

Ceaseless Intercession, Forever Salvation

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[0 : 00] Hebrews chapter 7, we're going to read verses 11 through chapter 8 and verse 2. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 11.

Hebrews chapter 7, verse 11.

He, of whom these things are said, belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe was ever served or has ever served at the altar.

For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest, like Melchizedek, appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

For it is declared, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless.

[1 : 39] For the law made nothing perfect, and a better hope is introduced by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath.

Others became priests without any oath. But he became a priest with an oath when God said to him, the Lord has sworn, and he will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever. Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. Now, there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office.

But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need, one who is holy, blameless, pure, and set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.

[2 : 52] He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints us high priest men who are weak. But the oath which came after the law appointed the son who has been made perfect forever.

The point of what we are saying is this. We do not have such a high priest, or we do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Let's hear God's word preached. You have your Bibles open there to Hebrews 7. Keep them there. I'll let you know what our big text for today is in a moment, but once I had selected the text and got to the place in my preparation where I was going to commentaries, I found that we were in good hands identifying this as a big text.

John MacArthur said of it, it's one of the most beautiful verses in Scripture. And it is that because it's all about salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior.

And so the text is verse 25 of Hebrews 7, if we could have it displayed. It's all about Jesus and his saving work.

[4 : 31] Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

Now, we're going to come to this verse in a bit, but I first want you to see the context, not only in chapter 7, but in the book of Hebrews, and even in the wider context of the whole Bible.

One of the clear teachings of the entire Bible is this, that Christ's work of salvation is done as a priest. Yes, even as a great high priest, the great high priest.

And that's one of the points that the whole book of Hebrews is very eager to emphasize. So in chapter 4 and verse 14, we're told, we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens,

Jesus, the Son of God.

God is wanting us to realize that our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a great high priest. And in the book of Hebrews, we're taught that the incarnation of the Son of God, that God becoming man was necessary to fit him for the office and the work of a high priest.

[5 : 57] So in chapter 5 and verse 1, we're told, Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

And then, so he must be taken from among men if he's representing men. Chapter 2 and verse 17 says, For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that, why made like us, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

So it was in order to do his work as a high priest, that the eternal Son of God became man, one of us, just like us, that he might represent us to God.

So Jesus' work of salvation is a work accomplished as a great high priest. Now, that means if we want to understand his work of salvation, we need to understand something about the work of a priest.

And we're not left to guess concerning that. Indeed, this is why there were priests in the Old Testament. This is why there were these Old Covenant priests in Israel.

[7 : 26] They were pictures foreshadowing the work of the one great high priest that Jesus would be, that God would send. They were types.

They were symbols to us, to teach us something about the work that he will do when he comes, this great high priest. And so, as you know, in your favorite book of the Bible, Leviticus, it's full of rules and regulations about the priesthood.

All the things that the priest must do, and careful instructions. And it's not just Leviticus, it's Exodus, it's Numbers, it's throughout the Old Testament, even on into the Gospels, and through the New Testament.

And so, without taking the time to turn up those passages, I want to summarize them for you, and to do so under two headings. Because though the priests did many things, their chief work falls into two categories.

First of all, to offer sacrifices to God for the sins of the people. Their work was that of making sacrifices. But secondly, to make intercession to God on behalf of those people for which he made the sacrifice.

[8 : 45] And so, the great high priest, the high priest, would make the sacrifice outside of the most holy place, on the altar of sacrifice.

He would shed the blood, he would put it on the altar, and sacrifice it to God. But then he would take the blood of that sacrifice back behind the veil into the most holy place where God's presence was manifested.

And there he would present the sacrifice to God. And on the basis of that sacrifice, he would plead for the forgiveness of Israel's sins. He would plead for their blessing.

And that's why when he went into the most holy place, he bore on his breastpiece, then ephod, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, pleading on the basis of that sacrifice.

Now, God, bless them. Bless them. Forgive them. Have mercy upon them. So we have, then, these two aspects of the work of the priest, the priesthood.

