

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What does the word "poise" mean? Think of leaders from history or in athletics. Who stands out as someone who exhibited poise? Describe how. Is there someone in your workplace, club, on your team, in a friend group or in your family who comes to mind as one who demonstrates poise? What does that look like for them?

2. In Old Testament times, what was the role of the High Priest? (See historical context & Hebrews 5:1). In what ways does Jesus exercise the role of the Old Testament priest? In what way is Jesus' work radically different from the Old Testament High Priest (Hebrews 4:15, 5:1, 5:3, & 5:4)? How can Jesus' role as high priest impact how we live day to day, how we face difficulty or catastrophe?

3. As Christians, we want to apply the good news of Jesus' work to our lives (the Gospel). Being a Christian is not just about thinking rightly, it is about living rightly. Read Hebrews 4:16. What does it mean to "draw near" to God's throne? When can we draw near to God's throne (Hebrews 4:16)? Why should we draw near (Hebrews 4:16)? What can our attitude be in drawing near? What are synonyms for the word "confidence" (Hebrews 3:6, 10:19, 35)? How can the reality that through Christ we may with confidence draw near to the throne of grace inform how we live today?

4. Read Ephesians 2:4-10 & Hebrews 4:15. What does the phrase "hold fast" mean? What does "confession" mean in this context? What does this mean for daily living the Christian life? What are the verses from the Bible that you to cling to when you face life's battles? Is there someone who is facing a battle who needs Gospel encouragement?

Praise to Jesus - (Read Hebrews 4:14 -16.) Praise Jesus for he is the great high priest who passed through the heavens! Praise Jesus for our confession of our faith. Praise Jesus for the high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses, though he was tempted did not sin. He has broken sin's power over us so when we are tempted like Jesus we can say "No" to sin. Praise Jesus for the confidence which is ours as we draw near to the throne of grace. Praise Jesus that we can draw near to the throne of grace anytime and when we are wrecked and in desperate need.

Repentance through Jesus- Is there an area of your life that our Savior has already faced & overcome yet instead of relying on all the resources of heaven necessary to believe the Gospel as it applies to the battle, you turned in on yourself away from the battle in cowardice, or fear, or doubt, or self-condemnation? Maybe you played the victim, or responded in anger, or any number of ways (Read Hebrews 4:15-5:2). Confess this to the Lord, repent, leave the past behind, believe the Gospel and rely on the Word of God to face the next battle.

Consecration for Jesus - "There is nothing you will encounter today that your Savior hasn't already faced and overcome so that you would have all the resources of heaven necessary to believe the Gospel as it applies to the battle before you. Jesus' perfect work of representation and reconciliation is your divinely appointed impulse to stare down today's chaos and concerns with the eyes of hope as you walk onward with the feet of faith." - Pastor Bill

"A religion without doctrine or dogma is a thing which many are fond of talking of in the present day. It sounds very fine at first. It looks very pretty at a distance. But the moment we sit down to examine and consider it, we shall find it a simple impossibility. We might as well talk of a body without bones. No man will ever be anything or do anything in religion, unless he believes something...no one ever fights earnestly against the world, the flesh and the devil, unless he has engraven on his heart certain great principles which he believes deeply."

- J.C. Ryle

"Everyone will be forgotten, nothing we do will make any difference, and all good endeavors, even the best, will come to naught. Unless there is God. If the God of the Bible exists, and there is a True Reality beneath and behind this one, and this life is not the only life, then every good endeavor, even the simplest ones, pursued in response to God's calling, can matter forever."

- Tim Keller

“Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind.”

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. In Hebrews 4:14 we read that we are to “hold fast our confession” in order to persevere through life’s challenges. The author is pointing us back to our profession of faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

- a. Ask your children what it means to “hold fast” to something. Play a game with your children where they try to knock something out of your hands when you hold lightly onto something and another time when you hold tightly. Talk about the differences between these.
- b. Ask your children what it means to hold fast to our faith in Jesus.

2. Read Hebrews 4:15 and ask your children what this verse tells us about Jesus. This is an important verse in our understanding of Jesus since we learn that Jesus faced all kinds of temptation to sin yet did not sin.

- a. Talk with your children about how people can better teach us how to play a sport when they have played that sport. The same goes for a dance teacher or school teacher.
- b. Take time to praise God that He loved us enough to come down to earth and knows our struggles personally. Also praise Him for His victory over sin and how He empowers us in our battle with sin.

3. Now read Hebrews 4:16 and ask them what we learn from this verse. This is a glorious verse that shows the implication of Hebrews 4:15. Because of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension, then we are invited to “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace” through our faith in Him.

- a. Ask your children what it means to draw near to God.
- b. The end of this verse mentions our “time of need”. Talk with your children about how each of us will need God’s grace and mercy. Give your children examples of when you needed God’s grace and what you did.
- c. Pastor Bill mentioned the poise that our faith in Jesus gives us. Talk about this with your children.

