



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Christ is Everything

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Hebrews 7:11-19

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¹¹ Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³ For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

¹⁵ This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is witnessed of him,

*“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”*

¹⁸ For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

(Pastor prays)

Today is one of those great events when the church remembers why it is so good to be in Christ as we take The Lord's Supper. We are reminded of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and why it is so glorious to be loved by God in Christ. And this passage is a great reminder of the tremendous benefits of being a born-again Christian. We are right in the middle of Hebrews 7 where the preacher is working to convince his people to stay faithful to the good grace of God found in Jesus. And the way he does it is by using an example, a type of person from the Old Testament named Melchizedek, to show us the excellencies of Christ. You see, they were in the same danger we are in, a danger of losing the grip on grace and love of God and commitment to Christ. And here in this passage he points through Melchizedek to Christ saying, if you don't

have Christ you don't have anything. And before we take The Lord's Supper, I want to use this passage to convince you that...

Now and Forever, Christ is Everything

and without Christ there is nothing. Let's look at the great benefits of being in Christ:

In Christ you can know God

Let's read verses 11-12 and then come back and explore it. ¹¹ *Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?* ¹² *For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.*

If you could be saved through the sacrificial system or through the Old Testament law there wouldn't be a need for Christ or His perfect life or His death on the cross. If works were enough, then grace would not be necessary. If salvation could be attained through the Levitical priesthood and the law, there would be no need for Christ. But none of that makes you perfect and gives you access to God. You can't *know* God through religion or through nature or through relaxation. You can't *know* God through concentration, quietness, meditation, yoga or vacations.

Here's what the author is doing. He's setting the superiority of Christ over against the entire Jewish system of law and sacrifice. He's doing that because his people were being tempted to go back to their old ways. And he's telling them if you don't have Christ you cannot know God. Now look, he's not saying the law of God is not good. It is good. Even Jesus would say I didn't come to abolish the law, I came to fulfill it. The Old Testament law is useful and the reflection of righteousness. It restrains evil and reveals God's will. The law enhances our awareness of sin and helps us see our spiritual deadness. The law shows us our need for atonement, the sacrificial system, a type of Christ. Galatians 3:24 says the law was our guardian that leads us to Christ.

There are several things that the law of God can't do. Romans 8:3 says, "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do." It doesn't truly make us new. It doesn't finally forgive sins. It doesn't provide access to God. It doesn't transform human beings. It doesn't restore what was lost in the fall. It doesn't bring new birth. It doesn't take what's dead and make it alive. And if all you have is a religion, you are still dead in your sins. And if all you have is nothing, you are still dead in your sins, and when the writer uses the word "perfection," he means complete access to God. And there is only one who can give you that. It is the priest after the order of Melchizedek, Jesus Christ. He is a satisfactory and final way to actually *know* God. The great Puritan John Owens gives us the perfection that Christ brought in. Let's look into the Bible to see these truths.

He brings in **righteousness**. 2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* As we take The Lord's Supper remember that it is His body and His blood that makes us righteous.

He brings **perfect peace**. Romans 5:10 - *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.* Therefore, Isaiah 9:6 - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* Because, Colossians 1:20 - *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.* And the result is – Romans 5:1 - *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* So that we can live and proclaim the gospel of peace found only in Christ. He brings us righteousness. He brings us peace.

He brings us **joy**. Romans 14:17 - *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* And in 1 Peter it says the Christian has a joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is what we celebrate today in The Lord's Supper. Joy!

We have peace in trouble, strength in emergencies, refreshment when we are weary, patience in a crisis and delight in tribulation. And verse 12 tells us why. What has happened to make all of this possible? ¹²*For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.* That word "change" in verse 12 is an important word. It means to put one thing

in the place of another. Now remember who the preacher is talking to here. His church is made up of people who used to be Jewish but are now Christians, and because the two are so connected, the danger is that under pressure some were slipping back. And what the writer is saying here is that the old way is gone, the Jewish way. There is nothing there. In a sense, Christianity comes from Judaism but Christianity is not an improved Judaism; it has replaced it. The old is gone and behold, all is new in Christ. It's why we can't in good conscience have or participate in an inter-faith service. We believe that now and forever, Christ is everything. The old is broken and gone. And a replaced priesthood in Christ meant a changed law; a law fulfilled in Christ and completed at the cross.

It's why I took so long with this point. In Christ and *only* in Christ can you know God. When I say, *know* God, I mean the Gospel. It's like this: God is a holy God and the creator of all of us in His image. You have dignity because God created you in His image. But that image of God in you is disfigured because of your sin. Your sin is not just bad decisions; your sin is an offense to a holy God who is also a just God, and because of that He must punish the sin. The punishment is too great for you. But God is not only just, He is loving and kind. In his love, God sent forth His son, Jesus, who is all-God and all-man. Jesus lived perfectly under the law, fulfilling the law because we can't. He earned righteousness, and at the cross there is a great exchange that happens. Jesus takes our sin and gives us righteousness, and the way that becomes yours is that you turn from sin and believe. And this preacher is saying, if you leave this wonderful offer of grace, then there is nothing for you. You see in verses 11-12 that In Christ you can know God. In verses 13-14 you know that...

In Christ you can *trust* God

So in verses 13-14 we are introduced to something else. We know him as the priest in the order of Melchizedek, but now in these verses the writer says— now wait, you know that Jesus is from the tribe of Judah. He is the lion from the tribe of Judah. That's the same one that David is from, that's the kingly line. So he is not only Priest, he is King. And as King he is sovereign over all and you can entrust your life in Christ. In Christ you can trust God.

Verse 15 tells us that...

In Christ you can *experience* God

God is not some far-off concept; In Christ He is your father. It's a beautiful verse. ¹⁵ *This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, Another priest. There are two words for another in Greek. The first is *Allon*. It means another just like the first. The second word for another in the Greek language is *Hetero*. That means another that is completely different. That's the word here. So the preacher is saying there has been another. Christ has come and He is completely different. He has arisen. That is the incarnation. That is Jesus becoming man. That is the perfect life of Jesus. That is the death of Jesus on the cross. Here is the resurrection of Jesus, arisen. This is why we baptize people: not because it saves them but as a reminder that you have arisen from the dead. In Christ you can experience God. Christianity is something that happens *to* you and *in* you. It's a transformation. In taking The Lord's Supper we are remembering what Christ has done *for* us and *in* us.*

In Christ you can live for God

Lets read verse 16. ¹⁶ *who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. **Indestructible**.* Nowhere else in the entire Bible do you see that word. The resurrected Jesus. You don't have an indestructible life. This is why you can be diagnosed with cancer and still have joy. This is why you can get arthritis and hurt and still thank God. Not because your body is indestructible, but Christ is. Because our faith is in Jesus, the forerunner. This is why you can grow old and still be happy. In Christ you can live for God.

In Christ you can *hear from* God

We don't hear from God in visions and dreams. We hear from God through His word. So I will close with this:

In Christ you can *see* God

¹⁸ *For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

Through Christ, a better hope by whom we draw near to God. And today we remind ourselves and center our lives on the cross of Jesus. It's the body and the blood of Christ drawing us near to God.

As we prepare our hearts for The Lord's Supper, I would just like for us to go into an attitude of prayer. As we pray, just think with me through these questions: Do you know God? – through Jesus. Do you trust God? Do you believe that He is working all things for good? Have you experienced God? Are you born-again and bearing fruit? Are you living for God? Find a way to this week. Have you heard from God? Has His word given you strength and hope? Will you one day see God? Do you have assurance of your own salvation that you are in Christ? Pray with me now.

(Pastor prays)