[9 : 53] And both of them are prophesied of Christ in Isaiah 53, 12, where it says, he bore the sins of many as he poured out his life unto death and made intercession for the transgressors.

There you have it. The two aspects of the priest. To make a sacrifice for sin and to make intercession for us. And so, as the children's catechism simplifies things so well for us, the question is, how is Christ a priest?

And the answer is, he died for our sins and he pleads with God for us. There they are. The two aspects of the work of the priesthood.

Now, I think that the modern believing church is well-versed on the first part of the high priestly work, that of making a sacrifice, an atoning sacrifice that satisfies God's wrath.

But I think the church is much less clear on his continuing priestly work of interceding for us.

[11 : 07] And yet, that is precisely where the emphasis is in our big text this morning. Notice it once more. Therefore, he, this great high priest, is able to save us, to save completely those who come to God through him.

Why? Ah, because he always lives to intercede for them. You see, the emphasis is on the second part of his priestly work. And so, his sacrifice on the cross of Calvary was not the end of his work as a priest.

Having made a fitting sacrifice to God, he then went before God to intercede for us. And both are absolutely essential for our salvation. Now, someone asks, don't, don't we believe in the finished work of Christ?

Did Christ not say from the cross, it is finished? And bless God, he did say that. And bless God, his work was finished there on the cross.

But he was not referring to all aspects of his saving work. Indeed, there is the work of salvation past, there is the work of salvation present, and there is yet a future salvation that we wait for.

[12:27] And when Jesus said it is finished, he wasn't saying all my work as a high priest is done. God, he's referring to his first part of making a sacrifice that would atone for sins.

That sacrifice made once for all time is over. All of that work is ended. But his priestly work of intercession for us in heaven was just beginning.

So the one is past and done forever. The other aspect of his priestly work continues and goes on forever. Now this is so important that I want you to see it from the book of Hebrews and also from the rest of the New Testament.

We'll give two verses from each of those sources. First of all, two verses from the book of Hebrews. And as the book opens up in chapter 1 and verse 3, it says of God's Son, after he had provided purification for sin.

Now where did he do that? On the cross. He made his sacrifice. And after he had provided purification for sin, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

[13:38] But don't ever think that sitting means he's doing nothing in heaven. That's not true at all. There's the two parts of his work right at the beginning of Hebrews.

Provided purification, now gone into heaven there at the Father's right hand. And chapter 9 and verse 24 tells us, in contrast to the earthly priests of the old covenant, Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one.

No, he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Now. Now to carry his finished work of atonement into the presence of God and there plead its benefits for us who trust in him.

Well, this is one reason then why Christ's resurrection and ascension are so essential to our salvation. We needed a high priest not only to make a sacrifice that would satisfy God's justice, but we needed one to take that sacrifice before God in heaven and plead it on our behalf.

And that's what he does continually as he represents us. He is the sacrifice. And by his very presence before the Lord, the very merits of his blood are pleaded for our forgiveness, for our acceptance, and for our favor with God.

[15:18] So those are the two texts from Hebrews. Then we go to Paul's text in Romans 8. In verses 33 and 34, the issue is how do you silence the condemning accusations that come against you?

How can you put them to silence? How does God put them to silence? Whether those condemning accusations come from Satan, come from the law of God, you've broken me, you're condemned, come from our own conscience that says, that's right, I am.

A lawbreaker and deserving of death? Or come from other people? How do you silence a condemning accusation? That's the question. Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?

It is God that justifies. Now there's the answer. Who can bring any charge against the ones that God has chosen? He's chosen them, chosen to save them, and he has justified them through the righteousness of Jesus.

He's declared them righteous, so who can make any charge stick against them? And he goes on further in verse 34. Who is he that condemns? Who can make a condemnation stick against these whom God has chosen and justified?

