

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: Hebrews

Week of September 28 (Week 4)

Hebrews: Striving and Resting—Sabbath (4:1–5:14)



CHAPTER 4 & 5 SUMMARY

Hebrews 4 reminds believers of God's promises, the efficacy of his word, and the comforting reality of Jesus as our empathetic High Priest. As believers, we're encouraged to approach God with faith, obedience, and confidence, assured of his grace and mercy. Hebrews 5 offers us a profound truth about Jesus' divine yet relatable high priesthood. The chapter is a call to reflection upon Christ's unique role, His sacrifice, and his eternal priesthood. It's an encouragement to us all to grow spiritually, to mature in our faith, and to strive to grasp the "solid food" of divine teachings. (Bible Hub Summary).

SERMON DISCUSSION

Topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

OBSERVING AND APPLYING THE TEXT

Hebrews 4:1–11 is the second stage in the author's exhortations based on the quotation of Psalms 95:7b–11 in Hebrews 3:7b–11. This new stage of exhortation in Hebrews 4, while still including warnings (vv. 1-2, 11b), shifts the focus to the positive—a renewed opportunity.

1. What is the main idea of Hebrews 4:1–11? Read verses 1–11 carefully to find the word that is most repeated.

2. How is Hebrews 4:1 connected to the previous section (Heb. 3:16–19)? What is the exhortation of the writer of Hebrews in 4:1 and 4:11?

3. Why does the writer of Hebrews stress the idea of “rest” to his audience?

Reflection: “God has invited his people to join his ‘rest.’ While an earlier generation forfeited the promise of that rest because of unbelief and disobedience, Christians are now invited to enter into that rest, experiencing the ultimate salvation God has in store for those who believe.” (Douglas J. Moo, *Hebrews*. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 356).

4. Hebrews 4:12–13 provides a compelling addition to the challenge of 4:1–11. The word of God is presented as the means he uses to expose and judge “the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” What are the attributes/qualities of the word of God in Heb. 4:12?

5. In what ways does the disobedience of the Israelites provide a warning for us today?

6. How can you apply the concept of entering God's rest “today” in your daily life?

7. How have you known Heb. 4:12–13 to be true in your own experience?

Reflection: “Appropriately responding to God’s word is vital because God’s word is powerful and penetrating, laying open before God the deepest human impulses and emotions. The word of God and the God who speaks in that word are inseparable, so

it is ultimately God, the revealer of the heart, to whom we are accountable.” (Moo, *Hebrews*, 402).

The author of *Hebrews* devotes a lengthy section (4:14–9:14) to discussing the theme of the “high priest.” Basically, his argument is this: The Law of Moses had recognized and made provision for a high priest who could mediate between God and man. But the priesthood of Aaron had several weaknesses, and the writer shows that the high priesthood of Christ is of a superior kind. The question of what order of priesthood Christ belongs to leads the writer to discuss the superior order of Melchizedek (Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*. Tyndale NT Commentary, 212).

8. What is the keyword in Heb. 4:14–5:1-10, and what is the message that the writer of *Hebrews* is trying to get across in 4:14–16 and 5:1–10?
9. What comparisons did the author make in Heb. 5:1–6 between the Old Testament priesthood and the priesthood of Jesus?
10. How can understanding Jesus as our High Priest impact our daily actions and decisions?
11. How can the church help believers transition from spiritual “milk” to “solid food”?

Reflection: “Because believers are represented before God by a high priest who is nothing less than the Son of God and who has passed through the heavens themselves to accomplish his work, they can approach God with confidence. This confidence is bolstered by the realization that this exalted high priest has entered fully into our test and temptations and is thereby able to empathize with our own struggles.” (Moo, 421).

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

September 29-October 3, 2025

Read Hebrews 4 & 5

Monday: 4:1 & 11 “Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it . . . Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.” Thank God for the promise of rest and the peace it brings to our lives. Pray for a deepening of faith to fully enter and experience God's rest.

Tuesday 4:13 “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Ask God today to help you live each day with accountability and for his glory.

Wednesday: 4:14-16 “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. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness . . . Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, what we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Seek boldness to approach God's throne, trusting in Jesus' intercession on your behalf.

Thursday: 5:8 “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” Pray for the strength and willingness to follow Jesus' example of obedience, even in difficult times.

Friday: 5:14 “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” Ask God to instill in you a deep desire to grow in your faith and understanding of His Word.