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# A Great While Before Day

VOLUME XI

PART TWO:

July 1–December 31

**A New Devotional from  
DON ANDERSON**

# Bible Teaching Resources

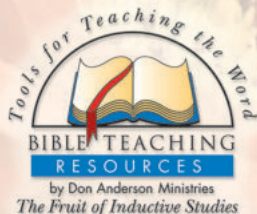
## Tools for Teaching the Word

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# ***A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY***

Volume XI (July - December)

*Daily Devotional*

*by Don Anderson*

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## by Don Anderson Ministries

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# A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

The gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV) Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging. Unless otherwise noted, New Testament verses are taken from the New American Standard Bible and Old Testament verses are taken from the New International Version.

## July 1 – A New Song (Ps. 98:1)

**Psalm 98:1:** *“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”*

**verse 1:** “Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”

Psalm 98 opens with a command: “Sing to the Lord a new song” (NET Bible). Notice the One who is the audience for our singing. We are to “Sing to the Lord.”

It seems some of our contemporary hymns are sung to an audience rather than to the Lord.

The phrase “a new song” appears in a number of the psalms. What’s wrong with “a new song”? If we are growing and maturing in Christ, we ought to be developing content for new songs to be sung to the Lord.

The psalmist gives reason for the command to sing “a new song” to the Lord: “for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”

The theme of our “new song” should not only tell the world what He does, but also reveal who He is.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16 NASB).

What song shall we sing to the Lord? I came up with 3 thoughts: (1) to glorify who He is; (2) praise Him for what He has done; and (3) express gratitude for His love and grace.

I would like us this morning to sing one of my favorite hymns that actually expresses all 3 of these desires. Please join me in singing Charles Wesley’s great old hymn, **“And Can It Be That I Should Gain”**: *“And can it be that I should gain An int’rest in the Savior’s blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? He left His Father’s throne above, So free, so infinite His grace; Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam’s helpless race; Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me. Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature’s night; Thine eye diffused a*

*quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th' eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou my God, shouldst die for me."*

## July 2 – So Great Salvation (Ps. 98:2-3)

**Psalm 98:2:** *"The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations."*

**Psalm 98:3:** *"He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."*

**verse 2:** "The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations."

The NET Bible translates verse 2: "The Lord demonstrates his power to deliver; in the sight of the nations he reveals his justice."

The theme of our new song should focus on what He does.

Moses cried out in Deuteronomy 3:24: "O Sovereign Lord, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?" (NIV).

The theme of our new song is not only telling the world what He does, but it also reveals who He is.

**verse 3:** "He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."

The Net Bible translates verse 3 as follows: "He remains loyal and faithful to the family of Israel. All the ends of the earth see our God deliver us"

Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

We have been commanded in these first 3 verses to "Sing to the Lord a new song" concerning what He does and who He is.

Thomas Brooks the puritan writer who has blessed my heart in recent days says the following:

Sinner, remember this—*None ever yet obtained an interest in Christ but unworthy creatures.* Was Paul worthy before he obtained an interest in Christ? And what worthiness was in Zacchaeus when Christ called him down from the sycamore tree, and told him that this day salvation was come to his house? Though *you* are unworthy, yet *Christ* is worthy. Though you have no merit, yet God has mercy. Though there is no salvation for you by the *law*, yet there is '*plenteous redemption*' in the *Gospel*. (*Smooth Stones Taken From Ancient Books*, 112-13)

Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith'" (NASB).

Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (NASB).

I find myself responding in song and singing with enthusiasm and excitement that great old hymn **"Jesus Saves!"**: *"We have heard the joyful sound, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Spread the tidings all around: Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Bear the news to ev'ry land, Climb the steeps and cross the waves; Onward! 'tis our Lord's command; Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Sing above the battle strife, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! By His death and endless life, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Sing it softly through the gloom, When the heart for mercy craves; Sing in triumph o'er the tomb, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Give the winds a mighty voice, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Let the nations now rejoice, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Shout salvation full and free, Highest hills and deepest caves; This our song of victory, Jesus saves! Jesus saves!"*

## July 3 – Shout for Joy! (Ps. 98:4-6)

**Psalm 98:4:** *"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;"*

**Psalm 98:5: “make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,”**  
**Psalm 98:6: “with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King.”**

**verse 4:** “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;”

Next we are commanded in verse 4: “Shout out praises to the Lord, all the earth! Break out in a joyful shout and sing!” (NET).

Eugene Peterson paraphrases the verse: “Shout your praises to God, everybody! Let loose and sing! Strike up the band!” (*The Message*).

Psalm 98:4 inspired Isaac Watts to write the words of our favorite Christmas carol, “Joy to the World”:

**verse 5:** “make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,”

**verse 6:** “with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King.”

In Psalm 98:5-6 the psalmist challenges us to sing with accompaniment, to use the instruments.

The NIV says: “make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King.”

Jesus said the night before he died upon the cross: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11 NASB).

Psalm 16:11: “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (NIV).

1 Peter 1:8: “and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (NASB).

I think it would be appropriate for us to, even in the first part of July to sing the words of that great Christmas carol, “**Joy to the World**”: “*Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King. Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ, While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.*”

#### **July 4 – The Curse Has Been Lifted (Ps. 98:7-9)**

**Psalm 98:7: “Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”**

**Psalm 98:8: “Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;”**

**Psalm 98:9: “let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.”**

**verse 7:** “Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

**verse 8:** “Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;”

In Psalm 98:7-8 the psalmist turns to creation. “Let the sea and everything in it shout, along with the world and those who live in it! Let the rivers clap their hands! Let the mountains sing in unison before the Lord!” (NET).

We are not only singing a brand new song about what He does and who He is, but we are challenged to use instruments and to invite creation to join us in this thunder of praise.

The psalmist mentions the sea, the world, the rivers, and the mountains.

**verse 9:** “let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.”

He gives us his final reason for singing this brand new song, in verse 9: “For he comes to judge the earth! He judges the world fairly, and the nations in a just manner” (NET).

What a thrill to know that He is coming again! He is coming to set the record straight and we will live eternally with Him in His rule and reign of righteousness.

I love the way Peterson paraphrases Romans 8:18-21: “That’s why I don’t think there’s any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can

hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens" (MSG).

Revelation 21:1-2: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (NASB).

Out of sure joy, ecstasy, and excitement I find myself already tuned up and singing "**All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name**": *"All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all! O that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall! We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all; We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!"*

Don Wyrzten wrote "Sing to the Lord" as a result of studying Psalm 98. He closes his meditation with this prayer, an apt one for us as we create our new songs: *"Dear Lord, unleash my spirit today and set me free to create music worthy of Your praise. Let my imagination soar as I lift up Your Name!"*

## July 5 – Shout for Joy (Ps. 100:1)

**Psalm 100:1: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth."**

**verse 1:** "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said of this psalm: "Nothing can be more sublime this side of heaven than the singing of this noble Psalm by a vast congregation."

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth." The word "Shout" is the word in Hebrew for "a clashing cymbal."

Psalm 150:5: "praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals" (NIV).

1 Corinthians 13:1: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (NASB).

Ron Allen said: "'to shout in joy.' The Hebrew culture allowed for believers to get truly excited about the reality of their great God!"

As we begin to meditate on Psalm 100, let me give you a couple of observations or commands in these verses: (1) "shout"; (2) "worship"; (3) "come before"; (4) "know"; (5) "enter"; (6) "give thanks"; and "praise."

There are 5 ingredients of worship in these verses: (1) "joy"; (2) "gladness"; (3) "joyful songs"; (4) "thanksgiving"; and (5) "praise."

You will notice our verse says "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth."

Garison Keillor said: "Some people think it's difficult to be a Christian and to laugh, but I think it's the other way around. God writes a lot of comedy, it's just that he has so many bad actors." (Reflections, *Christianity Today*)

Billy Graham said: "I can tell you that God is alive because I talked with Him this morning."

Paul Little said: "We see God as a celestial Scrooge who leans down over the balcony of heaven trying to find anybody who's enjoying life, and says: 'Now, cut it out!'" (*Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way*, compiled by Gordon S. Jackson).

Max Lucado in his book *A Gentle Thunder* said:

Once there was a man who dared God to speak: *Burn the bush like you did for Moses, God. And I will follow. Collapse the walls like you did for Joshua, God. And I will fight. Still the waves like you did on Galilee, God. And I will listen.*

And so the man sat by a bush, near a wall, close to the sea and waited for God to speak.

And God heard the man, so God answered. He sent fire, not for a bush, but for a church. He brought down a wall, not of brick, but of sin. He stilled a storm, not of the sea, but of a soul.

And God waited for the man to respond. And he waited...and waited.

But because the man was looking at bushes, not hearts; bricks and not lives, seas and not souls, he decided that God had done nothing.

Finally he looked to God and asked, *Have you lost your power?*



And God looked at him and said, *Have you lost your hearing?*

I find myself singing that wonderful prayer chorus **“Open Our Eyes”**: *“Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus, To reach out and touch Him, And say that we love Him. Open our ears, Lord, And help us to listen. Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus.”*

## July 6 – Worship the Lord (Ps. 100:2)

**Psalm 100:2**: *“Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”*

**verse 2**: “Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”

Our first command in verse 1 was “Shout.” Our second and third commands are in verse 2: “Worship the Lord” and “come before him.”

The word “with” occurs 4 times in the psalm. Twice in verse 2 and twice in verse 4.

The psalmist is saying when you come, bring 4 things: (1) “gladness”; (2) “joyful songs”; (3) “thanksgiving”; and (4) “praise.”

David Jeremiah in his book *A Bend in the Road* said:

Watch and wait, and you’ll find it to be true. You’ll be faced with a trial, and God will give you two gifts: a scripture for your mind and a song for your heart. And the song He gives you will burst forth in lovely melody in the midst of the darkest night. I don’t apologize for the fact that in my hospital room, in the middle of the night and a morphine drip, I was in my uncomfortable bed praising God with my hands lifted up to the Lord. I was celebrating Him, thanking Him for life, for health, for family, for friends—all that He is and all that He does. It was the most joyful song that hospital ever heard. (48)

W. Graham Scroggie said: “We may say, then, that Divine Worship is an act, wherein the devout soul prostrates itself before God in humble homage and entire submission.” (*Method in Prayer*, 27).

Ron Allen concludes his book in the Psalms by saying:

So let us join in song in praise of Yahweh, who has done such great things for us! Let us join in song in praise of the Lamb who is worthy! Let us join in song to our God, who has placed a new song in our hearts!

Isaac Watts said it this way: Come let us join our cheerful songs / With angels round the throne; / Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, / But all their joys are one. / “Worthy is the Lamb that died,” they cry, / “To be exalted thus.” / “Worthy the lamb,” our lips reply. / “For He was slain for us.” / Let all that dwell above the sky, / And air, and earth, and seas, / conspire to lift Thy glories high, / And speak Thine endless praise. / The whole creation join in one / To bless the sacred NAME / Of Him that sits upon the throne, / And to adore the Lamb.

*So let us sing!*

Y’shua the Lamb is Lord of Song!

I find welling up in my heart that wonderful prayer chorus written by Jimmy Owens called **“Holy, Holy”**: *“Holy, holy, holy, holy, Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; And we lift our hearts before You as a token of our love, Holy, holy, holy, holy. Gracious Father, gracious Father, We’re so blest to be Your children, gracious Father; and we lift our heads before You as a token of our love, Gracious Father, gracious Father. Precious Jesus, precious Jesus, We’re so glad that You’ve redeemed us, precious Jesus; and we lift our hands before You as a token of our love, Precious Jesus, precious Jesus. Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Come and fill our hearts anew, Holy Spirit; And we lift our voice before You as a token of our love, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit. Hallelujah, hallelujah, Hallelujah, hallelujah; And we lift our hearts before You as a token of our love, Hallelujah, hallelujah.”*

## July 7 – Know That the Lord is God (Ps. 100:3)

**Psalm 100:3**: *“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”*

**verse 3**: “Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

Pursuing our 7 key command words, we have seen: (1) “shout” in verse 1; (2) “worship” in verse 2; (3) “come before” in verse 2; and now (4) “know” in verse 3.

There are 5 things we know in verse 3. We know: (1) “that [he] is God”; (2) “he...made us”; (3) “we are his”; (4) “we are his people”; and (5) “we are...the sheep of his pasture.”

Let’s just take a moment this morning to meditate upon these 5 things.

(1) “Know that the Lord is God.” Paul says in Philippians 3:10: “that I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (NASB).

(2) “It is he who made us.” Make no mistake about it, He’s the creator and sustainer of the universe, and of each of us as well.

Paul tells the Colossians: “For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him” (1:16 NASB).

(3) “we are his.” We belong to Him as His possession because He made us. He redeemed us with the blood of His Son. We are twice His, one by creation and second by redemption.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (NASB).

(4) “we are his people.”

1 Peter 2:9-10: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (NASB).

(5) “we are...the sheep of his pasture.”

John 10:14: “I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me” (NASB).

Isaiah 40:11: “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (NIV).

The key word in verse 3 is “Know.” The things we are to know are 5 in number: (1) “[he] is God”; (2) “he...made us”; (3) “we are his” (possession); (4) “we are his people”; and (5) “the sheep of his pasture.”

Listen to the great benediction in Hebrews 13:20-21: “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 pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (NASB).

What a great and glorious God! The more you know Him the more you love Him. You don’t have to worship Him, you get to worship Him.

Join me in singing **“More About Jesus”**: *“More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me. More about Jesus, let me learn, More of His holy will discern; Spirit of God, my Teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me. More about Jesus, in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev’ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

## July 8 – Enter His Gates (Ps. 100:4)

**Psalm 100:4: “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”**

**verse 4:** “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

We have considered the first 4 commands in verses 1-3: (1) “Shout for joy”; (2) “worship the Lord”; (3) “come before him”; and (4) “know that the Lord is God.”

We now have the final 3 commands in verse 4: (5) “Enter his gates with thanksgiving”; (6) “give thanks to him”; and “praise his name.”

You will notice we have “with” a couple of times in verse 4. This takes us back to verse 2 where we had “with” 2 times: (1) “worship the Lord with gladness” and (2) “come before him with joyful songs.” Now here we have: (3) “Enter his gates with thanksgiving” and (4) “his courts with praise.”

The 5 ingredients of worship are now complete with verse 4: (1) “joy” in verse 1; (2) “gladness” in verse 2; (3) “joyful songs” in verse 2; (4) “thanksgiving” in verse 4; and (5) “praise” in verse 4.

Warren Wiersbe said: “The highest occupation of the Christian life is worshiping the Lord. Never allow your worship to become routine or artificial. Worship Him with a joyful and thankful heart by serving, singing, submitting and sacrificing.”

Praise is blessing the Lord for what He has done for us.

Psalm 103:1-2: “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (NIV).

Joni Eareckson Tada said:

A sacrifice of praise will always cost you something. It will be a difficult thing to do. It requires trading in our pride, our anger, and most valued of all, our human logic. We will be compelled to voice our words of praise firmly and precisely, even as our logic screams that God has no idea what he’s doing. Most of the verses written about praise in God’s Word were penned by men and women who faced crushing heartaches, injustice, treachery, slander, and scores of other intolerable situations.

Joni prayed this prayer: “Lord Jesus, I can’t wait for the day when I will rise up on resurrected legs. The first thing I will then do is to drop on grateful, glorified knees.” (*Diamonds in the Dust*)

Let’s sing one of Fanny Crosby’s great old hymns **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! There are depths of love that I cannot know Till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

## July 9 – The Lord is Good (Ps. 100:5)

**Psalm 100:5: “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”**

verse 5: “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Why should we shout for joy? Why should we worship the Lord with gladness? Why should we come before Him with joyful songs? Why should we know that the Lord is God? Why should we enter His gates with thanksgiving? Why should we give thanks to Him? Why should we praise His name? The reason is now given here in the final verse of this psalm.

The 3 reasons to give thanks to Him and praise His name are: (1) “For the Lord is good”; (2) “his love endures forever”; and (3) “his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

The Lord is mentioned 17 times in these 5 verses.

Let’s meditate on these 3 reasons to give thanks to Him and to praise His name.

(1) “For the Lord is good.”

Psalm 34:8: “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (NIV).

Psalm 107:1: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever” (NIV).

Lamentations 3:25: “The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him” (NIV).

I find myself singing that little chorus of praise this morning: *“God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He’s so good to me!”*

(2) “his love endures forever.”

He never stops loving us no matter what. Psalm 86:5: “You are kind and forgiving, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.”

1 Corinthians 13:7: “[Love] Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (NASB).

The word here for endures could likewise be translated “persevering all things.”

Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (NIV).

Let’s turn our attention now to the third reason we are giving thanks to Him and praising His name: (3) “his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Lamentations 3:22-23: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (NIV).

Psalm 36:5: “Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies” (NIV).  
God is never unfaithful!

Psalm 92:1-2: “It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night” (NIV).

I find myself praying the prayer of Jabez this morning:

*Lord, I would ask You to bless me a lot. Lord, I would ask You to enlarge my sphere of ministry. Lord, I would ask that Your hand might be with me, that You would fill me with Your Spirit. Lord, I would ask you to keep me from evil that it may not grieve me. Lord, because You are good and your love endures forever, and your faithfulness continues through all generations, I thank you for having heard this prayer and that you will respond in the affirmative!*

Join me in singing all 4 verses of “**God Is So Good**”: “*God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He’s so good to me! Jesus is real, Jesus is real, Jesus is real, He’s so real to me! He saved my soul, He saved my soul, He saved my soul And He made me whole! I praise His name, I praise His name, I praise His name, He’s so good to me!*”

## **July 10 – Learning to Worship: Step #1: Make a Decision to Worship (Ps. 111:1)**

**Psalm 111:1:** “*Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.*”

**verse 1:** “Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.”

We are commanded in this opening verse to “Praise the Lord.” The response of the psalmist, “I will extol the Lord with all my heart,” is that it will be pure, positive praise.

Here we see the psalmist’s declaration of purpose: “I will extol the Lord with all my heart.” He will do this in 2 places: (1) “in the council of the upright” and (2) “in the assembly.” I like to think of these 2 phrases as referring to the smaller accountability and the larger public assembly.

It was Erwin Lutzer who said: “If we haven’t learned to be worshippers, it doesn’t really matter how well we do anything else.”

Richard Foster said: “If worship does not change us, it has not been worship. To stand before the holy one of eternity is to change. Worship begins in holy expectancy. It ends in holy obedience.”

Joni Eareckson Tada said it beautifully:

*Something happens...something supernatural...something powerful...something that touches both time and eternity...when a believer gives praise to Christ in the midst of trouble and adversity. People notice, and wonder. Angels observe, and worship. Demons flee from the brilliance. But more than all of those things, the name of God gains honor and glory. Oh, my friend, it isn’t easy. It certainly isn’t natural. It may come through tears. But if by faith you will offer a sacrifice of praise to God in the midst of your pain today, the resulting radiance will shine further than you could begin to imagine. (31 Days to Overcoming Adversity, 74-75).*

My heart is welling up in praise. Please join me in singing that contemporary chorus “**Majesty**”:  
“*Majesty, worship His majesty, Unto Jesus be all glory, honor, and praise. Majesty, kingdom authority. Flow from His throne unto His own; His anthem raise. So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.*”



*Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King. Majesty, worship His majesty—Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.”*

### **July 11 – Learning to Worship: Step #2: Ponder God’s Greatness (Ps. 111:2-3)**

***Psalm 111:2: “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.”***

***Psalm 111:3: “Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.”***

**verse 2:** “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.”

The word translated “pondered” here means to hold, to treasure up, to keep to oneself, to conceal.

It is the word to describe the virgin Mary treasuring the words of the angels in her heart.

Elsewhere the psalmist meditates on the great works of the Lord: creation, providence, grace. Throughout the psalms his thoughts turn to the Red Sea, Jericho, Noah and the ark, and countless other glorious manifestation of the great and glorious God.

Psalm 66:5: “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!” (NIV).

Yesterday in verse 1 the psalmist was praising the Lord for his person. Now, here in verse 2, he is meditating upon God’s great works. He says of these great works: “they are pondered by all who delight in them.”

**verse 3:** “Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.”

Now he begins to focus specific words of praise. There are 2 here in verse 3. They are: (1) “glorious” and (2) “majestic.”

He then speaks of his being: “his righteousness endures forever.”

One of the most precious times of worship during my seminary years came when Dr. Mitchell taught us the book of Genesis and introduced us to a hymn I had never heard before, “How Great Thou Art.” I sensed the presence of the Lord in such a real way that tears blurred my written notes.

Psalm 57:5: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth” (NIV). Psalm 29:1-2: “Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (NIV).

Welling up in my heart is a song and of course you have already guessed it. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of “**How Great Thou Art!**”: “*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow’r throughout the universe displayed! When thru the woods and forest glades I wander And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees, When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze, Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*”

### **July 12 – Learning to Worship: Step #3: Praise Him For His Past Faithfulness (Ps. 111:4)**

***Psalm 111:4: “He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate.”***

**verse 4:** “He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate.”

The Net Bible translates this verse: “He does amazing things that will be remembered; the Lord is merciful and compassionate.”

In the last part of verse 4 he magnifies the Lord’s person and character with 2 words. The Lord is: (1) “gracious” and (2) “compassionate.”

Words burst forth in worship and praise of our great God, because of His faithfulness, uprightness, and holiness. He is awesome! He is gracious. He is compassionate. He is faithful. He is just. He is trustworthy. These are the sentiments of the psalmist and should be ours as well.

Deuteronomy 28:47-48: “Because you have not served the Lord your God with joy and enthusiasm, for the abundant benefits you have received, you will serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you. You will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything. They will oppose you harshly until you are destroyed” (NLT).

“God can take a lowly vessel, Shape it with His mighty hand, Fill it with a matchless treasure, Make it serve a purpose grand.” (Bosch, *Our Daily Bread*, April 3, 2007)

Lord, I love you, I worship you, I adore you this morning.

Welling up in my heart once again is the hymn we sang yesterday, “**How Great Thou Art!**”. Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4: “*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in—That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*”

### **July 13 – Learning to Worship: Step #4: Rejoice With Him Over His Present Involvement in Your Life (Ps. 111:5)**

***Psalm 111:5: “He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.”***

**verse 5:** “He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.”

The psalmist refers to the Lord as Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides. He is there to meet our physical needs on a daily basis. Not only this, “he remembers his covenant forever.”

One of the things we can say about the Lord in response to this phrase is He never forgets or fails to keep a promise.

As the Lord provided manna and meat in the wilderness for the children of Israel, He also provided for Elijah at the brook Cherith and at Zarephath, so we, daily, find Him available to provide for our needs.

Abraham is taking Isaac up the mountain of sacrifice. All the while the Lord is providing a ram that is coming up the other side.

Psalm 89:33-34: “but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered” (NIV).

Join me if you will this morning in an act of worship singing one of my favorite hymns. Let’s sing verse 1 of “**Day by Day**”: “*Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trails here; Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best. Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.*”

### **July 14 – Learning to Worship: Step #5: Worship Him for His Works and His Word (Ps. 111:6-8)**

***Psalm 111:6: “He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations.”***

***Psalm 111:7: “The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.”***

***Psalm 111:8: “They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.”***

**verse 6:** “He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations.”

The psalmist is now marveling at God’s mighty works in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, through the wilderness to Kadesh-Barnea, then 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and across the Jordan River, giving them the “lands of other nations.”

**verse 7:** “The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.”

Making another reference to the “works of his hands” and paying tribute with 2 words to describe them: (1) “faithful” and (2) “just.”

The psalmist then uses the word “all” once again: “all his precepts are trustworthy.” Basically we can say it is safe to depend upon His word.

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (NASB).

**verse 8:** “They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.”

The word “They” refers back to verse 7: “The works of his hands [and] all his precepts.” Our text tells us “They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.”

I love the words of Jeremiah. As he sees the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the southern kingdom with the citizens being taken captive to Babylon, he says these beautiful words: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (Lam. 3:22-26 NIV).

I am reminded of Job’s testimony in Job 19:25-27: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me” (NIV).

Join me in singing verse 2 of **“Day by Day”**: *“Ev’ry day the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, He whose name is Counsellor and Pow’r. The protection of His child and treasure Is a charge that on Himself He laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made.”*

### **July 15 – Learning to Worship: Step #6: Express Adoration and Awe of Eternal Salvation (Ps. 111:9)**

***Psalm 111:9: “He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.”***

**verse 9:** “He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.”

The verbs are very important. (1) “He provided redemption for his people” and (2) “he ordained his covenant forever.”

The outburst of praise is 2-fold: “holy and awesome is his name.”

The Lord is to be praised because he provided redemption for his people in delivering them from the bondage in Egypt and bringing them into the land of promise. We too can rejoice in the fact He has provided redemption for us through the death of our Savior upon the cross.

Ephesians 1:7: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (NASB).

“He ordained his covenant forever.” The first covenant God made with Abraham was an unconditional, eternal covenant that there would be a land and a seed. God has been faithful to fulfill those promises and will continue to fulfill those promises in the future.

“Holy and awesome is his name.”

Luke 1:68: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people” (NASB).

My heart swells with love and adoration toward our awesome God. Let’s sing together verse 3 of **“Day by Day”**: *“Help me then in ev’ry tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation Offered me within Thy holy Word. Help, me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting. E’er to take, as from a father’s hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.”*

### **July 16 – Learning to Worship: Step #7: Devote Yourself to Divine Direction (Ps. 111:10)**

***Psalm 111:10: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.”***

**verse 10:** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.”

The Net Bible summarizes verse 10: “To obey the Lord is the fundamental principle for wise living.” The final phrase “To him belongs eternal praise.”

Revelation 4:11: “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (NASB).

Swindoll helps us with this final step of worship when he says: “What comes from the Lord because it is impossible for humans to manufacture it? Wisdom. What comes from humans because it is impossible for the Lord to experience it? Worry. And what is it that brings wisdom and dispels worry? Worship.”

Psalms 70:4: “But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, ‘Let God be exalted!’” (NIV).

I think it would be fitting for us, as we have considered these 7 steps in the process of learning to worship, listen in as Jerry Bridges prays:

“Convinced of Your greatness, I fear You and stand in awe of You. Because I fear You, I trust You; and because I trust You, I worship You. ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.’ Revelation 4:11

“Fearing You is ‘the beginning of wisdom,’ and the beginning as well of my worship. ‘Who is like you...awesome in glory?’ No one is! ‘You alone are to be feared.’ ‘You alone are God.’ So You alone I worship...

Let my worship be acceptable to You today, O living God...” (*I Exalt You, O God*, 31)

My heart is welling up with worship and praise. Join me in singing that chorus “**Alleluia**”:  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior. He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy. I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him. I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him.*”

## July 17 – The Life of the Worshipper (Ps. 112:1)

**Psalm 112:1: “Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.”**

Psalms 111 and 112 are twin psalms that contain the same number of verses and clauses. They are both acrostic psalms. This means each of the Psalms has 22 lines and each line begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

In Psalm 111 we pursue the subject of learning to worship. Now Psalm 112 picks up where Psalm 111 leaves off. It reveals the blessings that come to the person who fears the Lord.

Psalm 112 addresses these questions: (1) What does God do for those who truly worship him? (2) What are the blessings of the worshiper?

In verse 1 we see the characteristics of the life of the worshiper. Then in the following warnings he will give us 6 blessings in verses 2-9. He concludes with a contrasting example of the life of the wicked in verse 10.

Sandwiched between the life of the worshiper in verse 1 and the life of the wicked in verse 10 are the six blessings the Lord bestows upon those who truly worship Him.

**verse 1:** “Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.”

In verse 1 we learn the worshiper is characterized as a man who is blessed for 2 reasons: (1) “[he] fears the Lord” and (2) “[he] finds great delight in his commands.”

Fearing the Lord means thinking His thoughts and walking in His ways.

Proverbs 28:14: “Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble” (NIV).

Obedience is agreeable to the true worshiper, according to Psalm 112. He is eager and excited to follow the Lord’s commands. He manifests brokenness and obedience.

Psalm 1:2 states of this man: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (NIV).



Oswald Chambers said: "It never costs a disciple anything to follow Jesus, to talk about cost when you are in love with someone is an insult."

Chambers qualified this slightly with an additional statement: "Love is spontaneous, but it has to be maintained through discipline."

A.W. Tozer said: "God never changes moods or cools off in his affections or loses enthusiasm."

John R. W. Stott once admitted that the truth that many of us have felt but failed to confess: "The thing I know will give me the deepest joy, namely to be alone and unhurried in the presence of God, aware of His presence, my heart open to worship Him is often the thing I least want to do."

Join me in singing a verse of **"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus":** *O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face; And the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the light of His glory and grace.*"

### **July 18 – Blessing #1: Experiencing God's Presence in Your Family (Ps. 112:2)**

**Psalm 112:2:** *"His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed."*

**verse 2:** "His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed."

Psalm 5:3: "Morning by morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; morning by morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."

This worshipful way of life is contagious, spreading to the worshipers' children. "His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed."

Job 42:15: "Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers" (NIV).

Psalm 128:1-4: "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord" (NIV).

Please join me in worshipping as we sing together verses 1 and 3 of **"I'm a Child of the King":** *"My Father is rich in houses and lands, He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hand! Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold. I once was an outcast stranger on earth, A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth; but I've been adopted, my name's written down, An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown. I'm a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior I'm a child of the King."*

### **July 19 – Blessing #2: Experiencing God's Presence in Your Finances and Faithfulness (Ps. 112:3)**

**Psalm 112:3:** *"Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever."*

**verse 3:** "Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever."

The worshiper will be blessed materially and spiritually. "Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever."

Proverbs 22:4: "Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life" (NIV).

Spiritually the worshiper is blessed. "His righteousness endures forever." A legacy of righteousness follows him because of his consistency and perseverance. His faithfulness bears fruit, even after he is long gone.

Malachi 3:10: "'...Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it'" (NIV).

Philippians 4:19: "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (NASB).

Join me in singing verses 2 and 4 of the hymn we sang yesterday, **"I'm a Child of the King":** *"My Father's own Son, the Savior of men, Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them. But now He is*

*pleading our pardon on high, That we may be His when He comes by and by. A tent or a cottage why should I care? They're building a palace for me over there; Tho' exiled from home, yet, still I may sing: All glory to God, I'm a child of the King. I'm a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior I'm a child of the King."*

## **July 20 – Blessing #3: Experiencing God's Presence in Your Character and Conduct (Ps. 112:4-5)**

**Psalm 112:4:** *"Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man."*

**Psalm 112:5:** *"Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice."*

**verses 4:** "Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.

Proverbs 4:18: "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (NIV).

Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (NIV).

For the true worshiper, there's always a light at the end of the tunnel.

Psalm 30:5: "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (NIV).

John 8:12: "Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life'" (NASB).

Psalm 112:4 marks the second time the psalmist makes reference to the worshiper as "upright." He is "gracious and compassionate and righteous." This is the way an upright person looks to the Lord. This is the way he lives his life.

**verse 5:** "Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice."

He guides his affairs with discretion. His decisions are sound.

James 3:17-18: "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (NASB).

Psalm 1:1-3: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and his leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (NIV).

Join me this morning in singing that wonderful prayer hymn **"Open My Eyes That I May See":**  
*"Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! Open my mind that I may read More of Thy love in word and deed. What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead? Only for light from Thee I plead. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my mind, illumine me, Spirit divine! Open my way that I may bring Trophies of grace to Christ, my King; Echoed in love Thy word shall out-ring, Sweet as the note that angels sing. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my way, illumine me, Spirit divine!"*

## **July 21 – Blessing #4: Experiencing God's Presence in the Storm (Ps. 112:6)**

**Psalm 112:6:** *"Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever."*

**verse 6:** "Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever."

The faith of the true worshiper will not be shaken. Although his life may be stirred up a bit, neither will he be forgotten.

The patriarch Joseph is certainly a graphic example of one who was never shaken and is remembered forever. He tells his brothers in Genesis 45:5: "And now, do not be distressed and do not be

angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you” (NIV).

When we get a solid grip on God’s sovereign purpose for our lives, we will not be shaken in the storms.

Isaiah 26:3: “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you” (NIV).

Isaiah 26:12: “Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us” (NIV).

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

Isaiah 33:6: “He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure” (NIV).

Colossians 3:15: “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful” (NASB).

Let’s worship the Lord together by singing a Selah rendition of **“Part the Waters” / “I Need Thee Every Hour”**: *“When I think I’m going under, part the waters, Lord When I feel the waves around me, calm the sea. When I cry for help, oh, hear me Lord and hold out Your hand Touch my life Still the raging storm in me.” “I need Thee ev’ry hour, Most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine Can peace afford. I need Thee ev’ry hour, Stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their pow’r When Thou art nigh. I need Thee ev’ry hour, In joy or pain; Come quickly and abide, Or life is vain. I need Thee; O, I need Thee; Ev’ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.”*

## **July 22 – Blessing #5: Experiencing God’s Presence in the Conflict (Ps. 112:7-8)**

**Psalm 112:7: “He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.”**

**Psalm 112:8: “His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.”**

**verse 7:** “He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.”

Every day it is necessary for the worshipping believer to suit up for battle, realizing Satan has home-field advantage.

Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (NIV).

In Psalm 112:7, 3 things are said about the worshiper: (1) “He will have no fear of bad news”; (2) his heart is steadfast”; and (3) “[he is] trusting in the Lord.”

**verse 8:** “His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.”

Verse 8 gives 3 more characteristics of this worshipping individual: (1) “His heart is secure”; (2) “he will have no fear”; and (3) “he will look in triumph on his foes.”

Isaiah 54:17: “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (NIV).

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

The true worshiper’s heart is “steadfast” and “secure.” Satan is a defeated foe.

1 John 4:4: “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (NASB).

We find the Psalmist resting in total confidence in his great God.

I find myself filled with joyful anticipation of the victory the Lord has already provided on the cross. The victory I will experience this day is I am dependent upon His spirit to infuse me with strength to walk in the way that would please Him.

Join me in singing that great old hymn by Isaac Watts **“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?”**: *“Am I a soldier of the cross, A follow’r of the Lamb? And shall I fear to own His cause, Or blush to speak His name? Must I be carried to the skies On flow’ry beds of ease, While others fought to win the prize, And*

*sailed thro' bloody seas? Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God? Sure I must fight, if I would reign; increase my courage, Lord; I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word."*

### **July 23 – Blessing #6: Experiencing God's Presence in a Faithful Finish (Ps. 112:9)**

**Psalm 112:9:** *"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be lifted high in honor."*

**verse 9:** "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be lifted high in honor."

The true worshiper is generous, godly and honored. As in Psalm 112:3: "His righteousness endures forever." His legacy is his righteousness. His horn a symbol of strength and power "will be lifted high in honor" at the end of the race. He will hear "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

There are 4 things you need to consider if you are going to hear from the lips of the Savior "Well done good and faithful servant": (1) financial—you need to get your financial house in order so that you can have a legacy of being fiscally responsible; (2) faithful—in your friendships and in your forgiveness; (3) concerned about bearing fruit to the glory of God right to the finish line. John 15:8: "By this is my father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." (NASB); and (4) funeral—plan your exit with dignity. It is your last chance to share the gospel with your family and friends.

Listen to the apostle Paul in Acts 20:24: "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I receive from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (NASB).

I find myself singing this morning in worship that great old hymn **"Work, for the Night Is Coming"**: *"Work, for the night is coming, Work through the morning hours; Work while the dew is sparkling, Work 'mid springing flowers; Work while the day grows brighter, Under the glowing sun; Work, for the night is coming, When man's work is done. Work, for the night is coming, Under the sunset skies; While their bright tints are glowing, Work, for daylight flies; Work, till the last beam fadeth Fadeth to shine no more; Work, while night is dark'ning, When man's work is o'er."*

### **July 24 – The Life of the Wicked (Ps. 112:10)**

**Psalm 112:10:** *"The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing."*

**verse 10:** "The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing."

Whereas the psalmist begins with the life of the worshiper in Psalm 112:1, he concludes with the life of the wicked in verse 10.

Here boldly displayed is the alternative to the life of the true worshiper. Verse 10 describes a person who is unhappy, unsatisfied, and unsettled.

Frustrated, annoyed, filled with anxiety, "The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth." He is angry because everything he has lived for is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Besides that, he's getting old. He will waste away, melting away through jealousy and annoyance.

The concluding words from the preacher in Ecclesiastes 12:14 are: "For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (NIV).

In Psalm 112:10 we see the wicked man's aspirations turn to ashes.

Luke 12:19, 20: "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'" (NASB).

1 John 2:17: "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (NASB).

In the words of A.W. Tozer: "God and man exist for each other and neither is satisfied without the other."



Join me in worshipping the Lord by singing the verses of the hymn, **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”** for this is the heart of true worship: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today! Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power all power Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine! Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o’er my being Absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see Christ only, always, Living in me!”*

## July 25 – I Need Help (Ps. 121:1-2)

**Psalm 121:1:** *“I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?”*

**Psalm 121:2:** *“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”*

Psalm 121 is the traveler’s psalm. As the pilgrims approached Jerusalem and looked to the hills in front of them, they often sang this psalm.

Stewart Perowne said: “This beautiful Psalm is the trustful expression of a heart rejoicing in its own safety under the watchful eye of Him who is both the Maker of heaven and earth, and the Keeper of Israel.” (*Commentary on the Psalms*)

James Boice said: “The point of Psalm 121 is not that we will not have problems, but that God will keep us safe as we go through them.”

**verse 1:** *“I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?”*

As the psalmist “[lifts] up his eyes to the hills” he is confronted with a question: “where does my help come from?” It has been a long hard trip. He is weary. Mountains are ahead and also the lights of the city.

Steve Farrar said: “So what’s the moral of the story? *You can’t live the Christian life by yourself.* Period. Or as the song says, ‘We all need somebody to lean on.’ That’s not only a good song. It’s biblical.” (*Quiet Whispers From God’s Heart for Men*, 99)

**verse 2:** *“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”*

In response to the question in verse 1, the psalmist answers: “My help comes from the Lord.” He then refers to the Lord as the “Maker of heaven and earth.” We can also say “and those hills” that are in front of him. He is indeed the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Psalm 123:1-2: *“I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he shows us his mercy” (NIV).*

1 Chronicles 16:11: *“Look to the Lord in his strength; seek his face always” (NIV).*

Isaiah 40:31: *“but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (NIV).*

Warren Wiersbe said:

Be sure you lift your eyes high enough so that you see by faith the great God who cares for you. The ten spies in Canaan did not look high enough: they saw the giants and the walls but not the Lord far above all (Num. 13:28-33). When things on earth seem too big for you to handle, lift your eyes to God by meditating on Isaiah 40 (note v. 26). He is able!

Let’s worship together by singing that hymn that was sung in the final devotional period for the 5 martyrs back in 1956, **“We Rest On Thee”:** *“We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender! We go not forth alone against the foe. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go! We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling, and needing more each day Thy grace to know; Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing; We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go. Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing; We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go! We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender! Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise. When passing thro’ the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro’ endless days. When passing through the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro’ endless days.”*

## July 26 – Constant Surveillance (Ps. 121:3-4)

**Psalm 121:3:** “He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;”

**Psalm 121:4:** “indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”

**verse 3:** “He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;”

There are 2 things the Lord will not let happen here in verses 3: (1) “He will not let your foot slip” and (2) “he...will not slumber.”

Let’s meditate on these 2 things for just a moment.

(1) “He will not let your foot slip”

Psalm 37:24: “though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand” (NIV).

Proverbs 3:26: “for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared”

(NIV).

1 Samuel 2:9: “He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness...”

(NIV).

Jude 24, 25: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (NASB).

(2) “he...will not slumber.”

This means he has each of us under constant surveillance. We are in his intensive care. He is involved with continuous monitoring. He has us on His radar screen. He is fully aware of everything going on in our lives.

We are the recipients of constant care and concern on the part of our heavenly Father.

**verse 4:** “indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”

Whereas the promise of not slumbering is individual in verse 3, it is national (referring to the whole nation of Israel) in verse 4.

1 Kings 18:27: “At noon Elijah began to taunt them. ‘Shout louder!’ he said. ‘Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened’” (NIV).

W. Graham Scroggie said: “Fear not the windy tempests wild, Thy bark they shall not wreck; Lie down and sleep, O helpless child! Thy Father’s on the deck.”

There is never a time he cannot be reached. No answering machine or computer run-around.

Exodus 33:14: “The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’”

(NIV).

Join me in an act of worship by singing the first verse of **“Does Jesus Care?”**: “*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained Too deeply for mirth and song; As the burdens press and the cares distress, And the way grows weary and long? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.*”

## July 27 – Concern for Comfort (Ps. 121:5-6)

**Psalm 121:5:** “The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;”

**Psalm 121:6:** “the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.”

**verse 5:** “The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;”

Exodus 13:21-22: “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people” (NIV).

The Lord will protect the pilgrim at all times. The Lord has such joy in His children that He never wearies of them. Isn’t it funny with our grandchildren? When nap time comes it’s for us and not for them.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “Our Lord Jesus has such joy in His people as keeps Him from ever being weary of them. That is one meaning of His never slumbering or sleeping.”

Joe Gibbs, former head coach of the Washington Redskins, said: “God loves us in good times and bad...But he is even more real in our lives when we are having tough times.”

**verse 6:** “the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.”

Isaiah 27:2-3: "In that day—'Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it'" (NIV).

I am reminded of Jonah 4:6-11: "Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, 'It would be better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?' 'I do,' he said. 'I am angry enough to die.' But the Lord said, 'You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?'" (NIV).

Lorenzo Scupoli said:

When your senses are gratified by some sweet odour, do not rest in the enjoyment itself, but let your thoughts pass on to your Lord, from Whom the delight comes; and, filled with inward joy at this contemplation, say—"Grant, O Lord, that as I rejoice because all sweetness comes from Thee, so may my soul, cleansed and delivered from all earthly gratifications, mount up to Thee, and be acceptable as a sweet savour poured forth in Thy Presence." (*The Spiritual Combat*, 43)

Join me in singing verses 2 and 3 of "**Does Jesus Care?**": "*Does Jesus care when my way is dark With a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, Does He care enough to be near? Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed To resist some temptation strong; When for my deep grief I find no relief, Though my tears flow all the night long? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.*"

## July 28 – Care and Concern For a Lifetime (Ps. 121:7-8)

**Psalm 121:7:** "*The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;*"

**Psalm 121:8:** "*the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*"

1 Chronicles 16:31: "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations 'The Lord reigns!'" (NIV).

**verse 7:** "The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;"

There are 2 things in verse 7 the Lord does: (1) "The Lord will keep you from all harm" and (2) "he will watch over your life."

What a tremendous promise from the Lord to start this new day!

1 Peter 1:5: "who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (NASB).

It's good to follow on and read verse 6: "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials" (1 Peter 1:6 NASB).

Brennan Manning said: "If God tears up your beautiful game plan and leads you into a valley instead of onto a mountaintop, it is because he wants you to discover *his* plan, which is more beautiful than anything you or I could have dreamed up. The response of trust is 'Thank you, Jesus,' even if it is said through clenched teeth. (*Reflections for Ragamuffins*, 200)

**verse 8:** "the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

In this grand culmination in verse 8, the psalmist makes reference both to the present and the future. We could say he is also making reference to time and eternity in the words "now and forevermore."

He has all our entrances and exits covered in this one statement.

Hebrews 7:25: "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" (NASB).

C.H. Spurgeon said: "When we go out in youth to begin life, and come in at the end to die, we shall experience the same keeping. Our exits and our entrances are under one protection."

Hudson Taylor said: "Both Thine arms are clasped around me, And my head is on Thy breast; And my weary soul hath found Thee Such a perfect, perfect rest! Blessed Jesus, Now I know that I am blest." (*One With Christ*, 80)

Warren Wiersbe said:

*God is your Helper and Keeper. No matter where your path in life leads, if you walk in His will, he will preserve you. Walk with confidence today. You have a Helper, a Keeper and a Preserver, who will see you through. (Prayer, Praise & Promises, Day 318)*

Let's worship the Lord together by singing the final verse of "**Does Jesus Care?**": "*Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye To the dearest on earth to me, And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, Is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.*"

## July 29 – Showers of Blessing (Ps. 128:1-2)

**Psalm 128:1:** "*Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.*"

**Psalm 128:2:** "*You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.*"

Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (NASB).

**verse 1:** "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways."

James Boice said: "In Psalm 128 the poet reminds us that there are nevertheless several important responsibilities that rest on the person who would partake of God's blessings. In short, he must fear God and obey him."

We begin with the word "Blessed." This word occurs in Psalm 1:1, 32:1, and 32:2. "Blessed are all who" do 2 things. There are no exceptions. What are these 2 things? (1) "fear [respect] the Lord" and (2) "[those] who walk in his ways."

Life can become terribly confusing at times because so many different voices are raised to provide answers.

To "fear the Lord" involves a resignation on our part to control anything. It is declaring our dependence upon the designer. It is saying "not my will but yours be done." It is saying with Esther, "If I perish, I perish." It is saying with Jacob "If I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

The second phrase in our verse is "who walk in his ways." You will notice it is "his ways" not our ways.

Gordon McDonald said: "The freest person in the world is one with an open heart, a broken spirit, and a new direction in which to travel."

Jeremiah 4:3: "This is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: 'Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns'" (NIV).

Hosea 10:12: "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you" (NIV).

**verse 2:** "You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours."

Psalm 127:2: "In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves" (NIV).

The blessing that comes to all who fear the Lord and walk in His ways are outlined in the next verses. In verse 2 there are 2: (1) "You will eat the fruit of your labor" and (2) "blessings and prosperity will be yours."

The principle we can gather from this is the Lord blesses the obedient heart.

Galatians 6:9: "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary" (NASB).

Join me in singing the first verse of that wonderful old hymn "**There Shall Be Showers of Blessing**": "*There shall be showers of blessing; This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons*



*refreshing, Sent from the Saviour above. Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead."*

### **July 30 – Blessings in Your Family (Ps. 128:3-4)**

***Psalm 128:3: "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table."***

***Psalm 128:4: "Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."***

Let's listen to Job as he testifies in a time that seems totally contrary to blessings in his family.

Job 10:12: "You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit" (NIV).

Job 34:21: "His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step" (NIV).

Job 34:32: "Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again" (NIV).

**verse 3:** "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table."

In verse 1 we are told "Blessed are all who" do 2 things: (1) "fear [respect] the Lord" and (2) "who walk in his ways."

Those who do this have 4 blessings awaiting them: (1) "You will eat the fruit of your labor"; (2) "blessings and prosperity will be yours"; (3) "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house"; and (4) "your sons will be like olive shoots around your table."

In verse 2 the psalmist is focusing on the gentleman's professional life. In verse 3 he turns to his personal life.

He is characterized by a fruitful family. We can see a parallel to Psalm 127:3-5: "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate" (NIV).

