

Hebrews 5:1-10 –Qualified – 20 September 2015

So today, please turn your Bibles with me to the book of Hebrews and chapter 5. We are continuing our series in the book of Hebrews.

This is a series we have entitled "Greater" because this is really about the supremacy of Jesus Christ. The author, right from the beginning, is establishing how great Jesus really is – that He is greater than the prophets, greater than the angels, greater than Moses, greater than Joshua. There is simply none like Him. And today, we're coming to chapter 5 to see the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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You might recall, some years ago, about a man, a Singaporean man in Australia working as a doctor. To be specific, he worked at Alice Springs Hospital in Australia and he was reported to treat some 400 patients. You say what's the big deal about that? Well, the twist of the story is that this man, Mr Balaji, a Singaporean, was never a doctor. He is a fake, he's an imposter, he's never graduated from medical school, he's absolutely not qualified to be a doctor.

He treated 400 patients and what would you feel if you suppose yourself to be one of the patients there? How would feel if he is your doctor? How would you feel if he operated on you? I guess you wouldn't feel very much now because you're probably going to be dead by now. But it's so scary if your physical life is in the hands of an unqualified physician.

Let me ask you about your spiritual life. Is your spiritual life in the hands of a qualified priest who is able to offer sacrifice for you, who is able to stand before God for you, who is able to bring reconciliation between the Holy God and yourself? Do you have someone qualified?

Today's sermon is simply entitled "Qualified", to see our great high priest, Jesus Christ, and to see His qualifications for it. The author here is going to give you a very simple rundown of the qualifications of Jesus Christ. He's going to say, first of all, the qualifications needed as a high priest and then the qualifications exceeded in Jesus Christ.

Now, some of you probably are going to switch off right now. You say, "Pastor, this is such a boring subject. This is so irrelevant. I mean you are going to spend this whole morning telling us about the priesthood of Jesus Christ? Can you be a bit more

practical?" You say, "I have problems in my life. I have a difficult marriage. I've struggling kids. I have so many issues in my life. Can you give me something more practical?" That is maybe what you're thinking right now. And I say to you, "In a way, yes."

Our subject of consideration today, the priesthood of Jesus, can be boring and irrelevant – just like how it will be boring and irrelevant if I tell you about a certain Dr Tan and his credentials and his experience and his academic achievements and the vast experience he has in liver surgery. Until you realise you have liver cancer, until you realise that you need surgery, then what seemed to be absolutely boring and irrelevant about Dr Tan becomes absolutely vital for you, isn't it? Because your life is now going to be in his hands and you've got to make sure he's really adequate and capable of helping you.

And so, this subject of the priesthood of Jesus will seem boring and irrelevant until we are stricken with the realisation of the depth of our spiritual disease. When we realise that we are sinners before a Holy God, when we realise that we have no other way to stand before Him, then the importance of the priesthood of Jesus Christ shines through because this is not just about your physical life. I'm talking about your spiritual life, I'm indeed talking about your eternal life. It's not just about your body, this is about your soul. There is simply nothing more important than that.

This week my son had just... Shawn had just... We sent him for swimming lessons and he has just completed his level 6 swimming test. Now, I do not know what exactly that means – what is level 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. I just know that he passes his test and I'm happy for that. I ask him, "So Shawn, what does it mean when you pass level 6 swimming test?" He says, "I'm going to learn the butterfly strokes soon." I say, "Wow! I can't even swim properly breast stroke and free style and here you are, you're going to learn butterfly." And by the way, my son swims nicely. I love to see him swim, and it struck me that he has learned so much in life.

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So in the car, I was saying, "Shawn, we're so happy for you. You are able to swim, you're able to cycle, you're able to skate, you're doing well in school, but most of all, I'm most happy for you," and that is where my wife joins in: "You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." I mean I never asked her to say together with me, you know. I was just saying we're happy... until we say, the most happy, the thing that makes us most

happy or happiest is that you follow the Lord Jesus Christ. It's like we... two voices at one time, because to us, there is simply no comparison.

