

**Jesus Heart for You #4**  
**He Deals Gently with the Ignorant and Wayward**  
~ Heb 4:14-5:10

Pastor Tom  
January 30, 2022

**How do you feel when someone close to you blows it?**

- A child repeatedly forgets to hang up their coat after they come home from school.
- A child leaves a mess behind when you've just reviewed what it looks like to clean up after themselves.
- A teenager forgets or ignores their parent's requirement to call in when they are out late.
- You find out your teenager or young adult child is regularly getting drunk or doing drugs or something else leading down a destructive path.
- Or maybe you have asked your parents to stop bringing up that one subject about you in public. Or you've asked them to stop teasing you about that one area and they did it again at a family gathering.
- Or maybe you've been helping out a family member financially. Then you find out they blew a bunch of the money on a new TV when they already had a TV. You're help was meant to pay the rent not to get an unnecessary item.
- Or you have some pretty good friends. You thought you were tight as a group. Then you find out that they got together without you and didn't even let you know. So you see them at school the next day or at church the next week. How do you feel about them?
- Or at work, you've asked your manager to meet to discuss some concerns you have about your job. You prepare for the meeting and get all your thoughts together. But the manager forgot – or comes unprepared or seems to pay little attention to your concerns.
- Or you're a manager and have reviewed some expectations with a certain employee. They abide by them for a couple months. But then you see things slipping in that one area again.
- Or your spouse or significant other keeps doing that thing that annoys you or they keep watching that show that bothers you or they belittle you in public settings.

- Or you're a grandparent and you love seeing your grandkids. But you're having issues with your kids about their rules for you when with the grandkids. You seek clarification on what they want. Your adult child just blows up at you and blasts you. How do you feel about them?

How do you feel when someone close to you blows it, messes up or blows up at you?

### **How do you respond when someone close to you blows it?**

We can respond in several ways that are not ultimately helpful or healthy.

One way is to just not say anything. Pretend it never happened. Sweep it under the carpet and just try to go on with the relationship. But the problem with that is the same thing may happen again. Or the other person feels like you've given them permission to keep doing that which really bugs you.

Another response is to bring it up but immediately play it down just to bring some sort of false peace to the relationship. "I noticed that you did that thing we talked about again but it's no big deal. I know you didn't mean anything by it and let's just move on." So you have just borne the brunt of whatever happened and let them off the hook. You may feel temporary peace inside but deep down the issue has not been resolved.

Or a third possible response which is pretty common – We get exasperated and angry. We just let the other person have a full blast of our anger. So at least gets the issue out on the table and you may communicate your expectations. But a lot of times, when we're angry and exasperated, we say or yell things that cause deep hurt. Or we say things we may not really mean. But our heightened emotional state removes the filter that would catch those more extreme statements. So we may gain compliance by yelling or getting really angry. But we may also have brought further damage to the relationship.

How do you respond when someone close to you blows it? Now let's turn the tables a little. How do we hope others will respond to us when we blow it? What do you hope for if you're the one who repeated the same unhealthy behavior; you're the one who forgot that important appointment; you're the one who said or did something to embarrass another person and now you see their hurt? Some of us might have received a raging blast of anger from someone in our childhood when we messed up. So we more

naturally hide or avoid the person we've wronged in the hope that it will just blow over or they will forget about it.

Then we can apply this same approach to our relationship with Christ. We watch something or say something or do something that grieves Jesus. A barrier now exists between us. And we avoid the relationship hoping He will forget about it. Or we imagine He would be just like my angry raging parent or boss or teacher. So why bother?

So the question we're asking today is **"What kind of a heart does Jesus have for us when we blow it?"** Today's text is going to answer that question. It will reveal more of his heart. It will also reveal more about our hearts. I pray (and have prayed) that this passage will help us see more clearly Jesus' heart for us. I pray the Spirit will use this the knowledge of Jesus' heart to move us closer to Him for the next time we blow it. I pray that we will also see how we, with Christ's help, can respond in a healthy way when others close to us blow it.

Now the text that provides all this is the same one we looked at last week. Hebrews 4:14-5:4. We looked at, Jesus, the sympathetic high priest section. Today, we will find our answers in another section. So let's hear this text again and then dive into it.

#### **Hebrews 4:14-5:4 (ESV)**

**<sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

**<sup>5</sup> For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. <sup>4</sup> And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.**

Last week we saw in verses 14-16, Jesus, the sympathetic high priest. We learned He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because he has been tempted in every way as we are yet without sin.

This reality can inspire to hold tightly to our faith. It also motivates us to boldly approach God in prayer with confidence to find mercy because Jesus is there.

The writer then spends the first four verses of chapter 5 talking about the high priest's relationship with the people. So in verse 1 he notes that high priests were appointed to act on behalf of others in relation to God. This included offering gifts and sacrifices for sins.