[16:39] Christ who died. That's the first part of his high priestly work. Christ who died, but it's not a period. More than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

So believing, brothers and sisters, don't shortchange your own comfort and assurance of salvation. Yes, your great high priest died for you. That's no small comfort, I trust, and assurance as he offered himself as the sacrifice in your place.

But Paul says more than that, there's even more assurance to be made than just his death for you. And it is that he was raised to life and is right now at this moment interceding for you.

And his presence there answers every condemnation that can ever be brought up against you. So it's to your comfort to know his present work in heaven for you as your great high priest.

He handles all your cases and he's never lost a case yet. That's Paul giving evidence to the intercessory work of our great high priest.

[17 : 55] And then John does the same in 1 John 2 and verse 1. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. Now there John is telling us the aim for which he wrote his letter of 1 John.

Why did you write it, John? My dear children, I wrote it that you might not sin. Now if that was his aim in writing, it ought to be our aim in receiving it. And it ought to be our aim every morning we wake up.

Our aim is not to sin. But John was also a realist. And he adds, my dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.

But if anybody sins, aren't you glad for that clause? if anybody sins, we have, present tense, an advocate with the Father. This is for the children of God.

We have right now one who speaks to the Father in our defense. He is Jesus Christ, the righteous one. And he's there right now for our defense.

[19 : 01] And I want you to know he's not pleading our righteousness. righteousness. He's pleading his own righteousness. He's the righteous one. And he pleads his righteousness on our behalf.

Father, I took her sins. You damned me in her place and gave to her my righteousness. And that's an ever-continuing advocacy where I need it most before the throne of God above.

There I have this advocate. There I have this great high priest pleading for me. That's the work of our great high priest in heaven. Interceding.

So there we have it. Two verses from Hebrews. Two verses from Romans and John. From Paul and John. So here we are on page three of my notes and we're still not to our text.

We're still introducing it. But I hope I've demonstrated my proposition. that Christ's work of salvation is done as a high priest.

[20 : 11] And as a high priest he had two parts to his work. To make a sacrifice that atoned for sin and then to take that sacrifice into the very presence of God in the real most holy place of heaven and there to plead salvation blessings for us.

Now shall we turn to Hebrews 7 then. Let's look at the context of chapter 7. And as we come to chapter 7 we notice that in this chapter a comparison is being made between the Old Testament Levitical priests all from the line of Aaron and Levi and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The comparison of these two kinds of priests and the superiority of Jesus' priesthood is being demonstrated. Now why is he doing this? And that means we must consider again briefly the reason that the author to these Hebrew Christians is writing this letter to them.

Well they're being tempted to turn back. They had put their trust in Christ but they're being tempted to turn back to the old Christless Judaism.

The Judaism that rejected Jesus as the Messiah. They're being tempted and pulled to look back. You see the coming of Christ meant great changes in their long-standing religious life.

[21 : 37] For hundreds of years under the old covenant they had a beautiful temple that they could point to. One of the wonders of the world there at that present time. Herod's temple.

And there was incense and a glorious altar and there were priests in flowing robes offering sacrifices before their eyes in living color and there was the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice.

It was all a lot for the physical eye to see and to take in. And it seems that they were wondering now are we missing out on all of that?

All that was so familiar. All that was in the Old Testament holy scriptures. Because the new covenant worship was so simple and plain without all of that, those accoutrements and outward trappings of worship.

And on top of that, the followers of Jesus were being persecuted. Some were killed, others imprisoned. Most of them ostracized from their family, from their neighborhood, had financial ramifications.

[22 : 50] And all of this and more was tempting them to abandon Christ and go back to their old familiar ways. Yeah, to the worship where we could see our priest and we could see the altar and we could see the sacrifices.

And so the writer to the Hebrews says, wait a minute, wait a minute. That old covenant was never meant to be permanent.

It was just a provisional setup to point to the permanent one. It was a temporary priesthood to point to the permanent priesthood.

And we do have a priest and we do have an altar and we do have a sacrifice. And so throughout the book of Hebrews, he's saying we have in Christ a better covenant.

