

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 5:5-6

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Hebrews chapter 5, verses 5 and 6.

Aaron was the first high priest among the Israelites in the Old Testament. In Hebrews 5:1-4, seven qualifications of Aaron are listed, which enabled him to fulfill his role as a high priest—to bring God's grace to the people and to minister them before God. These seven qualifications are:

1. He must be a man and live among the people.
2. He must be a mediator between God and man.
3. He must offer gifts and sacrifices to God for the sins of the people.
4. He must be able to sympathize with the ignorant and those who go astray.
5. He must have experienced weakness and suffering.
6. He must be qualified to offer sacrifices for the people's atonement.
7. He must be called by God to be an honored high priest and not take the position upon himself.

Yesterday, we also discussed that Jesus Christ possesses all these qualifications and even more perfectly. Since Aaron was human and lived in weakness, he inevitably sinned. Therefore, he had to first offer sacrifices for himself to atone for his own sins before he could offer sacrifices for the people. However, Jesus, being the Word made flesh and taking on humanity, lived a perfect human life on earth and never sinned. Therefore, Christ is even more qualified to be the High Priest.

In the New Testament, every believer has also been called to be a royal priest. We should learn from Jesus Christ and apply this to our church life today so that the priestly ministry may grow within us.

The author of Hebrews first presents Aaron's qualifications as a high priest to help us see that Jesus Christ possesses all these qualifications. Then, from verses 5 to 10, the author emphasizes some unique qualifications of Jesus Christ that Aaron did not have, demonstrating that Jesus Christ, as the High Priest, is far superior to Aaron.

Psalms 110:4 states, "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" The Israelites were very familiar with the priestly system according to the order of Aaron, which God established through Moses and recorded in Leviticus. We are also well acquainted with Aaron's priesthood.

However, without the book of Hebrews, we would not understand what the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek truly means. The priesthood of Melchizedek is mentioned three times in this chapter, once in chapter 6, and then explained in great detail in chapter 7. Therefore, when speaking of Jesus Christ's priesthood, the author of Hebrews focuses on the order of Melchizedek and proves that this order is superior to the order of Aaron.

In Hebrews 5:5-10, the author explains how Christ became a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. It is precisely because Christ went through these processes that God declared Him to be a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, making Christ the source of our eternal salvation.

Then, from 5:11 to 6:20, the author, following his usual pattern, includes a section of warning and exhortation, encouraging the Hebrew believers—and of course, us as New Testament believers today—to set our hearts on maturing to full growth so that we do not fall short of the ministry of our High Priest in our lives.

Chapter 7 then describes how Christ, today in heaven, serves as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, including many aspects of His ongoing ministry.

Hebrews 5:5-10, which explains how Christ became a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, can be divided into two parts: The first part (verses 5 and 6) tells us when Christ became the High Priest and why it is according to the order of Melchizedek. The second part (verses 7 to 10) describes the process Christ went through in His humanity, enabling Him to become the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Today, we will only read the first part, which includes verses 5 and 6.

Verse 5: "So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'"

The previous verse mentioned that Aaron, as a High Priest, was full of honor, but he did not take it upon himself; rather, he was called by God. This verse then brings out that Christ also did not glorify Himself to become High Priest. We must appreciate the precision of the wording used by the author of Hebrews.

First, the author does not say "He is Jesus" but refers to Him as Christ. "Jesus" emphasizes His humanity, the name He bore on earth as a man; "Christ" refers to His office, the name He was given when He was anointed by God to fulfill His role. Since He was anointed by God, this also highlights that He did not take it upon Himself but was chosen, called, and appointed by God.

Second, when the author speaks of Aaron's priesthood, he describes it as being full of honor, which refers to the dignity associated with his position. If he were to lose this position, he would also lose the honor. However, when the author speaks of Christ's office, he describes it as being full of glory. Glory is the manifestation of God, the expression that comes forth from the richness and maturity of life; thus, it is connected to life itself.

