

Hebrews 7:11-28

As we come to today's study, you will find we have covered much of this ground already in this book. Which gives us some room to go a little deeper in both understanding and application. And I for one believe there is just too much shallow ground teaching. It's as if we are saying to congregations we don't believe they have the capacity or desire to go deeper with God. Which is one of the reasons I'm so grateful for all of you who desire to dig in together with me.

- We have been told we are to be being transformed by the renewing of our minds. And the Holy Spirit has already used the author to tell them (these Jewish believers in Jesus) **they needed to get away from the spiritual diet of baby food and move to maturity (5:12-14)**. So this isn't just my thinking. I'm simply echoing what the Holy Spirit is and has been saying.
- So with that, let's enjoy so repetition as we think biblically about how these things apply to our lives.

¹¹ Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. ¹³ For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

How do you find a perfect pastor? You can't. We are all just human. And that is a reality for trying to find a perfect priest in the Levitical system. Or even looking for a high priest in the line of Aaron.

- So, when someone comes for assistance, as a pastor our job is to take their hand, put it in the hand of God (who is perfect), and then step back and observe. Or wait until we receive some type of prompting from the Lord to do something more.
- But in the OC (Old Covenant), the promises and advocacy of God towards man was not what we now have in the NC (New Covenant).
- But now (ever since Jesus came and ascended) the priesthood is not foremost of man (who are fallible), but of the Son of God himself. To say that's a vast improvement is obviously an extreme understatement.

There are so many kinds of priests today, and all of them, with the exception of Jesus, are just men. And it goes deeper than that, because in many religious groups who have priests, **there is a severe over emphasis on their positions**.

- In some of those religious groups, because they promote the idea of human enlightenment, in their estimation the priest is closer to recognizing his or her own "divine nature" and therefore is the source of truth they tell the people they need. That's just demonic deception. No matter how many bells, icons, tapestries, temples, or ornate robes they have, **it's all either of the flesh or demonic influence**.
- In others, they claim the priest is the one who has "access" to God (meaning you do not, or at least at a severely diminished capacity. Leaving you to pray to Mary or to other "saints"). **So they say you must go through them as they enter the throne room of God on your behalf** (because apparently, you're not able, even though you've been invited by God to do so [4:16]). **But they are as fallible as we are. And Jesus has personally invited us to come to Him.**
- God did give the ministry gifts to individuals to lead and aid the church in **1)** earning the word, in **2)** encouragement, **3)** equipping us for the work of our own ministry God has called us to, **4)** and even correcting those who contradict, when needed (Titus 1:9). And **5)** there are ministry gifts of administration and more (1 Cor. 12:28, Rom. 12:7-8). **But the role of the head of the church is not man but Jesus, and Him only!** And yet He has made a way for all mankind to have access to the Father, through His blood (10:19-20). We needed there to be a change of the priesthood, and we got it in Jesus.

And what this also reminds us is that **there is a path that cannot lead us to perfection** (actually, there are many). On one hand that can sound like a bummer. **But the reality is there is one path** (and just one) **that can and ultimately will**. And that path requires a perfect advocate (John 2:1) because **perfection** is not going to happen in the current state we are in (Phil. 3:12).

- We are not there yet, **but God will complete in us what He has started** (Phil. 1:6). No level of human effort can pull this off, though there are far too many trying to do this without Jesus. And each and every single one of those ways will utterly fail (John 15:5).

- But one day we who have put our faith in Jesus will be perfected by Him who is perfect. On that day you won't have to ask if you are thinking or doing the right things in terms of pleasing God or interacting with others (Jer. 31:34, Heb. 8:8-12). Now, of course, when you received Jesus you were born again, and that is no small thing. His salvation is a perfect salvation. And in the heavenlies you have been perfected already. And yet there is more to come.
- In that day we are speaking of the words like stress, conflict, guilt, remorse, anger, regret, temptation, and sin will all be retired from our vocabulary and obsolete in our experience. What a glorious day that will be!

