

Let Us Go on - Part 4

by Roy Hession

The sermon explores the transition from understanding Jesus as our earthly Aaron to recognizing Him as our eternal Melchizedek, emphasizing His role as our heavenly high priest who addresses the sin problem continuously.

Duration: 50:24

Scripture: Hebrews 3:8, Hebrews 5:10, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 7:11, Hebrews 7:24, Hebrews 8:5-6

Topics: "Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of resting in the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They explain that being active for the Lord does not make one a better Christian, but rather it is through the blood of Christ and the work of the high priest that believers have peace and salvation. The sermon also highlights the relevance of the Promised Land as a symbol of rest from one's own works and the establishment of righteousness. The speaker encourages listeners to rely on Jesus as their friend and advocate, who not only offers his blood as a sacrifice but also intercedes for them in the heavenly courts.

Transcript

Now, of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. We have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. For every priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle, foresee, says he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

On our first morning together, we tried to emphasize what seems to be the leading word of exhortation in this epistle, let us go on. Not laying again the initial foundations but going on to what the apostle Paul calls maturity. And then we've tried to see what it is we've got to go on from and what it is we've got to go on to.

We saw that we're called upon to go on from living in the wilderness as a state of things pictured by the Israelites in that dry, thirsty wilderness, into living in the spiritual counterpart of Canaan, which it was

God's purpose that they should inherit. And then yesterday we saw that we were called to go on from knowing the Lord Jesus as our Aaron to knowing him as our Melchizedek. And we went into that quite fully.

Now here in chapter eight, the apostle Paul takes a breath, I think he felt he needed one, and I think his readers felt they needed one. And he pauses and he sums up, now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. And the sum is that we have an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

Not a high priest on earth serving in an earthly tabernacle, but in a heavenly one. So the sum of what he's trying to say is this, that we have a heavenly high priest in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe the big thing he wants to show to these people is the heavenly high priesthood of the Lord Jesus on their behalf.

And he knows this is the one thing that's going to help them not to have that evil heart of unbelief that would lead them to depart from the living God and caught ruin. He knows that seeing the heavenly and understanding and entering into the heavenly high priesthood of Christ will be the greatest incentive of all, not to go back, but to go on into the fullness of what God has got for them. And so it is with us.

I believe, then, the great thing that this epistle has to say to us, which isn't clearly revealed in any other part of the New Testament, is the heavenly high priesthood of the Lord Jesus. We often have allusions to it in our hymns, but I wonder how much we've entered in and been blessed and helped as a result. Talk about Jesus being prophet, priest, and king.

Now this is the portion of Scripture which unfolds what the priesthood of Christ is in heaven on behalf of believers now. Now because this is the essential, central message of this epistle, I want us to go slowly at this point. And I feel it right to go over much of the ground of yesterday slowly and to amplify it.

You'd say, well, we've said that, but has it really got into our hearts? Have I? I think I need to lay hold afresh. And so I shall say some things that were said yesterday, they need to be said again, that we might be able to understand and appropriate the Lord Jesus as he's offered us. I suggested there's a difference between knowing the Lord Jesus as our Aaron and knowing him as our Melchizedek.

Now the Lord Jesus is our Aaron. That is, Aaron is a very lovely type and picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, without a doubt, and meant to be. And if you say, well, what do you mean by knowing Jesus only as our Aaron? Well, first of all, I would say that the work that Aaron did on behalf of the people was a work that he did on earth.

He offered gifts and sacrifices on earth. And the work picture is a work that Jesus did for us on earth. He offered up himself on that cross of Calvary on earth.

And I may be a man who knows that historically the Lord Jesus permitted himself to be hung up on the cross for me between two thieves. That's wonderful, absolutely essential to recognise that fact. And we may recognise that fact in varying degrees.

Some may have received initial salvation as a result of putting their faith in what that fact means, that their sins have been put away in him. Others may recognise he died for them, did this great thing for them, but it's doubtful as to whether they have received the forgiveness of sins as a result because, well, it hasn't gone very deep. But anyway, whichever it is, that's one element of knowing the Lord Jesus as our Aaron.

