

The Better Covenant

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Let's go to Hebrews 7. I want to give you basically a simple exhortation on the better covenant. The better covenant. As we sang that song I thought, is it not true that all earthly joys that hinder us from seeing and knowing Christ as our supreme joy is a robbery. It's a cheating. It takes us from what is rightfully ours and the deep rich treasures that we have in Jesus Christ. You know, so many today are hurting, so many are in despair, so many need a friend, so many need encouragement, so many need hope and of course, all who do not know the hope and forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ need him. And there are so many today who seem to extend a helping hand. It's just over and over and over and over again when we find some social program, some government-sponsored entity that's going to meet another need. I'm even appalled at many of the things we're hearing that, for example, in the new healthcare law, the notion that no matter what kind of sexual immorality you're involved in, the federal government owes you to provide you free contraceptives. I mean, it's just bizarre almost when you sit back and think about the extent to which "the world" is saying we're going to help you, we're going to meet your need, we're going to provide for you. Social services, there are retreat centers, there are psychologists and counselors and counseling centers and social workers and psychiatrists. By the way, thank God in common grace for folks who help people in their burdens and needs. That's not all bad, I'm not suggesting that. Too often the church kind of falls in this component of looking too heavily to meet temporal needs and forgetting her true calling and her primary calling which is to meet eternal needs.

An African American preacher that I used to listen to when I was just starting out preaching, his name was Manuel Scott. Manuel Scott was very short of stature, just a little guy but he's just little in every way. I remember him talking about going to a large black church in Dallas and there was great esteem connected with that pastor. When he went there, the deacons told him that he had to drive a fine car if he was going to pastor that church. I don't know back in those days, Mercury's must of been a little small so he just teasingly told us at that conference, "So I went out and bought me a little Mercury and drove it to church to show them that it's not wrong to have a fine car but that's not a requirement for my position." Anyway, Manuel Scott had a sermon and in that sermon he used this phrase over and over again, "The church is most truly the church when she does what no other group or collectivity even claims to be their job." Did you get that? The church is most truly the church when it does what no other group or no other collectivity even claims is their job. He gave some examples about that. He said, "My big church in

Dallas, we feed the poor but," he said, "other folks are doing that. At my church in Dallas, we clothe the destitute but other folks are doing that." And he'd go on and on about social causes and social needs but he'd say, "But other folks are doing that." But he said, "Nobody but the true church of Jesus Christ is preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ." And I might add, I don't know if this will get me in trouble or not because everything you say is going to be twisted and perverted today but I say this in affection and love but there is no group that needs more desperately a return to the true Gospel than the black church. They've been overtaken by these social Gospel, economic justice political causes and lost the true Gospel and some of those are good things and some of those things the church should stand on no doubt but if you miss the main thing, you've missed everything. Friend, the main thing is the Gospel and the power of Jesus Christ.

So in our world today, in the hurting, despairing, discouraging, hopeless world, we find so many ways to find educated or advanced men to say, "Here's how we're going to meet your need." But here's the end result, here's the axiom of the issue: man cannot be his own Savior. You might put a Band-Aid on something, you might help somebody feel better for a little while, you might bring a little encouragement but man cannot save himself and at the end of the day, all hurting and despairing and discouragement and lack of hope is a cry to find something outside of ourselves that we can connect to. You see, all of these things ultimately stem from one key broken relationship and that is the relationship between God and man and logically all men, even atheists, will agree with this. You see, if you have experienced an emotional, psychological or physical problem of any kind and you're an atheist, wouldn't you try to find the leading authority on that? Isn't that what a natural scientific man will do. "Well, I'm going to find the leading authority on family problems and I'm going to consult with them. I'm going to find the leading authority on this medical or physical problem and I'm going to consult them." Well, if you went to an atheist and said, "If I could find you the one who created you, wouldn't that be the leading authority?" They'd have to say, "Well logically, of course it would." That's the real problem, getting back to the true Creator and connecting with him. As we've studied in our Sunday morning series on the return of Christ and we talk about the glories and the wonders and the perfections of when Christ returns and sets up his kingdom and the point being that this is not going to be right, things are going to be out of joint until the Creator comes and makes things right again. Now, the church, our local fellowship and others that are striving to be true, should be a little respite, we should be a little taste of that love and that harmony, that peace and that unconditional acceptance but we lack very greatly. We need to connect with God and to connect with God we're going to have an adequate advocate, one who has established a better covenant.

