

# Twelve Encouragements to Finish Well

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing Christ and living a life of righteousness, and encourages listeners to remember Christ's love and sacrifice.*

**Duration:** 1:33:47

**Scripture:** John 17:4, Hebrews 2:2, Hebrews 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:1, Hebrews 13:3-6

**Topics:** "Drifting"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a helpful analogy given to him by a devout man in Texas. The analogy suggests that material possessions are necessary for life, but they become dangerous when they move from the hand to the heart. The speaker encourages the audience to hold everything they possess in an open hand, ready to share with others in need. The sermon then shifts to discussing the importance of living vitally and vigorously for the glory of God, using the example of Jesus who accomplished everything the Father sent him to do. The speaker emphasizes that through Christ's power, believers can also accomplish their purpose. The sermon concludes by referencing Hebrews 12:1-2, which encourages believers to lay aside encumbrances and sins, and to fix their eyes on Jesus as the author and perfecter of their faith.

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## Transcript

Well, we've come to the end of our time with Mr. Roberts tonight. I look forward to hearing what the Lord has to say through him. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we thank You for this day. We thank You for the words that we've heard already. We thank You for how You've spoken to us and for these warnings that we've heard.

Father, we pray for grace to lay a hold of them and to obey them immediately and constantly. We are grateful that You do speak to us. We're grateful for Your Word that You do not change, and therefore we are not consumed.

We're thankful for the mercies that You show us every day in Christ Jesus. And we're thankful for the mercy You've shown us this week. God, we ask You for more mercy.

We ask You to speak to us again tonight. We pray, Lord, that You would enable Mr. Roberts as he stands to preach. We pray, Father, that You would fill him with Your Spirit and speak through Your Word.

Father, not only tonight, but we also pray for Mr. Roberts in this coming week in Arkansas, both at the church there in Star City and also in the prison as he preaches. We pray, Father, that You would enable him. We pray that Your Word would find success, that it would fulfill all the purposes that You've sent it out for.

Father, we pray that You would make much of Your Son. And we do pray that You would revive our hearts, revive our land. God, come, please.

Help us, we pray, in Christ Jesus' name. Amen. Let's turn together to the 13th chapter of Hebrews.

I mentioned this morning that the 13th chapter is a bit like an appendix, but loaded with wonderful and helpful instruction. So, chapter 13, please, at verse 1. Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Do you suppose that's ever happened in your situation? Remember the prisoners as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have.

For He Himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you. So that we confidently say, The Lord is my Helper. I shall not be afraid what man shall do to me.

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you, and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefited.

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat, for the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood suffered outside the gate. Hence, let us go out to Him, outside the gate, bearing His reproach.

For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God that the fruit of lips that give thanks to His image and do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. And I urge you all the more to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. Take note that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I shall see you.

Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all.

Now one could misinterpret grievously the passage that we were looking at this morning. And once in a while, I have met people who said it's obvious that it's not right to have material goods. So we have given away everything.

And I have said to them, where do you live? Oh, well, we don't believe in owning things. Well, if everybody refused to believe in owning things, and nobody did, where would you live? Obviously, you can carry the wonderful instruction of the sixth warning too far. But years ago, in a conversation with a devout man in Texas, he gave me a picture that I have found very helpful, which I would like to share with you tonight.

When you think about everything being shaken, and the only things that remain are the things that cannot be shaken, and yet realistically, you realize we have to live somewhere, we can't just live out in the open, we have to have food to eat, we've got to take care of the children, we've got to care for the elderly, we've got to provide health care. His statement was, one will not go wrong if all of the material possessions which are necessary to life are held in the hand. It's when they move from the hand to the heart that they become dangerous.

And I have been so deeply appreciative of that, for ownership of goods is necessary, and places of dwelling mandatory. But what if every one of us from now on held everything that we possess in an open hand, so that if somebody needed it worse than we, we had no problem sharing it, so that it never got a grip upon our hearts, but was simply treated as something that will be shaken and destroyed, but for the moment is necessary. Now this evening, having completed the six warnings, what I would like to do is to share some encouragement out of this wonderful epistle.

Statements that will help us to live vitally and vigorously to the glory of God. Some of you have heard me say that I have been an itinerant preacher the bulk of my life. Began when I was young and persevered in it throughout the major portions.