The wife is characterized as being "like a fruitful vine within your house."

"Your sons will be like olive shoots around your table."

The word "fruitful" has in it the idea of refreshment and lavish enjoyment.

In thinking of the characteristics of the vine, there are 3. The vine: (1) clings; (2) climbs; and (3) clusters in fruitfulness.

One husband said: "Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories." (*God's Little Devotional Book for Dads*, 284)

**verse 4:** "Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."

The word "Thus" points us back to the 4-fold blessing of the man who fears God he described in verses 2 and 3. We could translate the word "Thus" as "Behold," "Low," "Observe," "Stop, look and listen." God is the author of all this. We had "Blessed" in verse 1, "blessings" in verse 2, and now "blessed" here in verse 4.

"Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."

Psalm 86:11: "Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, O Lord my God with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever" (NIV).

Psalm 147:11: "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love" (NIV).

J. Vernon McGee said: "You cannot get away from the fact that, unless there is that reverential fear of God and obedience to Him, there will not be a happy home."

Edgar Guest writes a great poem called "What I Want":

I don't want a pipe and I don't want a watch.

I don't want cigars or a bottle of Scotch.

I don't want a thing your money can buy.

I don't want a shirt or a four-in-hand tie.

If you really would make this old heart of mine glad,

I just want to know you're still fond of your dad.  
 You women folk say, and believe it I can,  
 "It's so terribly hard to buy things for a man!"  
 And from all that I've heard I am sure it must be.  
 Well, I don't want you spending your money on me.  
 I just want to know you're still fond of your dad.  
 Get on with your shopping; give others the stuff!  
 For me just a hug and a kiss are enough!

Please join me in singing verse 2 of **"There Shall Be Showers of Blessing"**: *"There shall be showers of blessing; Precious reviving again; Over the hills and the valleys, Sound of abundance of rain. Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead."*

### July 31 – Prayers for Blessing (Ps. 128:5-6)

**Psalm 128:5**: *"May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,"*

**Psalm 128:6**: *"and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel."*

Let's meditate for a moment on these prayer promises.

2 Chronicles 7:14: "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (NIV).

1 Chronicles 29:12: "Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all" (NIV).

Lamentations 3:25-26: "The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him. It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (NIV).

Now to our 2 verses for this morning.

**verse 5**: *"May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,"*

The psalmist now concludes his meditation with a prayer. This prayer has 3 requests: (1) "May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life"; (2) "may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem"; and (3) "may you live to see your children's children." He then concludes with the benediction: "Peace be upon Israel."

Request 1: "May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life."

Brokenness must precede blessing. Submission and surrender also precede God's blessing.

Numbers 6:24-26: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace" (NIV).

"May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life." This reminds me of Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

Request 2: "may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem."

It is now the prayer of the psalmist that it will be the joy of the man who is blessed to see an economic turn-around in Jerusalem. We had the word "prosperity" in verse 2. Now in his prayer, he is just expanding this prosperity to include the nation.

**verse 6**: *"and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel."*

Request 3: "may you live to see your children's children."

One writer said: "Fathers are what give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough...so they can have grand-children that are smarter than anybody's." (*God's Little Devotional Book for Dads*, 312)

The psalmist then concludes with the benediction: "Peace be upon Israel."

I am reminded of the scriptural benediction in Hebrews 13:20-21: "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 pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (NASB).

Join me in singing the last 2 verses of **“There Shall Be Showers of Blessing”**: *“There shall be showers of blessing: Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. There shall be showers of blessing: Oh, that today they might fall, Now as to God we’re confessing, Now as on Jesus we call! Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”*

## **August 1 – Failure: Falling Forward Toward the Finish (Ps. 130:1)**

***Psalm 130:1: “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;”***

***verse 1:*** “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;”

Let’s face it, failure is an inevitable part of the human condition. We fail at business, relationships, at morality, physical goals, and in our spiritual lives. Where do we turn?

Few portions of scripture offer more encouragement for those who fail than Psalm 130. The psalm is a product of a depressing time in David’s life.

Historically Psalm 130 takes place following David’s sin with Bathsheba, the confrontation with Nathan and the death of his little son. “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this first verse: “Help, GOD—the bottom has fallen out of my life!”

“The depths” makes reference to overwhelming affliction. A number of Bible characters found themselves in the depths. Jonah in Jonah 2:2 prayed: “From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry” (NIV). Job from the depths said in Job 9:17: “He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason” (NIV).

Elijah in 1 Kings 19:4: “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors” (NIV).

David said in 2 Samuel 22:17: “He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters” (NIV).

Joseph likewise experienced the depths when he said: “I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon” (Gen. 40:15 NIV).

Jesus tasted the depths when he cried: “... ‘ELI, ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?’ (Matt. 27:46 KJV).

Paul tasted the depths in 2 Corinthians 1:9-10: “indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us” (NASB).

H.C. Leupold said: “Throughout the Old Testament, *depths* refers to the deep waters of affliction and trouble.” (*Exposition of Psalms*, 903-4)

It is not a one-time cry. It is continuous. The Hebrew grammar reveals that in Psalm 130:1. David is saying: “I have cried in the past and I still cry.”

Alexander MacLaren says: “If out of the depths we cry, we shall cry ourselves out of the depths.”

To whom did David turn in Psalm 130? This was his redemption. “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.” He made a decision in the “depths.” Like the prodigal in the hour of his greatest need and crisis, he would arise and go to his father. He would seek a rescue from above.

I find myself singing that great old hymn **“Love Lifted Me”**: *“I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He’s the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.”*

## **August 2 – What Has Failure Done to My Relationship With the Lord? (Ps. 130:2)**

***Psalm 130:2: “O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.”***

**verse 2:** “O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.”

David’s primary concern was for an audience with the Lord. David’s confession in Psalm 51 similarly opens with these words: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions” (Ps. 51:1 NIV).

Psalm 18:16: “He reached down from on high and took hold of me. He drew me out of deep waters” (NIV).

The disciples thought they were done for in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Mark 4:38-39 describes this scene and the rescue: “And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Hush, be still.’ And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm” (NASB).

Out of the stormy depths his failing servant cries and the strong arm of our faithful father snatches him from sheer destruction. David knew this.

I have for years meditated upon a picture of a young boy at the stern and the Savior behind pointing the way through the storm. I have put these words underneath that picture:

And now I have a Captain, / He’ll guide I know He will, / I’ve given Jesus full command, / Since He said, “Peace be still,” / He whispered “Peace be still to me,” / My heart obeyed His will, / His word made calm the rolling sea, / When He said, “Peace be still.”

One is reminded of the tax collector whose prayer was in Luke 18:13: “God be merciful to me the sinner!” (NASB).

Delitzsch said: “His life hangs upon the thread of the divine compassion.”

“Lord, have mercy.” There needs to come a response. He’s ready when you are.

I find myself singing in worship that great old invitation hymn by Charlotte Elliott, **“Just As I Am.”** *As we sing the words of this hymn, let’s think first of Reality, verse 1: “Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!” Redemption, verse 2: “Just as I am, and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!” Repentance, verse 3: “Just as I am, tho’ tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!” Receiving Him, verse 5: “Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

### **August 3 – All Have Sinned And Fall Short of the Glory of God (Ps. 130:3)**

**Psalm 130:3: “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?”**

**verse 3:** “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?”

John Bunyan said: “One leak will sink a ship: and one sin will destroy a sinner.” (*The Pilgrim’s Progress*, 2)

In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* we read, “The psalmist recognized that no one could stand if God dealt with sinners according to what they deserved. To ‘mark’ ([or to] keep a record of) sins means to hold one accountable for his sins.” (886)

The scene in Psalm 130 switches from the “depths” of the sea to the courtroom. Lord, You are the Judge in this court. “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?”

Sin was David’s problem, and forgiveness, the answer.

We, like David, are guilty of sin as charged! Our only course of action is to throw ourselves upon the mercy of the court.

“O Lord, who could stand?” The obvious answer to this question is no one.

Ecclesiastes 7:20: “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins” (NIV).

Romans 3:10, 23: “as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’” (NASB).



J.B. Phillips said: The problem, even with confessing sin, is that we do not remember all our sins. Our hearts are corrupted, our minds confused. We are indulgent of our sins. We do not understand at times what constitutes sin. Still less can we properly confess all our sins.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

We don’t do very well calling sin, sin! We would rather rationalize, deny, defend, and distort rather than humbly acknowledge our sin.

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (NIV).

Jeremiah 17:10 then says: “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve” (NIV).

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing that wonderful hymn, **“Room at the Cross for You”**: *“The cross upon which Jesus died Is a shelter in which we can hide; And its grace so free is sufficient for me, And deep is its fountain as wide as the sea. Tho’ millions have found Him a friend And have turned from the sins they have sinned, The Savior still waits to open the gates And welcome a sinner before it’s too late. There’s room at the cross for you, There’s room at the cross for you; Tho’ millions have come, There’s still room for one, Yes, there’s room at the cross for you.”*

#### **August 4 – The Fragrance of Forgiveness (Ps. 130:4)**

**Psalm 130:4: “But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”**

**verse 4:** “But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”

The disease was sin in verse 3, the cure is “forgiveness” in verse 4. Instead of keeping a record of sins, the Lord provides forgiveness. This means full, sovereign pardon on His part, without limitations.

When the woman was caught in the act of adultery, the Lord says: “And straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’ And she said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way; from now on sin no more’” (John 8:10, 11 NASB).

The story is told of a dinner party at which Lady Churchill was seated across the table from Sir Winston, whose hands—two fingers bent at the knuckles—kept creeping up and down the table. The fingers appeared to be walking toward Lady Churchill. Finally, her dinner partner asked, “Why is Sir Winston looking at you so wistfully, and whatever is he doing with those knuckles on the table?”

“That’s simple,” she replied. “We had a mild quarrel before we left home, and he is indicating it is his fault and he is on his knees to me in abject apology.” (*The Romance Factor*)

We are sinful and God is holy. Sin can no more exist in the presence of God than darkness can exist in the presence of light. To stand before Him as we are is to invite destruction. If God were to keep a record of our sins, we could not stand in His presence.

C.S. Lewis expressed the truth of God’s forgiveness this way: “No amount of falls will really undo us if we keep on picking ourselves up each time. We shall, of course, be very muddy and tattered children by the time we reach home. But the bathrooms are all ready, the towels put out, and the clean clothes in the airing cupboard...It is when we notice the dirt that God is most present in us; it is the very sign of His presence.”

The word “But” in verse 4 forms the contrast to a Lord who is keeping record of our sins to One who is forgiving. “But with you there is forgiveness.”

Love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:5: “[Love] does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered” (NASB).

Notice the little word “is”: “But with you there is forgiveness.” This is something that is now available in the present for us. There are no exceptions! There is forgiveness for everyone! It does not say “will be” because the day is coming when forgiveness will be history.

Makes you want to shout, doesn’t it!

Psalm 86:5: “You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you” (NIV).

“Therefore you are feared.” That refers to worship and obedience.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "God forgives so that the forgiven will fear Him. This general word for fear often includes the ideas of worship and obedience." (886)

Join me in singing Fanny Crosby's wonderful hymn "**Near the Cross**": *"Jesus, keep me near the cross, There a precious fountain Free to all, a healing stream, Flows from Calv'ry's mountain. Near the cross, a trembling soul, Love and mercy found me, there the Bright and Morning Star Sheds its beams around me. Near the cross! O Lamb of God, Bring its scenes before me; Help me walk from day to day With its shadows o'er me. Near the cross I'll watch and wait, Hoping, trusting ever, Till I reach the golden strand Just beyond the river. In the cross, in the cross Be my glory ever; Till my raptured soul shall find Rest beyond the river."*

## **August 5 – I'm Waiting For the Verdict (Ps. 130:5-6)**

**Psalm 130:5:** *"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope."*

**Psalm 130:6:** *"My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."*

**verse 5:** "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope."

The word "wait" occurs 5 times in Psalm 130:5-6.

The picture is one of waiting for the divine verdict. What is the sovereign response?

David awaited a favorable ruling in his case. He was waiting in deep humility for God to act. He was waiting in complete resignation, hoping that fellowship would be restored. He was waiting for God to work.

Would the power be restored? Would the lights come on once again?

The past is irrevocable. What is done is done; the past cannot be changed or recalled. In the words of Lord Byron, "No hand can make the clock strike for me the hours that are past."

Because Saul did not wait for Samuel but forced himself to make the sacrifice, he lost the kingdom. Galatians 3:3: "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (NASB).

Notice, however, that David in Psalm 130 was not just waiting in inactivity. Rather, "in his [God's] word I put my hope." He continued in verse 6.

**verse 6:** "My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."

Forgiveness is a process that is worth the wait. David might have put it this way: "Lord, I choose to wait for You to respond. I am waiting with greater eagerness than the night watchman is waiting for the morning dawn."

Psalm 27:13-14: "I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (NIV).

C.H. Spurgeon said: "He is worth waiting for. The waiting itself is beneficial to us: it tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it comes. The Lord's people have always been a waiting people: they waited for the First Advent, and now they wait for the Second."

The psalmist says: "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits." While I am waiting: "in his word I put my hope."

I am reminded in Psalm 51 as David makes his confession of sin, he asks the Lord to renew, restore, cleanse, and not to take His Holy Spirit from him.

I am sure there was a time of waiting after this prayer had been expressed so that he could see evidences that forgiveness had been granted and that God had worked.

Psalm 37:7: "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him" (NIV).

Psalm 40:1: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined to me and heard my cry" (NIV).

As I read verse 6 I was reminded of Jacob wrestling all night with the angel. He secures the blessing from the Lord. We read in Genesis 32:31: "The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip" (NIV).

When forgiveness is freely granted it is like the dawning of a brand new day. It could be the dawning of a brand new day in life, in business, in marriage, and in family relationships.

Philippians 3:13: "Forgetting those things which are behind, we press toward those things which are in front" (DAV).

Our hymn of worship this morning is Fanny Crosby's **"Blessed Assurance"**: *"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight; Angels descending, bring from above Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."*

#### **August 6 – Full Acquittal (Ps. 130:7-8)**

**Psalm 130:7: "O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption."**

**Psalm 130:8: "He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins."**

**verse 7:** "O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption."

Psalm 130 moves from failure to forgiveness to fellowship, and, finally, to an affirmation of the ultimate freedom in God. David cries, "O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption" (130:7).

Notice, David mentions 3 wonderful gifts required of us to finish well: forgiveness, unfailing love, and full redemption. The word "full" could be translated "plenteous."

God's provision is a plenteous pardon! Yes, there is room at the cross for you and me! Jesus has paid it all!

As one writer put it: "Every sin, every particle of guilt, every atom of transgression is by the redemption of Christ, effectually taken away from all the Lord's believing family." (unknown)

According to David in verse 8, God the Father has already charged our sins to His Son and has paid the debt in full.

**verse 8:** "He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins."

This redemption refers to the Messiah. Matthew 1:21: "And she will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins" (NASB).

John 1:29: "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (NASB).

The psalmist first commands Israel in verse 7 to "put your hope in the Lord." The remainder of the verse is the reason for the command. It is 2-fold: (1) "for with the Lord is unfailing love" and (2) "with him is full redemption." It would be good for us to go back to verse 4 and put things together: (1) "but with you there is forgiveness"—verse 1; (2) "with the Lord is unfailing love"—verse 7; and (3) "with him is full redemption"—verse 7.

There are 3 wonderful things provided in our relationship with the Lord: (1) "forgiveness"; (2) "unfailing love"; and (3) "full redemption." The price has been fully paid!

What a tremendous gift is ours when we receive God's Son as our own Savior!

Colossians 1:14: "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (NASB).

What a triple blessing awaits us when we respond in obedience to that which the Lord asks of us. The psalmist concludes with verse 8: "He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins."

Note the little word "all."

"He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins." This goes along with the phrase from verse 7: "with him is full redemption."

Admission and confession leads to forgiveness.

Perowne pointed out: "He emphatic, He alone, for none other can."

It is He and He alone who "will redeem Israel from all their sins."

Warren Wiersbe said: "Place your confidence in the promises of God's Word. No matter how down you may feel, God hears you, holds you and helps you. Turn to Him; He'll see you through."

Please join me in singing **“There Is a Fountain”**: *“There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel’s veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains: Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away: Wash all my sins away, Wash all my sins away; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its pow’r, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more: Be saved, to sin no more, Be saved, to sin no more; Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more.”*

#### **August 7 – I Will Praise You (Ps. 145:1-2)**

**Psalm 145:1:** *“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.”*

**Psalm 145:2:** *“Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.”*

Ron Allen entitles Psalm 145 “An Alphabet of Praise.”

Each verse in the psalm begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is similar.

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. In Psalm 145, David is saying that his praise will include everything from A to Z. Let’s examine these items of praise in Psalm 145.

The psalmist opens in these first 2 verses with a commitment to praise.

**verse 1:** *“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.”*

**verse 2:** *“Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.”*

Psalm 69:30: *“I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving”* (NIV).

Psalm 86:12: *“I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever”* (NIV).

Psalm 139:13-14: *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”* (NIV).

Psalm 139:17: *“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”* (NIV).

C.S. Lewis writes:

To see what the doctrine really means, we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God—drunk with, drowned in, dissolved by, that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable, hence hardly tolerable, bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression, our joy no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. (*Reflects on the Psalms*, 96-97.)

Deuteronomy 10:21: *“He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes”* (NIV).

Don Wyrzten’s personal prayer is so special: *“My God and King, you alone are worthy of daily and forever praise. I exalt and declare your goodness to all generations.”* (*A Musician Looks at the Psalms*)

Welling up in the depths of my heart this morning is that beautiful hymn written by Fanny Crosby **“Praise Him! Praise Him!”**: *“Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim! Hail Him! Hail Him! Highest archangels in glory; Strength and honor give to His holy name! Like a shepherd Jesus will guard His children, In His arms He carries them all day long: Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! For our sins He suffered, and bled and died; He our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation, Hail Him! Hail Him! Jesus the Crucified. Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows; Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong: Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Heav’nly portals loud with hosannas ring! Jesus, Savior, reigneth forever and ever; Crown Him! Crown Him! Prophet and Priest and King! Christ is coming! Over the world victorious, Pow’r and glory unto the Lord belong: Praise Him! Praise Him! tell of His excellent greatness; Praise Him! Praise Him! ever in joyful song!”*



## August 8 – To God Be the Glory! (Ps. 145:3-7)

*Psalm 145:3: "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom."*

*Psalm 145:4: "One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts."*

*Psalm 145:5: "They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works."*

*Psalm 145:6: "They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds."*

*Psalm 145:7: "They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."*

**verse 3:** "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom."

Moses closes his final chapter with a song: "I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he" (Deut. 32:3-4 NIV). What a way to wrap it up! Heading toward the valley of the shadow singing!

**verse 4:** "One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts."

Psalm 33:1-2: "Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre" (NIV).

Isaiah 43:21: "The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise" (NIV).

Psalm 105:4: "Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always" (NIV).

**verse 5:** "They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works."

**verse 6:** "They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds."

Psalm 126:3: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (NIV).

C.S. Lewis said: "God does not only 'demand' praise as the supremely beautiful and all-satisfying object. He does apparently command it as a lawgiver."

Why are we so sporadic in our praise? Our praise comes in small spurts instead of a spontaneous free-flowing stream.

**verse 7:** "They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."

Jesus asked this question in Luke 17:17-18: "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return to give praise to God except this foreigner?" (NASB).

Dr. Andrew Bonar, a saintly man, wrote in his diary: "There has been much conversing and outward engagement with men, but I have not been occupied enough with God himself. I also realize that a closeness to Him gives abundant strength and is like sunlight shining through the clouds on a gloomy day."

May our prayer be this day the same as that of the psalmist in Psalm 104:33-34: "I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord" (NIV).

Another of Fanny Crosby's timely and wonderful hymns is **"To God Be the Glory."** Let's sing all 3 verses as we conclude our worship today: *"To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Lifegate that all may go in. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood! To ev'ry believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing thro' Jesus the Son; But purer and higher and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son, and give Him the glory, great things He hath done."*

## August 9 – The Lord is Good to All (Ps. 145:8-9)

*Psalm 145:8: “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.”*

*Psalm 145:9: “The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”*

**verse 8:** “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.”

In the mid 1980's I made the decision to go back to school and enrolled at Talbot Seminary to pursue a doctorate in marriage and family ministries. My youngest daughter, Julea, was attending Biola College at the same time, which is on the same campus. Julea often made me lunch and one day she enclosed Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” I realized at that point what I was missing daily was quality time between just the Lord and me, time in the word, time to pray, and time to praise. I haven't missed a day with Him since that lunch time treat.

Although my disciplines and accountability structures were in place, I still found it difficult to verbally praise God. Psalm 9:1-2 convicted me: “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O most High” (NIV).

Psalm 21:13: “Be exalted, O God, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might.”

Why do we hesitate to go and kneel at the feet of our blessed Lord and issue unstoppable praise?

Look at the quality of character in these 2 verses. The Lord is: (1) “gracious”; (2) “compassionate”; (3) “slow to anger”; and (4) “rich in love.” It is pretty well summed up in verse 9.

**verse 9:** “The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”

Why the hindrance? Why the anxiety about being vulnerable and transparent and laying before the Lord our petitions? Why the anxiety about our praise to Him for the mighty work He is doing in each of our lives?

Psalm 107:1-2: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say this—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe” (NIV).

Psalm 107:8: “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men” (NIV).

Psalm 119:140: “Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them” (NIV).

Let's adopt Wyrzten's prayer this morning: “My Father God, I thank You for your open hands which have satisfied the deepest desires of my heart through Jesus Christ and keep on giving every day of my life.”

While I was singing Charles Wesley's great hymn “And Can It Be That I Should Gain” God worked in my heart, especially through verse 4: “Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee.”

Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of “**All That Thrills My Soul**”: “Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, By His presence all divine? True and tender, pure and precious, Oh, how blest to call Him mine! Love of Christ so freely given, Grace of God beyond degree, Mercy higher than the heaven Deeper than the deepest sea. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; (to me;) And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.”

## August 10 –Thy Kingdom Come (Ps. 145:10-13)

*Psalm 145:10: “All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you.”*

*Psalm 145:11: “They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,”*

*Psalm 145:12: “so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.”*

*Psalm 145:13: “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.”*

**verse 10:** “All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “We are never in our element until we are praising Him. Self-love and its natural irritations die in the blaze of praise.”

Psalm 68:19: "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens" (NIV).

Psalm 106:12: "Then they believed his promises and sang his praise" (NIV).

Psalm 112:7-8: "He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes" (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe said it well: "As finite beings we can scarcely comprehend God's attributes but we can certainly praise Him for who He is and what He has done in our lives. Thank God for saving you. Praise Him for His greatness, His goodness, His grace and His glory."

**verse 11:** "They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,"

**verse 12:** "so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom."

**verse 13:** "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made."

Revelation 19:6: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns'" (NASB).

Revelation 21:4-5: "'and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.' And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true'" (NASB).

Revelation 22:20: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (NASB).

I find myself praying that sentence in the Lord's prayer: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

My heart is thrilled beyond description over the wonderful anticipation of the Lord splitting the skies. I find this morning, a song welling up in my heart. Horatio Spafford's **"It Is Well With My Soul."** Please join me in singing verse 4: *"And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, 'Even so,' it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul."*

### **August 11 – Jehovah Jireh, The Lord Provides (Ps. 145:14-16)**

**Psalm 145:14:** *"The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down."*

**Psalm 145:15:** *"The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time."*

**Psalm 145:16:** *"You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."*

**verse 14:** "The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down."

C.H. Spurgeon said: "My praise should not only be thanksgiving for the past, which is but discharging a debt of gratitude, but my faith needs to anticipate the future and wait upon God to fulfill His purposes. Then I will begin to pray my praise even before the mercy comes." (*The Practice of Praise*, 104)

In 2 Chronicles 20 as Jehoshaphat and the people obey the Lord, we read in verse 22: "As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated" (NIV). There is a liberating freedom and God begins to work when His people praise Him.

C.H. Spurgeon also says: "My aged brothers and sisters, I congratulate you, for you are almost home. Be yet more full of praise than ever. Quickened your footsteps as the glorious land shines more brightly. You are close to the pearly gates. Sing on, though your infirmities increase. Let the song grow sweeter and louder until it melts into the infinite harmonies." (*The Practice of Praise*, 40)

**verse 15:** "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time."

As Abraham was obediently walking up the mountain with his son Isaac, with the command from the Lord to sacrifice his son Isaac, all the while Jehovah Jireh was providing a lamb coming up the other side.

**verse 16:** "You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."

Philippians 4:19: "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (NASB).

Psalms 20:4: "He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows, with burning coals of the broom tree" (NIV).

Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (NIV).

Isaiah 61:10: "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (NIV).

Don Wyrzten said: "Our God is not stingy but lavish in his gift giving. He's a God of extravagance. He delights in caring for His children. Over and over again in His word we are reminded of His gracious provision, but physically and spiritually. 'They feast on the abundance of your house, you give them drink from your river of delights' (Psalm 36:8). 'You crown the year with your bounty and your carts overflow with abundance' (Psalm 65:11). 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want' (Psalm 23:1)." The refrain is echoed in the New Testament: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The greatest gift was God himself in human flesh.

Join me in singing **"Like a River Glorious"**: *"Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow Never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry Not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry Touch the Spirit there. Ev'ry joy or trial Falleth from above, Traced upon our dial By the Sun of Love. We may trust Him fully All for us to do; They who trust Him wholly Find Him wholly true. Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest."*

#### August 12 – Total Availability (Ps. 145:17-19)

**Psalm 145:17:** *"The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made."*

**Psalm 145:18:** *"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."*

**Psalm 145:19:** *"He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them."*

**verse 17:** "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made."

**verse 18:** "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."

**verse 19:** "He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them."

Isaiah 65:24: "Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear" (NIV).

Isaiah 66:2: "'Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' declares the Lord. 'This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word'" (NIV).

Psalm 68:19: "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Selah" (NIV).

Psalm 66:16: "Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me" (NIV).

Isn't it wonderful to know this morning "The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down." Perhaps you have started the day in a bit of depression. The Lord is just saying, "Look, I understand." Perhaps you have stumbled and fallen. The Lord is there to lift you up.

It is wonderful also to see that "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made." Not only that, but He is "near to all who call on him." He is available 24/7. Always ready to hear and to answer.

Isaiah 30:21: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (NIV).

Isaiah 30:18: "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!" (NIV).



Warren Wiersbe said: "God is not far from you. He is waiting for you to take that first step, to call out to Him and say 'Lord, I want to draw close to You. Here I am.' Have you stumbled? Are you carrying a burden? Or are you needy? He promises to be near to all those who call upon Him."

Someone has wisely said: "If you and God feel at a distance, guess who moved?"

I think the desire of our hearts should be that of Fanny Crosby in that familiar hymn, "**Draw Me Nearer**": *"I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side."*

### August 13 – The Choice is Ours (Ps. 145:20-21)

**Psalm 145:20:** *"The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy."*

**Psalm 145:21:** *"My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever."*

**verse 20:** "The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy."

The decision has been made by the psalmist. He expresses this in Psalm 119:30-32: "I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws. I hold fast to your statutes, O Lord; do not let me be put to shame. I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" (NIV).

Psalm 116:5-7: "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the simple-hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you" (NIV).

Psalm 147:11: "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love" (NIV).

The psalmist this morning sounds a great deal like John the apostle in 1 John 5:11-12: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (KJV).

I am reminded Psalm 1:5-6: "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (NIV).

Isn't verse 21 a wonderful way to prepare our hearts for today!

**verse 21:** "My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever."

His heart is overflowing with joy because of sins forgiven, for communion with our blessed Lord, that he has to be verbal. He is speaking "praise of the Lord." He is so touched by that he also wants others as well to join him. "Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever."

Praise is inward delight that has turned into outward demonstration.

Bishop Andrewes put it this way: "Let us all be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: as for my soul, it shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness: therefore, let my mouth be filled with thy praise: that I may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long. This is the happiness of the [four] creatures in the Revelation: they rest not day and night saying 'Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! Which was and is and is to come.'" (*The Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester*, 151)

Don Wyrzten said: "God's kingdom, not made with hands, is filled with His glory and reflects His power and might. At the center, radiant and brighter than the sun is the King himself. His dominion is not transitory. It is an everlasting kingdom, enduring through all generations. So moved am I that I break forth into a song of praise." (*A Musician Looks at the Psalms*)

My heart, too, is overwhelmed and overflowing with a river of praise to our God. Join me in singing Charles Wesley's wonderful hymn, "**O for a Thousand Tongues**": *"O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise, The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of His grace. He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood*

*availed for me. My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim, To spread thro' all the earth abroad, The honors of Thy name."*

#### **August 14 – Feeding Daily on the Word (Ps. 119:9-11)**

***Psalm 119:9: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."***

***Psalm 119:10: "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands."***

***Psalm 119:11: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."***

Today is a special day for Pearl and me. This is our 59th wedding anniversary. What a wonderful trip! What a blessed joy to celebrate God's faithfulness in changing both of us that we might enjoy the rich fruitage of 59 years together. God is so good!

It is very similar in our Christian walk. God has designed our lives so that we are nutritionally sound spiritually by feeding daily on His Word. The psalmist raises the question in verse 9.

**verse 9:** "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."

Jeremiah 15:16: "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty" (NIV).

1 Peter 2:2-3: "like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord" (NASB).

2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (NASB).

God uses the spiritual disciplines to bring about change in our lives. Our foundational principal is: Change produces greater closeness and compatibility. Your world has to change before you can change the world. We are pursuing the path of the tools God uses in making us more like Christ.

Chip Ingram says: "The Bible teaches that God brings about life-change through His Word and His Spirit in the context of sacrificial, other-centered relationships." (*Holy Transformation*, 41)

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Nothing can be more healthful to the soul of the believer than feeding upon the Word, and digesting it by frequent meditation."

When the Lord is teaching His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:11 he says: "Give us this day our daily bread" (NASB).

This could be a prayer from our hearts that we receive daily bread from the Word and physical bread to sustain our bodies.

**verse 10:** "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands."

Not only the decision to be feeding daily upon the Word, but also with a holy determination that the Spirit of God will lead us in straight paths. We have the promise in Proverbs 3:5-6 to: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (NIV).

The psalmist is passionate about his search. "I seek you with all my heart."

**verse 11:** "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

In order to be ready for an opportunity to minister with the Word, we need to memorize it so we can call upon it immediately in any given situation.

Warren Wiersbe said: "God's word has a cleansing effect but you must get into the word before it can become effective in your life. Obey God's word and he will keep you clean in this dirty world."

Wiersbe says further: "The word of God is a powerful spiritual resource. Its truths feed your soul. As you walk in the life of faith, the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to minister to you. Give into the word and allow it to make you whole and build integrity into your life."

Change always creates a greater closeness, both spiritually with our Lord and physically in our marriage relationship.

What a great thought for a 59th anniversary!

My heart is overwhelmed with God's faithfulness and goodness to us. Please join me this morning by singing the first verse of **"How Firm a Foundation"**: *"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"*

## August 15 – Meditating Daily on the Word (Ps. 119:12-13)

***Psalm 119:12: "Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees."***

***Psalm 119:13: "With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth."***

We learned yesterday that in Psalm 119:9-11 the bottom line is: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word?" The key to a clean life is the Word of God.

In verse 10 he tells us he is seeking the Lord "with all my heart" and then asks that he not "stray from [the Lord's] commands." Each morning I conclude my prayer time with the statement: "Keep me on task, on track, and out of Satan's traps."

In verse 11 the purpose of memorizing the Word is for victory over sin.

**verse 12:** "Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees."

This verse reminds me of Job's answer in Job 34:32: "Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again" (NIV).

Jesus said in the upper room with the disciples in John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (NASB).

John 16:13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (NASB).

**verse 13:** "With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth."

The psalmist is taking time to verbalize the word, to review the verses he has memorized.

Psalm 1:2: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (NIV).

The psalmist goes on to say in verse 3: "He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (NIV).

Joshua 1:8: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (NIV).

In Matthew 4:4 the Lord Jesus says while He is being tempted by the devil: "But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"'" (NASB).

I love Don Wyrzten's personal prayer: "O Lord, don't let me neglect Your word. As I hide it away in my heart like nuggets of gold, I am enriched. As I follow its precepts I am strengthened for the battle." (*A Musician Looks at the Psalms*)

What joy fills my heart this morning as we sing that wonderful hymn, **"Trust and Obey":**

*"When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey. Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies, But His smile quickly drives it away; Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear, Can abide while we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey."*

## August 16 – Delighting Daily in the Word (Ps. 119:14-16)

***Psalm 119:14: "I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches."***

***Psalm 119:15: "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways."***

***Psalm 119:16: "I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."***

**verse 14:** "I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches."

The psalmist says that pursuing the path of obedience to the Word is like finding a great treasure.

This reminds me of the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13:44: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field" (NASB).

The joy and delight is his as one rejoices in great riches. It's the joy and excitement and intense thrill of winning the lottery.

**verse 15:** "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways."

We could translate the word "consider" as "focus." The verse would then read: "I meditate on your precepts and focus on your ways."

The psalmist says there is a reward for being focused on the will of God. The result for that comes from meditating upon the Word.

**verse 16:** "I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."

Psalm 112:1: "Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands" (NIV).

Psalm 37:4: "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (NIV).

Zephaniah 3:17: "The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing" (NIV).

In these verses we have been studying together the last 3 mornings, you find 6 positive statements and 3 negative statements. The 6 positive are: (1) the psalmist pursues with passion—"I seek you with all my heart"; (2) he memorizes—"I have hidden your word in my heart"; (3) he remembers—"I recount all the laws that come from your mouth"; (4) he experiences joy and obedience—"I rejoice in following your statutes"; (5) he is chewing on the Word—"I meditate on your precepts and consider [focus on] your ways"; and (6) he delights to do His will—"I delight in your decrees."

There are 3 negative statements to warn us: (1) "Do not let me stray from your commands"; (2) "I might not sin against you"; and (3) "I will not neglect your word."

In order to give focal operation to the nutritional value of the Word of God, we must pursue a walk with God on a daily basis by being daily in the Word.

I am excited for us to continue that hymn we started yesterday, **"Trust and Obey."** This morning lets worship the Lord and praise His holy name by singing verses 3 and 4: *"Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, But our toil He doth richly repay; Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross, But is blest if we trust and obey. But we never can prove the delights of His love Until all on the altar we lay; For the favor He shows and the joy he bestows Are for them who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey."*

***Lord, You are all my joy and delight. My prayer is that I might be the same to You.***

## **August 17 – Give In, Give Out, Give Up, or Go on to Greater Heights: Introduction to the Book of Hebrews**

For the remainder of the 2012 we will be pursuing a verse-by-verse study of the Book of Hebrews.

The message of the book is loud and clear. There is no other alternative. We must forget those things which are behind and press toward those things which are in front. We must persevere and press on.

Growth in our Christian lives does not come by service. It comes by learning how to fellowship with the heavenly Father, who wants to bring about His designs in our lives.

The book of Hebrews is a book written to Christians, inspired by a loving Father who issues a number of warnings and desires, with loving restraint, that His children manifest those 2 qualities that He delights to see above all others. Those qualities are submission and obedience.

William Barclay said: "I believe that no New Testament book gives us such a glorious picture of Jesus Christ, in all the splendor of His manhood and in all the majesty of His deity."

It would be well this morning for us to pause for a few moments and reflect on some introductory matters that will clarify our own understanding of the book of Hebrews.

There are 3 things that will help us greatly in our comprehension of the message of the book of Hebrews: (1) The folks who are receiving this letter are of Jewish nationality. This explains much of the content and the many references to the Old Testament and the sacrificial system throughout the book. (2)



The book is written to genuine believers so the message is for Christians. (3) The group that is receiving the letter is contemplating the possibility of going back to Judaism, away from Christ, because of the persecution and suffering they have experienced.

The writer to the book of Hebrews is pointing out the fact there is no way for man to undo what God has already done and is doing in their lives. Their personal neglect of growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will be met with some serious consequences at the judgment seat of Christ.

The challenge of the book of Hebrews is to endure whatever circumstances may come because they have been created by God for our maximum growth. In summary we can say, the purpose of the epistle is to exhort these believers to patiently endure their present situation by considering the superiority of Christ's person and work and by pressing on to maturity.

Let's reflect further on these challenges: (1) Don't even think of quitting; (2) It is impossible to stop growth and start over; (3) We will be held accountable at the judgment seat of Christ; (4) Life abundant comes when we are cooperating with the circumstances in our lives designed by our heavenly Father for growth; and (5) Growth involves discipline, desire, determination, and dedication.

Our attitude should be displayed in adopting what Paul says to the Philippians in Philippians 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

My heart is welling up in worship as we launch into these new studies, singing that great hymn **"Higher Ground"**: *"I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I'm onward bound, 'Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.' My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho' some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim is higher ground. I want to live above the world, Tho' Satan's darts at me are hurled; For faith has caught the joyful sound, The song of saints on higher ground. I want to scale the utmost height And catch a gleam of glory bright; But still I'll pray till Heav'n I've found, 'Lord, lead me on to higher ground.' Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's table-land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

### August 18 – The Last Message is Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2)

**Hebrews 1:1:** *"In many ways and in many portions, God, in former times having spoken to the fathers by means of the prophets,"*

**Hebrews 1:2:** *"in the last of these days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (ages),"*

**verse 1:** "In many ways and in many portions, God, in former times having spoken to the fathers by means of the prophets,"

"In many ways and in many portions." God communicated, first of all, in "many ways." By visions, by the law, by types, and by prophecies.

We can see God chose "many ways" to speak through the 39 books of the Old Testament.

"In former times having spoken to the fathers by means of the prophets." The fathers would be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Moses, David, Isaiah, etc.

The instrument God used to communicate His message "in former times" was "by means of the prophets."

John MacArthur said: "A prophet is one who speaks to men for God; a priest is one who speaks to God for men. The priest takes man's problems to God; the prophet takes God's message to men." (*Hebrews*, 5)

2 Peter 1:21: "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (NASB).

**verse 2:** "in the last of these days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (ages),"

In verse 1 the key phrase is "in former times He spoke by means of the prophets." Now in verse 2, "in the last of these days [He] spoke to us in His Son." The focus of the whole book is on "His Son."

James Draper says: "In his Son he said it all. He revealed his heart. It was a complete revelation, not just a fragmented part." (*Hebrews: The Life That Pleases God*, 15)

It makes us appreciate those words that were heard from the heavens at the time of Jesus' baptism and also on the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5 NASB).

In the remainder of verse 2 and all of verse 3 we find the superiority of the Son. "Seven matchless statements," as J. Vernon McGee would say.

There are 2 of them at the conclusion of verse 2. Statement 1 is seen in the phrase "whom He appointed heir of all things." The Son is the sole heir of all the Father has. Sonship qualifies Him to be an heir.

Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" (NASB).

Statement 2: "through whom also He made the worlds." He is the creator. Not only the creator, but also He planned the program.

Yes, God has changed His message. It's from words to a person. His final revelation is His own Son, Jesus Christ. This final revelation begins at Christmas and ends at Easter. There are 2 things said about His Son here in verse 2: (1) "He appointed [Him] heir of all things" and (2) "through whom also he made the worlds (ages)."

My heart is swelling with a song, a song of worship. Let's sing verses 1 and 4 of "**He Is So Precious to Me**": "*So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King, His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, thro' faith in His wonderful grace, I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; 'Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.*"

### August 19 – God Coming in Human Flesh (Heb. 1:3)

**Hebrews 1:3:** "*who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;*"

**verse 3:** "who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

Yesterday we saw 2 things about the Son: (1) "He appointed [him] heir of all things" and (2) "through whom also He made the worlds (ages)."

Now there are 5 more in verse 3. Statement 3 has to do with "His glory": "who being the radiance of His glory."

R.C. Lenski said: "The inscrutable glory of God streams forth in the Son who is the effulgence of that glory."

In Matthew 17, on the Mount of Transfiguration, we read: "And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light" (Matt. 17:1-2 NASB).

As Jesus prayed in John 17 he said: "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was" (17:4-5 NASB).

He could either reflect or radiate the glory of God. The writer makes it specific that He radiates His glory. It is not something external, but internal. Christ is not a moon but is the sun. He radiates that which He possess.

Whereas in Statement 3 we focus on His glory, in Statement 4 we focus on His nature: “who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being).” Statement 4 is: “the exact representation of His name (real being).”

Colossians 2:9: “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (NASB).

In this verse we have considered His glory, His nature, and now we look at His power.

Statement 5: “who is bearing up all things by the word of His power.”

The word “upholding” can be translated “bearing along.” It communicates the idea of movement and progress to a given end.

Colossians 1:17: “And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (NASB).

In these first 3 statements in the verse we have been examining His person. Now in the remainder of the verse, we turn from His person to His work.

We will see the cross and the intercessory ministry of our Savior.

First of all, we see the cross in Statement 6: “when He had made purification of sins.”

1 Peter 2:24: “And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (NASB).

This word for “purification” is a priestly word. It is “purification of sins,” not from sins, we are talking about here.

Our third verse concludes with the seventh and final statement about Jesus Christ. Statement 7: “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” In Statement 6 he made “purification of sins.” In Statement 7 “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The work of redemption has been accomplished and now the victorious Son of God “[sits] down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

We move in this seventh statement from His redemptive work on the cross to His intercessory work as He represents us before “the Majesty on high.”

It is interesting there is no chair in the tabernacle because the priest’s work under the old covenant was never finished.

As we worship our blessed Lord, let’s reflect on the 7 things said about Him in our opening verses of Hebrews. He is: (1) “heir of all things”; (2) the Creator; (3) “the radiance of His glory”; (4) “the exact representation of His nature”; (5) “bearing up all things by the word of His power”; (6) “purification of sins”; and (7) “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

My heart is welling up with praise for my wonderful Savior. Join me in singing “**Praise the Saviour, Ye Who Know Him!**”: *“Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him! Who can tell how much we owe Him? Gladly let us render to Him All we are and have. Jesus is the name that charms us; He for conflict fits and arms us; Nothing moves and nothing harms us While we trust in Him. Trust in Him, ye saints, forever; He is faithful, changing never; Neither force nor guile can sever Those He loves from Him. Keep, us, Lord, O keep us cleaving To Thyself and still Believing, Till the hour of our receiving Promised joys with Thee. Then we shall be where we would be, Then we shall be what we should be; Things that are not now, nor could be, Soon shall be our own. Amen.”*

## August 20 – Superior to Angels (Heb. 1:4-6)

**Hebrews 1:4:** “*having become as much superior to the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.*”

**Hebrews 1:5:** “*For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’? And again, ‘I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to me’?”*

**Hebrews 1:6:** “*And when He shall have brought again the firstborn into the inhabited earth, He is saying, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’”*

**verse 4:** “having become as much superior to the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.”

A key word here is the word “superior.” He is indeed “superior to the angels” as the argument is going to unfold before us.

Why does the writer bring angels into the picture at this point? The fact is angels were also revealers by the fact many times they brought the message to man. We see angels at the giving of the law: "You who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it" (Acts 7:53 NASB).

We see angelic beings embroidered in the veil of the Tabernacle separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. We see them bowing over the Mercy Seat on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

Lewis Sperry Chafer in his *Systematic Theology* says: "These celestial beings are mentioned at least 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament..." (3)

God the Father's intention and plan is that the entire focus of truth be upon His eternal Son and on no other created being, whether it be men or angels or whatever. The focus of truth, then, is upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to have "inherited a more excellent name than they"?

He is a Son, He is sovereign, He is Creator, He is the Lord of the old covenant. The Father's pet name for His son was to call Him "Son."

**verse 5:** "For to which of the angels did He ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? And again, 'I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to me'?"

There are 2 questions here and both of these are quotations from the Old Testament scriptures. Question 1: "You are my son; today I have become your father" (Ps. 2:7 NIV). Question 2: "I will be his father, and he will be my son" (2 Sam. 7:14 NIV).

The focus here is on the relation that the Son has with the Father.

**verse 6:** "And when He shall have brought again the firstborn into the inhabited earth, He is saying, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

This is a glorious promise of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Whenever "He shall have brought again [His firstborn Son]." Jesus Christ has yet another mission into the world that is still future. He has written over His first experience: "Mission Accomplished!" Now He awaits the time when the Father will bring Him again into the world.

2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (NASB).

All we can do is bow in gratitude and praise. 2 Corinthians 9:15: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (NASB).

I love the paraphrase of that verse: "But thanks be to God for a gift too wonderful for words!"

I find myself singing Charles Wesley's great Christmas carol this morning and I think it would appropriate to sing all 3 verses of **"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."** *Think on the words as you worship your blessed Lord: "Hark, the herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!' Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies; With th' angelic host proclaim, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem!' Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come, Off-spring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail th' incarnate Deity, Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings. Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. Hark, the herald angels sing, 'Glory, to the newborn King.'"*

## August 21 – King of Kings (Heb. 1:7-8)

**Hebrews 1:7:** "And with reference to the angels He is saying, 'Who is making His angels winds, and His servants a flame of fire.'"

**Hebrews 1:8:** "But with reference to the Son He is saying, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom.'"

**verse 7:** "And with reference to the angels He is saying, 'Who is making His angels winds, and His servants a flame of fire.'"

The function of the angels is to be like the winds that blow and like the "flame of fire" that burns.

How interesting it is to see that with the coming of the Spirit of God in Acts 2 at Pentecost, we have these 2 manifestation: (1) "a mighty wind" and (2) "flaming tongues of fire."



Matthew 4:11: "Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him" (NASB).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "The writer contrasts the servanthood of angels and the eternal dominion of the son."

He quotes Psalm 104:4 here.

2 Kings 6:16-17: "'Don't be afraid,' the prophet answered. 'Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (NIV).

Matthew 26:53: "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (NASB). That's 72,000 angels that are on alert status.

**verse 8:** "But with reference to the Son He is saying, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom.'"

This Son is a King of righteousness.

The quotation in verses 8 and 9 comes from Psalm 45:6-7: "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (NIV).

As we conclude our meditation today, just stop and think of how Jesus Christ has been presented in these first 8 verses: (1) He is a Prophet, the One who brings the last message; (2) He is a Priest who makes an offering of Himself as a purification offering; and (3) He is a King of righteousness. Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus Christ, God's own Son.

Meditating on His eternal kingdom has found me singing "**Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned**": *"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon the Saviour's brow; His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace o'er-flow, His lips with grace o'er-flow. No mortal can with Him compare Among the sons of men; Fairer is He than all the fair Who fill the heav'nly train, Who fill the heav'nly train. He saw me plunged in deep distress And flew to my relief; For me He bore the shameful cross And carried all my grief, And carried all my grief. To Him I owe my life and breath And all the joys I have; He makes me triumph over death And saves me from the grave, And saves me from the grave."*

## August 22 – King and Creator (Heb. 1:9-10)

**Hebrews 1:9:** "You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness: therefore God, your God, anointed you, with the oil of gladness above your companions."

