

The Emotions of our High Priest

By Curtis Solomon

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Bible Text: Hebrews 4:14-5:10
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Well, I wasn't told until this morning that I was following after Dr. Wayne Mack who preached last week which I'm okay with that. Dr. Mack has been gracious. I use his notes modified through Stuart Scott and then threw myself to teach Methods of Biblical Counseling at Boyce College, but what I also was not told is that I was following the children's choir on Christmas. I'm not okay with that.

No, if you will, turn with me in your Bibles to Hebrews 4 and I'm going to read to you from the word of God. Then I'm going to pray and then we're going to open this up together. So Hebrews 4, starting in verse 14, and I'm going to read down through chapter 5, verse 10.

14 Therefore, since 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 cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2 he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3 and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"; 6 just as He says also in another passage, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Let's pray.

Dear heavenly Father, I thank you so much for this day. I thank you for this church. I thank you for the church that is gathering together today across the globe, sometimes in large buildings like this one or even larger, or sometimes in caves or forests or hidden away, but Lord, we are one in Christ. Lord, we thank you for the opportunity we have this season of the year to celebrate the birth of our Messiah, the one who was promised immediately following our first sin, who came, who lived a life, who died, was buried, and rose again, and is seated at the right hand, your right hand on the throne of glory, this same throne that we are here in this passage invited to enter into and make supplication before you boldly. So Lord, we come boldly this morning asking for great things, that you would open up your word to show us things that we have not seen before. Incline our hearts to your word, unify our minds so that we would not be distracted by the many things that could take our attention away from what you have to say to us today and, Lord, satisfy our hearts with the feast that we are about to enjoy and, Lord, satisfy us most of all with your Son, Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.

Well, thank you so much for the invitation to be here this morning to preach and open up the word of God to you. It has been a privilege and a blessing to be hosted by your church, to be hosted by a family within your church for the last couple of days. If you were here on Friday, thanks for braving Winter Storm 2017 in Atlanta, Georgia, which brought snow which was unexpected for I think all of us. We did have to cancel that PTSD training workshop part way through the day which you just trust those things in the Lord's hand and thank him for the extra nap, right?

No, it was a pleasure to be here and I found out that I am falling in love with Georgia. I've only been to Georgia a couple of times outside of the Atlanta airport, and two times were to go to the WinShape Retreat Center up in Rome, Georgia, which is where the BCC hosts our annual leadership summit. I was there this past week, but then I've been falling in love with Georgia, getting the white carpet rolled out before us this weekend.

It's been a pleasure and I really appreciate the common sense naming of streets around here. My family and I, I'm not that creative and I have passed that gene onto my boys. We name our animals things like Little Puppy, Big Puppy, Blue Puppy, that's a little creative, then we have Preppy Puppy because he wore a scarf. So I was really encouraged as I was driving through the roads, I thought, "I can fit in here," because you have Mall of Georgia Road, Peach Tree Road, and then I was intrigued by this thing called Sugarloaf. And so on Friday I shared this with people and I was wondering because I am a sweet tooth at heart, I mean, my teeth will fall out of my head before their time because I like sugar so much, so I was really intrigued to find out what a sugarloaf was but nobody knew so I had to do deep intensive research on Wikipedia and found out what a sugarloaf is. Does anybody know what a sugarloaf is? So I found this out, a sugarloaf is actually how sugar was sold prior to like 1850s, in the mid-nineteenth century, and before when molasses was refined into white sugar, it came out in this big huge cone and you would take what were called sugar nips, really powerful scissors, and you would just cut chunks

of sugar off of the sugarloaf. So maybe, I don't know somewhere down here in Georgia there used to be sugar mills but now you know. That's a sugarloaf and that has absolutely nothing to do with my sermon this morning but I just thought you needed to know that. So there you go.

Well, as Ty mentioned before, my name is Curtis Solomon and I have the privilege of being the Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition, and Ty shared a little bit with you about the BCC and so I'm not going to go into that. I'm going to spend more time with other things, but people often wonder what is the difference between all these different biblical counseling organizations. You guys are familiar with ACBC, others are more affiliated with CCF or IBCD or OIC or IABC, and on and on and on the list could go, and the BCC was created by those organizations to bring some maybe clarity to the confusion, but also some unity to the movement, and as Ty said, we're an umbrella organization which means that we are a place where they can come together out from under the storm, gather together and build relationships and build unity, and then through that unity really advance the biblical counseling movement globally. So it's a real privilege and honor to be able to lead this organization and as Ty mentioned, he and Jess were able to join us at our leadership summit this past week and it was a really sweet time.