Knowing him as our Aaron may or may not carry salvation with him. To believe that Jesus died for you may or may not carry salvation. It depends what you mean by believing that Jesus died for you.

The second thing is that, like Aaron, the Lord Jesus was chosen from among men. That high priest of old was himself a man, compassed about with infirmities, and for that reason could be sympathetic with the failures and mistakes and errors of the people whom he was to represent to God. And the Lord Jesus, it's not true, of course, to say he was chosen among men, he was chosen from heaven, but he came down among men and he identified himself with our humanity as closely as was possible.

In all points he was made like unto his brethren. And for that reason we have a high priest, an Aaron, who is sympathetic to human frailty. Chapter 4, verse 15, we get that? For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but he was in all points tempted like us, we are yet without sin.

What's that hymn which says, the great physician now is here, the sympathizing Jesus. And to know the Lord Jesus as our Aaron is to see him, the sympathizing Jesus, the one who's been identified with us, who knows what we go through, the one to whom we can go and pour out our woes and our troubles and receive comfort and great help, the one who answers the prayer of the widow. She may not even be saved, but he answers her prayers nonetheless.

There's a special providence, by the way, that looks after widows. Have you seen it? Well, God says he's the father of the fatherless, and he looks after widows, that's an Old Testament revelation of him, and it works today even among unregenerate men, a kindly providence, looks after such. It happens again and again.

God is good over all his works, and the Lord Jesus is the summary of all that. And to know the Lord Jesus as your Aaron is to know that there's someone to whom you can go with your troubles and your sorrows, and from whom you can get much help. You can know all that.

Whether or not that carries with it salvation depends. It's possible to know him as that, but he may not even be saved. Or if you are saved, there's still a whole realm of need that's not yet been touched, but thank God he is your Aaron.

And then, too, Aaron was moved amongst the people, he was approachable, he was with them. And in the same way, to know the Lord Jesus with you, well, that's part of knowing him as your Aaron. We sing these choruses, Jesus is with me, with me wherever I go.

Very good, absolutely true. But there's something more. It can only be this knowledge of the Lord Jesus as our Aaron.

Well, thank God if we have some sort of knowledge. If it's got us somewhere. But the message of this epistle is, you have got to go on from knowing the Lord Jesus as merely someone who did historically a work for you on earth, from knowing him merely as the one who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities and can help you in your troubles, merely as one who's with you all the day long, to knowing him in another capacity altogether, to knowing him as our Melchizedek, which means we're to go on from knowing him as, in the way in which I've indicated, to knowing the present and continuous priesthood of the Lord Jesus on our behalf in heaven at this moment, and to know that he's there not merely for my troubles, but for my sin, to present a continuous and efficacious answer to the biggest and the deepest

problem in every person's life, be they saved or unsaved--sin.

To know him as your Aaron, you can know a lot about him, but somehow the sin problem's not being dealt with. You haven't got peace with regard to sin, or if you've got it with regard to past sin way back, we haven't got it with regard to the present things that go wrong. I believe there is a difference between knowing Jesus as your friend and knowing him as your saviour.

There are lots of church people, good people, nice people, and they know him as their friend. I remember when I was taking missions in South Wales--very difficult place, Wales, for missions because they're so religious--I never found myself preaching so violently as to the deeply religious people of Wales. We're in Wales, but there's not a Welshman here, I don't think, so we mustn't let this go beyond those walls.

And oh, to penetrate that religiousness! They all felt they were all right. And we have to admit they did have some sort of knowledge of Christ, but it was only a knowledge of him as saviour. And I remember going to see a sick woman, and I said, did she know the Lord Jesus as her saviour? She said, I don't know what I could do without him.

He's answered my prayer. I felt an absolute care to have to tell her she was still going to hell. It's the sin question for which he rarely came.