**Hebrews 1:10:** "And 'as for you, in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands;'"

**verse 9:** "You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness: therefore God, your God, anointed you, with the oil of gladness above your companions."

The picture in our minds is the picture of the anointing of David in 1 Samuel 16: "Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' 'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered, 'but he is tending the sheep.' Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.' So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; he is the one.' So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah" (10-13 NIV).

When David wanted to build a house for the Lord after he became king, we read in 2 Samuel 7:16 the response from the Lord: "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (NIV).

Luke 2:4: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David" (NASB).

Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war" (NASB).

Revelation 19:16: "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (NASB).

**verse 10:** "And 'as for you, in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands;"

This is a quotation of Psalm 102:25-27. Whereas we have seen God's Son as: (1) superior to angels; (2) the King of righteousness; now we see Him as (3) the Creator of the universe.

Colossians 1:16-17: "For in Him [Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (NASB).

Let's worship the Lord Jesus this morning, our soon-coming King, by singing "**Fairest Lord Jesus**": *"Fairest Lord Jesus! Ruler of all nature, O Thou of God and man the Son! Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor, Thou, my soul's Glory, Joy, and Crown! Fair are the meadows, Fairer still the woodlands, Robed in the blooming garb of spring: Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, Who makes the woeful heart to sing. Fair is the sunshine, Fairer still the moonlight, And all the twinkling, starry host; Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer, Than all the angels heav'n can boast! Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, Praise, adoration, Now and forevermore be Thine! Amen."*

#### **August 23 – Eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:11-12)**

**Hebrews 1:11:** "*they themselves will perish, but as for you, you are remaining; and they all will become old as a garment,*"

**Hebrews 1:12:** "*and as a cloak you will roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But as for you, you are the same, and your years will not come to an end."*

**verse 11:** "they themselves will perish, but as for you, you are remaining; and they all will become old as a garment,"

The word "they" refers to the earth and the heavens: "they themselves will perish."

2 Peter 3:7, 10-13: "But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men....But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (NASB).

1 John 2:17: "And the world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (NASB).

**verse 12:** "and as a cloak you will roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But as for you, you are the same, and your years will not come to an end."

James Draper says:

Jesus Christ is unchanging in his purpose. He will someday roll up the heavens like a vesture (1:12). The word "vesture" speaks of something like a robe or a cloak to be thrown over a shoulder or wrapped around the body. The heavens and the earth are to be changed, but Jesus Christ is the same and his "years shall not fail." Literally translated, verse 12 states that the years of Jesus Christ shall never be completed. He just never runs out of years. (*Hebrews: The Life That Pleases God*, 33)

There are 2 contrasts in verses 11 and 12: (1) The heavens and the earth will perish, but the Lord will be remaining. (2) "they [referring to the heavens and the earth] all will become old as a garment...but [in contrast] you [referring to the Lord] are the same, and your years will not come to an end."

Both of these phrases “you are remaining” in verse 11 and “your years will not come to an end” in verse 12 refer to the eternality of the Son of God.

Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever” (NASB).

I am reminded of an article in *Our Daily Bread* some time ago:

During a severe financial crisis, a farmer, whose homestead had been in the family for three generations, was forced to sell all his goods to pay his debts. After everything had been auctioned, he came back into the living room, sat down on an old box, and looked around at the empty farmhouse. Noticing a familiar item hanging over the fireplace, he said, “Thank God, there’s one thing they haven’t sold!” The auctioneer had overlooked it, and it became for the farmer a most precious possession. It was a little card with silver lettering that read: (“THOU REMAINEST!”) His furniture and his farm implements were all gone, but there was great comfort in those words, for they reminded him that his richest treasure—the love of God and the salvation Jesus Christ provides—could not be taken from him.

John 10:28-29: “and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (NASB).

My heart is overflowing with love for the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ my Savior. I think it would be appropriate for us to sing **“My Jesus, I Love Thee”**: *“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I love Thee, because thou hast first loved me, And purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I’ll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath; And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. In mansions of glory and endless delight, I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright; I’ll sing with the glittering crown on my brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”*

#### **August 24 – The Lamb of God (Heb. 1:13-14)**

**Hebrews 1:13: “But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘Be sitting at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’?”**

**Hebrews 1:14: “Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent out to render service for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting salvation?”**

**verse 13:** “But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘Be sitting at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’?”

We have seen God’s son as superior to angels, a King of righteousness, a Creator of the universe, and now we see Him in a position of honor at the “right hand” of the Father.

We saw back in verse 3: “When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

I am reminded of Jesus in His resurrected body: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20 NASB).

The final quotation we have here in verse 13, Quotation 7, focuses on authority. Psalm 110:1: “Be sitting at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (NIV).

**verse 14:** “Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent out to render service for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting salvation?”

This verse begins with a reference to the angels, calling them “ministering spirits.” Back in verse 7 the function of angels was 2-fold. They are: (1) “winds” and (2) “flame of fire.”

Now we learn in verse 14 they are “ministering spirits.” There is no salvation provided for angels.

We ought to magnify and marvel in the grace of God, in view of the fact there is no salvation provided for angels.

2 Peter 2:4: "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment" (NASB).

Jude 1:6: "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (NASB).

A minister was visiting some of his members one afternoon. As he knocked on one woman's door she called "Angel, is that you?" The minister replied, "No, but I'm from the same department."

Psalm 34:7: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them" (NIV).

Angels have a unique ministry of service "for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting salvation.:

We need to be reminded that Satan is a fallen angel, and he can be transformed as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds" (NASB).

Salvation is not something you can earn or qualify for, it is something which is given as a gift. It is an inheritance which is ours as a result of coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

Jesus Christ is the whole truth, and His invitation to you is to experience the wholeness that can be yours by knowing Him. One writer said: "We can come to know Jesus better but we can never find anything better than knowing Jesus."

François Fénelon said: "You deceive yourself if you think you are growing spiritually because your curiosity has intellectually explored some spiritual idea. Humble yourself, and do not expect to receive from man that which God alone can give." (*The Seeking Heart*, 38)

Let's sing as we celebrate the grace of God this morning, something that angels never experienced. **"Amazing Grace":** *"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures. And when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease; I shall possess within the veil A life of joy and peace. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun."*

## August 25 – Pay Attention! (Heb. 2:1)

**Hebrews 2:1:** *"For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them."*

One of the basic essentials to making process toward spiritual maturity is to recognize that every day is a brand-new opportunity to grow and develop spiritually.

The process of an ever deepening relationship with our Lord Jesus involves: (1) feeding daily upon His Word; (2) communion with Him in prayer; and (3) seeking His face.

These Christians are tempted to stop short rather than go on to grow and reflect His holiness, to bear fruit, to keep serving and to wearing out their spiritual gift.

The question we face this morning is: Are you serious about growth? None of us has arrived.

M.R. DeHaan said: "There is no excuse for any Christian remaining a spiritual babe, or living a defeated life, or being unfruitful because of His provision." (*Hebrews*, 23)

**verse 1:** "For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them."

Because of who He is and what He has done, "For this reason we must be paying much closer attention."



*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "Since the Son is so supremely great and is destined for final triumph over His enemies, the readers would do well to pay more careful attention to these realities."

Are we serious about what God is trying to say to us this morning?

2 Timothy 1:13: "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

William Barclay said:

There is a vivid picture there—the picture of a ship drifting to destruction because the pilot sleeps while the insidious current sweeps the ship past the harbour until it is wrecked. For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin. (*The Book of Hebrews*, 13)

"We must be paying much closer attention." The word "must" or "ought" could be translated "required," "goes with the course."

James Draper said:

This term is a strong term that removes any options about duties to be performed....I have no other choice. I must do it. This strong word leaves no alternative, there are no other options, there is a duty that must be performed. (*Hebrews*, 39)

The Lord Jesus says to the church at Ephesus: "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Rev. 2:4 NASB).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "The word for 'drift away' is a word that occurs only here in the New Testament."

The revelation is anchored. It is we who are drifting. We are manifesting spiritual immaturity when we say we don't make long-term commitments. We talk a good game, we make a lot of promises. When it comes right down to it, we are not passionate about being totally and completely involved in what the Lord wants to do in our lives this day.

1 Timothy 1:19: "Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (NASB).

The rough seas were tearing the anchor from the seabed.

R. Kent Hughes said: "Some in the church were also in danger of being blown away from their moorings and drifting away from the truth of Christ and back into 'the Dead Sea of Judaism.'" (*Hebrews*, 47)

Warren Wiersbe said: "More spiritual problems are caused by neglect than perhaps by any other failure on our part."

How easy it is in life to get off schedule, to have botched-up priorities, to become tired and bored of the mundane sameness of everything.

We become reactive rather than proactive.

The picture here is of Christians being carried downstream past a landing place, thus missing the goal or destination.

Proverbs 3:21: "My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight" (NIV).

Notice the text says: "we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard."

James 1:22: "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (NASB).

James 4:17: "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (NASB).

The big question that is asked at this point is, are you drifting?

Maybe you are involved devotionally this morning and you have drifted from His Word. You've lost your fellowship with Him and you no longer have power in prayer.

Drifting is dangerous, doom is pending, and disaster is certain.

I find myself singing Robert Robinson's great hymn, "Come, Thou Fount." As the composer of this hymn, he came to know Christ and then drifted from the Lord. On one of his travels he met a young woman who shared the message of this hymn and it was his own hymn. As we sing these verses, please

listen as one who experienced the wandering and drifting away from the Lord and make your own personal commitment to join me in telling the Lord we're ready to go anywhere, to do anything at any price to glorify and honor His name. **"Come, Thou Fount":** *"Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise His name! I'm fixed upon it! Name of God's redeeming love. Hither-to Thy love has blest me; Thou hast bro't me to this place; And I know Thy hand will bring me Safely home by Thy good grace. Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Bought me with His precious blood. O to grace how great a debtor Daily I'm constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee: Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above."*

### **August 26 – No Way of Escape (Heb. 2:2-3)**

**Hebrews 2:2:** *"For if the word spoken through angels was valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,"*

**Hebrews 2:3:** *"how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard,"*

**verse 2:** *"For if the word spoken through angels was valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,"*

Here the apostle gives us the reason why we must pay closer attention to what we have heard. There are 2 reasons stated in the verse: (1) "if the word spoken through angels was valid"—and it was—and (2) "if...every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty"—and they did.

Since these 2 statements are true, he can then raise the obvious question of verse 3 in applying the truth.

Here the apostle is speaking of the giving of the law.

It was Ted Coppell who said: "They were the Ten Commands not the Ten Suggestions."

Because it was valid and in force, "every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty."

**Galatians 6:7-8:** "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life" (NASB).

**Hosea 8:7:** "They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (NIV).

**Hosea 10:12:** "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you" (NIV).

**verse 3:** *"how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard,"*

**Hebrews 12:25:** "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven" (NASB).

The little word "we" helps us see he is not talking about hell here or the loss of salvation.

**2 Corinthians 5:10:** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (NASB).

It would be good for us to raise the question, How is it that we neglect so great a salvation? There are several reasons: (1) We cease to give attention and earnestness to the things of God (Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship with the Lord); (2) we get absorbed with earthly and selfish interests; (3) an increased hardness of heart toward Christ, His sacrifice and of the love of God who gave Him (we become cold and callous); (4) an occupation with the affairs and news of this world rather than of the world to come; (5) the loss of God-consciousness; (6) a putting away of the thought of a judgment to come when we will be held accountable; and (7) living only for the present without contemplating eternity.

The Lord Jesus said: "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (Rev. 3:11 NASB).

It is awfully easy to neglect something that is difficult. We major in our lives on the things which are easy. For instance, a choice between eating or exercise, playing or praying, relaxing or reading, watching TV or worshipping. All of these things indicate our hearts.

Tony Evans said:

Living a carnal life is like the law of gravity: What goes up, must come down. So when you persistently and knowingly live for yourself rather than God, you can land hard on the pavement of life.

In short, if you're a carnal Christian, you risk severe judgment in time and eternity.

Carnality can result in divine discipline. (*The Victorious Christian Life*, 68)

My heart is welling up with the words of Fanny Crosby's wonderful hymn, "**Close to Thee**":  
*"Thou, my everlasting portion, More than friend or life to me; All along my pilgrim journey, Saviour, let me walk with Thee. Not for ease or worldly pleasure, Nor for fame my prayer shall be; Gladly will I toil and suffer, Only let me walk with Thee. Lead me through the vale of shadows, Bear me o'er life's fitful sea; Then the gate of life eternal May I enter, Lord, with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee."*

#### **August 27 – God At Work (Heb. 2:4-5)**

**Hebrews 2:4: "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and various works of power and by distribution of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?"**

**Hebrews 2:5: "For He did not subject to angels the inhabited earth which was coming, concerning which we are speaking."**

**verse 4:** "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and various works of power and by distribution of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?"

God is verifying their message in ministry by 4 things: (1) "by signs"; (2) "by...wonders"; (3) "by...various works of power"; and (4) "by distribution of the Holy Spirit according to His own will."

It is interesting to note 2 things in verse 4: (1) He was "bearing witness with them" and not necessarily with us; (2) all the "signs and wonders and various works of power and [gifts] of the Holy Spirit [are] according to His own will" and not according to ours.

**verse 5:** "For He did not subject to angels the inhabited earth which was coming, concerning which we are speaking."

Now the apostle returns to his argument with regard to the angels that he spoke about in verse 1. Angels were created to minister and man was created to rule.

Ray Stedman said: "This section declares that Jesus Christ became a man in order to recapture our lost destiny. No angel could take Christ's place, for God had never given the right to govern the universe to angels but to men." (*What More Can God Say?*, 19)

Larry Richards said:

In chapter one the writer began with Jesus. Salvation means we must grasp clearly who Jesus, the Son of God, is.

In this chapter the writer focuses on us. To understand salvation and to avoid slipping into a life of frustration and spiritual immaturity, we must grasp who we are. (*The Complete Christian*, 20)

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "The author here returned to his main train of thought, the destiny of Jesus in the world to come."

J. Vernon McGee said:

I think the writer of Hebrews has definite reference here to the Day of Pentecost when the gifts of the Holy Spirit were exercised. The gifts, of course, confirmed the message. To whom? To the nation Israel.

What tremendous truths we have here in this first danger warning. It is a warning sign, not about speeding up but about drifting—just drifting *by* these great truths which we may have been taking for granted. (*Hebrews*, 515)

In response to the verses this morning, I find myself singing that great hymn of worship **“Channels Only”**: *“How I praise Thee, precious Saviour, That Thy love laid hold of me; Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me That I might Thy channel be. Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand; With no pow’r but as Thou givest Graciously with each command. Witnessing Thy pow’r to save me, Setting free from self and sin; Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord come in. Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit Hearts that full surrender know; That the streams of living water From our inner man may flow. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

#### **August 28 – The Father’s Plan (Heb. 2:6-8)**

**Hebrews 2:6:** *“But one testified somewhere, saying: ‘What is man that you are remembering him? or the son of man that you are concerned about Him?’”*

**Hebrews 2:7:** *“You made Him for a short time lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, [and appointed him over the works of your hands] (some ancient manuscripts omit);”*

**Hebrews 2:8:** *“all things you put in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all things in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not made subject to him. But now we are not yet seeing all things subjected to him.”*

**verse 6:** “But one testified somewhere, saying: ‘What is man that you are remembering him? or the son of man that you are concerned about Him?’”

Question 1 in this passage was: “How shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation?”

Question 2 is: “What is man that you are remembering him?”

Question 3 is: “or the son of man that you are concerned about Him?”

Verses 6-8 are a quote from Psalm 8:4-6. Let us pause here for just a moment. Who is man anyway? Man is just a small creature on one of the minor planets.

Someone put it like this: “Man is a rash on the epidermis of a minor planet.”

Thomas Jefferson said: “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.”

Somebody said after that: “If He trembled then, He would have a violent seizure now.”

The psalmist is so overwhelmed by what the Lord, the Creator, has brought into existence. In Psalm 8:3 we read: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained” (KJV).

How can a God of this great creation—the heavens are the work of His fingers, the earth His handiwork—be mindful of man?

**verse 7:** “You made Him for a short time lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, [and appointed him over the works of your hands] (some ancient manuscripts omit);”

Whereas in verse 6 we have the frailty of man, in verse 7 we have the dignity of man. The same things are true of Jesus Christ.

Fred Allen said: “A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, and then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.”

**verse 8:** “all things you put in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all things in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not made subject to him. But now we are not yet seeing all things subjected to him.”

The sovereignty that was promised to man in Genesis 1:26-27 was lost by the fall, though the title is still man’s. Christ, as the representative man, has won back for man this sovereignty. This sovereignty will be exercised in the millennial age. This never was promised to angels.

At the time of creation, God gave man authority over the earth. Man was given sovereign control over this sphere. The right to exercise this dominion was lost in the fall but the title to this dominion was never surrendered.



Christ has identified Himself with man so as to assume not only the title but also the right to rule and reign over the earth.

Angels were never given the right to have dominion over the earth. Since Christ appropriated humanity, He has title to the sovereignty. This is something that puts Him over the angels.

Chesterton was right: "Whatever is or is not true about men, this one thing is certain—man is not what he was meant to be."

What is said of man here can also be said of Jesus Christ. There is a yet future time when He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, and He will sit upon the throne of His father David, and the universal kingdom will have come.

Philippians 2:9-11: "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (NASB).

In the Son of Man, man's sovereignty shall be gained.

How appropriate that I find myself singing "**O Worship the King.**" Please join me: *"O worship the King, all glorious above, O gratefully sing His pow'r and His love; Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days, Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise. O tell of His might, O sing of His grace, Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space. His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form, And dark is His path on the wings of the storm. Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light; it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain. Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end! Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend."*

## August 29 – The Focus is on Jesus (Heb. 2:9)

**Hebrews 2:9:** *"But we are seeing Jesus who for a short time has been made lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, having been crowned with glory and honor, in order that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one."*

**verse 9:** "But we are seeing Jesus who for a short time has been made lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, having been crowned with glory and honor, in order that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one."

In verse 8 "we are not yet seeing all things subjected to him." In verse 9 "we are seeing Jesus."

Back in verse 7 the psalmist said: "You made man for a short time lower than the angels." Now in verse 9 we see the writer speaking of Jesus: "for a short time has been made lower than the angels."

One thing you can count on is that the doors are going to open and Jesus is coming back.

John 12:20-21: "Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus'" (NASB).

I find myself singing that wonderful chorus: *"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face; And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace."* (The Heavenly Vision by Helen H. Lemmel)

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Yes, he became man to pay the price for our sin.

*"He paid the debt He did not owe, For those who owed but could not pay."*

His reason for coming is that He should "taste death for every one."

George Mueller said: "The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Word in our life and thoughts."

I am overwhelmed this morning with the sacrificial love of my Savior. That He would come and endure such abuse, such suffering, and such pain, all for the purpose of paying the price for my sin.

I find it appropriate we sing "**No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus**": *"I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus Since I found in Him a friend so strong and true; I would tell you how He changed my life completely, He did something that no other friend could do. All my life was full of sin when Jesus*

*found me, All my heart was full of misery and woe; Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me, And He led me in the way I ought to go. Ev'ry day He comes to me with new assurance, More and more I understand His words of love; But I'll never know just why He came to save me, Till some day I see His blessed face above. No one ever cared for me like Jesus, There's no other friend so kind as He; No one else could take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cared for me."*

### **August 30 – It Is Fitting For the Creator to Suffer (Heb. 2:10-11)**

**Hebrews 2:10:** *"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the originator of their salvation through sufferings."*

**Hebrews 2:11:** *"For both He who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren,"*

**verse 10:** "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the originator of their salvation through sufferings."

The word "For" ties back into the preceding verses and answers the question, "Why must He die?": "For it was fitting." In other words, the cross was the masterpiece of God's wisdom, that He should taste death for every man.

God solved a problem no human or angelic mind could solve.

"For it was fitting for Him." It was the right thing for God to do. "It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things." John 1:3: "All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (NASB).

Here is the divine objective for all of this. The mission, the target, what He came to do was to be: "bringing many sons to glory."

And what is being described here is the only way God could "bring many sons to glory." It involves: (1) salvation—which involves a relationship; (2) sanctification—which involves growth; and (3) glorification—the ultimate goal.

"Sons" speaks of a relationship. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (NASB).

Kenneth Wuest said: "God the Father provides the salvation, God the Son procures it, and God the Holy Spirit applies it." (*Hebrews in the Greek New Testament*, 60)

Something had to be done! I am reminded of the story of E.V. Hill speaking at the Billy Graham school of evangelism. He tells about preaching one Sunday morning on the subject "You can go to hell!" His wife was ill and stayed at home. After he got home from the service she asked him what he preached on. He said "You can go to hell!"

The writer here in describing Jesus Christ says: "for whom are all things and through whom are all things." This speaks, first of all, of His sovereignty: "for whom are all things." This then speaks of Him as the creator: "through whom are all things."

If we plan to spend time in glory we are going to be brought there only through a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is salvation and salvation indeed.

God perfects us through suffering. Wasn't Jesus already perfect? Yes He was. The word perfect means to carry to the goal or consummation, fulfills the purpose for which He came.

Suffering was included in bringing many sons to glory.

The "originator" of their salvation could be translated "the One who made it all possible." He is the One who goes first, the leader, the point man, the pioneer, the champion.

As the spiritual pioneer and example, He brings us to the Father.

We are presently in the training program of the greatest leader the world has ever know, being prepared to share in the rulership over the kingdom which is to come. This explains many of the answers regarding the sufferings of the present life. If we were on a sailing vessel captained by an inexperienced captain, we would be very frightened and anxious. Not so with our Lord, who has become our perfect captain.

You will notice it is "in bringing"—not everybody but—"many sons into glory." It is only by being born again by the Spirit of God into God's family that we will be brought into glory.

**verse 11:** “For both He who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren,”

You will notice the emphasis upon the family. Back in verse 10 it was “sons.” Now in verse 11 it is “brethren.”

The word “sanctify” means to make holy. The One who is saving us is also “sanctifying” us and suffering is part of that sanctifying process.

The question we raise at this point is: Does sanctification involve suffering? The answer to that question is Yes!

“For which reason He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren.”

How fantastic it is to know that our blessed Lord is proud of His kids and is willing to call them “brethren.” Wonder of wonders! “He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren.”

I see Him always wanting to show our pictures to others. He also has a song in His heart for us.

Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (NIV).

I would like you to join me in singing one of my favorite hymns about Jesus, **“Hallelujah! What a Savior!”**: *“‘Man of Sorrows’—what a name For the Son of God, who came Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood—Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Guilty, vile, and helpless we; Spotless Lamb of God was He. ‘Full atonement’—can it be? Hallelujah! what a Savior! Lifted up was He to die; ‘It is finished,’ was His cry. Now in heav’n exalted high—Hallelujah! what a Savior! When He comes, our glorious King. All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we’ll sing, ‘Hallelujah! what a Savior!’”*

## August 31 – I Am Proud of My Kids (Heb. 2:12-13)

**Hebrews 2:12:** “saying, ‘I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing your praise.’”

**Hebrews 2:13:** “And again, ‘I will put my trust in Him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children whom God gave me.’”

**verse 12:** “saying, ‘I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing your praise.’”

William Lane said: “The quotations in vv 12 and 13 illustrate that Jesus does not blush to identify himself with the people of God.” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 59)

This is a picture of Christ speaking to the Father. The key words in verse 12 are “proclaim” and “sing.” “I will proclaim your name” and “I will sing your praise.”

It reminds me once again of Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (NIV).

**verse 13:** “And again, ‘I will put my trust in Him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children whom God gave me.’”

The key words in verse 13 are “trust” and “gave.”

The 4-fold focus on these Old Testament quotations is upon the words: (1) “proclaim”; (2) “sing”; (3) “trust”; and (4) “gave.”

The Lord Jesus is pictured here as proud of the relationship: “not being ashamed to be calling them brethren.” He, the Messiah, will proclaim the name of God the Father to the brethren. He will sing His praise to the brethren. And like the brethren, He will put His trust in Him. He then puts them on display: “Behold, I and the children whom God gave me.”

The Savior is constantly and confidently awaiting the fantastic future that’s before us.

My heart is overwhelmed with song and with singing. Please join me in singing that great song **“Until Then”**: *“My heart can sing when I pause to remember, A heartache here is but a stepping stone Along a trail that’s winding always upwards, This troubled world is not my final home. The things of earth will dim and lose their value If we recall they’re borrowed for a while And things of earth that*

*cause the heart to tremble, Remembered there will only bring a smile. This weary world with all its toil and struggle May take its toll of misery and strife The soul of man is like a waiting falcon, When it's released it's destined for the skies, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home."*

### **September 1 – Gaining Victory Over the Devil and Death (Heb. 2:14-15)**

**Hebrews 2:14:** *"Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same, in order that through death He might render powerless the one who is having the power of death, that is, the devil;"*

**Hebrews 2:15:** *"and might release those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."*

**verse 14:** "Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same, in order that through death He might render powerless the one who is having the power of death, that is, the devil;"

"Since then the children have shared blood and flesh." The word "shared" has the idea "to have a share in common with someone else."

"He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same"—that is, flesh and blood. The word "partook" could be translated "to hold with." This is a picture of John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (NASB).

The purpose of the incarnation is seen in the next phrase: "in order that through death [and what a cost] He might render powerless the one who is having the power of death, that is, the devil." Satan's power is still in existence but we are relieved of the necessary obligation to obey him.

Kenneth Wuest said: "Satan was not annihilated at the Cross. His power was broken."

I have translated the word "destroy" as "render powerless."

Ray Stedman said: "The word means 'to render impotent; to nullify; to render inoperative, inconsequential.' That is the idea. The devil has not been eliminated, but the devil has been rendered impotent. Not to everyone! Not to everyone! Only under certain conditions is this true, but those conditions are available to all men in Jesus Christ."

Ruth Myers said: "As someone has put it, 'It's a serious mistake to underestimate the power of Satan; it's a tragedy to overestimate it'—or to be overly occupied with it." (*31 Days of Praise*, 142)

J.C. Ryle wrote: "'Even on the brink of Jordan,' said a dying saint, 'I find Satan nibbling at my heels.' We must fight till we die.'" (*Holiness*, 55)

Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (NASB).

**verse 15:** "and might release those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Whereas in verse 14 the death of Christ rendered powerless Satan, it also affected the release of the one who appropriates that death to himself personally by faith.

The word translated "release" here is found in the papyri and used of a wife who desired to be divorced from a marriage contract. It is a technical word for divorce.

Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades'" (NASB).

Occasionally someone would say to Dr. [Vance] Havner [after the death of his wife], "I hear you lost your wife."

"No," Dr. Havner would say, "I didn't lose her. I know right where she is. You haven't lost someone if you know where they are."

And then he would quote this poem:

Death can hide but not divide;



She is but on Christ's other side.  
 She with Christ and Christ with me,  
 United still in Christ are we. (Ronald Dunn, *When Heaven Is Silent*, 120)

I think a hymn to celebrate and worship this great victory on the part of our blessed Savior over death and the devil would be to sing Martin Luther's great reformation hymn, **"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"**: *"A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He, amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal. Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle."*

## September 2 – Fulfilling His Obligations (Heb. 2:16-18)

**Hebrews 2:16:** *"For of course He is not giving help to angels but He is giving help to the offspring of Abraham."*

**Hebrews 2:17:** *"Therefore, He was obligated to be made like His brethren in all things, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."*

**Hebrews 2:18:** *"For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are being tempted."*

**verse 16:** "For of course He is not giving help to angels but He is giving help to the offspring of Abraham."

Here again we have a statement of reason. It is a negative and a positive statement. Negatively, He is not taking an interest in angels. But is the word of contrast, positively, He is taking an interest in the seed of Abraham.

Galatians 3:6-7: "Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham" (NASB).

We learn from this verse there is no salvation for fallen angels. "He is giving help to the offspring of Abraham." Believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are of the seed of Abraham.

**verse 17:** "Therefore, He was obligated to be made like His brethren in all things, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, "He was obligated to be made like His brethren in all things."

This is the first mention in the book of Hebrews of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

"To make propitiation" is in the present tense.

1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (NASB).

There are 4 R's that spell out the fabulous work of our great High Priest in making a sacrifice of Himself: (1) rendered powerless Satan; (2) He released from the fear of death; (3) He provided redemption; and (4) He paid the ransom.

He did this in making "propitiation for the sins of the people." He satisfied all the claims against us.

**verse 18:** "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are being tempted."

Let's meditate for just a moment on the fact that "He is able." Here the text says "He is able to come to the aid" or run to the cry, to run at a cry for help.

Matthew 20:22: "But Jesus answered and said, 'You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to Him, 'We are able'" (NASB).

Matthew 10:28: “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 9:8: “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed” (NASB).

Jude 24-25: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (NASB).

“He is able to come to the aid of those who are being tempted.” That is, tempted by suffering, tempted to quit, or tempted by sin.

One writer said: “We may face situations beyond our reserves but never beyond God’s resources.”

It was Amy Carmichael who prayed: “O Lord Jesus, my Beloved, May I be a joy to Thee...”

This beautiful prayer was recorded in *Our Daily Bread* some time ago: “Dear Lord, take up the tangled strands, Where we have wrought in vain, That by the skill of Thy dear hands Some beauty may remain. (Burroughs)

My heart is already humming the tune of **“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”**: *“Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand, The shadow of a mighty Rock Within a weary land; A home within the wilderness, A rest upon the way, From the burning of the noon-tide heat, And the burden of the day. Upon that cross of Jesus Mine eye at times can see The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me; And from my smitten heart with tears Two wonders I confess, The wonders of redeeming love And my unworthiness. I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face; Content to let the world go by, To know no gain nor loss, My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross.”*

### September 3 – Focus on Jesus (Heb. 3:1-2)

**Hebrews 3:1:** “Therefore, holy brethren, sharing in a heavenly calling, contemplate Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.”

**Hebrews 3:2:** “Who is faithful to the One who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.”

Jesus is the focus of the book of Hebrews. His readers are contemplating going back under Judaism because of the suffering they are encountering. It’s like they are hearing a voice saying “Hey you guys! Look what you’re leaving in following Christ—the prophets, the angels, and now Moses. Moses, the one through whom the first covenant came and the one you are going to go back to.”

**verse 1:** “Therefore, holy brethren, sharing in a heavenly calling, contemplate Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.”

The term “holy brethren” here refers to the New Testament believers, the saints, those who are set-apart ones.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The fact that they are called holy brethren indicates that they are genuine believers.”

Throughout chapter 2 we have noted he refers to them as “brethren,” “children,” and “sons”—all speaking of the family relationship.

We are sharing in a heavenly calling. Israel is sharing in an earthly calling—an earthly kingdom. The church is sharing in a heavenly calling.

The writer then issues a command: “contemplate Jesus.”

The Greek word means to “fasten the mind on,” to “get focused.”

Get focused on Jesus instead of your circumstances and Judaism.

Contemplate Him: (1) as the prophet who communicates the Father’s final message; (2) the priest who sacrifices Himself as an offering for sin; and (3) as the king who is going to come and rule and reign—a king of righteousness who in a future day will administer His kingdom.

Yes, the answer is to “contemplate Jesus”: (1) “the apostle” and (2) “high priest of our confession.”

Yes, Jesus our high priest made the perfect sacrifice. He is indeed the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**verse 2:** “Who is faithful to the One who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.” “Who” refers to the Lord Jesus. He is characterized by the word “faithful.” This means He was faithful to fulfill and to finish.

Matthew 3:17: “This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”

One of the greatest delights of the Father in His children is to see the quality of faithfulness.

Isaiah 25:1: “O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago” (NIV).

Jesus is a perfect model for their own fidelity and faithfulness.

Jesus Christ, who is the “apostle and high priest of our confession...is faithful to the One who appointed Him.” It is the desire of the writer to the book of Hebrews that these Christians follow the example of their leader.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “However, with the tabernacle as the back-drop, we have God’s “house” in the Old Testament.”

Moses is included in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11:24-26: “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward” (NIV).

The greatest joy of all is to anticipate that wonderful day when we will hear from the crucified, risen Savior: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

We need to recognize the fact that we will never hear those words if we are not faithful to finish the task set before us. We will never be able to say that we finished if we do not hang in there.

Paul could say it. 2 Timothy 4:6-8: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (NASB).

Join me in worship by singing that hymn of meditation, **“When We See Christ”**: *“Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear, We’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair; But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride away, All tears forever over in God’s eternal day. Life’s day will soon be o’er all storms forever past, We’ll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last; We’ll share the joys of heav’n a harp, a home, a crown, The tempter will be banished, we’ll lay our burden down. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ.”*

#### **September 4 – Worthy of Glory (Heb. 3:3-4)**

**Hebrews 3:3:** *“For He has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as He who built the house is having more honor than the house.”*

**Hebrews 3:4:** *“For every house is being built by someone, but the one who built all things is God.”*

**verse 3:** “For He [Jesus] has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as He who built the house is having more honor than the house.”

Let’s begin our meditation today by tying these first 3 verses together here in chapter 3. In verse 1 the command is “contemplate Jesus, the apostle and high priest.” He is characterized in verse 2 as being “faithful to the One who appointed Him.” Now in verse 3 we read “He has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses.”

Christ is seen as the Creator of the house and Moses is a resident.

The reason being, He [Christ] “has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as He who built the house is having more honor than the house.”

It has been over 2,000 years since God tore apart the temple veil, signifying the end of an era which had lasted 1,500 years. A new day had dawned abruptly and completely. The Jew had to face the revolutionary fact that Christ had eclipsed all others and that Calvary spelled the end of the law.

**verse 4:** “For every house is being built by someone, but the one who built all things is God.”

We now have a second statement of reason in this argument: “For every house is being built by someone, but [in contrast] the one who built all things is God.”

Christ is the builder of all things, and Moses is part of His building operations.

It is an acceptable premise that when you have order and design, you have a creator. This universe is built by someone: “but the one who built all things is God.”

Moses is a resident, Jesus is president.

Join me in singing that hymn **“Reach Out To Jesus”**: *“Is your burden heavy as you bear it all alone? Does the road you travel harbor danger yet unknown? Are you growing weary in the struggle of it all? Jesus will help you when on His name you call. Is the life you’re living filled with sorrow and despair? Does the future press you with its worry and its care? Are you tired and friendless, have you almost lost your way? Jesus will help you just come to Him today. He is always there hearing ev’ry prayer faithful and true. Walking by our side in His love we hide all the day through. When you get discouraged just remember what to do Reach out to Jesus, He’s reaching out to you.”*

### September 5 – Faithful as a Son (Heb. 3:5-6)

**Hebrews 3:5:** “Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;”

**Hebrews 3:6:** “But Christ is faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if indeed we keep the confidence firm and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

**verse 5:** “Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;”

The argument now expands. Christ as the builder and Moses as a part of the house. Christ is over the house and Moses is in the house. Christ is the Son, Moses is the servant.

Moses was a voluntary servant. Like the Savior, who emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, both were faithful in the accomplishment of their task.

**verse 6:** “But Christ is faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if indeed we keep the confidence firm and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

In contrast to Moses being “faithful in all His house as a servant,” “Christ is faithful as a Son over His house.”

The writer speaks of his recipients as well as himself when he says: “whose house we are.”

1 Peter 2:4-5: “And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (NASB).

The writer concludes verse 6 with a conditional phrase that has been disturbing to many: “if indeed we keep the confidence firm and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by saying in Matthew 7:24-27: “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall” (NASB).

Ephesians 2:19-22: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (NASB).



Romans 4:20-21: "Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (NASB).

Once again the author includes himself in this admonition: "if indeed we keep the confidence firm and the boast of our hope firm until the end."

John MacArthur said: "How can we know that we are really God's house? By holding **fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end**. This does not mean, as many have misinterpreted, that we are saved if we hang on until the end. We can neither save ourselves nor keep ourselves saved. The meaning is simply that continuance is the proof of reality."

J. Vernon McGee said: "...if we are sons of God and if we are partakers of the heavenly calling, we *will* be faithful and we will hold fast. This is that proof we are of God's house."

Revelation 3:11: "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (NASB).

Dr. V. Raymond said: "It's always too soon to quit...Remember always to keep chin up and knees down!"

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (NASB).

I love the hymn we are going to sing this morning. Join me in singing "**Lead On, O King Eternal**": *"Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Your tents shall be our home, Through days of preparation Your grace has made us strong, And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song. Lead on, O King Eternal, Till sin's fierce war shall cease, And holiness shall whisper The sweet Amen of peace; For not with swords loud clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums, With deeds of love and mercy The heav'nly kingdom comes. Lead on, O King Eternal, We follow, not with fears; For gladness breaks like morning Where'er Your face appears; Your cross is lifted o'er us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might."*

### September 6 – Do Not Harden Your Hearts (Heb. 3:7-9)

**Hebrews 3:7:** "Therefore just as the Holy Spirit is saying, 'Today if you hear His voice,'"

**Hebrews 3:8:** "Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion in the day of testing in the wilderness,"

**Hebrews 3:9:** "Where your fathers tried me by testing me, and saw my works for forty years."

**verse 7:** "Therefore just as the Holy Spirit is saying, 'Today if you hear His voice,'"

Isaiah 30:21: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (NIV).

Psalms 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (NIV).

1 Samuel 3:9: "So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening"' (NIV).

Lord, my prayer this morning is that You will slow me down, still my spirit from all the distractions about, and speak softly because Your servant is listening.

**verse 8:** "Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion in the day of testing in the wilderness,"

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "To drive home his call to fidelity and to warn of the consequences of unbelieving infidelity, the author referred to the classic failure of Israel at Kadesh Barnea which led to their 40-year detour in the wilderness. They were marked by tragic loss and defeat. The readers were not to repeat such an experience in their own lives."

"Contemplate Jesus in verse 1. "Hear His voice" in verse 7. "Do not harden your hearts" in verse 8.

It is interesting that none of these strong appeals refers to repenting and believing the Gospel.

The writer's command is to never let yourself get into the kind of spiritual hardness which issued in the 40 years of wandering for your forefathers.

Mark 3:5: "And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored" (NASB).

Ephesians 4:18-19: "Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness" (NASB).

It is coldness and indifference toward the message of the Word.

Life's greatest moment is before us when we hear the voice of God speaking to us. If we will hear it, we can enter into the blessing of God in our life. If not, we cannot. It boils down to this, we have a choice.

We are confronted by the voice of God. We hear God's voice. Our soul stirs as God is dealing with us. We have only one choice, whether we will say like Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord that I should listen to Him?" or will we say like the prodigal son: "I will arise and go to my father."

We must make our own choice when we hear God's message. "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

Is God speaking to you right now? Don't turn away. Maybe He hasn't spoken in a long time. Maybe you're just not close enough to hear.

**verse 9:** "Where your fathers tried me by testing me, and saw my works for forty years."

There are 2 ways, according to this verse, that the children of Israel rebelled against the Lord: (1) "your fathers tried me by testing me" and (2) "[they] saw my works for forty years."

As we conclude our meditation for this morning, will you very tenderly and genuinely pause for a moment and say "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening."

Join me in singing that wonderful hymn that is built around Psalm 139:23-24, "**Cleanse Me**": "Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev'ry sin, and set me free. Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide."

## September 7 – All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray (Heb. 3:10-11)

**Hebrews 3:10:** "Therefore, I was angry with this generation, and I said, 'They are always being led astray in their heart; and they did not know my ways';"

**Hebrews 3:11:** "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"

**verse 10:** "Therefore, I was angry with this generation, and I said, 'They are always being led astray in their heart; and they did not know my ways';"

This is the third "Therefore" in the passage. We see "Therefore" in verse 1, verse 7, and now in verse 10.

Here we get the Lord's response to the irresponsible behavior of the Israelites. The Lord says 2 things: (1) "They are always being led astray in their heart" and (2) "they did not know my ways."

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "God's reaction was one of anger. The word could mean (to loath.) It is a word to refer to an intense displeasure or wrath."

"They did not know my ways." In other words, they had a lack of experiential knowledge of the Father's way of doing things.

Isaiah 53:6: "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (NIV).

Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (NIV).

Proverbs 8:34: "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway" (NIV).

Proverbs 10:9: "The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out" (NIV).

**verse 11:** "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"

“Rest” refers to the fulfillment of the promises that have been given to them. Rest is of a deepening, dependent relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My [burden] load is light” (NASB).

The “rest” is the added blessing from God one receives as a believer when he lives a life in obedience to God.

As Moses is preparing to finish his farewell address, he says these words: “Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life” (Deut. 28:65-66 NIV).

One of my all-time favorite hymns was also the favorite hymn of Hudson Taylor. Join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”**: *“Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, for by Thy transforming power, Thou has made me whole. O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea! O how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me! Yes, I rest in Thee Beloved, Know what wealth of grace is Thine, Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

## September 8 – Bearing One Another’s Burdens (Heb. 3:12-13)

**Hebrews 3:12:** *“Keep on taking care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.”*

**Hebrews 3:13:** *“But keep on encouraging one another every day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’ lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*

In our last study we learned that Christ is superior to Moses. We were commanded to get focused on Jesus. He is the center of all God’s dealings with us.

We now come to another practical section as the writer begins to apply his admonitions to the recipients personally.

These recipients are of Jewish descent. They have come out of Judaism into the reality of Christ. Now, because of suffering, they are contemplating going back to a more comfortable position living under Judaism.

**verse 12:** *“Keep on taking care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.”*

The first thing we need to note in this warning is that it is addressed to “brethren.” We become brothers and sisters when we are born again by the Spirit into God’s family. The author is still focusing on the family relationship as we have noted in many of the prior verses.

The command here is in the present tense and is reflected in our translation: “Keep on taking care, brethren.” Be seeing to it brothers! See to it. Keep a watchful eye ever open.”

We are most vulnerable when times are rough and losses keep accumulating. We get our eyes off the Lord and start rendering wrong verdicts.

There are 4 very real possibilities for being blown away and facing lack of preparation. These 4 things are: (1) sin; (2) Satan; (3) suffering; and (4) Savior.

Sin can creep in so deceptively and cause us to compromise in our commitment.

Satan is like a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour. His fiery darts can catch us in a moment when our shield of faith is down. Suffering. Philippians 1:29: “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (NASB). Part of God’s plan to make us more Christlike is the suffering we endure. The Savior has promised to come at any time and what a tragedy for Him to come and find us unprepared.

Revelation 22:12: “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (NASB).

We must be faithful to keep our priorities intact, faithful to maintain and deepen the relationship with our Lord, and faithful to live as though this might be our last day upon the earth.

It is “in any one of you.” It is very pointed. “...an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.” Israel missed so much. They were still His people but they were disciplined in the wilderness for 40 years.

In their unbelief they decided to turn and walk out—walk away from responsibilities for the relationship. They turned away from Moses. They wouldn’t go in. They went astray in their hearts. “They didn’t know My ways!”

Discipline is a family thing. Proverbs 22:15: “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him” (NIV).

We need to remember He is the living God. He’s alive, He’s aware, and He’s active. Our life as believers is a dependent walk.

I am reminded of Jehoshaphat as he concludes his prayer: “O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (2 Chron. 20:12 NIV).

**verse 13:** “But keep on encouraging one another every day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’ lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

In verse 12 we have a present imperative telling us to “keep on taking care.” Now here in verse 13 we have a present imperative: “keep on encouraging one another every day.”

“Lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Responding to the fatal attraction, it’s like a fish. When the fish alters its course and takes the fly, he’s hooked and fried.

R. Kent Hughes said: “When you are alone and unaccountable, it is tempting to take the easy course instead of the right one.” (*Hebrews*, 103)

John MacArthur said: “Get along side each other and help each other.”

Charles Swindoll has added a verse to “Home on the Range”: “Oh give me a church, Where the folks in a lurch, Are encouraged and healed from above, Where seldom is heard, A discouraging word, And the truth is modeled in love.”

Because the Christian life is a moment-by-moment experience, the challenge here is to be encouraging one another daily as long as it is still called today.

The Lord teaches us to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread.” In speaking of discipleship he says: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23 NIV).

“As long as it is still called ‘today,’”—while we still have an opportunity.

The 2 key words in the remaining part of verse 13 are: (1) “hardened” and (2) “deceitfulness.” Sin is active. Man is passive. There is a constant exaggeration of the satisfaction that can be gained from sin. The “deceitfulness of sin” can be seen in the story of the prodigal son, in the story of Achan who stole the articles from Jericho and buried them in the floor of his tent, in the story of Ananias and Sapphira who lied about a real estate deal. You can see it in the life of David as he got involved in adultery and murder. You can see it in Elisha’s servant Gehazi as he chases after Naaman’s chariot to get some personal remuneration. The word “deceitfulness” has in it the thought “to trick” or “fraud.”

Join me in singing “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting,**” the hymn we started yesterday. Today let’s sing verses 3 and 4 as an act of worship: “*Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art, And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed! Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee; Resting ‘neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth’s dark shadows flee. Brightness of my Father’s glory, Sunshine of my Father’s face, Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.*”

**September 9 – We are Partakers of Christ (Heb. 3:14-15)**



**Hebrews 3:14:** “For we have become partakers of Christ, if indeed we hold firm the original confidence steadfast until the end;”

**Hebrews 3:15:** “while it is being said, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion.’”

**verse 14:** “For we have become partakers of Christ, if indeed we hold firm the original confidence steadfast until the end;”

One of the evidences of relationship is the unconditional commitment to stay by the stuff.

Here in this verse we have the statement of the reason why the previous admonition was given to be “encouraging one another daily as long as it is still called ‘today’: “For we have become partakers of Christ.”

Notice the little word “we”: “For we have become partakers of Christ, if indeed we”—and the author identifies himself with the recipients of this letter—“hold firm the original confidence.”

1 John 2:19: “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us” (NASB).

Let’s walk for a moment with Job through his great valley of difficulty, loss and physical affliction.

Job 1:21-22: “and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.’ In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (NIV).

Job 13:15: “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him...” (NIV).

Job 19:23-27: “Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (NIV).

Job 23:10: “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (NIV).

Job 42:2: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted” (NIV).

It was Vince Lombardi who said:

After the cheers have died and the stadium is empty, after the headlines have been written and after you are back in the quiet of your own room and the Super Bowl ring has been placed on the dresser and all the pomp and fanfare have faded, the enduring things that are left are: The dedication to excellence; the dedication to victory; and the dedication to doing with our lives the very best we can to make the world a better place in which to live. (Zig Ziglar, *Over the Top*, 266)

Ray Stedman said: “...one virtue proves decisive in whether one ever arrives at spiritual maturity: perseverance.” (William D. Hendricks, *Exit Interviews*, 25)

**verse 15:** “while it is being said, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion.’”

We have seen this message earlier in chapter 3. We have a repetition of 2 words from verse 13: “Today” and “harden.”