On your seats or nearby, you should have received maybe one of these or one of these. If you didn't, there are some in the dining facility and I just encourage you to check out the BCC website. If you're a person, that website will be helpful to you because if you're a human being in this world, you suffer and you know people who are suffering or you have challenges, you have temptations, you have difficulties that come into life, and the BCC website because of the different people that are involved in our organization, we are able to offer thousands of free resources on our website to address all kinds of issues from abuse, to depression, to anxiety, self-harm, suicide, anything you can imagine, and if you go to our website which is biblicalcounselingcoalition.org or if you can't spell coalition like me, it's biblicalcc.org, there is a resources button and it will give you an alphabetized listing of all kinds of resources. So please, please, please take advantage of that for yourself, for those that you are ministering to, for hurting people that you know in the area. And if you're interested in finding out more about the BCC, you can sign up on our website. There is a place for you to fill out your information and get on our mailing list, or you can also fill out one of these cards. This tears in half. You take the picture with my family, you stick a magnet right there and you enjoy the view of my beautiful family and then pray for us and drop this other half in the little blue box that is on that table in the dining hall.

I did want to say thank you and also offer just as a thank you to your church, I want to give you all a set of our BCC trilogy. It's three books that were written by up to 36 different authors from the Biblical Counseling Coalition to address issues of biblical counseling. So, Ty, I just want to give these to you all. So thank you for your hospitality.

So as the Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition, you can imagine I think a lot about biblical counseling and this morning we're going to look at Hebrews 4:14 through

5:10 and we are going to zero in primarily on chapter 5, verse 7, and I want to address some issues related to biblical counseling in particular. Like I said, I think about these things a lot because of my role and also my passion for biblical counseling. Mel's dad is the reason I am a biblical counselor. Going to college I thought, "I want to be a pastor and I'll probably have to do some marriage counseling or something like that at some point," and so I took this class called "Marriage and Family Counseling" from Dr. Street and my eyes were opened and my life was changed from that point on because I realized that this book has a lot to say, has everything we need to say about all the trials and tribulations and difficulties and joys that this life will bring and how to handle them.

So my passion is to not only advance biblical counseling but to hone it and to make it more and more excellent as we deeply understand the word of God and how it relates to people, and there are a few things that I think that we sometimes in deficient biblical counseling, not well practiced biblical counseling but inadequate biblical counseling are tempted to do with emotions, and I want to show you a few implications from this text on how we need to improve in those areas. Just to give you a heads up, these are the three things that I want to address primarily. The first is that there is no such thing as a bad emotion. There is no such thing as a bad emotion. Another thing I want you to see is that our goal in biblical counseling is not to move people away from what we might think of as bad emotions. So if you think of sorrow, fear, anger, where you have kind of this division that we think these are good emotions and these are bad emotions, and so a lot of times we are tempted to make our goal in biblical counseling to stay away from these and move people from here, from sorrow and anger and fear, over to happiness and joy and peace. But I want to talk to you today and show you from this text and Scripture that that should not be our goal.

Then I also want to show you that because that's not our goal and because of what true biblical counseling is, just because somebody believes the right things and has the right doctrine and theology, doesn't mean they will always be happy. I think there is a misapplication of the texts that say, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice." And we oftentimes want to push people from grief to joy too quickly. So I want to think about that and I just want to lay that out there for you as we begin to open up Hebrews 5:7 and show you why because of the life of Jesus those things are not true.

But before we dive into that, I think it's important for us to understand a broader context of what's going on in the book of Hebrews. So Hebrews is centered around the theme of the supremacy and the primacy of Christ. Jesus is the best. If you were going to sum up Hebrews in one sentence, that is what it would be. So the author of Hebrews is unknown but he's writing to a group of believers who have trusted in Jesus Christ and they are coming out of a Jewish background. So they've been involved in synagogue life, they've been involved in temple worship, offering sacrifices to animals, they've been submitted under the Levitical priesthood, they've been hearing and studying the Torah, the five books of Moses, they have been learning from the law and the prophets. That's their background, that's their history and they are coming out of that and they have believed in Jesus Christ and they haven't completely abandoned the Old Testament, obviously, because it is still Scripture, but they have moved on and they have come to a saving faith

