

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Sermon Title: Jesus Christ's Work for Us Should Move Us Toward Maturity,  
Hebrews 5

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**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 5:1-4 <sup>1</sup>*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. <sup>2</sup>He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. <sup>3</sup>This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. <sup>4</sup>And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.*

**INTRODUCTION:** I've talked a lot about the priests of the Bible, so I'll not go into all that again. Since the priest was a sinner, he dealt carefully with those who sinned. And, so it is today. Let us be careful in our dealing with others—not only I, as a pastor, but you, as a believer.

Today we are going to look at why Jesus Christ's work for us should move us toward maturity, and I have two main points:

1. Jesus is our Sacrifice, our High Priest, and our King.
2. Hebrews warns us about not growing as believers.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 5:5 <sup>5</sup>*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."*

**EXPLANATION:** The priests were chosen by God, not self-appointed.

**First, JESUS IS OUR SACRIFICE, OUR HIGH PRIEST, AND OUR KING.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 5:6 <sup>6</sup>*And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."*

**EXPLANATION:** Two things make Jesus' priesthood unique and greater.

1. Forever—all priests in the Bible eventually died. Jesus is alive today and serves as our high priest.
2. Different order—Priests were from the tribe of Levi. Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah.

This scripture makes reference to Melchizedek, who too many people is an archetype or a representation of Christ in the Old Testament. Melchizedek is only mentioned two other times in the Bible—in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. What is unusual is: he was a priest and a king. Another king named Uzziah also wanted to be a priest, but God didn't allow it to happen. Melchizedek was a priest and a king before the Law of Moses, and now, here is Jesus, who is both a priest and a king after the Law of Moses.

While on earth, Jesus could not be our high priest because he was not a Levite, but now he has three roles:

1. He is Jesus, Atoner of our Sins.
2. He is King Jesus, King of kings.
3. He is High Priest Jesus, interceding on our behalf.

Now, I want you to get the importance of this. The Old Testament priests sacrificed an animal on behalf of the people. They were not the sacrifice themselves. Jesus was the sacrifice for our sins and is now the sacrifice, the High Priest, and the King.

**APPLICATION:** Do you get it? Jesus is our Sacrifice, our High Priest, and our King.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 5:7-10 <sup>7</sup> *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.* <sup>8</sup> *So though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered* <sup>9</sup> *and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him* <sup>10</sup> *and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Listen as I read the prayers of Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 22:41-44 <sup>41</sup>*He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." <sup>43</sup>An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup>And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 23:34 <sup>34</sup>*Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

**SCRIPTURE:** John 11:41-42 <sup>41</sup>*So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."*

**SCRIPTURE:** John 12:27-28 <sup>27</sup>*"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

So as verse 7 says, Jesus agonized in prayer.

### **Third, HEBREWS WARNS US ABOUT NOT GROWING AS BELIEVERS.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 5:11-14 <sup>11</sup>*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. <sup>12</sup>In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup>Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

**EXPLANATION:** This image here is clear. Babies need milk, because a baby cannot eat vegetables, fruit, or meat. But, eventually a baby can.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I am the oldest of five kids. I remember when my brothers and sisters tried foods for the first time. My mom was a practical mom, and she ignored a lot of Dr. Spock's writings. She had a friend who had a baby, and the baby cried all the time. My mom told the mother the baby was hungry for something other than milk, and she was right. They gave the baby some food, and it was satisfied.

**APPLICATION:** I think the comparison to Christians is very similar. A new believer needs the milk of the Word. New believers are bottle fed, meaning someone does all the teaching. Eventually, a new believer holds his own bottle and feeds himself.

At some point, a new believer is spoon fed solid food, and then later a new believer should feed himself.

Look in verse 12: *By this time you ought to be teachers...* The words in Hebrews assume new believers will eventually become teachers. Really, a church as old as this one and with Christians as mature as this should be overrun with teachers.

So, the summary of this is: when you are born, others are responsible for your nutrition, but as you age, you become responsible for your own nutrition.

Warren Wiersbe, a Christian commentator, points out marks of spiritual immaturity:

1. Dullness toward the Word.
2. Inability to share. By this, he means inability to help others grow.
3. A baby food diet.

**Let me be the first to say we've dropped the ball.** I've never been in a church which had an ongoing new Christian's class. Our model is for new Christians just to jump in with everyone else and hope they learn.

I often thought it would be good to move believers through a series of teaching, along with tests to determine comprehension. I've done this over the last year and a half, but not in a formal way, where a person's attendance is logged and they can make up what they missed.

**For those who've been here** on Sunday mornings and nights and on Wednesday nights, I've taught the basics of the Bible—the key elements of the Christian faith, how we got the Bible, and how to interpret the Bible. I've taught about the Old Testament, what it means, and how it relates to the New Testament. I've taught about the New Testament, what it means, and how it relates to us today. I've taught through several books of the Bible. I also spent quite a bit of time reviewing Baptist distinctives, such as the Priesthood of All Believers, Believers' Baptism by Immersion, and so on.

**Now, if you have responsibilities** in the church and therefore, not been able to attend all these lessons, then I assume you know them. If not, maybe you need to take a break and come back to the teaching, returning to the milk of the Word.

What I have not done is jump around all over the place, preaching random things. And, I have not preached to you the latest feel good sermons from TV and best seller books. If you want that, you can turn on the TV or read a book.

The reason I have done what I've done is because I want everyone to have the tools to feed yourself.

Terry Taylor and I had a discussion some months ago about people who think that only the senior pastor can meet their needs. Let me be clear with you. It is your responsibility to feed yourself.

**Let me say where else we've dropped the ball: church membership.** We are about to send a letter to all the inactive church members inviting them to return or letting us know their status if they are not going to return. I asked one of our administrative assistants to print a list of inactive members. It had thousands of names. And, there are many, many names with obsolete information. In other words, people have moved and changed their phone numbers and not even bothered to tell the church. This shows you how important their church membership is to them.

When someone joins this church, I expect them to become a productive member of the church. What I am not going to do is spend all my time chasing people down, begging them to return. I just don't have the time to do that.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I have a friend who is a pastor. He invited a man to church, and the man came. He saw the man in town during the following week and invited him to church again. The man came the next Sunday. The third Sunday, the man did not come. So, the pastor called him. The man said, “You didn’t invite me. If you invite me, I will come.” This man wanted a personal invitation from the pastor every single week.

**CALL TO ACTION:** We need to take a look at church membership. We just cannot go on packing the rolls with people who have absolutely no intention of moving beyond having their name on a membership list.

It is interesting to note growing churches are ones who have connected church membership with responsibility. In many churches, people must complete a new members’ class before they join—reviewing the basics of the faith and informing people what they are about to get into. This might be a smart thing, especially with this bunch!

**OK, so why have I delved into all this?** Because the teaching from Hebrews is clear: Christians are to mature and produce fruit.

There may be numerous reasons why a person does not produce fruit, but let’s not look at other people. Let’s look at ourselves.

Are you producing any fruit of being a Christian?

**Jesus Christ’s work for us should move us toward maturity.**

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Thanks to Judy Andrews and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

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