



## Hebrews 4:14-5:10 – God mediates through His Son

Each year there is a poll conducted in Australia about the jobs which Australians respect and those they don't... I've got the results from last year's poll...

What do you think are the...Least respected professions

- |                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Car salesmen          | 7. TV Reporters |
| 2. Estate agents         | 8. Directors    |
| 3. Newspaper journalists | 9. Federal MP's |
| 4. Advertising people    | 10. State MP's  |
| 5. Insurance brokers     |                 |
| 6. Union leaders         |                 |

What about the...Most respected professions

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Nurses               | 7. Dentists       |
| Pharmacists          | 8. Engineers      |
| Doctors              | 9. Police         |
| School teachers      | 10. Uni lecturers |
| Supreme Court Judges |                   |
| High Court Judges    |                   |

*What do the most respected professions have in common? Helping people in need!*

If you took the poll today – where do you think a priest would come?

I think a Priest would have to be one of the least respected professions in Australia right now.

Most people consider them as irrelevant but worse than that they now have a reputation for abusing the trust people place in them. This morning we're going to think about the role of a priest – BUT not a priest as people use the word today – but a priest as defined in the pages of the Bible.

Last week we were confronted by a severe warning. We were reminded of Moses' generation, the wilderness generation and how they turned away from God's rest, and we were warned to make sure we don't do the same! Today is a passage of wonderful comfort, and encouragement.

The encouragement is in 4:14-16 but I want to come back to that later, because it is 5:1-10 that gives the basis for that encouragement...

### 1. The Priestly qualification

To be qualified the priest had to be appointed by God from among men.

**Read: 5:1-4**

**What is a priest?** Someone who is a **mediator**. The middle man between 2 people. They represent people to God.

**There were Old Testament qualifications** – He was selected from among men. Had to be a human. V.1 'selected from among men.' Selected and appointed.

It is not as though he thought this would be a good job I'll give it a go. Gets on seek.com and looks for a job. He is appointed. Appointed by God. Not self appointed but God appointed. Not elected. Didn't volunteer.

It was the Israelite family of Aaron whose family was chosen to be the priests. Aaron was Moses brother. It was from this family that God chose priests. V.4

**Jesus' qualification as the high-priest****Jesus has approval of God, vv 5-6...**

- The verses quoted are 2 Psalms, the first is psalm 2 which speaks of Jesus as the king – the messiah appointed by God.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> is Ps 110 which is also about the messiah – but this messiah is also a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.
- In the OT the high priests are descendents of Aaron but here is a new order of priests.
- Melchizedek comes up again chapters 6 & 7.
- It means Jesus is high priest **FOREVER**.

Now that he has come there is no need for any other priests and high priests because God has designated Jesus as **THE** high priest forever.

**Personal Qualifications****v. 7...**I've heard people say

"How can Jesus really sympathise with me if he was perfect?

How can he fully understand our weakness if he never sinned?"

How would you answer that?

Let me ask you this question...

Which is harder?

- Being tempted or giving in to temptation?
- Being tempted for one minute or one hour?

The person who immediately gives into temptation knows nothing of the struggle that it is to resist temptation. It is much harder to resist than to give in!

In Hebrews 5:7 it is the Garden of Gethsemane that the writer has in mind – where Jesus faced the reality of his death.

- He knew he would die as a sacrifice with the sins of the world placed on him – and he was terrified by the thought.
- **v. 7...** with loud cries and tears he prayed to the one who could save him from death.
- "Father if you are willing take this cup from me, yet not my will but yours be done"
- God did save Jesus from death but only after he offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- Jesus not only experienced weakness and temptation but he endured the condemnation of our sin in our place!

**v. 8 says...**

- Jesus was never disobedient but he did learn obedience – he experienced the cost of obedience – the unrelenting struggle against temptation.

Jesus is perfectly qualified as high priest because he has experienced the full depth of human weakness – our struggle against sin, and yet he remained sinless – he is able to enter God's presence on our behalf permanently as the perfect high priest. That is where he is right now – seated at God's right hand in heaven.

Verse 9 says that Jesus was made perfect. We read this in 2:10 a few weeks ago. It is not referring to Jesus being sinful and then becoming sinless. It is not referring to his morality. It is not as though he was imperfect. What it is referring to is that by his life, death and exaltation Jesus became "fully qualified" as our saviour.

