



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Trusting the Work of Christ

March 13, 2022

Hebrews 5:1-10

Clint Pressley

5 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. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

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.”*

7 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. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

(Pastor prays)

Everybody in here feels the instability of the world we live in, the instability of society. Let me just speak to the instability of American ~~Society~~society, the instability of society even within our city. You already feel inflation. Things are so unbelievably expensive. My gas light is on right now... I'm avoiding it. We feel the absurdities in the world we live in. You can see it on the news. You

probably see it on your social media. We see the absurdities of the gender confusion that's going on in America. The USA TODAY "Woman of the Year" is a man! The top female collegiate swimmer is a man! And we've been asked to look at that and believe it. Our eyes are not deceiving us. And if you say that, as a Christian you might feel— honestly— you might feel anger, frustration or you might feel a sense of panic. It certainly is confusing. We've got to be careful that it doesn't sit down on our souls and we start feeling this sense of doom.

And as if that's not bad enough, you turn the channel and there you can see the war in Ukraine, how tensions around the world make it seem so odd. Not to mention your own things that you have to deal with, the things in your own home, the things in your own life, some of the pains that you carry.

This passage right here is written to people who are inside a crisis. And the preacher when he writes to his church, a church that is undergoing significant cultural and religious pressure, he doesn't write to them little words of encouragement. He doesn't write to them ways that they can "be better." Do you see what he does right here? He calls their attention to joyfully trusting in Christ. My brothers and sisters, what I want to do today is to take this passage in the midst of where we live and all the confusion and the junk we have to deal with. Let's get done with anger and frustration. I'm asking you to put your eyes, trust...in fact we might say it like this:

Grace Means Trusting in the Work of Christ

I want you to trust in what God is done for you in Jesus. Let's take this passage and just go through it. I want you to trust...

The Fulfilling Work of Christ

In verses 1-4 you'll see that -

Christ is a better mediator

In verse 1 you have for the very first time the use of the word “priest.” The writer of Hebrews will be the person in the New Testament who uses the word “priest.” And here’s the very first time that he uses it. He puts it on Christ and says He’s the high priest. He’s setting it up. The writer says in verse 1, *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.* Here’s the first use of the word “priest” and he’s telling us that what a priest does is go between man and God. We need a mediator. God is holy; man is sinful. God will not fellowship with man as he is; man can’t fellowship with God because of his sin. We need a priest.

You can just go to Leviticus and read it. From the very beginning there must be a way for God to meet with man, and man to meet with God. We need a priest. All through the Old Testament, you had the imperfect priest making sacrifices, being lifted up, the aroma to God. For a blood sacrifice, something has to die. Every bit of it imperfect and the writer is setting it up to say Christ is the *perfect* mediator. God has given us a way that is perfect; It is in the person of Jesus, the work of Christ.

Not only that, when you read, you go down to verse 2 where he continues to describe about a priest. He says that a priest is a sympathetic person.

I want you to see...

Christ is the better sympathizer

Notice what verse 2 says. ²*He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.* Any high priest in that day would serve like a pastor does now, being able to deal with the people of the congregation in such a way that they are not shocked. It’s to deal *gently*. Those words in verse 2, “deal gently.” This is the only time you’ll see it in the New Testament. It means not to be shocked. And what the writer is doing is he’ll use verse 5 and say now what a high priest does; and Christ does it better. There’s not anything in your life that you’ve done or thought or been a part of that will shock God. Our God has given us Christ, who lived like you

can't and took the punishment for everything that you have done. He is not shocked at what you've got. He's a better sympathizer.

Christ is a better forgiver

Come down with me to verse 3. The writer outlines what the priest does for sinners. ³ *Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.* The high priest of the day was human and had to offer sacrifices for his own sins just as he does for other people. He needs an outside sacrificial offering. He offers it up for himself or other people. And what the preacher is doing here is letting us see that's what a regular high priest is like. Let me tell you what Christ is like. Every sacrifice ever offered in the temple, ever seen in the Old Testament, every single one of them is pointing to Jesus Christ on the cross for your sins.

The hope of the Gospel is that we can trust the fulfilling work of Christ because...

Christ is a better answer

Let me show it to you in verse 4 and the first part of verse 5. ⁴ *And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.* ⁵ *So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him.* God. You see that Jesus fulfills every requirement of the high priest. We need someone who is a mediator between us and God, and Jesus is the perfect mediator. The writer is saying “do not abandon Him, do not walk away from Him, do not take your eyes off of Him.” That little church is undergoing persecution; they're in a world that hates them. And the preacher says “don't fight that. Be careful what you get yourself tied up in, what kind of arguments you get tied up in.”—The preacher says, “I want you to come and focus on Jesus, look what Jesus has done for you. That's where you'll find your confidence, that's where you'll find your hope, that's where you'll find your strength.”—Trust the fulfilling word of Christ. He set it up for us and he brings us forward in verse 5. We need to trust...