But then in verse 2, he talks about the solidarity of the high priest with the people. "He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness." So the high priest was supposed to deal gently with others who messed up because he himself was weak. The weakness talked about here is the weakness of sinning. For according to verse 3, he had to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. So because of his own human frailty, he must deal gently with the people.

The Greek word translated into two words, "deal gently," is such an appropriate word. It means, "To restrain or moderate one's feelings so one can deal gently and considerately with another." So the high priest needed to deal with his own feelings before dealing with the people. He needed to moderate any exasperation or anger or complacency that welled up in his heart. He must refuse to ignore the people's sin or sweep it under the carpet. But he needed to deal with them gently.

Who was the high priest supposed to offer this kind of approach to? Those who were ignorant and wayward. To be ignorant means to not know. In this context, it referred to not knowing God's moral law and God's holy will. So it is a lack of knowledge about God and His good will for us. We will see many examples of this today. One is when couples who live together but are not married. That's become accepted and affirmed widely in our culture. It's portrayed as the natural and healthy next step in a dating relationship. So if a person does not know God's good will on this, they will move in together and think little of it. So they live in ignorance of God's will. What is God's will on this? Hebrews 13:4 - Let the marriage bed remain undefiled. The only God affirmed expression of sex is in the bed of marriage. Living together before marriage may not be the great good our culture claims. And it's not that God is old fashioned and just wants to repress people. His will is good for us. John Mark Comer, in his book, Live

no lies talks about this. He raises serious and well thought out questions about our culture's assumptions like cohabitating before marriage is good for you. He notes studies done that conclude "those who cohabit before marriage are one – less likely to marry; two – more likely to divorce if they do marry; and three often develop long term trust issues."<sup>1</sup> Yet a couple that has no knowledge about God's good will and these serious issues that accompany cohabitation will enter such an arrangement thinking this is for the best. Yet if they came to worship, the high priest was not supposed let them have it and blast them for their behavior. He was supposed to deal gently with them since he himself is beset with weakness.

This same approach applied to another group of people called those who had gone astray or a wayward. Astray give us the image of a sheep who has not followed the shepherd. They have not obeyed his or her voice. The wayward then know God's law or will. They have chosen to go off God's path. So if the ignorant sin unintentionally then the wayward sin intentionally. Yet even for this more intentional sinner, the high priest needed to respond by dealing gently with them. He was supposed to restrain and moderate his own feelings about the people's sin because he himself was a sinner. So he needed to offer sacrifice for his own sins and then minister to others. Pondering his own weakness would help moderate his approach to the people.

Now let's think about ourselves in this context. Say we have blown it. We messed up unintentionally or intentionally. Yet we knew someone like the high priest described in verse 2. Wouldn't it be more likely for us to go to them with the reality that we had blown it? It makes a huge difference if we can trust someone to deal gently with us. It is inviting to go to a person with a heart who will deal gently with us whether it be a boss, or a manager, or a teacher or a parent or a spouse or a relative or a pastor. The author of Hebrews declares that this expectation lay upon the high priest.

But what was the reality? What do we know of the high priests over Israel during the first century? We find them to be arrogant, corrupt, compromised, murderous, defensive, dismissive, angry and power hungry. If the high priests modeled that kind of behavior towards people, how do you think that filtered

---

<sup>1</sup> John Mark Comer, Live No Lies, Waterbrook, Colorado Springs, 2021, 29.

down to the priests who directly ministered to the people? We see Jesus condemn ordinary priests and religious leaders for their mistreatment of the people. Spend some time in Matthew 23 which paints a clear picture of the abuses done by some priests while in their position.

So imagine you are a first century Jewish person. You know the high priests have this negative reputation. Maybe your local priest acted similarly. If you went and admitted your sin, they would rage away at you in exasperated anger. Then they read verse 2? “He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward?” Many would answer “I wish I had a priest like that. I wish I had someone to go to when I blew it that would help me through it and help me do better.” So we’ve got this picture of the ideal high priest in verse 2.

Now zoom out for a moment from verse 2. What is this overall passage about? It describes Jesus, the sympathetic high priest who is infinitely superior to every human high priest. Though the author doesn’t say it directly, I think he’s indirectly saying, “Jesus fulfills verse 2 perfectly for anyone who blows it.” Jesus will deal gently with the ignorant and wayward. Now this is where Dane Ortlund goes in his book *Gentle and Lowly*. He claims that Hebrews 5:2 describes Jesus’ heart for us. When I first read that, I struggled because the writer is talking about the human high priests. He points out their need to offer sacrifice for their own sins in verse 3.