We have better promises that hold out a better hope for drawing near to God. We have a better country. We have a better ministry, a better priesthood, a better altar, a better sacrifice.

[23 : 53] So hold on to Christ. Just because you cannot see him, don't abandon him. He's real. He is our great high priest. He's the only savior. And so this letter is a call to persevere in the way of Christ.

And he gives them both warnings and encouragements to do so. And so in chapter 7, we're dipping in right into the midst of this argument that Jesus is a better priest than these Old Testament Levitical priests.

There's some dozen reasons why he's better, I suppose, in these chapters, but we're dipping into the argument there. And he's saying, you think you're missing out because you can't see your priest.

Well, let me give you some reasons why Jesus is a superior priest. And we're only going to look at one. It's the one that has to do with our text. priesthood. And it's found in verses 23 and 24.

It's all to do with Jesus having a permanent priesthood. Notice verse 23 and 24. Now, there have been many of those priests, those Levitical priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office.

[24 : 59] But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. So the old covenant high priests, they were priests for life. There were no term limits upon them.

But the trouble was they kept dying and they needed to be replaced. So there had been many of those priests since death prevented them from staying in office.

Somebody estimated maybe as many as a hundred high priests since Aaron up to the time of Christ. But they kept dying.

But verse 24 says, but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Permanent. It cannot end. Oh, he was dead, but behold, he's alive forevermore and never to die, never to be replaced.

He is a priest forever is what his father said to him. And so our big text then is piggybacked on that argument because Jesus lives forever, because he has a permanent priesthood, therefore, therefore, he's able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

[26 : 19] Notice three points about our great high priest Jesus Christ and they just follow the three phrases of our verse. Number one is his ability to save. He is able to save completely.

And that's what marks him out as utterly unique among all the priests, the high priests that have ever served. No other high priest was able to save.

No other high priest was able to save by their sacrifices, by their prayers. The sacrifices of goats and lambs could not take away sin.

It was impossible. Oh, they could typify, they could picture, they could symbolize and point to a sacrifice that would really take, but they couldn't take away sin.

They couldn't save. They were just provisional, pointing to Christ's sacrifice, but only Christ is able to save because only he offered a fitting sacrifice.

[27 : 30] sacrifice. And so he did what no other high priest had ever done. He offered himself as the sacrifice.

The other high priest brought animals. Jesus, the great high priest, brings himself and he offered himself without spot to God, the scripture said.

Offered himself. now there was a sacrifice that could save because there was a sacrifice that could appease the wrath of God that stood against us because of our sins.

There was a sacrifice that could actually satisfy justice so that justice smiles and asks no more. There was a sacrifice that could pay the full price for my sins and undo all the offense that my sins did, pay the full hell to pay that my sins deserve.

He, by that sacrifice, could pay it all off, the whole debt. And that's why he alone is able to save. Able to save.

[28 : 41] So he's not only willing to save, he is able with power to save. And not just for a few years, but forever, completely, to the uttermost, to the end.

He doesn't rescue you for 40 years or 50 years and then he dies and leaves you in the lurch to make it on your own from there. No. He's able to save forever.

Why? Because he always lives to intercede for you. And that's why he's able to save. And not get you just halfway home, but safely all the way home to heaven.

His ability to save. that's why we're thankful that we have Jesus as our great high priest. But secondly, notice whom he saves completely.

It's those who come to God through him. You know, don't you, that you must come to God to be saved. You've rebelled.

[29 : 42] You've turned against God. Now you must repent and turn and come to him. Oh, but you can't come alone. You can only come to him through his appointed high priest, Jesus Christ.

You can't come to him through the merits of Mary or the saints or your own merits. You can only come to God through his appointed high priest, Jesus Christ.

Apart from him, we have no business coming to God. Oh, but through him, we have an open welcome. What did Jesus say? I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.

You must come to God through him. Otherwise, I have no grounds upon which to approach God. Me, the sinner, he, the holy God, whom I've sinned against.

