


JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

HEBREWS READING GUIDE

WEEK 9



JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

WEEK 9
MARCH 13, 2023



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.



WEEK 9

HEBREWS 5:1-10



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DAY 1

WEAKNESS HAS LIMITS

First read Hebrews 5:1-2.

A priest is a representative. He represents people in God's presence and God in people's presence. In God's presence the priest must **"offer gifts and sacrifices for sins"** (v.1). That's because to be in God's presence sin must be forgiven and the priest is **"beset with weakness"** (v.2b). Weakness is a multifaceted idea in the Bible. But what's in focus here is spiritual weakness.

The priest is a mediator but also a sinner like everyone else. Weakness makes sacrifice necessary. But weakness also makes gentleness possible (v.2). The priest knows the struggle because the priest is in the struggle. That's a good thing. When someone represents us we want them to understand us. We want to know they know what it's like to be us. Whether that's an elected official representing us in Washington or a high priest interceding on our behalf to God. God's people were meant to find comfort knowing their mediator was **"chosen from among men"** (v.1). Yet they were also meant to long for something better. After all, as long as weakness persists so too would the need for sacrifices. In other words, weakness is endearing to a point. Weakness has limits.

We all long for a mediator who is not just gentle but powerful. A representative who understands us in a very real sense, but ultimately who is not us. That's what the book of Hebrews is all about (see Hebrews 4:15).

DAY 1 WEAKNESS HAS LIMITS

1. How does God's gift of a mediator reveal his love?
2. What spiritual weakness are you facing this week?
3. Why is Jesus the true and better high priest?

Heavenly Father ...

Thank you for your Son, the great high priest who knows the weakness of the flesh but overcame the power of sin. What a comfort to know that he alone represents me with gentleness and power.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

GOD CALLS THE HUMBLE

First read Hebrews 5:3-4.

Moses' brother, Aaron, was the original priest. In fact, his family became a tribe of priests **"called by God"** (v.4). God told Moses, **"bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests"** (Exodus 28:1). Their role would be to **"offer sacrifices for his own sins just as he does for those of the people"** (v.3). Though the regulations and expectations of the priesthood were extremely high, every priest was still a sinner **"beset with weakness"** (v.2).

Divine calling and human frailty seem incongruent. It seems reasonable to assume that God invites only the most faithful and strong people to serve in significant ways—*holy people for holy tasks*. But the Lord has different plans. King David's family learned this lesson. When Samuel came to pick the next leader of Israel, they all expected God to call David's much more attractive and capable brothers. Instead Samuel blesses a forgettable and weak shepherd boy. The Lord explains his selection telling them, **"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart"** (1 Samuel 16:7).

Whether a king or priest or teacher or accountant, God does not call the strong. He calls the humble (see James 4:10). He calls the one who doesn't *take honor for themselves* (v.4). Writer Joy Davidman opens her brilliant book, *Smoke on the Mountain* with an observation on humility. She says the student who needs help the least often asks for it the most. No matter how much we know or what role we play, being familiar with our weakness makes us ready candidates for divine calling.

DAY 2

GOD CALLS THE HUMBLE

1. Why do you think God calls the humble?
2. In what areas of your life are you prone to take honor for yourself?
3. How does the gospel cultivate humility?

Heavenly Father ...

Humble me. By your holiness and love, melt my pride and self-sufficiency. Set my eyes on your Son, the truly humble priest called by God.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3

REFUSING SELF-EXALTATION

First read Hebrews 5:5-6.

Humility is often confused with shame. Shame is self-despisement. Researcher Brené Brown says, “Shame is that warm feeling that washes over us, making us feel small, flawed, and never good enough” (*The Gifts of Imperfection*, 52). Shame is natural. Humility is supernatural.

From this passage we might describe humility as the refusal to exalt self. The writer of Hebrews tells us that like every other high priest, **“Christ did not exalt himself”** (v.5a). Now, this is wildly ironic. Christ had every reason to exalt himself. A good high priest was someone who could identify with people and with God. Jesus was a human and Jesus was God. He was the perfect candidate.

Yet Christ **“humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”** (Philippians 2:8). Rather than exalt himself he allowed himself to be lowered in the dirt. That’s humility.