Not only once, but he's got in himself the continual answer. And so I do believe God wants us to go on from knowing him in some such elementary way as that, to knowing him as our priest, whose business it is to deal with sin, and not merely once when I was converted, but the contiguousness of that blessed answer before God. Now that, I suggest, is the sun, as Paul seems to say it.

Now the things which we have spoken, this is the sun. This is the heart of the message of this epistle, and therefore I think it's right to say the things we've tried to say twice, in order that we should not miss them. Now you will remember that we saw that this heavenly high priesthood of Christ is pictured for us by that Old Testament priest Melchizedek.

We won't look at the details, we will remember those quite easily. You remember three times as their reference to Melchizedek, once historically in Genesis, where this priest emerges out of heathenism, where he's come from, where he's going to, nobody knows. And he blesses Abraham when he returns from the slaughter of the kings, and Abraham acknowledges his superiority in that he gives him tithes of all the spoil.

Then there's a second time, is in Psalm 110, that Messianic Psalm. And you just look at it again, it's important, because Paul is going to make use of every phrase in this Messianic verse. Psalm 110, verse 4. The Lord, that is, Jehovah, has sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Jehovah is addressing his son prophetically, and he's saying, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And we're directed back to that strange picture back in the Old Testament, that priest that suddenly emerges, whose superiority even Abraham acknowledged. And the third time, of course it's several times, is in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

And as I said, Paul really works on this quotation. And saying it again, I think we must say it again, there are four times where Paul quotes this verse about the Lord Jesus from the Old Testament, and on each occasion he emphasises a different phrase. Now the first is in chapter 5, verse 5. Christ glorified not

himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my son, today have I begotten thee, as he saith also in another place, quoting from Psalm 110, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

So the emphasis is, thou art a priest. Jesus didn't say, I think I'd rather like to be a priest on behalf of men, I'm awfully sorry for them, I think they need someone to look after their interests before God. He's a bit difficult, he's a bit particular and strict, I'll stand in the gap.

No, he didn't glorify himself to be made a high priest, it was God himself who appointed him to that high office on behalf of men. That's very important. Supposing you were in a firm and you wanted a little promotion, or you thought perhaps you weren't getting quite your rights, it would be very helpful if you happened to know personally someone who was on the board of directors.

And you might have them round to have a cup of coffee and you might just tell them how you're feeling about things. Say, now look here, will you put a word in for me? Now that's not how it is in this matter. It isn't me looking round for somebody who will put a word in for me to God.

It isn't me going to Jesus or to just take up my case. It's rather God who says I'm going to have a priest in my inner councils, my co-equal who's going to be in my inner councils for the one express purpose of looking after the interests of failing saints. Isn't that lovely? God wants you in fellowship with himself.

God wants you relieved of that condemning heart. He wants you set free from that coldness and dryness that we all have from time to time. He has not got the big stick in his hand, evidenced by the fact that he has looked for a high priest that will adequately represent us before him and look after our interests in that divine temple.

And though it cost him everything, he chose the Lord Jesus and it was necessary for him to come and do the work he did on earth and go back to heaven, having paid that dreadful price to be our priest, our priest that stands, tricks God and man, and he's there by God's appointment for me. So it's never true that Jesus is on my side, but you're not quite sure whether God is. Nothing at all.

Never get that idea. It's God who's for men, God who's for sinners, it's God who loves a rebel world and who purposes to make every provision for that rebel world to come back to himself, and when they have come back, to safeguard every other interest of theirs, to take care of every other subsequent failure in that he's got a priest in his own inner counsels who stands there on their behalf. Look at chapter 2, 17.

Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation - that's the revised version - for the sins of the people. He's a merciful and faithful high priest, merciful to us, faithful to God. Look in the next chapter, wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful - what to us? Oh no! Something much more important.