I mean you can do well in physical life, but what's most important is your spiritual life. Do you know God? Do you have forgiveness? Do you have reconciliation? Is your hands, is your life in the hands of a qualified priest? I think apostle Paul says it well: "I will glory in nothing but the cross of Jesus Christ. I determine to know nothing amongst you but Christ and Him crucified."

So this morning, this may seem irrelevant to those who are not really thinking about life. But if you think hard about it, there is simply nothing more practical and more important than to know our qualified high priest. The author here tells us:

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

(Hebrews 5:1 ESV)

So the priest is the representative for sinful people. He is to offer sacrifice to hopefully appease the wrath of a Holy God. The Bible teaches about a Holy God, not a "chin chai" God, not a God who somehow closes one eye and let sinners in ("chin chai" in the Hokkien dialect means "anything" or "whatever", and is used to describe a person who is unconcerned about details). No, there is a God in the Bible, given to us, clearly revealed to us, who is holy, who is angry at sin and will judge sin.

Therefore, there's a need for the high priest to bring appeasement to that holy wrath, by offering sacrifices. And there're qualifications for this priest. There are simply two qualifications I read in Hebrews 5.

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

(Hebrews 5:2 KJV)

Number one, he must be someone who has compassion for men. So the author says the high priest must be chosen from among men. Why? So that he can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward

(Heb 5:2 ESV below).

He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

(Hebrews 5:2 ESV)

So verse 2 says, so that he can deal gently. Now this is in the ESV but what about the King James? It seems to be a little bit more clearer in this sense, where he says "who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way". So the first essential characteristic of a suitable high priest is that he must be among men (Heb 5:1) so that he can have compassion – he can feel, he can know the struggles and the infirmities of man (Heb 5:2 KJV).

I was googling about that fake doctor working in Alice Springs and one of the articles that came out was this. I do not know why it came to this, but it came to this. It's an interview with the Dean of Medicine, who is still the Dean of Medicine today, the last I checked. And he said in this interview, "Doctors need skills and heart."

I graduated from medical school. I have a class, I've many classmates who are very intelligent and they have lots of skills. I'm not sure if all of them have the heart but it is essential for doctors to have skills and heart. In fact, he says the doctors' foremost quality must be compassion. It's very hard to assess in a medicine interview if a student has compassion. Nevertheless he says, for a doctor, this is necessary.

And I suppose in the same way for the priest, he must have compassion. So this is the first essential characteristic. What's the second essential characteristic? The author goes on to say:

And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

(Hebrews 5:4 ESV)

He must be called by God, he must be commissioned by God. In other words, nobody becomes a priest simply because he chooses to be one. You don't self-appoint. This priesthood must be given by God, called by God. And so Aaron was called by God to be one. The Bible says:

"Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests

(Exodus 28:1 ESV)

So no one else in the whole world will be part of this priesthood except Aaron and his descendants. Now, some people don't believe this. They say, "Huh, what makes you think only Aaron and his descendants could be priests? I also want to be priest. Why can't I do so?" And there was this guy who did think exactly like that and his name is Korah.

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So we read of Korah's rebellion. Basically, Korah couldn't stand the sight of Moses and Aaron. "Who made you to be the leader over us? I should be the one." And so in pride, he rose up and stood before Moses and Aaron. Well, of course, the Bible tells us his end is swift. The earth split, swallowed up Korah and his family, and God sent down fire to kill some 250 other people. Why so drastic and serious a consequence? The Bible says:

to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become like Korah and his company-as the LORD said to him through Moses.  
(Numbers 16:40 ESV)

This is to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the Lord. It's a very serious thing in God's mind. No one becomes a priest by himself, he must be commissioned, he must be called by God. Now, this is a very serious lesson, but people's memories are short.

So several years later, this same problem repeated itself. Israel now has its first king – tall, dark, handsome Saul. That's his name. Saul was the king of Israel, but he was not satisfied just to be the king of Israel. He also wanted to perform some priestly duties. So he said he couldn't wait for Samuel to come, and he took things in his own hands. He offered burnt offerings to God.