in Jesus but they are tempted to go back to what they used to do. They are tempted to move themselves back to a faith that is not a faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, by grace alone, through the word of God alone. They are tempted to add back in the law and the prophets and submitting ourselves to the sacrificial system and the priests of that day. Another way that you could put it is that Jesus is better. He is better than angels. He is the prophet who far outshines all of the Old Testament prophets. He is better than Moses. And the laying down of his life as the ultimate one-time sacrifice is better than all of the sacrifices in the entire sacrificial system that was laid out for and practiced by the Levitical priesthood. The writer of Hebrews is telling people, "Don't go back. Jesus is better."

So this section of Scripture that we're going to talk about talks about Jesus as the high priest and that concept was introduced earlier in chapter 2 and in chapter 3, but chapter 4:14 through 5:10 kind of have this encapsulated section that argues that Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek and you see that mentioned in chapter 5, verse 6, and then closing out this section in chapter 5, verse 10. But this crazy big word, Melchizedek, Melchizedekian priesthood, sounds really intellectual but has extremely practical and deep meaningful application for the people and that is laid out for us in this section as well. So let's look at that little bit.

Chapter 5, verse 1 begins some comparisons between this priesthood that the Aaronic priesthood, the Levitical priesthood that is laid out for us in the first five books of the Old Testament, and the author of Hebrews gives us some comparisons between this priesthood and the priesthood of Jesus and points us to the fact that both of these realities should point us to the humility of our Lord and Savior. Look at chapter 5, verse 5, "So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest." You see, the high priest in verse 1 was appointed by God, not men. There wasn't an election that was held that appointed the most popular priest to the high priesthood. It wasn't even just open to anybody. It had to be of the line and descendant of Aaron, right? You see that in the Old Testament, the Levitical priest, they had to be of the tribe of Levi and the high priest was supposed to be not just from the tribe of Levi but from the family of Aaron. So they are automatically, it wasn't open for anybody to be a part of. God was limiting down who could be participating in this role, and then from that role God selected who the high priest would be and who would serve in that capacity. Likewise, Jesus did not take on this role for himself, he was appointed by the Father, glorified by the Father to this role as it says in verse 5, "You are my Son, I have begotten You." So also in another passage it says, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

So we see the humility of Christ but we also understand that this passage highlights the compassion that the priests were supposed to exercise their role in. Chapter 5, verse 2 tells us that the high priest of the human order, of the Levitical priesthood, deals gently with people, with the ignorant, with the misguided. Why? Because he himself also is beset with weaknesses. Sometimes if you read about what the high priest would do, it can become really tempting to think that these guys were super aloof and distant. I mean, they are having to cut animals to pieces all day long and once a year they walk into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and they shed blood for the entirety of themselves

and all of the nation of Israel. But this passage tells us that God appointed and called men of compassion who knew their own weaknesses, who knew that they were fallen and weak and needed a sacrifice as well, and they could minister to not just the holy and righteous Israelites, but to the ignorant, to the ones beset with weakness, the misguided. They are compassionate men.

Likewise Jesus, if you jump back to chapter 4, verse 14 and 15 says, "Therefore, since 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 cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Clearly, this has implications for us who do counsel and the reality is I always want to separate and tell people, "Listen, you may not think of yourself as a counselor," because people get this idea that, "Oh, I need to go and get a degree or I need to get a certificate before I can counsel." We talked about in Sunday school this morning how when Paul wrote in Romans 15:14 that he is confident of all of you brethren, that you are full of knowledge, filled with all goodness and able to counsel one another, and that wasn't written to the pastors of the church of Rome, that was written to all the Christians in Rome. Paul had confidence in them because the Holy Spirit was abiding in them and they had the word of God and through those things they could counsel each other. The reality is if you're a human being and you have relationships with other people, you are a counselor, the question is whether or not you're going to be a good one because somebody, your child, your friend, your neighbor, your coworker, somebody at some point in your life is going to ask you, "Hey, what do you think about X? Hey, I'm having a really hard time with my kids, what do you do? Hey, I'm having a really difficult time with my spouse, how have you handled that?" And the reality is you're going to respond in some way, shape or form to that counsel, the question is are you going to give your wisdom or God's wisdom? You are a counselor so are you going to be a biblical counselor or are you going to be some other kind?