Historical Context

A high priest in the Old Testament had various duties. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, he made sacrifice for the sins of God’s people. To do this the high priest would enter the holy of holies (the inner chamber of the temple) to meet with God and to make atonement for the sins of the people. Only a blood sacrifice could turn away God’s wrath from the people’s sin. After the high priest went into the holy of holies to meet with God to offer an atoning sacrifice, he would come out of the temple and bring God to the people. This usually took the form of a blessing. The priest would bring the richness of God’s fellowship back to the people.

Jesus’ role as high priest has two primary functions: to bring the people to God and to bring God to the people.

Big Idea

Because of the work of our perfect High Priest and Savior, Jesus, you can stare down today’s chaos and concerns with a Gospel poise knowing that all the resources of heaven are available to you for this battle.

Outline

1. The Work of our Perfect High Priest

2. Gospel Living

Scriptures for further study:

Psalm 2

Psalm 110

John 1:29

Romans 8:34

For more information on the Old Covenant Priesthood see:

Exodus 28:1

Leviticus 8-9, 16

1 Chronicles 15

Numbers 18

“GOSPEL POISE”

Hebrews 4:14-5:10 ESV

14 Since then 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 is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. **2** He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. **3** Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. **4** And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. **5** So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; **6** as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." **7** In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. **8** Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. **9** And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, **10** being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

4. Hebrews 5:1-11 talks about the difference between the Old Covenant High Priest and Jesus as the Great High Priest.

- a. Ask your children what they know about the role of the priests in the Old Covenant. The foundation of their office is God is telling His people that we must deal with our sin before we can be in fellowship with God.
- b. Ask your children what we see in Hebrews 5:1-10 as the differences between Jesus the Great High Priest and the Old Covenant High Priests. Make sure to talk about that all priests had to be human to mediate the sins of humans. Verses 2-3 point out that the Old Covenant priests were “beset with weakness” and had to make offering for their own sin. Remind your children about Hebrews 4:15 that tells us that Jesus was sinless. Verse 5 points out that Jesus is the Son of God and therefore a greater High Priest. Verse 6 points out that Jesus is an eternal High Priest unlike the Old Covenant High Priests that come from the family line of Aaron. We will study more about the meaning of Jesus being a priest in the order of Melchizedek in chapter 7.
- c. Make sure to talk about verses 7-10 that speak of Jesus’ suffering on our behalf as He worked as our Great High Priest and as the great sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. Who is our great high priest, and how did He come to humanity (4:14; compare 1:1-4)?
2. In what ways have you tried to represent yourself before God, rather than letting Jesus do that?
3. What should be our response to having a great high priest (4:14)?
4. What keeps you from being sure of your standing with God? How does this passage help?
5. Can our high priest “sympathize with our weakness” and understand our “temptations” (4:15)? (Luke 4:1-13 illustrates Hebrews 4:15 well).

Scriptures for further study:

Leviticus 23:26-32

James 1:22

Philippians 4:6

1 Timothy 1:14

Romans 4:19

Ephesians 2:4-10

Scriptures for further study:

Leviticus 23:26-32

6. How are you encouraged today by the fact that Jesus took on human flesh and suffered like us?

7. How can we “draw near to the throne of grace,” and what is the result of us doing so (Heb 4:16)?

**Some questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews for You by Micheal J. Kruger and Hebrews: How Jesus Speaks into Everything by John D. Barry*

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. These Christians were told to hold firmly to the faith they had professed (4:14). Have you ever considered making a profession of faith, and publicly declaring your belief in Jesus Christ as your Savior and the Son of God? Romans 10:9 says that if you profess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

2. Hebrews 4:15 makes an amazing claim: that God sympathizes with us in our every weakness because Jesus was fully man and experienced everything we experience (minus sin). One author (Hughes) writes that if you have two pianos in the same room and a note is struck on one, the same note will gently respond to the other. In the same way, because Christ was like us in every way, then our weaknesses truly resonate with him. Know that his heart resonates with yours. And he not only feels what you are going through, he is also able to help you in your time of need (4:16).

3. We are assured in Hebrews 4:16 that we may approach God with confidence, knowing that his throne room is essentially a place of grace. We can come to him without hesitation, or tentativeness. We can come to him with bold frankness, and openly pour out our hearts. What do you need now? What help are you seeking? He promises that you will find grace; that is, whatever grace is appropriate to this time and your circumstances. What are you waiting for? Approach him!

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God’s plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let’s begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina’s world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

4. We often think that because of our sin, God could never love us. But Hebrews 5:2 states that Jesus our high priest "deals gently" with us, no matter if our sins are sins of ignorance or sins in which we knowingly went astray. The important thing is that we are prepared to repent, which means to turn from sin and turn back to God.

5. The passage says that Jesus led a life of obedience to God (Hebrews 5:8). As Christians, we know that we are saved by Christ's obedience and by his grace alone. But having been saved, we are now called to live in obedience (as a result of, and evidence to, our salvation). As you grow in your relationship with the Lord, what is an area (or two) where you believe God wants you to be more obedient to him?

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

March 20, 2022
Hebrews 4:14-5:10