Jesus is qualified as our High Priest.

**2. The Priestly occupation****To sacrifice and sympathise****Read: 5:1****a. Sacrifice**

The job description of a high priest is mentioned in v. 1...

The high priest's role is seen on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16. On that day the high priest entered the tabernacle. He went into the holy of holies. Access to that room was only open on this one day of each year – the day of atonement – and it was only this one man – the high priest - who had access.

**Why was access so restricted?**

Because entry into that room symbolised entry into the presence of God – the presence of the holy God.

- How can a human being in our sin and imperfection come into the presence of the holy God?
- The Bible says on our own we can't!
- We would be consumed – like a dry piece of wood in contact with raging fire!

But there was one day of access between God and the people and that was through this one man – the high priest. On that day the high priest took 2 goats. One goat he sacrificed for the sins of the people and sprinkled its blood around in the holy of holies to purify it from sin. Then he would take the other goat and he would lay his hands on it – and confess the sins of the people and lay them on the goat and then that goat was taken out of the camp – away into the desert- scapegoat

In this way – the high priest dealt with the sins of the people so that they could enjoy relationship with the holy God.

As it says in Heb 5:1...

They had to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well. They had to be acceptable to God. The only way they could be was to offer a sacrifice. This shows the problem with the OT system.

Jesus, 14:14 tells us is also a priest. There is no other like him because there is no other sacrifice like his. He has gone through the heavens.

**7:27** – *Unlike the other high priests he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day first for his own sins and then for the sins of the ppl. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*

We will speak more of this in the next couple of weeks but to say the old way meant continuing to sacrifice whereas Jesus sacrifice was a once off never to be repeated deal.

**5:9** says he became the source of our eternal salvation.

**B . Sympathise**

5:2 says because the priests were humans they were able to deal gently with the people.

What is it about their humanity that means they can deal gently? It is the fact that he is subject to weakness. They are vulnerable to sin and being tempted to sin as every human is. So Jesus becoming a man is able to sympathise.

Look at verse 4:15

The essence of temptation is to reject the authority of God. Jesus was tempted to do this. It is tempting because of the cost of submitting to God.

When you suffer you gravitate towards people who have suffered in the same way. So when Belinda and I had a couple of pregnancies end before that when to full term we naturally turned to people who had gone through the same experience. And then as friends went through the same thing knowing that we had they turned to us.  
Why? Because of the common experience. They know the feelings you are having and the grief and pain you are going through.

The very one we could be turning away from when we are tempted is the very person we need to turn to in Jesus.

**This is applied in 4:14-16****3. The Priestly exhortation**

We are to keep trusting Jesus as our priest and keep going to him.

**Read: 4:14,16**

**Let us...** We are weak and vulnerable we all are – how much we have to struggle to stick at it...

Life is hard...Raising our children, Loving our wives, or husbands

Obeying Jesus, Persevering as a Christian, Resisting temptation...  
We feel weak and vulnerable and sometimes overwhelmed!

And the more you get to know me the more you see this weakness in me...I am not your priest – I am your brother – I am a fellow sinner with you – I struggle just as you do!

We can forget this and pretend we don't struggle.

- we put on a brave face and pretend all is going smoothly when in fact it is hard going
- let's not pretend with each other.

And What an awesome word of encouragement we have to share with one another!

***Let us...v.16***

- Jesus is there at God's right hand.
- He sympathises with you deeply – he knows what you are going through – he has been there!
- But because of him you can pray to God just like Jesus did – even with loud cries and tears.
- And you can be sure you will receive mercy and grace in your time of need.
- Do you hear that? Your prayers will not fall on deaf ears.
- And You won't receive harsh judgment, you won't even get what you deserve – even better you'll get mercy and grace.
- Forgiveness of sins - Strength through trial - Perseverance and joy in the face of suffering

Please notice – this is not a promise that life will be easy – if anything it saying the opposite – life will not be easy it is a constant struggle – God's rest is still in the future. But call on him and he will deal with you gently and tenderly – he will sustain you in the wilderness, he will give you what you need in your time of need.

I grew up singing a song at church that said:- What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief's to bear,  
what a privilege to carry , everything to God in prayer Oh what peace we often forfeit Oh what needless pain  
we bear,  
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer

**Remember who we have in Jesus.**

So let's hold firmly to the faith we profess.

And

Let's approach the throne of grace with confidence.