But we also need to be the kind of counselor who understands we are not the Messiah. We are like this high priest who understands the weaknesses of our people because we understand we are beset with sin and weakness and struggles and frailties and disabilities of our minds and disabilities of our bodies. So we come with compassion, not lording over authority and control over the people who are listening to us but coming alongside as brothers and sisters, hooking arm with those who are weak. It's 1 Thessalonians 5:14, right? Encourage the fainthearted. Help the weak. Admonish the unruly. There are different ways in which we counsel different times for different people but, man, we are all in it. That verse closes out, be patient with all men, right, because we all need patience. No matter what we're going through, we need to be patient and we need patience ourselves. We need to follow the example of Jesus Christ. We understand what it means to suffer. We understand what it means to face temptation. We don't get what it means to do it without sin, though. This passage is also one of the most comforting passages in all of Scripture. One commentator said these two verses are the most comforting passages in all of the Bible.

So there are some comparisons that are shown between the priesthood that it's appointed, not chosen, not brought on themselves, but there are also some distinctions that are made between these two priests: the priest, Christ, according to the order of Melchizedek; and the priests who fall in line with the Levitical priesthood. Primarily that begins to come and the primary contrast begins to start, we start to see it in verses 2 and 3 of chapter 5, "he," the high priest, the human high priest, the non-divine high priest, "can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself." So there is a huge distinction here between Jesus Christ, the sinless one that we just saw in chapter 4, verse 15, right? He committed no sins, but this human priest, well, Jesus is human too, but the non-divine high priest had to offer sacrifices for his own sin. And if you flip over in your Bibles to chapter 7, this distinction is made even more distinct because in chapter 7, verses 26 and 27, we see it says, "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself." The distinction between the sacrifices that were day in and day out for the sins of the high priest and the sins of the people of Israel are contrasted with the once for all sacrifice of Jesus that paid for all of our sins forever. Jesus doesn't sacrifice day in and day out. This is why when we celebrate communion, we are not sacrificing again Jesus over and over and over again. That payment was done once and for all. When he said tetelestai, it is finished, the work was done. All sin past, present and future which comes under the blood of Jesus is paid for. It is dealt with.

So it's on the backdrop of this passage that Jesus is far greater, far better than anything or anyone else the Jews or anyone ever else could hope to put their faith in. Like I said, the author of Hebrews has been arguing this over and over and over. He's been saying, "You think angels are really great? Jesus is better. You think the prophets are really great? Jesus is better. You think Moses is really great? He's the new Moses. He's the one that was promised to be like Moses. He's better. You think those sacrifices were really helpful? Jesus is better." You think alcohol and drugs are going to be the place that you find refuge and comfort? Jesus is better. You think you need to worship through legalism and following a bunch of rules and being at church every Sunday? Jesus is better. Whatever it is, whatever you run to to find comfort for your soul and refuge and whatever you think you can do to make yourself right with God, you're wrong. Jesus has done it all and he is better.

So that's my introduction. Point 1: there is no such things as bad emotions. There is a really simple logical syllogism, right? Jesus is not bad. Jesus expressed negative emotions, sorrow, anger, therefore sorrow and anger, and I would even argue fear, are not inherently evil or wrong.

Chapter 4, verse 15, we have already seen he was without sin. Verse 9 of chapter 5 says that he was being made perfect. The whole reason Jesus is the high priest rests on this fact: he is without sin. Have you got that down? Jesus is perfect. No sin. No problems. Nothing wrong with him. No shifting shadow. No implications whatsoever. Not a crack

in his integrity. Nothing. Perfect. And Jesus experienced sadness, sorrow, fear and anger. In this passage, we don't see the explicit display of Jesus' anger but most of us are familiar with that idea, right? You guys have heard the story about Jesus clearing the Temple Mount. Anybody familiar with that idea? Can we call that righteous...nobody raised their hand. Do I need to go back? Anybody familiar with the idea? Okay, good, good. So Jesus sees all this corruption going on in the place of worship, in the house where his Father is supposed to be praised, so he makes a whip, runs around and clears off the Temple Mount. Have you ever been to the Temple Mount? It's like a 7 to 9 acre big huge block place and Jesus clears the entire place, and I guarantee you he wasn't walking around really passively going, "You guys need to get out of here. Go on. This is my Father's house. Get out of here, please." No. He was flipping tables and cracking whips. You don't make a whip just to, like, display it. He was angry. Zeal for his Father's house consumed him.

