

## HEB 4:15-5:10—THE DIFFERENCE OF JESUS

**INTRO:** All of us have deep, innate needs. And we're all looking to satisfy them. As a result, at some level, in different ways, and at different times in our lives, most people try to connect with what they hope is "something more" compared to their compared to our day-to-day lives—even a deeper, spiritual reality.

Our search for something more, for a deeper spiritual reality, is not by accident. C. S. Lewis put it this way in his essay "The Weight of Glory": **"A man's physical hunger does not prove that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe . . . that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called falling in love occurred in a sexless world."**

People may try to find this deeper reality, this "something more," through drugs, or religion, or achievement, or love, or family, or all kinds of different things. But there is a problem. We all are born with these innate, instinctive desires; yet, oddly, this world never truly, completely, or permanently satisfies those desires. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis puts it like this: **"Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise. The longings which arise in us when we first fall in love, or first think of some foreign country, or first take up some subject that excites us, are longings which no marriage, no travel, no learning, can really satisfy. I am not now speaking of what would be ordinarily called unsuccessful marriages, or holidays, or learned careers. I am speaking of the best possible ones. There was something we grasped at, in that first moment of longing, which just fades away in the reality. I think everyone knows what I mean. The wife may be a good wife, and the hotels and scenery may have been excellent, and chemistry may be a very interesting job: but something has evaded us."** Many years ago Peggy Lee captured the fact that ultimate fulfillment always eludes us in a hit song she had called "Is That All There Is?" (You can listen to it on YouTube.)

Why is this important? To a large degree, this fact—that we all have these innate desires that even the best things of this world never can truly, completely, or permanently satisfy—is what leads to religion. Religion is mankind's attempt to find that true, complete, permanent satisfaction that even the best things of this world never quite give us.

There are lots of different religions in the world: Christianity; Buddhism; Islam; Hinduism; Judaism; traditional tribal religions; new age spiritual endeavors; even atheism (I include atheism because atheism is a worldview that tries to make comprehensive sense of reality, just like any other religion). But even though there are many different religions, there are only two *kinds* of religion in the world: Christianity and everything else. What do I mean? I mean that all religions except Christianity are fundamentally alike in the most basic way, namely, all other religions essentially say, "If you want to find ultimate fulfillment or satisfaction—whether in this world (in the case of atheism), or in nirvana (Eastern religions), or Paradise (Islam)—*it's up to you* to work hard enough, do enough good deeds, make enough sacrifices, or follow the proper rituals.

Christianity, alone among every religion and worldview, is fundamentally different. Christianity says, "If you want to find ultimate fulfillment and satisfaction, it's not what *you* do (because you can do nothing); rather, it's what Jesus has done *for* you. He will give you what you innately desire as a gift when you become connected with him by faith." It's that simple. Every other religion and worldview essentially says, like the old Smith-Barney commercial, "You've got to earn it." Christianity alone says, "You can't earn it; you'll never be good enough; but God knows that; so, in the person of Jesus Christ he did for us what we could never do for ourselves."

Today's passage of Scripture, **Heb 4:15-5:10**, talks about this and shows us why Jesus alone can meet our deepest needs, because no one else is like Jesus.

**O/S:** We will see this as we consider: (1) Jesus *knows* what we are going through (**4:15-16**); (2) He has the *power* to give us what we need (**5:1-6, 10**); (3) He has the *character* we can trust (**5:7-8**); (4) He has our *best interest* at heart (**5:9**). I will read each of these section-by-section as we come to them.

### **I. Jesus knows what we are going through (4:15-16—READ).**

**4:15** makes it very clear: Jesus knows exactly what we are going through. He sympathizes with us. Why? Because he has been there himself. He faced every temptation we face. Are you afraid of physical

problems? Jesus was tired, hungry, thirsty, a man of sorrows, who ended up shedding his blood in pain. Are you afraid of poverty? Jesus himself was poor. Are you afraid of losing family members? Jesus's own brothers didn't believe him and even thought he had lost his mind.

Whatever you are going through, Jesus has already been there. He knows. And **v.15** says that he *cares*—he *sympathizes*—with us. He knows what fear is: his sweating great drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane shows us that. So, whatever you are facing don't think that you are going through it alone. You're not.

Therefore, **v.16** tells us that we can **“draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.”** We are all in need. When things are going well, we tend to forget that, but then things change. These verses are telling us that we can approach Jesus—not hesitantly or with fear—but with *confidence*. And we will receive the grace we need to help us in our time of need. Jesus knows what our real need is. His answer, the grace he gives us, will be what we *need*.