But I was late in life in getting married, 31 years of age, having been years in itinerant work. And then Maggie and I were married, and we were blessed with two children. And what I discovered after a while was my children hardly knew who their father was, because I was away from home so much.

And that did not seem right or pleasing to God. So we began to pray fervently that God would provide some opportunity of ministry that would be as urgent and as vital as the itinerant work. And out of the blue, a church in California asked me to consider coming there as pastor.

It was a very strange church. It had a most extraordinary name. The name of the church was the Free Evangelical Lutheran Cross Church.

Now it was not free. Membership in the church was determined by paying dues. And the dues were \$25 per year per person, with virtually a written guarantee from the church that as long as you paid your dues, you were certain of heaven.

At \$25, that is the bargain. So despite its name, it was not free. It was most certainly not evangelical.

They had never had an evangelical pastor. It was actually made up entirely of immigrants from Russia. During the days of Catherine the Great, Germans were invited to settle in the White River region or the Volga area of Russia.

Tens of thousands of Germans moved to Russia. They were given certain unusual privileges. They were guaranteed that they would never be conscripted for army service.

They were given a long number of years tax-free. And many other benefits came to them. But at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, they were driven out of Russia.

And because they were farmers, they settled in the better agricultural regions of both the United States and Canada. The church to which I was called was regarded as the mother church. At the time I went there, it had 2,400 people who had paid their \$25 dues and all told 5,000 families on the constituency roll.

But it was not evangelical. They did not know the gospel. When I went there, I knew that Billy Graham had held a crusade in Fresno, California shortly before, and there were about 30 people who professed to be converted in that crusade.

Then there was a little band of about six elderly men, 80 and older, who had been part of the Russian Brotherhood and had come to California and were still practicing Christians, but they were extraordinarily narrow-minded and bigoted and difficult men. So the church, although named free, was not free. Although named evangelical, it was not evangelical.

And although named Lutheran, it was not a Lutheran church. It was a congregational church, and that's why I was invited to consider the pastorate because I was at that time the minister-at-large of the congregational denomination. After I arrived there, it was somewhat amusing to me but not to them to receive a letter from all the Lutheran churches in central California asking them to drop the name Lutheran in that they had never been and most certainly were not at that time Lutheran.

Somehow they thought I was the instigator of that letter, and I took a good bit of blame for it. So, despite its name, not free, not evangelical, not Lutheran, but it was cross. They were the crossiest people that I have ever encountered in all my life.

I have never known anybody with such a warring spirit as those people have. The very first Sunday, I preached there as pastor. The deacons waited on me as a body, and they said, we don't like your preaching.

From now on, you must submit your sermon to us by Tuesday, and we will tell you what portion of it we will allow. I said to them, I have read the Constitution, and the Constitution of the church says the deacons are to assist the pastor. So let it be understood that I ask God what to preach, and I preach what he shows me.

You will have nothing whatsoever to do with what I preach. On the other hand, if you know someone who is ill, someone who needs pastoral ministry, you're welcome to mention that to me. And they said, we won't tolerate that.

We will put you out. And immediately, they went to work to do so. But I had the most incredible privilege of preaching there for a year to thousands and thousands of people who didn't know Christ.

But at the end of the year, they called a business meeting to put me out. It was amusing. There were people who came to vote me out who were overheard asking, who is this guy we're voting on? What does he look like? Is he here? They got into a fight with one another over it, and they failed altogether to remove me.

The mayor of the city of Fresno was a member of the church, and he said, turn it over to me. I know how to get rid of the guy. And so they had a business meeting again the next week, and the mayor did know how to get rid of a guy.

But in the process, they not only put me out, but they put out the handful of believers along with about 40 or 50 who had not yet been converted but had been deeply stirred by the preaching of the word. And we really had no choice. Having moved from New York to California, having purchased a house there, and having been there only a year, we felt we must stay, and we must try to help this band of believers.

And during the meeting in which the mayor was maneuvering to remove me, I received several notes from people saying, it's obvious they put us out as well as you. And then a note from a family that had a huge home saying, let's meet at our house tonight. And so about 70 people gathered in that home, and we determined to start a new church.

And it was agreed that the basis of membership would be credible evidence of regeneration. Each person who wished to become a member had to prove to the rest of the congregation that they were truly born of God. It was a very interesting time, I assure you.