He was faithful to him who appointed him, and this work that Jesus does on behalf of poor people like ourselves, he does out of faithfulness to the one who appointed him. How sure and certain is to be our relationship and fellowship with God if it's based so entirely on what God has done for us. Well, that's the first reference to this text, and the emphasis, as I've said, is on thou art a priest, I have appointed thee.

The next is in chapter 5, verse 10. Jesus is the high priest, called of God, and high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Actually, there's another one in 620, high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

I've grouped those together because they're in the same paragraph, and the emphasis is on the same part of the phrase. The emphasis here is after the order of Melchizedek. And Paul, as I said, was at pains to show that Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to Aaron's, and excelled it in that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and without contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

So that fact shows that this priest was superior to Abraham. Furthermore, Abraham paid tithes to him, and it's the inferior who pays tithes to the superior, it would seem. And more than that, he said, Levi and all the priests were virtually still in the loins of Abraham when he did that homage.

And therefore Levi and Aaron's priesthood is in effect acknowledging the superiority of this strange priest about which nothing more is heard, and he's there as a type and picture of the Lord Jesus. And so Paul has much to say to help these Hebrew Christians to see that Jesus is a priest not after the order of Aaron, because he didn't come from Aaron's seed, but he's after this other order which is so much superior and eclipses Aaron's order. Now that which makes his priesthood better and superior, basically, is of course the sacrifice which he had to offer.

If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, but he nonetheless needs somewhat to offer if he is to be a priest. And oh, what a wonderful sacrifice this is that the Lord Jesus has to offer. Just look at chapter 10.

For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things you see was foreshadowing, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. That means perfect as regards their conscience. For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because of the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins and have been gone.

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. I think the reference especially to the great day of atonement when the two goats were brought before the Lord, and when the sins of the people were confessed over the head of the one goat, and the goat was lost in the wilderness, the other goat was slain, its blood brought into the Holy of Holies. Every year they were confessing their sins of murmuring and the like in the wilderness.

Every year the rebellions of which they were guilty, the same sins, always brought up, always confessed over the head of the lamb, and any new ones as well. And apparently they never got a real assurance it was gone, they weren't intended to. Those sacrifices were only pointing forward to the better sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this man, he didn't have to offer sacrifices again and again. He offered one sacrifice for sins forever. Look at 7.27, who needeth not daily or yearly as those high priests to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's, for this he did once.

And that means in the Greek, once for all, when he offered up himself. And you don't have to be raking up the same old things again and again if you're being to the Lord Jesus Christ. One sacrifice for sins forever.

Look at 10.11, and every priest standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sins but this man, but this man after he'd offered one sacrifice and that himself for sins forever sat down on the right hand of God from henceforth expect and awaiting till his enemies be made his footstool. Oh, how much better. Now the thing I want to emphasize is this contrast between the old priest standing and this one sitting down.

They were standing because their work was never finished. He sat down because his was. God was satisfied with that one sacrifice for sins forever.

Lord, I believe we're sinners more than sands upon the ocean shore. Thou hast for all atonement made, thou hast for all a ransom paid. It never needs to be done, it's enough.

One sacrifice back there forever, always availing to the end of time. No matter what awful failures we may fall into, no matter how many new sinners may be born, that one sacrifice for sins is enough to put the vilest and most helpless offender into utter and complete relationship with God if he will repent and confess and put it right in any way that God shows him. Mind you, we should be careful as we talk about putting it right.

What can really put right sin? Does an apology put it right? Does even paying back money put it right? It's something against God, only the blood of the Lord Jesus puts it right. We must be very careful not to think that by making restitution we get peace, because the fact is, I know people who've made restitution, they haven't got peace. I know there's some Christians in Madras who are over-emphasizing restitution.

It's under-emphasized in this country. In this particular group it was over-emphasized. And I said to a dear man in high position, well, are you praising the Lord? Well, I'm not really, because I've still got a few more things to do.

And I don't know how many things he hadn't done. He was in a high government position, and he'd now got as far as trying to work out how much paper in the office he'd used for the odd personal letter, and reckoning out to pay. And then, of course, there'd be something else and something else and something else.