## **II. Jesus has the power to give us what we need (5:1-6, 10—READ).**

**5:1-6, 10** show us that Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Let's take a look at this:

Jesus is the Son of God. **Heb 1** already praised Jesus as the Son of God who created the world. Now, **5:5** quotes from **Ps 2:7**. When it says, **“Today I have begotten you,”** that is not referring to when Jesus was created—because the Bible is clear that Jesus is uncreated, the eternal Son of God. **v.5** also is not referring to when Jesus was conceived in the virgin Mary and became a man. Instead, **Psalm 2**, which is being quoted here, is an inauguration psalm for the Israelite kings—the public declaration of kingship.

In Jesus' case, Ps. 2:7 refers to Jesus' inauguration as king of the universe at his resurrection and exaltation. The statement in **v.5** is the public announcement by God about the true identity and authority of Jesus. He is the Messiah, the savior, the true king of Israel and the world. This is confirmed by **Rom 1:4** which says that Jesus **“was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.”** And **Eph 1** tells us Jesus now reigns **“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”** No one else is like that.

These verses are telling us that Jesus Christ has all power in the entire universe. He has power over everyone and everything else. Therefore, do you think Jesus has the power to give you what you need in your circumstances? [YES] We can trust Jesus—he has the power to deal with *any* situation and to meet our deepest needs.

**5:6, 10** call Jesus **“a priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”** What is going on? **5:1-6** contrasts earthly priests with Jesus. Although there are some similarities between earthly priests and Jesus, **5:2-3** point out that earthly priests are **“beset with weakness”** and have to make sacrifices for their own sins as well as offering up sacrifices for the sins of the people.

Jesus is not like that. We already saw in **4:15** that, although he was tempted in all things just like us, Jesus never sinned. That qualified him to offer *himself* for *us* as the perfect, sinless lamb of God. Only Jesus could bear our sins and the punishment we deserve, to give us new life.

Who is this Melchizedek? Melchizedek is a mysterious character who appears in **Genesis 14**. He is called the king of Salem, which means “king of peace” in Hebrew. He is also called **“a priest of God Most High.”** In **Gen 14** he appears with bread and wine, and Abram tithes to him. **Heb 7:3** describes Melchizedek like this: **“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.”** That is a description of Jesus.

Why is this important? It is important because one role of a priest is to be an intercessor between God and people. But **“a priest according to the order of Melchizedek”** is not like an ordinary human priest. Therefore, **v.6** says that Jesus is a priest “forever.” **v. 7** tells us that God “hears” Jesus' prayers—IOW, God answers Jesus' prayers. This means that, if we are in Christ, Jesus “forever” is interceding for us and the Father “hears” his intercession.

Our outward circumstances sometimes may be bad, even very bad. Yet we have a security and a stability that we could never earn on our own, but a security and a stability that Jesus gives us *in* our circumstances. He gives us what we need to deal with our circumstances just as the Father gave Jesus the ability to bear the cross he had to face.

What have we seen so far? We have seen that Jesus knows what we are going through and cares about us because he went through the same kinds of trials himself. We have seen that Jesus has the power to give us what we need because he is king of the universe, and he has the ear of the Father because he is our great high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. But there is something else:

### III. Jesus has the *character* we can trust (5:7-8—READ).

When v.7 talks about Jesus' prayers and supplications, his loud crying and tears, that is primarily referring to Jesus' prayer to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed that the cup he was about to drink might be removed, yet he said, "not my will, but your will be done." In Gethsemane, Jesus knew what he was about to endure. It was not just physical suffering. It was separation from the Father, with whom he had been in perfect unity for all eternity. That separation is the essence of hell.

In v.8 the "obedience" of Jesus primarily is referring to what he went through on the cross. Jesus' cry from the cross, "**My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**" reveals his perfect obedience. Think of this, by definition hell lasts forever. Yet Jesus experienced millions of eternities in hell, all compressed onto him in the hours he spent on the cross. That is beyond my comprehension. On the cross, Jesus endured an infinity of suffering, yet he continued to obey the Father all the way to the end.

Why did he do that? He did it for you and for me—because he loves us. Jesus took onto himself all the hells of those for whom he died—because that's what it took to reconcile sinful humanity to a holy God. **Isa 53:11** tells us that "**as a result of the anguish of his soul, he will see it and be satisfied.**" What that means is: Jesus knew that, even though he was having to endure an *infinity* of suffering, it was all worth it. Why? Because then he would have us. Only Jesus has ever done anything like that. Anyone who would do that for me has the character we can trust all the way to the end.

v.8 also tells us that, even though Jesus was the Son of God, he still suffered, and he learned from that suffering. The book of Romans says that the whole purpose of our life is "**to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.**" Since that is true, because Jesus suffered, we can expect to suffer, too. Maybe you *will* lose a family member or a job, maybe you *will* have a serious medical problem. But you can know that whatever happens to you has first passed through the hands of Jesus. Just as Jesus "**learned obedience from the things which he suffered,**" so he is using the circumstances of our lives to conform us into his own image.