But it's good news that's being announced in this text. There is an appointed high priest to bring us to God to be saved. He's God's appointed mediator, but there's only one mediating priest that will do the job.

[31 : 02] There is one God and one mediator between God and man. He is the man in Christ Jesus. Fully God, fully man, and through him and his work, we can come to God and be saved.

Why? Because he always lives to intercede for those who come to God through him. So when we come to God, when we turn from our way and come to him, we come to God saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, for Jesus' sake.

Because of who Jesus is and what he's done for poor sinners. That's what it means to come to God through Christ. It's through his merits what he has done to save sinners.

sinners. And he makes us fit for God. Now notice thirdly, why he's able to save completely those who come to God through him.

It's because he always lives to intercede for them. He never stops interceding for them. He's never done. It's because he lives forever that his intercession is forever, that your salvation is forever.

[32 : 09] Can you follow the logic of that? That verse? Because Jesus never dies like the other old covenant high priests, because his priesthood is permanent, therefore his intercession for believing sinners is unceasing and therefore their salvation is unending.

He always lives to intercede for them. Oh, but but if your high priest representing you before God ever dies, if he's ever removed from heaven, you're in big trouble.

But if he cannot die and he always lives and always intercedes for you, then your salvation is more secure than you realize.

As top lady says, more happy but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heaven. We have loved ones in heaven who put their trust in Christ.

They're secure. They may be happier than us, but they're not more secure than us. Their salvation rests as much upon this great high priest's work of atonement and ongoing intercession as ours does.

[33 : 25] And so more happy but not more secure. And that's why it's in our Bible and that's why it's a big text. It's meant to assure us as we sang, I greet thee who my sure redeemer art.

He is a sure redeemer. He's a sure high priest and therefore our salvation is sure. Now, look even closer with me at his intercession.

What is Christ's present work of intercession? It's to answer the question, what is Jesus doing right now in heaven for me as my high priest? Two things.

Number one, he's presenting himself before God as the sacrifice for our salvation. He himself, as we said, was the sacrifice offered as a priest on the altar of Calvary.

And by rising from the dead and ascending to the throne of God in heaven, going into the most holy place, he is there now presenting that sacrifice to the Father on our behalf.

[34 : 32] Where is Jesus? He is there at the Father's right hand. He's right there on the throne of God with him. And what's he doing? He's praying for us.

He's presenting to the Father the sacrifice that has bought us for God. And so that means that the Father has always before him our substitute sacrifice.

24-7, always before the Father, is our payment for sin. The sacrifice, Jesus, he's there at the Father's right hand, always in view.

And his presence there ever pleads the merits of his blood to cover our sins. Hebrews 12, 22-24 takes us into that heavenly scene and tells us what's there.

And yes, there are angels in joyful assembly and the spirits of just men made perfect. But then he says, God the judge is there. And Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant is there.

[35 : 42] And the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. You remember the blood of Abel? We talked about it a week ago. When Cain killed his brother Abel, what did he do with him?

He buried him. His blood soaked into the ground. And Cain thought that's the end of that. But God came to him and said, Abel's blood is crying to the ground in my ear.

What was it crying? It was crying for justice. And God came to punish Cain for his crime of murdering his brother Abel.

Oh, but there in heaven is before God the judge is Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant and his sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Well, what does his blood speak? A better word. A forgiving word. Abel's blood for vengeance pleaded to the skies.

[36 : 42] But the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries. Five bleeding wounds he bears. He bears. He bears. He bears. He bears. He bears. They pour effectual prayers. They strongly plead for me.

Forgive him. Oh, forgive. They cry. And let not that ransomed sinner die. You see, the very presence of Jesus before the Father pleads for our salvation.

Because he is the sacrifice ever in view before the Father. But then there is secondly, his interceding for us is not only the presentation of himself as the sacrifice before God.

He is praying for us and presenting our prayers to the Father. He prays for us and presents our prayers to the Father. We have samples of his intercessory prayers.