Verse 7, look at it again, of chapter 5 here in Hebrews, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death." So there is a bit of discussion among commentators to what does this mean, "in the days of his flesh," and when exactly is this passage referring to. In the days of his flesh clearly refers to Jesus' earthly ministry. From the time he was born in Bethlehem until the time that he was raised into heaven outside of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives are the days of his flesh. Some people want to limit this passage just to the account that Jess read for us earlier in the garden of Gethsemane, but the reality is that Scripture tells us that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with much grief, Isaiah 53, and we see in other passages that Jesus wept. So the days of his flesh not just Gethsemane were filled and acquainted with sorrow and frustration and grief.

I mean, think about what this guy went through. He was perfect and he had imperfect parents. How many of you ever got spanked when you didn't deserve it? I bet Jesus did. Remember, his parents forgot about him in Jerusalem and took off. I mean, he was fine with it because he's like, "Yeah, I'm doing my Dad's business." But they weren't perfect parents and a little bit later on we see his brothers and his parents coming out against him saying, "Jesus, stop this nonsense! Come away with us! Stop teaching, you're talking crazy talk! You're a lunatic! Get back up to Nazareth and keep your mouth shut so you stop embarrassing us." And then everybody he knows and loves and is invested in betrays him. One of his closest companions sells his life for 30 pieces of silver. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus and commentators wrestle over and over and over with this because I think they have given in to this idea that sorrow and bad emotions are bad, and they are uncomfortable with the idea of a grieving, weeping Savior over the loss of life.

But what does it mean? How much more does this passage point out to us? That he cried out with loud cries and tears. For us descendants of Western Europe, we are really uncomfortable with this. On the BCC, we have people represented from all different countries and I love to talk to our brothers from Latin America and our brothers from the UK because one in particular, they were together on a panel and they were talking about the differences in culture and our Brazilian brother said, "Man, like Brazilians, you just can't get them to be quiet." And our brother in Mexico, he said, "Man, all the counseling

there, drama, drama, drama. There is just emotion and tears and flying and all of this, it's all over." Then you have our brother from the UK, Steve, he's British. I mean, how do you describe it? Very little emotion. If there are tears, you can tell it but, I mean, it's quiet and there is one tear. That is not what is described here of Jesus. I think we are uncomfortable with this idea of a loud crying, tear filled Savior because we are uncomfortable with those feelings ourselves and we come from a culture that says men don't cry, or tough people don't cry, or suck it up and move on. But look at the words that are used.

So this passage I think describes all of Jesus' life, the days of his flesh, but it does specifically hone in on the garden of Gethsemane, and why do we know that? It's because he's praying and he's crying out to the one who can deliver him from death, right? So he's highlighting this account in Gethsemane and Jess read for us the account in Luke earlier, and in Mark 14, it says similarly, "They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.' And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.'" And we know in the story time and time and time again he goes back to his brothers, "Why are you sleeping? Don't you understand what is at stake right now? Peter, you said you would die for me, why can't you stay awake?" In Luke it describes it as being in deep agony. He was praying very fervently and sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground. This is not some weak, pathetic, single tear streaming down the face of our beautiful Savior, this is wretched agony to the point of blood vessels under his skin bursting under the stress.

Intense sorrow and distress like none of us could ever even fathom and I think we can say here there is even an element of fear, of righteous fear, because why? Because Jesus cries out to the Father, "If there is any way, let this cup pass from me." God gave us the ability to be afraid so that we could survive, we could exist in this world, and you see Jesus here not wanting to face the cross but still joyfully surrendering himself to the will of the Father. Part of the reason we don't like these bad emotions is because we don't want to feel them, but that's also really complex. How can you say you have joy when at the same time being sorrowful? We have the notion of bitter sweet, right? You're familiar with that idea. Man, I'm moving away to the new job and to that new exciting career thing and, man, I'm excited about that, but I'm also sorrowful about this leaving my friends and family who are here.

So we see Jesus is undergoing these intense intense emotions, so therefore Jesus is not bad. He's perfect. Jesus experiences these emotions, therefore sorrow, fear and anger are not bad. These emotions are given to us by God so we should not think of them as negative. I'm kind of on this, I don't know if it's a one man campaign, but I would love to just throw off the idea that there are good emotions and bad emotions, there are positive emotions and negative emotions. I prefer the idea of pleasant and not unpleasant emotions because the reality is, and we'll talk about it in a moment, that these emotions are good and we need to not try to eradicate them from human experience.