I want to just talk about that for just a few minutes here tonight. Look at Hebrews chapter 7, beginning in verse 22. I'll not give you anything of an outline but I've got a couple of spots where I'll give you two or three things but no real outline of the text. I'm just going to use it as a point of exhortation. Look at verse 22 of Hebrews 7,

"22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. 23 The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, 24 but

Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

First of all, in verse 22, it says he is the guarantee of a better covenant. Now, when you buy something important, you always want a good guarantee, you want a good written guarantee. You get it in writing. But our guarantee before God is better than a written guarantee, he's not the written word, he's the living word. It's almost like the owner of the company when you bought the product went to your house and said, "I'll be here 24/7 if anything happens. I'll make sure it's right." That would be a little bit strange, wouldn't it? Well, that's basically what the word of God is telling us using this word "guarantee." He is the ever living, ever present guarantee of a better way to connect to God and know God even though we're sinners and ought to be banished and punished by God.

Keep your finger in Hebrews 7 and go to John, would you do that? John 1 right quick. Matthew, Mark, Luke and then John, chapter 1, verse 1, John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then verse 14, "And the Word became flesh," that's Jesus, "and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." So we have the very word, the very expression, the truth of God in living form that has said, "I have provided for you something that commanded human performance and priests whereby you connected to and they humanly performed their priestcraft, if you will." All of that is one approach to God which never worked and, by the way, meant to drive us to Christ but so many keep clinging to that. But Christ is a different way. He's ever living. He's not just something on paper. He's not cold, letter, rote performance. He is a living embodying way to know and have peace with God. You know, a written guarantee is very limited: you could lose it but you can't lose Jesus. He's never lost. I mean, he's the most found entity in the universe. I mean, he's life itself. He's omnipresent. So you may lose a written warranty for something you buy or for something you have but not Jesus.

Secondly, a warranty is always conditional. I was reading about some products online that I might want to buy and it was just interesting to see that this is guaranteed and then the fine print. "If..." If you decide not to use it and keep it in the box the whole time, you know, something like that. Buying televisions and electronics is really humorous to me. You buy it and it has a warranty but then they say, "If you really want it to work three years, you've got to pay \$100 more." It's just kind of interesting to me. That's just the way the world works. There are always conditions but there is no condition with Jesus. He is never lost, you can't lose him. He's the guarantee and he's completely unconditional. God demonstrates his own love toward us, now listen, in that while we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us. While we were yet in the status and in the practice of sinful offensiveness before a holy God, in that state, unconditionally Christ died for us. Unconditional.

Well, a written guarantee, you can lose it, it's conditional. Jesus isn't someone you can lose and he's certainly not conditional but thirdly: it could lapse. The time could run out. Well, Jesus said, "Time never runs out on me." He said, "Even before Abraham was, I Am." He's the great I Am. He was I Am in the past. He is I Am in the present. He's I Am in the future. Jesus is a better covenant, a better covenant than the old covenant of Jewish works and law. Now look, you can parallel this over to all the different forms of Christendom whereby they have incorporated works and law and priestly ministry to "bring us to God." I'm telling you, all of those now, this is the word out of the book of Hebrews, all of those now are obsolete because we have a better covenant through the Lord Jesus Christ. The old covenant could never fulfill the need of man and make man right before a holy God. But listen, the new covenant in Jesus Christ can never fail man who comes to God through Jesus Christ. Romans 3:20 says, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." It's almost like God says, "All of you that are concerned about some form of religion or ritual or performance in order that you might gain or maintain some standing with this holy God that you've got to understand something, all of that was never meant to gain that. All of that was meant to reveal to you that you can't gain it that way. You're misusing God's law. It's meant to show you your deficit, not to enable you to obtain some true and right standing before this holy God."

