

Jesus Saves to the Uttermost

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Preacher: Jeremy Martinson

[0 : 0 0] And you can turn to Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews chapter 7. And Amy, would you please come and read for us?

Amy is going to be reading from the New American Standard version of the Bible. If that's a little different from the version you're using, that's just fine. And yeah, you got a mic?

Perfect. Thank you. For on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and its uselessness, for the law made nothing perfect.

And on the other hand, there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And insomuch as it was not without an oath, for they indeed became priests without an oath, but he with an oath through the one who said to him, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever.

So much the more, also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. The former priests, on the other hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing.

[1 : 0 8] But Jesus, on the other hand, because he continues forever, holds his priesthood permanently. Therefore, he is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

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 he did once for all when he offered up himself.

For the law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a son made perfect forever. Thank you, Amy. Earlier this week, Emily dropped off a key for their house just in case we would need it while they were away from us this week.

And as it turns out, we did need their key to get into their home. And so on Wednesday, I walked up their driveway, took the key out of my pocket, and used the key that she had given me to unlock the door.

And then when we finished what needed to be done, I locked the door and I made sure it was securely shut, and now I am returning the key to the Thompsons, so I am no longer responsible for that key.

[2 : 5 2] Now, the question is this. Why would the Thompsons trust us with a key that gave us access to most of their earthly possessions?

And the answer to this is that we have a relationship, right? A relationship that's based on trust and on love for one another.

And on the basis of that relationship, they give us the key to their home, trusting that we will be responsible with it. Now, what if I violate that trust?

What if I am irresponsible with the access that they give to me? What if I let myself into their house, don't take my shoes off at the door, because nobody else is there?

What if I snoop around their home, help myself to a snack, take one of Tim's guitars from his worship room in his basement, and then walk out and just leave the door wide open?

[4 : 0 9] If I show that type of irresponsibility with the access that they give me to their home, it would be perfectly reasonable for Tim and Emily to set a boundary and to refuse to give me access in the future.

This is true of our houses, and it is also true of our hearts. It is wise and responsible and sometimes necessary to set boundaries when a person is irresponsible with the access that you give them to your heart.

Now, if you remember, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had a lot of access to God's presence. God walks and God talks with them, and their unique relationship with God makes this possible.

But Adam and Eve are what? They are irresponsible with the access that God gave them to his presence.

And so it is wise and reasonable and necessary for God to establish a boundary and to restrict their access to him.

[5 : 3 6] Remember, kids, sin what? Separates. Sin separates. And access requires a right relationship.

And Adam and Eve's sin fractured the relationship, and therefore, access had to be cut off. Now, hundreds of years later, God, in his amazing grace, gives his people a way to be close to him again.

Sort of. It's a system of worship that includes priests and bloody sacrifices and special holidays and lots and lots and lots and lots of rules.

But access for most people is still impossible. It is just one man, one time a year, and not without blood, who gets to pull back the curtain, the veil, and go inside where God's presence is.

Even though God gave this old covenant, hear me use these words very carefully. It was intentionally defective.

[7 : 1 1] It's like light bulbs. They work, but you have to keep replacing them. Why would God give his people an intentionally defective way of coming close to him?

Because God is looking forward to who? To Jesus. Jesus. And all of that old covenant is only a pointer to Jesus who is to come.

God doesn't want them satisfied with that old covenant. He wants them also looking forward to the one who will come. He doesn't want them to be satisfied trying to keep all of those sacrifices and maintain all of those holidays forever because God knows they can't do it.

We can't do it. God has a better plan because God intends that Jesus personally guarantees your access to his presence.

God has a better plan because God has a better plan for him. Two main headings for us today. I want to start with the problems with priests. And then I want to talk about the perfection of Jesus.

[8 : 3 0] So the problems with priests first. Under the old covenant, priests were born into service. It's not like it is now, where kids are like, you can do whatever you want with your life.

Mike's son, Bennett, would become a carpenter like Mike. That's just how it worked. You did what your father before you did.

And so if you were born into a priestly family, if your father was a priest, it doesn't matter whether you want to be a priest or not, you're going to be a priest. That is, that is, so long as you are qualified by the 142 qualifications that it takes to become a priest.

Your priesthood is based on God's law and your ability to measure up to it. It doesn't matter if you don't want to be a priest. You are a priest because that's the law.

And you'll do it. Here's the second problem with priests. They die. Even the strongest, healthiest person is not going to live forever. And when a priest dies, then a new priesthood needs to be inaugurated.

[9 : 54] You have to keep replacing priests like you replace batteries in children's toys. They wear out. They die. You have to replace them. The third problem with priests.

Priests are sinners like the rest of us. And so even the best and most honorable priest is still sinning.

And so before a priest can offer a sacrifice for your sin, the priest has to offer a sacrifice for his own sin. Think about a car mechanic who says, let me quick change my oil first, and then I'll do your oil change.

The fourth problem with priests. Their ministry is ineffective. Look in your Bible, verse number 18.

For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness.

[11 : 12] For the law made nothing perfect. This word perfect here has in mind access to God. It has in mind the relationship, the right relationship that is necessary for you to get access to God.