So, second point: the goal of biblical counseling is not to remove "bad emotions." What is the goal of life? Somebody tell me. To glorify God. I heard it, right? That's the goal of life and we have people come into a relationship to seek counsel for that is the goal that we constantly need to be reminding ourselves of and reminding them of. It's to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 2 Corinthians 5:9, "we have made it our ambition, whether at home or abroad, to be," what? Be "pleasing to Him." Romans 11:36, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

Everything we do is supposed to be for the glory of God but it's easy in counseling when somebody comes in who is suffering and going through difficulty to fall into the same pit and same trap that secular therapy drives into. Their goal primarily is not the glory of God, their goal primarily is to help people feel good and function better and, man, we can relate to that, right? Because who doesn't want to feel better and who doesn't want to function better? But the reality is that God sometimes has us in a place and a position of life where we probably shouldn't feel good and if we're going to seek to honor and glorify him, we need to be careful to not try to eliminate or eradicate that negative feeling. People come in because they want something fixed. When you ask people, "Why are you here for counseling?" They're like, "There's this problem. I want this problem to go away. No, the problem is not me, it's him or her or the circumstance or whatever. Make it go away so I can feel good and I can get back on track and live life the way that I want to do."

None of us want to feel that, right, that's why I'm okay with the idea of unpleasant but I don't like the idea of bad because, honestly, we just don't like to cry, most of us. Every once in a while, I wonder. Most of the time we don't like to be angry, and we definitely don't like feeling afraid and we want those emotions to stop. I mean, think about it, just poll all the guys in this room, how many of you like to be in the presence of a crying woman? No, like we will go to the ends of the earth to do everything we can to make that fountain stop, right? I mean, what can I buy you? Where do I need to take you? What can you eat? I mean, something. Let me make this stop because I am uncomfortable. That's what it comes down to, right, is we're uncomfortable with it, let alone watching another man cry. Nothing will make me cry more than seen my dad in tears, right?

The reality is we'll do anything we can to make that stop and that's why tears can be such a powerful and manipulative tool. Ladies. Let's be honest, and guys. It just doesn't work for guys, okay? But ladies, I mean, you can turn on the waterworks sometimes and get things the way you want and that's not right. We're going to move on from that, but you get my point. We are averse to these feelings. We don't like to feel them so it's easy to fall into that I idea that they are bad or they are negative emotions but the point, and what I want you to understand is that since our goal is to glorify God in all that we do, we need to think about how do we glorify God with our emotions? How do we glorify God with sorrow? How do we glorify God with anger? How do we glorify God with fear? And I think the point for me is this: we need to exemplify emotions in the same way that our Savior would.

So we are Christians, who can tell me what does Christian mean, what does the word mean? Christ like. That's right. In Romans 8:28 and 29 which we are so fond of quoting so often and it's good that we are fond of quoting it, it tells us the reason that all things happen in life is for God's glory and our good, and what is that good? The good is being transformed into the image of Christ, right? So everything that happens in my life if I'm a believer in Jesus Christ is happening in a way to make me like Jesus, including your emotions. So we need to emote the way that Jesus emotes. So if something would make God angry, it should tick you off. If something brings God great joy, you should rejoice in it. If something grieves the Holy Spirit, it should grieve us as well. So there is a necessary and appropriate response and expression of these "negative" emotions, and we need to be okay with that.

Secular psychology is notorious in its desire to remove all unpleasant emotion. The introduction of antidepressants and other psychotropic drugs has given them the seemingly easy ability to do so, right? You feel bad, take this pill, you'll feel better. If you're familiar at all with secular therapy, you know about this book called the DSM or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. It's now in its fifth edition and one of the transfers from the fourth edition to the fifth edition was the idea of it actually removed the idea of an appropriate period of grief. So prior to just a couple of years ago, if you went to a psychiatrist or a psychologist and you are struggling with extreme sorrow or depression and you had just had somebody in your life die, they would say this is good and normal. If that extreme sorrow and grief extended beyond a certain arbitrary number of days that they identified, then they could prescribe you prescription drugs, but in the fifth edition of this book, they removed that period of grieving. So if I'm a husband who has been married to my wife for 35 years and she is killed in a car accident yesterday and I feel bad about it, I could go to a psychiatrist and he could give me antidepressants so that I don't feel bad.