Verse 23 talks about how Jesus is not limited by death but all the other priest are. Verse 23, "The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing." Now you've got to understand, he's writing to an audience saturated in the old Jewish religion and they knew very, very well the importance of the priests' ministry. They also knew that there were a lot of priest and they kept having more and more priests because the guys would keep dying. I've always been kind of amused at the Roman church and they talk about this infallible pope. He is unable when he speaks for the church, when he speaks on doctrine, he's infallible they say. But my goodness, he gets awful weak and puny and just putrid looking at times. Then he dies. I don't know about you, but I'm glad that head of the church never gets weak and never get sick, never gets puny and never dies. He ever lives. He just can't die. What a hope that is. What a joy. What a better covenant that is than going to a priest that can die. The former priests were always controlled by death but Jesus, on the other hand, he conquered, now listen, through death. They are controlled and limited by death but Jesus took the enemy of men's souls, the product of men's sin, and entered into that death and through death conquered on our behalf.

A couple of verses here, if you will. Hebrews 2:14, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Then Colossians 1:22, "yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." Jesus Christ

used death. It's almost like the passage when Joseph spoke to his brothers who had betrayed him and sold him into slavery. He said, "Well, you meant it for evil but God meant it for good." When Jesus is hanging on the cross and Satan and his cohorts were allowed in God's sovereignty to bring death upon him, he gave up his life but they were assaulting him with death. They meant it for evil but God the Father and God the Son meant it for our good. Jesus was not the victim of death, he conquered through death. What do you mean by that? The wages of sin is death. He entered into death, tasted death, experienced the full blow of death that we might be free from death. Death for us now as I've said to you 100,000 times, not quite that many but close, death is now a kind of messenger that takes us to a better home. The sting of death is sin and the stinger of sin has been extinguished in the flesh of Jesus Christ on the cross for us. Now folks, you've got to understand the past tense verb there, "has been extinguished." It's not partially extinguished. It's not on the way to being extinguished. He has extinguished. That's why when you believe on Jesus Christ, there is instant justification. You stand just before God, now listen, you stand before God in the righteousness of God's Son Jesus Christ the moment you believe in the merits of what his Son performed for you. It's a better covenant. He doesn't die. He's not controlled or limited by death, he entered death and used death as a victorious platform for saving his children. So he conquered through death and then, by the way, he conquered death. He conquered through it and then he conquered in it. He has eliminated death for the child of God and I believe that's exactly why the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit uses the word "sleep" so often when he talks about a Christian departing this life because death no longer has a hold on us.

Now look at verses 24 and 25, "but Jesus, on the other hand," that means he doesn't die like those earthly priests that you look to if you're in a religious system of works and performance, "but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently." Once Jesus took on the office of priest, he never steps down or out of that office. Verse 25, "Therefore He is able also to save forever." You could say "save completely" which includes forever. Actually, completely is a little better translation because it includes the full aspect of all of our salvation. It is forever but it is full also. It's full forever salvation, if you will. "Therefore he is able to save forever," or completely, "those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." So he's able to save forever all of us from the penalty of sin. Remember, that means you have been saved. In one sense, your salvation means you have been saved. You are saved from the penalty of sin and why is that? Because God will not ever believe in double jeopardy. When he laid the penalty for his children's sin on his Son on the cross, the full blow, the perfectly measured blow that divine justice required for all of our sin penalty was taken. Period. So he can save forever because he has already performed salvation in freeing us from the penalty of sin when he died on the cross.

He is saving us from the power of sin. Why are you here on Sunday night? It's not cool to go to church on Sunday night. Hasn't anybody told you that yet? I mean, the new cool churches don't have church on Sunday night. Why are you here? Because something has changed in your heart. There is a new appetite in you. There is a sanctification going on

in your heart. Why can't you just fall headlong into sin and just give yourself away to the lust of the flesh and the desires of the world? Because God is sanctifying you, therefore, saving you from the power of sin. Now, you're never finished in this life but he keeps working on us. A little simple song, "Well, he's still working on me to make me what I ought to be. It took him just a week to make the moon and stars, sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars. How loving and patient he must be, he's still working on me." By the way, he only works on his own. There is a great reason why as Jesus is working and ministering and training his disciples we don't have any record of Judas being reproved or rebuked but poor old Peter, every time he turned around, Jesus is rebuking and correcting him and embarrassing him publicly. Why? Because he belonged to Jesus. I don't know about you, but I have a pattern of disciplining my own children, not yours. I wouldn't completely shirk back from disciplining yours if they needed it and I saw it but we don't generally do that, do we?