R. Kent Hughes said: “Brothers and sisters, if we hear his voice, we must do something now!” (*Hebrews*, 104)

John Phillips said: “Today! Again and again he rings out the word. God never promises us tomorrow. Now is the time to get eternal matters settled.” (*Exploring Hebrews*, 72)

Let’s worship the Lord with this great hymn of affirmation, **“I Know Whom I Have Believed”**:  
*“I know not why God’s wondrous grace To me He hath made known, Nor why unworthy, Christ in love, Redeemed me for His own. I know not how this saving faith To me He did impart, Nor how believing in His Word Wrought peace within my heart. I know not when my Lord may come, At night or noontide fair,*

*Nor if I'll walk the vale with Him, Or 'meet Him in the air.' But 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.' "*

### **September 10 – When They Heard, They Rebelled (Heb. 3:16-17)**

**Hebrews 3:16:** *"For who when they heard, rebelled? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?"*

**Hebrews 3:17:** *"And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?"*

**verse 16:** "For who when they heard, rebelled? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?"

There are 6 questions that are used in verses 16-18 that bring the truth to the surface as to why there was a problem in Israel with regard to entering into the land God had promised.

Question 1: "For who when they heard, rebelled?" Question 2: "Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?"

1 Corinthians 10:1-5: "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness" (NASB).

**verse 17:** "And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?"

Question 3: "And with whom was He angry for forty years?" It was that generation that turned back from Kadesh-Barnea and refused to trust God and go into the land. He answers his own question with yet another question.

Question 4: "Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?"

Corpses strewn in the wilderness, evidences of divine disqualification. The landscape of the scriptures is scattered with the corpses of those who did not finish well.

A little sin will add to your trouble, subtract from your energy, multiply your difficulties, and divide your relationships.

Samuel confronts Saul with his deliberate disobedience: "But Samuel replied: 'Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king'" (1 Sam. 15:22-23 NIV).

Join me in singing that wonderful hymn **"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"**: *"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim thro' this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty, Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more. Open now the crystal fountain Whence the healing waters flow; Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey thro'; Strong Deliv'rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield; Strong Deliv'rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield."*

### **September 11 – We Miss So Much! (Heb. 3:18-19)**

**Hebrews 3:18:** *"And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient?"*

**Hebrews 3:19:** *"And so we are seeing that they were not able to enter because of unbelief."*

**verse 18:** "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient?"

Question 5: "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest?"

Question 6: "But to those who were disobedient?"

Why was it so? Why did they not go in? The reason they did not was because they formed a committee and failed to move forward on the basis of God's promise.

I had a little plaque in my office for some time that said: "God so loved the world that He didn't send a committee."

Psalm 62:1-2: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken" (NIV).

**verse 19:** "And so we are seeing that they were not able to enter because of unbelief."

In the words "so we are seeing" is the triumphant conclusion to the writer's argument.

J. Vernon McGee said: "I suggest that you underline this verse in your Bible. This is what is robbing you and me of many blessings—*unbelief*."

There are 4 key hot words in these last 4 verses: (1) "rebelled"—verse 16; (2) "sinned"—verse 17; (3) "disobedient"—verse 18; and (4) "unbelief"—verse 19.

The summary points are as follows: (1) The very people God rescued provoked him—verse 16; (2) They sinned and suffered its consequences—verse 17; (3) Disobedience brought the rejection—verse 18; and (4) They could not reach the rest that they started for by faith because of unbelief—verse 19.

Let's sing a positive affirmation of our faith in that great hymn "**At Calvary**": *"Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. By God's Word at last my sin I learned, Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned, Till my guilty soul imploring turned To Calvary. Now I've giv'n to Jesus ev'rything; Now I gladly own Him as my King; Now my raptured soul can only sing Of Calvary. O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."*

## September 12 – Fear of Falling Short (Heb. 4:1-2)

**Hebrews 4:1:** *"Therefore, let us fear lest, a promise that is still open of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have failed to reach it."*

**Hebrews 4:2:** *"For indeed we are having had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word of the preaching did not profit them, because it had not been mixed together with faith in those who heard."*

The big question we should ask ourselves today as we deal with these verses in Hebrews 4 is: Are we resting in the total adequacy of Jesus Christ?

Living in vital union with our Savior brings about a rest whereby we are increasingly deepening our relationship with Him, depending more fully upon His strength, disciplining our desires to do His will. The rest that results is the inner rest of well-being.

Isaiah 32:17: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (NIV).

Isaiah 28:12: "to whom he said, 'This is the resting place, let the weary rest'; and, 'This is the place of repose'—but they would not listen" (NIV).

**verse 1:** "Therefore, let us fear lest, a promise that is still open of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have failed to reach it."

In these first 3 verses the author identifies with the reader. He says here in verse 1: "Therefore, let us." In verse 2: "For indeed we." Then in verse 3: "For we are entering...we who believed."

This command "let us fear" follows from the tragic example of Israel that Christians should also take warning.

It is time to persevere and press on, not a time to quit.

The 3 S's describe our rest from the total adequacy of Jesus Christ: (1) surrender; (2) sovereignty; and (3) satisfaction.

Psalm 37:7: "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way" (NIV).

We have 2 alternatives here as life blindsides us: (1) Believe God's Word and enter the faith-rest life or (2) Doubt God's Word and be totally miserable until the day we die.

The Lord is saying: "Believer, lean on Me. Trust in Me. I have given you My word, the promises and doctrines from the Bible."

**verse 2:** “For indeed we are having had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word of the preaching did not profit them, because it had not been mixed together with faith in those who heard.”

We can be guilty of quoting promises without claiming them.

Romans 10:17: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (NASB).

Acts 26:28: “‘Much more of this, Paul,’ returned Agrippa ‘and you’ll be making me a Christian’” (NASB).

Brennan Manning said: “Whatever is denied cannot be healed. To acknowledge humbly that I often inhabit an unreal world, that I have trivialized my relationship with God, and that I am driven by vain ambition is the first blow in dismantling my glittering image.” (*Abba’s Child*, 40)

Could it be that now is the accepted time for you to enter into His rest?

I just love singing “**Near to the Heart of God**”: “*There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God, A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. There is a place of comfort sweet, Near to the heart of God, A place where we our Saviour meet, Near to the heart of God. There is a place of full release, Near to the heart of God, A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God, Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God.*”

### September 13 – Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting (Heb. 4:3-5)

**Hebrews 4:3:** “*For we are entering into this rest, we who believed; just as He has said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest,’ and yet His works came into being from the foundation of the world.*”

**Hebrews 4:4:** “*For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day in this manner: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’;*”

**Hebrews 4:5:** “*and again in this passage, ‘They shall not enter into my rest.’*”

**verse 3:** “For we are entering into this rest, we who believed; just as He has said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest,’ and yet His works came into being from the foundation of the world.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “This ‘rest’ was established as far back as creation itself.”

**verse 4:** “For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day in this manner: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’;”

The sign on my computer desk says: “Don, Trust Me. I have everything under control. Signed, Jesus”

Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

**verse 5:** “and again in this passage, ‘They shall not enter into my rest.’”

Andrew Murray said: “We speak with Scripture of the ‘rest of faith.’ Faith, however, only gives rest because it rests in God. It rests because it allows God to do all. The rest is in God Himself. It is in His own divine rest into which we enter by faith.” (source unknown)

François Fénelon said:

Learn to cultivate peace. And you can do this by learning to turn a deaf ear to your own ambitious thoughts. Or haven’t you yet learned that the strivings of the human mind not only impair the health of your body but also bring dryness to the soul. You can actually consume yourself by too much inner striving and to no purpose at all. Your peace and inner sweetness can be destroyed by a restless mind. Satan is the one who torments us with trivialities. And he often transforms himself into an angel of light and bothers us with endless self-examinations and an oversensitive conscience which allows us no peace. Live in continued peace but understand that peace does not depend upon the fervor of your devotion. The only thing you need to be concerned about is the direction of your will. (*Let Go*)



Let's bear witness to the world by singing **"Nothing Between"**: *"Nothing between my soul and the Savior, Naught of this world's delusive dream; I have renounced all sinful pleasure, Jesus is mine; there's nothing between. Nothing between, e'en many hard trials, Tho' the whole world against me convene; Watching with prayer and much self-denial, I'll triumph at last, with nothing between. Nothing between my soul and the Savior, So that His blessed face may be seen; Nothing preventing the least of His favor, Keep the way clear! Let nothing between."*

#### September 14 – Choosing Disobedience (Heb. 4:6-7)

**Hebrews 4:6:** *"Since therefore it is remaining for some to enter into it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them did not enter because of disobedience,"*

**Hebrews 4:7:** *"He again is designating a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.'"*

**verse 6:** *"Since therefore it is remaining for some to enter into it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them did not enter because of disobedience,"*

This takes us back to Hebrews 3:18-19: "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient? And so we are seeing that they were not able to enter because of unbelief."

J. Vernon McGee said: "It is unbelief that robs you of the rest of salvation, that robs you of the rest of satisfaction and blessing which God can give to you. Oh, the wonderful rest that He wants to give to us!"

**verse 7:** *"He again is designating a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.'"*

This is the 4th and 5th use of the word "Today," helping us to see the urgency of the matter.

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow may never come. We only have today.

The verse concludes with a present negative command and we could literally translate the last phrase: "Stop hardening your hearts."

Brennan Manning said:

At every moment of our existence God offers us this good news. Sadly, many of us continue to cultivate such an artificial identity that the liberating truth of our belovedness fails to break through. So we become grim, fearful, and legalistic. We hide our pettiness and wallow in guilt. We huff and puff to impress God, scramble for brownie points, thrash about trying to fix ourselves, and live the gospel in such a joyless fashion that it has little appeal to nominal Christians and unbelievers searching for truth.

From hound-dog disciples and sour-faced saints, spare us, oh Lord! (*Abba's Child*, 58)

Let's answer the call to obedience by celebrating that we're not guilty and our hearts are filled with song. Join me in singing **"'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"**: *"'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to take Him at His Word; Just to rest upon His promise; Just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord.' O how sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to trust His cleansing blood; Just in simple faith to plunge me 'Neath the healing, cleansing flood! Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus, Just from sin and self to cease; Just from Jesus simply taking Life and rest, and joy and peace. I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee, Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend; And I know that Thou art with me, Wilt be with me to the end. Jesus, Jesus, How I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er! Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more!"*

#### September 15 – Sabbath Rest for the People of God (Heb. 4:8-10)

**Hebrews 4:8:** *"For if Joshua brought them to rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that."*

**Hebrews 4:9:** *"There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."*

**Hebrews 4:10:** *"For the one who entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."*

**verse 8:** *"For if Joshua brought them to rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that."*

In Joshua 21 we read: "The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled" (21:44-45 NIV).

The book of Joshua is followed by the book of Judges, throughout which the restlessness of the people is evident. The lowering of their moral conceptions prevented them finding rest. The story of that book may be summarized by repeating 3 words 7 times over: disobedience, discipline, and deliverance.

**verse 9:** "There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

Here we are talking about that future rest. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them'" (NASB).

John Barridge, a close friend of George Whitefield, said: "Lord, if I am all right, keep me so; if I am not right, make me so."

**verse 10:** "For the one who entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."

Revelation 3:10-11: "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (NASB).

François Fénelon said: "Here is a way to know if you've actually trusted God with something—you will not think about the matter any longer, nor will you feel a lack of peace." (*The Seeking Heart*, 66)

There is a past, present and future rest for the children of God. The past rest comes at salvation, the present rest comes as we yield to His will, and the future rest will be our eternal inheritance.

"There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9 NASB).

Let us see rest as the fruitage of the 4 P's: (1) The Promise of His Presence. Hebrews 13:5-6: "...He will never leave us nor forsake us..."; (2) Peace. Isaiah 32:17: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace..."; (3) Power. Isaiah 40:31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..."; and (4) Purpose. Hebrews 4:9: "There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

Ruth Myers said:

Thank You that I can give my self up to be led by You...that I can go forth praising and at rest, letting You manage me and my day...that I can joyfully depend on You throughout the day, expecting You to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in me and with me what You desire..." (*31 Days of Praise*, 106-7)

Join me in your affirmation of faith this morning by singing John W. Peterson's, "**Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul**": "O what a wonderful wonderful day, Day I will never forget; After I'd wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Born of the Spirit with life from above Into God's fam'ly divine, Justified fully thru Calvary's love, O what a standing is mine! And the transaction so quickly was made When as a sinner I came, Took the offer Of grace He did proffer He saved me, O praise His dear name! Now I've a hope that will surely endure After the passing of time; I have a future in heaven for sure, There in those mansions sublime. And it's because of that wonderful day When at the cross I believed; Riches eternal And blessings supernal From His precious hand I received. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!"

## September 16 – Let Us Therefore Be Diligent (Heb. 4:11)

**Hebrews 4:11:** "Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience."

My prayer and deep desire for you and for me this morning is that we will develop a deeper intimacy with Jesus Christ. That these studies in Hebrews will get down to where we really live and make a difference.

**verse 11:** “Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.”

For all of us, there is a past, present, and future tense of “rest.” The Lord is willing to take upon Himself the total responsibility for our eternal salvation. The past tense of “rest” is the rest of eternal salvation. There is a present “rest” we can experience in the total adequacy of Christ as He lives out His life in us and through us.

The third rest is that future “rest,” the eternal rest of the soul, when we rest from our labors and we enter into the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation 14:13: “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, ‘Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them’” (NASB).

The writer of the epistle of Hebrews is using the illustration of the disobedience of the children of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, in being willing to trust the Lord and go in and possess the land.

Jeremiah 6:16: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, “We will not walk in it”’” (NIV).

We have already noted that there are a number of possibilities when we face the word “rest.” The scripture speaks of creation-rest, Sabbath-rest, salvation-rest, sanctification rest, and eternal rest.

The “rest” that the author is speaking of here is a present experience of rest in the adequacy of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:11b: “Christ is all, and in all” (NASB).

He gives rest in the good times and the bad.

He is in all that a man needs and He is in all that a man does.

“Let us therefore be diligent.” You will notice the author includes himself in this command and then a warning. In other words, “Do it daily.”

2 Peter 3:14: “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless” (NASB).

2 Peter 1:10: “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble” (NASB).

Roy Hession said: “...the Christian is to make entering into God’s rest his number one priority and to let nothing stand in the way of his doing so.”

The command in verse 11 is “Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest.” And the warning is in the last phrase: “lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.”

We must answer the question this morning, Are we resting in His adequacy? If not, what are we stressed about? What difference will it make next year? What difference will it make in eternity?

This helps us understand the urgency of the situation. When we are commanded several times in previous verses: “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...” Time on the clock is running out. You do not have much time left. Now is the time to respond.

We live too short and die too long!

Perhaps as you are preparing to respond to this challenge to enter into His rest, there are some things that are really keeping you from that rest. Maybe it’s a spirit of unforgiveness, guilt over a habit or relationship, perhaps some problem in business. Whatever it might be, can you bring that to Calvary at this time? The Spirit of God has His finger on that situation right now!

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing our prayer, **“More Love to Thee”**: *“More love to Thee, O Christ, More love to Thee! Hear Thou the pray’r I make On bended knee; This is my earnest plea: Once earthly joy I craved, Sought peace and rest; Now Thee alone I seek, Give what is best; This all my pray’r shall be: Then shall my latest breath Whisper Thy praise; This be the parting cry My heart shall raise; This still its pray’r shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!”*

**September 17 – The Sword of the Word (Heb. 4:12)**

**Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said it best: “Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren’t.” If you want a life that’s held together, you need to wear your Bible out. (Tony Evans, *Our God Is Awesome*, 213)

**verse 12:** “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

There are 5 key things said about the Word of God in verse 12. We focus on the words: (1) “living”; (2) “effective”; (3) “sharper”; (4) “piercing”; and (5) “able to judge.”

John 15:1-2: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit” (NASB).

The instrument of the pruning process is the Word of God. The Word of God uncovers the restless heart. It wounds the sinner, condemns the hypocrite, and rebukes the saint.

To examine our hearts, listen to Schuyler English as he raises these questions about the Word: “...do you treasure it, and tremble at its mighty power and holiness? Does it comfort you? Does it rebuke you? Does it cleanse you? Does it guide you? Does it mould you? Does it master you? Does it thrill your soul and bring joy to your heart?” (*Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 125).

Let’s reflect this morning on the key characteristics of the Word of God in verse 12. “The word of God is”: (1) “living.” 1 Peter 1:23: “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God” (NASB). (2) “effective.” Acts 19:20: “So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing” (NASB). Acts 20:32: “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (NASB). (3) “sharper than any double-edged sword.”

Ron Mehl said: “The Lord’s medical bag is full of options, and one of those options is surgery. He knows when to use a scalpel. He knows when surgery is the only method that will bring healing. He knows when simple day surgery will do the job, and He knows when He must cut deeply.” (*God Works the Night Shift*, 172)

Divine surgery always give birth to something pretty precious.

“For the word of God is”: (1) “living”; (2) “effective”; (3) “sharper than any double-edged sword”; and (4) “piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow.”

It goes down deep where no one else can go to handle the deep things of the heart and the personal motivations.

“For the word of God is”: (5) “able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

This is a critical function for cleansing and Christlikeness. It can deal with the mind and the motivations of the heart.

Has the Word of God done its work recently in your heart? Have you laid on the table and allowed God the Father to use the surgical instruments to cut away those things in your life that are not pleasing to Him and that are hindering you from being all that the Lord wants you to be?

Join me in singing the prayer chorus, **“Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me”**: “*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—All His wonderful passion and purity! O Thou Spirit divine, All my nature refine Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*”

## September 18 – You See It All (Heb. 4:13)

**Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.”**

Yesterday in our devotional time we talked about the written Word. Today we will be talking about the Living Word—Christ.



Ephesians 6:17: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (NASB).

**verse 13:** “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “...nothing is hidden from God’s sight.”

The Word of God exposes us and the Lord knows whether or not we are at rest in Him.

Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. It is easy to hide our attitudes and actions from people but not from God.

William Lane observed: “The surveillance predicated of God is exhaustive; nothing escapes his scrutiny.” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 103)

J. Vernon McGee said: “People ask me, ‘Do you think we ought to confess everything to Him?’ Well, why not? He already knows—you might just as well tell Him all about it.”

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight.” It is total exposure and utter defenselessness.

Trying to hide something from God is like trying to hide daylight from a rooster.

Perhaps some of us are like Achan and have some things hidden in the floor of our tent. We need to deal with it. The Lord already knows all about it anyway.

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (NIV).

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but [by contrast] all things are”: (1) “open” and (2) “laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.”

Proverbs 15:3: “The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good” (NIV).

Psalms 90:8: “You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence” (NIV).

Ray Stedman concludes his exposition of these verses by offering this prayer:

Lord Jesus, how this Word has searched our hearts. We have found it to be exactly what You have declared it to be, that which can pierce even the joints and the marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thank You for this wonderful surgery that sets us free. We rejoice that there is a rest remaining into which we can enter. Grant us that we shall.

In Your name,

Amen (*What More Can God Say?*, 57)

Let’s sing another devotional prayer chorus this morning in response to this verse. **“Lord, Be Glorified”:** *“In my life, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In my life, Lord, Be glorified today. In my song, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In my song, Lord, Be glorified today. In Your Church, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In Your Church, Lord, Be glorified today.”*

## September 19 – A Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14)

**Hebrews 4:14:** *“Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession.”*

It is altogether fitting that the writer would turn our attention to the Father’s provision for our sins. In these remaining verses He will focus on the priesthood of Jesus Christ. We do not need to feel fearful or awkward if our hearts are right with the Lord.

Provision has been made by the Father. Come and don’t run away.

Psalms 34:22: “The Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him” (NIV).

**verse 14:** “Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “...to hold firmly...the priesthood of their Lord offered them all the resources they needed.” (1) Forgiveness and mercy; (2) Grace and strength; (3) Freedom; and (4) Fellowship.

Our blessed Savior is the Prophet, He brings the last message. He is the priest, He's made a sacrifice of Himself and in the present, He is interceding in our behalf at the right hand of the Father. In the future, He is going to be coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. If that doesn't light your fire you're using wet wood!

The verse ends with the second exhortation in the passage. Exhortation 1 was back in verse 11: "Let us therefore be diligent." Now in verse 14 we have exhortation 2: "Let us be holding fast our confession."

1 Timothy 2:5-6: "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time" (NASB).

2 Peter 1:3-4: "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (NASB).

To celebrate our great High Priest's ministry in our behalf, I have chosen a hymn from the 1800's written by Charitie Bancroft called **"Before the Throne of God Above"**: *"Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea A great High Priest whose name is love Who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands My name is written on His heart. I know that while in heaven He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart. No tongue can bid me thence depart. When Satan tempts me to despair And tells me of the guilt within Upward I look and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free For God, the Just, is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me. To look on Him and pardon me. Behold Him there! The risen Lamb My perfect, spotless, Righteousness. The Great unchangeable I AM The King of Glory and of Grace. One with Himself I cannot die My soul is purchased by His blood. My life is hid with Christ on high With Christ my Savior and my God."*

## September 20 – A Sinless Priest (Heb. 4:15)

**Hebrews 4:15:** *"For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."*

**verse 15:** "For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Just like back in verse 11, we were challenged "Let us be disciplined." The exhortation was followed with a reason in verse 12, for the Word of God will work you over.

We have the same thing here in verses 14 and 15. Back in verse 14 the second exhortation was "Let us be holding fast our confession." Now in verse 15 we have a negative and a positive: "For [negatively] we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but [in contrast, positively] one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Wilbur M. Smith in his book *Have You Considered Him?* points out:

Fifteen million minutes of life on this earth in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation, every thought, every deed, every purpose, every word, privately and publicly, from the time he opened his baby eyes until he expired on the cross were all approved of God.

Wow! What a record!

Hebrews 2:18: "For in that He has suffered, having Himself been tempted, He is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted" (NASB).

G. Campbell Morgan said: "Beyond the splendours of the robing of Aaron, beyond the glory of the ritual of the Tabernacle, beyond the suggestion of eternal values in rites and ceremonies, is Jesus the Son of God, as a Priest." (*God's Last Word to Men*, 64)

2 Corinthians 5:18-21: "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we

beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (NASB).

Isaiah prophesied all of this. Isaiah 53:4-5: “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (NIV).

“... ‘ELI, ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?’ (Matt. 27:46 KJV).

The cry of One being made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might experience the righteousness of God.

Erwin Lutzer in his book *Cries From the Cross* said:

Let us remember that He was forsaken by God that we might be accepted by Him. Let us hold to this promise: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). Paul assured us that nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39).

Jesus went through darkness that we might have light. He was cursed that we might be blessed. He was condemned that we might be able to say, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). He suffered hell for us so that we can enjoy heaven with Him. “He entered the awful Darkness,” wrote Pink, “that I might walk in the Light; He drank the cup of woe that I might drink the cup of joy; He was forsaken that I might be forgiven!” (103)

Let’s celebrate the overwhelming victory, the debt being paid in full. Let’s sing verses 1 and 2 of **“Calvary Covers It All”**: *“Far dearer than all that the world can impart Was the message that came to my heart (to my heart); How that Jesus alone for my sin did atone, And Calvary covers it all. The stripes that He bore and the thorns that He wore Told His mercy and love evermore (evermore); And my heart bowed in shame as I called on His name, And Calvary covers it all. Calvary covers it all, My past with its sin and stain; My guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, And Calvary covers it all.”*

## September 21 – Finding Grace in Time of Need (Heb. 4:16)

**Hebrews 4:16:** *“Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”*

**verse 16:** “Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (NASB).

This is the third exhortation where the author identifies with his readers. The first was in verse 11: “Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest.” The second was in verse 14: “Let us be holding fast our confession.” Now the third is here in verse 16: “Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace.”

The purpose is 2-fold for “drawing near.” “In order that we may”: (1) “receive mercy” and (2) “find grace to help in time of need.”

His grace is there all the time and it is there every time we need it.

It is a present imperative here. A. T. Robertson translates it: “Let us keep on coming to our high priest...”

I love the way Eugene Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases Psalm 20:6: “That clinches it—help’s coming, an answer’s on the way, everything’s going to work out.”

Nancy Spiegleberg says: “Lord, I crawled across the barrenness to you with my empty cup, Uncertain in asking any small drop of refreshment. If I had only known you better, I’d have come running with a bucket.” (William Carr Peel, *Living in the Lions’ Den Without Being Eaten*, 202)

Richard Foster wrote, “His heart is the most sensitive and tender of all. No act goes unnoticed, no matter how insignificant or small. A cup of cold water is enough to put tears in the eyes of God. Like the

proud mother who is thrilled to receive a bouquet of wilted dandelions from her child, so God celebrates our feeble expressions of gratitude.” (Brennan Manning, *Abba’s Child*, 65)

I have chosen Horatio R. Palmer’s famous hymn for our meditation and worship this morning.  
**“Yield Not to Temptation”:** *“Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each vict’ry will help you Some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. To him that o’ercometh, God giveth a crown; Thru’ faith we will conquer, Though often cast down; He who is our Saviour, Our strength will renew; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”*

## September 22 – Their Work is Never Done (Heb. 5:1)

**Hebrews 5:1:** *“For every high priest when he is taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order that he may continually be offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins;”*

I love Psalm 118:15: “Songs of joy and victory are sung in the camp of the godly. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things!” (NLT).

We are now going to experience seeing the difference between a human priest and a divine Priest.

Now as we prepare to dig into Hebrews 5:1-10, let me prepare the landscape by pointing out the fact we are going to be considering the priesthood of Aaron (verses 1-4) and the priesthood of Christ (verses 5-10).

For Aaron’s priesthood, you’ve got to do business with God with a lamb. For Christ’s priesthood, He is the Lamb of God.

We have already considered in earlier chapters that Christ is superior to angels and superior to Moses. Now we are focusing on the fact Christ is superior to Aaron and his priesthood.

Because of sin man needs a Mediator, a Priest, a Go-Between.

**verse 1:** *“For every high priest when he is taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order that he may continually be offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins;”*

The word “For” points us back to Hebrews 4:14-16. We have everything we need in Jesus.

In these first 4 verses we are going to be considering then the qualifications of the priests of Aaron: (1) their humanity; (2) their compassion; and (3) their divine appointment.

You know, this priesthood business is a very serious business. I want to know that He is going to meet the qualifications of a holy God, be able to represent me adequately, and make provision for not only the forgiveness of my sins but for eternal life.

*“For every high priest when he is taken from among men [that is he must be a human candidate] is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God.”*

The purpose behind his appointment is given in the last phrase of verse 1: *“in order that he may continually be offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins.”*

The only hope we have is for someone qualified to represent us.

*“He [must] continually be offering [these] sacrifices”* because no sacrifice that he can offer will be adequate to take away sins permanently. So he is *“continually...offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins.”* There is no permanent arrangement under the law.

*“Gifts”* probably refers to the meal offerings and sacrifices to the animal offerings that were made for sins.

Join me as we worship together by singing verse 1 of Joseph Scriven’s very familiar hymn,

**“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”:** *“What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev’rything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!”*

## September 23 – Sacrifices for the Priest and People (Heb. 5:2-4)

**Hebrews 5:2:** *“who is able to be dealing gently with those who are ignorant and those who are being led astray, since he himself also is continually subject to weakness;”*



**Hebrews 5:3:** “and because of it he is under a moral obligation to be offering sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.”

**Hebrews 5:4:** “And no one is taking the honor to himself, but when he is called by God [he responds to it], even as also Aaron.”

**verse 2:** “who is able to be dealing gently with those who are ignorant and those who are being led astray, since he himself also is continually subject to weakness;”

The focus of the author on qualifications for priesthood in verse 1 is on his humanity. In verse 2 it is on his compassion.

“Who is able to be dealing gently with those who are ignorant and those who are being led astray, since he himself [that is the priest] also is continually subject to weakness.” In other words, he sins too.

“Who is able to be dealing gently.” That takes us back to Christ’s priesthood in Hebrews 4:15: “For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

**verse 3:** “and because of it he is under a moral obligation to be offering sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.”

“And because of it [that is, “he is subject to weakness” or he sins too] he is under a moral obligation to be offering sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.”

The writer is saying that he needs a sacrifice too for his own sins.

**verse 4:** “And no one is taking the honor to himself, but when he is called by God [he responds to it], even as also Aaron.”

The focus has been on the priest’s humanity in verse 1, his compassion in verse 2, and now he is under divine appointment in verse 4.

Saul disobeyed the Lord by giving the command to bring the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings to him because Samuel wasn’t there. When he finished the offering Samuel arrived and Saul went out to greet him. “What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, ‘When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, ‘Now I have not sought the Lord’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.’ ‘You acted foolishly,’ Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time’ (1 Sam. 13:11-13 NIV).

Our text says “And no one is taking the honor to himself, but when he is called by God [he responds to it, he accepts it], even as also Aaron.”

2 Chronicles 26:16-19 “But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the Lord followed him in. They confronted him and said, ‘It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the Lord God.’ Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord’s temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead” (NIV).

There is a high cost to disobedience with regard to the priesthood.

We have been considering in these opening verses of chapter 5, the 3 qualifications for the Aaronic priesthood: (1) humanity; (2) compassion; and (3) divine appointment. You could say from the human standpoint, the priestly system had 2 requirements: (1) one true humanity to represent man and (2) divine appointment to represent God.

God chooses the priest!

Let’s celebrate and worship our blessed Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”**: “Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our ev’ry weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer.”

**September 24 – Jesus as a Priest (Heb. 5:5-6)**

**Hebrews 5:5: “So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’;”**

**Hebrews 5:6: “just as He is saying also in another passage, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”**

What a joy is ours this morning to be considering the priesthood of Jesus Christ in these verses we are looking at together.

**verse 5:** “So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’;”

With the words “So also” we have a transition to Christ. The author is now going to use a reverse order in handling the 3 qualifications. He will deal with divine appointment in verse 5 for Christ, even as he also had done for Aaron in verse 4. Those 3 points were: (1) divine appointment; (2) compassion; and (3) humanity.

The question in the back of our minds ought to be, Does Jesus Christ meet the qualifications of priesthood? You don’t fire one and hire the other when you have the best in the business.

His becoming a high priest was an appointment by the Father as a result of His resurrection.

“You are my Son.” The Father authenticated the relationship often during the ministry of Christ. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then he says “Today I have begotten you” referring to this act of becoming a high priest.

The high priesthood of Christ could not begin until the sacrifice had been made on Calvary and He was raised from the dead.

The writer is quoting from Psalm 2:7: “You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (NIV).

**verse 6:** “just as He is saying also in another passage, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

This is a quotation from Psalm 110:4. You will notice in verse 5 the quotation says “You are my Son.” Then in verse 6 we have “You are a priest.”

He is a priest, not of the order of Aaron. He could not qualify for He is of the tribe of Judah. But He is a priest of the “order of Melchizedek.”

Warren Wiersbe said: “Melchizedek is mentioned in only two places in the entire Old Testament, Genesis 14:17-24, and Psalm 110:4. His name means ‘King of Righteousness,’ ... ‘King of Salem [peace].’ ... he was both a priest and a king!”

John MacArthur said: “He was a king-priest who lived in the time of Abraham, and whose ancestry is completely unknown. He was king of Salem (the ancient name for Jerusalem) and was a priest of the true God...He lived many centuries before the Aaronic priesthood was established and his priesthood was unending...”

Let’s meditate in conclusion for a moment on the 3 key passages of scripture that have to do with Christ’s priesthood.

(1) 1 Timothy 2:5-6: “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time” (NASB).

There is only one God and there is only one priest and that is Jesus Christ.

(2) Hebrews 7:25: “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” (NASB).

(3) 1 John 2:1-2: “My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (NASB).

Our Priest not only made a sacrifice of Himself which is adequate to cleanse us from our sin and to declare us righteous before a holy God, His priesthood continues as He intercedes on a daily basis to maintain that relationship. To God be the glory in the marvelous Priest He has provided for us to secure eternal salvation.

Everything is cared for in Jesus Christ! The only way you will win your day in court is to have Jesus Christ represent you!

Please join me in singing verse 3 of **“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”**: *“Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He’ll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.”*

## September 25 – Loud Crying and Tears (Heb. 5:7-8)

**Hebrews 5:7**: *“Who in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One who is able to be saving Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety,”*

**Hebrews 5:8**: *“although being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered;”*

**verse 7**: “Who in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One who is able to be saving Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety,”

Yes, He qualifies as a priest because He has felt the full weight of testing.

This is probably a reference to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus Christ our Priest settled every claim against us, paid the fine in full, and shed His own blood as a sacrifice for our broken law.

“Who in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications.” Back in verse 1 we had the priests of Aaron’s line “offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” But our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, only “offered up both prayers and supplications.” He never needed to offer a sacrifice for Himself. He made a sacrifice of Himself for man’s sin.

F. B. Meyer said:

He knew before his incarnation where in the forest the seedling was growing to a sapling from the wood of which his cross would be made. He even nourished it with his rain and sun. Often during his public ministry, He was evidently looking beyond the events that were transpiring around Him to that supreme event, which He called “his hour.” And as it came nearer, his human soul was overwhelmed at the prospect of having to sustain the weight of a world’s sin. His human nature did not shrink from death as death; but from the death which He was to die as the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world.

“Who in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One who is able to be saving Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety;”—that is “By reason of His reverent submission,” according to Henry Alford.

“He was heard because of His piety.” The answer is given on resurrection morning when Jesus Christ breaks the bands of death and rises in new life.

In the Garden of Gethsemane it was: “Not my will, but Yours be done.”

Ron Mehl said: “You can call heaven’s help line anytime, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, and you’ll never get some nasal-voiced, part-time angel or God’s voice mail. This is a God who works the switchboard Himself. Even on the night shift.” (*God Works the Night Shift*, 167)

**verse 8**: “although being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered;”

“Although being a Son” takes us back to the statement in verse 5, “You are my Son.”

“He learned obedience.” He did not learn to obey. That was not the issue. He was learning what is involved in obedience through suffering and testing—what it costs.

Dr. John G. Mitchell said: “To give thanks when you don’t feel like it is not hypocrisy; it’s obedience.” (Ruth Myers, *31 Days of Praise*, 26-27)

Join me in singing **“The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power”**: *“The blood that Jesus shed for me, Way back on Calvary; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow’r. It soothes my doubts and calms my fears, And it dries all my tears; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow’r. It reaches to the highest mountain, It flows to the lowest valley The blood that gives me strength from day to day—it will never lose it’s power.”*

## September 26 – Source of Eternal Salvation (Heb. 5:9-10)

**Hebrews 5:9:** “and having been made perfect, He became to all those who are obeying Him the source of eternal salvation;”

**Hebrews 5:10:** “being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”

**verse 9:** “and having been made perfect, He became to all those who are obeying Him the source of eternal salvation;”

“Having been made perfect,” He got a 4.0 in the school of obedience. The Father’s stamp of approval in raising Him from the dead. And His cry, “Tetelestai! It is finished!” is the goal. He broke the tape. He qualified for the priesthood.

John MacArthur said: “Jesus went through everything He had to go through, and accomplished all He needed to, so He could be such a perfect High Priest.” (*Hebrews*, 125)

**verse 10:** “being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Because of all that had gone before and the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilling the requirements of humanity, compassion, and divine appointment, we now come to the moment of celebration. That is, Jesus Christ: “being designated by God [the Father] as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”

This takes us back to verse 6 where the author quoted from Psalm 110:4: “just as He is saying also in another passage, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

We need to recognize the fact that Jesus is the only “source of eternal salvation.” We need to ask ourselves the question, Do we have a priest and is His name Jesus?

“And having been made perfect, He became to all those who are obeying Him the source of eternal salvation.”

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (NASB).

Hebrews 10:19-20: “Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh” (NASB).

Ray Stedman’s prayer is beautiful:

“Our Father, Thank You that the garden of Gethsemane was not mere play acting upon a stage. The Lord Jesus did not come into the world to perform a role; He fully entered into life. He went the whole way, He bore the full brunt. Help us, then to obey these simple words of admonition: to come with confidence, with boldness to the throne of grace that is within us from which all help comes, all light is streaming, all hope is flaming. Make these words real in our experience.

In Christ’s name,

Amen.” (*What More Can God Say?*, 73)

Let’s glory in our precious Savior’s priesthood by singing that wonderful hymn, “**Glory to His Name**”: “Down at the cross where my Saviour died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name. I am so wondrously saved from sin, Jesus so sweetly abides within; There at the cross where He took me in; Glory to His name. O precious fountain that saves from sin, I am so glad I have entered in; There Jesus saves me and keeps me clean; Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.”

## September 27 – Hard of Hearing (Heb. 5:11)

**Hebrews 5:11:** “Concerning Him there is much to be said, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing).”

Nothing delights us more than to see our children grow and mature. How does your Heavenly Father feel about you? Are you green and growing or are you ripe and rotting?

The writer moves from exposition to exhortation in these verses that come before this morning.

There’s a huge problem. They are suffering from arrested development, continuing childhood, intentional infancy. Pilgrims should make progress!



We are coming to our third warning in the book of Hebrews. The first warning had to do with drifting—Hebrews 2: “Paying...attention.” The second warning had to do with doubting—Hebrews 3: “Today if You hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” Now the third warning has to do with dullness—Hebrews 5: “[they are] hard of hearing.”

It's the peril of spiritual immaturity.

**verse 11:** “Concerning Him there is much to be said, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing).”

“Concerning Him” refers us back to the whole high-priestly ministry of Christ in the order of Melchizedek that He just made reference to in verse 10.

One principle we can learn from this is: Spiritual truth is not mastered in one big swallow.

When he speaks of this subject of priesthood, he says 2 things: (1) “there is much to be said” and (2) “it is hard to explain.”

The author finds he would like to say a lot more about this priesthood. Yet, when he actually comes to the saying of it, he is finding it difficult; and he is frustrated to explain it. The reason is that the readers have become “hard of hearing.”

Now the author proceeds with the reason why he is frustrated: “since you have become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing).”

Warren Wiersbe said: “It refers to a condition of spiritual apathy and laziness that prevents spiritual development.”

It is epitomized in that old statement: “Don’t confuse me with the facts! My mind is already made up!”

They have closed their ears to truth that would make them uncomfortable, things that would demand something from them. This is spiritual pride: “You can’t tell me anything I don’t already know!” The unteachable spirit.

William Barclay said: “[It’s] imperceptive and lethargic nature of a stone.” (*The Book of Hebrews*, 48) It’s like talking to a rock!

“You have become sluggish.” We need to recognize this is a process that has developed over time. The apathetic attitude toward spiritual things has created this. They have “become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing).”

In the book of Revelation those 7 letters written by Jesus end with the statement: “He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

Someone has said: “God is ever calling to the deeps within us, but we are too shallow to respond.”

Hannah Hurnard in her book *The Hearing Heart* said: “In Hebrew an ‘obedient heart’ is the same word as a ‘hearing heart.’ If one hears the Voice of God, it should mean obedience, and if one obeys one will hear.” (13)

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing **“More About Jesus”**: *“More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me. More about Jesus, let me learn, More of His holy will discern; Spirit of God, my Teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me. More about Jesus, in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev’ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

## September 28 – Why Don’t You Grow Up? (Heb. 5:12)

**Hebrews 5:12:** *“For though by this time you are under moral obligation to be teachers, you are having need again for someone to be teaching you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have become such as are having need of milk and not solid food.”*

**verse 12:** “For though by this time you are under moral obligation to be teachers, you are having need again for someone to be teaching you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have become such as are having need of milk and not solid food.”

Here in verse 12 we have the diagnosis for the condition we have confronted in verse 11. The charge of immaturity is seen in their deafness in verse 11 and their dependence in verse 12. They should be giving instead of receiving, but their need is for receiving instead of giving.

Ezra describes for us the inspired, divine pattern for development and spiritual growth: “For Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, to do it, and to teach it in Israel” (7:10 NIV).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

They ought to be teachers, indeed. God counts the time since a man has heard the truth and believed it. He rightly expects progress in divine things. Years, months, days, hours, yea, moments are precious to professing Christians since the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to enlighten us, to lead us into all truth, to empower us in things divine, and to bring forth through us and in us that precious fruit for which the husbandman, the Father, looks with yearning from those in Christ the true vine. Reader, we are always becoming. Not one of us is where he was yesterday. If an unbeliever, you are further in unbelief today than yesterday. For to sow an act is to reap a tendency. To sow a tendency is to reap a habit. To sow a habit is to reap a character. To sow a character is to reap a destiny.

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost procures 3 questions from this passage: (1) Is your life characterized by knowledge or lack of knowledge? (2) Is your life characterized by independence or by dependence? (3) Is your life characterized by ability to use the word of God or by complete inability to apply the principles and precepts of Scripture to daily conduct?

The reason many Christians become dull of hearing is simply because they do not put into practice that which they hear. Every day is a brand-new opportunity, and we must face each day with the disciplines of life. To be in the Word, in prayer, and in fellowship with the Lord. Every day we must express the obedient heart by fulfilling the principles of Scripture.

Life would be a piece of cake if it weren't so daily.

This is true in every area of our lives: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Each day is a new stewardship and responsibility. As a result, too, it is often an opportunity for growth and spiritual development.

“For though by this time you are under moral obligation to be teachers, you are having need again for someone to be teaching you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have become...”

This phrase has already been seen back in verse 11. It is a process of time. “You have become sluggish in hearing” in verse 11. “You have become such as are having need of milk and not solid food” here in verse 12. They have reversed the normal growth pattern. Whereas the focus is on their deafness in verse 11, it is on their dependence and deformity in verse 12.

Corrie ten Boom said: “I praise You that Jesus Christ is able to untangle all the snarls in my soul, to banish all my complexes, and to transform even my fixed habit patterns, no matter how deeply they are etched in my subconscious.” (Ruth Myers, *31 Days of Praise*, 74)

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing that song that asks the question, “**Is He Satisfied?**”: “Do you ever search your heart as you watch the day depart? Is there something way down deep you try to hide? If this day should be the end and eternity begin, when the book is opened wide, would the Lord be satisfied? (Feeble) is the lamp of fame by which man inscribes his name on the walls of time for other men to see. Though he boasts of wealth and pow'r none can help him in that hour when the angels hear his plea; is He satisfied with me? Is He satisfied, is He satisfied? Is He satisfied with me? Have I done my best, have I stood the test? Is He satisfied with me? When my Lord shall come again, when He walks and talks with men, what if ev'ry friend He had were just like me? Would He feel a welcome here or would He go away in tears? Am I all that I should be? Is He satisfied with me?”

## September 29 – The Burp, The Bottle, and The Dirty Britches (Heb. 5:13)

**Hebrews 5:13:** “For everyone who is partaking only of milk is unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness, for he is a babe.”

**verse 13:** “For everyone who is partaking only of milk is unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness, for he is a babe.”

Now we have the reason that they “are having need of milk and not solid food.” The principle is given in the first part of this verse: “For everyone who is partaking only of milk is unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness.”

1 Corinthians 13:11: “When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things” (NASB).

Righteousness does not come by the works of the law. The truth is, righteousness comes by relationship.

Romans 1:17: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith’” (NASB).

The problem with these Jewish Christians is that they see growth and spiritual development as a performance rather than the deepening of a relationship.

Galatians 3:3: “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (NASB).

1 Corinthians 3:1-3: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (NASB).

1 Peter 2:2-3: “like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (NASB).

2 Peter 1:5-8: “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

2 Peter 3:18: “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (NASB).

Let’s sing together **“Take Time to Be Holy”**: *“Take time to be holy; Speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, And feed on His Word. Make friends with God’s children; Help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek. Take time to be holy; The world rushes on; Spend much time in secret With Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, Like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see. Take time to be holy; Let Him be thy Guide; And run not before Him, Whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, Still follow thy Lord And, looking to Jesus, Still trust in His Word.”*

### **September 30 – Solid Food is for the Grown-ups (Heb. 5:14)**

**Hebrews 5:14: “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice are having their powers of perception trained to discern good and evil.”**

**verse 14:** “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice are having their powers of perception trained to discern good and evil.”

In verse 11 we talked about the immaturity of these Hebrew Christians, made manifest in their deafness. They were “sluggish in hearing.”

It was manifested by their dependence. When they ought “to be teachers,” they were having need of “someone to be teaching” them again.

They were deformed. They were “having need of milk and not solid food.” In verse 13 we learned they were deceived. They are “unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness,” for they are still babies.

The word “But” forms the contrast for us in verse 14. We switch from immaturity to maturity.

There are 2 qualities of a mature person that are described here in verse 14: (1) their discipline—“who because of practice are having their powers of perception trained” and (2) their discernment—“their powers of perception trained to discern good and evil.”

These Hebrew Christians were manifesting a prolonged babyhood by the fact they were not mature enough to continue in the direction they should be going in growing up in Jesus Christ.

John Calvin said: "We are therefore thrice miserable Christians if we grow old without advancement, for our faith ought to progress through all stages of our life until it grows to full manhood [Eph. 4:13]." (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 89)

We learn then that maturity reflects itself in senses that are trained to discern good and evil.

As we stand back from the passage for a moment, there are 4 reflections I would like to share with you: (1) These Hebrew Christians are babes. They are babes in Christ. They have eternal life. They have been born again. (2) They need no knowledge. Their need is to use the knowledge they have. (3) They have lapsed into dullness because of disuse. (4) They are expected to teach.

The "milk" in the passage speaks of immaturity and being taught. The "meat" speaks of maturity and teaching.

Let's sing together **"Take My Hand, Precious Lord"**: *"Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, help me stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; Thru the storm, thru the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home. When my ways grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home."*

### October 1 – Pressing on to Maturity (Heb. 6:1-2)

**Hebrews 6:1:** *"Therefore having left behind the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us be pressing on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,"*

**Hebrews 6:2:** *"of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."*

As we begin our devotional time in Hebrews 6, I think it would be good for us to stop and realize 3 things: (1) they are Jewish believers going back to Judaism rather than on to Christlikeness; (2) there is no division between the chapters; and (3) the warnings we had in Hebrews 5 had to do with them being hard of hearing and still living in protracted babyhood.

**verse 1:** "Therefore having left behind the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us be pressing on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,"

The word "Therefore" points us back to Hebrews 5:11-14 that we looked at the previous mornings.

Therefore, in view of your present condition, this is what I am asking you to do. On the basis of the fact that the mature individual has his senses trained, we at this time in the growth process must put away the beginning word of the Christ. Then he exhorts us: "let us." The author identifies himself with his hearers. "Let us be pressing on to maturity." This is in the present tense and is a present imperative. It is something we do daily. Let us grow up together in Jesus!