Christians, how quickly are we tempted to fall into that same trap? We're not going to give somebody drugs but we are going to give them a verse, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice." And believe you me, I believe that verse with all my heart. There are ways to rejoice even in the midst of our suffering but that doesn't mean it's absent of tears and grief and sorrow. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he didn't say, "I want to give you hope so that you don't grieve." He said, "I want to give you hope so that you grieve as those who have hope, not like those who don't." You still grieve. You see, biblical counselors, we don't prescribe medications, we are not allowed to, we are not medical doctors, that's not our thing, but easily we can slip into the idea of just simple cognitive behavioral therapy and if you just believe the right things, if you just know the truth, then everything is going to be okay. You'll function right and you'll feel better which leads me to my third point: that knowing and believing truth does not and should not always lead to pleasant feelings. Let me say that again: knowing and believing the truth does not and should not always lead to pleasant feelings.

Last night I received news that a dear friend of mine lost his mother-in-law. She is a believer, praise the Lord, and she is at our Savior's side rejoicing more than any of us, any you or I will ever be rejoicing while we're here on this earth because she is free of

sorrow, sin, suffering, pain. She is with Jesus. Amen. But what if I called up my friend this afternoon and said, "Hey," and he picks up the phone and I hear he has been crying and he is weeping a little bit and I say, "Brother, why are you crying? She's in heaven with Jesus. Shouldn't you be happy? Shouldn't you be rejoicing in the Lord? Why the tears? Why the waterworks? She's with Jesus, everything is all right. You're going to see her again someday, wipe those tears away." No way, we would never say that would be appropriate but how often do we do that?

Go back to chapter 5, verse 7, loud crying and tears. He's offering up prayers and supplications to the One. Why? Why is Jesus crying? Why is Jesus in tears? Why is he crying out to the One who could save him from death? Because he knows it's going to hurt and he knows the weight of the sin of the world being on his shoulders is too much for his humanity to bear and he knows that the Father is going to turn his back on him and it is a grievous, horrifying, terrible thing to face.

Think about this: does Jesus know that truth? Does Jesus know that dying on the cross was a good thing? Did he know that he was going to raise again three days later? Did he know that through his death, burial and resurrection, he was going to accomplish salvation for millions and billions of his followers from history past and history forward? Yes. Does that knowledge of God's sovereignty and God's glory being lifted up by him being crucified on the cross take away that grief and that sorrow? Clearly it didn't. Clearly it didn't. I mean, imagine going to Jesus and saying, "Jesus, why are you crying?" In Gethsemane if Peter came and said, "Jesus, what's this sweating blood drops all about? Why are you anxious? Why are you scared? Why are you grieving deeply to the point of death? The Father told you you were going to raise from the dead. You have raised people from the dead. God is sovereign, God is in control, it's all going to be okay, why are you crying?" We would never do that to our Savior so why do we do it to each other? We need to stop trying to eliminate sorrow and fear and anger because it makes us uncomfortable, and we need to seek to rightly align our fears and our sorrows and our joy and our happiness with the things that made God those things as well.

So where do we go from here? What are some practical things that we can take away? What do we do? The point of Hebrews and the point of this passage is run to Jesus. Run to Jesus. He's better. He is our refuge. He is what we need to be. He is better than Moses, better than the angels, better than the prophets, better than cognitive behavioral therapy, better than psychotropic drugs. He knows what it is to be angry, to feel fear, to experience deep deep sorrow. He was tempted in every way as we are yet without sin. Why? So he could be our great high priest.

I want, my prayer is that at the end of this service you will love Jesus more than you did when you sat down in those red chairs because you understand more of what he has done for you and how deeply he was moved and how hard it was for him to go to the cross, but he still did it for you and for me because he loves us. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him would have everlasting life." Not perish but have everlasting life. He knows what it's like to be wherever you are. I don't know you. I don't know what trials, what sins, what temptations, what struggles

you're facing but Jesus does and he has been through them and he's been through worse. He's been tempted in every way. That word "temptation" can be trial, tribulation, or what we think of as this temptation to sin. If you think about it, every trial, every tribulation is a temptation. It's a test of whether or not you're going to respond in a way that glorifies God or in a way that doesn't, and Jesus always responded rightly.