I thought it was interesting, I forgot who it was the other day who said they had a neighbor or something that saw that they had spanked their child and was beginning to inquire about had they actually spanked their child in all this thing and I thought, "Good heavens." Literally when I was a little boy, my mother would tell our neighbors, "If he misbehaves, you spank him and when he gets home I'll spank him again." How times have changed. Bless their little hearts, these children today are just so delicate. They are just so, you might warp their development and some of them need a little warping on the development if you want to be honest. It's just a different day, is it not? How did I get off on that? We're talking about being saved from the power of sin.

You have been saved from the penalty of sin. You now are being saved from the power of sin. Now look, that's because he holds his priesthood permanently. Now, if he was like other priests and died, he couldn't do all this but he performs all this for us. Thirdly, you will be saved from the presence of sin. That's future tense. That's glorification. So there is justification, you have been saved from the penalty of sin. There is sanctification, you now are being saved from the power of sin. Then there's glorification, you will be saved from the presence of sin. All of these are assured because he never dies and that's why his covenant is a better covenant. Can you imagine the drudgery and the burden? That's why Jesus said to all these people living under the old law, "Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden." Can you imagine the drudgery of saying, "I went to my old priest and I kept going to my old priest and I kept doing what he said, kept bringing the right sacrifices and kept dotting the i's, crossing the t's, doing what the priest said, confessing my sins and then lo and behold, he died and I'm starting all over with another one." What a drudgery and every day, every day, every day, under the old legalistic system of the Jews, a devout person who was trying had to lay in bed and say, "Oh God, did I do enough?" And the reality would be, their conscience would speak and say, "You didn't come close to doing enough." So under the that heavy load, they would get up again the next day. Of course, the system became totally warped and man-centered and abused where the religious authorities would heap great honor and position and wealth on themselves and keep putting more and greater burdens on the common men of the nation. Of course, Jesus is not that kind of priest. We believe on him, on the merits and the

performance of all that he's done and since he never dies, saved from the penalty, the power and the presence of sin.

Now look at verse 26, if you would. "For it was fitting for us." Isn't that an interesting phrase? "It is fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens." Now, there are no other priests who have ever lived, listen to me, no other priest who has ever lived has been or is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. There has never been anybody else like that. He said, "it is fitting for us to have a priest like Jesus, the true, one high priest." One of the things he means by saying "it's fitting" has the idea of it is needed or it is necessary. In other words, if he's not holy, if he's not undefiled and if he's not separated from sinners, if he is not one acceptable to God in heaven, therefore exalted above the celestial heavens and into the glories of heaven with the Father, if he's not qualified for all of that, then he cannot free us from our sin. He is not adequate, if you will, to perform it. So it's necessary that we have this kind of priest. In other words, it's either Jesus, the true high priest, or it's none at all. No other will suffice. God demands holiness and righteousness and so God's mandatory righteousness is that we are all righteous. God's punitive righteousness is that God will judge and must judge all unrighteousness and we're all unrighteous. So unless one steps in our place and takes our place and stands for us before God, we're doomed. It's fitting that we have.

Now, I believe there's another aspect here about his adequacy. He is the only, it is needed in God's, if you will, providence and purpose to have for himself a people. Here's where we come into the doctrines of sovereign grace that if you don't grasp them, you don't get the Scriptures. If it is true that God for his own purposes and for his own glory, did predestined some and did elect some and did choose some and did call some, if he did do that, then it was necessary, are you listening, it was necessary that he according to his own justice, provide redemption for them. And for him according to his own holy character to provide justice meant his Son must be the priest, the sacrifice, for those children he predestined, he elected, he called, he chose. If not, then his providential purpose from the foundation of the world to have for himself a people, now listen to me, would fail. Are you hearing me? Now listen, there's one thing God can't do: he can't fail. He can't fail. When he determined before the foundation of the world to the glory and praise of his own name to save for himself a people out of the wretched, wicked, offensive sinners that will fill the earth, then he also fore-ordained a Savior that would come and perform what was necessary, that's the word here, that they might be saved.