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.  
(1 Samuel 13:13-14 ESV)

And Samuel now says to Saul, "You have done foolishly, you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God." And so as a result of that, your kingdom will be taken away from you. It shall not continue forever. So Saul lost it.

Now, several years later, again the same problem repeats itself. It is seen now in this man. Who is this man, anybody knows? Uzziah, King Uzziah, absolutely. The Bible says:

But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

(2 Chronicles 26:16 ESV)

When he was strong, he grew proud. You know that's the way it is, successful in secular life, now he wants also to do what God has not given to him in the spiritual realm. He was strong, he grew proud to his destruction, he was unfaithful. Look at this: he thought he's doing service to God (but God says you are unfaithful) and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God."

(2 Chronicles 26:18 ESV)

And so the priests, who knew these things, withstood Uzziah and said to him, "It is not for you, it is not in your place to burn incense. You have done wrong. This is reserved only to the priests, the sons of Aaron, which is consecrated to them to do so."

Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests

(2 Chronicles 26:19 ESV)

Uzziah, in his deep pride, became angry because he was opposed and as a result of that, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests. It must be a scary time.

And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD.

(2 Chronicles 26:21 ESV)

And the Bible says he was a leper to the day of his death, and was excluded from the house of the Lord.

Now, the Old Testament therefore gives us incidents to emphasise to us that the priesthood is one that is reserved for those who are called by God (Heb 5:4). You

don't take this on for yourself and by yourself. So the qualifications are twofold: number one, compassion; number two, commission.

The question now is: Is Jesus qualified? Is he going to be the suitable high priest? Is He called of God and does He show and is He capable of compassion to the wayward and the ignorant. The answer is an obvious, emphatic "yes". The Bible says:

... Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,  
(Hebrews 5:5 ESV)

So He is appointed by the Father. And look at this verse. It's a very interesting way the author uses the Old Testament. The author says:

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";  
(Hebrews 5:5 ESV)

The Father says to Him: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." So the author is saying, the priesthood of Jesus Christ is appointed by the Father who says this, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." This is a quote from Psalm 2 and verse 7. This is a very interesting verse. There is so much to talk about this verse. Why? Because this verse in Psalm 2:7 is quoted three times in the New Testament, in three different ways. First time, Hebrews 1, remember? Now Hebrews 5 and the next one is Acts 13.

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But let me just focus on this quotation in the context (of Heb 5:5). "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." It's a specific saying that you are my son and I've set you to be the king. You say, "Where do you get this?" Because verse 6 says: "As for me, I have set my King" (Psalm 2:6 below).

"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."  
(Psalm 2:6-7 ESV)

So God says, I'm going to have the perfect king who will rule the world. Who is this perfect king who will rule the world, who will have an everlasting kingdom? Who will

be the one? Is it Saul? Is it David? Is it Solomon? Is it Hezekiah? Is it Uzziah? No, the entire history of the kings of Israel tells us there is simply none who can fill these shoes except for Jesus Christ. You are my Son. You are the one who I'll set as the King on Zion (Psalm 2:6-7).

So when the author here quotes this, "You are my son, today I have begotten you." he is saying something unique about the priesthood of Jesus – that Jesus who is priest is also the king. You get that? He's not an ordinary priest like Aaron and his descendants. He is going to be a royal priest, a kingly priest – dual office in the same person, both priest and king (Heb 5:5). You say, "Are you sure this is how you read this?" Well, read on in verse 6:

5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";  
6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."  
(Hebrews 5:5-6 ESV)

Who is this Melchizedek? Never hear of this guy before, some of you may say. Well, Melchizedek occurred only once in the historical account in Genesis. He is spoken of again in Psalm 110 but here is Melchizedek. Anybody knows the meaning of Melchizedek? King of righteousness, yes. Melchizedek literally means king of righteousness. He has another title given to him, you know what's the title? Sorry? King of Salem. Salem is peace, so Jerusalem is the city of peace. So Melchizedek is called the king of righteousness, he's also the king of peace.

Basically, he's a king. Melchizedek is a king. But Melchizedek is also a priest and Jesus is both king and priest. His priesthood is a royal one, distinct from the Aaronic priesthood. And again, this point is further proven when you look at where it is quoted from in the context. In Psalm 110, it is said:

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."  
(Psalm 110:4 ESV)

"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." So what kind of a priest? Well...