Next, the author tells us when Christ became the glorious High Priest. When exactly did God appoint Christ as High Priest? The author quotes Psalm 2:7, "The Anointed One says: 'I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You."'" Here, God the Father says to Christ, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." We know that in eternity, Christ was already the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Since eternity has neither a beginning nor an end, how can there be a statement such as "Today I have begotten You"?

Paul provides an explanation in Acts 13:33, "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'" Paul clearly connects Christ's resurrection to the statement in Psalm 2:7, "Today I have begotten You." It turns out that the "today" spoken of by God the Father refers to the day of Christ's resurrection. In other words, Jesus Christ's humanity had to go through the process of death and resurrection in order to be elevated and declared by the Father as the Son of God. This is the process of humanity entering into divinity.

However, the author of Hebrews takes this understanding a step further, going beyond even Paul's insight. Paul saw that resurrection was a divine birth, which is why he says in Romans 1:4, "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The author of Hebrews states that this was also the moment when Christ was anointed and appointed as the High Priest. If Jesus Christ were only the Son of God, He could not be a High Priest, because the first qualification for a High Priest is that he must be a man and live among the people. If Jesus Christ were only the Son of Man, then when He was crucified, He could not have resurrected, and He could not have been anointed as High Priest after His resurrection. Therefore, Jesus Christ had to be 100% the Son of Man and 100% the Son of God in order to be exalted as the Son of the Father after His death and resurrection and anointed by the Father as the High Priest.

Because He passed through death and overcame death, He destroyed the devil, who had the power of death, and was able to release those who, through fear of death, were subject to lifelong bondage. Not only did He give them eternal life,

overcoming death, but He also became their High Priest, supplying them with the power of His resurrection to help them live a victorious life. As Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." The Christian life should be victorious and glorious, bearing witness to Christ everywhere and spreading the heavenly fragrance of His presence.

Verse 6: "As He also says in another place: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

Aaron's priesthood was to help people offer bulls and sheep as sacrifices, temporarily covering sins and the problems brought by sin. Aaron's priesthood could not remove sin, nor could it surpass the consequence of sin, which is death. Therefore, priests in the order of Aaron had to continuously offer sacrifices until they died, after which the priesthood was passed on to the next high priest.

However, Jesus Christ was established as High Priest only after He was resurrected from the dead. He has already conquered death, and He does not need to offer sacrifices for the sins of the New Testament believers, because He has already offered Himself once for all as a sacrifice, forever removing the barrier of sin. Moreover, since He has risen from the dead and triumphed over the power of death, Jesus Christ's priesthood is completely different from Aaron's.

The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 110:4, which states, "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" The Father declares that Christ is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. It is easy to understand why He is a priest forever—because Jesus Christ has conquered death, His humanity has been exalted, and He has been revealed as the Son of God. Since He is the Son of God, He lives forever; therefore, He is a priest forever.

Next, why is He a priest according to the order of Melchizedek? What is the difference between Melchizedek and Aaron? In Hebrews 7, the author will discuss

in more detail the relationship between Melchizedek and Aaron. But in chapter 5, he briefly introduces the greatest and most fundamental difference between these two priesthoods—something that many believers today often overlook. Just because something is of great significance does not mean it will not be overlooked. Remember, in Hebrews 2:3, the author points out that such a great salvation is still frequently neglected. That is why, in chapter 5, he emphasizes that Jesus Christ is a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, prompting us to reflect on the differences between these two priesthoods.

To understand the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek, we must first examine who Melchizedek was. No one knows Melchizedek's background. Hebrews 7:3 says, "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God." He is a very mysterious figure, and the Bible says he is like the Son of God. Since he is like the Son of God, it means he is not the Son of God. God seems to have deliberately concealed certain details, making it impossible for people to fully comprehend. This teaches us humility—we must not assume we know everything.