As person after person stood and provided the evidence that they had passed from death to life, that they had truly been born of the Spirit, three Sunday evenings were set aside for these provisions of evidence. On the third Sunday after the morning service, a woman passed by me who had a very troubled look. And I said to her, Betty, is it your intention to become a charter member of this church? Weeping profusely, she said, oh, Mr. Roberts, I can't.

I said, why? She said, you know I'm not a Christian. Yes, I said, Betty, I know you're not a Christian, but what I don't know is why you're not a Christian. And weeping, she said to me, I don't feel what you have to feel to be a Christian.

I said, what is that? She said, I don't know what it is. I just know I don't feel it. Come now, Betty, I will not accept that as an answer.

What is it you think you have to feel to be a Christian? She said, I don't know. It's just that I know that my husband is a real Christian, and I don't feel what any feel. I didn't have any alternative but to bow my heart and say, Lord, if I'm going to help this person, you're going to have to help me.

So I said to her, will you answer some questions? Yes, she said. I said, Betty, did you ever make an onion sandwich? Her mouth dropped open, and in a startled way, she said, what kind of a question is that? I said, answer the question. Did you ever make an onion sandwich? She said, I don't like onion sandwiches, but my husband does, so every once in a while I make him an onion sandwich.

Oh, I said, then you don't feel about onion sandwiches like Eddie feels. No, definitely not. I said, answer another question.

Do you think Eddie loves you the way you love Eddie? Mr. Robert, you know Eddie's a good man. He tries to love me. I think he does love me in his own way, but he certainly doesn't love me the way I love him.

Oh, then you don't feel the same about onion sandwiches as Eddie feels, and you don't feel the same about Eddie as Eddie feels toward you? What makes you so sure to be a Christian you have to feel the way Eddie feels? She said, are you saying I don't have to feel anything to be a Christian? No. I said,

answer another question. Did you ever feel grieved because you're a sinner? Then she really broke into weeping.

She said, I know I'm a terrible sinner. I don't know that there's ever been a sinner as bad as me. I can't even sing the hymns.

I'm so guilty. I said, answer another question. Did you ever feel that Christ truly loves you? Oh, she said, I don't know how he can.

I just know that he does. And I said, Betty, you have all the feelings necessary to become a true believer. Why don't you just cast yourself upon him? And she left.

When the meeting was opened that night, and I said, we're now ready for you who have still to do so to provide credible evidence of regeneration, she rushed forward and she said with this great smile on her face, just today, I cast myself upon Christ and he has saved me. And truly, he has. Now, in the book of Hebrews, we have been talking, really, about salvation.

Hebrews is all about salvation. But one of you says, I thought you said it was all about Christ. Ah, yes.

It is all about Christ. Because Christ is salvation. Salvation is not a feeling.

It's not even an experience. It's certainly not a series of things you do. Salvation is Christ.

Do you remember in the second chapter of Luke, that that old man, Simeon, was in the temple with great regularity. And when Mary and Joseph came into the temple carrying the baby Jesus, Simeon took the baby in his arms. And he said to God, Now, your servant can depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation.

There, in the arms of aged Simeon, is salvation. Christ, the Savior. And it's when we embrace Christ, when we cast ourselves upon Christ, when Christ becomes our Lord and our Savior, that salvation is truly accomplished.

Now, having stressed the six warning passages throughout the week, here is the simple plan for tonight. There are 13 chapters in Hebrews. The 11th chapter says nothing distinct or directly about Christ.

It is the great faith chapter and the account of those many saints of the Old Testament and their confidence in Christ is what occupies that chapter. So, taking out chapter 11, there are 12 chapters that talk about Christ. I'd like to just select a single statement from each of the 12 chapters just to give you a refreshing sense of how wonderful salvation is.

Because Christ, our Savior, is truly wonderful. We'll start in chapter 1. It will be different from sermons that I normally preach. I don't ever remember doing such a thing before.

But I love the idea. And I believe it will bless your heart to ponder these simple and yet glorious statements about Jesus Christ Himself. Chapter 1, verse 9. Chapter 1, verse 9. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.

Therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions and thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They will perish, but thou remainest. We read the portion that follows this morning.

But let's just for a moment reflect upon this incredibly consequential statement. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. The reason Christ was willing to be born on this earth.