And although we are now waiting for that perfect day, **there has already been a perfect change of covenants because the changing of the priesthood necessitated this.** The law, which could only reveal our inability of self-righteousness (by revealing our sin and having no way to heal it [Isa. 64:4, Titus 3:5]) has been replaced with a covenant in which we could identify with the death of Jesus (reckoning our old nature dead) while receiving newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Hallelujah!

- And to further show the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, we are reminded that Jesus never entered the earthly temple to do any of the work or sacrifices that the priests under the Law performed. That is not the covenant or position He came to take. His offering was of Himself, outside the gates of the city, and then as High Priest in the true tabernacle of heaven (8:2, 13:10-14).

¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah (the kingly tribe), of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. ¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest ¹⁶ who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

We come now to another affirmation of the unchanging priesthood of Jesus in that **He has the power of an endless life, verses those still in these perishing bodies.** That is what is meant by *a fleshly commandment*, because those in the priesthood all held the office while in a corruptible body, bound for death that would require a successor.

- And for those who have not been with us in the studies of the past chapters, **1) Melchizedek** is this priest who comes out of nowhere and greets Abraham. And **2) this was before the law and the priesthood existed.** And **3) his credentials identify Him as being more than human or angelic. I personally believe it was an appearing of Jesus before He was born in human flesh** (yet there are some who disagree). As the rest of you might remember, this is called a Christophany and there are several of them in the Old Testament.
- Also, in the Law and sacrificial system no man was allowed to be both King and Priest as they were of two different tribes and God forbade it. But Jesus being of the priesthood of Melchizedek and of the tribe of Judah is both our High Priest and the King of Kings.

¹⁷ For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

The Law and the priesthood of the Levitical system could only make the people painfully aware of their sin. Try and put yourself in their sandals. You (being a realist) know the guilt of your sin. And if you were under the law (as these Jewish believers were) the Law makes it clear there is **no sacrifice for willful disobedience.** Yet, BTW, even in their willful disobedience God kept calling them to repent and return to Him- why, because He had given the law to show them they could not keep it, **while at the time still extending grace to those who repented.**

- Now going back to placing yourself in their position, because of your sin you have to take this perfect animal, full of life, and while the priest held it, you had to slit its throat as an offering for your sin. Again, why? Because the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:14), and there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22), because the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). **But here is the bigger picture** (the one all this had been pointing to), it was foretelling of the day the sinless Son of God would offer Himself up, having His blood shed for the remission of sin for all who would receive Him (Matt. 26:28, Rev. 1:5).
- **Sin is not harmless. It's just that God bore the harm of our sin upon Himself out of love. And when He did, a new commandment came into effect.** And to say it is a better hope, through which *we draw near to*

God should stir our hearts like a wildfire, because if you are like me, you can't imagine killing so many innocent animals simply to have their blood temporarily cover your sin.

- Let me take just a minute and compare a few of the differences between the Old and New Covenants to show you why the *annulling* of the Old in order to make way for the New is so incredible.

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant
Conditional (if/then)	Unconditional (correction but no cursing)
Unfinished- numerous animal offerings	Finished once and for all in Jesus
And object lesson of our futility in the pursuit of self-righteousness.	The righteousness of God placed in our account and the Holy Spirit's transformational power placed in us.
For unintentional sins	For all sin
A priesthood of fallible humanity	A priesthood administered by the Son of God
Limited access into the presence of God	An invitation to an intimate personal relationship

**This would be a great exercise to continue on your own. These are just some of the realities highlighted in Hebrews.

And here is the final piece of these verses which is so powerful. After hearing of the incredible covenant God made with Israel (for truly in that time, there was no other covenant which the living God made with a nation), on a one-on-one basis there did not exist this same kind of universal understanding that each and every individual who acknowledged God and committed to His covenant could draw so intimately near to Him.

- Now don't get me wrong, we see some intimate relationships God had with people by simply reading the Old Testament. But today, no matter who you are or what you have done, in this New Covenant in Jesus blood (the covenant of grace), there is an invitation to you to draw intimately near to God.

