

# WELCOMED INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

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Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

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When I was in grade school and junior high I had a friend whose dad was one of the most successful businessmen in town. They had the biggest house and, as far as I knew, the only TV in town. None of my other friends had ever been in Alan's house. But because Alan and I were close friends, he would take me into his house once in a while and we would watch TV – The Lone Ranger, Lassie, Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers. I would never get into that house except that Alan was my friend and he took me in.

There is even a nicer place that I get to visit, but only because the Son invites me in, and that is into the presence of God, and one day God's heaven.

It is part of God's purpose for all of us. Let's remind ourselves how that welcome is possible.

Hebrews 4:14 **Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.**

There is one of those "therefores" again. Let's remind ourselves what this "therefore" refers to.

- The verses before this explained God's rest.

## 1. Christ Jesus Our High Priest Exactly God's Purpose

- a. God rested because all is set to confirm who He is
  - i. He created the world and universe and mankind, and each time He created he said it was good.
    1. Not that he would create something that wasn't good, but that what He had just created fit perfectly with His purpose.
    2. That purpose was that this creation, including you and me, would once and for all demonstrate that He alone was the LORD God and that nothing could exist without Him - He alone was God.
    3. There was no other God.
    4. That evidence would be played out here on this earth.
  - ii. And so, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, after He had created for 6 days, He rested – rested in the fact that everything needed was ready.
    1. His purpose would be fulfilled.
    2. He rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day not because he was tired, but that His holy purpose could now be completed.
    3. And so He called the 7<sup>th</sup> day holy.
  - iii. He called all of His created beings to have a day of rest.
    1. Stop doing all that they needed to do in order to keep alive
    2. A day of trust in God
    3. Trust that we are part of His purpose,

4. That everything that happened in our lives was never out of His purpose
- iv. A day of trust that would be a holy day,
  1. A day of acknowledging that He alone was God,
  2. That we could trust Him,
  3. Our only hope was in Him
- v. So a day that would be a holy day for us
  1. A Sabbath Day of rest
- b. God's rest includes confidence in the salvation of mankind
  - i. That purpose of God included the defeat of the lie Satan had whispered to Adam and Eve.  
The day when we all started dying, the curse of sin.
  - ii. And the plan for salvation was completed when God's Son, Christ Jesus, the Son of God came to earth as a man, to die for our sins and rise from the dead.
  - iii. That would be our salvation.
- c. Trusting God's purpose in every circumstance
  - i. And because of that, every circumstance in our life would never be outside of God's control
  - ii. The blessings and the challenges were all part of His plan. He could be trusted in everything.
  - iii. **Hebrews 2:14** Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. [15] Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.  
[16] We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. [17] Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. [18] Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.
  - iv. Jesus has become our High Priest
    1. What does that mean?

## 2. God Provided A High Priest To Safely Connect Mankind With The Lord God, Jehovah

- a. The role of the High Priests in the Temple  
**Hebrews 5:1 – 3** Every high priest is a man chosen to represent other people in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers sacrifices for their sins. [2] And he is able to deal gently with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to the same weaknesses.

[3] That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as theirs.

- b. Mankind's representative before God and for God
  - i. So the high priest would talk to the people from God and would represent the people before God.
  - ii. What separated mankind from God was man's sin.
  - iii. No sin can enter into the presence of God
  - iv. That is not just a rule or law of God, but a reality,
    - 1. Just as much as you cannot have light and darkness in the same place.
    - 2. Their natures are such that it is just impossible.
  - v. So it is with the holiness of God and the sin of man.
  
- c. The work of the High Priest is the stark reality of sin's total devastation
  - i. You would come to the priest with your sacrifice, (often a lamb) with the desire to be forgiven your sin.
  - ii. The priest would take the lamb and put it on an altar and kill it, cut its throat, shedding its blood,
  - iii. Sounds gruesome, but that killing represents what sin does. We die because of sin.
    - 1. And the reality is that **Hebrews 9:22** says "**without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.**"
    - 2. All this sacrifice happened outside of the temple building before entering into the presence of God in the temple.
  
  - iv. Then the priest makes his way to the temple building
    - 1. But before entering there is a basin where he washes his hands,
    - 2. Representing the washing, cleansing of our sin and even for his sin.
  
  - v. Now the priest can enter the temple into the first room.
    - 1. On the right side is a table with some bread, representing God the bread of life
    - 2. On the left side is the lampstand representing God the light of the world
    - 3. In the center toward the back of this room is a small altar with incense burning, the smoke representing the prayers of the Spirit of God on our behalf.
    - 4. No one but priests can enter this room, which is called the Holy Place.
  
  - vi. Behind this room is a second room called the Holy of Holies.
    - 1. In it is the Ark of the Covenant – the Ark of God's Promise to us.
    - 2. Here is the Seat of Mercy on which the high priest would sprinkle the blood from the sacrifice he had made for the sins of the people.

3. The high priest could enter this room only once a year, on the Day of Atonement
  4. This was the room where he met presence of God, and if the priest entered with any blemish, he would die.
  5. The priest came in with the smoke of incense in his face, so that he would not have to see God. He could never survive that.
- vii. That is what it cost for mankind to come before God for the forgiveness of sin.
1. God wanted to meet with man - break down the barrier of sin between Himself and mankind
  2. And through these careful steps God protected man from the terrifying consequence of sin in the presence of holiness.
  3. Satan didn't believe this
    - a. Adam and Eve didn't believe this
    - b. We don't grasp the terror of our sin
  4. But God had a purpose in creation to change all this.

### 3. Jesus Became Our High Priest And Became A Final Solution

- a. He is our only hope
  - i. Jesus came to be our High Priest, from God **TO** us, and to God **FOR** us.
  - ii. But he would need to come as a man, as one of us, yet without sin unlike the other priests.
  - iii. **Hebrews 5:7** During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. [8] Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered [9] and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him [10] and was designated by God to be high priest.
  - iv. He would be our high priest connecting us with God
  - v. But there would still have to be a sacrifice, for “without the shedding of blood there is no salvation, no forgiveness of sin.”
- b. He offered Himself as our sacrifice
  - i. Now instead of the priest bringing a lamb to sacrifice for the sins of the people, the high priest Himself, Jesus, offers Himself as the sin offering.
- c. A “once-and-for-all” offering to set us free from the curse
  - i. **Hebrews 9:24** For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. [25] Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. [26] Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do

away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. [27] Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, [28] so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

- ii. **Hebrews 10:5** Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; [6] with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. [7] Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, O God.'" [10] And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

#### 4. Jesus takes us into God's presence where we are now welcomed by God

- a. **Hebrews 4:16** Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

That was God's purpose in creation.

- And that is why God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.
- And that is why He calls us to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day,
  - a day of trust in God,
  - a holy day

Wow! What amazing truths. It makes my head spin, my heart to leap.

- And the writer isn't done yet with explaining all this.

That is why he says at the end of Chapter 5

**Hebrews 5:11** We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. [12] In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! [13] Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. [14] But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

**[6:1]** Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity,

Listen, you are welcome into God's presence.

- Do you know that?
- Have you put your trust in God like this?

Do you live it?

- Every day?
- In every circumstance?

If you need to talk to someone or pray with someone, our prayer room is open for you. Someone will be there to meet you.