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst



of your enemies! (Added by pastor: "Scepter is a symbol of authority.")  
(Psalm 110:1-2 ESV)

So this is kingly language (referring to Psalm 110:1-2), you see that? It's about the king, it's about royalty. This is priestly language (referring to Heb 5:5-6). And it is both seen in that one person, Jesus Christ. The long and short of it is this, when we ask, "Jesus -- is He qualified to be priest?" the answer is absolutely. God has appointed Him; not only that, He exceeds the priesthood of Aaron in that He is a royal priest.

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Anybody knows where this is (pastor showed a picture of a place)? Beijing, and this is called...? 天坛 ("tian1 tan2"). Very good, Guat Hoon is right. Not 天堂 ("tian1 tang2"), (but) 天坛. There's a big difference: 天堂 is heaven, and she's right, 天坛 is the heavenly altar. Literally, that's what it means.

So what is this 天坛 for? When it was constructed, what is it for? It's for sacrifices to be offered to the heavens (that is) 上天 ("shang4 tian1"), or 上帝 ("shang4 di4" i.e. Gods) or ... yeah, 上帝 lah, (that is) to Gods, to the heavens. Now, who is the one who goes to 天坛 to offer sacrifices? Tan Ah Kow can go or not? Tan Ah Kow can't go because there's only one who is qualified to do so and his name is 王帝 ("wang2 di4" i.e. emperor) or 天子 ("tian1 zi3", another name for emperor). He (天子) is the son of heaven; literally, that's what it is.

The emperor, in those days, is seen not just to be the political head but the spiritual head. He's their priest. The emperor is the priest of China. So this concept of both king and priest is not so strange. It is in many cultures and we are very familiar with the Chinese culture.

So Jesus Christ is appointed to be both king and priest. He's also our brother, He's also our Saviour, He's also our sacrifice. He's so many things, so many persons, so many roles fulfilled for us. So is Jesus qualified? Absolutely. Not only is He commissioned, the author goes on to say, in verses 7 and 8, He is absolutely someone who shows compassion on us.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.  
(Hebrews 5:7-8 ESV)

That's why he labours the point: "in the days of His flesh". Now the Father didn't come in the flesh, the Spirit didn't come in the flesh, but the Son came in the flesh – so that He could be with us and like us experiencing fully our infirmities, so that He can learn obedience through what He suffered, and so (as we have looked at the last time – in Heb 4:15 below) He might sympathise with our weakness, He might show compassion to the wayward and the ignorant, because He fully feels what we feel yet remains pure and without sin.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.  
(Hebrews 4:15 ESV)

We have laboured a lot about the compassion of Jesus and I will not re-emphasise that. But the point is that Jesus is absolutely qualified. Now, this needs to be explained because Jesus didn't come from the line of Aaron. I mean Joseph or Mary, they are not from Aaron's line. Joseph was a carpenter, he is not a priest.

Jesus, in his lifetime, didn't offer sacrifices in the earthly temple; He didn't go there before the Holy of Holies. So when the author says Jesus is the priest, people say, "When did we ever see him become a priest?" Ah, but you see, He is the qualified high priest because God has appointed him back in the Old Testament, and He is one of us showing compassion upon us. So, He's absolutely qualified. And so the emphatic declaration in verses 9 and 10, as we draw to a close:

And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,  
being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.  
(Hebrews 5:9-10 ESV)

And being made perfect (complete, suitable through His humanity, through His sufferings, through His obedience), He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Now, He is really the high priest designated by God, after the order of Melchizedek. He not only met the qualifications, He exceeded them and I say to you, He is of a superior priesthood than Aaron's priesthood.

You see, the Jews are so fixated about the Old Testament tabernacle, Aaronic priesthood and the rituals. For the rest of the chapters, the author is going to show

you, no, Jesus' priesthood is far better. You say, "Why?" Number one, this is just some advanced things, ahead of time. Melchizedek and Aaron, who is greater? You know Chinese, we have this thing called 辈份 ("bei4 fen4" i.e. seniority). Chinese New Year, you go see your aunty, uncle, you must respect your elders, your seniors.