You cannot get perfect. You cannot get this right relationship that gives you access to God through the law. Now hear this. It is not because the law itself is defective.

The law is good. Paul will tell us much later in the New Testament. The law is good. But our hearts are defective and sinful and broken, and we cannot keep God's law perfectly.

So the Old Covenant cannot give you a right relationship with God. Don't take this metaphor too far. It's like a fast food employee mopping the floor with a filthy mop and dirty water.

It's not exactly doing nothing, but it's also not exactly cleaning the floor. The priestly ministry under the Old Covenant is weak and useless.

[12 : 33] All of the blood of bulls and goats cannot provide forgiveness of sin. And as a result, worshipers under the Old Covenant cannot get this right relationship with God in order to get access to God's presence.

The law cannot provide that. And what serves as a constant reminder for them that they don't have access? It's the veil, isn't it? The veil is a constant reminder.

God has established a boundary here. Your sin separates you from God. You do not have access to His presence.

These are the problems with Old Covenant priests. Now let's turn our attention to the perfection of Jesus. Under the Old Covenant, we notice priests are born into ministry and qualified by law.

But Jesus was not born into a priestly family. Hmm. Jesus was born into the tribe, do you remember?

[13 : 44] Judah. Judah. And the author of Hebrews is going to tell us at some point here, I can't remember if it's before or after this portion, I think before, he's going to tell us about the tribe of Judah.

The law never specifies anything concerning priests. So Jesus is not born into a priestly family. He's born into the tribe of Judah.

So Jesus is not qualified to be a priest on the basis of the law. Rather, Jesus is qualified to be a priest on the basis of God's promise.

Look in your Bible at verse number 20. Let me back up. Before I say that, before I read verse 20, let me just mention this.

This idea of law versus promise. Sometimes, sometimes we say, I promise. And when we say it's, when we have to say I promise, I think it's because we have found ourselves to be not trustworthy.

[14 : 49] You know what I mean? Like it's not enough for us to say, I'll be home by 530. We also have to tack on there, I promise. Or, I promise we will leave church at a reasonable time after the service today.

I promise, right? Because in the past, we haven't left church at a reasonable time after the service. Or, ready, guys? I promise we'll go out on a date this week.

Why do we have to add that I promise? Well, because we know that we're not as trustworthy as we need to be. God does not need to say, I promise.

It's enough when God says something. But listen, in the scripture, when God says, I promise, we should pay attention.

And God says that here. He says, I promise. Look in your Bible, verse 20. And it was not without an oath.

[15 : 52] For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath. They became a priest on the basis of the law, being born into a priestly family, and measuring up to the qualifications.

Those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath. But this one, speaking of Jesus, was made a priest with an oath.

Verse 28. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a son who has been made perfect forever.

When God says, I promise, we should recognize that whatever he says next is unchangeable. It is unbreakable.

It is irrevocable. It is woven into the very fabric of the universe. God makes an oath declaring that Jesus is a priest.

[17 : 09] Why? Jesus is a perfect priest because God said, I promise. Because he made an oath and established his priesthood under that oath.

The second problem with Old Testament priests, they die and have to be replaced. But notice this. Jesus is a priest forever. Here's the oath. It's back up in verse 21.

This one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him, The Lord, Yahweh, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever. You are a priest forever. Verse 23.

The former priests, the priests under the Old Covenant, they were many in number. Why? Because they were prevented by death from continuing in office.

[18 : 13] They just keep dying and need to be replaced. Verse 24. But he, Jesus, holds his priesthood permanently.

The Lord Jesus' priesthood is perfect because it is permanent.

He does not ever need to be replaced. Third, Old Covenant priests, they what? They require sacrifices for their own sins first, but not Jesus.

Look at verse 26. It was, indeed, fitting that we should have such a high priest, or you might say, a high priest like this.

What is Jesus like? Holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

[19 : 22] See, priests under the Old Covenant have to be thoroughly examined to make sure that they are qualified. If Jesus is not a priest on the basis of law, but rather is made a priest by God's promise, by God's oath, then what is it that qualifies Jesus?

Well, the author of Hebrews has already given us the answer. It's back in verse 16. He has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent.

In other words, not because his father was a priest, but what? by the power of an indestructible life.

What qualifies Jesus to serve as priest? It's the resurrection of Jesus. The power of an indestructible life qualifies him for this perfect priesthood that is established by God's promise and not on the basis of the law.

The resurrection proves that Jesus never has to say, let me quick offer a sacrifice for my own sins first, and then I'll offer a sacrifice for yours.

[21 : 04] What testifies to us that that is true? It is the resurrection. It is the power of an indestructible life. This is Jesus' perfect priesthood.

And his once for all sacrifice for the sins of his people perfectly and eternally deals with his people's sin.

Look at verse 27. He, Jesus, has no need like those priests, those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

this is very good news for us because we need saving, not just from sins that are in our past and not just from sins that are going to be in our future.

We need saving from the sin that still exists inside of us. Jesus' once for all sacrifice and glorious resurrection inaugurates his permanent perfect priesthood.