"Let us be pressing on to maturity." He then outlines 6 things negatively we should not be spending our time on as far as being top priority in our lives. The elementary principles are the A-B-C's. We leave the alphabet behind as we learn the language.

There can be no standing still in the Christian life.

Warren Wiersbe said:

The phrase "let us go on" should be translated "let us be carried forward." It is God who enables us to progress as we yield to Him, receive His Word, and act on it. A baby does not "grow himself." He grows as he eats, sleeps, exercises, and permits his body to function. Nature, as ordained by God, carries the baby along day after day, and gradually he matures into an adult. It is normal for Christians to grow; it is abnormal for them to have arrested growth.

We have learned what's wrong in chapter 5. They are dull, dependent, and deformed. Now in chapter 6 we learn how to fix it.

"Therefore having left behind the elementary teaching about the Christ."

"Let us be pressing on to maturity."



Philippians 3:12-14: "Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

The positive admonition is "let us be pressing on to maturity." The negative side of the admonition has 6 parts: (1) "not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works."

Ray Stedman said: "A foundation is laid but nothing is built on it. Instead of building on the foundation, the owner tears it up and lays it again."

It is a graphic picture of arrested development.

Haggai came and found a similar problem. With only the foundation laid of the house of God, they have gotten distracted and onto other priorities. He says over and over again the message from the Lord: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Give careful thought to your ways'" (Haggai 1:7 NIV).

The problem here is the problem of maturity. There is need for progression. There is the duty of progress and the peril of relapse. The leaving of one is necessary to the going on to the other.

There are 6 things spoken of here in these first 2 verses that explain the "elementary teaching about the Christ."

John Baird, the Wyoming rancher said it well: "You can't ranch cows sittin' in the bunkhouse, drinkin' coffee and readin' books about cows!" (*Reaching Men Ministries*, Feb. 1995)

The big question being addressed is, Why go back to rules and rituals when you have the reality of a relationship

**verse 2:** "of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."

The 6 things you have left behind are "Not laying again a foundation of": (1) "repentance from dead works"; (2) "faith toward God"; (3) "instruction about washings"; (4) "laying on of hands"; (5) "the resurrection of the dead"; and (6) "eternal judgment."

J. Vernon McGee points out:

There are six foundation facts...

(1) Repentance from dead works—These works were the works of the Mosaic Law.

(2) Faith toward God—The Old Testament taught faith toward God.

(3) Doctrine of Baptisms [washings]—It has nothing to do with the New Testament baptism.

(4) Laying on of hands—When a man brought an animal offering, he laid his hands on its head to signify his identification with it.

(5) Resurrection of the dead—taught in the Old Testament, but now they needed to come up to the resurrection of Christ.

(6) Eternal Judgment—taught in the Old Testament. (paraphrased from J. Vernon McGee's commentary, 543)

The consequence of failing at Kadesh-Barnea to trust God and move forward should be an illustration to them that they should not be trying to go back to Judaism without some very serious consequences.

Join me this morning in singing that beautiful hymn, "**I Am Not Skilled**": *"I am not skilled to understand What God hath will'd, what God hath plann'd; I only know at His right hand Stands One who is my Saviour. I take Him at His word indeed: 'Christ died for sinners,' this I read; And in my heart I find a need Of Him to be my Saviour. And was there then no other way For God to take? I cannot say; I only bless Him, day by day, Who saved me thro' my Saviour. That He should leave His place on high, And come for sinful man to die, You count it strange? So once did I, Before I knew my Saviour."*

**October 2 – It's Impossible to Rewind the VCR of Life (Heb. 6:3-4)**

**Hebrews 6:3: "And this we shall do, if indeed God is permitting."**

**Hebrews 6:4: “For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,”**

**verse 3:** “And this we shall do, if indeed God is permitting.”

Once again, the author identifies with the reader and makes this follow-up statement: “this we shall do, if indeed God is permitting.” This takes us back to verse 1: “let us be pressing on to maturity.”

The author is in full recognition of God’s sovereign purpose and also the process involved in spiritual growth.

And this pressing on to maturity we will do. Maturity is possible because of what they now have. The Lord knows best how to grow us up. It’s with His plan, His provisions, and His power that are all available to produce Christlikeness in each of us. You cannot be brought to maturity without leaving dullness and indifference behind.

Here the author gives full recognition of God’s sovereignty.

Isaiah 46:10: “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (NIV).

Tony Evans said it well: “Your choices will not determine whether God winds up where He wants to go. He will arrive at His destination...either through you, around you, over you, by you, or in spite of you.” (*Our God Is Awesome*, 92)

**verse 4:** “For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,”

Notice the word “those” in verse 4. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* calls this “The Alternative to Progress....If they did not advance, they would retreat. Should anyone so retreat, his situation would be grim indeed.” (794)

I think what we need to recognize here is there is no rewind button on the VCR of life. You cannot reverse relationships. I think it is important for us to make the observation here that the author has changed from “we” in verse 3 to “those” in verse 4.

“Impossible” is placed at the beginning of the sentence. Obviously the author wants to recognize the plight of those who are considering the possibility of going back under Judaism.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* put it this way: “It is impossible for those who have...to be brought back to repentance.” (794)

The passage is a warning against a failure to progress.

There are 3 characteristics here in this verse: (1) “Those who have once been enlightened”—this speaks of conversion; (2) “those who have tasted of the heavenly gift”—this likewise is reference to conversion; and (3) “partakers of the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 1:13-14 describe the situation: “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” (NASB).

Psalms 34:8: “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (NIV).

Romans 8:16-17: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him” (NASB).

I think it would be good this morning for us to bow our heads before the Lord and praise Him for His faithfulness in providing all that we need to go onto maturity in Christ, and to make verbal commitment in the song we sing today. **“Where He Leads I’ll Follow”:** *“Sweet are the promises; kind is the Word. Dearer far than any message man ever heard. Pure was the mind of Christ—sinless, I see. He the great example is, and pattern for me. List to His loving words: ‘Come unto me.’ Weary, heavy-laden, there is sweet rest for thee. Trust in His promises, faithful and sure; Lean upon the Savior, and thy soul is secure. Where He leads I’ll follow. Follow all the way. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow Jesus ev’ry day.”*

### October 3 – Tasting the Good Word of God (Heb. 6:5-6)

*Hebrews 6:5: “and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age,”*

*Hebrews 6:6: “and then have fallen away, to be renewing them again to repentance, since they are crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and putting Him to open shame.”*

**verse 5:** “and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age,”

The author now has 5 things that are said about these people, the ones who have: (1) “once been enlightened”; (2) “tasted of the heavenly gift”; (3) “made partakers of the Holy Spirit”; and now (4) “tasted the good word of God”; and (5) “tasted the powers of the coming age.”

Hebrews 6 emphasizes the duty of progress and the peril of relapse. It points out the impossibility of repeating the past, as even nature shows.

Alleviating persecution by fellowshiping in the old order, this was a sign of their immaturity. The exhortation is to leave the Mosaic order for the reality of Christ. The purpose of this immediate section is to show the duty of every believer to make progress.

Characteristic 4: “[those who] have tasted the good word of God.”

Jeremiah 15:16: “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty” (NIV).

Characteristic 5: “[those who have tasted] the powers of the coming age.”

You cannot be saved twice! Paul follows his admonition to “press on toward the goal” in Philippians 3:14, with this admonition in Philippians 3:15-16: “Let us therefore, as many as are mature, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained” (NASB).

**verse 6:** “and then have fallen away, to be renewing them again to repentance, since they are crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and putting Him to open shame.”

You notice it is “renewing them again to repentance” not to salvation.

There are many decisions that we make in our lives that we wish we could undo. But once those decisions have been made, they cannot be undone.

We have already seen this in the children of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea. The next day they wanted to undo the decision not to go into the land, but God had already said, “I swore in My wrath, they shall never enter My rest.”

We all have choices to make. We all have decisions to make. Some of those choices and decisions we live with and wish that we could change, but there is no possibility.

For Esau when he sold his birthright for a bowl of chili, he wished often he could undo that decision.

Samson must have grieved while he was blind and grinding in the prison of the Philistines. Saul must have grieved when the kingdom was ripped from him because of poor choices. Judas Iscariot went out and hung himself because of poor choices. Belshazzar was weighed in the balances and found wanting. Pharaoh hardened his heart, lost his first-born son and his own life as well.

How many times during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness did the children of Israel wish they had made the right decision when they came to Kadesh-Barnea?

How many young men and young women give away their virginity and realize you can only do this once?

It is impossible to remove failure by another experience of salvation. Therefore, the only thing you can do is to progress.

Just as it is not possible to have a second physical birth, so it is not possible to have a second spiritual birth.

We will learn in Hebrews 9:27: “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (KJV).

“and then have fallen away, to be renewing them again to repentance, since they are”: (1) “crucifying again to themselves the Son of God” and (2) “putting Him to open shame,;

These 2 present tenses are used here in conclusion of verse 6 to help us understand what is happening when we try to do this.

My heart is overflowing with joy and affirmation as I am singing! Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **“The Solid Rock”**: *“My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus’ name. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In ev’ry high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the vale. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.”*

#### **October 4 – Bringing Forth Vegetation (Heb. 6:7-8)**

**Hebrews 6:7:** *“For land which drank the rain which is often falling upon it and is bringing forth vegetation suitable to those for whose sake it is also being tilled, is receiving a blessing from God;”*

**Hebrews 6:8:** *“but if it is bringing forth thorns and thistles, it is worthless and almost cursed, and its end is burning.”*

**verse 7:** “For land which drank the rain which is often falling upon it and is bringing forth vegetation suitable to those for whose sake it is also being tilled, is receiving a blessing from God;”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “An illustration from nature now drives home the writer's point. Whenever rain-soaked ground is properly productive, it receives the blessing of God.” (795)

We look for certain results from certain conditions. Some believers take the blessing of their salvation and go on to maturity, while others are immature.

**verse 8:** “but if it is bringing forth thorns and thistles, it is worthless and almost cursed, and its end is burning.”

The point is, you can receive the blessing of God and use or misuse it.

The author is saying, if a piece of land bears a certain kind of fruit it must undergo a certain kind of experience. The ground is treated according to the character of its fruit. When a Christian is properly fruitful, he can expect the blessing of God. Conversely, if not, he can expect judgment. If our lives are fruitful, we can look to God for mercy and grace available.

When the land bears “thorns and thistles,” it is disapproved. It is worthless, and “it’s end is burning.”

John 15:8: “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (KJV).

The Father’s supreme desire of us is that fruit might be borne in and through our lives.

Our longing desire ought to be to hear at the judgment seat of Christ: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Let’s return to our hymn from yesterday and sing verses 3 and 4. **“The Solid Rock”**: *“His oath, His covenant, His blood Support me in the whelming flood; When all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.”*

#### **October 5 – God Will Not Forget Your Work and Love (Heb. 6:9-10)**

**Hebrews 6:9:** *“But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things concerning you, things that are belonging to salvation, though we are speaking in this way.”*

**Hebrews 6:10:** *“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you demonstrated toward His name, in that you ministered and are still ministering to the saints.”*

Let’s begin our meditation with a statement by Phillips Brooks:

Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. (Kenneth Osbeck, *Amazing Grace*, 305)

Growth, progress, and fruit are the big words in the normal Christian life.



**verse 9:** “But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things concerning you, things that are belonging to salvation, though we are speaking in this way.”

The author expresses the certainty of salvation on the part of the recipients of this letter. The word “But” forms the contrast from what we have seen in the previous verses. “But, beloved.” This is the only occurrence of this wonderful word here in the book of Hebrews. The word occurs 61 times in the New Testament.

It reminds us of the Father’s words in reference to His Son: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

Ephesians 1:6: “to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (NASB).

“But, beloved, we.” He has changed back from “those” to “we.”

“We have been convinced of better things concerning you.”

How are they “convinced”? It has to be by the quality of their lives and consistent commitment; their patience, their perseverance, their pressing on, their discipline, their discernment, and their desires. It is their work and love that is recorded in verse 10.

The Greek word communicates the thought of a past conflict issuing in a settled judgment.

They are following the path of fruitfulness and not the “thorns and thistles.”

“But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things concerning you, things that are belonging to salvation, though we are speaking in this way.”

What are those things we think about that belong to salvation? We would think of the purity of heart, the servanthood aspect, unconditional love for the lost. We would think in terms of evangelism, chastity, compassion, charity, and concern.

In verse 9 our author is saying “I am persuaded that you are going to live for God, that you are not going to remain babies in Christ; but that you will grow up and go on to maturity to Christlikeness.”

**verse 10:** “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you demonstrated toward His name, in that you ministered and are still ministering to the saints.”

John MacArthur said: “A Christian’s works are not what saved him or what keep him saved, but they are an evidence of his salvation.” (*Hebrews*, 154)

James says faith without works is dead.

“God is not unjust so as to forget.”

2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (NASB).

“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you demonstrated toward His name, in that you ministered and are still ministering to the saints.”

Now in the remaining part of verse 10 we have the definition of “work” and “love.” The definition basically is servanthood.

“In that you ministered [in the past] and are still ministering [in the present] to the saints.” You are still serving others.

Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (NASB).

Joe Aldrich in his book *Secrets of Inner Beauty* said: “We are already sons, He wants us also to serve. Servants are beautiful. Check your wardrobe. The ones who will hear, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant’ will be wearing towels that are worn, faded and patched because of heavy use.”

I find myself singing that sweet chorus of commitment, “**I Will Serve Thee.**” Please join me as we sing these words together: “*I will serve thee because I love Thee; You have given life to me. I was nothing before You found me; You have given life to me. Heartaches, broken pieces, Ruined lives are why You died on Calv’ry. Your touch was what I longed for; You have given life to me.*”

## October 6 – The Full Assurance of Hope (Heb. 6:11-12)

**Hebrews 6:11:** “And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,”

**Hebrews 6:12:** “in order that you may not become sluggish (lazy), but imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises.”

**verse 11:** “And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,”

The way to do this is to keep your focus on others, not yourself and the price you are paying.

Whereas in verse 10 we had the past and present manifested on the part of these saints sacrificially serving others, we now point to the future in verse 11. In verse 9 it was “we have been convinced...we are speaking in this way.” In verse 10 it was “you” and “your.” Now in verse 11 we return to “we”—“we are desiring.”

This is the key purpose of the letter. It is a passionate desire. “And we are desiring that each one of you.” He is very specific. He does not want to leave anybody out. he does not want anybody to get discouraged, fail, and turn back to Judaism.

Oswald Chambers said in *Our Utmost for His Highest*: “Launch out in reckless trust that the redemption is complete...and bother no more about yourself.”

“And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.”

He is challenging them at this point: “Don’t go dead in the water!”

Keep on “demonstrating the same diligence.” Just like Jesus in John 13 is still thinking of others as He dons the towel and takes the basin to wash the disciples’ feet.

The reward for this kind of action is “the full assurance of hope until the end”—which of course is Christlikeness and maturity.

“Soon we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.”

**verse 12:** “in order that you may not become sluggish (lazy), but imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises.”

Here is the purpose for the desire that they demonstrate diligence. In this verse we have a negative and a positive. “In order that you [negatively] may not become sluggish (lazy), but [positively] imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises.” There is no place on the path and pursuit of godliness of laziness.

“I have yet to meet an undisciplined godly individual....”

Vance Havner said: “The alternative to discipline is disaster.”

“Sluggish (lazy)” is the same word rendered “slow” in Hebrews 5:11 in the phrase “slow to learn.”

The Greek of this verse can mean “we do not want you to be lazy,” rather than to “become lazy”—“but [become] imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises.” Their real goal should be the inheritance that is set before them. The great cavalcade of stars along this line are recorded in Hebrews 11. The 3 key ingredients are: (1) faith; (2) patience; and (3) perseverance.

Faith, patience, and perseverance are antidotes to sluggishness. Unbelief and lack of endurance are the cause of it.

Brennan Manning in *Abba’s Child* said: “Passion is not high emotion but a steely determination, fired by love, to stay centered in the awareness of Christ’s present risenness, a drivenness to remain rooted in the truth of who I am, and a readiness to pay the price of fidelity.” (137)

One writer said: “Man doesn’t plan to fail—he just fails to plan.”

How about joining me in singing that fabulous hymn, “**When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder**”:  
*“When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise And the glory of His resurrection share; When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care; Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, And*

*the roll is called up yonder I'll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."*

#### **October 7 – God Made the Promise (Heb. 6:13-14)**

**Hebrews 6:13:** *"For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,"*

**Hebrews 6:14:** *"saying, 'Blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply you.'"*

**verse 13:** "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,"

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says of these next verses, we are finding a model to imitate Abraham.

Romans 4:20-21: "yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (NASB).

The covenant here rests upon the unconditional promises of God. Salvation does too, so you don't undo it. It is an eternal, unconditional transaction. In Genesis 15, where God institutes the covenant with Abram, He puts Abram out of the way. As a smoking lamp or furnace, He alone passes between the pieces of the sacrifice, obligating Himself unconditionally to carry out the promises made to him.

God the Father's greater Son went up Calvary's hill alone and there by His death procured the sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God by His death on Calvary's cross.

**verse 14:** "saying, 'Blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply you.'"

Yes, this covenant rests upon the unconditional promises of God. The marvelous thing is that our eternal salvation does too! This is something you just cannot undo. It is an eternal, unconditional transaction.

My heart is welling up with song. Let's sing a couple of verses of **"Because He Lives"**: *"God sent His Son they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon; An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. And then one day I'll cross the river; I'll fight life's final war with pain. And then, as death gives way to vict'ry, I'll see the lights of glory—and I'll know He reigns. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives."*

#### **October 8 – Waiting For the Promise (Heb. 6:15-16)**

**Hebrews 6:15:** *"And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."*

**Hebrews 6:16:** *"For men are swearing by one greater [than themselves] and with them an oath [given] as confirmation is an end of every dispute."*

**verse 15:** "And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."

Those words "patiently waited" involved 25 years in an impossible set of circumstances; and yet waiting in faith, believing that God was going to be faithful to fulfill the unconditional promise that He had made to Abraham.

Through the process of 25 years, Abraham had numerous experiences which only helped to mature him as he waited for the fulfillment of the promise: (1) He took a side trip into Egypt; (2) He had to be separated from his nephew Lot; and (3) He had the experience of trying to help God out through using Sarah's handmaid Hagar. Ishmael was born some 15 years before God was ready to open Sarah's womb and provide the son that He had promised.

The writer is just telling us that if someone like Abraham could wait for 25 years for God's promises to be fulfilled, certainly these Hebrew Christians could spend the rest of their lives in the patient endurance of hope, persevering through the problems and persecutions of life, keeping their eyes fixed upon the inheritance which should be theirs at the end of the race.

Joshua 23:14: "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" (NIV).

Real faith is when our “if’s” become “when’s.”

“And thus, having patiently waited.”

**verse 16:** “For men are swearing by one greater [than themselves] and with them an oath [given] as confirmation is an end of every dispute.”

Jeremiah 32:27: “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for me?” (NIV).

Jeremiah 33:3: “Call to me and I will answer you and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know” (NIV).

Let’s sing together with great enthusiasm verses 1 and 2 of **“Faith Is the Victory”**: *“Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers, rise, And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies. Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurled; Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world. His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God; We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod. By faith they, like a whirlwind’s breath, Swept on o’er ev’ry field; The faith by which they conquered death Is still our shining shield.”*

### October 9 – Unchangeable Purpose (Heb. 6:17-18)

**Hebrews 6:17:** *“In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath,”*

**Hebrews 6:18:** *“in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may be having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.”*

**verse 17:** “In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath,”

“In the same way God, desiring even more” takes us back to Hebrews 6:11: “And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.”

“In the same way God [as He did with Abraham] desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath.”

Men take an oath and that ends the dispute that they are going to fulfill their part of the bargain or contract. God does not really have to but “In the same way God, desiring even more” to show those who are inheritors of the promise. “The unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath.” This is the key phrase in understanding Hebrews 6. Whereas it is “impossible” back in verse 4, we see now here in verse 17, He is the Lord God and He changes not.

When we get down to verse 18 we see again the word “impossible.”

“It is impossible for God to lie.”

The “unchangeableness of His purpose” is a key phrase to understanding the book of Hebrews. Our love may wax and wane; our hearts can be hot and cold.

We may experience the ups and downs, the fat and the lean, the good and the bad, the fruit and the failure, but God’s purpose still remains unchangeable.

In verse 18 we now have the purpose.

**verse 18:** “in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may be having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.”

We can actually say the “two unchangeable things” are His promise and His oath. “In order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie.”

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (NIV).

The writer is doing everything possible to help the readers understand they can have strong encouragement, and that they ought to continue to press on.

“We may be having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.”



Titus 2:11-13: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (NASB).

Let's continue the hymn we started yesterday and sing verses 3 and 4 of **"Faith Is the Victory"**: *"On ev'ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array; Let tents of ease be left behind, And onward to the fray; Salvation's helmet on each head, With truth all girt about, The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread, And echo with our shout. To him that overcomes the foe, White raiment shall be giv'n; Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in heav'n. Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame, We'll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus' conquering name"*

### **October 10 – We Have An Anchor (Heb. 6:19-20)**

**Hebrews 6:19:** *"This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil,"*

**Hebrews 6:20:** *"where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."*

**verse 19:** "This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil,"

This is the third and fourth time we have had the occurrence of the word "hope" in this passage.

The first time we saw it was back in verse 11. The second time was in verse 18.

Now the third and fourth times are here in verse 19: (3) "This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul" and (4) "a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil."

While there is hope we cope and hang on to the rope.

Our writer returns to the nautical metaphor we saw in the early warning in Hebrews 2:1.

Sometimes we have to let go of the past in order to enjoy the present and be able to dream of the future.

Romans 8:38-39: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NASB).

**verse 20:** "where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

The dominant focus of these remaining verses is that Jesus is a refuge, a hope, an anchor, a forerunner, and by Him we have access into His presence.

Jesus went into the heavenly Holy of holies, sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat. One sacrifice once for all! He's my priest!

The anchor within the veil is Jesus Christ our Savior.

Christ our forerunner has entered into the Holy of holies and He there intercedes on our behalf 24 hours a day.

Let's sing that familiar hymn, **"We Have an Anchor"**: *"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift, or firm remain? It will firmly hold in the straits of fear, When the breakers have told the reef is near; Tho' the tempest rage and the wild winds blow, Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow. We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."*

### **October 11 – Meet Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1-2)**

**Hebrews 7:1:** *"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the defeating of the kings and blessed him,"*

**Hebrews 7:2:** *"to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything, is first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace."*

The author has told us several times that he is going to be discussing the crucial subject of the priesthood of Christ.

The purpose of Hebrews 7 is to show that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron.

Thus far in our study we have seen that Christ is superior to the angels, to Moses (the law-giver), and now He is superior to Aaron (the Levitical priest).

We must realize that we cannot represent ourselves in the supreme court of the universe. We are guilty! We need someone to plead our case. Jesus Christ offers us the solution to that problem.

John McArthur reminds us of the fact that Melchizedek is a type of Christ:

In biblical study, a type refers to an Old Testament person, practice, or ceremony that has a counterpart, an antitype, in the New Testament, for instance, the bronze serpent in the wilderness represents the sacrificial lamb in the New Testament. (paraphrased)

Melchizedek is a type of Christ and his eternal priesthood as well.

Stepping into God's courtroom at the end of our lives, our only hope is a lawyer, a representative, a court-appointed attorney. We are guilty and there is no hope unless there is someone to intervene.

As we begin our study of Hebrews 7, let's hear again those 2 wonderful verses that concluded our last study: "This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil, where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (6:19-20 NASB).

Christ, our High Priest, is a forerunner: (1) He goes to prepare the way and (2) He expects others to follow.

Psalm 33:22: "May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you" (NIV).

**verse 1:** "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the defeating of the kings and blessed him,"

Now we come to this mysterious personality who flies across the pages of Scripture in brevity.

The references to Melchizedek are first of all: (1) the historical in Genesis 14:18-20; (2) the prophetic in Psalm 110:4; and (3) the doctrinal here in Hebrews 7.

There are 2 things said about Melchizedek here in verse 1: (1) He is the "king of Salem" and (2) He is a "priest of the Most High God."

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "Melchizedek's name and title suggest the messianic attributes of righteousness and peace." (797)

Two things about Melchizedek in verse 1: (1) He is a king, the "king of Salem" or Jerusalem and (2) He is introduced as a priest, "[the] priest of the Most High God."

All of this precedes the formation and the existence of the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood under the law.

In Genesis 14 he brought out bread and wine to strengthen and refresh him. What a picture of the communion table.

**verse 2:** "to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything, is first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace."

Jesus Christ has gone back to heaven and He has entered within the veil. He has completed the sacrifice and He functions there as our High Priest before God the Father. Jesus Christ is God's last Prophet. He is the final Word. He is God's last Priest. He made the perfect sacrifice. He is the coming King, the "king of righteousness."

Welling up in my heart this morning is that wonderful hymn, "**Rejoice, the Lord Is King.**" *Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2: "Rejoice, the Lord is King; Your Lord and King adore! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, And triumph evermore. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice! Jesus, the Saviour, reigns; the God of truth and love; When He had purged our stains, He took His seat above. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!"*

**October 12 – A Priest For All Time (Heb. 7:3-4)**

**Hebrews 7:3:** *“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he is remaining a priest for all time.”*

**Hebrews 7:4:** *“Now be giving careful consideration to how great this man must have been to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the best part of the booty.”*

**verse 3:** “Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he is remaining a priest for all time.”

As our writer concludes his description of Melchizedek, he has several things to say. First of all, he says 3 things. Melchizedek was: (1) “Without father”; (2) “without mother”; and (3) “without genealogy.”

He also continues to say 2 more things: (4) “having neither beginning of days” (5) “nor end of life.”

“Having been made like the Son of God, he is remaining a priest for all time.”

This is a key phrase in the apostle’s argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron.

**verse 4:** “Now be giving careful consideration to how great this man must have been to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the best part of the booty.”

In view of the record that has been given in the first 3 verses, the writer now gives a command: “be giving careful consideration to how great this man must have been.” He is a man “to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the best part of the booty.”

Kenneth Wuest says: “The writer now proceeds to show that Melchisedec was better than Abraham, in order that he might show that he was better than Levi, and thus better than Aaron. It follows therefore that if Melchisedec is superior to Aaron, his priesthood must be better than that of Aaron. Since that is the case, Messiah’s priesthood, being in the order of the priesthood of Melchisedec, must be better.”

Let’s sing in worship **“O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”**: “O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, and in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be. O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flick’ring torch to thee; My heart restores its borrowed ray, That in thy sunshine’s glow its day may brighter, fairer be. O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee; I trace the rainbow thro’ the rain, And feel the promise is not vain That morn shall tearless be. O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to hide from thee; I lay in dust life’s glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.”

## October 13 – Collecting the Tithes (Heb. 7:5-6)

**Hebrews 7:5:** *“And those indeed of the sons of Levi, who are receiving the priestly office are having commandment in the Law to be collecting a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.”*

**Hebrews 7:6:** *“But the one who is not having his descent from them has received a tenth from Abraham, and has blessed the one who is having the promises.”*

**verse 5:** “And those indeed of the sons of Levi, who are receiving the priestly office are having commandment in the Law to be collecting a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.”

Now the writer brings the Aaronic priesthood into the picture and points up the fact: (1) they too get tithes from their own brethren, who are stipulated in the Mosaic Law and (2) they are descendants of Abraham.

**verse 6:** “But the one who is not having his descent from them has received a tenth from Abraham, and has blessed the one who is having the promises.”

Verse 6 is a reference to Melchizedek and his priesthood. He is not having his descent from Aaron or from Abraham and yet he received a tenth, or a tithe, from Abraham.

The blessing of Melchizedek was upon Abraham, “the one who is having the promises.”

Genesis 12:1-3: “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless

you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (NIV).

Let’s sing in our worship time together **“Now I Belong to Jesus”**: *“Jesus my Lord will love me forever, From Him no pow’r of evil can sever, He gave His life to ransom my soul, Now I belong to Him; Once I was lost in sin’s degradation, Jesus came down to bring me salvation, Lifted me up from sorrow and shame, Now I belong to Him; Joy floods my soul for Jesus has saved me, Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me, His precious blood He gave to redeem, Now I belong to Him; Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me, Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.”*

#### **October 14 – The Greater and the Lesser (Heb. 7:7-8)**

**Hebrews 7:7**: *“But without any dispute the lesser is being blessed by the greater.”*

**Hebrews 7:8**: *“And in this case mortal men are receiving tithes, but in that case one is receiving them, of whom it is being witnessed that he is living.”*

**verse 7**: *“But without any dispute the lesser is being blessed by the greater.”*

There is no need for argument. There is not no reason. For “the lesser [Abraham] is being blessed by the greater [Melchizedek].”

Franz Delitzsch said: “The relation of blessing and being blessed is that of giving and receiving. The giver of the blessing is always raised above the receiver, over whom he spreads or on whom he lays the benedictory hand, and pronounces the blessing over him in the power of God.” (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 344)

**verse 8**: *“And in this case mortal men are receiving tithes, but in that case one is receiving them, of whom it is being witnessed that he is living.”*

The key words in verse 8 are “mortal” and “living” [immortal].

Whereas in verse 7 the contrast was between “the lesser” and “the greater,” now the contrast in verse 8 is between “mortal” and immortal—between dying as opposed to living.

The dying or “mortal men” are identified with the “lesser” in verse 7. The “living” or immortal are identified with the “greater” in verse 7.

What a glorious Easter message! He is risen, yes, He is risen indeed! He is living! He lives! Christ Jesus lives! There is no end to His priestly reign.

Let’s celebrate the resurrection by singing verse 1 of that triumphant hymn **“He Lives”**: *“I serve a risen Savior, He’s in the world to-day; I know that He is living, what ever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him, He’s always near. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart, You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.”*

#### **October 15 – Melchizedek is Superior (Heb. 7:9-10)**

**Hebrews 7:9**: *“And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who is receiving tithes, has paid tithes,”*

**Hebrews 7:10**: *“for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”*

**verse 9**: *“And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who is receiving tithes, has paid tithes,”*

The point is now reached. If the Father is obligated to recognize the superiority, the sons ought to also.

Long before the Levitical law had been established, where a special family was set apart in Aaron and Levi, we have evidence of the priesthood of Melchizedek of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the great High Priest.

What the writer is saying is that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Levi, who is a descendent of Abraham, was also paying tithes through that identification.

**verse 10**: *“for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”*

The reason is given in verse 10: “for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”



Paul uses a very similar argument in Romans 5:1-12 when he points out the fact that when Adam sinned, we sinned also.

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (NASB).

I think it would be good for us to pause for a few moments and reflect on what we have in Jesus Christ our High Priest. Let's listen and meditate once more on Hebrews 4:14-16: "Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession. For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (NASB).

How long has it been since you have come to His throne of grace where you could receive mercy and find grace to help in your time of need?

Spending time in the presence of your Great High Priest will manifest itself externally in a radiance that will be seen upon your face.

2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (NASB).

Let's turn for our worship and praise to verses 2 and 3 of that wonderful hymn that celebrates the resurrection, "**He Lives**": *"In all the world around me I see His loving care, And tho' my heart grows weary, I never will despair; I know that he is leading thro' all the stormy blast, The day of His appearing will come at last. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King! The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find, None other is so loving, so good and kind. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart, You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

### **October 16 – If One is Working, Why Another? (Heb. 7:11)**

**Hebrews 7:11: "Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the people have received the Law, what further need was there for another priest to be arising according to the order of Melchizedek, and not being designated according to the order of Aaron?"**

Let's begin our study with some words from François Fénelon in his book *The Seeking Heart*:

When outward distractions and a wayward imagination hinder you from having a peaceful inner life, then you must, by an act of will, bring yourself before God. Not that you can force yourself into God's presence, but even the desire to come into God's presence is, in itself, a powerful aid to your spirit. Cultivate a pure and upright intention toward God.

From time to time you must stir up your deepest desires to be fully devoted to God. There need to be seasons when you think on Him alone, with a wholly undistracted love. Consecrate your senses to Him completely at these times. Don't get caught up with things that you know distract you both outwardly and inwardly from God. (121)

1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (NASB).

It is the height of arrogance to think I can win my day in court without a court-appointed attorney.

Psalms 110:4: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek'" (NIV).

There is no court of appeals. Your case comes before the Supreme Court, period.

As the passage unfolds: (1) in God's sight the Aaronic priesthood has come to an end and (2) the Aaronic priesthood is imperfect.

In verse 11 we are talking about a change of priesthood. The old priesthood ended when the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom.

There would be no need for a new priesthood if the old priesthood was getting the job done.

**verse 11:** “Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the people have received the Law, what further need was there for another priest to be arising according to the order of Melchizedek, and not being designated according to the order of Aaron?”

This is what they are contemplating going back to. “Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood” A holy God demands perfection. The writer is saying that if the goal of access and acceptance into the presence of God was accomplished by the Levitical priesthood in the observance of the Law, which raises a real question.

The question: “what further need was there for another priest...?”

If the other one was working, why change it?

Let’s sing in worship this morning verses 1 and 4 of **“He the Pearly Gates Will Open”**: *“Love Divine, so great and wondrous, Deep and mighty, pure, sublime! Coming from the heart of Jesus, Just the same thro’ tests of time. In life’s eventide, at twilight, At His door I’ll knock and wait; By the precious love of Jesus I shall enter heaven’s gate. He the pearly gates will open, So that I may enter in; For He purchased my redemption And forgave me all my sin.”*

### October 17 – The Law and the Priesthood are Connected (Heb. 7:12-13)

**Hebrews 7:12:** “For when the priesthood is being changed, of necessity there is taking place a change of law also.”

**Hebrews 7:13:** “For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.”

**verse 12:** “For when the priesthood is being changed, of necessity there is taking place a change of law also.”

A changed priesthood requires a changed law. The law and the priesthood go together. “For when the priesthood is being changed”—referring to putting one thing in place of another—it is necessary that there be “a change of law also.”

Galatians 3:13: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’” (NASB).

**verse 13:** “For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.”

Psalms 110 speaks of a priest from David’s line, the King of righteousness. This person is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the “one concerning whom these things are spoken.” He “belongs to another tribe,” not the tribe of Levi but the tribe of Judah, “from which no one has officiated at the altar.

There has never been a priest who has functioned from a non-Levitical tribe.

R. Kent Hughes said: “...the new had nothing to do with the old Aaronic priesthood” (*Hebrews: Volume I*, 197)

Galatians 3:21: “Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law” (NASB).

Galatians 5:1: “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (NASB).

Romans 3:19-20: “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” (NASB).

Let’s worship by singing Fanny Crosby’s hymn, **“Rescue the Perishing”**: *“Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o’er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save. Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that are broken will vibrate once more. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”*

## October 18 – Jesus is of the Tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14-15)

**Hebrews 7:14:** *“For it is known to all that our Lord has descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.”*

**Hebrews 7:15:** *“And this is clearer still, if another priest is arising according to the likeness of Melchizedek,”*

**verse 14:** “For it is known to all that our Lord has descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.”

“For it is known to all.” In other words, it is just downright evident “that our Lord has descended from Judah.”

Numbers 24:17: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel” (NIV).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “[He is] from Judah, which is proof that a change was made.” (798)

**verse 15:** “And this is clearer still, if another priest is arising according to the likeness of Melchizedek,”

“Clearer still” only appears here in the New Testament. The word “another” is another of a different kind. The word “arising” is the word indicating certain fulfillment of the divine purpose.

As Jacob blesses his sons before his death, we read in Genesis 49:10: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his” (NIV).

David learns when he desires to build a house for the Lord, the Lord has other plans. 2 Samuel 7:27-29: “‘O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, “I will build a house for you.” So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever” (NIV).

Jesus Christ is a King Priest from the tribe of Judah.

Let’s sing today as our hymn of worship, verses 1 and 2 of **“Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”**: *“Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, Much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Thy folds prepare: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are. We are Thine; do Thou befriend us, Much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Thy folds prepare: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.”*

## October 19 – Jesus is an Eternal Priest (Heb. 7:16-17)

**Hebrews 7:16:** *“who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.”*

**Hebrews 7:17:** *“For it is witnessed of Him that: ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”*

**verse 16:** “who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.”

Speaking of this other priest who is “arising according to the likeness of Melchizedek,” the writer puts the truth in bold relief by speaking from a negative and a positive point of view. Negatively, “not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but [in contrast, positively] according to the power of an indestructible life.”

The Levitical priests must retire. Numbers 8:23-26: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the Tent of Meeting, but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the Tent of Meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites’” (NIV).

Basically the Law said you can serve for 25 years but that's it. The difference between that and the Lord Jesus Christ is that He is an eternal being. He is the living Christ. He has already conquered death and He is alive and our eternal Priest.

As a result, we never have to worry about retirement or replacement.

**verse 17:** "For it is witnessed of Him that: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

Here the witness that is called forth on this occasion is the psalmist and the record is in Psalm 110:4.

The rise of the new shows the inferiority of the old.

R. Kent Hughes said: "Whatever our problem, Jesus is the answer!" (199)

You don't need to look elsewhere! You just prolong your agony in the process of the hunt.

Psalm 110:4: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek'" (NIV).

Psalm 111:2: "Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them" (NIV).

Psalm 112:7-8: "He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes" (NIV).

For worship this morning let's continue to sing the hymn we started yesterday, "**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**": *"Thou hast promised to receive us, Poor and sinful though we be; Thou hast mercy to relieve us, Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Early let us turn to Thee; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Early let us turn to Thee. Early let us seek Thy favor; Early let us do Thy will; Blessed Lord and only Saviour, With Thy love our bosoms fill: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast loved us, love us still; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast loved us, love us still."*

## October 20 – The Law Can Justify No One (Heb. 7:18-19)

**Hebrews 7:18:** "For, on the one hand, there is a doing away of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness"

**Hebrews 7:19:** "for the Law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we are drawing near to God."

**verse 18:** "For, on the one hand, there is a doing away of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness"

The question that comes to our minds immediately, what has happened with the change of priesthood? The author addresses that here in verse 18: "there is a doing away of a former commandment." It is the putting away of law and sin.

The "former commandment" was put away because of its "weakness"—it could not impart strength to fulfill its demands, and "uselessness"—it could not bestow life.

Romans 8:3: "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh" (NASB).

Isaac Watts said: "Not all the blood of beasts, on Jewish altars slain; Could give the guilty conscience peace, Nor wash away one stain."

"Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."

**verse 19:** "for the Law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we are drawing near to God."

You must have perfection to be acceptable in God's presence, and we do not have it apart from a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. When we enter into a relationship with Him, we are declared perfectly righteous in God's sight. We are dressed not in our own righteousness, but in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne.

The Law could not do that. It could not make anything perfect.



“And on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope.” This “better hope” takes us back to Hebrews 6:19: “This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil” (NASB).

It is through this “better hope...we are drawing near to God.” We can translate the phrase “constantly drawing near to God.”

This is the key phrase to the whole passage. The result of the new priestly ministry is access and acceptance.

We are coming as sons in His family into His presence.

Now that we are sons by relationship, we can be “drawing near to God.”

It is time for a change. The best decision you will ever make in your life. “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my heart.”

Let’s sing one of those hymns that gets us all excited about our walk with the Lord Jesus. Let’s sing verses 1 and 2 of **“He Keeps Me Singing”**: *“There’s within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low; ‘Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, In all of life’s ebb and flow.’ ‘All my life was wrecked by sin and strife, Discord filled my heart with pain, Jesus swept across the broken strings, Stirred the slumbering cords again. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev’ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go.”*

### October 21 – A Priest Forever (Heb. 7:20-21)

**Hebrews 7:20:** *“And inasmuch as it was not without an oath for they indeed have become priests without an oath,”*

**Hebrews 7:21:** *“but He with an oath through the One who is saying to Him, ‘The Lord placed Himself under oath and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’;”*

**verse 20:** “And inasmuch as it was not without an oath for they indeed have become priests without an oath,”

The emphasis in the passage now changes to the significance of an oath.

In verse 20 we see that the Melchizedek priesthood is accompanied by an oath and the Levitical priesthood had none.

The oath equals God’s purpose declared absolutely.

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe said:

No priest in the order of Aaron was ever ordained and established on the basis of God’s personal oath. The Aaronic priests ministered “after the law of a carnal [physical] commandment” (7:16).

Their moral or spiritual fitness was not examined. The important thing was that a priest belonged to the right tribe and met the right physical and ceremonial requirements (Lev. 21:16-24).

I am reminded of Eli the priest and his sons. We read in 1 Samuel 2:22- 25: “Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. So he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the Lord’s people. If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?’ His sons, however, did not listen to their father’s rebuke, for it was the Lord’s will to put them to death” (NIV).

**verse 21:** “but He with an oath through the One who is saying to Him, ‘The Lord placed Himself under oath and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever”;”

We had the word “they,” referring to the Aaronic priests in verse 20. Then in verse 21 we have the word “He.”

“But [in contrast] He [that is, Jesus Christ] with an oath through the One who is saying to Him.” Aaron had his priesthood by law based on man’s requirements. But, in contrast, Christ’s priesthood was with an oath. The oath is: “through the One who is saying to Him, ‘The Lord placed Himself under oath and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever.””

Let's return to yesterday's hymn and worship by singing verse 3 of **"He Keeps Me Singing"**: *"Feasting on the riches of His grace, Resting 'neath His sheltering wing, Always looking on His smiling face, That is why I shout and sing. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go."*

#### **October 22 – The Guarantee of a Better Covenant (Heb. 7:22-23)**

**Hebrews 7:22:** *"so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."*

**Hebrews 7:23:** *"And they indeed have been made many priests in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing,"*

**verse 22:** *"so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."*

The author uses the human name of Jesus, referring to the Son of man who enters into the presence of God the Father. "So much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant." That word "guarantee" is only used here.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ comes with an oath and a guarantee. You could translate it "under good security." Whereas in verse 19 we have a reference to "a better hope," here in verse 22 we have reference to "a better covenant."

**verse 23:** *"And they indeed have been made many priests in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing,"*

The word "they" returns us to the Aaronic priests once more. "And they indeed have been made many priests in number." We have only one. The reason they have had many is because "they were prevented by death from continuing."

I am reminded of Eli's death in 1 Samuel 4:17-18: "The man who brought the news replied, 'Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.' When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years" (NIV).

Doctors, lawyers, CPAs, agents all die. When they do, you have to get a new one. This is also the case with the priests of Aaron. They were not allowed to continue because of the coming of death.

Numbers 20:28: "Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain" (NIV).

Joshua 24:33: "And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim" (NIV).

Let's worship and sing this morning verses 4 and 5 of **"He Keeps Me Singing"**: *"Though sometimes He leads through waters deep, Trials fall across the way, Though sometimes the path seems rough and steep, See His footprints all the way: Soon He's coming back to welcome me Far beyond the starry sky; I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown, I shall reign with Him on high. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go."*

#### **October 23 – Able to Save Forever (Heb. 7:24-25)**

**Hebrews 7:24:** *"but this [priest], because He is abiding forever, is holding His priesthood permanently."*

**Hebrews 7:25:** *"Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them."*

**verse 24:** *"but this [priest], because He is abiding forever, is holding His priesthood permanently."*

The word "but" forms the contrast between the priesthood of Aaron and the priesthood of Melchizedek.

There is no death in this priesthood: "because He is abiding forever."

Since "He is abiding forever, [He] is holding His priesthood permanently."

We have learned this priesthood is bound by an oath which is God's sovereign purpose. It has the guarantee of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is permanent and won't change. It's eternal. He will

never be put out of office. He's not up for reelection. There are no term limits. He won't resign or be impeached.

Brooke Foss Westcott said: "Christ's Priesthood is His alone, open to no rival claim, liable to no invasion of its functions." (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 190)

**verse 25:** "Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them."

The word "Hence" gives us the conclusion to the writer's argument: "Hence also He is able." The Law could not do it, but He has the power to do it!

Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (NASB).

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (NASB).

Since He lives forever, He is able to save forever.

"Hence also He is able to be saving forever." That is completely, fully, and wholly.

The word "saving" is reference to present tense salvation. "Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him."

The nature of this "drawing near to God" is to provide an eternal salvation which has past, present and future ramifications. In the past to be freed from the penalty of sin, in the present to be freed from the power of sin, and in the future to be freed from the presence of sin.

The phrase "drawing near to God" here in verse 25 takes us back to verse 19: "for the Law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we are drawing near to God." That is, drawing near to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The security that is ours is that He is always living, therefore, He is available to be called upon at any time. His priesthood is based on the resurrection. He is the eternal Son of God.

Luke 22:31-32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (NASB).

John 17:9: "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me for they are Thine" (NASB).

J. Vernon McGee said: "He died down here to save us, but He lives up there to keep us saved."

Let's meditate on 3 things as we contemplate the ramifications of verse 25. Let's focus on the words "He is able."

"He is able" to provide sustenance (roadside assistance). Hebrews 2:18: "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are being tempted" (NASB).

"He is able" to sympathize. Hebrews 4:15: "For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (NASB).

"He is able" to save. Hebrews 7:25: "Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him" (NASB).

Let's worship and pay tribute to our blessed Lord, our Great High Priest who made a sacrifice of Himself for our sins. Let's do that by singing verse 1 of "**He Lifted Me**": *"In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Thro' grace He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"*

## October 24 – A Priest Fully Qualified (Heb. 7:26)

**Hebrews 7:26:** *"For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, having been separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;"*

The writer now brings the passage to a conclusion in verses 26-28. Here he summarizes the arguments.

**verse 26:** “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, having been separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;”

There are 5 things said about our High Priest in verse 26. He is: (1) “holy”; (2) “innocent”; (3) “undefiled”; (4) “having been separated from sinners”; and (5) “exalted above the heavens.”

We have a spotless High Priest: (1) His personal purity is seen in the word “holy,” which points God-ward. (2) He is “innocent.” He did not practice evil; that’s man-ward. (3) He is “undefiled.” There is freedom from defilement which points self-ward. (4) He is “separated from sinners,” pointing to His present ministry in the Holy of Holies. (5) He is “exalted above the heavens,” the way He became “separated from sinners.”

What a glorious truth for us! That Jesus Christ not only is our Sin-bearer, He is our perfect High Priest.

Here you have His resume before us in these 5 wonderful words that are said about His priesthood. What peace and joy becomes ours! Now we are ready to lift up our hearts in praise and adoration and accept His blessed invitation in Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (NASB).