That is the most important thing—being conformed into his image. At the beginning today we talked about our deepest innate needs that even the best things of this world can never really satisfy. Why don't they? The answer is because we are not made primarily for this life and this world. We are made primarily for eternal life and the new heavens and new earth where we will be living forever. There we will be with him. We will see him as he is. And therefore we need to be like him—IOW conformed to his image. Until that happens, we can have security and peace now even in the difficult circumstances we face because we know he has the character we can trust, since he sacrificed everything he had for us.

But our passage reveals one final and important aspect of Jesus:

### IV. Jesus has our *best interest* at heart (5:9—READ). There are three things to note in this verse:

First, when it says that Jesus was "made perfect," that is not implying that he was sinful or defective. **Heb 4:15** has already told us that Jesus never sinned. Several times in the book of John Jesus says that he never even did anything on his own, but only did what the Father showed him. The Greek verb for "**made perfect**" here means, "**To complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal.**" That's what Jesus did by obeying the Father all the way to the end.

Second, it says that because Jesus obeyed the Father all the way to the end, he has become the source of eternal life. It is THAT which proves Jesus has our best interest at heart. Eternal life is not just living for a long, long time. No. Eternal life is a different type or quality of life. It is the life of Jesus himself. That's why the whole purpose of our life is "**to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.**"

You see, Jesus knows that we live a few years on this earth; we have good things happen to us and bad things happen to us. Then we die. But his plan is that we will live forever on a new glorious earth in new glorious bodies with no more pain, suffering, or death. That's why he took all our suffering onto himself, so that we will experience all the joy that he has—and we will experience it forever.

A life like that is greater and more wonderful than anything else imaginable. We can begin to experience this new life now; we will fully experience it when Jesus returns and makes all things new. Everything he is doing is designed to prepare us for that wonderful day. We can trust Jesus because he has our best interest at heart—not just our best interest now, but our best interest for the next ten thousand, million, billion, trillion, zillion years!

The third thing to note in v.9 is that Jesus is the source of eternal life "to all those who obey him." Jesus said in **John 14:21**, "**He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me.**" What we do *because we love Jesus* is the outward and visible sign that we are, in fact, united to him through faith. Do you really love Jesus? He loves you, and he proved it by what he did on the cross. Do you really trust Jesus? He has proved himself worthy of your trust. We show Jesus that we love and trust him by how we live our lives.

**PROP:** All of this is telling us that: **Jesus alone can meet our deepest needs—because no one else is like Jesus.**

**APPLIC:** So what do we do about this? I would say two things:

- First, for those of you who are not yet connected to Jesus by faith—get connected. Come to him. Jesus is unlike anyone else who has ever lived. Yes, he was a man—a real human being. But he was more than only a man. He was God come to earth as a man. And while he was on earth Jesus basically said, “I will prove to you that I am more than just a man by doing something that anyone who is only a man could never do, namely, they will kill me, and bury me, and I will rise bodily from the grave.” He did that. His rising from the grave validates who he is and everything he said. If this is an issue for you, I summarize the historical and factual evidence for Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection in my book *Christianity & Islam: Theological Essentials*, which is on the “ECLEA Courses & Resources” page of the ECLEA website: [www.eclea.net](http://www.eclea.net).

If you understand this, then cross the line. Admit that you can’t save yourself no matter how hard you try. Only Jesus can save you. And he did it by taking your sin, your guilt, and the punishment for your moral failures onto himself and paying the price that otherwise you would have to pay but never could. But he also gives to you all the honor, all the good, that *he* is due. He takes your bad and gives you his good. It’s that simple. No other religion, or worldview, or religious holy person has ever claimed to do that or could do that. Only Jesus can do that, because no one else is like Jesus. Come to him.

- If you have already done that, then as v.9 says, “obey him.” To call Jesus our “Lord” means we do what he says. To be conformed to his image means that we start thinking like him and acting like him. He enables us to do this because he said, “I won’t leave you as orphans but will send the HS who will come and live inside of you.” The HS works in us, puts thoughts in our mind, convicts us when we do wrong, and strengthens us to do right. If you know of something you need to do, then do it. If you know of something you need to change in your life, then make that change. The HS will enable you to do it.

How this looks will be different for each of us, because each of us is in our own individual circumstances. Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. IOW, we are to help preserve people and give taste—a foretaste of heaven—like salt; and we are to be seen, like light. Remember, the only Christian your neighbors and co-workers may ever encounter is you. We are to show love to them in practical ways because Jesus loved us in practical ways.

**CONCL:** Jesus knows our deepest needs and desires, because he programmed them into us when he created us. He alone can meet and satisfy our deepest needs and desires because he *knows* what our needs are; he alone has the *power* to give us what we need; he has the *character* we can trust; and he has our *best interest* at heart. So trust him. Follow him. Obey him. Let him work his will out in your life with confidence and hope. If you do, you will be transformed, people will recognize it, and they will be drawn to Jesus and to the new life he brings because they will have seen him in you.