No, be careful. Restitution is right. God will hold you.

But he'll show you what you've got to do. But it isn't that that gives the guilty conscience peace. Not all the blood of goats on Jewish altars slain could give the guilty conscience peace, or what a way it's done.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins away. There's where you get your peace. Because when you've made all your restitution, it's still a here-ness thing in the sight of God for which your conscience condemns you.

But oh, how wonderful to see that justly has my sin been put away in the blood of Jesus. My God, to know that thou art just, gives rest and peace within. I could not in a mercy trust, which takes no count of sin.

Do you see that? You cannot in a mercy trust, which takes no count of sin. Of course, all right, we'll forget about it, but your conscience doesn't forget about it. It's a reflection of the demands of divine justice.

But oh, when you see that blood, when you see that one sacrifice, that's enough. Sure it's enough. What could be asked more? And God himself has declared himself satisfied and at rest with regard to all that sin has brought in.

The Son himself is satisfied. He sat down. He's satisfied with it on your behalf.

Can't you be? Must you always be torturing yourself? Must you always be trying to be a better Christian by doing this, that and the other, hoping if you can do it, you will be in right relationship with God? The trouble is you can't do it, not as your conscience wants you to do it. And it's possible to be a Christian who's not

sitting down, who's not at rest. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast wind it in either direction. But it's wonderful to be in rest with regard to all that sin and failure has brought in. I hear the words of love.

I gaze upon the blood. I see the mighty sacrifice. And I have peace with God.

I can rest. I believe we're either standing or sitting in the same. I'm not suggesting about activity for the Lord.

Of course he wants us to be. But you don't become active for the Lord to become a better Christian, to get more peace, but because through the blood of Christ and that one offering, through your dear high priest, you've got it. But I believe we're one or the other.

And this was what Paul was trying to tell us about the Promised Land. It's rest from your own works, from trying to establish your own righteousness. You're content with the sinner's righteousness.

Are you? You see, God delights to declare those to be right to admit they're wrong, through the blood of Christ. That's the only righteousness with him that he's got. It's the sinner's righteousness.

You can only get peace with God as a failure, as a sinner. Some of us want to get peace with God as a success. Successful Christian.

Trying to get a successful Christian's peace. And there isn't such a peace in the world. There's only one peace.

It's that which Jesus made for us through his blood. It's the sinner's peace. If you're content to have the sinner's righteousness, you can sit down.

You have to admit the full extent of your sin. You may have to do some humbly acknowledgements of things that have been wrong. There might have to be some things put right.

But the moment you're willing to say, yes Lord, that's me. You're in possession of the sinner's righteousness before God. You're as right with God as the blood can make you.

And you can share the rest of the Lord Jesus. You can sit down. From that vain search for peace, for an adequate righteousness before God.

I don't expect to have any other righteousness but that one. I trust there will be a progress in my life. I'm not sure how much there has been personally.

But I trust there will be. But even that progress is not going to be my peace. And it's not going to be my righteousness.

I had a perfect righteousness credited to me when I first turned to Christ. And it couldn't be improved if I became a George Muller or a Hudson Taylor. I like that word where it says in Colossians, giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

You cannot be any more meet for that heavenly inheritance than you are when the blood of Christ cleanses you. Your meekness is not your efforts, not your attainments, not your long prayers. It's the blood of Jesus Christ.

And this isn't just something theoretical. When you know it, your heart's free. You want to pray, you enjoy that hymns mean everything to you.

You're at full liberty. And then, of course, you're ready to do anything the Lord wants you. But even so, you're not thereby seeking a successful Christian's peace.

You go back again and again to the feet of your Saviour to renew, to take again that sinner's peace. And to see yourself credited with a sinner's righteousness. Oh, this sacrifice! And more than that, it is offered there, continually in heaven on my behalf.

Now that brings me to the third place where this text is referred to. And that's in 717. It talks about Jesus in verse 16.