The reason Christ was willing to suffer at the hands of religious leaders. The reason Christ was willing to be crucified. The reason Christ was willing to bear your sin on His own body on the tree was because He has always loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

And He did not die so that you could escape hell. He died so that you could escape wickedness. He died to take away your evil.

He died to give you a heart for righteousness. He died to make it possible for you to live all out forever to the praise of His glory. No one else has ever hated iniquity and loved righteousness the way Christ hates iniquity and loves righteousness.

And how perfectly asinine it is for a person to call themselves a Christian when they love unrighteousness and hate righteousness. And we have multitudes in the churches across the land who are in exactly that plight. They don't hate iniquity.

They just hate getting caught doing it. And they hate the possibility of punishment for it. Christ gave Himself for each of us because He loves righteousness.

Isn't that a wonderful encouragement to know that the real purpose of His death and His burial and His resurrection was so that you could learn to love what He loves and to hate what He hates. It's obviously a useless task on your own to rid yourself of the love of sin. By our nature, there are certain sins that we despise.

But again, by our nature, there are certain sins that we love and we fondle and we cater to. But when Christ comes into our lives, all appetite for sin is removed. And a great hunger for righteousness is given to us.

We do occasionally lapse back into a taste for sin. When we fail to keep our eyes fixed upon Christ. But is it not wonderful even after you have been a true believer for a considerable season and then you lapse back into iniquity that Christ is as ready to receive you back and to enable you to rise above sin as He ever was? Go away from this week remembering Christ died.

Christ was buried. Christ rose again so that you might hate what He hates and love what He loves. Look at chapter 2. And again, I would point out a short statement in verse 8. Chapter 2 verse 8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet.

For in subjecting all things to Him He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him but we see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels namely Jesus. Because of the life or the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man.

We have been instructed in Hebrew that Christ has put all things under His feet. So not only did Christ die and was buried and rose again to alter our affections so that we were no longer attracted to sin but drawn in love of righteousness. He also made it wonderfully possible by putting everything under His feet.

There is not one thing that is guaranteed to defeat the Christian. There is not one sin that you can end up saying I can't deal with it. I want to.

I long to. But I am unable to because Christ has put everything under His feet. These warning passages are fortified by the glorious truth that what Christ has called us to Christ has enabled us to be and to do.

Make a note in your heart that there is no reason to live in defeat. There is absolutely no sin that has any authority over you except the authority you give it. But if instead of giving authority to the sin you place your confidence in Christ and you live in confidence Christ in me enables me to put under my feet all the things He already has under His feet.

I like to remind myself on a regular basis today no temptation is going to come but what Christ has already experienced it Himself and put it under His feet. Today I am going to live in the confidence of a Savior who has already won my victory and I am going to live by His grace in the victory that Christ Himself has won. Chapter 3 this time verse 2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him.

We noted when we were looking at the warning portion this warning in chapter 2, the second of these warning statements we noted verse 6 Christ was faithful as a son over His house whose house we are. If we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end but let us focus for a moment upon verse 2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him. Those words remind me of a spectacular statement that Christ made in the gospel of John chapter 17 at verse 4. I want to turn back there and read it to you.

If you have not exposed yourself to this statement recently I would like to encourage you to turn with me and note for yourself these absolutely magnificent words. The gospel of John chapter 17 at verse 4 I have glorified Thee under earth having accomplished the work which Thou hast given me to do. Is that not amazing that Christ accomplished absolutely everything that the Father sent Him to accomplish.

But what makes it so absolutely alluring and wonderful is that through His power we too can accomplish everything that He has given us to do. Some of you have grown so weary of falling on your face of failing time after time. But if you fall on your face if you fail to accomplish the purpose that Christ has for you it's just because you're willing to fail.

He had not only the power to accomplish all that the Father gave Him to do personally but to enable each of us to accomplish absolutely everything that the Father has for us to do. Isn't it time that some of us stopped trying and started believing. Wouldn't it be wonderful if from tonight forward never a single day passed but what you knew deep inside just as Christ finished the work that the Father gave Him to do.

So today by the power of Christ I have finished the work that He has given me to do. And we read in verse 6 that just as Christ was faithful over His house we also are of His house. If we go on boldly claiming proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Now these warnings that we have been looking at are severe and they do appear in many ways extremely difficult. But not one of these warnings is beyond our capacity in Christ to observe and to observe with utter faithfulness and to conquer day after day after day as we place our faith in Christ. Look at the fourth chapter where I select again just a small portion.

