

## Notes for Study Group Leaders - Hebrews Chapter 5

### 1 Vulnerability in leadership (vv1-3):

- We have here a surprising concept - that those called to leadership are qualified by their weakness. Only those who know the reality of a daily struggle against sin are capable of leading others.

- How does this biblical criteria for leaders correspond to our cultural ideas of fitness to lead? How much is the Christian Church influenced by the world's thinking?

- Read Philippians 2vv5-8. What does this passage imply for those who follow in the steps of Christ, leading his Church.

### 2 The glory and honour of being our High Priest (vv4-5):

- How is it possible that it can be an honour and a glory for Christ to be appointed as our High Priest?

### 3 Prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears (vv6-7):

- We see the passion of Jesus' intercession in this description of his prayer life (which although focussed in on Gethsemane, also includes the whole of his earthly life).

- Discuss the following rabbinic saying:

*«There are three kinds of prayers, each loftier than the preceding: prayer, crying and tears. Prayer is made in silence: crying with raised voice; but tears overcome all things ('there is no door through which tears do not pass')».*

- How passionate is your prayer-life, our prayer-life as a fellowship? Why?

### 4 He learned obedience from what he suffered (v8):

- What does this verse mean? What does the experience of accepted suffering teach us about obedience to God?

- What experiences of suffering have we been through, are we going through? What are they teaching us about obedience to God? In what way are these sufferings perfecting us?

- Discuss the following quote:

*The real test of our lives is not the intensity of our religious experience but the reality of our love, and love makes us vulnerable to hard unrewarding work.*

(Jesus Wept - V. Herrick and I. Mann, pub. DLT, 1998, p.26)

### 5 The source of salvation for those who obey (v9):

- Obedience is seen as the characteristic of the saved. How much our our lives characterised by obedience to God? In what areas do we struggle to be obedient?

- Can the disobedient really be said to be saved in any meaningful way?

### 6 Christ is a High Priest in the order of Melchizadek (v10):

- Read Genesis 14vv18-20. Note also that Melchizadek means «*King of Righteousness*» and Salem is the O.T. form of Jerusalem which means «*foundation of peace*», discuss the significance of this in relation to Christ.

### 7 The stages of spiritual growth (vv11-14):

- Read 1 John 2vv12-14. What are the three stages of spiritual growth? What is the focus of each stage? What is the nature of the relationship to God in each stage? What are the key activities of each stage? What are the strengths and potential dangers of each stage?

Stage	Key Focus	Relation to God	Key Activity	Strengths / Dangers
Children	The experience of forgiveness from the penalty of sin.	Children of a loving Father who forgives.	Rejoicing in the experience of forgiveness and the experience of God's love.	Genuine-ness, whole-heartedness. / Immaturity and ignorance.
Young Men	The experience of victory over the power of sin.	Servants of the King who leads them into battle to break down strongholds and establish the kingdom.	Bearing the major burden of the Church's activity. Fighting opposition without and error and apostasy within. Growing strong in the faith through prayer, fasting and scripture meditation. Declaring the gospel of Christ.	Commitment, experience, courage. / Activistic, impatient, over-confident in themselves.
Fathers	The experience of a deep intimate relationship with God. A deep love founded upon an understanding of God gleaned from scripture and learned through experience.	Friends.	Enjoying the day by day experience of life with God. Accepting trials with faith and obedience. Accepting blessing with joy and thankfulness.	Ability to become spiritual parents themselves. / Passivity.