Let’s continue our worship by singing verse 2 of **“He Lifted Me”**: *“He called me long before I heard, Before my sinful heart was stirred, But when I took Him at His Word, Forgiv’n He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!”*

## **October 25 – A Priest Who Offered Himself (Heb. 7:27-28)**

**Hebrews 7:27:** *“He who is not having a need daily, like those high priests, to be offering up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this He did once for all, having offered up Himself.”*

**Hebrews 7:28:** *“For the Law is appointing men as high priests who are having weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever.”*

**verse 27:** “He who is not having a need daily, like those high priests, to be offering up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this He did once for all, having offered up Himself.”

Our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, “is not having a need daily” like those of the Aaronic priesthood, “to be offering up sacrifices”: (1) “for His own sins” and (2) “for the sins of the people.”

The writer then gives a reason: “for this He did once for all, having offered up Himself.”

It would be good for us to meditate upon Calvary, the sayings of Christ from the cross as He makes this sacrifice:

(1) He prays to the Father: “Father, forgive them, for they are not knowing what they are doing.”  
 (2) “Today you will be with Me in the paradise.” Here is the promise of eternal salvation to this thief who is hanging with Him there on one of the other crosses.

(3) “Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother.” He gives and makes provision for His family and friend.

(4) “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” Here God the Father turns His back on God the Son as He is made sin for us.

(5) “I thirst.”

(6) “It is finished.” *Tetelestai*, the work is done.

(7) “Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit.”

**verse 28:** “For the Law is appointing men as high priests who are having weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever.”

This takes us back to Hebrews 5:8-10: “although being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who are obeying Him



the source of eternal salvation; being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek” (NASB).

Yesterday we learned that the Lord Jesus Christ is a spotless High Priest, fully qualified to carry out His function as our representative before the Father. Today we have learned He is a sufficient sacrifice and He has sacrificed Himself upon the cross.

I find myself bursting with passion, adoration, and deep desire to be all that my High Priest would want me to be today—to live and glorify and honor Him. Let’s sing in celebration verses 3 and 4 of **“He Lifted Me”**: *“His brow was pierced with many a thorn, His hands by cruel nails were torn, When from my guilt and grief, forlorn, In love He lifted me. Now on a higher plane I dwell, And with my soul I know ‘tis well; Yet how or why, I cannot tell, He should have lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!”*

### October 26 – The Main Point (Heb. 8:1-2)

**Hebrews 8:1:** *“Now the main point in what is being said is this: We are having such a high priest, who took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens,”*

**Hebrews 8:2:** *“a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together, not man.”*

Warren Wiersbe said: “A superior priest could never minister on the basis of an inferior covenant.”

A new priesthood assumes the inadequacy of the old. The law and the priesthood go together.

**verse 1:** “Now the main point in what is being said is this: We are having such a high priest, who took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens,”

“Now the main point in what is being said is this.” We could translate this “to crown the argument.” The basic thesis of this chapter is the law and priesthood have been replaced.

Because of what Christ our High Priest has done, He has a better ministry based on a better covenant. He will get the job done! No one and nothing else will!

“We are having such a high priest, who took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.”

The amazing miracle of this passage is that we have a seated Priest “who took His seat.”

“We are having” because we hired Him. We have an agent, a court-appointed attorney.

Negotiations are complete, the contract is signed. We have availed ourselves of His services—that denotes our relationship. A decision has been made.

Warren Wiersbe said: “Today our Lord is *seated* because His work is completed. There were no chairs in the Old Testament tabernacle because the work of the priests was never finished.”

Jesus Christ is referred to as the seated Priest in 3 other passages in the book of Hebrews:

(1) Hebrews 1:3: “who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (NASB).

(2) Hebrews 10:12: “but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God” (NASB).

(3) “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (NASB).

The fact He is seated indicates the work has been done. The price has been paid.

We don’t have to be equal to the situation, we only have to know that Jesus is. Praise God He is!

In Acts 7 Stephen had just made his dramatic defense before the Sanhedrin. We pick up reading at verse 55: “But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God’” (Acts 7:55-56 NASB).

The response by the raging, angry mob from the Sanhedrin was to stone Stephen. Jesus, his faithful High Priest, rises to His feet to welcome His suffering servant home.

**verse 2:** “a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together, not man.”

In verse 1: “we are having such a high priest.” Now in verse 2: “we are having such...a minister.” He is characterized by servant leadership.

He is serving in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord put together and not man.

1 John 3:16: “We are having a moral obligation to be laying down our lives for the brethren” (version unknown).

Let’s celebrate this morning our personal experience with our great High Priest by singing verse 1 of **“He Touched Me”**: *“Shackled by a heavy burden, Neath a load of guilt and shame—Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole.”*

#### October 27 – Gifts and Sacrifices (Heb. 8:3-4)

**Hebrews 8:3:** *“For every high priest is being appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this one also be having that which He might offer.”*

**Hebrews 8:4:** *“If indeed therefore He were on earth, in that case He would not be a priest, since there are those who are offering the gifts according to the Law;”*

**verse 3:** “For every high priest is being appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this one also be having that which He might offer.”

Yes, we can respond immediately, “He does!” He gave the gift of Himself as a sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the world.

Hebrews 5:1: “For every high priest when he is taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order that he may continually be offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (NASB).

Griffith Thomas said: “The essential idea of priesthood is ministry. The priest is a servant, and the specific form of service is the offering of gifts and sacrifices.” (*Let Us Go On*, 101)

**verse 4:** “If indeed therefore He were on earth, in that case He would not be a priest, since there are those who are offering the gifts according to the Law;”

The scene of our Savior’s ministry is a heavenly Tabernacle. It is the heavenly one that is eternal. It is the earthly one that is temporal.

Christ was ineligible to be an Aaronic priest because He was not of the tribe of Levi and did not meet the specifications of the Mosaic Law.

Jesus never took up priestly prerogatives. He healed the sick, raised the dead, preached, multiplied bread and fish, walked on water, forgave sin, and called Himself God’s true Son.

Let’s celebrate once more by singing verse 2 of **“He Touched Me”**: *“Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole, I will never cease to praise Him—I’ll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole.”*

#### October 28 – Following the Pattern (Heb. 8:5)

**Hebrews 8:5:** *“who are serving a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses had been warned [by God] when he was about to be erecting the tabernacle; for ‘See,’ He is saying, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.’”*

**verse 5:** “who are serving a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses had been warned [by God] when he was about to be erecting the tabernacle; for ‘See,’ He is saying, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.’”

The Aaronic priesthood is such that you “are serving a copy and shadow of the heavenly” sanctuary where the Lord Jesus ministers as our faithful High Priest.

Moses, when he was given the blueprints for the tabernacle, was warned that he must make all things according to the pattern which he was shown on the mountain by the Lord Himself. You see the

phrase over and over again in Exodus 38-40. After they carried out some part of the construction you read the phrase "As the Lord commanded."

In Exodus 40 you have the occurrence of the phrase: "Moses did everything just as the Lord commanded him." This phrase occurs 8 times in those verses. Is it any wonder that by specific obedience to the Lord's command, the wonderful results would be the glory of the Lord.

Exodus 40:34: "Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (NIV).

Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Psalms 1:1-3: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (NIV).

My mind is turning toward Romans 12:1-2: "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity" (Phillips).

Let's sing a very majestic hymn this morning for our time of worship. Let's sing verse 1 of "**Be Still My Soul**": *"Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In ev'ry change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend Thro' thorny ways leads to a joyful end."*

## October 29 – A Better Covenant (Heb. 8:6-7)

**Hebrews 8:6:** *"But now He has attained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."*

**Hebrews 8:7:** *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second."*

**verse 6:** "But now He has attained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."

The word "But" forms the contrast to the previous and now brings us to the conclusion of his argument at this point.

What an incredible verse we have before us for our meditation.

Why for one minute would these Jewish believers even entertain the possibility of going back under the old order when in Jesus Christ they have: One who "has attained a more excellent ministry," and a "mediator" between them and God and "a better covenant"? In Jesus Christ, that "better covenant...has been enacted on better promises."

A. T. Robertson said "He has attained" is an old verb that means to hit the mark.

Jesus Christ did not fall short, He hit the mark on the target in the bull's eye. He accomplished perfectly what the Father required for the salvation of sinful man.

The writer now introduces the word "covenant" and will pursue that in the remainder of the chapter. We have the word "covenant" occur 7 times in the remaining verses.

"But now He has attained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant."

Jesus is referred to as "mediator" in 3 passages in the book of Hebrews. Here in Hebrews 8:6. We will see it again in Hebrews 9:15: "And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (NASB). Then we see in Hebrews 12:24: "and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel" (NASB).

As a “mediator,” the Lord Jesus is a prophet in that He reveals God’s truth. He is a Priest in that He provides God’s redemption. He is a King who bestows God’s power.

James Draper said: “The word mediator” means “to stand in the middle between two parties to bring them together.” (*Hebrews: The Life That Pleases God*, 217)

In 1 Corinthians 11:25, as the Lord gives instructions to the Corinthian saints about the Lord’s supper, He says: “In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me’” (NASB).

This is the new arrangement. This is the new agreement. This is a new constitution.

**verse 7:** “For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.”

After proving the superiority of Christ’s priesthood, the author will now prove the superiority of the covenant and sacrifice on which the new priesthood rests.

He picks up “covenant” from Hebrews 7:22 and gives it further consideration: “so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant” (NASB).

“For if that first covenant [that is, the law] has been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.”

This is very similar logic to what we saw in our previous study in Hebrews 7: “Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the people have received the Law, what further need was there for another priest to be arising according to the order of Melchizedek, and not being designated according to the order of Aaron?” (Heb. 7:11 NASB).

2 Corinthians 3:6: “who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (NASB).

Let’s continue our worship by singing verses 2 and 3 of **“Be Still My Soul”**: *“Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake To guide the future as He has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on When we shall be forever with the Lord, When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored. Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.”*

### October 30 – A New Covenant (Heb. 8:8-9)

**Hebrews 8:8:** “For finding fault with them, He is saying, ‘Behold, days are coming, the Lord is saying, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;”

**Hebrews 8:9:** “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 I did not care for them, the Lord is saying.”

**verse 8:** “For finding fault with them, He is saying, ‘Behold, days are coming, the Lord is saying, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;”

We are learn in these verses before us, the benefits of this new arrangement.

This statement of the new covenant from Jeremiah 31:31-34 and the purpose for quoting it proves the prophets anticipated the abandonment of the old covenant on which the old priesthood rested, and the introduction of a new covenant on which this new priesthood might be founded.

The first of 6 “I will’s” occurs here in verse 8: “I will effect a new covenant.”

**verse 9:** “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 I did not care for them, the Lord is saying.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The opening statement in verse 9 makes this clear: ‘not like the covenant that is of the law which I made with their fathers.’” It’s not “we will” of the old but “I will” of the new!

Isaiah 41:13: “For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (NIV).



Psalms 73:23-24: "Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory" (NIV).

Referring to Josiah, the prophetess says: "Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord" (2 Kings 22:19 NIV).

James 4:7-10: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you" (NASB).

Let's express our desire and worship as we ask the Lord to **"Open My Eyes That I May See"**: *"Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! Open my mind that I may read More of Thy love in word and deed. What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead? Only for light from Thee I plead. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my mind, illumine me, Spirit divine!"*

### October 31 – All Shall Know Me (Heb. 8:10-11)

**Hebrews 8:10:** *"For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, the Lord is saying: putting my laws into their minds, and upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

**Hebrews 8:11:** *"And they shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of these."*

**verse 10:** "For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, the Lord is saying: putting my laws into their minds, and upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

We come now to the second "I will." The first was back in verse 8: "I will effect a new covenant." Now the second one is here: "this is the [new] covenant which I will make with the house of Israel."

This reminds me of John 4:22 when Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well: "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews" (NASB).

Salvation is through the cross and the blood of the new covenant.

The third "I will" is in the latter part of verse 10: "upon their hearts I will write them." The fourth "I will" is in the next phrase: "And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

**verse 11:** *"And they shall not teach each one his fellow-citizen, and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of these."*

Paul says in Philippians 3:10: "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..." That is, knowing Him by personal experience.

Are you taking time to know Him? Is it your aim to know Him more intimately? To know His mind? To know His plan and purpose? To know what delights His heart? To fellowship with Him, living in communion, knowing the joy of His blessing because you've taken time to experience Him?

Let's sing verse 1 of John W. Peterson's great hymn, **"Springs of Living Water"**: *"I thirsted in the barren land of sin and shame, And nothing satisfying there I found; But to the blessed cross of Christ one day I came, Where springs of living water did abound. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply."*

### November 1 – I Will Be Merciful (Heb. 8:12-13)

**Hebrews 8:12:** *"For I will be merciful in the case of their wrongdoings, and I will remember their sins no more."*

**Hebrews 8:13: “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is near to destruction.”**

**verse 12:** “For I will be merciful in the case of their wrongdoings, and I will remember their sins no more.”

The fifth and sixth “I will’s” are here in verse 12: (5) “I will be merciful in the case of their wrongdoings” and (6) “I will remember their sins no more.”

Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more” (NIV).

**verse 13:** “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is near to destruction.”

John MacArthur said:

By His merely saying that a new covenant was coming, God rendered the old one **obsolete**, no longer valid. In fact it would disappear. The human writer of Hebrews could not have known how literally this truth would be fulfilled within a few years of his writing... When verse 13 was written, the **obsolete** covenant was **ready to disappear**. (*Hebrews*, 217)

In summary we can say Christ’s priesthood is better because it rests on a better covenant with better promises. Instead of being temporary or transitory—as the Levitical order was—it is eternal and permanent.

There is great comfort in Psalm 89:33-34: “Nevertheless my lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that is gone out of my lips” (NIV).

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (NIV).

Our agent has worked out an incredible contract and it has been notarized in the blood of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ratify it that covenant by the signature of faith!

Horatius Bonar said: “I heard the voice of Jesus say, ‘Behold, I freely give The living water; thirsty one, Stoop down and drink, and live.’ I came to Jesus, and I drank Of that life-giving stream; My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, And now I live in Him.”

Ray Stedman’s beautiful prayer can be moments of meditation for us:

*“Our Father, thank you for this look at the ministry of our great High Priest, a ministry that so many times we have simply ignored, never taken at face value, never taken seriously, but rather looked about in all the broken cisterns of earth to try to find something as a substitute. God forgive us, and help us to claim our heritage in Him, this new agreement for living. We pray in His name, Amen.”* (*What More Can God Say?*, 126-7)

Let’s continue our worship by singing verses 2 and 3 of **“Springs of Living Water”**: *“How sweet the living water from the hills of God, It makes me glad and happy all the way; Now glory, grace and blessing mark the path I’ve trod, I’m shouting ‘Hallelujah’ ev’ry day. O sinner, won’t you come today to Calvary, A fountain there is flowing deep and wide; The Saviour now invites you to the water free, Where thirsting spirits can be satisfied. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply.”*

## November 2 – The Meeting Place (Heb. 9:1-2)

**Hebrews 9:1: “Now even the first covenant was having regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.”**

**Hebrews 9:2: “For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.”**

As we launch into Hebrews 9 this morning for our devotional time, we find that Jesus Christ is a better priest, has a better covenant, a better sanctuary, and a better sacrifice.

Jesus is all that we need. He’s better than the angels, better than Moses, better than the law, better than the priesthood, and better than the sanctuary. Why go back to the temporary is the big question that we would issue to these saints who are contemplating going back under Judaism.

John MacArthur said:

God never asks anyone to give up anything without His offering something far better in return. The chief obstacle in the way of the Hebrews' faith was their failure to see that everything connected with the ceremonial law (covenant, sacrifices, priesthood, and ritual) was preparatory and transient. So the writer painstakingly and definitively pursues a clear revelation of the better character of the New. (*Hebrews*, 220)

**verse 1:** "Now even the first covenant was having regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary."

Speaking of this first covenant, the author points out there were 2 things true of it. It had: (1) "regulations of divine worship" and (2) "the earthly sanctuary."

This "earthly sanctuary" was incapable of bringing about access to God, which man needs above all else.

**verse 2:** "For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place."

In picture form, you find Jesus Christ in every article of furniture that is contained in the tabernacle. (1) The brazen altar—Jesus is our altar of sacrifice. (2) The laver contained water for the cleansing of those who ministered in the tabernacle—Jesus' blood assures the continual cleansing. (3) A seven-branched candlestick—it pictured the Holy Spirit who continuously lights our way. (4) The table—provides complete sustenance. (5) The golden altar of incense—acceptable prayer. (6) The ark, the symbol of the covenant—today Jesus Christ is our guarantee. (7) The mercy seat where blood was spilt to provide access—Jesus Christ has become our access, our cleansing, our enlightenment, our strength, our welcome, our guaranteed entrance into the very presence of God.

To miss Him is to miss everything! Jesus is all you'll ever need!

Join me in singing that wonderful chorus, "**Thou Art Worthy**": *"Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, oh Lord To receive glory, glory and honour, glory and honour and power. For Thou hast created, hast all things created. Thou hast created all things. And for Thy pleasure they are created, for Thou art worthy, oh Lord."*

### November 3 – The Rest of the Floor Plan (Heb. 9:3-5)

**Hebrews 9:3:** *"And behind the second veil, a tent which is being called the Holy of Holies,"*

**Hebrews 9:4:** *"having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant having been covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded and the tables of the covenant."*

**Hebrews 9:5:** *"And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; concerning which things we are not now speaking in detail."*

**verse 3:** "And behind the second veil, a tent which is being called the Holy of Holies,"

**verse 4:** "having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant having been covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded and the tables of the covenant."

We have somewhat of a problem here in that the "golden altar of incense" is located right in front of the veil which separates the holy place from the Holy of Holies and thus is located in the holy place.

Like the altar of sacrifice is at the entrance into the place, likewise the "altar of incense" is at the entrance into the Holy of Holies.

What a picture all of these articles are of what it cost Jesus Christ to purchase our redemption.

J. Vernon McGee quotes from the hymn: "None of the ransomed ever knew, How deep were the waters crossed; Nor how dark was the night, That the Lord passed through, Ere he found His sheep that was lost."

1 Kings 6:22: "So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary" (NIV).

Leon Morris explains, "The author has in mind the intimate connection of the incense altar with the Most Holy Place..." (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 81)

There certainly is no veil in the heavenly sanctuary, and as a result of Christ's death upon the cross we read: "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split" (Matt. 27:51 NASB).

**verse 5:** "And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; concerning which things we are not now speaking in detail."

In the final phrase in verse 5 the author says: "concerning which things [these articles in the tabernacle] we are not now speaking in detail." In other words, the important thing is not the type but the reality.

Having successfully laid out the floor plan for the tabernacle, the author now wants to get back on track focusing on the key message, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Join me in worship as we magnify the Lord Jesus Christ singing together **"Jesus Is Lord of All":**  
*"All my tomorrows, all my past—Jesus is Lord of all. I've quit my struggles, contentment at last! Jesus is Lord of all. All of my conflicts, all my thoughts—Jesus is Lord of all. His love wins the battles I could not have fought; Jesus is Lord of all. All of my longings, all my dreams—Jesus is Lord of all. All of my failures His power redeems; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all."*

#### **November 4 – The Program for Worship (Heb. 9:6-7)**

**Hebrews 9:6:** *"Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship."*

**Hebrews 9:7:** *"But into the second only the high priest is entering, once a year, not without [taking] blood, which he is offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance."*

**verse 6:** "Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship."

Here at this point we move from the sanctuary to the service.

The word "Now" introduced us to the sanctuary in verse 1 and to the service of the priests in the sanctuary in verse 6.

"Now when these things have been thus prepared the priests are CONTINUALLY ENTERING the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship." (emphasis mine)

The key phrase in verse 6 is "continually entering." The key is the constant repetition of the sacrifices under the old covenant. They never got the job done.

Kin Hubbard wrote, "A bee is never as busy as it seems; it just can't buzz any slower." (Liz Curtis Higgs, *Only Angels Can Wing It*, 113)

No matter what we do or what we say, we recognize that all our efforts are in vain. The provision for our eternal salvation resides in a person not in a performance. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**verse 7:** "But into the second only the high priest is entering, once a year, not without [taking] blood, which he is offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance."

4 things are noted here about the ministry on the Day of Atonement that contrast the old and the new: (1) the Holy of holies was entered only once a year; (2) the high priest alone could enter; (3) the entrance was through a power other than his own; and (4) the high priest needed the same protection of the blood as the offerers.

That blood was an offering for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

Let's conclude our worship this morning by singing verse 1 of **"He is Able to Deliver Thee":**  
*"'Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung; 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; 'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung, 'Our God is able to deliver thee.' He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho' by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: 'Our God is able to deliver thee.'"*

#### **November 5 – The New Order (Heb. 9:8-10)**

**Hebrews 9:8:** *"The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been revealed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing;"*



**Hebrews 9:9:** *“which is a symbol for the present time. According to which both gifts and sacrifices are being offered which are not able to make the one who is worshipping perfect in conscience,”*

**Hebrews 9:10:** *“since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of the new order.”*

**verse 8:** “The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been revealed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing;”

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to make the Scripture plain, to open our eyes spiritually “that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy truth.”

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me’” (NASB).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The Levitical arrangements were designed to convey the idea that the true way to God did not lie in them.” (801)

These remaining verses in this passage are pointing to the limitations of the service of the tabernacle and of the whole Levitical system.

In the old order of things it was limited, imperfect, and temporary. In the new order that comes with Christ, we have access, acceptance, cleansing, and it’s a permanent, eternal relationship.

**verse 9:** *“which is a symbol for the present time. According to which both gifts and sacrifices are being offered which are not able to make the one who is worshipping perfect in conscience,”*

The key phrase in this whole argument in verse 9 is “which is a symbol for the present time.”

It was not able to bring perfection to the conscience. The ordinances were external. The goal of the worship was access to God.

When I read these words “not able” I am reminded of Hebrews 7:25: “Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them” (NASB).

**verse 10:** *“since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of the new order.”*

*The Bible Knowledge commentary* says: “The readers must remember the transitory nature of these things under the ‘aging’ covenant and should not return to them.” (801)

The last phrase says it all: “until a time of the new order.” That “new order” is spelled out in a new covenant, new priesthood, new sacrifice, and new sanctuary.

Psalms 107:43: “Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord” (NIV).

For our worship this morning let’s continue by singing the rest of **“He is Able to Deliver Thee”**:  
*“’Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main; ‘Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain; ‘Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ ‘Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul; look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho’ by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’”*

## November 6 – He Entered Once For All (Heb. 9:11-12)

**Hebrews 9:11:** *“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;”*

**Hebrews 9:12:** *“and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”*

We come now to this wonderful passage in the book of Hebrews when we are going to be focusing on Christ’s sacrifice.

In our last study we talked about the sanctuary and now we are going to see that Christ’s sacrifice is superior.

The scene is heavenly. The substance is His own blood. The character is eternal.

Every priest brings a sacrifice. The writer is saying to these Hebrew Christians, why try to go back to Judaism? You have a better priesthood, a better covenant, a better sanctuary, and a better sacrifice.

**verse 11:** “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;”

The word “But” forms the great contrast to what we have just been studying in the previous verses about the Levitical tabernacle and priesthood.

We are now moving from shadows to substance, from pictures to reality.

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest.” We could translate it “But when Christ arrived on the scene as a high priest.” Christ came on the scene and all was changed. He is “a high priest of the good things to come.”

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.”

It is the Heavenly One: (1) “not made by hands” and (2) “not of this creation.”

“The good things to come” are salvation, sanctification, and glorification. All of it is a gift of God’s grace.

“He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle,” not the earthly one we have been talking about.

**verse 12:** “and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”

It is important for us to remember in our previous study we focused on the Day of Atonement and the acts of the high priest entering into the Holy of Holies for his annual presentation of the blood on the Mercy Seat, “for his own sins and the sins of the people.”

Christ is our great High Priest, entered the Holy of Holies once for all, sprinkled his own blood on the Mercy Seat and in the process has “obtained eternal redemption” for us. He has bought us off the slave market of sin. He has paid a full price. There’s no more debt to pay. There’s no fine print in the contract. There is no future indebtedness.

When Christ is speaking in His final words from the cross saying (4) “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and (6) “Tetelestai. It is finished!” The debt has been cancelled. The bill has been paid. Jesus Christ our High Priest was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might experience the righteousness of God.

For the Levitical priest it would be a priest with blood. But for our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, it is “through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained [that which results as the issue of personal labor and the result is] eternal redemption.”

He made arrangements. He paid the price. He signed the contract. The result “eternal redemption.”

Let’s worship the Lord together by singing verse 1 of “**Grace Greater Than Our Sin**”:  
*“Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder on Calvary’s mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”*

#### **November 7 – How Much More Will the Blood of Christ Prevail? (Heb. 9:13-14)**

**Hebrews 9:13:** “For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctifying for the cleansing of the flesh,”

**Hebrews 9:14:** “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to the serving of the living God?”

**verse 13:** “For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctifying for the cleansing of the flesh,”

Verse 13 shows us why Christ’s redemption was eternal. If the law and sacrifices worked on a temporary basis, in contrast, the blood of Jesus Christ will be permanent and eternal.

**verse 14:** “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to the serving of the living God?”

We move from the lesser in verse 13 to the greater in verse 14. “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to the serving of the living God?”

Verse 14 leads us to the logical conclusion: “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to the serving of the living God?”

All 3 members of the Trinity are involved: Christ, the Spirit, and God the Father.

“[He] offered himself without blemish to God.” In other words, He is the perfect sacrifice.

What a wonderful thing we have in verse 14 in that we have all 3 persons of the Trinity involved in the redemption of mankind through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross.

“Cleanse your conscience from dead works.”

The Levitical rituals could not do this. The good works by a spiritually dead person cannot do this.

The only cleansing the Father recognizes is the cleansing blood of His own Son.

“Not all the blood of beasts, On Jewish altars slain, Could give the guilty conscience peace, Or wash away the stain. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away, A sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they.”

The “conscience” is so cleansed that it discontinues its condemning work. We are serving out of passionate gratitude for what He has done for us.

The big question that comes this morning is, has the blood of Christ done its work in your life?

If the blood of Christ has not been applied to your life, you will not make it into heaven.

1 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (NASB).

Let’s worship our blessed Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Grace Greater Than Our Sin”**: *“Sin and despair like the sea-waves cold, Threaten the soul with infinite loss; Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold, Points to the Refuge, the Mighty Cross. Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”*

## November 8 – He is the Mediator of a New Covenant (Heb. 9:15)

**Hebrews 9:15:** *“And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*

**verse 15:** “And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

Really the whole argument here is about the reception of an eternal inheritance. A key word in this verse is the word “mediator.”

R. Kent Hughes said: “The job of a mediator is to arbitrate in order to bring two parties together—here, the holy God and sinful humanity. As the Father’s mediator, it is Christ’s job to bridge the vast gulf and obtain entrance for us into God’s holy presence.” (234)

In verse 23 we saw “having obtained eternal redemption.” In verse 14, “who through the eternal spirit.” Now once again in verse 15: “receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

We can say an eternal price has been paid by an eternal Person in the power of the eternal Spirit, to obtain the promise of an eternal inheritance.

We not only have the provision of salvation but we have access into His very presence and acceptance as His sons and daughters.

1 Peter 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (NASB).

The covenant is unconditional. Jesus Christ alone walks between the pieces, obligating Himself to fully bring about the fulfillment of the promises and the dispensing of the inheritance involved.

Let's continue our worship this morning by singing verse 3 of **"Grace Greater Than Our Sin"**:  
*"Dark is the stain that we cannot hide, What can avail to wash it away? Look, there is flowing a crimson tide; Whiter than snow you may be today. Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin."*

#### **November 9 – Validated the Covenant By His Death (Heb. 9:16-17)**

**Hebrews 9:16:** *"For where a covenant is, the death of the one who made the will must be established."*

**Hebrews 9:17:** *"For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it is living."*

**verse 16:** "For where a covenant is, the death of the one who made the will must be established."

When blood was shed the terms of the covenant were finally established. No one can change the terms of salvation. These believers were endeavoring to do just that.

You can't change the will after the death of the one who made it.

Acts 13:38-39: "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses" (NASB).

When the will is read you are going to find out what He left you. Just think of forgiveness, clear conscience, peace, purpose, eternal life. It was all activated by His death on the cross. You need to find out what He left you in His will.

1 Corinthians 2:9: "but just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him'" (NASB).

2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (NASB).

**verse 17:** "For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it is living."

The terms of the covenant were finally established. No one can change the terms of salvation. These believers were trying to do just that.

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing verse 4 of **"Grace Greater Than Our Sin"**:  
*"Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe; You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive? Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin."*

#### **November 10 – The First Covenant in Blood (Heb. 9:18-20)**

**Hebrews 9:18:** *"Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood."*

**Hebrews 9:19:** *"For after every commandment was spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,"*

**Hebrews 9:20:** *"saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.'"*

**verse 18:** "Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood."

The word "Therefore" points us to the fact that the blood covenant will now be illustrated.

The word "blood" occurs 6 times in verses 18-22.



**verse 19:** “For after every commandment was spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,”

**verse 20:** “saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.’”

The dominant thought here is that the wages of sin brings death. Blood must be shed to satisfy the holiness and justice of God.

Has the blood of Christ done its work in your life? Alexander Whyte said:

I feel that I would need a whole redeemer and all His redeeming blood to myself. But, then, after that fountain filled with blood has drowned in the depths of the sea all the accusations that my sinful life has raised against me, that same blood will still flow for you and will do the same service for you. And the blood of Christ is the same blood yesterday, today, and for ever. For after it has spoken better things than that of Abel to you and to me, it will still abide and will still do the same service to our children and to their children, till a multitude that no man can number have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. No wonder that Paul called that blood not the blood of Christ only, but the blood of God. (*Bible Characters*, 37) Colossians 1:20: “having made peace through the blood of His cross...” (NASB).

Revelation 7:14-15: “These are those who have come through the great tribulation, they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they now have their place before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple” (NASB).

2 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (NASB).

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Only Trust Him”**: *“Come, ev’ry soul by sin oppressed, There’s mercy with the Lord, And He will surely give you rest By trusting in His Word. For Jesus shed His precious blood Rich blessings to bestow; Plunge now into the crimson flood That washes white as snow. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”*

## **November 11 – Without Blood There is No Forgiveness (Heb. 9:21-22)**

**Hebrews 9:21:** “*And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the equipment used in the services with the blood.*”

**Hebrews 9:22:** “*And one may almost say that with blood all things are being cleansed according to the Law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*”

**verse 21:** “And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the equipment used in the services with the blood.”

**verse 22:** “And one may almost say that with blood all things are being cleansed according to the Law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

R. Kent Hughes said: “The Old Covenant sailed on a sea of blood, for two vast reasons. First, to emphasize the seriousness of sin. The Bible takes sin seriously, more than any other religion... The second reason is the costliness of forgiveness. Death is the payment. It will either be Christ’s life or ours!” (237)

1 John 1:7: “but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (NASB).

There are so many great hymns and songs that come flooding into my mind this morning! “There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel’s veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.”

“Yes, there is power, power, wonder working power in the blood of the Lamb.”

The blood of Christ will never lose its power!

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Only Trust Him”**: *“Yes, Jesus is the truth, the way, That leads you into rest; Believe in Him without delay, And you are fully blest. Come, then, and join this holy band, And on to glory go, To dwell in that celestial land, Where joys*

*immortal flow. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now."*

#### **November 12 – Appearing Before God For Us (Heb. 9:23-24)**

**Hebrews 9:23:** *"Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."*

**Hebrews 9:24:** *"For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, a [mere] copy of the true [sanctuary], but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"*

**verse 23:** "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

R. Kent Hughes raised the question:

What are the "heavenly things" that are purified? Nothing less than us! Just as the Tabernacle had to be anointed and purified so that God might show his presence there, even so the people of God must be cleansed and sanctified so as to become "a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 218-19)

Peter says the same thing: "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "Mere copies of the heavenly things might be adequately hallowed by animal sacrifices but the heavenly things themselves required more than that."

The earthly "copies of the things in the heavens" could be cleansed by animal sacrifices but for the things in heaven themselves, must be covered with a "better sacrifice than these." This is pointing to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the total and complete sacrifice to satisfy God's justice and to declare the sinner righteous.

**verse 24:** "For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, a [mere] copy of the true [sanctuary], but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "Christ was appointed as High Priest of the New Covenant to represent sinful people in heaven itself, that is, in the presence of God. So His sacrifice had to be greater than that which allowed entrance into a mere man-made sanctuary..." (803)

My heart is filled with joy when I think back to Hebrews 7:25: "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" (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe summarized it beautifully when he said: "Hebrews 9:24-28 mentions three 'appearings' of Jesus Christ: a past appearing (v. 26) for our salvation, a present appearing (v. 24) for our sanctification, and a future appearing for our glorification (v. 28)."

My heart is overflowing with His goodness and grace and the magnificent provision He has made for each of us. Celebrate with me this morning by singing verse 1 of **"Blessed Be the Name"**: *"All praise to Him who reigns above In majesty supreme, Who gave His Son for man to die, That he might man redeem! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!"*

#### **November 13 – The Sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:25-26)**

**Hebrews 9:25:** *"nor in order that He may be offering himself often, even as the high priest is entering the holy place year by year with blood not his own."*

**Hebrews 9:26:** *"Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested for putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

**verse 25:** "nor in order that He may be offering himself often, even as the high priest is entering the holy place year by year with blood not his own."

F. B. Meyer said: "There is a word here which occurs like a note on an organ beneath the tumult of majestic sound. Five times at least it rolls forth its thunder, pealing through all ages, echoing through all worlds, announcing the finality of an accomplished redemption to the whole universe of God—once."

This is the significance of Christ's victory cry from the cross: "Tetelestai. It is finished!" Everything is cared for. The price has been paid. It's totally adequate. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

**verse 26:** "Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested for putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Back in verse 24 He is appearing "in the presence of God for us." Here in verse 26 He is appearing for the purpose of "putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

This is the purpose of the incarnation. This is the reason He came to die upon the cross for our sins."

Your heart must be overflowing with joy and liberation, just to contemplate the thoughts of what Jesus Christ did to take care of the sin problem and give to each of us who are willing to receive it, that precious gift of eternal salvation.

Join me if you will in singing verses 2 and 3 of **"Blessed Be the Name"**: *"His name above all names shall stand, Exalted more and more, At God the Father's own right hand, Where angel hosts adore. Redeemer, Saviour, Friend of man Once ruined by the fall, Thou hast devised salvation's plan, For Thou hast died for all. Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!"*

#### November 14 – Men Die Once, Then Judgment (Heb. 9:27-28)

**Hebrews 9:27:** *"And inasmuch as it is certain for men to die once and after this judgment;"*

**Hebrews 9:28:** *"so Christ also, once was offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation, without reference to sin, to those who are eagerly awaiting Him."*

**verse 27:** "And inasmuch as it is certain for men to die once and after this judgment;"

According to an irrevocable and natural law, man only dies once and then judgment.

For Christ also, death and judgment fell on Him and not a continuous offering.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people... 'once' and... 'once for all' stresses the finality and the singleness of Christ's sacrificial work in contrast with the repeated Levite ministrations. In addition, the 'once'-sacrifice of Christ (vv. 26, 28) compares with the 'once'-death of each person (v. 27). (803)

The day of our death is on the Lord's appointment calendar.

Let's turn to Psalm 90 for just a moment and read verses 10 and 12: "The length of our day is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.... Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (NIV).

F.F. Bruce said: "Men and women die once, by divine appointment, and in their case death is followed by judgment. Christ died once, by divine appointment, and his death is followed by salvation for all his people." (231-2)

Thomas Lister placed these words on nearly every grandfather clock he made: "Lo! Here I stand by thee upright to give thee warning day and night; For every tick that I do give Cuts short the time thou hast to live."

Romans 14:12: "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (NASB).

There is a judgment for everyone. For the sake it is the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (NASB).

The judgment seat of Christ for the believer is an accountability for life that has been lived from new birth to splash down.

According to Hedinger, a person who dies without a priest, a covenant, the blood of Christ is “A person who has the devil in his heart, death in his bosom, hell beneath his feet and a curse on his posterity.”

Tony Evans said: “You don't want to be caught dead without Jesus Christ!” (*Our God Is Awesome*, 363-4)

Robert Louis Stevenson said: “Everyone sooner or later sits down to a banquet of consequences.”

Please remember, as you are confronted with verses like this, we are not in the land of the living going to the land of the dying, we are in the land of the dying going to the land of the living.

**verse 28:** “so Christ also, once was offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation, without reference to sin, to those who are eagerly awaiting Him.”

We literally are waiting for our Priest to come out of the Holy of holies with the benefits of salvation.

F.F. Bruce said: “But when he appears the second time to those who expect him, it will not be to deal with sin once more. Sin was dealt with decisively at his first appearing.” (233)

In verse 24 He is appearing in the presence of God for us. In verse 26: He is appearing to be “putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Now here in verse 28: He is “appear[ing] a second time.”

He is coming as King of kings and Lord of lords! How we rejoice in the blessed hope!

Please join me in singing verse 4 of “**Blessed Be the Name**”: “*His name shall be the Counselor, The mighty Prince of Peace, Of all earth's kingdoms Conqueror, Whose reign shall never cease. Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!*”

## November 15– Because By the Works of the Law No One Will Get Into Heaven (Heb. 10:1-2)

**Hebrews 10:1:** “*For the Law, having a shadow of the good things about to be, and not the very form of things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering year after year, make perfect those who are drawing near.*”

**Hebrews 10:2:** “*Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because those who are worshipping, having once been cleansed, would no longer be having a consciousness of sin?*”

**verse 1:** “For the Law, having a shadow of the good things about to be, and not the very form of things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering year after year, make perfect those who are drawing near.”

The word “For” that begins verse 1 takes us back to Hebrews 9:26: “Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested for putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (NASB).

The Mosaic sacrifices could not bring perfection for they had to be repeated which shows: (1) their insufficiency; (2) they set forth the need they did not satisfy; and (3) which they could not satisfy.

The Law was only a shadow of good things to come and not the reality itself. The system was temporary and therefore could accomplish nothing permanent.

“Shadow” tells us the real deal is on the way. The real deal comes in Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:17: “things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (NASB).

“Make perfect those who are drawing near.” God demands it and the law can’t get it done!

We ask ourselves the question: Why was it necessary for Christ to come and to give His life? The reason is seen here in verse 1: “For the Law, having a shadow of the good things about to be, and not the very form of things.” Salvation comes in Christ. The law is never able to “make perfect those who are drawing near.” Your only hope is in Jesus.

Perfection here equals access and acceptance.

All the law can do is to condemn and to judge a man. There is no hope for the human race unless God does something.

**verse 2:** “Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because those who are worshipping, having once been cleansed, would no longer be having a consciousness of sin?”



Please join me in singing one of my favorite Fanny Crosby hymns, **“He Hideth My Soul”**: *“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, A wonderful Savior to me; He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, Where rivers of pleasure I see. A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, He taketh my burden away; He holdeth me up, and I shall not be moved, He giveth me strength as my day. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand.”*

#### **November 16 – By the Law Comes the Knowledge of Sin (Heb. 10:3-4)**

**Hebrews 10:3:** *“But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.”*

**Hebrews 10:4:** *“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”*

**verse 3:** “But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.”

William Barclay said: “So far from purifying a man from his sin, all that they do is remind him that he is not purified and that his sins still stand between him and God.” (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 126)

Every year when the Day of Atonement rolled around, the nation Israel was reminded that the blood of the little lamb could only cover their sins and not do away with them.

The word “But” forms the contrast to the previous. In response to the question in verse 2 about the adequacy of the law, we have the statement: “But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.”

**verse 4:** “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”

Here is the reason why the law is ineffective. Here is the reason why something must be done for the desperate plight of mankind. Guilty of sin by breaking the law, there is absolutely no hope unless God steps in and does something.

In verse 1 we saw the statement that “the law is never able to make perfect those who are drawing near.”

Now we see in verse 4 “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”

No sacrifice anyone makes will ever attain salvation. Man cannot do it! God must take the initiative and act.

Since the law sacrifices were doomed to failure, some other means had to be found, and a more personal way of reconciliation was required. God is the only one who knows what it’s going to take. The universal sin of mankind and only God taking action can solve the problem.

No sacrifice anyone makes will ever attain salvation.

Let’s continue in worship by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“He Hideth My Soul”**: *“With numberless blessings each moment He crowns, And, filled with His fullness divine, I sing in my rapture, O glory to God For such a Redeemer as mine! When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise To meet Him in clouds of the sky, His perfect salvation, His wonderful love, I’ll shout with the millions on high. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand.”*

#### **November 17 – I’m Coming To Do Your Will (Heb. 10:5-7)**

**Hebrews 10:5:** *“Therefore when He is coming into the world, He is saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;’”*

**Hebrews 10:6:** *“in whole burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin you took no pleasure.”*

**Hebrews 10:7:** *“Then I said, ‘Behold I am coming, (In the roll of the book it has been written concerning me) to do your will, O God.’”*

**verse 5:** “Therefore when He is coming into the world, He is saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;’”

Therefore since “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins, Therefore [in light of what has just been said] when He [Jesus Christ] is coming into the world, He [Jesus] is saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but [in contrast] a body you prepared for me.’”

Negatively, not “sacrifice and offering...but [positively] a body you prepared for me.”

A sacrifice will not get it done! It must be a human body.

Oh how significant and important is that phrase “a body you prepared for me.” What a statement of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ!

Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (NIV). “Immanuel” is interpreted “God with us.”

Here in verse 5 we have the real picture of Christmas: (1) the reason for Christmas is sin; (2) the record of Christmas is the sacrifice; and (3) the result of Christmas is salvation.

The Christmas story in Luke 1 and 2 is the complete and detailed record of a body prepared for Jesus Christ.

It’s a statement of John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (NASB).

He comes to assume a body that has been prepared for Him in order that He might make a perfect sacrifice for sin.

This quotation is from Psalm 40. He has taken the words of that psalm and put them in the mouth of Jesus. What that psalm says is that God does not want animal sacrifices, He wants obedience to His will.

A body is prepared for Jesus and a place is being prepared for us, according to John 14.

**verse 6:** “in whole burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin you took no pleasure.”

He “took no pleasure” because they did not satisfy Him. He would simply say “Here we go again! Same song, second verse!”

When I make the Father my Master it immediately demands complete obedience. What is sin? It is His will or my will.

**verse 7:** “Then I said, ‘Behold I am coming, (In the roll of the book it has been written concerning me) to do your will, O God.’”

It’s just like Isaiah 6:8 when the Lord says, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for me?” And the response: “Here am I. Send me!”

Joseph Stowell in his book *Perilous Pursuits* said: “Here are the four essential commitments that Christ lived out in His earthly ministry and His death on the cross to purchase our redemption. He was willing to surrender to the Father’s will, willing to sacrifice His privileges and position, willing to serve, and willing to suffer.” (171)

The Savior’s total availability to fulfill the will of the Father has really touched my heart this morning. Let’s sing **“Face to Face”**: *“Face to face with Christ, my Savior, Face to face, what will it be? When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me. What rejoicing in His presence, When are banished grief and pain; When the crooked ways are straightened, And the dark things shall be plain. Face to face! O, blissful moment! Face to face, to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who loves me so. Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!”*

## November 18 – Taking Away the First to Establish the Second (Heb. 10:8-9)

**Hebrews 10:8:** “After saying above, ‘Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire, nor have pleasure [in them]’ (which are being offered according to the Law),”

**Hebrews 10:9:** “then He said, ‘Behold, I am coming to do your will.’ He is taking away the first in order that He might establish the second.”

**verse 8:** “After saying above, ‘Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire, nor have pleasure [in them]’ (which are being offered according to the Law),”

Here the writer records what has been said previously. The Lord “did not desire, nor take pleasure” in that which was “being offered according to the law.”

Simon Kistemaker said: “He is pleased with the unfaltering trust and obedience of his children.” (Hebrews, 277)

The fact the writer repeats what was said for emphasis. He wants to draw the readers' attention and focus concentration on what has just been said and the ramifications of such.

**verse 9:** "then He said, 'Behold, I am coming to do your will.' He is taking away the first in order that He might establish the second."

Yes, He did say "Behold, I am coming to do your will." What is that will? "He is taking away the first [that is the old covenant] in order that He might establish the second [the new covenant]." He is taking away one in order He might establish the other.

In the pursuit of the Father's will He finds He is "taking away the first [the law] in order that He might establish the second [grace]."

This is God's unmerited favor toward us whereby through the death of His Son upon Calvary, He can render acceptable and perfect in His presence.

One hymn writer put it this way: "Free from the law, O happy condition, Jesus hath bled, and there is remission; Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall, Grace hath redeemed us once for all." (P.P. Bliss, *Once For All*, 112)

Carole Mayhall quotes the Christian missionary Jim Elliott who said:

"God's will is always bigger than you bargain for." Often I find myself in a situation where I say to the Father, "Lord, what have you gotten us into this time?" and the Father invariably answers, "Nothing I can't handle!" (*When God Whispers*, 32)

Galatians 3 helps us greatly along this line: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13 NASB).

Galatians 3:23-24: "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith" (NASB).

Galatians 3:25: "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (NASB).

I'm excited to be able to join you in singing this morning "**God Will Take Care of You**": "*Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you. No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.*"

## November 19 – The Offering Once For All (Heb. 10:10-11)

**Hebrews 10:10:** "*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*"

**Hebrews 10:11:** "*And every priest has stood daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;*"

**verse 10:** "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Back in verse 5 we read a "body you prepared for me" and now we understand why.

That little body was formed in the womb of a virgin, miraculously. Born in Bethlehem, lived 33 years all for the purpose of becoming the offering for sin "once for all."

Hebrews 7:27: "He who is not having a need daily, like those high priests, to be offering up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this He did once for all, having offered up Himself" (NASB).

Hebrews 9:12: "and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (NASB).

The hymn writer is correct: "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow" (John T. Grape, *Jesus Paid It All*, 104)

"We have been sanctified," that is set apart for intended use.

**verse 11:** “And every priest has stood daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;”

We have had the mention of the Levitical order as making offerings “year after year” and now the “offering time after time.”

We have the same sacrifices back in verse 1 as we have here in verse 11. In verse 1 the phrase “never able” is used. In verse 4 the word “impossible” is used. Here in verse 11 we have “can never take away sins.”

Here the writer speaks in an exclamatory form, indeed, every priest representing the law has stood “day by day” performing his sacred service. Not only that but “offering time after time the same sacrifices.” We get the similar statement we had in verse 4: “which can never take away sins.”

Can you see sin is a serious problem? “And every priest has stood daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away [that which surrounds us] sin.”

It is interesting to note that “every priest...stood.” There was no chair for him to rest his weight upon. The fact it is “daily” is that it is not adequate.

