

## “THE EARTHLY PRIEST”

### Hebrews 5:1-4

Message 1598

Every human being of any maturity asks this question, “How can I be at peace with my Creator?” Many have tried to find that way by following human leaders. But human leaders cannot lead you or anyone else to real peace with the Creator. Oh, there are hundreds of religions in the world, but as long as man tries his own way, he fails. The road is blocked. It is not possible for any person to find his own way to peace.

The question still comes, “How can I find peace with my Creator?” Only as God opens the way can peace be found. And, praise the Lord, my friend, He has opened the way. We need someone to stand for us and to stand by us. He is presented in Hebrews 5:1-4. Here is a word from the Lord how you can find peace.

- 1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*
- 2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*
- 3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*
- 4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

In order for a man to be an effective high priest for us, he needed to have certain **QUALITIES**. I want to meditate on those qualities found in Hebrews 5:1-4.

**THE QUALITY OF HUMANITY** is first mentioned in this text. The priest is expected to represent other human beings to God. Because of that he needed to be human. So it was in the time of Moses. Many years ago when God instructed him how to set up the priesthood, he chose one of the sons of Jacob by the name of Levi.

He established this particular family to be the family of priests. They were human just like their fellow human beings. This is what the text tells us, “taken from among men,” the quality of humanity.

The priest was to sacrifice for human sin, as God required it. God said without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. In other words, there needed to be sacrifices offered before God, the ones that He prescribed, the ones that He required. Every human being commits sin, so man needed some way for this sin offering to be offered, this sacrifice to be made.

This Scripture tells us that the priest was taken from among men and ordained for men in things pertaining to God. Thus the mediator, you see, was that person, that man who stood between sinning people and a holy God. He was called a mediator, one who stood between. And that quality is necessary in God’s plan, the quality of humanity. He needed to be like his brethren.

**THE QUALITY OF HARMONY** is important for an earthly priest. He was to be one who had compassion on the ignorant, to identify with those who do not know, and the wandering, those who are out of the way. These are most descriptive statements: The ignorant, those who do not know, and those who are

out of the way, the wandering persons. He is to identify with them because there are so many of them to whom He could minister.

Then he was called to sympathize because he himself was compassed with weaknesses, circled around with weakness. Being human he could understand how a person needed help, needed somebody to stand between him and God.

God did not choose an angel, as a mediator, because there would be no harmony there. Angels are of a different order of creation from human beings. So God didn't choose an angel as an earthly priest. And God did not choose a devil. No indeed. Because again there would be no harmony there. Now, while we do sin and come short of the glory of God, the devil could not represent us before God justly.

So then God chose a human being. In the Old Testament time of Moses, He chose the family of Jacob's son Levi. The first high priest so named was Aaron, in our text, "as Aaron was". He needed to have the experience and the quality of harmony, being like those to whom he was to minister.

**THE QUALITY OF HUMILITY** is the third quality necessary for a high priest. The earthly priest was not perfect, so he needed to offer sacrifices first for himself. The book of Leviticus in the Old Testament describes for us how the high priest went about making this sacrifice for himself, and then for the people. He understood that it was necessary for him to come into the presence of God properly.

Then, there was no self-glory in it, there was no self-seeking in it. No man reached out to take this honor to himself. But he was appointed; he was called of God. Aaron was that first high priest. He was appointed by the Lord.

This office carried a very sober responsibility, because here was a man, himself human, representing other human beings who like him were compassed with weaknesses. He was to stand before an all-holy God pleading the cause of sinning people. Do you understand? The quality of humility was important, for the earthly priest stood between sinful mankind and a holy God.

He needed to be sympathetic. He needed to understand that his fellow human beings were compassed with weaknesses just like he was. So to be an effective earthly priest the man chosen needed to possess these qualities: he needed to be human, he needed to be in harmony with his fellow human beings, and he needed to be humble. These are the qualities of an earthly priest.

The question is, where can such a man be found. Oh, we have a high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. Therefore, let us hold fast our profession. He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Are you trusting in Him?