He is made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, for he testifies, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Here the emphasis is on forever. He isn't appointed by an ordinary commandment, but because his is the power of an endless life.

Forever! Look at verse 23. They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because he continueth ever, has an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

Now, isn't the complaint of many of us Christians, or maybe all of us, that our experience of life and fullness of life is intermittent? Well, it may well have been intermittent in Old Testament days because they were dependent on a priest who could die at any moment, and there would be a bit of a time lag before the next priest, his son, took office. But not so this one. He continueth ever.

Ever living. There in the presence of God for us. And for that reason, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

That word, uttermost, as far as I can understand from looking at Revised Versions and Young's Concordance, can mean one of two things. Probably means both. He's able to save completely.

And it also means he's able to save to the end, continuously. Because, you remember, it says in John 12, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end. That's the same word as uttermost here.

And to me, I think, what we've got here is the continuousness of the salvation which is guaranteed to us because our High Priest is all the time up there in Heaven. Just as often as sin may come, just as often as failure may come, there's my High Priest. There for me the Saviour stands, shows his wounds and spreads his hands.

God looks on him and pardons me and keeps me in relationship with himself. He ever lives. To make intercession, nothing intermittent on his side.

Therefore my experience of him need not be intermittent. It's only intermittent when I'm not willing to see what makes me cold and when he shows me I'm not willing to come to him in confession of it. We needn't be defeated for any longer than it takes us to call sin, sin because on his side the thing was anticipated before it was ever committed.

And he's there all the time on my behalf and he's there making intercession for me. Now, I suggested yesterday that that making intercession is very largely, I think, the mere fact he's there at all. Turn to Hebrews 13, verse 20.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Jesus was brought again from the dead, how? Through his own blood. Turn to chapter 9, verse 11. Christ, being come and high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered into the holy place.

Jesus was raised from the dead because of his own blood. He entered into glory back there in heaven by his blood. Let me say what he said yesterday.

He had more sins upon him than I have. He had the world's sins. What then can wash away his sin? What then can make him whole again? What then can raise him from the dead? The wages of sin is death.

He ought to stay there. Ah, but the blood that he shed was of such value and power that it paid the debt. It cancelled the whole thing for which he was shorted.

And he was brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant. And that same blood gave him, who'd become an effigy of sin, the right to go back to glory. It was an evidence that the thing was finished.

And the fact that I've got a high priest in heaven at all is his intercession on my behalf. There for me the Saviour stands, shows his wounds and spreads his hand. Or as Charles Wesley said, five bleeding wounds he bears, received on Calvary.

They pour effectual prayers. They strongly plead for me. Forgive him, O forgive, they cry, nor let that ransomed sinner die.

And so there he is for me. As a result of that, the value of those wounds and blood that he pleads on my behalf, restoration is mine. Whenever things go wrong, not only restoration and cleansing, but life from above.

Abundant life, that his life within me, because although he's in heaven, he's somehow in a wonderful mystery, in our hearts as well. And all the help that poor sinners need. The wonderful thing is that he hasn't ceased to be our Aaron, although he's our Melchizedek.

Up there in the glory, he's touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He knows how you feel. What a battle I had today as I tried to prepare for the day with wandering thoughts.

And I just said, Lord, here I am, Lord. And I counted on the intercession of my high priest. Yes, I believe there's something more than just presenting his blood.

Maybe there is an intercession, but I don't understand it. At the blessed mercy seat pleading for me. My feeble faith looks up Jesus to me.

You can just tell him where you are and what you are. Don't reproach yourself for your infirmities. Don't take a stick to yourself.

Admit them. Bring them. And count.

You've got a sympathetic friend at court. And say, now, Lord, what I said, I said, Lord, bless us this morning, not according to my preparation or concentration, but according to the worth of your intercession on behalf of our saints. That's the way to go about it.

Really count on that. Go out of yourself. How do I feel now? I say, Lord, I'm all over the place.

