



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

Jesus is the Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14-5:10

June 10, 2018

1. **Lesson Starter:**

What is God's process and way for us as Christians to feel "fresh and replenished" both spiritually and physically? What time or state is God addressing when he mentions "Enter into my rest", what does that mean specifically? Verses 4:12 is one of the most well known in the bible, we will look at the "sharper than a double edged sword" scripture and see what it is addressing. We will also visit our old friend Melchizedek and find out what this has to do with Jesus being our High Priest? A power packed set of scriptures for one lesson with many different truths we will try and spotlight.

2. **The Appointed Day 4:4-8**

⁴ "For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works." ⁵ And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

⁶ Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." ⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

God made the Sabbath as a day of rest, a day to contemplate our Creator and the wonders of his creation. This marked the end of the original creation. The new age came when Christ broke the chains of sin and death by his resurrection, a new order. Spiritual values are to be held as our supreme allegiance, yet so many people who enjoy the new age use God's day of rest as a typical work or business day.

Going back into the Old Testament, Moses failed to bring "rest" to the people of Israel. Of course Joshua accomplished where Moses failed by bringing the Israelites into the promised land, their named place of rest. But it was quickly pointed out by the writer of Hebrews, that the land of Canaan was not the "ultimate destination" of rest for his people.

The writer speaks of God's final resting place as one of:

- Quietening of our fears
- Deliverance from our wanderings
- Place of security, forgiveness of sins
- Eternal relationship with our father God

3. **Our Final Rest and Word of Warning 4:9-4:13**

⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The deep spiritual and bodily kind of rest that God offers his people:

- Not inactivity in good and it is not total immobility
- Energy devoid of labor or worldly gain
- Devoid of suffering

- At peace to replenish and refill the body, soul and spirit;
- spiritual renewal
- Foretaste of heavenly rest and peace

God warns us to not let endless activities bring us to exhaustion. God's spiritual and physical rest allows us to see a glimpse of the clear light of God's righteous judgement and place of peace over all of our frenzied activities. God reminds us that "in the Lord, your labor is not in Vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). God reminds us that it was the disobedience of the Israelites that brought about their destruction. The unbelieving heart still prevents a person from entering into the "true spiritual rest of Canaan".

We have been given a clear word of warning that 1) God's word is living. The spirit of God conveys the living word to his people; 2) God's word is active. God's word is capable of doing what God intended; 3) God's word is piercing and penetratingly powerful. God sees clearly into every aspect of our soul and person. He sees the spirit. All physical and spiritual aspects are known and guided by our God.

We must remember that our every thought and intention are known by God. We are laid bare and open with all aspects of our lives stripped away. There is no masquerading, disguising or tricking our God.

4. **Nature of the High Priest 4:14-4:16**

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

While many would look at the "priesthood" as an ancient relic of Israel's religious system that passed out of being with the tabernacle and the Temple, we all need to remember the principle function of the priest was to hear confession of the sin.

Unconfessed sin weighs on our spirit like a heavy burden, sapping our energy and interferes in our ability to serve God. Unconfessed sin spreads and maligns our holy work and serving God. What a relief it is to be able to confess our sins and know that Jesus has removed them all!! We need our High Priest in Jesus Christ!

A perfect High Priest must:

- Be Great in nature
- Have full communication with God
- He must bring God to man and man to God
- In touch with God's nature

Jesus is this person. He is the son of God. He brings God himself to man. He has passed through the heavens by his resurrection and is highly exalted. While exalted, Jesus was tempted in every way that man does, He was like us in all ways except for sin. Notice the progression in these passages:

1. Terrifying picture of God's all seeing eye
2. Tender compassion of God our Maker and who walked our difficult road
3. His Throne of Grace offered freely to those who would accept

5. **Human and Moral Qualifications 5:1:5:10**

¹ Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³ This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ In the same way, 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." ⁶ And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." ⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Son though he was, 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 in the order of Melchizedek.

Our great High Priest deals gently with us, as ignorant and wayward people, those who sin because of our weakness of human nature. These are the only types of people whose sins were forgiven on the Day of Atonement. There were no pardons for the deliberate presumptuous sinners. The ritual of sacrifice in the Old Testament did not cover deliberate willful and proud sinners.

The genealogy of the priestly order was carefully preserved. There are no known records of Melchizedek. He did not according to common impression receive his priesthood from his earthly genealogy nor did he pass it on to his descendants. He was a priest, appointed in a special way from God. You may also remember that I taught a whole lesson on Melchizedek several years ago that you can go back and reference.

Jesus's moral discipline qualified himself to be the great High Priest:

- Qualified himself by his prayers
- Qualified himself by his agony and tears
- Qualified himself by faith in the One who was able to save
- Qualified himself by obedience and submission through suffering
- Designated by God as the eternal source of salvation

6. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Regarding "God's Appointed Day of Rest" described verses 4:4-8, discuss the following:
 - a. Think about times in your life when you did not adhere to God's guidance; Did you find yourself eventually being worn out with the world and physically?
 - b. How can we prevent ourselves from being worn out from our frenzied activities and listening to God on his day of rest?
2. When reading verses 4:9-11 concerning God's rest, can man have perfect rest on earth? Did God structure "rest" so that we will not have perfect rest until we can rest together?
3. Read verses 4:12-13 and discuss its meaning with respect to these areas:
 - a. God's word is alive
 - b. Penetrating nature to the soul and spirit
 - c. Judges the heart
4. What is the significance in Vs 6 of "The order of the Melchizedek"?
5. Why is it important to reference and Jesus as our High Priest?