Let’s sing verse 1 of that joyful hymn **“In My Heart There Rings a Melody”**: *“I have a song that Jesus gave me, it was sent from heav’n above; There never was a sweeter melody, ‘Tis a melody of love. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love.”*

#### **November 20 – He Sat Down At the Right Hand of God (Heb. 10:12-14)**

**Hebrews 10:12:** “*but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,*”

**Hebrews 10:13:** “*then waiting until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.*”

**Hebrews 10:14:** “*For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*”

**verse 12:** “but He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,”

The word “but” forms the contrast. “But He, when He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” He got it done! A finished transaction signed, sealed and delivered!

Jesus Christ is this priest. He made a sacrifice of Himself. “He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time.” He cried on the cross: “My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?” We understand now that Jesus was being made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might know the righteousness of God, and that His sacrifice was good for all time. It satisfies fully the justice of a holy God in full and complete payment of the penalty for the sin of man.

When He finished the work He “sat down at the right hand of God.”

Hebrews 12:2: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (NASB).

**verse 13:** “then waiting until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.”

Jesus Christ is simply waiting. He is waiting for: (1) the completion of His bride, the church and (2) the coming of His kingdom.

You could say He is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). He is waiting for sinners to come, saints to learn to turn it over to Him and to rest in Him, and the glories of His coming kingdom.

**verse 14:** “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”

Here again we “one” and “for all time.” His “one offering” for sin is totally adequate, not only to save but to sanctify the soul and to deliver it to its ultimate glorification.

The reason He is seated is given. The whole work is done and He need not rise to repeat it.

J. Vernon McGee said: “One offering does what many offerings could not do. If Christ cannot save you and keep you, then God has no other way to save you and keep you.”

Let’s continue our worship by singing verse 2 of **“In My Heart There Rings a Melody”**: *“I love the Christ who died on Calv’ry, For He washed my sins away; He put within my heart a melody, And I*



*know it's there to stay. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven's harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love."*

#### November 21 – Total, Complete Forgiveness (Heb. 10:15-18)

*Hebrews 10:15: "And the Holy Spirit also is bearing witness to us; for after having said,"*

*Hebrews 10:16: "'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, the Lord is saying: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will write them,"*

*Hebrews 10:17: "and their sins and their lawless deeds I will positively not remember any more."*

*Hebrews 10:18: "Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."*

**verse 15:** "And the Holy Spirit also is bearing witness to us; for after having said,"

Warren Wiersbe raised the question: "How do we know personally that we have this perfect standing before God? Because of the witness of the Holy Spirit through the Word..."

**verse 16:** "'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, the Lord is saying: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will write them,"

**verse 17:** "and their sins and their lawless deeds I will positively not remember any more."

There are 3 things here: (1) "I am putting my laws upon their hearts"; (2) "upon their mind I will write them"; and (3) "their sins and their lawless deeds I will positively not remember any more."

Psalm 103:12-14: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us, Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust" (NIV).

Isaiah 38:17: "...you have put all my sins behind your back" (NIV).

**verse 18:** "Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Psalm 86:5: "You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you" (NIV).

What freedom and joy is ours this morning! That we have total forgiveness in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! That ought to really get us passionate about singing the final verse of **"In My Heart There Rings a Melody"**: *"'Twill be my endless theme in glory, With the angels I will sing; 'Twill be a song with glorious harmony, When the courts of heaven ring. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven's harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love."*

#### November 22 – Praising Him For the New and Living Way (Heb. 10:19-20)

*Hebrews 10:19: "Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,"*

*Hebrews 10:20: "by a new and living way which opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh."*

Today is Thanksgiving Day and I am praising the Lord with a loud voice for the "new and living way"!

Remember now, our readers want to go back to Judaism where the priest handles everything. Leave the substance for the shadow, leave the reality for the rigors of the Law, throwing away the treasure and keeping the trash, leaving the person for the picture.

This is certainly true of these Hebrew believers as they are contemplating throwing away all the precious things they have in the Lord Jesus Christ and going back under Judaism.

The writer has finished the main argument of the book in showing us the superiority of Christ in every way.

**verse 19:** "Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,"

"Having therefore, brethren" helps us recognize the fact these are genuine believers. "Having therefore, brethren, confidence." This "confidence" is the absence of apprehension and the fear of

rejection, something the priest with the blood of bulls and goats could never do. He always entered the Holy of holies with the blood in fear and trepidation.

“Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its power, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more.” (William Cowper, *There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood*)

**verse 20:** “by a new and living way which opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.”

In verse 19 we read “Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place”: (1) “by the blood of Jesus” and now (2) “by a new and living way.”

This is “a new and living way.” It is fresh. It cannot grow old and every believer can tread this way. This way is likewise a “living way” because it brings life from God. It is a way not scattered with dead sacrifices but made accessible by the living Christ.

This is a path not there before. Not the well-trodden path of the Law.

John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (KJV).

In this “new and living way” we have access and acceptance into the presence of God. Do you realize the awesome miracle this is? This “new and living way which [has been] opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.”

It was Jesus in the upper room who said: “This is My body which is broken for you.”

Matthew 27:50-52: “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (NASB).

Ephesians 2:13: “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (NASB).

My heart is overflowing with gratitude. Please join me in Fanny Crosby’s glorious hymn “**My Saviour First of All.**” Join me in singing verses 1 and 2: “*When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see; I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me. Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face, And the luster of His kindly beaming eye; How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love and grace, That prepares for me a mansion in the sky. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand.*”

## November 23 – Keep On Drawing Near (Heb. 10:21-22)

**Hebrews 10:21:** “*And since [we are having] a great priest over the house of God,*”

**Hebrews 10:22:** “*let us keep on drawing near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our body having been washed with pure water.*”

**verse 21:** “And since [we are having] a great priest over the house of God,”

Once again notice he uses the word “brethren” in verse 19, “us” in verse 20, and “we” here in verse 21.

The author is identifying with his fellow believers: “And since—our obligation and responsibility—we are having] a great priest.” To have Him we have had to receive Him to go along with the new priesthood and the new covenant.

He has become our agent, our court-appointed attorney. Our access and acceptance is dependent upon this Great Priest. He is great because of His sovereign power.

It is having “confidence” in verse 19 and “a great priest” in verse 21.

We can reverse that: “since [we are having] a great priest” we can be having “confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”

**verse 22:** “let us keep on drawing near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our body having been washed with pure water.”

“Let us keep on drawing near” is in the present tense so let’s do it all the time.

James 4:7: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (NASB).

Once again he identifies with the readers by using the word "us."

"Let us keep on drawing near" not by the rituals of worship under the old order but, by the blood of Jesus and a new and living way.

It is a call from lukewarmness to be "drawing near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our body having been washed with pure water."

"Drawing near with a sincere heart" means to put aside your doubts, your depression, your desires, and to depart and "draw near" to the Lord.

"No more veil! God bids me enter, By the new and living way—Not in trembling hope I venture, Boldly I His call obey; There, with Him, my God, I meet, God upon the mercy seat! In the robes of spotless whiteness, With the Blood of priceless worth, He has gone into that brightness, Christ rejected from the earth—Christ accepted there on high, And in Him do I draw nigh." (*Brought Nigh*)

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (NASB).

The "full assurance of faith" is a ripe faith, a mature one. A faith that is vigorous to face the opposition and to remain faithful. This is certainly the answer to the recipients of this letter. Keep on trusting Him when it is tough.

Let's continue by singing verses 3 and 4 of Fanny Crosby's hymn "**My Saviour First of All**":  
*"Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they beckon me to come, And our parting at the river I recall; To the sweet vales of Eden they will sing my welcome home, But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. Thro' the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand."*

#### **November 24 – Keep On Holding Fast (Heb. 10:23-25)**

**Hebrews 10:23:** *"Let us constantly be holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;"*

**Hebrews 10:24:** *"and let us be considering how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,"*

**Hebrews 10:25:** *"not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging [one another]; and so much the more as you are seeing the day drawing near."*

**verse 23:** "Let us constantly be holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;"

Back in verse 22 the command was "let us keep on drawing near." Here in verse 23 he is saying: "Let us constantly be holding fast."

The word "holding fast" is in direct contrast to "wavering" in the latter part of the verse. To "be holding fast" is to remain erect and firm.

To "be holding fast" is 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Hebrews 6:19: "This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil" (NASB).

"Holding fast" is in contrast with Israel in the wilderness when they would not proceed in faith to go on into the land at Kadesh-Barnea but chose to waver at that point. As a result, they spent 40 years wandering in a purposeless wilderness.

The reason for this command is: "for He who promised is faithful."

The reason for "holding fast...without wavering" is given to us in the last phrase of verse 23: "for He who promised is faithful." What an awesome argument for perseverance. No matter what, God is holding up His end.

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Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

1 Corinthians 1:9: "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (NASB).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (NASB).

**verse 24:** "and let us be considering how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,"

We could translate this verse: "and let us constantly be giving careful attention to one another for the purpose of stimulating one another to love and good works."

The writer sees them as the readers in need of some encouragement from others who are being faithful to stand firm in the faith.

We have a 5-fold challenge here in verses 22-25. We can solve our problems not by going back, but by moving ahead.

(1) "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith" (verse 22).

(2) "Let us hold fast" [unswervingly] to the hope (verse 23).

We are considering together:

(3) "Let us be considering how we may [spur one another on] to love and good deeds" (verse 24).

There will be 2 in verse 25:

(4) "Let us" not give up meeting together.

(5) "Let us encourage one another." This is accountability and affirmation that comes from meeting together regularly with believers.

"Let us be considering how to stimulate" or prod.

This is a word that can be illustrated by the spurs of the cowboy or the cattle prod that gives the shock to control and direct cattle.

The word for "stimulating" is the word for sharp, to sharpen, to stimulate, to incite.

Careful attention plus stimulation equals "love and good deeds."

I love a poetic piece called "At the Winter Feeder" by John Leax, professor of English and poet-in-residence at Houghton College:

His feather flame doused dull  
by icy cold,  
the cardinal hunched  
into the rough, green feeder  
but ate no seed.

Through binoculars I saw  
festered and useless  
his beak, broken  
at the root.

Then two: one blazing, one gray,  
rode the swirling weather  
into my vision  
and lighted at his side.

Unhurried, as if possessing  
the patience of God,  
they cracked sunflowers  
and fed him  
beak to wounded beak  
choice meats.

Each morning and afternoon



the winter long,  
that odd triumvirate,  
that trinity of need,  
returned and ate  
their sacrament of broken seed. (Charles Swindoll, *The Finishing Touch*, 357)

**verse 25:** “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging [one another]; and so much the more as you are seeing the day drawing near.”

He has given us 3 positives in verses 22-24: (1) “Let us keep on drawing near”; (2) “Let us constantly be holding fast”; and (3) “Let us be considering.”

He now says in verse 25—negatively—“not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but—in contrast positively—encouraging [one another]; and so much the more as you are seeing the day drawing near.”

A.T. Robertson speaking of the Greek word translated “not forsaking” says it means: “Not leaving behind, not leaving in the lurch...” (412)

The challenge of verse 25 is to stay focused on 3 things: (1) their companionship; (2) their conversation; and (3) His coming again.

One writer said: “If absence makes the heart grow fonder, think how much some people must love their church.”

My heart is filled with great joy and is overflowing. Let’s sing verses 1 and 3 of that wonderful hymn **“O That Will Be Glory”**: *“When all my labors and trials are o’er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet, just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me.”*

## November 25 – The Choice is Ours (Heb. 10:26-27)

**Hebrews 10:26:** “For if we go on sinning intentionally after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer is remaining a sacrifice for sins,”

**Hebrews 10:27:** “but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which is about to be consuming the adversaries.”

**verse 26:** “For if we go on sinning intentionally after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer is remaining a sacrifice for sins,”

Here the author continues to identify with the readers when he gives the reason why we should “not [be] forsaking our own assembling together.”

The warning is being given. The red and yellow lights on the dashboard are flashing.

“For if we go on sinning intentionally.”

Paul lists the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. He concludes the list by saying: “...which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (NASB).

“For if we sin willfully,” the rejection of fellowship was a willful thing. He is dealing with one sin of rejection of assembly together. If they go back, sacrifices will not do it. It will not do now what it never did before, going back to the Old Testament concept.

When they forsake and go back there is no more sacrifice. There’s nothing to go back to! It didn’t then and it won’t now!

**verse 27:** “but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which is about to be consuming the adversaries.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “[This] is not...hell.” (805)

Paul addresses this issue in 1 Corinthians 3: “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Corinthians

3:13-15). He is concerned with a Christian who becomes so reprobate, so disobedient, so rebellious that God has to step in and say, "I cannot tolerate it anymore. I cannot stand it. There is nothing left for you but the judgment seat of Christ." (James Draper, *Hebrews*, 279-80)

Does this devotional find your heart frustrated because you are still trying to control things and you are producing acts of the flesh rather than out of close communion with your blessed Lord? Living under the control of the Holy Spirit you are seeing the fruitage of that relationship being produced in your life today. May God help us to recognize how serious the matter of sin is in our lives as believers and to learn what it is to confess our sins, knowing He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

My heart is humming the tune and singing one of my favorite hymns. So many times these words have come to my heart. Join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **"My Wonderful Lord"**: *"I have found a deep peace that I never had known And a joy this world could not afford Since I yielded control of my body and soul To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. I desire that my life shall be ordered by Thee, That my will be in perfect accord With Thine own sov'reign will, Thy desires to fulfill, My wonderful, wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and seraphs in heaven adored! I bow at Thy shrine, my Saviour divine, My wonderful, wonderful Lord."*

#### November 26 – The Greater Punishment (Heb. 10:28-29)

**Hebrews 10:28:** *"Anyone who set aside the Law of Moses is dying without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses."*

**Hebrews 10:29:** *"How much greater a punishment are you thinking one will deserve who trampled under foot the Son of God, and regarded as common (unclean) the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"*

**verse 28:** "Anyone who set aside the Law of Moses is dying without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses."

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "If defiance of an inferior covenant could bring such retribution, what about defiance of the New Covenant which, as he had made clear, is far superior? (805)

**verse 29:** "How much greater a punishment are you thinking one will deserve who trampled under foot the Son of God, and regarded as common (unclean) the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"

Here is the question and it has to do with a person who has done 3 things. He has (1) "trampled under foot the Son of God"; (2) "regarded as common (unclean) the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified"; and (3) "insulted the Spirit of grace."

We have a clue this is again a reference to true Christians because of the fact they were sanctified by the blood of the covenant.

William Barclay said: "All through this, one thing comes out. Sin is not disobedience to an impersonal law; it is the disturbance and the wrecking of a personal relationship. To sin is not to sin against the law; it is to defy and wound and violate the heart of the God whose name is Father." (*Letter to the Hebrews*, 141)

If these readers chose to go back under Judaism they are going to be guilty of these 3 things: (1) "trampled under foot the Son of God"; (2) "regarded as common (unclean) the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified"; and (3) "insulted the Spirit of grace."

In essence, when we choose daily to want to control things on our own and we don't have time to seek the Lord's face and to know in the power of the Spirit what He wants us to do for that given day, we are guilty of these things as well.

These are hard words and serious consequences. I feel like singing that majestic hymn that is filled with commitment, **"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"**: *"Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross, Lift high His royal banner, It must not suffer loss; From vict'ry unto vict'ry His army shall He lead, Till every foe is vanquished And Christ is Lord indeed. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The trumpet call obey; Forth to the mighty conflict In this His glorious day. Ye that are men, now serve Him Against unnumbered foes; Let courage rise with danger, And strength to strength oppose. Stand up, stand up for*

*Jesus, Stand in His strength alone; The arm of flesh will fail you Ye dare not trust your own; Put on the gospel armor, Each piece put on with prayer; Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The strife will not be long; This day the noise of battle, The next, the victor's song; To him that overcometh A crown of life shall be; He, with the King of Glory, Shall reign eternally."*

#### **November 27 – The Lord Will Judge His People (Heb. 10:30-31)**

**Hebrews 10:30:** *"For we are knowing Him who said, 'Vengeance belongs to me, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.'"*

**Hebrews 10:31:** *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

**verse 30:** "For we are knowing Him who said, 'Vengeance belongs to me, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.'"

Deuteronomy 32:35: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them" (NIV).

James Draper said: "If we have been saved, we have the awesome task to live as God wants us to live. It is our sacred charge. God will not tolerate bold, malicious rebellion in his people. He will judge us for the deeds we do." (*Hebrews*, 281)

2 Peter 3:14: "Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (NASB).

2 Peter 3:17: "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness" (NASB).

**verse 31:** "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

A. T. Robertson said: "We are not dealing with a dead or an absentee God, but one who is alive and alert" (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 414)

This takes us back to Hebrews 3:12: "Keep on taking care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God" (NASB).

1 Peter 4:17: "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (NASB).

James 5:8-9: "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door" (NASB).

Revelation 22:7: "'And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book'" (NASB).

In celebration of our soon-coming Lord to set everything right and to pronounce judgment, let's sing together **"Battle Hymn of the Republic"**: *"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps; They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps; I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps; His day is marching on. He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me; As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free. While God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on."*

#### **November 28 – A Call To Remembrance (Heb. 10:32-34)**

**Hebrews 10:32:** *"But constantly be remembering the former days, in which, after being enlightened, you endured a hard (great) struggle with sufferings,"*

**Hebrews 10:33:** *"partly, by being exposed as a public spectacle to insults and persecutions, and partly by becoming sharers with those who are being treated in the same way."*

**Hebrews 10:34:** *"For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted with joy the seizure of your property, knowing that you are having for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one."*

**verse 32:** “But constantly be remembering the former days, in which, after being enlightened, you endured a hard (great) struggle with sufferings,”

What is the solution to the certainty of God holding us accountable? It is revealed in the remaining verses of this chapter.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “An effective way to fortify people against future trials is to remind them of the courage they displayed in past ones. (806)

“But constantly be remembering the former days, in which, after being enlightened.” This takes us back to verse 26: “after having received the knowledge of the truth.”

He is saying, remember your former experience. You endured, you persevered a hard, great struggle with sufferings.

The lessons of the past are designed to challenge them in the present.

**verse 33:** “partly, by being exposed as a public spectacle to insults and persecutions, and partly by becoming sharers with those who are being treated in the same way.”

They were getting verbal and physical abuse.

John Phillips said the word “exposed”:

The word is...“theater.” They had been put on the stage, as it were, and exposed to ridicule and shame and contempt. In the arena of testimony, with catcalls and missiles being hurled at them by an infuriated audience, they had endured. They had shown the faith in Christ to sinners. (*Exploring Hebrews*, 151)

**verse 34:** “For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted with joy the seizure of your property, knowing that you are having for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.”

There are 3 things here in verse 34: (1) “you showed sympathy to the prisoners”—that is your ministry; (2) “you...accepted with joy the seizure of your property”—you were joyful in your misery; and (3) “knowing that you are having for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one”—how did you do that? You did it by keeping your focus on the eternal. This is just the temporal down here. Whereas you have your ministry in 1, the misery in 2, here’s your motivation in 3.

Colossians 3:2-3: “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (NASB).

John Newton said: “Though troubles assail and dangers affright, Though friends should all fail and foes all unite, Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide: The Scripture assures us, ‘The Lord will provide.’”

Richard Swenson said: “Remember the sampler on Grandma’s kitchen wall: ‘Use it up. Wear it out. Make it do. Do without.’” (*Margin*, 182)

Let’s worship the Lord this morning by singing “**A Shelter in the Time of Storm**”: “*The Lord’s our Rock, in Him we hide, A Shelter in the time of storm; Secure whatever ill betide; A Shelter in the time of storm. A Shade by day, Defense by night, A Shelter in the time of storm; No fears alarm, no foes affright, A Shelter in the time of storm. The raging storms may round us beat, A Shelter in the time of storm; We’ll never leave our safe retreat; A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm.*”

## November 29 – Don’t Throw Away Your Confidence (Heb. 10:35-36)

**Hebrews 10:35:** “*Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which is having a great reward.*”

**Hebrews 10:36:** “*For you are having need of perseverance, in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*”

**verse 35:** “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which is having a great reward.”

In view of your past faithfulness to endure such adversity, “Therefore, do not throw away [fling away as though it were of no value] your confidence, which is having a great reward.”

We had the word “confidence” back in verse 19: “Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”



Lenski says: "The readers did not shrink back during that severe trial of 'former days'; they will surely not do so now." (*The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James*, 367)

"Do not throw away your confidence, which is having a great reward." There will be crowns given at the judgment seat of Christ.

Revelation 3:11: "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

**verse 36:** "For you are having need of perseverance, in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

Now the apostle gives the reason for the exhortation in verse 35 why they should "not throw away [their]...confidence, which is having a great reward." The reason: "For you are having need of perseverance." The purpose: "in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "...these words express the central exhortation of the Book of Hebrews." (806)

There are 2 things we need to remember in this verse: (1) perseverance is the will of God and (2) perseverance leads to the promise.

"For you are having need of perseverance, in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive [or carry off] what was promised."

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (NASB).

Just so we won't throw away our confidence, and that we will persevere and press on, let's sing about what's at the finish line. Let's worship the Lord by singing **"Beyond the Sunset"**: *"Beyond the sunset, O blissful morning, When with our Saviour, heav'n is begun. Earth's toiling ended, O glorious dawning; Beyond the sunset, when day is done. Beyond the sunset no clouds will gather, No storms will threaten, no fears annoy; O day of gladness, O day unending, Beyond the sunset, eternal joy! Beyond the sunset a hand will guide me To God, the Father, whom I adore; His glorious presence, His words of welcome, Will be my portion on that fair shore. Beyond the sunset O glad reunion, With our dear loved ones who've gone before; In that fair homeland we'll know no parting, Beyond the sunset, forever more!"*

### November 30 – He is Coming Soon! (Heb. 10:37-39)

**Hebrews 10:37:** "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay."

**Hebrews 10:38:** "But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul is having no pleasure in him."

**Hebrews 10:39:** "But we are not of the shrinking back kind to destruction, but of those who are having faith to the preserving of the soul."

**verse 37:** "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay."

Jesus is coming! Positively: "He who is coming will come." Negatively: "will not delay."

Three times the Lord tells us in Revelation 22 that He is coming. (1) Revelation 22:7: "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book" (NASB). (2) Revelation 22:12: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (NASB). (3) Revelation 22:20: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (NASB).

**verse 38:** "But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul is having no pleasure in him."

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* interprets "shrinks back" as "...God's favor cannot rest on his life." (807)

In the passage we have seen 3 things: (1) sinning intentionally; (2) setting aside the law of Moses; and (3) shrinking back.

**verse 39:** "But we are not of the shrinking back kind to destruction, but of those who are having faith to the preserving of the soul."

Hebrews 6:9: "But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things concerning you, things that are belonging to salvation, though we are speaking in this way" (NASB).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "The "destruction" that the writer is describing is temporal and not eternal ruin...[this is] a call for determination and perseverance." (807)

In *The Book of Virtues* William Bennett tells the story of the Alamo:

By early 1836, Lieutenant Colonel William Barret Travis and the fort's garrison found themselves hemmed in by a Mexican army swelling to six thousand troops. On February 24, Travis dispatched couriers to nearby Texas towns, carrying frantic appeals for aid. Fewer than three dozen men picked their way through enemy lines to join the Alamo's defenders. The siege continued until March 6, when Santa Anna's forces overwhelmed the fort. The entire garrison was killed, some 180 men, including Colonel Travis, James Bowie, and Davy Crockett. [Travis sent the message] *I shall never surrender nor retreat.* (484-5)

The key words in the passage tell us how to persevere and complete the task: (1) "drawing near"; (2) "holding fast"; (3) "considering"; (4) "remembering"; and (5) "do not throw away."

We are commanded "not to throw away [our] confidence" but to keep on persevering.

Let's celebrate by singing verses 1 and 3 of "**Soon and Very Soon**": *"Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King!"*

## December 1 – Gaining Approval by Faith (Heb. 11:1-3)

**Hebrews 11:1:** *"Now faith is the realization of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

**Hebrews 11:2:** *"For by it the men of old gained approval."*

**Hebrews 11:3:** *"By faith we are understanding that the worlds have been prepared by the word of God, so that which we are seeing has not come into being out of things which are visible."*

The message to the Hebrew Christians to this point has been a message of "hang in there, don't take the easy way out, keep on trusting God and obeying His Word."

The author is telling the people to persevere and then he's telling them stories of those who did.

These stories we are considering in Hebrews 11 are the stories of folks who took the bit in their teeth and ran and won it. Nothing stopped them.

We are now entering the great hall of faith.

These are the people who have pressed on in the battle and came through to ultimate victory. If they did it, why not you?

Their faith was simply taking God at His word and directing their lives accordingly.

Actually the whole chapter is an expansion of Hebrews 6:12: "In order that you may not become sluggish (lazy), but imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises."

These verses show us what faith can do.

**verse 1:** "Now faith is the realization of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

According to verse 1, faith is 2 things: (1) "realization of things hoped for" and (2) "the conviction of things not seen."

What it believes is true and what it expects will come!

Hope looks forward with utter certainty. Hope is founded on conviction, solid conviction based on God's Word.

Faith makes the future present and the invisible seen.

Faith is exercised when we persevere and hang on to the promises.

**verse 2:** "For by it the men of old gained approval."

"For by it [faith] the men of old gained approval."

The supreme example of this faith is seen in Hebrews 12:2 in the Lord Jesus Christ: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

To my way of thinking, it is when God does not come through, because of some different program or greater purpose involved, that we have a true picture of faith. We continue to believe in God, His goodness and His grace to get us through whatever circumstances He has designed for our individual lives.

Faith and trust show up best in the storm.

**verse 3:** “By faith we are understanding that the worlds have been prepared by the word of God, so that which we are seeing has not come into being out of things which are visible.”

In creation, something came out of nothing. Creation imposes the responsibility of faith in the creation, even though the unseen is the author of it.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18: “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (NASB).

Let’s celebrate this morning by singing Beethoven’s great hymn “**Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**”: *“Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flow’rs before Thee, Hail Thee as the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day! All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heav’n reflect Thy rays, Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise; Field and forest, vale and mountain, Bloss’ming meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain, Call us to rejoice in Thee. Mortals join the mighty chorus Which the morning stars began; Father love is reigning o’er us, Brother love binds man to man. Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife; Joyful music lifts us sunward In the triumph song of life.”*

## December 2 – By Faith Abel (Heb. 11:4)

**Hebrews 11:4:** “*By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still is speaking.*”

We come now to a transitional point in our study of the book of Hebrews. We move from principles to people, belief to biographies of belief.

We trace the examples of faith in the remainder of this chapter.

**verse 4:** “By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still is speaking.”

Genesis 4:4-7: “The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it’” (NIV).

Abel recognized his obligation to God to come in obedience. This is faith worshipping.

It was through this offering “he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith.”

G. Campbell Morgan said: “When Abel came into the presence of God, bringing a sacrifice, this was the sign and acknowledgment of sin, and the need for some mediation in drawing nigh to God.” (*God’s Last Word to Man*, 51)

Cain on the other hand brought the fruit of his labor.

There are many who today are unwilling to come to God according to His prescribed approach through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. They are like little children determined to do things their own way.

I think it would be good for us to take a moment and focus on the last phrase in verse 4: “and through faith, though he is dead, he still is speaking.”

This is the legacy of faith. Approach to God is only acceptable with the blood of a sacrifice.

(1) You come to God by faith.

(2) You come God’s prescribed way.

(3) Coming the wrong way leads to rejection.

Pearl and I enjoy The Florida boys. Our CD in the car is often accompanied with our singing the words along with them. One of their songs on the album is **“Saved by Grace.”** Let’s sing this song even if we don’t know the tune: *“He was a good man, he loved his wife. All in all, he lived a quiet and decent life; He helped his neighbor, he raised his kids, But trusting Jesus is one thing he never did. Yes, we should follow, where Jesus trod, And make ourselves a living sacrifice to God; But still we stumble as mortal men, Praise Jesus’ name, He paid the debt for every sin. We stand condemned under the law. When we break one, we’re guilty of them all; Deserving death, we need no alibi, Pardoned by the law of Christ. [Chorus] It’s true, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, For not by our good works are sin and death erased; It’s by Jesus’ blood alone, we’re forgiven and atoned; Through our faith, we’re saved by grace; Through our faith, we’re saved by grace.”* (Tommy Clark: Careless Weed Music / BMI)

### **December 3 – By Faith Enoch (Heb. 11:5-6)**

**Hebrews 11:5:** *“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he had witness borne that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”*

**Hebrews 11:6:** *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who is coming to God must believe that He is, and that He proves Himself a rewarder of those who are seeking Him.”*

**verse 5:** “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he had witness borne that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

Whereas in Abel we see faith worshipping, in Enoch we see faith walking.

Genesis 5:21-24 talks about Enoch: “When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (NIV).

Obviously the birth of his child changed his priorities. In the miracle of birth he saw a gift from the Lord.

The primary focus in our lives as believers ought to be upon our fellowship with the Father.

Ray Stedman said:

I love the way the little Sunday School girl told it. She said, “Enoch was a man who learned to walk with God, and they used to take long walks together. One day they walked so far that God said, ‘Look, Enoch, it’s too far for you to go back; just come on home with Me.’ So he walked home with God.” (*What More Can God Say*, 191)

The blessed hope of the church is the next prophetic event. That’s when the church is caught up to be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (NASB).

Let us meditate a moment on the reason why God “took him up” in the last phrase of verse 5: “for he had witness borne that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

Why was he “pleasing to God”?

“He was pleasing” because he exercised faith. “He was pleasing to God” because he walked by faith.



Hebrews 10:38: "But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul is having no pleasure in him" (NASB).

Enoch's witness is seen in the final words "He was pleasing to God."

How did he do this? He walked with God and therefore he was: (1) teachable; (2) obedient; and (3) transparent.

**verse 6:** "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who is coming to God must believe that He is, and that He proves Himself a rewarder of those who are seeking Him."

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him." He then gives the reason: "for he who is [pleasing to God] must believe that He is, and that He proves Himself a rewarder of those who are seeking Him."

Zephaniah 3:17: "The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing" (NIV).

Please join me! I am already singing that enthusiastic chorus, **"I'll Fly Away"**: *"Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away. To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away. When the shadows of this life have flown, I'll fly away. Like a bird thrown, driven by the storm, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away. Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away. To a land where joy shall never end, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away."*

#### **December 4 – By Faith Noah (Heb. 11:7)**

**Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned [by God] about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."**

**verse 7:** "By faith Noah, being warned [by God] about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Whereas we see Abel as faith worshipping, Enoch as faith walking, we see Noah as faith working.

Noah magnifies the obedience of faith as he is warned by God. He is absolutely obedient. "In reverence [he] prepared an ark." The reason he did this, "for the salvation of his household [which was his mission field] by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Genesis 6:9: "This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God" (NIV).

Just like Enoch walked with God, so Noah walked with God.

The times of Noah are similar to the times of today.

Genesis 6:5: "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (NIV).

Back in the 1960s I loved to hear the Kingston Trio sing: "They're rioting in Africa, They're starving in Spain. There are hurricanes in Florida, And Texas needs rain. The whole world is seething, With unhappy souls. The French hate the Germans, The Germans hate the Poles. The Poles hate the Yugoslavs, South Africans hate the Dutch, And I don't like anybody very much."

Around the campfire we often sang Larry Norman's song **"I Wish We'd All Been Ready."** This seems like an appropriate song to sing this morning: *"Life was filled with guns and wars and ev'ry one got trampled on the floor. I wish we'd all been ready. Children died, the days grew cold, a piece of bread would buy a bag of gold I wish we'd all been ready. Man and wife asleep in bed, she hears a noise and turns her head, he's gone. I wish we'd all been ready. Two men coming up a hill, one disappears and one left standing still. I wish we'd all been ready. There's no time to change your mind, the Son is come and you've been left behind. There's no time to change your mind, How could you have been so blind? The Father spoke, the demons dined, the Son is come and you've been left behind. You've been left behind."*

## December 5 – By Faith Abraham (Heb. 11:8-10)

**Hebrews 11:8:** *“By faith Abraham, obeyed by going out to a place which he was about to be receiving for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”*

**Hebrews 11:9:** *“By faith he lived as a stranger in the land of promise, as if it were foreign, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;”*

**Hebrews 11:10:** *“for he was looking for the city having foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

**verse 8:** “By faith Abraham, obeyed by going out to a place which he was about to be receiving for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

Whereas “Abel offered to God a better sacrifice” and “Noah prepared an ark,” we read here “Abraham obeyed.”

In Abraham we see faith waiting.

It was 25 years between the promise and the birth of the promise seed.

God may be slow but He is never late. Delay is not denial!

**verse 9:** “By faith he lived as a stranger in the land of promise, as if it were foreign, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;”

It is good to remember the Abrahamic covenant involved a land and a seed. The writer here in verse 9 is making reference to both of these when he speaks of being “a stranger in the land of promise” and then “dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise.”

He is making reference to the seed as it passes on through his heirs, Isaac and Jacob.

**verse 10:** “for he was looking for the city having foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says this is “...a reference to the heavenly and eternal Jerusalem.” (808)

Revelation 21:2: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (NASB).

Basically what’s being said is that Abraham was looking for something beyond the here and now. This isn’t all there is!

Quite a number of years ago B.J. Thomas made famous a song called **“Home Where I Belong.”** I find myself singing that song this morning as a result of Abraham’s experience in these verses. Please join me: *“They say that heaven's pretty / And living here is too / But if they said that I / would have to choose between the two / I'd go home, going home, where I belong / And sometimes when I'm dreaming / It comes as no surprise / That if you look and see / The homesick feeling in my eyes / I'm going home, going home, where I belong / While I'm here I'll serve him gladly / And sing him all my songs / I'm here, but not for long / And when I'm feeling lonely / And when I'm feeling blue / It's such a joy to know that / I am only passing through / I'm headed home, going home, where I belong / And one day I'll be sleeping, / When death knocks on my door / And I'll awake and find that / I'm not homesick anymore / I'll be home, going home, where I belong.”*

## December 6 – By Faith Sarah (Heb. 11:11-12)

**Hebrews 11:11:** *“By faith even Sarah herself received power to establish a posterity, even beyond the normal time of life, since she considered Him faithful who promised;”*

**Hebrews 11:12:** *“therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, [as many descendants] as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”*

**verse 11:** “By faith even Sarah herself received power to establish a posterity, even beyond the normal time of life, since she considered Him faithful who promised;”

Sarah laughed at the thought she was going to become a mother at 91 years of age. You would have laughed too seeing a crib in an assisted living facility!

The reason she is here in the biographies of faith is “she considered Him faithful.”

Hebrews 10:23: "Let us constantly be holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (NASB).

**verse 12:** "therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, [as many descendants] as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore."

Genesis 22:17: "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies" (NIV).

When I'm thinking of Abraham and Sarah, Abraham being 100 years old and Sarah being 90, the Lord really worked and wrought a miracle to fulfill His promise in the Abrahamic covenant of the land and the seed.

Just celebrating that this morning makes me want to sing that wonderful hymn, "**He Giveth More Grace.**" Let's sing verses 1 and 2: "*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction He addeth His mercy; to multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day in half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father's full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow'r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!*"

#### **December 7 – By Faith Seen From a Distance (Heb. 11:13-14)**

**Hebrews 11:13:** "*All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*"

**Hebrews 11:14:** "*For those who are saying such things are making it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.*"

**verse 13:** "All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

"All these" refers to the biographies we have been considering together. They "died in faith." Negatively—"not having received the promises, but"—positively—"having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

**verse 14:** "For those who are saying such things are making it clear that they are seeking a country of their own."

I find myself morning after morning singing with the Gaither's those great hymns "Beulah Land" and "I'll Meet You in the Morning at the Eastern Gate."

Barbara Ryberg wrote a great piece where she pictures a soul in glory voicing these words of comfort to the grieving relatives here on earth:

When I am gone, remember I'm with Jesus;  
 then do not mourn because I've passed away.  
 Life holds so many griefs and disappointments,  
 and will you cry because I did not stay?  
 'Tis only for a spell we must be parted;  
 not many years on earth to us are given.  
 And when my Savior tells me you are coming,  
 I'll go with Him and welcome you to Heaven.  
 Grieve not because the eyes that looked upon you  
 shall never see your face on earth again;  
 Rejoice, because they look upon the Savior  
 who gave His life to ransom sinful men.  
 Weep not because I walk no longer with you;  
 remember, I am walking streets of gold.  
 Weep for yourselves that you awhile must tarry,

before the blessed Lord you may behold. (InfoSearch 3.51)

I find my heart already humming the tune to the hymn we're going to sing in worship this morning. Let's sing a few verses of **"When We All Get to Heaven"**: *"Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace; In the mansions bright and blessed He'll prepare for us a place. Let us then be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev'ry day; Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of life repay. Onward to the prize before us, Soon His beauty we'll behold; Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold. When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We'll sing and shout for victory."*

#### **December 8 – By Faith Looking For a City (Heb. 11:15-16)**

**Hebrews 11:15:** *"And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return."*

**Hebrews 11:16:** *"But as it is, they are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them."*

**verse 15:** "And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return."

If they were just looking for an earthly city it would have been easy for them to have turned around and gone back to that city.

**verse 16:** "But as it is, they are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them."

And these, instead of thinking about going back "are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one."

1 Peter 2:11: "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul" (NASB).

Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (NASB).

Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (NASB). "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them."

Jesus made reference to this preparation in the upper room when He was talking to the disciples the night before He died on the cross. John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (NASB).

R. Kent Hughes quotes the chorus we often sang in Sunday school: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through. My treasures are laid up, Somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me From heaven's open door. And I can't feel at home In this world anymore."

I want us to sing my mom's favorite song, **"Mansion Over the Hilltop."** She's already over there and waiting for the rest of the family to join her. Join me in singing verses 1 and 3: *"I'm satisfied with just a cottage below, A little silver and a little gold; But in that city where the ransomed will shine, I want a gold one that's silver lined. Don't think me poor or deserted or lonely, I'm not discouraged, I'm heaven bound; I'm just a pilgrim in search of a city, I want a mansion, a harp and a crown. I've got a mansion just over the hilltop, In the bright land where we'll never grow old; And some day yonder we will never more wander But walk the streets that are purest gold."*

#### **December 9 – By Faith Abraham: Part 2 (Heb. 11:17-19)**

**Hebrews 11:17:** *"By faith Abraham, while being put to the test, offered up Isaac; and he who received the promises was offering up his only begotten [son];"*

**Hebrews 11:18:** *"with reference to whom it was said, 'In Isaac your descendants shall be called.'"*

**Hebrews 11:19:** *"He considered that God is able to raise [men] even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type."*



**verse 17:** “By faith Abraham, while being put to the test, offered up Isaac; and he who received the promises was offering up his only begotten [son];”

Faith is tested in suffering.

Genesis 22:1: “Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied” (NIV).

The word “offered up” takes us back to the word “obeyed” in verse 8.

My sweet Pearl speaks of suffering in this poetic piece:

Ah, suffering my painful friend;  
you take the bubble of comfort  
I have so carefully built around myself  
and in a seemingly cruel fashion  
snatch it from my clinging hands  
and dash it to the ground;  
where it breaks into a hundred pieces  
and leaves me exposed and trembling.  
Again, I must make the choice:

Do I retreat or do I move on.

**verse 18:** “with reference to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your descendants shall be called.’”

Montefiore in Black’s commentary said: “Abraham’s decision was so difficult because God seemed to be contradicting himself by giving an order which appeared to nullify a previous promise.” (199)

**verse 19:** “He considered that God is able to raise [men] even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.”

Genesis 22:5: “He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you’” (NIV).

Psalms 119:140: “Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them” (NIV).

The musical group Selah, the Celtic Women, and Vocal Majority have made famous a wonderful song **“You Raise Me Up”**: *“When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary When troubles come and my heart burdened be Then, I am still and wait here in the silence Until you come and sit awhile with me. There is no life—no life without its hunger Each restless heart beats so imperfectly But when you come and I am filled with wonder Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity. You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains. You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas. I am strong, when I am on your shoulders. You raise me up...to more than I can be.”*

## December 10 – By Faith Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Heb. 11:20-22)

**Hebrews 11:20:** “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things about to be coming.”

**Hebrews 11:21:** “By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, [leaning] on the top of his staff.”

**Hebrews 11:22:** “By faith Joseph, when coming near to the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.”

**verse 20:** “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things about to be coming.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The patriarchs mentioned here likewise looked to the future in faith.” (808)

**verse 21:** “By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, [leaning] on the top of his staff.”

**verse 22:** “By faith Joseph, when coming near to the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.”

Genesis 50:25: “And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, ‘God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place’” (NIV).

Exodus 13:19: "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, 'God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place'" (NIV).

Joshua 24:32: "And Joseph's bones...were buried at Shechem..." (NIV).

Habakkuk 3:17-19: "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (NIV).

With all of these patriarchs talking about physical death and that heavenly city, let's sing "**Shall We Gather at the River?**": *"Shall we gather at the river, Where bright angel feet have trod; With its crystal tide forever Flowing by the throne of God? Ere we reach the shining river, Lay we ev'ry burden down; Grace our spirits will deliver, And provide a robe and crown. Soon we'll reach the shining river, Soon our pilgrimage will cease; Soon our happy hearts will quiver With the melody of peace. Yes, we'll gather at the river, The beautiful, the beautiful river, Gather with the saints at the river That flows by the throne of God."*

#### **December 11 – By Faith Moses (Heb. 11:23-26)**

**Hebrews 11:23:** *"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict."*

**Hebrews 11:24:** *"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"*

**Hebrews 11:25:** *"choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin;"*

**Hebrews 11:26:** *"considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward."*

**verse 23:** "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict."

In the life of Moses we see faith operating in the face of opposition and hostility.

In verse 23 we have "when he was born, [he] was hidden for three months by his parents" for 2 reasons: (1) "they saw he was a beautiful child" and (2) "they were not afraid of the king's edict."

Stephen in his sermon before the Sanhedrin says in Acts 7:20: "And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father's home" (NASB).

"Because they were not afraid of the king's edict." Amram and Jochebed "were not afraid of the king's edict."

**verse 24:** "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"

It is the rudder of forged convictions that give us the strength to just say no. It is the same convictions that cause us to stand against a culture.

Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's meat.

Joseph refused to go to bed with Potiphar's wife.

Nehemiah met his enemies, Sanballat and Geshem, with stern resistance in their request for a summit meeting.

Moses is a thermostat instead of a thermometer. He determines social climate rather than registering it.

He is a crocodile instead of a chameleon. A chameleon gets his color for the last environment he crawled across.

"[Moses] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Because of his personal values and his faith and trust in God and His purpose and plan, not only for his life but for the life of the nation, Moses has the courage to stand and make a very difficult decision. The courage to make that decision is forged out of his convictions.

What a man is will determine what a man will do.

The key word in verse 24 is “refused.”

“[He] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He was turning down a free ride—money, mansions, marriage.

**verse 25:** “choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin;”

His convictions in verse 24 determined his choices in verse 25.

Make no mistake about it, the choices we make are based on the convictions we hold.

This is a powerful message to these Hebrew Christians. “Refused” and “choosing rather” are words critical to their future happiness.

Psalm 16:11: “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (NIV).

**verse 26:** “considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward.”

His convictions in verse 24 caused him to refuse his choices in verse 25. Now the manifestation of his character in verse 26: “considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” The reason: “for he was looking forward to the reward.”

Colossians 3:2: “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (NASB).

Moses made a right decision because he had his eyes on the future. He also is manifesting the ability to experience delayed gratification.

My heart is overflowing with gratitude and joy. I want us to sing a song this morning that George Beverly Shea made famous. A song I listened to on my 78 rpm record until I wore it out. Let’s sing verses 1 and 2 of **“I’d Rather Have Jesus”**: *“I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand. I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause; I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause; I’d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I’d rather be true to His holy name. Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

## December 12 – By Faith Moses: Part 2 (Heb. 11:27-29)

**Hebrews 11:27:** “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible.”

**Hebrews 11:28:** “By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, in order that the One who is destroying the firstborn might not touch them.”

**Hebrews 11:29:** “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though [they were passing] through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.”

**verse 27:** “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible.”

We have seen Moses’ convictions in verse 24 in the word “refused.” We saw his choices in verse 25 in the words “choosing rather.” We saw his character in verse 26 in that he is “considering” and “looking forward.” Now we come to the consummation in verse 27, “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.”

Here Moses is characterized just like his parents back in verse 23: “they were not afraid of the king’s edict.” Faith casts out fear!

There is a question as to which one of the 2 times Moses left Egypt is being referred to here in this act of faith. Was it when he fled after slaying the Egyptian into the wilderness of Median? or 40 years later in the exodus in leading the people out?

I prefer to follow those who say this is a reference to the exodus that took place when Moses led the people out and never looked back. He certainly fled in fear of the king on the first occasion.

The final phrase in verse 27 “for he persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible.”

“Now faith is the realization of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

His priorities are in place. His horizontal and vertical relationships are right. He can continue to persevere and press on as he is "seeing Him who is invisible."

He is focused on the reality of the reward.

Paying the price in the present produces the prize of the future.

**verse 28:** "By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, in order that the One who is destroying the firstborn might not touch them."

In verse 27 "By faith he left" and in verse 28 "By faith he kept."

The nation of Egypt had survived the 9 plagues that had preceded the plague of the first-born. This tenth and final plague was to involve the death of the first-born children and cattle alike.

The children of Israel were sheltered by the blood of the sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22: "...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

It was John the Baptist who said when seeing the Christ: "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

**verse 29:** "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though [they were passing] through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned."

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though [they were passing] through dry land." We see God's intervention in the final phrase: "and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned."

Warren Wiersbe said: "It took but one night for God to take Israel out of Egypt, but it took forty years to take Egypt out of Israel." (*Run With the Winners*, 112)

Celebrate with me by singing verse 3 of "**I'd Rather Have Jesus**": *"He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He's sweeter than honey from out the comb; He's all that my hungering spirit needs. I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead. Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin's dread sway. I'd rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today."*

## December 13 – By Faith Joshua (Heb. 11:30-31)

**Hebrews 11:30:** *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days."*

**Hebrews 11:31:** *"By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace."*

**verse 30:** "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days."

7 days, 13 trips—a God thing! Faith and obedience frees God to respond.

The God who brought them out in verse 28, brought them through the Red Sea in verse 29, He is the God who for 40 years later is bringing them into the land (verse 30).

I think it is really important for us to notice there is no record of the 40 years it took for them to experience the judgment of God for refusing to go into the land on the first opportunity.

I think it is good for us to be reminded of the fact the scripture many times skips over those years of living out of fellowship with the Lord or living in unbelief.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down."

The first obstacle the children of Israel faced as they crossed the Jordan River on dry ground was the imposing fortification of the city of Jericho.