Can you wrap your mind around that? If you are God-centered you can. If you are God-centered, it's no problem. If you're man-centered, you struggle here. But if you're God-centered, God has his purpose and see, the sovereignty of God in our calling and election, it's not primarily for your good, it's primarily for God and God's glory so when you get over here and you're man-centered, you get to, "Oh, I don't know what to think about that. Oh, I don't know. What about the people he left out?" and you are like a dog chasing his tail. But if you get over here and you're God-centered and you realize that God has deemed all worthy of eternal wrath, all unsaveable in themselves, all offensive, all cast out and then God says, "But I in my perfect purposes will provide a means for some to

become my own," and he does that through his Son. So divine sovereignty in salvation has a purpose to the end that God purposes primarily that he be glorified in the work he performs through his Son on behalf of his children.

Now, God forbid in the slightest way when you contemplate that in God's sovereign purposes, "He predestined me, he chose me, he elected me and he called me so I am special." No, he did all that because he's special and you're a wicked sinner and he could show the power, the beauty and the wisdom of who he is by saving sinners like us. So in one sense, God sits in heaven with arms outstretched and says, "Will any come?" Romans chapter 1, God puts the law in men's hearts. He bears witness in men's conscience. He shows men in creation that there is a God that they must seek and know and repent of their failures before that God. God cries out in every way he can, "Turn. Turn. Turn. Turn." Zero respond. So he chooses to act further in unmerited favor toward some. Now listen to me, and when he chooses to act further in unmerited favor toward some, he does not fail. So it was fitting that this plan would not fail; so it was fitting that there be an adequate Redeemer, Jesus Christ; a sufficient, adequate priest, the high priest, Jesus Christ. That's what Paul is meaning here when he says "it is necessary," so that God's purposes to save God's elect cannot, listen, cannot, listen, cannot, cannot, cannot, cannot fail. Bill Stafford used to say, "I'm so saved it's pitiful," and that's very true.

Well, looks at verse 27, "who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people." That's a perfect parallel to the modern professing Christian who is doing work after work after work, service after service, religious rite, religious ritual after religious rite, after religious ritual, trying to obtain something before God. And he says, "Jesus doesn't need to do that and you don't need to look to a priest doing that with you on your behalf." The earthly priest of Judaism of the old Jewish religion would first offer up for their own sins a sacrifice and then for the ones they were representing before God. But it says in the last part of verse 27, look at it, "first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He," Jesus, "did once for all when He offered up Himself." All of those whom are his, he offered up a redeeming sacrifice once of for all. Now at risk of chasing every theological point too far in one sermon, let me say something about the atonement. What happened when Jesus died on the cross? Did Jesus die for everyone? Well, I would submit to you when Jesus died he redeemed his children. If he died in the same way for everyone, then we believe in universalism, everybody is saved. Either that or your belief is some sort of meritorious atom that's required. I bought a vehicle lately, no, I'm actually renting it from the company that made it. But anyway, when I got the vehicle, they didn't say, "Now, you've got to do a little extra to get the tires. We didn't know you wanted tires on this car." Well, in salvation, we don't have Christ performing redemption and then we've got to add on a little extra. Do you know why? Now listen to me, because no matter how tiny you try to make the little extra, it gives you some room for boasting. Are you hearing your pastor? You can strut around in heaven like bantam rooster, "I was smart. I was wise. I believed on Jesus and those dummies didn't do it." Listen to me, that is the most abominable notion I can imagine that anybody would dare claim one atom of credit for their soul's precious redemption. It was wrought and accomplished and completed once for all when he died for his children.