Humility is derived from the Latin word *humilitas* which means “low to the ground” or “from the earth.” Our very definition of humility is embodied in Christ’s refusal to exalt himself but rather to lower himself. And here’s where the irony takes full force. Because Christ refused to exalt himself **“God has highly exalted him”** (Philippians 2:9). The Father says to his Son (the one who refused to make himself a priest), **“You are a priest forever”** (v.6). And in his humble priesthood, Jesus washes away all our shame (see Colossians 2:15).

DAY 3

REFUSING SELF-EXALTATION

1. How does Christ's humility shape your understanding of humility?
2. In what ways are you prone to exalt yourself?
3. Why does the gospel both humble us and wash away our shame?

Heavenly Father ...

I'm quick to exalt myself. But I'm also prone to shame. When fear controls my thoughts and affections, I fail to trust you and your Word. Forgive and humble me. Help me to see the beauty of a life that refuses self-exaltation. Help me to trust in you and the exaltation you provide through Christ.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4 WHAT JESUS KNOWS IN HIS BONES

First read Hebrews 5:7-8.

Our author continues to juxtapose Jesus with earthly priests. With each new description he demonstrates the immeasurable beauty and truth of Jesus' priesthood. Like other priests, and all humans for that matter, Jesus **"learned obedience through what he suffered"** (v.8b). While it might sound odd that God the Son learned anything, this is the nature of learning.

It's true that Jesus was the perfect Son for all of eternity. He never disobeyed. However, **"in the days of his flesh,"** Jesus endured the pressure and tensions of this life (v.7a). To be sure there's mystery surrounding what specific impulses Jesus experienced, yet professor Oliver Crisp believes we can agree that, "Jesus has a human nature that feels the effects of the fall, including things like fatigue, pain, and death" (*Was Christ Tempted in Every Way?*, October 2019).

He suffered. And suffering taught him lessons which are only learned by living. Specifically he learned to trust God beyond his comfort when he **"offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears"** (v.7b). That means there's substance behind Jesus' sympathy. It's beautiful. He doesn't merely know the right answers, he has endured the cost of obedience. Jesus knows in his bones what it is to cry out to the Heavenly Father and wait in that painful space between our prayers and God's fulfilled promises. Every priest knows the cost of obedience. Even Jesus.

DAY 4

WHAT JESUS KNOWS IN HIS BONES

1. How does Jesus' learned obedience encourage you?
2. What suffering are you enduring right now? What is your suffering teaching you about obedience?
3. How does the gospel empower us to suffer with faith?

Heavenly Father ...

Your Son is a great comfort to me. Help me to rest in him today.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5 GOD WHISPERS THEN HE SATISFIES

First read Hebrews 5:9-10.

God promised King David a day, ***“of your power, in holy garments”*** (Psalm 110:3). It was a day of moral healing and purity. At the center of that promise was an obscure and eternal priest, in the order of a guy named Melchizedek.

For the second time we’re introduced to this mysterious figure in Hebrews (v.6,10). We’ll take a deeper dive into Melchizedek in future chapters, but suffice to say he represents God’s promise to bring lasting peace—that is, peace with God. Whenever a priest would enter the temple to make sacrifices for sins, this promise was whispered but never completely satisfied. That’s because no matter what, another priest would eventually have to make another sacrifice. None was ***“a high priest after the order of Melchizedek”*** (v.10b). Now, these priests and sacrifices weren’t bad. In failing to satisfy the lasting promise of peace, the sacrificial system was fulfilling God’s design as a signpost rather than a savior.

But Jesus ***“being made perfect ... became the source of eternal salvation”*** (v.9). Jesus fulfills the promise. He is, after all, the *yes and amen* to all God's promises (2 Corinthians 1:20). Now and forever Christ is the only source of salvation ***“to all who obey him”*** (v.9a). That doesn’t mean life with God depends on our obedience. That would contradict everything the writer has just said. Rather, faith in Jesus' obedience manifests in our obedience of Jesus (see John 15:10).

We live as if the promise has been fulfilled in Christ. Because it has.

DAY 5 GOD WHISPERS THEN HE SATISFIES


1. God makes and keeps promises. What does that say about his character?
2. How are you living in light of God's fulfilled promise of peace?
3. How does Jesus' death and resurrection usher in the day of healing and purity promised in Psalm 110?

Heavenly Father ...

My heart and mind are often not at peace.

_____ and _____ cause me to live as if your Son has not fulfilled your promise of healing and purity. Renew my heart. Transform my mind. Settle my soul in your love and power.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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