The Ruling Work of Christ

The *ruling*. I want you to trust the *ruling*. Some people sitting in this congregation, sometimes I feel in my heart too, we act like God is not actively in control. We forget that we serve a King. The preacher is reminding his people, they being persecuted in society, maybe by Rome possibly or by zealous Jews. And what he does in verse 5, he quotes Psalm 2:7. He has already quoted it once before in chapter 1, and notice what it says. “*You are my Son, today I have begotten you.*” I started thinking, what is the context of that Psalm? Let me just read where that Psalm comes from. Psalm 2:1-7. *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.*

Do you know what the preacher is doing there? The preacher is likening Jesus to a king. He’s already called Him the high priest; and now he said ~~he~~He is the *high priest king*. He’ll call ~~him~~Him Melchizedek in the next verse. He’s telling us that this priest Jesus is like no other. And it’s something we need to get a hold of: that Jesus Christ is your true ruler. We can be frustrated with the president and mad at a dictator, but we worship a King and His name is Jesus.

What did Paul write in Ephesians 1:21-23? ²¹ *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.* You can walk out of here today with confidence.

You don't have to be afraid. You don't have to worry. You've been redeemed by the blood of this one who is not just a high priest, he is also King! You can trust the ruling work of Christ. We need to trust the ruling work of Christ in our everyday life. We need to trust the fact that He is taking your life somewhere; even when you don't feel like it. You think your wheels are spinning and you're stuck in the mud; you are not! Our God has a good purpose, and that purpose has to do with your life, honoring His name. You need to trust the ruling work of Christ. That's not all though. You can find in verse 6...

The Enduring Work of Christ

Melchizedek pops up the first time right there in Hebrews 5:6 when he's quoting Psalm 110:4. ⁶ *as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."* Now, some of you like to study and you want to know, what is that preacher going to say about Melchizedek? I'm not saying anything today. He comes up again in a long passage in Chapter 7 that deals with Melchizedek. Let me just say a couple of things about him. He is designated by God. Jesus is designated by God as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is a figure that shows up in Genesis and another place he shows up is Psalm 110:4. After the second place we don't hear from him again until the Hebrew writer, who knows the Bible so well, reaches back to this figure from Genesis and Psalm 110. He's saying Christ is not a priest like Aaron. These people would be familiar with the priesthood, with Judaism. The preacher says, "you need to get your eyes off that one priest. I'm talking about that one, that watery figure in the Old Testament, but this is a kind of priest like Melchizedek. He has no predecessor; he has no successor. He's the only one. Put your eyes on this high priest, Jesus, the one that endures forever. You don't know where he's from; you don't know where he's going to be because he is the forever."

Not only that, when you think about Jesus and His strength, you need to be reminded that He holds your life. Brothers and sisters take joy that God has you in His hands; that Jesus has put you there; that Jesus sees you as a gift

given by the father to the son. Look at what John says in John 10:27-30. ²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* ²⁸ *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.* ²⁹ *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.* ³⁰ *I and the Father are one.*”

Brothers and sisters, there is great security in being in Christ. You are held in the hand of Jesus, who's held in the hand of God the Father. There's not another person who can break that grip. That's where you are held. There's great security when we trust in the grace of God. Grace gives us great security, and there's nothing you did to earn your salvation; there's nothing you could do to lose your salvation, because it wasn't yours to earn or to lose. It was given to you by God. God gives it, and the way Jesus has described it, not only is it given to us by God, we are given by God to Jesus.

What a great picture! It means you can walk out of here and you can trust in God. You can trust that God is working in your life; trust that God has bought you by the blood of Jesus and cares for you and loves you. You can walk out of here without doubt. It's tough to live your life if you're doubting your salvation all the time. What does the Bible say? If you are in Christ you are *secure*. And if you keep doubting that, we find ourselves in sin. There ought to be this real sense in your heart that you are committed to know what the Bible says about what it means to be a Christian. You're committed to grow in Christ. I want you to trust the great grace of God and the work of Christ, the enduring work of Christ. Let me show you something else in verse 7. I want you to trust...

The Interceding Work of Christ

Now while studying verse 7, to me this was the most moving in this passage. Let's look at what the preacher says. ⁷ *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.* Now let's work backwards.

Look at that word “reference.” It gives us this understanding of who God the father is. Jesus, the Holy One, has pure understanding of who God the Father is. And there with that fear, that understanding of majesty, because of that, when He prayed His prayers they were heard. God could save Him from death and the resurrection is proof. We worship on a Sunday. Why? Because God raised Him from the dead, He heard His prayer. in the days of His flesh, verse 7 tells us, He offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries. You know, when we think of this we think of the Garden of Gethsemane.