Now there's a sense in which his atoning death is sufficient for all. It's adequate for a million worlds of people in a sense but it's only efficient, which means it carries out its saving conclusion, it's only efficient for those who believe or the elect. There is one sense in which and I believe the Bible teaches this about Jesus' death and his atonement: when Jesus died, he died for every single person who has ever lived. Here's what I mean by that: there is a sense in which I believe Jesus' death is an atonement for temporal sustaining of God's wrath in this sense, why didn't God crush you into eternal wrath the first moment you came to the age of understanding and you chose in your mind to sin against God? In that split-second moment when you chose, "I'm going to dis-honor and offend God," why didn't he crush you into eternity? Here's why: because there's a sense in which every single person has purchased for them a temporal holding back of God's wrath. In that sense, I believe the cross abides for everyone. The merits of the cross cover everyone in a temporal sense but only those who are God's chosen and elect and predestined and called, use the word you want to use, those are the Bible words that are used. And on the human side, repent and believe, of course, you must repent and believe. Only those receive the eternal benefits of the work on the cross. So there is a temporal holding back of wrath or all men would already be consumed but only ones who get the eternal merits and provisions are those he has chosen. Are you with me? You're not going to fire me tomorrow? A special called meeting and I'll show up if you do. Just bring your Bibles and strap in if you're going to.

Verse 27, "He died once for all." By the way, that "all" includes all parts of my sin. All my sins of my past no matter how ugly, how vile, how evil or how black. All aspects of my present sin because he is eternal. And beyond time, all aspects of my future sins. You say, "Pastor, if you teach people that, they'll just go out and sin." Not those that belong to him. Not those that have new regenerate hearts. They are humbled and grateful and say, "O God, help me to live better for you. Help me to love you more. Help me to be more devoted. Help me to give more. Help me to support more. Help me to serve more. I'm so grateful." Well, how can God do all this? How can Jesus be this kind of a priest to accomplish all of this stuff for us in such amazing, complete adequacy? How can he do this? Very simple, very simple, very simple: he is God. It takes God to do that. He is God. I'm not looking for a priest or a system or a religion or a rite or a sacrament or anything else. I'm looking to God my Savior. We've got a song that says that, don't we Brother Tom? "God my Savior." There's a lot in that phrase. You sing those little phrases and you think, that's just a phrase. No, it's rich in Bible doctrine.

So God looks from the eternal perspective, not from the perspective of time and God saves us completely through the adequacy of his Son who died for us once for all. Now, those who teach you can be saved and then lose it and get saved and then lose it and then get saved and then lose it, I think they teach two different plans of salvation if you'll listen to them. But secondly, the problem there is that they are throwing themselves in the meritorious part of salvation because my salvation is totally and radically what Jesus did, not what I do. So I can't lose what I didn't get. He got me, I didn't get it. You can't spend what you ain't got and you can't lose what you never had. You never had salvation, he saved you. Are you hearing me? You never had it, he saved you. He chose you and then

he called you. Now before that, he chose you that he died particularly for you. When Jesus died on the cross, he didn't just in some sloppy way cast a lot of saving power out there. No, when he died, he died for you. Your particular need was met on the cross personally, specifically. You. Then he called you. Primarily his means is through Gospel preaching. Then he sent the Spirit of God to regenerate you and as the Spirit of God regenerated your heart, you became aware, "I am a sinner. I am lost." The weight of sin is so real and in that regeneration, he also gave you the ability to place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As you repented of your sins and placed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you were sealed by the Spirit and declared justified in the sight of God forever. Then he began sanctifying you. Then one day he will abruptly and powerfully and wondrously glorify you. Do you know why? Because listen, this priest can't fail. Are you hearing your pastor? This priest can't fail. I want you on the one hand to be the most bold and confident people in this community and on the other hand the most sweet, meek and humble people because your great bold confidence is in Jesus who can't fail but you're humble because you know you don't deserve it and praise his name for doing it. Amen? Both of those are true. Once for all, the verse says. Verse 27, once for all. He didn't have to go and do it again and again and again. He died once for all and I am forgiven. Once for all and I have a relationship with God. I may need to grow in that relationship, I may need to repent and reestablish that relationship from time to time but once for all, the relationship is established and once for all I have an intercessor with God.