John chapter 17, we refer to it as the intercessory prayer of Jesus. And it's a template then of what he's doing today. He was praying not for the world but for his own, his disciples.

[37 : 44] What did he pray for them? Father, protect them from the evil one. Father, make them holy. Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth. Unite them.

Make them one even as we are one that the world might see and believe in me. And Father, bring them home to me that they might be with me where I am and see my glory.

The glory you gave me before the creation of the world. He's praying, you see, for us. Right now, praying for us. But it's not in just some vague general way. He knows his sheep by name.

And he prays for our individual and specific needs according to our present situations in life. We see that in his prayer for Peter on the night of the arrest.

He says in Luke 22, 30 and 31, Simon, Simon. That's personal. That's not general. That's very particular. An individual.

[38 : 45] Satan is asked to sift you as wheat. He's going to get you in his sieve and he's going to shake you here and there in every direction. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.

And after you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. Christ knew what was coming that very night and how Satan would tempt him.

And what Satan's aim was in that temptation, not just to get Peter to deny three times that he didn't know Jesus. Satan's aim was to have him turn his back on Jesus forever and go to hell. Satan always aims at death. He comes with this little temptation. You think, oh, he's not after much. He's after your soul. And that's what he was after with Peter. What kept Peter from apostatizing? What kept him after denying three times, making it four and five and never again following the Savior? The prayers of his high priest.

[39 : 52] I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith not fail. Now, that's good news for me. Between here and heaven, there's a lot that's setting against me.

There is the devil who wants me damned in all of his temptation. He's an enemy too strong for me. There's the world and its allurements and its persecutions and worst of all, there's the flesh still in me that wants what Satan suggests and wants what the world is offering so that every sin is an inside job.

I say it's all amassed against me to keep me from making it to heaven. Then why will I make it? Where's my assurance? It's this, that after suffering and making an atonement that satisfied God on my behalf, Jesus is now presenting that sacrifice and praying for me.

And as long as Jesus prays for me, my salvation is secure. He always lives to always intercede. His priesthood is an everlasting priesthood. Now this was a lesson that Christian needed to learn early in the Christian life in Pilgrim's Progress as he comes into the interpreter's house.

[41 : 12] He sees this, he sees this fireplace and it's got a fire burning. And even though a man is throwing buckets of water upon the fire, strangely enough, it keeps burning.

And so Christian asks the interpreter, what is the meaning of that? Why does it keep burning? He says, come around behind. And around behind was a man pouring in oil. to teach us that all that the world and the devil and our flesh might do to put out the fire of faith within us is overcome because of something that Jesus, our high priest, is doing secretly.

We don't see him. But don't think he's not doing something. He is our high priest always living to intercede for us and from heaven his secret, most holy place.

He's praying for us. That our faith not fail. When I think my faith might fail, Jesus is praying for me that it not fail.

So what do I owe to Jesus, my high priest, and his prayers for me? I owe him my salvation. Every holy thought, every godly desire, every victory over Satan, every self-denial, every love for God and hatred for sin, every ounce of love for man, every step along the way, every bit of my faith, hope, and love, it's coming from my great high priest who prays for me and secures from the Father these graces and mercies that I need.

[42 : 54] He presents my needs and my request to God and they're heard. That's his intercessory work.

Now what do you think of him? How do you think of him as he's there today praying for you specifically, Christian? How do you think of him? What do you think his attitude is for you?

Well, I can assure you that his heart towards you was not one thing when making the sacrifice on Calvary and another thing now that he's making intercession for you.

Did he pour out his life as a sacrifice for you on Calvary out of love for you? Then you can know that it is out of love for you that he is now praying for you.

It's the same high priest. It's the same love, loving ministry. And his heart is the same. Can you say with Paul, he loved me and gave himself for me.

[44 : 01] Then you can say, right now, he is loving me and praying for me with love. We have it in Hebrews 4.

We have this great high priest, Jesus, the Son of God. Verse 15. We do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way like we are yet without sin.