At chapters, verses 14 or excuse me 15 and 16 Hebrews chapter 4, 15 and 16 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with us in our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things as

we are yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Isn't it wonderful having weathered a season of terrible temptation and having by Christ's power won to remember that there has never been and there will never be a single temptation come upon us that Christ has not already personally faced.

And every temptation that he faced, he overcame. And he overcame it not merely as the Son of God but as the Savior of all who believe. And his example is given for our encouragement and help so that we too might be overcomers.

That we might prevail against sin even as our wonderful Savior did. Chapter 5 at verse 8 Although he was a son he learned obedience from the things which he suffered. And having been made perfect he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

He as a son learned obedience. Now we discussed with some care the whole matter of discipline, self discipline and the disciplines of the Lord. These disciplines as I pointed out that evening are sent to us so that we like our Savior might learn obedience.

If you protest against the discipline as I pointed out earlier, then you lose the benefit of the discipline. If you pray for deliverance from the discipline then you never learn the obedience. But what an incredibly wonderful thing that God loves each of his children so very much that he regularly sends upon them difficulties, not difficulties they want, but difficulties he wants us to experience so we like him might learn obedience.

Since the evening when we spoke about discipline have you been expressing thanksgiving for every difficulty that came? And have you been saying, Lord please don't relieve me of this difficulty until I have learned the obedience you want me to learn? Now we don't have earthly parents who love us sufficiently to allow us to learn from difficulty. You know the fault of many parents is their children don't make any progress because mother in particular is always stepping in and trying to solve things for the child. So there are children who even though 40 years of age are doing no better with difficulty than they did when they were 11.

Now our Heavenly Father sees us in the midst of our trouble. He could come and rescue us from it but he doesn't because he wants us to learn as Jesus learned obedience through suffering. As I said there are very few parents who love their children enough to let them suffer the great issues of life without parental interference.

We need to thank the Lord that when he sees us broken down and weeping and struggling and we foolishly asking for deliverance he turns a deaf ear to our prayer and doesn't remove the discipline until the purpose is accomplished. Oh what love what a wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord. Chapter 6 verses 19 and 20 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Christ has provided incredible hope for every true believer and the hope serves as an anchor. Now the first warning as most of us remember was a warning against drifting. If you've ever been out in a small boat and you wanted to fish in a certain spot and yet there was a wind blowing and the current moving that boat you knew how important it was to have an anchor.

But have you ever really deeply appreciated the fact that Christ is the anchor of your soul? There is no drifting possible when that anchor takes hold. All of the warning passages are made much more possible in accomplishment by the hope that is ours in Christ. People drift when they have lost hope and don't have an anchor to hold them.

But what an incredibly wonderful thing to face the greatest storms of life and to see others all around you blown off course. But you remain exactly where Christ placed you because your hope in Christ is an anchor steadfast and sure there is no wind, there are no waves that can drive the believer who is full of hope from the position where Christ has placed them. Some of us need to have a very real change of heart about the Savior.

Yes, He does hate iniquity and love righteousness. But He also loves it when His people are steadfast and sure. If every person in this congregation over the next three months never wavered an inch but all held their place because of their hope in Christ, the anchor, I believe heaven itself would be lit with joy.

I believe the angels would have a wonderfully good time rejoicing because people who had not been adequately aware of the anchor were beginning to place all their confidence and hope in the one who is steadfast and sure. Let's turn to the seventh chapter and observe in particular verses 23, 24, and 25. Hebrews 7, 23 to 25.

And the former priest on the one hand existed in greater number because they were prevented by death from continuing. But on the other hand, because He, that is Christ, abides forever, His priesthood holds permanently. Hence also He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them.

We have observed at least in a small way during the course of this week that our position in Christ is wonderfully better than the position of Israel of old. And one of the reasons why our position is so much better than theirs is they had a changing priesthood. And as I commented earlier in the week, their great high priest died.

And he had to be replaced with another high priest who died, who had to be replaced with another high priest who died. But our high priest is not only alive during our entire lifetime, but it's the same high priest upon whom our grandparents leaned. And it's the same high priest upon whom if God spares the world, our great great great grandchildren will rely.

One ever-living high priest who is constantly making intercession for us. Now some of us have had a bit of experience with courts of law. And you know that when you are in some difficulty, real or pretended with the law, you're very likely to hire an advocate or an attorney to represent you.