So if you look back at verse 16, here are some practical takeaways for you. Therefore draw near to the throne of grace. Draw near to the throne of grace. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. He has been exalted to perfection and ruling in authority above all else. If you look at verse 9, he was made perfect and he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation. You might be here today and you're like, "I have no idea who this Jesus guy is. Or maybe I thought I knew Jesus but, man, you're talking about him in a way I never understood and that makes me want to know him." If that's the case, then please, God's Spirit is moving on you and I beg you and pray that you would find somebody here, go to Pastor Ty or Jess or one of the elders or somebody that you know that brought you here and ask them, "How do I know this Jesus?" Because today is the day of salvation for you.

You see, Jesus, verse 7 there says, he was heard for his piety. Think about this: he prayed to the one who could redeem him from death and it says he was heard, and when the Scriptures say that somebody was heard, that means their prayer was answered. So how can that be? Jesus died, right? How can the author of Hebrews say that Jesus was heard when he prayed to the one who could keep him from death and then he died? Because God answered, yes, the moment that Jesus rose from the dead. He was removed forever from the realm of the dead and set into all eternity. People, your prayers, do not make the comparison that Jesus was heard for his piety so therefore if I'm pious, I will be heard. That is not the point. The point is you will be heard in your prayers because of his piety. His righteousness is why you are able to enter into the throne of grace boldly.

So wherever you are, whatever you're facing, if you haven't trusted in Jesus or you've known him for 50 years, cry out to Jesus wherever you are. Go before the throne of grace. You can stand before the Almighty God of the universe because Jesus was perfect and you are clothed, if you trust in his death, burial and resurrection for the covering of your sins, you are clothed in his righteousness. You are pure and spotless like the snow that we see outside. Not because you are pious but because Jesus is perfect and he died for you.

Trust in his sacrifice and receive his salvation and then draw near with confidence. Draw near with confidence, with boldness. This is like the little kid, I mean, we talk about this all the time, little kids say crazy things, why? Because they have no inhibitions and, man, my kids they feel free to just barge into any room where I am anytime and just start blabbering, right? And that's the picture that we have with our Father. It's not that we come with arrogance and, "God, you have to listen to me because Jesus died for me so you'd better listen." We can just come freely because we are his children and we know that the Father is going to hear us and he's going to listen to us. Jesus said, you know, "If you ask anything in my name, I will give it to you." So when you don't get the answer that you want, realize that either God is answering in a different way than you expect and

maybe in a different time frame than you expect, because just like Jesus' prayer to be relieved from the dead was not answered in relieving him from physical death but removing him from the realm of the dead through resurrection, your answer might await until eternity. God is not bound, praise the Lord, by space and time. I don't want that to discourage you or cause you to turn away from prayer but broaden your perspective of your minuscule answer for prayer because God's answer is far bigger and far better than anything you could ask or imagine.

Go with confidence knowing that he will listen, he does hear, because of Jesus' righteousness and he will listen, and then draw near in your time of need. Brothers and sisters, you may not be in a time of need right now but you will be. You've been through them before, you know they are coming around and you may be in one right now. Whenever those times of need come, draw near to Jesus. Draw near to the throne of grace and draw near to receive mercy and grace. He knows you. He knows your sorrows. He knows tribulation. He knows suffering. He knows what it means to weep deeply so run to him. Draw near to him. Receive grace and mercy in a time of need and weep in the lap of your loving Father.

Let's pray.

Dear heavenly Father, your word written down is perfect and your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Savior, is perfect and so, Lord, I pray that our understanding of you, your word, your Son, is deeper now that it was when we began. I pray that we would as uncomfortable and as hard as it is, that we would understand what it means to truly grieve like you grieve and for the things that you grieve; that we would be okay with tears flowing from our eyes and from the eyes of those that we love because we understand that what we are going through is worthy of sorrow. Lord, help us to align our lives, all of it, our thoughts, our actions, our emotions, our desires, every ounce of our being, Lord, continually transform us and shape us into the image of your Son so that when the world sees us, it sees Jesus, and they are drawn to it, and people come up to us in the midst of suffering, in the midst of trial and they say, "How do you have hope? I know those are tears streaming down your face but I also know that you cry with hope. You grieve as those who have hope, why? Why? Why?" And Lord, help us to say Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.