Don't forget, verse 7 says, “in the days of his flesh,” 33 years. There at His baptism He's asking God, praying. There in Mark 1 it tells us that He rose up early in the morning, went outside to solitude, to a place when it was still dark, praying. Luke chapter 5 says He goes out into desolate places to pray. We find out in Luke 6 that He prayed all night long before He chose the disciples. In John 6 when he feeds 5,000 people, He lifts up His eyes to Heaven and prays. He put His hand on a deaf/mute and unstopped his ears and the boy starts talking. He prays before He does that. He stands at the grave of Lazarus, tears coming down from His eyes; He prays. In John 17 we find Him there with a high priestly prayer, praying for you. Then we go to the garden. Matthew, Mark and Luke give us pictures (of) loud cries when He prayed “Father, take the cup, but not my will, your will.” God answered that.

When He said to His friends “my heart feels broken, I feel sorrow that's like death.” Luke says He sweat great drops of blood. We find out in the gospels that the angels came to ministered to Him. There in the garden of Gethsemane, He was praying.

That's not the only place He prayed. He goes to the cross and on the cross, this is where Stephen learned it. Jesus says, “Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.” And later in the day he would cry, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Into your hand I commit myself.” The Bible presents Him as our great intercessor. The Bible says that He now ever lives to make intercession, He is our mediator in Heaven, pleading His blood to the Father that covers our sins. Look, I want you to trust in the interceding work

of Christ. You feel the pressure of life and everything coming in around you, look at the One who was there for you.

Not only that, come down to verse 8. I want you to trust...

The Suffering Work of Christ

Verse 8 is a difficult verse for me. The writer says of Jesus, ⁸ *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.* Although He was a son, Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, this doesn't take away from His perfection. He learned obedience. That word, "learn" is the experience He lived and learned obedience. In verse 8, how did He learn it? It came through suffering. For every person here who ever suffered, you need to see Christ suffering. The old Puritans just called it the passive obedience of Christ. To actively live out the passive obedience of Christ was understood to mean to know that Jesus suffered.

Brothers and sisters, you need to come here and drink. All through the gospels how He suffered. In the wilderness being tempted in ways that you and I cannot imagine. Him growing up as a child and presumably suffering at the death of a parent. We see Mary, but His earthly father Joseph, we don't hear any more about him, and most believe he just died. He had to walk through that with His mother. We find him there at the death of one of His friends Lazarus.

Read the story of Jesus's suffering through ridicule and persecution. Read the gospels; He's lied to, shunned by His family. His closest friends misunderstood Him. He is forsaken by Peter, *forsaken*, by one of his *best friends*. He's betrayed by Judas. Go there till the end of the gospels and watch Him being physically beaten. He's being humiliated, stripped completely naked in front of everyone while He's being beaten and hanged on the cross. Completely humiliated. Think of the physical pain He had to suffer on the cross. Think of the weight of your sins on Him. Think of the wrath of God on Jesus. The preacher's holding Him up saying "He's suffered for you. You can trust him. He suffered everything you ever suffer." This morning you ought to feel loved,

you ought to feel valued; you should feel relieved, your hearts should sense the forgiveness of God. You need to walk in this healing that provides peace in your soul. You should be encouraged because of the suffering work of Jesus

I'll just close with this one last word. You ought to trust..

The Saving Work of Christ

Don't you love verse 9? The preacher says, ⁹ *And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.* We are secured in Jesus; His experience perfectly as a human, He had to be a human. We are secured by Jesus in salvation as seen in obedience. That salvation is given to all who obey Him. In verse 9, do you see the two fraternal twins? They don't look alike but are *grace* and *obedience*. Salvation in your life is seen in obedience. Salvation stands the test. Verse 9 says that He saves them forever, eternal salvation.

Brothers and sisters, we live in a terrible, broken world. It is the world where God has put us. We don't live here by ourselves. We live under the lordship of Jesus. "Saved by grace" means that you need to be trusting the finished work of Jesus. Do you trust? Do you trust the fulfilling work of Christ? Do you trust the ruling work of Christ in your life? Do you trust that He's sovereign and in active control? Do you even trust the enduring work of Christ? There is no predecessor, there is no successor, there is only Jesus. There's only the I AM.

Do you trust the interceding work of Christ on earth? Do you trust the He is now at the right hand of God the Father interceding on your behalf? Do you trust the suffering? Some of you have suffered. Look to the One who suffered. His suffering redeems every bit of yours. We trust the saving work of Christ. Jesus is the source and obedience. Jesus is the giver, we are the receivers and we live it out in life. I'm closing it down and as I do, I want you to walk out of here trusting the good grace of God given through Jesus.

(Pastor prays)