

Prayer:

4:11-13: be diligent to grow in your relationship with God

4:14-16: Our High Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses

5:1-3: the imperfect High Priest had to make a sacrifice for his own sin

Background: The preacher has been writing about staying the course as Christians. He has been challenging the people not to give up, but instead to strive to enter the rest. He has used Psalm 95:7-11 which was referencing Numbers 14 when the people rebelled because of lack of faith. Rest is not only sleeping but resting in the will of God. We can rest knowing that we have salvation in Jesus and trusting that He has our best interest in mind.

Verse by verse observations:

4:11-13: be diligent to grow in your relationship with God

Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

- This passage starts with a “therefore.” The passage is looking back to what he has been writing about.
 - Not to fall away as the Hebrew people did in the Old Testament
- He uses the word “diligent” to describe how we should act in order to enter the rest.
- We are to do this so that no one will fall. The example is still given of the rebellion in the O.T.
- Those people were described as an example of disobedience
 - →who wants to be described that way? We don’t want to be described as disobedient, nor an example that way. We can learn from other people’s examples
- Verses 12-13 are an amazing passage describing the Word of God. The Word of God is described with an image of a sword.
 - →Interesting that this is placed here, except maybe that God’s Word knows whether we are rebelling or not.
 - The Word of God is:
 - Living an active

- Sharper than any two edged sword
- It can pierce the soul and spirit (as far as the division of soul and spirit: this implies this is deep)
 - I think the idea is separating the soul from the spirit which would mean the soul is different from the spirit. This would be interesting since the soul idea comes from Greek thought and I have read Christian psychological/philosophical documents making the case the soul and the spirit are the same thing.
 - John MacArthur believes this is not meaning to separate entities but fullness like “heart and soul.”
- Of both joints and marrow (the idea is still the division of both joints and marrow)
- Able to judge the thoughts of the heart
- Able to judge the intentions of the heart
 - →This is all amazing. Scripture, and church tradition, affirms that Scripture is the Word of God. This means that Scripture can split our soul and spirit, joints and marrow, etc. Sometimes it will hurt to read and study Scripture but we are being fixed up by God.
 - →sometimes it really hurts to have doctors do surgery, example a tonsillectomy really hurts, yet it is for the good. So is our study and reading of Scripture.
- Jer 23:29; Eph 5:26; Heb 6:5; 1 Pet 1:23: verses on the Word of God
- Verse 13 is very much a continuation of verse 12. There is nothing hidden. Nothing.
 - →I can think of times when I was a kid and wanted to cover up things I did. But how many times would I want to cover up something from life? I wish I didn’t think that... I wish I didn’t say that... I wish I didn’t look at that... I wish... I wish... But we cannot. Once it is done, it is done and God sees it all. Nothing is hidden.
 - →This applies to the previous section as the author is challenging them to not rebel, but stay the course. Whether we stay the course or not God still sees what we have done; however, God sees us through Christ as Christians.
- We also must give account to God.

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

The Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo spoke of the power of the universal, divine “Word” (the Logos, divine reason that permeated the universe) to subdivide the soul into smaller and smaller units, especially into its rational and irrational components; but he sometimes

Philo *Philo. A first-century Jewish philosopher committed to both Judaism and Greek thought; he lived in Alexandria, Egypt, and held a position of great influence and prestige in the Jewish community there.

identified spirit and soul, as the New Testament writers usually do. The point here is not an analysis of human nature, but that the Word searches the heart in such detail that it is like a sharp sword that divides even what is virtually (but not absolutely) indivisible, whether soul and spirit or joints and marrow.¹

4:14-16: Our High Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Now, it is interesting that the preacher moves to now write about our high priest
 - But it makes perfect sense. We are all bare before the Lord, He sees all our imperfections but we have a High Priest. The High Priest makes atonement for us and also sympathizes with us.
- We have a great High Priest
 - Our High priest is worthy
- He is Jesus Christ
- He passed through the heavens--- this should be important considering our needs.
- So let us hold to our teaching. This has the idea of chapter 3—stay the course

Verses about the High Priest: Heb 6:20; 8:1; 9:24

- Verse 15 makes it clear that Jesus can sympathize with us. He was tempted in all things as we are
 - This may not mean every single sin, but categories of sin: lust, greed, pride, etc
- He was tempted and He didn't sin (2 Cor 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us...)
- Verse 16: let's draw to the "throne of grace," draw to Jesus with confidence, why? Because He understands us, He has been where we are.
 - We can receive mercy, and grace
 - For the time of need
 - →this fits in context. The Hebrew people are being encouraged to persevere and Jesus can help
- Psalm 110:4 is referred to. Jesus a better High Priest than Aaron. Psalm 110:4 was used in chapter 1 as well.

5:1-3: the imperfect High Priest had to make a sacrifice for his own sin

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; ² he can deal gently with the ignorant

¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 4:12). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;³ and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.

- This seems to be an overview of the appointment of a high priest. Notice the repetition of “among men.” This is about a high priest who is only human and not God.
- Notice the contrasting element of men with God, “things pertaining to God.
- This high priest makes gifts and sacrifices
- High Priest comes from Ex 28:1
- Verse 2: the High Priest can be gentle because he has had problems too.
- Verse 3: because of his weaknesses he must offer sacrifices for the people and himself.
- Lev 9:7 and 16:6
- These ideas are repeated through Hebrews

ESV Study Bible:

[Heb. 5:1–4](#) He can deal gently ([v. 2](#)). High priests are human and understand human weakness ([vv. 1–2](#)); they present sacrifices for sins for others and for themselves ([vv. 1, 3](#)); and they are appointed by God ([v. 4](#); as were Aaron and his lineage, see e.g., [Ex. 28:1; 29:1–46](#); cf. [Heb. 7:11](#)). Jesus fulfills these high priestly criteria ([5:5–10](#)), except that he is the perfect high priest since he is without sin ([4:15](#)) and therefore does not need to present a sacrifice for himself ([7:26–28](#)).