And I'm not going to try and sort myself out. Come as I am. There for me the Saviour stands.

And all that poor failing saints and people coming up with that will be yours because we've got a friend at court, the heavenly high priesthood, the continual answer to weakness, but more than that, the continual answer to failure. All the time. A priest forever.

Forever. Never a moment. But he cares for his own up there forever.

Forever. Never a moment, but the blood is availing. That's what it means, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Years ago I heard the illustration of this of a diver. And there he is at the bottom of the ocean, compassed about with water that would kill him. But he's alive.

And if you could talk to him, he said, he said, what? How do you manage to live? He said, I've got a friend up there. And you come up, you swim up to the top, and there you see a boat, and if it was an old-fashioned apparatus, you've got a man turning a wheel. You say, what have you got? What are you doing there? He said, I've got a friend down there.

If I stop turning this wheel, he'll die, but I'm not going to stop turning this wheel. And I've got a friend up there looking after my interests, looking after everything, even taking care of my failures and sending down life, help from the sanctuary, all that I need. Oh, to come like that.

Come in your feebleness. Don't try and conquer it. Don't try to say, I must be strong to death.

Tell him you aren't anything. And begin to count on a saviour, not only as in you, but where he most needs to be, up there in those awesome courts, where failure would otherwise be visited with death. But it isn't, because I've got a saviour who's presenting his blood.

Jesus, my great high priest, offered his blood and died. My guilty conscience seeks no sacrifice beside. His powerful blood did once atone, and now it pleads before the throne.

And not only the blood, but the saviour himself, my friend in court. Now, the fourth place, I'll draw you to a close, where this is mentioned, is in verse 21. Those priests, in the Old Testament, were made without an oath.

But this man, with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord swear and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. What is the phrase that's emphasised here? The first is, Thou art a priest.

The second, after the order of Melchizedek. The third, a priest forever. The fourth, The Lord swear and will not repent.

He's been constituted, our priest, with an oath. And God says, I'm never going to go back on it. I'm never going to repent of that oath.

No matter what happens. No matter what failures there may be. The Lord swear and will not repent.

Though the saints disappoint him. Though they feel ashamed of themselves sometimes. Though they are facing odds which they somehow can't cope with.

He's never going to go back on it. When it says God not repenting, it means God doesn't change his mind. Which is all that repentance means.

When it comes to my repentance, it's me changing my mind about sin and myself. I've got to do it. But God will not change his mind with God's provisions of grace he's made for us.

Take that, will you? The Lord swear and will not repent. Sure he thinks it's about time he finished with this. The Lord swear and will not repent.

Thou art a priest forever, for these dear ones, after the order of Melchizedek. Isn't that good? You get the same thought in John, not quite so fully amplified. If you just look for a moment, 1 John 2. 1 John 2, verse 1. My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sin.

If any man sin, he has an advocate with the Father. Hebrews says a high priest, John, an advocate. It's the same sort of thing.

An advocate is someone who looks after your interests in the court of law. If I was held up for offence, I wouldn't try and defend myself in a court of law. I know nothing about English law and its many intricacies.

I go to an advocate. It requires that I be absolutely honest with him about what's really happened. Tell him the whole facts, and then he would go into court to answer for me, to take up my case, to see what provisions in the law would cover me, and to seek to get me acquitted.

And in that heavenly court I've got an advocate, and it's Jesus. He's my advocate. He's on my side.

He looks after my interests in those awesome courts. He doesn't plead I didn't do it. He knows I did, and I have to tell him I did.

His answer isn't to plead extenuating circumstances, but to spread his hand, to show his will on my behalf. Because the sinless Saviour died, my guilty soul is counted free, and God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me. Now, will you notice he doesn't say if any man confesses sins or repents, he has an advocate.

He says if any man sins, he has an advocate. If any Christian sins, he's got an advocate. And that advocate immediately takes up his case, even if for a time he doesn't repent.