You can pay him a huge sum of money, but you have absolutely no guarantee that he'll do a thing to earn that sum of money, and you certainly don't have any assurance that he's going to win your case. But we have an advocate in heaven. What do you think is the possibility that our advocate in heaven will lose a case? He's never lost a case yet, and he's not going to lose in your case.

There are times, perhaps, when you have wondered whether indeed you would hold fast. But it's Christ who's interceding for you, having laid his hand upon you, having placed his love in your heart. He's not going to step off the throne and go on a six-week vacation and let you perish in those six weeks.

He never lets up. He is interceding on your behalf before the throne of God day and night, week after week, year after year. All of us have the privilege of an advocate who has never lost a case.

Why not begin to display some confidence in our intercessor? Not confidence in ourselves we could lose any time and often do. I'm not the Savior. You're not the Savior.

He's the Savior. And everybody whom he reaches out to and lays hold of, he intercedes so that they can enjoy eternal salvation. Now, when are we to start enjoying eternal salvation? After it's all over? After life is finished? I don't see any sense in that.

Why not start enjoying it now? Why not live with the confidence that Christ is himself doing everything necessary to assure that I enjoy forever the eternal salvation that he has secured. Chapter 8 at verse 6. Hebrews 8 verse 6. But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second.

For finding fault with them, he says, Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant and did not care for them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will put my law into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen and everyone his brother saying, Know the Lord for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more.

Have you reminded yourself with regularity that you're under a better covenant? Some of you realize that the Jews had phylacteries, bands that they put around their wrists. Sometimes things that they attached to an earlobe or around their neck. Reminders to behave themselves.

Reminders of the law of God that was imposed upon them. But we're not under a covenant like that. We've had the law written in our heart.

Our minds are made fully aware of God's plan and God's purposes for us. Israel failed miserably under the old covenant but God determined to make a better covenant so that none of his children would fail. Why not enjoy that incredible privilege of being a part of the new covenant? We're not left to wonder what is acceptable conduct and what is unacceptable conduct.

God in his lovely mercy has written it on our hearts and planted it in our minds. Now we observed when I was with you, if I'm not mistaken, two years ago. I spoke to you on Hebrews 11 and I made a strong emphasis upon the word better from Hebrews 11.

Everything for us is better than it was for them. They failed but we don't need to fail. We began thinking about Hebrews last Sunday and I said up front that Christianity is not a good beginning but a glorious ending.

It really matters so much how you start as how you finish. And because we are subjects of a better covenant and we have a better high priest and have an anchor for our souls. Our finish is in his capable

hand and what we're called upon to do is to believe with all of our hearts.

If there's been some sin that's been besetting you, may hold of the accomplishment of Christ. Appreciate the fact that you are part of a better covenant and that God wants you to finish having accomplished everything that God wants you to do but he not only wants you to finish he has made it possible through the glorious work of Jesus Christ. Let's turn then to chapter 9 and notice the words of verse 24.

Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands a mere copy of the true one but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us nor was it that he should offer himself often as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own otherwise he would have needed to suffer often for the foundation of the world but now at the consummation he has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and in as much as it is appointed for men to die once and after this the judgment so Christ also has been offered once to bear the sins of many and shall appear a second time not to bear sin to those who eagerly await him for salvation what a lovely thought that is your days on this earth need not be spent floundering your days can be spent in

anticipation of that hour when he comes and carries you upward into eternal salvation everything needed has been provided and our task is to believe and to enjoy these blessed things that Christ has accomplished for us as I stated earlier Christ is even now in the presence of God the Father and sitting there on the throne he has you in mind chapter 10 verse 14 for by one offering he has protected for all time those who are sanctified oh what a lovely promise who are the sanctified well the word sanctified means set apart the called out ones every believer in the room tonight is called out from the world to live for the glory of Christ we are the sanctified and here in this perfectly marvelous statement he has perfected for all time now you don't feel perfect and often your conduct doesn't

look very good but you have been perfected I don't know whether you've ever paid any attention to the terms state and standing as used in connection with the Christian life take a moment to think about this my state is my actual condition my standing is God's awareness of my condition my state when I began life was that of a sinner and my standing was separate from God but when Christ came into my life then my state was altered I became a forgiven sinner who had imputed to himself the righteousness of Jesus Christ so that because I have been forgiven and the righteousness of Christ has been applied to my life now God sees me not as the sinner I was but as the saint that Christ has made me now our problem is we sneak around behind one another and we raise the hem of the robe of