Now last verse, verse 28 and we're done. "For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak," they are weak, "but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son." I submit to you that is the unique and one and only Son, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, "made perfect forever." He is made in the sense that Jesus was God's perfect Son but he didn't become the perfect high priest or the perfect Savior until he performed the sacrifice for us and God raised him from the dead and he went into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled his blood on the mercy seat. So he had to perform his office of priestly Redeemer and, by the way, he did that perfectly. Not sloppily. He didn't just in some sloppy way slosh a lot of saving power out there and wring his hands in heaven and say, "Oh, I hope those sovereign people choose me. I hope some of those sovereign people decide on me." Oh no, he went up into heaven with that precious blood and he poured it on the mercy seat in heaven and he looked up at his Father and said, "That blood perfectly covers our children. It's the exact right, perfect payment," and the heavenly Father, the Bible says, are you listening? Was satisfied. He said, "Yes Son, I'm just as happy as I can be. My wrath and my justice completely, effectually satisfied in what you have performed."

Listen to me: not one tiny drop of that blood was wasted. All the elect of God of all the ages were perfectly atoned for in that precious blood. Enough power in one drop to save a million worlds, yes, but in God's perfect ways. He was made perfect. In other words, in all that he performed, he provided and obtained redemption perfectly. He's perfect in his person. He's the sinless Son of God. He is perfect in his performance that he offered himself up as the guilt offering. He presented his precious blood, the precious amount of blood, the precious type of blood. It was all perfect and he is perfect in his position today where he sits at the right hand of the Father forever. There is only one way you could

possibly lose your salvation, somebody has to topple Jesus off the throne of heaven. Do you not understand? Are you listening to your pastor? Do you not understand that your Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, sits in heaven with all the power of the Godhead intent on keeping you saved. All the omnipotence of deity is devoted to your salvation. So the next time somebody whispers to you in any way, "Are you sure you're his? Are you sure that you're saved forever?" You just say, "If my Savior is adequate, I'm sure. If my Savior is sufficient, I'm sure." And of course, that's an absurd question, is it not? It's rhetoric to the nth degree. Absolutely he's sufficient. He is made perfect forever, verse 28. His perfection makes him adequate and his perfection gives us assurance. Assurance.

I've told you before about the Mormons coming to my door. When they come to your door, get everything they've got. Say, "Go out to your car. I want some more," and then throw it away when they leave. The Mormons came to my door and I said, "What do I need to do to be complete before God?" They told me a few things I had to do and then they added that if you really want to get on up there, you need to go to Utah and you need to go to the temple. I forgot, I think you have to get married out there. Pam wouldn't go. We couldn't do all that but you have to get married, if you really want to do something and I just stood there with God as my witness, I meant this with all my heart, I said, "You don't understand. You don't understand." I said, "standing before you is a vile, wicked, wretched, offender, blasphemer of the one true holy God. If you lay any requirement on me, I will fail. If you lay anything on me I must perform, I will fail." I said, "You've got to understand, I can't do that. If it's not free, if Christ isn't enough, I fail. You don't know what I am. I will fail." You know what their response was? Nothing. They had no answer for that. If you want to argue what you do, they'll do that all day long and they are good at that, that's all they do. But when you tell them you're a wretch and you can't perform anything to please a holy God, they are lost and at that point I was able to talk about the unmerited favor of God and the grace that we have in Jesus Christ and salvation must be by grace through faith alone. I got about halfway through that and the older elder grabbed the younger elder who was quite tuned in and said, "We need to leave," and they left and they haven't been back.

Have you found that in your witnessing if you'll start with what you really are, a wretch, unable and wicked, just about anybody will listen to you? They love to hear how bad you are but it gives you a chance to talk about how good Jesus is. He is an adequate advocate of a better covenant. If you love the word of God, would you say amen? Is this not good stuff? Is this not good stuff? Not me, not my message. You all don't even have an outline. This is good stuff. He's a good God. Praise his name.

Let's stand together and let's pray.