The advocate still takes up his case. Otherwise thunderbolts from heaven might well fall upon the monogamous. I would have forfeited my place in the family of God years ago, but it's guaranteed for me that if I sin, I have that advocate.

That blood assures me. But what does happen if I don't repent? I lose peace. I lose fellowship.

The joy of my sonship goes, though not necessarily the fact of it. I have an advocate that keeps the fact of it. But how do I get the joy of it back? By confessing, and seeing my advocate by faith.

And that's what we have to do. My high priest is there. But if I want to know the good and glory of what he has for me, I've got to be willing to call things by their name, to say, yes, Lord, you're right there.

The other fellow was right, and I was wrong over that. I got so angry, so bitter. I had to repent of being angry about that coach going wrong.

I was put to shame by those who said, no, we don't want reimbursement. I was ready to go to town over there, and I had to confess. At the time, I hadn't got peace with God.

My advocate was there for me. I had been finished. But I hadn't got the peace of it.

But back it came when I said, Lord, you're right, I'm wrong. That's not the way Jesus acts. That's not the way the love of God.

Mistakes can be made by anybody. I make more than those. And the blood avails.

And you're at peace with God, and life and blessing comes down into your hearts. The Lord swear, I will not relent, that a priest, for poor saints, after the order of Mephistopheles, and he gives them all they need. Nothing.

Not only forgiveness, but everything else. If Jesus is the answer to my sin, he's also the answer to my everything else. And I've got him there to come to.

Of course, he's in my heart too, which makes it even better. And of course, it's the Holy Spirit who helps me to break. He's in my heart to convict me.

Come on. Down you go. Now, don't justify yourself.

Don't say, well, the fellow shouldn't have done it. You're wrong. That attitude's wrong.

And then he directs my gaze, when I feel so sad about myself, to my Saviour. I say, well, he's anticipated it. He's there for me.

He's my righteousness. Now, my last word, I'm transgressing by a moment or two, forgive me, but we must do this. I want you to see the relevance of all this to the main purpose of this letter.

This letter is not a word of doctrine. As we saw in the first study, it's a word of exhortation. What's the exhortation? Go on.

And if you don't go on, you can go back. So far back as to lose everything. I say again, I'm not suggesting it isn't true.

Once saved, always saved. But if a man gets as far back as saying, I'm finishing with Christ, I don't want to be saved, he can only accept his decision. And that is a possibility.

It may be a distant one, but it is a possibility. Now, it says, I want you not to go back, but to go on. And we saw the way to go on was to know Jesus as this in the present.

Look at verse 14. This is the relevance of a heavenly high priesthood to that main burden of the epistle. 414.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, like as we have seen, that is passed into the heavens on our behalf, Jesus, Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. What greater encouragement than this, to have such a friend at court as to go on and not to go back. When something goes wrong, the devil is discouraged, he says, oh, no good, you're hopeless, go on back.

But you don't if you see you've got this high priest, if you've got this friend at court, who's anticipated the worst about you, isn't a bit shocked about it, who's got blessing and life more abundant for you if you only come back to him. What an amazing confidence. What amazing encouragement to go on.

You see, the whole gospel is designed to give sinners a chance. It's designed and made to measure for weak people, for weak Christians, and we're all that. The devil wants to discourage you, but nothing more encouraging than this.

And I say again, as it says in 3, verse 14, we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast from the end. The beginning not of our resolution, not of our determination, I'm finished if that's it. The beginning of our confidence in this grace, this saviour who's on my side.

And so there's nothing that's going to help these people and us more to go on, even though the devil attacks us and sometimes might get us back, get us down, as to see before the throne of God above I have this strong and perfect plea. What a wonderful provision. Let's go on.

From knowing him merely as our Aaron in that funny sort of half-hearted elementary way that only partially deals with sin, to knowing him as our heavenly high priest, and let's be willing to call the things that need cleansing by their right name and begin to do it today. Begin to know this continual salvation that comes from our high priest. Let us pray.

Let's say the grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, love of God, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

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