Jeremiah 32:17: "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you" (NIV).

**verse 31:** "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace."

Many are amazed that Rahab, a prostitute, could be included in these examples of faith.

What an encouragement to us sinners that she is included!

With Paul Harvey it is good for us to pause and reflect on "The rest of the story."

We have a little genealogy at the end of the book of Ruth that helps us trace the rest of the story.

Ruth 4:21-22: "Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David" (NIV).



Rahab became a part of the nation and she fell in love with Salmon. She and Salmon had Boaz as their son.

It was Boaz who married Ruth the Moabitess who came back with Naomi from the land of Moab. Boaz and Ruth had a child by the name of Obed. Obed grew up and had a child by the name of Jesse. Jesse had a son by the name of David. And many generations later, out of that very line, came the Lord Jesus Christ. We read of this in Matthew 1:5-6: “and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; and to Jesse was born David the king...” (NASB).

Rahab the prostitute and Ruth the foreigner from the land of Moab. Both had fantastic futures by the choices they made in the faith they exercised.

Please join me in singing a chorus that has touched many hearts. It is taken from Ecclesiastes 3:11: “He has made everything beautiful in its time” (NIV). Let’s sing together both verses of **“In His Time”**: *“In His time, in His time; He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me ev’ry day As You’re teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say In Your time. In Your time, in Your time; You make all things beautiful in Your time. Lord, my life to You I bring; May each song I have to sing Be to You a lovely thing In Your time.”*

#### **December 14 – By Faith is the Victory (Heb. 11:32-34)**

**Hebrews 11:32:** *“And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets;”*

**Hebrews 11:33:** *“who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed [acts of] righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,”*

**Hebrews 11:34:** *“quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.”*

**verse 32:** “And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets;”

“What more shall I say?” He obviously is quite overwhelmed with the subject matter and the illustrations at his disposal. He gives us the reason for the question: “For time will fail me if I am telling of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets.”

Here in verse 32 he speaks of 4 judges: Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. He speaks of a king, David, and a prophet, Samuel.

He then mentions unnamed prophets—“the prophets”—gathering all the other prophets together who could be great illustrations of faith as well: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

**verse 33:** “who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed [acts of] righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,”

**verse 34:** “quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.”

In verses 33 and 34 there are 9 achievements of faith: (1) “conquered kingdoms”; (2) “performed [acts of] righteousness”; (3) “obtained promises”; (4) “shut the mouths of lions”; (5) “quenched the power of fire”—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; (6) “escaped the edge of the sword”; (7) “from weakness were made strong”; (8) “became mighty in war”; and (9) “put foreign armies to flight.”

It would be a good exercise for you to take those 9 achievements of faith and use your biblical knowledge and put the names of people who are involved in the accomplishment of those tasks.

1 Corinthians 15:57: “but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

Let’s celebrate our victory in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning by singing verses 1 and 3 of **“Victory in Jesus”**: *“I heard an old, old story, How a Saviour came from glory, How he gave His life on Calvary To save a wretch like me; I heard about His groaning, Of His precious blood’s atoning, Then I repented of my sins and won the victory. I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory, And I heard about the streets of gold Beyond the crystal sea; About the angels singing, And the old redemption story, And some sweet day I’ll sing up there The song of victory. O victory in Jesus, My Saviour, forever,*

*He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."*

## December 15 – By Faith the Suffering (Heb. 11:35-37)

**Hebrews 11:35:** *"Women received [back] their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection."*

**Hebrews 11:36:** *"And others received mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment."*

**Hebrews 11:37:** *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated"*

In these verses we are going to see how faith triumphs over death.

There are 10 things we will see in verses 35-37.

**verse 35:** "Women received [back] their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection."

(1) The women who "received [back] their dead by resurrection" are the widow at Zerephath whose son died and Elijah was used by God to restore the child and the woman at Shunem whose little boy died and Elisha was the instrument God used in the resurrection.

(2) "And others were tortured, not accepting their release." The purpose behind that is in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

A.T. Robertson said: "A 'better resurrection' than the temporary ones alluded to in this verse by the women." (429) This would be like Jesus' resurrection—living forever!

**verse 36:** "And others received mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment."

(3) "Others received mockings"

(4) "Scourgings"

(5) "Chains and imprisonment"

Samuel Lover said: "Circumstances are the rulers of the weak; they are but the instruments of the wise." (InfoSearch 3.51)

**verse 37:** "They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated"

(6) "Stoned"

(7) "sawn in two"

(8) "tempted"

(9) "put to death with the sword"

(10) "went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated."

We are plagued in the 21st century church with a strain of theology that is focusing more on selfish entitlement than it is on sacrificial servanthood.

A.W. Tozer gave this warning: "Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. God will not be used."

Sir Winston Churchill said: "Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valor our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible." (Parson's Bible Illustrator)

1 Corinthians 16:13: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (NASB).

Let's conclude our time of worship by singing that old hymn, **"For Those Tears I Died"**: *"You said You'd come and share all my sorrows. You said You'd be there for all my tomorrows. I came so close to sending You away, But just like You promised You came there to stay, I just had to pray. Your goodness so great I can't understand. And dear Lord, I know that all this was planned. I know You're here now, and always will be, Your love loosed my chains and in You I'm free. But Jesus, why me? Jesus, I give you my heart and my soul. I know that without God I'd never be whole. Saviour, You opened all the right doors And I thank You, and praise You from earth's humble shores. Take me, I'm Yours. And Jesus said, 'Come to the water, stand by My side, I know you are thirsty, You won't be denied. I felt ev'ry teardrop when in darkness you cried And I strove to remind you That for those tears I died.'"*

## December 16 – God Has Something Better in Mind (Heb. 11:38-40)

**Hebrews 11:38:** “(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”

**Hebrews 11:39:** “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,”

**Hebrews 11:40:** “because God had provided something better for us, in order that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”

**verse 38:** “(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* points out it’s “...a lovely touch [is placed here], the writer commented that the world was not worthy of those whom it banished.” (809)

Brooke Westcott said: “They were men worth more than the whole world, and they lacked all.” (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 381)

R. Kent Hughes said: “...the world does not deserve to have them even if it were to accept them.” (*Hebrews*, 153)

**verse 39:** “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,”

**Hebrews 11:13:** “All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth” (NASB).

These promises of the hope of His return and the setting up of the kingdom is something still future when these folks died and went to be with the Lord.

David Roper said: “God does not look for powerful instruments but for instruments that can be wielded by his power.” (*Seeing Through*, 83)

**verse 40:** “because God had provided something better for us, in order that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”

That “something better” is access into God’s very presence. It is the new priesthood, the new covenant, the one final sacrifice for sin on the part of our Savior, the conscience being cleared from all guilt because of Christ’s sacrifice. It is the glory of the future that gave them endurance for the present.

God is not ashamed of them in verse 16. The world is not worthy of them in verse 38. First we have the reason why they “did not receive what was promised”: (1) “because God had provided something better for us.” He then follows this with the purpose: (2) “in order that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” The law couldn’t but Jesus could! And He did!

The glory of the future gave them the perseverance for the present.

Join with me in singing that great hymn, “**Hiding In Thee**”? “O safe to the Rock that is higher than I, My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly; So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be; Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee. In the calm of the noon-tide, in sorrow’s lone hour, In times when temptation casts o’er me its pow’r; In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee. How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe, I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe; How often, when trials like sea-billows roll, Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul. Hiding in Thee, Hiding in Thee, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee.”

## December 17 – Running With Perseverance With Our Eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2)

**Hebrews 12:1:** “Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us,”

**Hebrews 12:2:** “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The main message of the book of Hebrews is a challenge to accept the call of the Cross, to manifest the quality of perseverance when it comes to the matter of faith. We have just considered together the great hall of faith. The argument of the author is that others have stayed by the stuff, hung in there in difficult circumstances, continued to believe and trust God, and were faithful to finish.

A number of years ago Pearl and I were circling the Parkland Hospital trying to find a place to park so we could visit our daughter, Becky. As I came around the corner of the hospital I saw this vacant place and was just beginning to pull into it when I was greeted with an imposing sign which said, "Don't even think about parking here!" I think that is the summary of the author's purpose. He wants these believers to press on to finish the course, to keep the faith, to enjoy their inheritance as a result of their perseverance. Don't stop now! Go for it! The finish line is in sight!

The author in essence is saying: "You have seen it done through the examples of others in the past. Now, persevere and press on in your present circumstances knowing that there will be joy at the finish line."

**verse 1:** "Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us,"

The word "Therefore" could be translated "for that very reason then."

- (1) Do whatever God commands however difficult.
- (2) Endure whatever God appoints, however severe.
- (3) Obtain what He promises, however seemingly unattainable.

The great "cloud of witnesses" are those he has mentioned in Hebrews 11. These people made, so can we.

It's tough to find a legitimate excuse for not making it! We have an obligation and a responsibility.

It is the Father's will that we finish in 3 areas: (1) our work; (2) our family; and (3) our witness.

The writer is identifying with the readers and says "let us" do 2 things: (1) "let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us" and (2) "let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us."

What does the apostle mean by "lay aside every encumbrance"? This is an impediment, a weight, a hindrance. You cannot win if you are weighted down.

A big problem is hanging on to the hindrances that keep us from being effective.

These weights and hindrances can be anything that keeps us from winning. It could be sex, drinking, smoking, TV, credit cards, banana cream pie, golf, bridge, indebtedness, pride, gossip, bitterness, resentment, circumstances, music, or finances. The list just goes on forever.

Charles Wesley sang it well: "My chains fell off, I was set free, I rose, left all, And followed Thee."

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27: "I treat my body roughly and make it serve me, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

"Let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us."

It's the sin of unbelief. I'm saying it's not worth it, I can't make it, and it's too hard. You get tired. All you can think about is the pain. We do some dumb things when we are weary. We get distracted and lose focus.

The first command is "let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us." The second command is "let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us."

The future prospect should lead to a present perseverance. Stay focused on the finish line!

We can say it is persevering the agony.

**verse 2:** "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The word "fixing" could be translated "focused attention, with our eyes on Jesus."

He is "the originator and perfecter of faith." He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the A and the Z.

We've got the human models behind us and the divine model in front of us.

He is the great leader, the author, the pioneer, the one who blazes the trail. He is also the finisher, the perfect realizer of faith, and the consummator.



He is the one who fittingly cried upon the cross of Calvary: "Tetelestai, it is finished!" The cry of the Olympic runner when the tape has been broken in victory.

"Who for the joy lying before Him." It is the joy that is set before. It's the 3 F's: (1) faithfulness; (2) finishing; and (3) fruitfulness.

The rest of the verse has "endured the cross, despising the shame, and...sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The 3 verbs summarize the work of Christ. He: (1) "endured"; (2) "[is] despising"; and (3) "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Let's sing one of John W. Peterson's hymns "**It's Not An Easy Road.**" I would like for us to sing this as we conclude our worship this morning: *"It's not an easy road we are trav'ling to Heaven, For many are the thorns on the way; It's not an easy road but the Saviour is with us, His presence gives us joy ev'ry day. It's not an easy road there are trials and troubles, And many are the dangers we meet; But Jesus guards and keeps so that nothing can harm us, And smooths the rugged path for our feet. Though I am often foot-sore and weary from travel, Though I am often bowed down with care; A better day is coming when Home in the glory, We'll rest in perfect peace over there. No, no, it's not an easy road, No, no it's not an easy road; But Jesus walks beside me and brightens the journey, And lightens ev'ry heavy load."*

#### **December 18 – Jesus Suffered But Didn't Quit (Heb. 12:3-4)**

**Hebrews 12:3:** *"For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, in order that you do not grow weary, giving out in your souls."*

**Hebrews 12:4:** *"You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;"*

**verse 3:** "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, in order that you do not grow weary, giving out in your souls."

In verse 2 the writer says to be "fixing our eyes on Jesus [as the One who] endured the cross." Now in verse 3 the writer says "consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself."

He did it so can you!

The purpose behind the admonition for them to consider the curriculum Christ faced in His sacrifice is seen in the last phrase: "in order that you do not grow weary, giving out in your souls."

Galatians 6:9: "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

Jeremiah 12:5: "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" (NIV).

Jeremiah 31:25: "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint" (NIV).

The Christian life is truly a race. It is going somewhere and it is our responsibility to lead, follow, or get out of the way.

This "race" begins when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and we are born again into His family. It ends when we are called into His presence.

D.O. Flynn said: "The man who goes down swinging is very admirable; but the man to watch out for is the one who gets up swinging." (Parson's Bible Illustrator)

**verse 4:** "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;"

You are looking away to Him who gives strength to resist and to conquer. Do not relax before the tape, stay on your feet until you get to the end. Bear with it because others have, and Jesus did, and recognize the whole purpose for what the Lord is doing in your life.

Your Christian profession has not yet cost you your life!

We may grow tired by relaxing in our souls.

Don't let up! Lay it on and leave a legacy! It's time to crank it up a notch!

It is Jesus in John 9:4: "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work" (NASB).

Like the Energizer bunny we've got to keep going and going and going!

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning for the cross experience that He, humanly speaking, would love to have avoided but He pursued on to finish the work that was set before Him. I think it would be good for us to sing a couple of verses of **"Ten Thousand Angels"**: *"They bound the hands of Jesus in the garden when He prayed; They led Him thro' the streets in shame. They spat upon the Saviour, so pure and free from sin. They said, 'Crucify Him; He's to blame.' To the howling mob He yielded; He did not for mercy cry. The Cross of shame He took alone. And He cried, 'It's finished,' He gave himself to die; Salvation's wondrous plan was done. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called Ten thousand angels, But He died alone for you and me."*

## December 19 – The Discipline of the Lord (Heb. 12:5-6)

**Hebrews 12:5:** *"and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, stop regarding lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor giving out when you are being rebuked (corrected) by Him;'"*

**Hebrews 12:6:** *"for those whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining, and He is scourging every son whom He is receiving."*

The author is now moving from the track to the woodshed. We can say as we begin these verses on discipline: "Welcome to the woodshed!"

**verse 5:** *"and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, stop regarding lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor giving out when you are being rebuked (corrected) by Him;'"*

In verse 3 we saw the purpose "For consider [Christ]...in order that you do not grow weary, giving out in your souls." Here we see: "giving out when you are being rebuked (corrected)."

Proverbs 12:1: "Whoever loves discipline love knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid" (NIV).

Deuteronomy 8:5: "So you should realize that, as a man punishes his son, the Lord punishes you to help you" (TLB).

Discipline is designed to bring the spirit of brokenness.

Psalms 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (NIV).

Verses 5 and 6 are a quotation of Proverbs 3:11-12: "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (NIV).

"My son, stop regarding lightly the discipline of the Lord." In other words, the challenge here is from a positive point of view to be taking it seriously. The suffering and circumstances in our lives are designed as a curriculum to make us more Christlike.

We ought to take these things very seriously.

There are 2 things he says in verse 5: (1) "stop regarding lightly the discipline of the Lord" and (2) "nor giving out when you are being rebuked (corrected) by Him."

In other words, do not pass it off and do not get discouraged.

I believe it is necessary for us to recognize there is a difference between discipline and punishment. Punishment is by the judge, upon enemies, and out of anger. Discipline is parental, from a father, upon children, and an act of love.

Psalms 34:19: "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all" (NIV).

"My son, stop regarding lightly the discipline of the Lord." Take it seriously! What is God trying to teach me? to make of me? to do with me through this experience?

A father's hand will never cause his child a needless tear.

As I was reading *Our Daily Bread* several years ago, this statement jumped out at me: "I learned that when God disciplines us, our greatest gain isn't what we get but what we become."

He is our Father and our Teacher. In John 15 He prunes the vine that it might bring forth more. There is the pruning, the purging, and the purifying process. It's all involved in our sonship and in our development toward Christlikeness.

**verse 6:** “for those whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining, and He is scourging every son whom He is receiving.”

Here we have the reason for the 2 previous exhortations. (1) “whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining.” The suffering imposed is by the wisdom of a divine love.

Job 5:17: “Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty” (NIV).

Job 34:32: “Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again” (NIV).

Psalm 119:67-68: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees” (NIV).

Psalm 119:71: “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees” (NIV).

Revelation 3:19: “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent” (NASB).

“Those whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining, and He is scourging every son whom He is receiving.”

It is interesting to note there is discipline without exception. Every son can expect disciplining from the hand of the Lord. The Lord is not expecting a hypocritical shout from us: “Hallelujah, it hurts!” He’s looking for a brokenness and obedience that will eventually yield the fruit of the Spirit.

Oswald Chambers said: “The reason we are all being disciplined is so that we will know that God is real.” (*Christian Disciplines*, 7)

Join me in worship as we praise the Lord together by singing “*Under His Wings*”: “Under his wings I am safely abiding, tho the night deepens and tempests are wild; Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me, he has redeemed me and I am His child. Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow! How the heart yearningly turns to His rest! Often when earth has no balm for my healing, There I find comfort and there I am blest. Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment! There will I hide till life’s trials are o’er; Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me, Resting in Jesus I’m safe evermore. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever.”

## **December 20 – Discipline is a Required Course (Heb. 12:7-8)**

**Hebrews 12:7:** “*It is for discipline that you are persevering; God is dealing with you as with sons; for what son is there whom [his] father is not disciplining?*”

**Hebrews 12:8:** “*But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not real sons.*”

**verse 7:** “It is for discipline that you are persevering; God is dealing with you as with sons; for what son is there whom [his] father is not disciplining?”

Here again we have the word “persevering” that occurred back in verse 1: “let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us.”

Now “It is for discipline that you are persevering.”

The reason being “God is dealing with you as with sons.” In other words, hang in there! God is up to something! The reason: “for what son is there whom [his] father is not disciplining?” Good question. We shall cease from self-pity, resentment, and rebellious complaint. If we remember there is no discipline of God: (1) which does not take its source in love; and (2) which is not aimed at our good.

It is our responsibility to have a willing acceptance of our entire relationship with Him as our Heavenly Father.

We can be challenged to endure anything when we recognize that in back of that which has been permitted in our lives is a loving Father who is disciplining and pruning us for a greater and more effective fruitfulness.

It certainly does away with the question “Why me?” and all the bitterness and resentment that can arise when we fail to comprehend what the Lord is trying to do in our lives.

“God is dealing with you as with sons.” In this He is disciplining us in love for the purpose of accomplishing Christlikeness.

The pointed question at the conclusion of verse 7 summarizes everything the apostle has had to say about the disciplining process. “For what son is there whom [his] father is not disciplining?”

David Roper said: “Our best choice is to be still and submit to God’s discipline. We are never so safe as when we yield our wills.” (*Seeing Through*, 91)

**verse 8:** “But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not real sons.”

The word “But” forms the contrast. “If you are without discipline” there is a problem. Because “all have become partakers” of this. The consequences “you are [positively] illegitimate children and [negatively] not real sons.”

The writer is saying here that those who escape the rod need to ask themselves again, Am I truly born again? Have I been born by the Spirit of God into His family and become His son?

To become His son places us in the position of experiencing, without exception, the disciplining hand of our Heavenly Father, exercised in love for our good.

2 Corinthians 13:5: “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (NASB).

John MacArthur said: “When the Lord disciplines us, we should say, ‘Thank you, Lord. You have just proved again that You love me and that I am Your child.’” (395)

I love singing the wonderful hymn I have picked for this morning’s worship. Let’s sing **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”**: “*Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav’n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ His tender word I hear, And resting on His goodness I lose my doubt and fears; Tho’ by the path He leadeth But one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. Whenever I am tempted, Whenever clouds arise, When songs give place to sighing, When hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him, From care He sets me free; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He cares for me.*”

## December 21 – The Peaceful Fruit of Righteousness (Heb. 12:9-11)

**Hebrews 12:9:** “*Furthermore, we were having indeed fathers of our flesh (earthly fathers) to discipline us, and we were respecting them; shall we not much rather put ourselves in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?*”

**Hebrews 12:10:** “*For they were disciplining us for a short time as was seeming best to them, but He is [disciplining us] for our good, that we may share His holiness.*”

**Hebrews 12:11:** “*In fact, all discipline for the moment is not seeming to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it is yielding the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*”

**verse 9:** “Furthermore, we were having indeed fathers of our flesh (earthly fathers) to discipline us, and we were respecting them; shall we not much rather put ourselves in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?”

Here in verse 9 the author makes a statement and then he raises a second question: “shall we not much rather put ourselves in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?”

The first question was: “for what son is there whom [his] father is not disciplining?”

This is the reason you don’t want to resist and run away.

The apostle now uses an earthly illustration. Sons can expect discipline. The illustration he uses is that of our fathers in the flesh and our parent-child relationship. How they used to discipline us and as a result we respect them. In light of that fact, he raises the question: “shall we not much rather put ourselves in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?”

This process involves submitting ourselves to the rod as the Lord raises it in our lives to the accomplishment of some purpose.

It can prove to be a happy time in the midst of trouble if we know that a Heavenly Father has seen it necessary to use the chastening process to educate us properly. It was Jesus who said: “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).



He knows what is necessary. He knows what is best. When He brings the rod of reproof, could we not rather respond to it then to resent it?

**verse 10:** “For they were disciplining us for a short time as was seeming best to them, but He is [disciplining us] for our good, that we may share His holiness.”

Here is the reason why we need to “put ourselves in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live.” Our earthly fathers used to discipline “us for a short time as was seeming best to them.” Our earthly fathers were fallible. They are going to make mistakes. There will be times when we are disciplined wrongly.

This is possible with our earthly parents but not with our Heavenly Father who is infallible and knows all things. His disciplining us is for our profit that we may share in His holiness. The Heavenly Father knows how to get the desired results.

The contrast between the disciplining of our parents is “For they were disciplining us for a short time [and they were doing it] as was seeming best to them, but [in contrast, God] He is [disciplining us] for our good, that we may share His holiness.” We don’t think of it this way but this would be a good time to stop and sing that wonderful little chorus, “Holy Ground”: “We are standing on holy ground, And I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now. We are standing in His presence on holy ground.”

I’m sure that chorus has never been sung in a disciplining context but it certainly is a correct response to God the Father’s hand of discipline.

**verse 11:** “In fact, all discipline for the moment is not seeming to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it is yielding the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

God’s discipline has eternity in view. All the discipline from His hand “is not seeming to be joyful, but sorrowful; [while we are going through it] yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it is [eventually going to be] yielding the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

We have a negative and a positive statement in verse 11: “all discipline for the moment is [negatively] not seeming to be joyful, but [in contrast, positively] sorrowful.”

“The peaceful fruit of righteousness” is that righteousness which is produced out of the right relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is the fruit that is born in John 15 in our relationship of the vine and the branch. It is the fruit in Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (NASB).

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

Please join me in singing that prayer hymn, “**Fill My Cup, Lord**”: *“Like the woman at the well I was seeking For things that could not satisfy; And then I heard my Savior speaking ‘Draw from My well that never shall run dry.’ There are millions in this world who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford; But none can match the wondrous treasure That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord. So, my brother, if the things this world gave you leave hungers that won’t pass away, My blessed Lord will come and save you, If you kneel to Him and humbly pray: Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”*

## **December 22 – Strength and Straight Paths (Heb. 12:12-13)**

**Hebrews 12:12:** “*Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees which have become disabled,*”

**Hebrews 12:13:** “*and be making straight paths for your feet, in order that [the limb] which is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*”

**verse 12:** “Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees which have become disabled,”

In light of the fact we are called upon to endure, by considering the Lord Jesus who endured, and what we are going through right now is part of the educational process, the disciplining of us as His children. There are a number of things we need to do, 2 of which are here in verse 12: (1) “strengthen the hands that are weak” and (2) “the knees which have become disabled,” or weak.

It's like our author has returned to competition. He is speaking about the ring where boxing takes place and the race on the track.

(1) "The hands that are weak" is a picture of the fighter in the ring who, in his exhaustion, begins to drop his hands and gets ready to surrender to the opponent.

(2) "The knees which have become disabled" is the problem of the runner who is running in the race.

It is Peter who says in 1 Peter 1:6: "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials" (NASB).

I have in my mind that great passage in 1 Corinthians 9, when writing and challenging the Corinthians to commitment, he says in verses 24-27: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (NASB).

Paul points out in verse 27 that the time of greatest vulnerability is we are exhausted in the race and see heartbreak hill ahead. All the systems seem to be shutting down. I read the following statement and have it hanging on my wall: "We drench ourselves with the grace of exhaustion and the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it."

Vince Lombardi said: "Fatigue makes cowards of us all."

Extra effort produces excellence. "But I treat my body roughly and make it serve me, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

**verse 13:** "and be making straight paths for your feet, in order that [the limb] which is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed."

We have a negative and a positive here. "Be making straight paths for your feet." Stay on the task and on the track and out of Satan's traps.

Proverbs 4:18: "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (NIV).

The purpose is: "in order that [the limb] which is lame may [negatively] not be dislocated, but [positively] rather be healed."

The secret to the fulfillment of this command is Proverbs 3:5-7: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil" (NIV).

When you and I rebel we are like sheep that go astray. Through the afflicting and disciplining process, we are brought back to that path. Now, to avoid further acts of discipline, he is saying: "be making straight paths for your feet."

The Lord is not easy to deal with when we resist Him. It is far better to respond by obedience than to persist in the path of disobedience. He can flat put the hurt on you!

Proverbs 15:10: "Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path..." (NIV).

I love Peterson's paraphrase of Proverbs 15:9: "A life frittered away disgusts God; he loves those who run straight for the finish line." (*The Message*, 51)

Remember the words to the hymn "When We See Christ"? "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

Stuart Hamblen was one of the first to receive Christ when Billy Graham was holding his crusades back in the late 40s and early 50s in Los Angeles. He wrote the song, "**It Is No Secret (What God Can Do).**" Join me in singing both verses: "*The chimes of time ring out the news, another day is through, Someone slipped and fell, Was that someone you? You may have longed for added strength, Your courage to renew, Do not be disheartened, For I bring hope to you. (There) is no night, for in His light you'll never walk alone, Always feel at home wherever you may roam. There is no power can conquer you, While God is on your side, Just take Him at His promise, Don't run away and hide. It is no*

*secret what God can do, What He's done for others, He'll do for you. With arms wide open, He'll pardon you, It is no secret, What God can do."*

## **December 23 – Pursuing Peace (Heb. 12:14-15)**

**Hebrews 12:14:** *"Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."*

**Hebrews 12:15:** *"Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled;"*

The author will pursue matters relevant to key relationships.

**verse 14:** "Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

Here the author issues a 2-fold command: (1) "Be pursuing peace with all men" and (2) "Be pursuing...the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

The focus in (1) is on our horizontal relationships—"Be pursuing peace with all men" and (2) is on our vertical relationship—"Be pursuing...sanctification."

The command has changed from persevering to "pursuing."

Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" (NASB).

Do the best you can to have peace with everybody!

There is probably some real strife on the inside of this little church. Those who want to go and those who want to stay!

"Peace is the baby you don't want to throw out with the dirty water of relationships!"

"Be pursuing...sanctification." Recognize it's not something I have or can produce. I am pursuing by relationship, not performance.

It is the holiness of life produced by the Spirit of God that is an evidence of our relationship. He is saying this fruit ought to begin to be seen in our lives.

Sanctification is a byproduct of praising His Person, persevering His program, and prioritizing my time.

Ephesians 5:26-27: "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless" (NASB).

**verse 15:** "Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled;"

Command 1 in verse 14: "Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." We now have command 2 in verse 15: "Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled."

When times are hard, 2 things can happen: (1) you can quit or (2) you can get bitter.

"Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God." Stay focused on grace. Let your devotional hymn be "Amazing Grace." In grace be bearing burdens and believing the best.

2 Corinthians 12:9: "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (NASB).

"Coming short of the grace of God" doesn't mean you lose your salvation. It is just failing to avail ourselves of the available resources that will lead to victory.

What is it that causes one to be "coming short of the grace of God"? I say it is: (1) pride; (2) performance orientation; (3) preparation not needed; and (4) the pressure of the race.

"That no root of bitterness springing up is": (1) "causing trouble" and (2) "by it many be defiled."

"Coming short of the grace of God" is: (1) they are people who did not continue to trust the adequacy of Christ; and (2) their relationship to Christ did not mean that much to them.

Because of the difficult times of suffering and hardship they are facing, they have become bitter instead of better through the process.

“[The] root of bitterness springing up” is a quick process. It is a fast growing weed.

1 Samuel 1:10: “In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord” (NIV).

Ruth 1:20-21: “‘Don’t call me Naomi,’ she told them. ‘Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me’” (NIV).

A wrong attitude toward the chastening hand of God in your life can keep the sinner from coming to Christ and also defile your brother and sister in Christ.

For our hymns of worship to conclude our studies for the next 3 mornings, we’ll sing a Christmas carol in celebration of the birth of our precious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Join with me in singing “**O Come, All Ye Faithful**”: *“O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels: Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing all ye bright hosts of heav’n above; Glory to God, all glory in the highest: Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv’n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.”*

#### **December 24 – Lost it for a Bowl of Chili (Heb. 12:16-17)**

**Hebrews 12:16:** “*that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for one meal.*”

**Hebrews 12:17:** “*For you know that even afterwards, when he was desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.*”

**verse 16:** “that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for one meal.”

This is the third part of command 2. The command “Be seeing to it”: (1) “no one is coming short of the grace of God”; (2) “that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled”; and (3) “that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for one meal.”

Esau took the promise of God and said it held no blessing to him whatsoever. The Christians in view are doing the same thing with the sacrifice of Christ.

I think it would be good for us to stop and meditate on the contrast between Esau and these whose names have been talked about in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11. How different is Esau from Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and others?

The 2 words that stand out to describe Esau and his life is: (1) “immoral” and (2) “godless.”

Esau by the right of birth had the full privilege of being in the Messianic line, of being godly. But he was a sensuous man, who had no regard for the privileges of his birth, and who for a bowl of chili sold his birthright and pursued the paths of Godlessness and immorality.

This is a sober reminder to these Hebrews who are not wanting to endure.

They have been challenged by the apostle to endure by looking to Christ as an example, to recognize the disciplining hand of a loving Father because they are sons and daughters in His family. They are being exhorted and challenged to strengthen the drooping hands, the weakened knees, and to make straight paths for their feet. To be eagerly seeking after peace with all holiness, to be seeing to it that no one is being excluded from the grace of God, and “that no root of bitterness springing up” and “that there be no...person like Esau” among them.

The big question is, is it ever right to sell out because it is rough?

Esau was a person who was preoccupied only with personal gratification.

I have Karl Menninger’s quote hanging in the hallway of our bedroom:

When a trout rising to a fly gets hooked on a line and finds himself unable to swim about freely, he begins with a fight which results in struggles and splashes and sometimes an escape. Often, of course, the situation is too tough for him. (Charles Swindoll, *Active Spiritually*, 144)



**verse 17:** “For you know that even afterwards, when he was desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”

There always has to be a morning after! Do you know, “that even afterwards, when he was desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected”?

Just like Cain was rejected earlier, so now we see the same plight in the life of Esau.

Genesis 4:6-7: “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it’” (NIV).

The reason is “he found no place for repentance.” Then the final phrase, “though he sought for it [that is, the blessing] with tears.” He did not seek with a repentant, broken and contrite heart.

the ‘tears’ he was shedding were tears over the loss of the benefits of the blessing rather than tears of repentance. There is no brokenness or surrender.

Esau is like the 5 foolish virgins who are unprepared for the coming of their Lord and were away making those preparations when He came. Through lethargy, thoughtlessness, being unaware, and procrastination, these things will happen. There are certain choices that cannot be unmade. The choice has been made and it stands.

Whenever a young man gives up his purity or a young woman gives up her virginity, there is nothing that can be done to ever bring it back.

I wish at times Eve and Esau would have heard: “Don’t take that first and last bite!”

Esau, this is the most expensive bowl of chili you will ever eat!

Because it’s Christmas eve, let’s think about God’s loving and wonderful provision in giving His Son to be our Saviour. Let’s sing **“Silent Night”**: *“Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright ‘Round yon virgin mother and Child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace. Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav’nly hosts sing Alleluia; Christ, the Saviour, is born, Christ, the Saviour, is born. Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light! Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.”*

## **December 25 – It Is a Fearful Thing (Heb. 12:18-19)**

**Hebrews 12:18:** “For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,”

**Hebrews 12:19:** “and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words, concerning which sound those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them.”

**verse 18:** “For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,”

**verse 19:** “and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words, concerning which sound those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them.”

My first words to you this morning are Merry Christmas!

Keep your focus on Jesus! He is the reason for the season.

The little word “For” applies to the lesson of Esau to the readers. From a negative perspective, he made a choice on the spur of the moment that cost him for a lifetime. “You have not come.” The author outlines 7 statements here in these 2 verses: (1) “to a mountain that may be touched”; (2) “to a blazing fire”; (3) “to darkness”; (4) “to...gloom”; (5) “to...whirlwind”; (6) “to the blast of a trumpet”; and (7) “the sound of words.”

The writer is taking us back to Mount Sinai after the giving of the Law. This is what they are wanting to go back to!

Is this what they really want to go back to? This is what they are contemplating doing.

William Barclay titles this section of Hebrews: “The terror of the old and the glory of the new.” (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 211)

What a sober reminder to these Jewish believers who are contemplating going under the old and forsaking the new. What a warning this provides for them as the author prepares to wrap up this wonderful epistle.

Romans 8:3-4: "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (NASB).

The warning in Ecclesiastes 7:10 comes to mind: "Do not say, 'Why were the old days better than these?' For it is not wise to ask such questions" (NIV).

Keep focusing on Jesus and the future, looking forward to that finish line and the joy of what our blessed Lord has prepared for each of us who know Him and walk with Him.

Let's continue to celebrate Christmas in our worship time by singing that hymn by Martin Luther, **"Away in a Manger"**: *"Away in a manger, No crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky Looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on the hay. The cattle are lowing, The Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, No crying He makes; I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle, Till morning is nigh. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, And love me, I pray; Bless all the dear children In Thy tender care, And take us to heaven, To live with Thee there."*

## **December 26 – I Am Full of Fear and Trembling (Heb. 12:20-21)**

**Hebrews 12:20:** *"For they were not able to bear the command, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.'"*

**Hebrews 12:21:** *"And so terrible was the spectacle, that Moses said, 'I am full of fear and trembling.'"*

**verse 20:** "For they were not able to bear the command, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.'"

The reason they "begged that no further word should be spoken to them," "they were not able to bear the command" is epitomized in the statement: "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned."

James 2:10: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (NASB).

Galatians 3:10: "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them'" (NASB).

**verse 21:** "And so terrible was the spectacle, that Moses said, 'I am full of fear and trembling.'" John MacArthur said:

The law is God's great mirror. When we look into it, we see ourselves as we really are—immeasurably short of God's standard of righteousness. There is not a single commandment that we have kept perfectly or can keep perfectly, in either act or attitude. The law makes no exceptions and no allowance for less than perfect obedience. The law overwhelms us, slays us. No sinner can endure Sinai. Every sinner who stands at the foot of Sinai is paralyzed with fear. (412)

You can just feel the passion of the author for these folks who are contemplating this decision. He is saying "It's your call! It's time to sign. What's your choice? Paper or plastic? Aisle or window? Wheat or white? Here's where you are now! What are you going to do?"

Jeremiah 6:16: "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, "We will not walk in it"' (NIV).

Philippians 2:12-13: "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (NASB).

Ralph Carmichael wrote a beautiful invitation chorus, **“The Savior Is Waiting.”** Please join me singing verses 1 and 2: *“The Savior is waiting to enter your heart; Why don’t you let Him come in? There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, What is your answer to Him? If you’ll take one step t’ward the Savior, my friend; You’ll find His arms open wide. Receive Him and all of your darkness will end, Within your heart He’ll abide. Time after time, He has waited before, And now He is waiting again. To see if you’re willing to open the door, Oh, how He wants to come in.”*

## **December 27 – Home in Heaven (Heb. 12:22-23)**

**Hebrews 12:22:** *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,”*

**Hebrews 12:23:** *“to a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection,”*

**verse 22:** *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,”*

This is what you got with grace!

Back in verse 18, from a negative point of view, the writer says: “for you have not come.” Now in verse 22 we have the contrast, the positive: “But you have come.”

In these 2 verses, the author outlines 6 statements that characterize that which we have come to. “But you have come to”: (1) “Mount Zion”; (2) “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem”; (3) “myriads of angels”; (4) “a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven”; and (5) “the Judge of all.”

It is all ours by grace!

“But you have come to” and 3 things are mentioned here in verse 22: (1) “Mount Zion”; (2) “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem”; and (3) “myriads of angels.”

**verse 23:** *“to a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection,”*

As we continue in our listing of this new relationship we see: (4) “a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven.”

They have been registered in the Lamb’s book of life. Revelation 21:27: “and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (NASB).

You already have your reservation and your room is reserved in the heavenly hotel. You’ve got your place at the table. At the time of one’s new birth our names are recorded in the Lamb’s book of life. At that time reservations for the marriage supper of the Lamb were made. At that time we also have to have reservations for a place to stay in the New Jerusalem.

My reservations are at the Four Seasons Resort on the sea of glass, right next to Pearl’s. Since we can’t live together up there, I figure we can do a lot of courting!

Seriously, the Lord is preparing a place for each of us, as His children, in His Father’s house.

(5) “the Judge of all.”

Acts 17:31: “because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (NASB).

(6) “the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection.”

Philippians 1:6: “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (NASB).

1 John 3:2: “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (NASB).

1 Corinthians 15:51-52: “...but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (NASB).

Go back to Hebrews 12:14: "Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

My heart is already singing in anticipation of that wonderful day when we will see Him face to face, we will be home in glory. Let's sing together **"Sweet By-and-By"**: *"There's a land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar; For the Father waits over the way, To prepare us a dwelling place there. We shall sing on that beautiful shore The melodious songs of the blest, And our spirits shall sorrow no more, Not a sigh for the blessing of rest. To our bountiful Father above We will offer our tribute of praise, For the glorious gift of His love And the blessings that hallow our days. In the sweet by-and-by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore. In the sweet by-and-by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore."*

## December 28 – Jesus the Mediator (Heb. 12:24)

**Hebrews 12:24: "and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel."**

**verse 24:** "and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel."

The author of the Book of Hebrews listed 6 wonderful gifts of grace in yesterday's meditation. There are 2 more listed here in verse 24.

(7) "Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant."

1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (NASB).

Hebrews 8:6: "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (NASB).

He is a "Priest according to the order of Melchizedek." He is a "Mediator of a new covenant." We have our attorney to represent us in court on that glorious day!

What joy is ours to know that He has already settled all the claims against us! He has paid the price fully for our salvation. What confidence and peace is ours as Jesus Christ represents us on that glorious day!

We have come into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the Mediator of a new covenant." Who wants to leave this position in Jesus Christ to go back to one of terror? Why leave the heavenly city to go back to the terror of Mount Sinai?

"and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and": (8) "to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel."

"The blood of Abel" was spilled out of vengeance. The blood of Jesus was spilled for reconciliation.

John MacArthur refers to the sacrifice that Abel made in contrast to the sacrifice Jesus made. He says:

The sprinkled blood of Jesus far surpasses the sacrifice of Abel (Heb. 11:4) and **speaks better than the blood of Abel**. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God because it was offered in faith, but it had no atoning power—not even for Abel, much less for anyone else. Jesus' blood, however, was sufficient to cleanse the sins of all men for all time, to make peace with God for whoever trusts in that blood sacrifice... (416)

Let's meditate and review for a just a moment all that we have as a result of the relationship which is ours in Jesus Christ.

"But you have come to": (1) "Mount Zion"; (2) "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"; (3) "myriads of angels"; (4) "a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven"; (5) "the Judge of all"; (6) "the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection"; (7) "Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant"; and (8) "the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel."

All I can say is Wow! If that doesn't light our fire, we are using wet wood!

You want to give all that up for the terror of the Law and Judaism?



Please join me in singing Bill Gaither's song **"The Longer I Serve Him"**: *"Since I started for the kingdom, Since my life He controls. Since I gave my heart to Jesus, The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. Ev'ry need He is supplying; Plenteous grace He bestows. Ev'ry day my way gets brighter; The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The more that I love Him, more love He bestows. Each day is like heaven; my heart overflows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows."*

## **December 29 – Do Not Turn a Deaf Ear to Jesus (Heb. 12:25-26)**

**Hebrews 12:25:** *"Be seeing to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who was warning them on earth, much less shall we escape who are turning away from Him who is speaking from heaven,"*

**Hebrews 12:26:** *"whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.'"*

**verse 25:** "Be seeing to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who was warning them on earth, much less shall we escape who are turning away from Him who is speaking from heaven,"

We come now to command 3 in the passage: "Be seeing to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking." Command 1 was back in verse 14: "Be pursuing peace with all men." Command 2 was in verse 15: "Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled."

We have already had a warning back in Hebrews 2:3: "how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard."

We've had the repeated command "Harden not your hearts!"

The one "who is speaking" is described for us in Hebrews 1:3: "who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

"Be seeing to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking." The challenge is to harden not your hearts. Rather, be obedient to Him. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (NASB).

The author then gives us the reason for the command: "For if those did not escape." We have already raised that question. "When they refused him who was warning them on earth, much less shall we escape who are turning away from Him who is speaking from heaven."

**verse 26:** "whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.'"

In the past His "voice shook the earth." In contrast, "but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake [negatively] not only the earth, but [positively] also the heaven.'"

Haggai 2:6: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land'" (NIV).

Matthew 24:29: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (NASB).

My heart and thoughts turn to Psalm 34:17-19: "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all" (NIV).

Isaiah 14:24: "The Lord Almighty has sworn this oath: 'It will all happen as I have planned. It will come about according to my purposes'" (NLT).

Isaiah 14:26-27: "I have a plan for the whole earth, for my mighty power reaches throughout the world. The Lord Almighty has spoken—who can change his plans? When his hand moves, who can stop him?" (NLT).

Let's sing John W. Peterson's hymn **"Surely Goodness and Mercy"**: *"A pilgrim was I, and awand'ring, In the cold night of sin I did roam, When Jesus the kind Shepherd found me, And now I am on my way home. He restoreth my soul when I'm weary, He giveth me strength day by day; He leads me beside the still waters, He guards me each step of the way. When I walk thru the dark lonesome valley, My Savior will walk with me there; And safely His great hand will lead me To the mansions He's gone to prepare. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days, all the days of my life; Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days, all the days of my life."*

### **December 30 – Yet Once More (Heb. 12:27)**

**Hebrews 12:27:** *"And this expression, 'Yet once more,' is indicating the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of things which have been made, in order that those things which are not being shaken might remain."*

**verse 27:** "And this expression, 'Yet once more,' is indicating the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of things which have been made, in order that those things which are not being shaken might remain."

Jesus cannot be shaken and He remains forever.

What is shakable is temporary. What is unshakable is eternal.

Isaiah 2:19: "Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth" (NIV).

The key words in verse 27 are "removing" and "remain."

The shaking is for the purpose of "removing those things which can be shaken."

The purpose behind all of this is: "in order that those things which are not being shaken might remain."

My mind is calling to remembrance the way the Lord Jesus concluded His inaugural sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Let's listen to Him speak in Matthew 7:24-27:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. (NASB)

Psalms 118:23-24: "the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (NIV).

I'm already singing with enthusiasm and I want you to join me in that wonderful hymn, **"Jesus Is the Joy of Living"**: *"I have found a wondrous Savior, Jesus Christ, The Soul's Delight; Ev'ry blessing of His favor Fills my heart with hope so bright. Life is growing rich with beauty, Toil has lost its weary strain, Now a halo crowns each duty, And I sing a glad refrain. Heav'nly wisdom He provides me, Grace to keep my spirit free; In His own sweet way He guides me When the path I cannot see. Jesus is the Joy of Living, He's the King of Life to me; Unto Him my all I'm giving, His forevermore to be. I will do what He commands me, Anywhere He leads I'll go; (I'll go;) Jesus is the joy of living. He's dearest friend I know."*

### **December 31 – Receiving a Kingdom (Heb. 12:28-29)**

**Hebrews 12:28:** *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be having grace (showing gratitude), by means of which we may be serving God in an acceptable manner with reverence and awe;"*

**Hebrews 12:29:** *"for our God is a consuming fire."*

**verse 28:** “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be having grace (showing gratitude), by means of which we may be serving God in an acceptable manner with reverence and awe;”

Whereas the key words in verse 27 were “removing” and “remaining,” the key word in verse 28 is “receiving.”

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.”

We come now to command 4: “let us be having grace (showing gratitude), by means of which we may be serving God in an acceptable manner with reverence and awe.”

There is adequate grace. You don’t have to worry about coming up short. You can keep on serving in an acceptable manner with perseverance and awe!

Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

**verse 29:** “for our God is a consuming fire.”

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Hebrews 10:26-27: “For if we go on sinning intentionally after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer is remaining a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which is about to be consuming the adversaries.”

William Barclay said: “It is a grim thought; but in it there is the eternal truth, which there is no altering, that, if a man is true to God, he gains everything; and if he is untrue to God, he loses everything. In time and in eternity nothing matters save only loyalty to God.” (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 216-17)

Eugene Peterson paraphrases Proverbs 15:10: “It’s a school of hard knocks for those who leave God’s path, a dead-end street for those who hate God’s rules.” (*The Message: Proverbs*, 51)

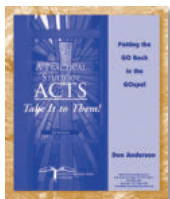
Peterson paraphrases Psalm 50:22-23: “Time’s up for playing fast and loose with me. I’m ready to pass sentence, and there’s no help in sight! It’s the praising life that honors me. As soon as you set your foot on the Way, I’ll show you my salvation.” (*The Message: Psalms*, 74)

Let us never forget that “our God is a consuming fire.”

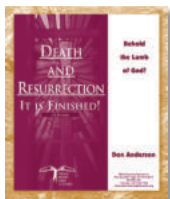
Philippians 2:9-11: “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (NASB).

Let’s sing that marvelous hymn as we conclude the year 2012 rejoicing in the fact that soon His kingdom is going to come! Let’s do our celebrating by singing verses 1 and 4 of “**Crown Him with Many Crowns**”: “*Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne; Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns All music but its own! Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And hail Him as thy matchless King Through all eternity. Crown Him the Lord of love! Behold His hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified; All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou hast died for me: Thy praise shall never, never fail Throughout eternity.*”

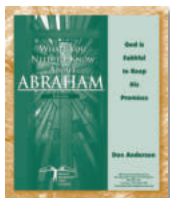
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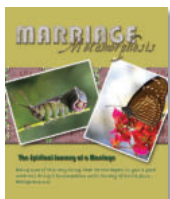
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