But notice in verse 2, he doesn’t use the word sin when talking about the high priests. He says they themselves are beset with weakness. This weakness in the ordinary high priests is certainly sin. But the author has just written in Hebrews 4:15. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” So Jesus Himself was beset with weakness – human weakness in the face of temptation. He can sympathize. He knows what temptation is like. But he never sinned. Instead he did something about our sins. Instead of being obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins, he offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. So he can fulfill verse 2 perfectly. He can deal gently with us for he sympathizes with our weakness. He also gave Himself for us to pay for our sin. So though our sin still grieves Jesus, He has already moderated His response to us through the cross. The father’s feeling towards us has been

moderated because of the cross. Romans 5:8 – “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Now He lives. When we come to Him, he will deal gently with the ignorant and wayward.

**What is Jesus’ heart like towards us when we blow it? Jesus deals gently with the ignorant and wayward.** Now I know it’s not comfortable to talk of our sins yet it’s necessary if we want to experience freedom from their poison. If we don’t think sin is an issue for us. Well this is another reason why we need the Bible. It reveals the reality of our hearts to us. God through the Psalmist says in Psalm 95:10 “For forty years, I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” The prophet Isaiah says this – “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way (Isaiah 53:6).” If we are going to have a close relationship with Jesus, we have to admit the reality that we go astray. It’s part of being human. All we like sheep have gone astray.

But when we come to Jesus, we don’t come to someone who looks down on us with judgment and scolding. Nor we do we come to someone who sweeps everything under the carpet and pretends it didn’t happen. He deals gently with the ignorant and wayward. The disciple Peter talks about this in his first letter. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:24-25. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree (the cross), that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you are healed. For you were straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

So how can we respond to all of this?

**First, we need to acknowledge our sin to the Lord Jesus and repent of it.** 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Confess. That’s how the poison of sin gets washed out. We might have done something unintentionally that resulted in hurt. Or we may have wandered off God’s path. So we come to Christ who receives us and deals gently with us. We admit our sin and express our desire to turn from it. He forgives us. We embrace a restored relationship with Christ. John Chrysostom, an early church Father “Be ashamed

when you sin, don't be ashamed when you repent. Sin is the wound, repentance is the medicine. Sin is followed by shame; repentance is followed by boldness. Satan has overturned this order and given boldness to sin and shame to repentance." But don't believe his lie.

**Second, we need to acknowledge our sin to those sinned against and repent of it.** Matthew 5:23-24 state: "So, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." This is part of reconciling relationships. We need to acknowledge and admit what we've done to any we have wronged. We need to feel and show real remorse over the hurt we've caused. We need to allow the other person to express their hurt and how our sin affected them. Then we need to promise that we will work on changing.

**Third, we need to ask the Spirit to grow us in an ability to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward in our lives.** So parents of young children, you're often dealing with situations where the child messes up unintentionally. They spilled their milk. They were careless but they didn't mean to spill their milk. If our automatic response when someone else blows it is exasperated anger, we need to ask the Spirit to grow us in this area. We ask the Lord to help us see again our own weakness and sinfulness. Then we grow in moderating and restraining our feelings towards others who blow it unintentionally.

But then there are those who are intentionally wayward. That's harder. When this happens to me, I must first withdraw and deal with my own feelings. Remember the word translated "deal gently" means to restrain and moderate our feelings. I have to do that before I actually speak and address things. Sometimes we have to recover emotionally. Otherwise, we are more likely to blow up at the one who blew it. Or just avoid it which just frustrates us further. I also need to ask God for supernatural wisdom and patience. I need His perspective and the Spirit's help and words. God deals greatly with those who come humbly. Some of you are in situations where you're in close contact with someone who can repeatedly frustrate you or sins against you. So you must pray and ask the Lord for a continual supply of His grace and gentleness into your own heart for that person while also setting appropriate boundaries.



**Fourth – We need to take responsibility for our own spiritual growth.** I have encountered several in my life, who have told me, commanded me or expected me to hold them accountable for something in their life. When I was new in ministry, I always said yes to such a request. It's a good thing to have others hold you accountable *if you want to grow*. But if we're asking someone else to hold us accountable so that we don't have to change and actually deal with the warped stuff in our hearts, then that's just using another person realized that some of these requests for accountability were more about shifting responsibility for their life onto me.

God is the only one who can fully carry our burdens and address our needs. Yes, we need to bear one another's burdens. But if we cause a constant burden to another because of our own immaturity or unwillingness to grow, that's a problem. We need to seek the Lord who is also seeking us. He longs to help and empower us to grow and mature. But we need to cooperate with Him, make time for Him.

He is Lord over the universe and He desires a relationship with us. He always wants the best for us. We need to take responsibility for our spiritual growth. Yes we learn from others and depend on each other. But we have to take hold of this life Christ gave us and grow.

Yet it all flows from our own walk with Christ and a willingness to come to Him even when we sin. We come to One who deals gently with us. So today, maybe need to confess; maybe we need courage to confess and repent to someone we've hurt; maybe need to ask for strength to deal gently with others; maybe we need to confess our lack of growth and need to take our spiritual and character formation more seriously. But let us come to Christ now.