

Jesus: Our Great High Priest Forever
(Week 10)
Hebrews 5:5-10
“The Suffering Son”

Introduction

“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of The LORD been revealed? He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem. Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was pressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away. Yet who of His generation protested? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet, it was The LORD’S will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though The LORD makes His life an offering for sin, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of The LORD will prosper in His hand. After He has suffered, He will see the light of life and be satisfied; by His knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors, for He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Isaiah 53

This passage from Isaiah is commonly known as the prophecy of “The Suffering Servant”, but I prefer “The Suffering Son”, for it is absolutely and irrefutably a foretelling of the priestly ministry of Jesus, The Son of God, who would one day come and offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. God, in His infinite wisdom, gave the prophet Isaiah a wonderful glimpse of the glory and majesty of Jesus, The Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world (**Revelation 13:8**). *The Bible*, as you have heard me say so many times, is the story of Christ. It isn’t a book of history. It is HIS-story, and the writer of *Hebrews* was well aware of this fact. That is why he uses so many *Old Testament* references to establish that everything written in the holy scriptures was written with a single purpose; so that WE could **recognize** and **believe** in Jesus when He came!

This week we will examine **Hebrews 5:5-10** to see what the writer of *Hebrews* wants us to discover in Christ. The writer tells us that Jesus was in fact The Great High Priest appointed by God Himself to offer the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Jesus perfected (fulfilled) this holy calling by being a **Submissive Son**, and a **Suffering Son**, and therefore, He has been forever established as our only **Source of Salvation**.

The Submissive Son (vs.5-7)

“...Christ did not take on Himself the glory of becoming a High Priest. But God said to Him, ‘You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.’ And He says in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries to the One Who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.”
Hebrews 5:5-7

Jesus was appointed by God The Father to become our Great High Priest. Even though He was not a descendant of Levi, and therefore, not from the designated priestly class, God in His sovereignty had every right to call whomsoever He chose. Melchizedek hadn't descended from Levi, and yet, God had obviously appointed him to be a priest king, so there can be little argument against the priesthood of Jesus, The Son of God, Who was God, even before Melchizedek! Jesus “became” the Son of God upon that first Easter Sunday, when God raised Him from the dead, but in order for that great event to occur, Christ had to place Himself in submission to His Father. He had to humble Himself and leave the splendor and majesty of heaven, and become a man from a poor family of men, and place Himself in reverent submission to The Father's will. Jesus, who was no less than God, became a humble servant of God:

“ ...Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!”
Philippians 2:6-8

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus who was *always* no less than God, and had existed for an eternity before time began, and had never had anyone else ever tell Him what to do? He, being God, had always given the orders, not taken them, that is until He became a man and subjected Himself to the Father's will. Jesus became a man and “learned obedience” (**vs.8**). He had to place His full weight and trust in God for His protection. Oh, He **could** have taken control of His own situation. The devil had certainly tried to tempt Him to do just that (**Matthew 4:1-11**), but He was resolved to submit Himself to The Heavenly Father, in ALL things. Therefore, The Son submitted Himself to The Father, and as such, if God had not been able to keep His promises, then Jesus would have been in grave danger upon that cross.

When the writer of *Hebrews* tells us about Jesus' **“prayers, petitions, and fervent cries to the One who could save him from death (vs. 7)”**, he is no doubt referring to the passionate prayers of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane:

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”
Matthew 26:39

You see, Jesus had come into the world to die as the sacrificial lamb of God. He had always known this day was coming, but on the eve of it all coming to fruition, His humanity could not help but desire another way. For millennia, He had foreseen the horrors of the cross, when the wrath of God for the sins of all eternity would be unleashed upon him. He could see the moment in time when God would turn His back on Him, for the consequence of sin is to be separated from a Holy and Righteous God. In His divine heart, The LORD Himself knew that there was no other way, but who could blame Him for longing for another way. Knowing that there was no other way, however, He submitted Himself to the will of His Father. The phrase in **verse 7** that reads **“could save Him from death”**, should actually read, “Could deliver Him **out of** death”. Jesus knew that He would certainly die, but in His submission of faith, He trusted that God could, and in fact **would**, raise Him from the dead. Therefore, He placed His

complete trust in God, rather than to His own power. You do understand that Jesus could have easily stopped His execution at any time, but chose to proceed with it, placing his very life in The Father's hands. It is through this faith that He became the "perfect sacrifice" (**vs. 9**), not that He wasn't already perfect to begin with, but because of His perfect submission He was able to become "**our**" perfect sacrifice! Bearing all this in mind, therefore, don't you think that He has earned the right to ask the same from each of us? Jesus commands that we place our full faith in Him, in exactly the same way that He placed His complete faith in His Father. Are you trusting Jesus today to save you from death? Because He lives, we are guaranteed to live as well, if we will simply put our faith in Him, The Submissive Son of God.

The Suffering Son (vs. 8)

"Son though He was, He learned obedience from what He suffered...."