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I ask you: Melchizedek and Aaron, who is greater? There's no question – Melchizedek. You say, "Why?" Because Aaron's ancestor is Abraham and Abraham had to offer gifts to Melchizedek. So if my great-great-great-grandfather has to offer sacrifice or gifts to another person Melchizedek, surely Melchizedek is greater than me. So the author here is saying, "Hey, you're not giving up the Aaronic priesthood for something inferior. You're giving up the Old Testament rituals and all this because Jesus is the greater priest.

Number two, this is a better priesthood because it is about eternal salvation. First of all, Aaron's priesthood couldn't save people from sins. You will know that later on in Hebrews 10, where the priesthood of Aaron is a picture lesson to remind people of sin. But Jesus' priesthood brings eternal salvation. In Hebrews 7, it says:

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

(Hebrews 7:23-24 ESV)

The former priests, (that is) the Aaronic priests, were many in number. There are so many of them, can't even count because... You need many of them because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. They never lasted more than a hundred years; they all die. But He, that is Jesus, holds his priesthood permanently because it continues forever. You have a superior priesthood in Jesus Christ. As a result, the application is clear. The author says, therefore:

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

(Hebrews 7:25 ESV)

This is tremendously comforting to those who believe in Jesus Christ, because even after you believe in Christ, you're going to fall into sin – you're going to curse, you're going to get bitter, you might slip into pornography, adultery, hatred, worldliness. It is in those times that you start to have self-doubt, isn't it? Maybe God would never

forgive me because I believe Him, but I still fell into that sin. Could He ever forgive me? Could I ever stand before God again?

Well, knowing the priesthood of Jesus Christ brings comfort to the regenerate, to the child of God, because we know that there is a priest who is able to save us to the uttermost (Heb 7:25). And even when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful. It's not whether I deserve it or whether I've earned it. But He deserved it, He earned it on the cross and He is representing me before the Father. So my security is in Christ. Some of you today are struggling. You're struggling because you have fears, you have guilt and you feel like God is never going to forgive you anymore. But folks, stand in the grace of our great high priest.

I alluded to this song two/three weeks ago and I just want to remind you again of this reality, it's so easy for us to forget. The plea that we have before God is Jesus Christ, our great high priest. My friends, all of us one day will die. None of you 长生不老 ("chang2 sheng1 bu4 lao3"), (that is) none of you will live on forever. And when you die and you stand before the Holy God, what would be your plea?

I've already said, according to Scripture, God is holy, He is not going to just close one eye and let you into heaven and let that sin go undealt with. He is holy, He is just and so what's your plea when you stand before the judge? Would you say, "God, I know I've sinned, I'm not perfect but I'm better than Tan Ah Kow, I'm better than Lim Ah Beng. I have at least not killed anyone, I've given to charity, I've even been to your church. Would that be your plea? It will not stand before God; you are guilty as charged. But I know my plea. My plea would be the same as this author, this songwriter.

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"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"

Before the throne of God, I have a strong and indeed, perfect plea. Why is it perfect? Because Jesus, my great high priest, is the perfect Saviour who did a perfect job in saving me from my sins. He loves me, He died for me. He paid for all my sins and I know He's representing me before You, God. He's my priest. I stand in Him. Would you have that plea on that day? The writer goes on to say:

"My name is graven on His hands  
My name is written on His heart  
I know that while in heav'n He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart"

I know my name is written, or graven on His hands, written on His heart. I know that while in heaven He stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart. I mean, who can, who can deny the finished work of Jesus Christ?

"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"

Satan today tempts you to despair. He wants you to despair. He wants you to draw away from God. He wants to remind you of your guilt. But then, this is where faith kicks in. 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"

Because the sinless Saviour died, my sinful soul is counted free. For God, the Just, is satisfied. To look on Him and pardon me.