What is his heart toward us? As in our weakness, our sins, our failings, our stumblings, our denying of him. What's his attitude toward us in our weakness and sins as we come to him with our prayers? His attitude is one of pity. He's a merciful and faithful high priest. He remembers what it's like to be tried and tempted like we are.

And his heart runs out to us in our weakness, sympathizes with us, has a fellow feeling in his heart with us, and gladly prays for grace, for mercy and grace in our time of need.

[45 : 16] And don't think that the Father's heart is any different than his heart. We are wrong to get the idea that Jesus is our great high priest there at the Father's side and he's just begging and pleading God who's reluctant to save and forgive us.

No, no. The Father's the one that sent the Son as our great high priest. Jesus has the same deity as the Father.

That means they share deity together. They have the same heart, the same desires, the same mind. They're one in their deity. So do you, does Jesus love you as he prays for you?

The Father loves to answer the prayers of his Son for you. He delights to do so. That's why he sent his Son. And he's just delighted that you would make use of him as you come to him.

And so the application there in Hebrews 4 follows. Verse 16, let us therefore, do we have this great high priest who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses and falterings?

[46 : 22] Then let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace and that we might receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.

What gives us confidence to come to him in prayer when we're sinning and stumbling and weak and poor and needy? Well, it's because of the one who's there for us.

He's there as our priest to bring our prayers and needs before the Father. And our high priest loves us and the Father loves us. No fear of approaching God with this great high priest representing us.

And so we come reverently but boldly with our request. We remember the fear of Queen Esther approaching the throne of her husband, the king of Persia.

And she came with fear because whoever approached his throne uninvited was immediately killed.

And the only exception being if the king raised his scepter to welcome them.

[47 : 28] But 30 days had passed and he had not invited her into his presence to approach him.

Oh yes, she approached in fear that day, didn't she?

Ready to give her life. If I perish, I perish. We don't come like that to the throne of God. Not to some pitiful king of Persia.

We come into the very throne room of the God of heaven and earth, the king of kings, the Lord of lords. And we don't come trembling like Esther did.

No, we come confident of how we will be received because he is our sympathetic, merciful, faithful high priest in service to God.

And as we come before God with Jesus, the golden scepter is always raised to us. We have access through our Lord Jesus Christ a hundred times a day if you'd like to come.

[48 : 32] So we come boldly. We approach through the merits and person of Christ and the Father's delighted to give grace and mercy to us.

We come to a throne that is not a throne of judgment to us who have come through Jesus, but a throne of grace to receive grace when we most need it. The applications are clear, I trust.

Drink in this truth for your security, for the assurance of your salvation. We have one who holds us fast. He holds us by his presenting, his offering before God.

He holds us by his mighty prayers before the Father. And his intercession guarantees your complete salvation. And then secondly, make generous use of this great high priest.

If we have this great high priest, what a tragedy that we don't make use of him. That we don't lay hold of our privilege.

[49 : 35] That in our sin and in our weakness we have one to come to and to receive exactly what we need. Later in chapter 10, verse 19 to 22, therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened up for us through the curtain, that is his body.

And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with sincere heart in full assurance of faith. That's it.

Come to him. Come boldly. Come often. And pour out your hearts to him. And then go with expectation because of the kind of high priest that he is for you.

There's encouragement here for the saints. And there's encouragement to any sinner that's not yet come to Christ. That if you do come to Christ, to God through Christ, he will receive you.

Whoever comes to me, I will in no way cast out. Let's pray. Lord, we confess that our faith is often so weak that we can't take in fully all that you are for us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[51 : 00] So I ask that we who are your people would think and meditate and treasure this high priest that you, our Father, have appointed for us.

Knowing exactly our need for a sacrifice and for an intercessor, you gave us your own son. Shine your light upon him today, Holy Spirit, that we might see him and love him and we might go from this place and make use of him.

Not just morning and evening, but throughout our days. Enjoying that fellowship that is ours because of all that Jesus is and does. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.