Might I suggest you capitalize on that sincere invitation, created for you, simply because God loves you. What a shame that there are still so many that believe God is purposefully distant and unaccusable, even after claiming faith in Jesus. If you choose to approach Him like that then own the fact that this is your doing and not His. He has opened the door for you to have a more intimate relationship with Him than anyone or anything. The next move is yours.

²⁰ And inasmuch as He (Jesus) was not made priest without an oath ²¹ (for they (those of the Levitical priesthood) have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The Lord has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'"), ²² by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

We talked about the promises and oaths of God last time, which set us up for the reinforcement of the power of this oath now. But that Jesus has become the *surety of a better covenant* is certainly something I believe many of us have placed our eternal hope in. And that hope will not be disappointed. I hope that for you personally, you are at a place where you never doubt that. The enemy works hard to try and get us to despair of life. And in some of the weakest moments there are some, who instead of turning to God, listen too long and too intently to other voices. But it does not say in Jesus there is "a better possibility" you are going to heaven than to hell. No, He is *a surety of a better Covenant*. And that covenant is an unconditional and completed one (whereas in all the other major religions there is no such promise).

- Now does that mean you can live like hell and go to heaven? No! Because if your **pattern** of life denies your profession of faith, you should be very concerned (1 John 3:4-9). But since we have already discussed the impossibility of perfection in this life, if as a believer and receiver of Jesus you end up doing something terrible and follow it up with genuine repentance, it doesn't mean you won't wreck your life here on earth. But it also doesn't mean you have forfeited eternity with Him.
- But on a practical note, because I am believing better things for you (6:9), it's more likely the questions of the surety of this covenant has to do with others you love who are not walking with victory right now, even though they have at one point made a confession of faith in Jesus.
- Like you I wish they would just get out of their own way and surrender their whole life to Him. But here is what we do know 1) the promise is *a surety* for all who have trusted in Jesus (although some are going to make it into heaven smelling like smoke [1 Cor. 3:15]), 2) of all the sheep the Father has given to Jesus, not one is (or will be) lost (John 18:9), and 3) love tells us that after we have witnessed and testified with our mouths and our lives, that love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Cor.

13:7). That's our job. The rest is His and all falls under *Jesus having become a surety of a better covenant*.

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

We just celebrated Resurrection Sunday and spoke about this subject of Jesus saving *to the uttermost*. Which is another way of affirming that if you have placed your faith in Jesus, *He is going to get you all the way home to heaven*.

- In this life (and the gift of it) we have certainly been blessed. But *the uttermost is yet to come*. That is when there is nothing left to be done to make life perfect in the way God has planned. And that means perfectly and eternally being with Him.
- And because Jesus has eternal life (and is the author of it), it reminds us **1)** nothing will end His advocacy as our High Priest, **2)** His reign as our King, and **3)** His ability to keep us forever close to Him.

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

How can someone who is not perfect bring you to perfection? It's not possible. *The good news for us is our High Priest is the perfectly righteous God*. And as unfathomable as it may seem, He is going to bring us to a place, when we go to be with Him bodily, where He will complete His work in us (Phil. 1:6). That happens when this fallen flesh is glorified.

Folks, what we have covered today is misunderstood by so many who have come to Christ. *I am not questioning their salvation, but their understanding*. And you might say, "well if it won't affect their salvation, why does it matter?" It matters because **1)** there are storms **2)** and there is a deceiver. And **both will require you to have an unshakable foundation**.

- I like building things. And often I completely overbuild. So if a physical storm comes, knowing how something I have built should hold up gives me great confidence. *But for those who do not understand the construction of the shelter they are in, there can be some real anxiety that might make them question if they should look for another place*.
- The same is true in our faith. If you do not understand **1)** the construction of Gods plans **2)** and work of completed for your salvation, the enemies voice will come to you in the storm and say, "run to another place because this is going to collapse on you".
- But for those who know the construction and work of our salvation, we also have been invited into an intimate relationship with the architect and builder. And when you accept this invitation, when the storms come (and they will), **1)** you will neither desire to run away from or to anything else, **2)** **because you will already be with Him**. And you, through experience and truth, will know there is no safer place you could ever be.