There is simply no salvation like the biblical salvation. What amazing grace, what amazing security – all found in Jesus Christ. Therefore, let no flesh glory but in Him alone. I say to those who today are so guilt-stricken that you do not want or dare to come to God in prayer. Remember the author when he says:

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.  
(Hebrews 4:16 ESV)

Let us then with confidence. Remember the word confidence means frankly speaking, just come with all that you are... all the toils, all the struggles, all the guilt that you have; come to the throne of grace, recognising Jesus Christ is your high priest; pray, speak to God, commune, draw near; have confidence in this intimacy with Jesus because this is where you receive mercy and grace to help in time of need.

Regardless of the problems you go through, I think there is no more practical reality than to realise that my prayers are acceptable to God because of Jesus Christ. Regardless of the situation I am in, I can have help in time of need because He loves me, and He loves me because of Jesus Christ. What problem is there that you can't go through, folks, if God is for you because Jesus is for you? And then I say, lastly:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.  
(Hebrews 4:14 ESV)

Since then we have our great high priest who has passed through the heavens, victorious, no more dead, no more buried but now, at the right hand of the throne of God, let us hold fast. We are a relatively young church, and you are a relatively young congregation. But as we grow older each day, each year, when trials come, when difficulties come, there may be some who are tempted to give up on their faith, very tempted to say, "Maybe this is not what I want to believe in anymore. Maybe I want to try some other means. I believe there may be some other way. This trial is too hard for me to bear. Let me just throw in the towel."

Well, the author of Hebrews, from the beginning to the end, is saying, "Don't you give up. Keep believing. Keep holding on to Jesus right to the very end because if you quit, there is no more salvation for you." And once again, I say to all of our guests today, "What is Christianity? Holding fast to Jesus Christ. That's all it is."

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Today, God wants you to repent of your sin and believe in His Son. His Son has come, He has come all the way from heaven to earth, to be born as man, to die on the cross, that He may be both our sacrifice and our priest. Let me ask you, would you have Him today as your priest? Would you have Him plead your case before the Father, would you do that? Would you repent and come to Jesus? Jesus is absolutely qualified. You can trust Him. Let's bow for a word of prayer together.

This is a very straightforward message. There is a dominant theme in the mind of the author of Hebrews. Just like how you might focus on a doctor when you know that you are sick, I pray today, by the Spirit of God, you would know that you are spiritually in need. And this spiritual cancer of sin can never be removed unless it is in the hands of a qualified priest and the world needs to know there is only one – Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who came to die on the cross, who rose again, victorious over sin.

Now He is both king and priest, now He is interceding for those who draw near to Him, and who is able to save each one of us to the uttermost, seeing that He ever lives to make intercession for us. This is the God we worship this morning. If you today have not trusted in Jesus, I plead with your soul. Stop trusting in yourself, stop rebelling against God, stop fighting Him, humble yourself and go to this priest. He will represent you, He will save you.

My friends, if you're here today, my brothers and sisters in Christ and you are stricken with false guilt, Satan has gotten the better of you, he's gotten you to be tempted to despair, to be all obsessed about the guilt within, then I say together with the song, "Upward lift up your eyes to see Him there, who made an end of all your sin." And in that deep confidence, pray, renew your relationship with Him. He's never going to turn you away, He's not going to neglect you because He sees Jesus in you, He sees Jesus for you.

What a salvation, what grace, what love, my great high priest whose name is love. May your soul today be warmed by the message of love from the Scriptures. May you who are drifting and sliding find a rekindling of that flame within your heart. May you today live for no one else but God and His Son, Jesus Christ. May God bless each one of you today.

Father, we thank You for Your Word, thank You for the gift of Your Son. Thank you that while we were yet sinners, Christ represented us and died for us. He did not take another life, He did not take an animal but He laid down His own life, that through His death, we might find life. Oh God, may this life, therefore, received as a gift from on high, be re-presented to You as a living sacrifice. May Your church today live out this Gospel, live in such a self-denying, sacrificial way so that when people see us, they see Jesus. Save, dear God, those who are here today for the first time. Blow into their life by the wind of Your Spirit that they may see the Kingdom of God, they may see the beauty of Jesus, Your Son. May all lives behold Him today. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.