If we want to understand what God wants us to know about Melchizedek, we must return to the first mention of Melchizedek in the Bible, which is in Genesis 14. Lot, because he lived in Sodom, was caught up in a war between four kings and five kings. In that war, the king of Sodom was defeated, and because Lot lived in Sodom, he was taken captive. When Abraham learned about this, he immediately led 318 trained men to rescue him.

When Abraham recovered the captives and possessions, Genesis 14:18-20 records, "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.'" This is the first appearance of Melchizedek in the Bible. Here, he is introduced as the king of Salem. "Salem" means peace, so he is the king of peace. The meaning of the name Melchizedek is "king of righteousness." Thus, Melchizedek is both the king of righteousness and the king of peace, and he is also the priest of God Most High. When Abraham returned victorious,

Melchizedek came out to meet him, bringing bread and wine to supply him, and he blessed Abraham.

Now, let us recall that Aaron's priesthood was about offering bulls and sheep as sacrifices to cover sins and the problems caused by sin, allowing people to be accepted by God. This was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. However, since Melchizedek is the king of righteousness, this signifies that the issue of sin has already been dealt with, and that man has already been justified by God. As the king of peace, he not only has been justified by God but has also been accepted by God, achieving peace between man and God. This means that the work of Aaron's priesthood has already been completed, and only after that does the priesthood of Melchizedek come into play.

Melchizedek brought bread and wine to supply the victorious Abraham and blessed him, foreshadowing how Jesus Christ, having completed the work of redemption, no longer needs to offer sacrifices but now supplies the saints with bread and wine.

The ministry of Melchizedek is the same as what Jesus established in Matthew 26:26-29 with the breaking of bread and drinking of the cup: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'"

This was the Lord's table that Jesus established in advance after He and His disciples had finished the Passover feast, and He instructed the disciples to continue to remember Him after His resurrection and ascension.

Paul conveyed this command of Jesus to all the saints of the New Covenant in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, stating what must be done: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

Thus, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ has already completed the great work of redemption, and Aaron's priestly ministry has been replaced. Now it is the priesthood of Melchizedek, which supplies the saints with bread and wine—this is precisely the high priestly role of Jesus Christ in heaven today.

Dear brothers and sisters, may we all see this truth. The priesthood of Christ is completely different from that of Aaron—not only different but far more superior. What Aaron ministered has already been fulfilled by Jesus during His earthly ministry. Today, grace has already been given to us, and we only need to partake of it.

Christ has now ascended into the heavens and fulfills His role as the great High Priest there. He supplies the saints with bread and wine. The bread is His body, which was broken for the saints, becoming their spiritual nourishment so that they may grow in life. This spiritual nourishment is the very words spoken by the Lord, for His words are spirit and life. The wine is the new covenant established by His blood. The work of redemption has been completed, and the new covenant has been established.

In the new covenant, Jesus Christ is the true vine, and we are the branches. As long as we abide in Christ, we will bear much fruit. In this process, the High Priest supplies us with wine. Wine is the essence of the life of the vine—it empowers us in our daily lives, fills us with joy in service, and brings forth glory in our praises, because Christ has accomplished everything. He is our great High Priest, who has ascended in glory. As Hebrews 4:16 states: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." With such a great High Priest, how can we not rise up and run after Him?

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, thank You. You have ascended to the heavens and become our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Today, You

supply us with bread and wine, just as every Lord's Day when we gather in Your house and break bread with the saints, drinking the cup together—this is Your high priestly ministry. Today in the church, we are nourished spiritually as we remember You. Help us grow in life, recognizing that we are in the new covenant, and that as long as we abide in You, we will bear much fruit. Help every saint who has received grace and salvation not to remain only at the experience of the forgiveness of sins, but to continue following our High Priest forward—growing in life through eating the bread, and bearing much fruit through drinking the cup. May our church life be worthy of the grace we have received. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.