Hebrews 5:8

Jesus, The Son of God, had never been called upon to be "obedient", until He gave up His heavenly throne to come and suffer as a man. He "learned" obedience through His suffering. Now we have all heard the horrific descriptions of His death upon the cross which followed the terrible punishment that He suffered at the hands of Pilate. He was beaten to within an inch of His life by a cat o'nine tails, which was a whip consisting of nine leather strands with pieces of bone or metal attached to it ends. Most people died from such beatings, but after He was beaten, Jesus was mocked and forced to carry His own cross up Calvary's hill to be executed there. He was compelled to wear a crown of thorns upon His brow as He hung there under a mocking sign that read "The King of The Jews". We have heard the story so many times before, but beyond the sheer physical torture, we cannot begin to fathom what it must have been like to feel the complete weight of God's wrath being poured out upon the sins of all mankind.

When I watch the news, I see the total depravity of mankind throughout the world, and often times I find myself becoming intensely angry about it. I hear a story of some wicked and depraved parents who brutally murder their child, or I see a report of some wicked despot in some distant land who destroys an entire sect of people in what is called "ethnic cleansing", and my heart cries out for justice. Sometimes, I must admit, I want to see these criminals punished in the most violent way imaginable for their atrocities. Can I get a witness? Now just imagine for a moment a Holy God, Who cannot tolerate sin of **any** kind. For centuries, He has had a front row seat to, not some mind you, but, ALL of the horrible acts committed in this wicked world. Imagine all of that stored up anger and wrath building for generations, and Who took the full force of all of it? Jesus, The Son of God, that's Who. My friends, I don't believe for one second that we can possibly begin to imagine just how intensely painful it was for Him upon that cross. I don't believe that our human minds can even comprehend how much suffering was placed upon The One Who became "sin for us" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). But, I do know this, He learned obedience through suffering. And why would He even consider doing that? Because God so loved the world, that's why (**John 3:16**). What a terrible price He paid so that you and I could be set free from sin and the wrath of God. Thank God for The Suffering Son.

The Source of Salvation (9-10)

"...and once He was made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him and was designated by God to be High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 5:9-10

When the writer of *Hebrews* says that Christ was made perfect, he is not of course saying that He was somehow "imperfect" before. What he IS saying is that once Christ had offered Himself as a the ultimate sacrifice, there was no longer a need for any other sacrifices. The cross, once and for all, did

away with *The Old Testament* sacrificial system, whether the Jews realized it or not. *The Old Testament* sacrifices were inadequate. This is why they had to be offered over and over again, day after day. The blood sacrifices offered up by the Levitical priesthood could only “atone” for sin (the word in Hebrew means “cover”), while Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice washed away sin forever! *The Old Testament* sacrifices were given as a symbol of Jesus’ once-and-for-all sacrifice. Please allow me to further explain.

Every morning and every evening, the daily sacrifices had to be made at the temple according to The Law of Moses:

“This is what you are to offer on the altar each day: two lambs a year old. Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. With the first lamb, offer a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter hin of wine as a drink offering. Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning — a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to The LORD.”
Exodus 29:38-41

Let’s look to these daily sacrifices closely, shall we? Every morning and evening two lambs were to be slaughtered in the prime of their lives (1 yr old). If you check your Jewish history, you will find that the first lamb was slaughtered at nine o’clock in the morning and the second was killed every afternoon at three o’clock. Does that sound vaguely familiar at all? Jesus was struck down in the prime of his young life (33 years of age). He was crucified at what Mark’s gospel calls the “third’ hour of the day. In Jewish timekeeping the daytime hours begin at six a.m. Therefore, Jesus was crucified at exactly the same time as the morning sacrifice was being made at the temple. A little further reading of Mark’s gospel will reveal that Jesus cried out and yielded up his spirit (died) on exactly the ninth hour the day, or three o’clock, just as the regular evening sacrifice was being slaughtered (**Mark 15:25-34**). You see, those other daily sacrifices were only given to point to Christ’s perfect sacrifice.

Now let’s look at the grain and wine offerings that accompanied those lambs in the daily sacrifices. The fine flour represents the sinless Son of God, who is the Bread of Life (**John 6:35**). Oil in *The Bible* is ALWAYS associated with the anointing of The Holy Spirit. Jesus was most definitely filled with the Spirit of God. The Wine represents the blood of the covenant. In *The Old Testament*, wine was poured out upon the altar fire as what was called a “drink offering”. It was a symbolic sacrifice that represented giving ones very life blood. When The Apostle Paul was about to be executed for preaching the gospel, he wanted Timothy to fully comprehend that he (Paul) had given his very life’s blood for the great commission of Christ, so he wrote:

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.”
2 Timothy 4:6

Jesus, The Son of God, poured out His precious blood as an offering to wash away the sins of the whole world. He held nothing back. He gave all that He had. He too was poured out for us as a drink offering. So you see, He alone “perfected” *The Old Testament* sacrifices. He is Our Great High Priest Forever. The Son of God was made perfect in Submission and Suffering, and has become the only Source of Salvation. What more do you need to believe in Him? Or, as the writer of *Hebrews* has so eloquently said:

“How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?”
Hebrews 2:3

And ALL of God’s people said... TRUTH!!!