

**May 4. Read Hebrews 4:1-13.** What we read today continues the message repeated for the third time: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts'. The saving message of God's love is only effective when it meets with faith in our hearts. We must respond and that response is compared to entering God's rest. It is like God's rest on the seventh day because this is God's completed work of salvation. The way is now perfect. It is God's rest also because it is not by means of our own work or merit that we gain this salvation from God. The covenant Joshua inherited from Moses for the Hebrews required careful compliance and obedience to the law. And that required great effort and hard work. Through the Son now, our faith holds the word of God, believes it and lets it take control. And this word, like a sword, penetrates every area of our lives. God's word convicts us, drives us to be holy and gives us God's rest. It is not work to satisfy some obligation or earn some reward but it is not idleness either. Faith involves action. Salvation rests in the finished work of Christ. Commit yourself anew to read and study His word regularly. Ask God to apply His word thoroughly to your life.

**May 5. Read Hebrews 4:14–5:10.** When Jesus, the Son, was presented as greater than Moses (chapter 3), He was among other things described as high priest. Here the theme is taken up again and mentioned five times. A priest stands for us before God. His job is to act on our behalf so that we may find favor or approval before the Almighty. For this Jesus is supremely qualified. First, He is one of us, fully human. He knows our weaknesses and is able to deal gently with us. Yet He is perfect before God because he is without sin. Second, no priest appoints himself as priest. God appointed Christ for the job. If God has given him the role, have we any right to seek another? The danger the Hebrew Christians, to whom this letter was addressed, faced was that they might drift away (v 14). It was not easy to be different. The Jews probably found comfort in observing the practice of having a priest offer sacrifices for their sins. There was a pull for the Jewish Christians to follow what was, after all, a God ordained practice. The message here for us all is that there is no better priest than Jesus. Hold firm to the best. Do not let the 'good' keep you from the best. Let us approach the Throne of God with confidence – regularly, and often. Although Christ was the Son, He had to learn obedience through suffering. If we are God's children will He not also perfect us through suffering? If this has been our lot, let us count it all joy (James 1:3).

**May 6. Read Hebrews 5:11–6:12.** It is not good enough to just enter God's rest and remain at the entrance 'holding firm'. There is a journey to begin. We must grow from drinking milk to eating solid food. We need to understand what God's heart is like and all that He has done for us to reach maturity. When the mind and heart change, our behavior and habits become Christlike. The road to Christlikeness is through reading, meditating on and applying God's word to our life. But here is a word of caution: We need to leave behind arguments about repentance, baptism, the laying of hands and the resurrection as though we could come up with new ideas. Scripture is already clear on these things. Adding, subtracting or changing this foundation leads to a shipwreck of our faith. There is real danger in getting involved in any deviant new teaching. It is the rejection of the goodness of God, shown in the Son, Who is superior to all. Those who feed on solid food are able to distinguish good from evil. The family shares physical food together. Likewise the family should feed on spiritual food together. Together we can help each family member grow from drinking milk to eating solid food.

**May 7. Read Hebrews 6:13-20.** The writer of Hebrews now brings to the center of his letter, topics that will occupy the next four chapters of the epistle, before he closes with his final exhortations. He has presented the Son as superior and spelled out how essential it is we receive and pursue our faith. But can we be really sure we are right? There are 'two unchangeable things' we are told, 'in which it is impossible for God to lie'. They are not named in the next sentence, but if we read carefully asking what these are, we see they are:

- i) The oath (promise)
- ii) The blood of sacrifice (seal).

This passage is the beginning of the argument and we do not see yet how the oath, or blood of sacrifice, applies to Jesus but we are told here about the certainty of God's promises. He made a promise to Abraham and it was fulfilled. This was deep in the Hebrew soul. Even before there was the Law that came through Moses, the Hebrews had their origin in the promise to Abraham. About that they were sure. When we study the Scriptures, we too will be fully convinced that the God who made the Covenant with Abraham is, and always will be, trustworthy and faithful. It is upon the very nature of the God, who has revealed Himself and spoken by an oath that we can be and are sure. In Christ we have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure (v 19). Do we face skeptics and doubters who shake our faith? Identify these issues and seek the answer to give to 'everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have' (1 Peter 3:15).

**May 8. Read Hebrews 7:1-10.** Not being Hebrews and steeped in the Torah or Law we may find ourselves totally lost with this reference to Melchizedek. We are keen to go on and know more about being sure about our faith but instead run into this detour. We are taken back 2000 years before Jesus and told of how Abraham meets this 'king of righteousness' who was also priest of God Most High. He stood apart from Abraham and all the other kings who were on one side or the other in war. He blessed Abraham and received from him a ritually significant offering. Neither he nor his people are ever mentioned again. In Abraham's day there were no other priests of God. Israel's descendants who were to be priests were not yet born. Yet God planned this encounter to show that even the great Abraham needed a priestly mediator. In this passage, the meaning behind Melchizedek's appearance is not yet discussed but here is a priest unlike the sons of Levi, one mysteriously sent by God. There is a reference to him in Psalm 110, which is a prophetic psalm significantly referring to the Messiah as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. God always provides the means we need to go to him. Our minds cannot grasp the majesty of the immortal and invisible God, nor can we approach him acceptably. We need a mediator and no one fits the role better than Jesus to be our priest.

*Adapted from: <http://www.su.org.my>*