[22 : 34] Look again at verse number 24. He holds his priesthood permanently. Why? Because he continues forever.

Consequently, notice that word that's connecting for us. Because of the resurrection, because of the power of his indestructible life, because he continues forever, consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him.

How? Since he always lives to make intercession for them. Some of us have changed pastors recently.

And every four to eight years, we change our president around here. And some of us have new managers at work, new people that we have to report to.

And so when we have these changes, we ask ourselves, what will that person be like? What will he be like? What will she be like?

[23 : 57] Will he be patient and kind? Will he have good vision? Will she set us on a trajectory that leads us in a healthy direction? Can she turn this ship around and help this business head somewhere better than we have been before?

We ask ourselves these questions, and I wonder if those living under the old covenant would ask similar questions when a new high priest came into office.

Will he be sympathetic? Will he be patient with me in my weakness? Will he intercede on my behalf to God?

Will he be careful about offering the sacrifices and doing it exactly the way that God has prescribed? Friends, God has no succession plan for Jesus.

power between Jesus and any other king.

- [25 : 08] And you do not need to worry about how Jesus will function as your high priest because the scripture is clear. Jesus doesn't delegate intercession to a subordinate.
- not even the glory of heaven, not even the worship that is rightfully his in heaven distracts him from his ministry on your behalf.
- And Jesus doesn't merely intercede with words. He intercedes with the power of his own blood.
- Father, that sin it's covered by my blood. That anger, it's covered by my blood.
- That pride, covered by my blood. That desire to manipulate and dominate, it's covered by my blood. That lust, covered by my blood. That incessant, that incessant insecurity, it is covered by my blood.
- [26 : 16] Oh, friend, this gives you tremendous, tremendous hope. Jesus doesn't grant you access to God once a year like under the old covenant.
- Jesus personally guarantees your access to God. Verse 19, the second half of the verse.
- A better hope, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God.
- Verse 22, this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.
- commitment. It's tempting for sinners like us to reduce Jesus from guarantor to cosigner.
- [27 : 14] You know? We want a cosigner. We like this idea of God helping those who helps themselves. Right? We like the idea of you do your best and God will do the rest.
- What are we doing? We're bringing down Jesus from this position of being guarantor of the new covenant and we're saying, I just need you to be my cosigner.
- Jesus will not be your cosigner. But he ever so graciously is willing to be your guarantor.
- Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus and be saved. There is no one else who will personally guarantee your access to the Father.
- Come to Jesus. Followers of Jesus as verse 25 says, your savior saves to the utter most.
- [28 : 22] ! Are you discouraged and distressed?
- Do you feel like you are walking wounded? Have you lost your job, your friends, your relationship with family, your reputation?
- Remember, as bad as it is right now, it could be worse. You have not yet come to the uttermost. And even if your life does get worse, Jesus is still able to save you because he saves to the uttermost.
- I wonder if you are hounded by temptation. I wonder if you are exhausted by the devil's accusations and he says to you, again, you did that again?
- You are such a lousy hypocrite. There is no hope for you. Friend, the devil is a coward and a liar.
- [29 : 40] Jesus saves to the uttermost. There is hope for you. There must be hope for you because Christ is risen and he saves all the way to the uttermost.
- Is your body weak? Are your emotions ragged? God, perhaps you are grieving. Are you weary of the struggle and you feel like I'm ready to give up on this?
- rest? Come to me, Jesus says, and I will give you rest. And even if a healthy body, even if a fully healed heart and mind and emotions are not God's plan for you for right now, dear, dear friend, even if you walk the valley of the shadow of death.
- Your beloved shepherd has promised to be with you and you can rest in this hope that Jesus saves to the uttermost.

He personally guarantees your access to God. This is your unquenchable source of comfort, child of God.

[31 : 13] God, because Jesus lives, you can face tomorrow. Because Jesus holds his perfect priesthood permanently, he is able to save all the way to the uttermost.

Because he ever lives, he always lives to make intercession for you, you do not need to fear. because Jesus devotes every moment of his powerful, glorious, resurrected life to the keeping of your soul.

There is no sin too great and there is no suffering too severe. You always have access to God's presence.

Jesus personally guarantees it and it is true right now and on into eternity. Let's pray.

Father, your word is so good and we are grateful to have it and to receive it. Would you help us to believe these things, these beautiful truths that your word reveals to us about the perfection of Jesus?

[32 : 40] Would you anchor these truths deep down in our souls and remind us frequently of the indestructible life that Jesus now possesses and that he is actively, eagerly, joyfully using all of that life to intercede on our behalf and that he promises to save us to the uttermost.

Would you please help us as we consider these truths, as we reflect on them, as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus?

Thank you for your good kindness to us. Please do work in our hearts, Holy Spirit. Please comfort, please encourage, please convict, please draw to salvation.

Oh dear God, perhaps today would be the day that you would draw one of our children, one of the adults, to faith in Jesus. We would so delight to celebrate together your kindness in granting life and faith and repentance.

repentance so that a broken-down sinner responds by repenting and believing this gospel. We ask this for our good and for your glory in Jesus' name.

[34 : 15] Amen. Amen. Thank you.