righteousness of Jesus Christ that has been put upon us if one of you were to sneak up behind me right now and raise the hem of Christ's righteousness you would say is just a dirty old man underneath he is still a sinner but no no not in the eyes of the one for whom it really matters once the robe of righteousness has been placed upon us God refuses to see us as what we were he sees us as what we have become his children robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ now actually Christ has done more for us than that but that's normally where we begin sins forgiven the robe of Christ righteousness upon us and therefore we are sanctified and seen by God as truly righteous but as we realize what Christ has done and lay behold in faith of what Christ has done indeed we begin to be radically

transformed and we become more and more what Christ sees us as for he did procure for us in his death burial and resurrection our perfection and he invites us through faith to rise up to what he has made us it's only when we neglect Christ that we fail to advance in glorious perfection I urge you think more highly of Christ than you ever have place more and more confidence in him and enjoy the eternal salvation already

secured for you now as I said up front we'll pass over chapter 11 because of its very nature and we turn now to chapter 12 and let's remind ourselves of the opening words of the fifth warning chapter 12 verses 1 and 2 therefore since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and let us

run with endurance the race that is set before us fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and the perfecter of our faith those are the words I'd like you to think of now Jesus the author and the perfecter of our faith those of us who believe did not manufacture faith we didn't look round in the garden and find it under a cabbage leaf we didn't inherit it from our parents Christ is the author of faith Christ is the giver of faith some of you may remember that wonderful first chapter of second Peter where it talks about the source of faith and the appearance of faith and the conduct of faith and it makes it so wonderfully clear faith is a gift that's received and in that passage in Peter there's this wonderful emphasis that every believer has received a faith of the same kind as Peter had as

Paul had as Stephen had as every New Testament believer had you have the same kind of faith that Martin Luther received the same kind of faith that raised up John Calvin and Philip Melancthon and made them giants we have the same faith as George Whitefield John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley and thousands of other saints who prevailed and moved the world toward Christ.

Some of us have not exercised the faith that we've been given but Christ is its author and Christ is its perfecter so suppose that if the Lord appeared in person here tonight and he singled out one of you and he asked you to stand and you stood in trembling and he looked at you with great love and yet great severity and he said to you oh you of little faith he said that often to the disciples before his crucifixion suppose that in all honesty your own heart requires you to admit inwardly that's me a person of little faith don't forget Christ is both the author and the perfecter of faith and if indeed you have been crippled by little faith go to the author and the perfecter and say give me the kind of faith that turned Peter into a giant give me the kind of faith that Paul had who made him

such a saintly influence give me George Whitfield kind of faith give me Jonathan Edwards kind of faith give me Sarah Edwards kind of faith you Lord are both the author and the perfecter I'm weary of being one of little faith now perfect faith in me and he will delight to do so that's why he came as the savior to completely transform our lives and finally chapter 13 verse 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever my mother and father were converted gloriously in a little holiness church in Schenectady New York when I was a boy of 8 years of age it was a difficult little church they held to a lot of silly things for instance a lady's holiness they thought was determined by the length of her sleeve so if a lady wore a sleeve that was cut off above the elbow she was

considered a wicked person but if the sleeve came below the elbow she was saintly now thank God we don't have much of that nonsense around today men like me who have worn and never removed a wedding band for 48 years were judged as wicked because we displayed gold and finery but despite the failures of that little church a lifelong impact was made upon me because all around the walls were scripture plaques and then up over the podium in an archway were printed the words Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever and those words burned into my soul and to become a very great part of who I am and I delight tonight to close this few days of special meetings by reminding you that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever there are all these wonderful saints whose names

are familiar to so many of us they are now in the glory because it was Christ who saved them and he hasn't changed he hasn't lost any strength he has not grown old and weary and indifferent he is as able to do for you as he did for Paul he is as able to use you and to make your life gloriously blessed as he used men like Philip and John Calvin and our simple privilege is to believe if you spend the rest of your life limping when you should be soaring if time after time you find yourself flattened by sin the only reason will be you haven't placed your confidence in Christ salvation as I said already is not a doctrine it's not even an experience it's a person yesterday today forever Jesus Christ the Savior

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