

**Hebrews 8: 1-3; “A Minister of the Sanctuary”, Sermon # 29 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on February 20th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Today we want to think about where our Lord Jesus Christ is presently. He is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; that is at the right hand of God. We want to think about the implications of this for ourselves and for Christ’s Church as a whole. Introductions are in order, so that You might know Christ better; so that You might see Him as He is right now, by faith. I would like to 1st of all – Introduce you to the idea of Christ’s Session. And then 2nd – I want to introduce you to the idea of His being a Minister of the Sanctuary. The truth of Christ’s High Priestly ministry in its particulars will be opened up more fully and completely in the verses which follow this in the rest of this chapter, and in chapters 9 and 10, but today’s message will serve as an introduction to all that follows.

1st of all – I want to introduce you to the idea of Christ’s Session.

Verse 1 – “Now this is the main point of the things that we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man.” The main point or the sum of what Paul is saying here, is that Christ is the only New Testament, New Covenant, High Priest. He is presently seated in the heavens at the right hand of the Father. His being seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, all during this Age, from the time of His Ascension to heaven, until He returns again in His 2nd Coming, is called by theologians, His Session. The text which should always be remembered in this regard is Psalm 110, verse 1 – The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet.

That is, the Lord the Divine Father said to David’s Lord, who is the Divine Son; He said to Him in the everlasting council and covenant of grace, that His purpose was, after He had accomplished Redemption through Him as the Incarnate Son, that He would have the Lord Jesus ascend to heaven to sit at His right hand. And, it would be from this high vantage point, having been given all power and authority in heaven and earth by the Father, that He would from that time forward to the end of the world, be the great Minister of the sanctuary there in heaven. Heaven is the true tabernacle, the true and glorious Divine Tent which the Lord erected and not man our text says.

This is the place where our Lord is now, ministering as our great High Priest. And His ministry will go on there until Redemption is fully applied to every one of God’s dear people, even to the end of the age. What exactly is meant by this expression – Sitting at God’s right hand? It shows us that our Lord Jesus, having accomplished the work that He and his Father purposed that He would accomplish in His earthly ministry, has been raised to a position of great dignity and honor, to begin a heavenly ministry. Our Triune God is a great King over all the earth, and the Divine Son is certainly equal to the Father in substance and essence as God. But in the Incarnation, Christ’s human nature was joined with the Divine so that He would become the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

It was purposed by the Triune God in the council in eternity past, that He would be given a kingdom, a delegated kingdom, which He would receive from His Father. As it says in Daniel 7, verse 13 and 14 – “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!” “He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.” “Then to Him was given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.” “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom the one which shall be destroyed.” Christ as our Mediator is accountable to God for all that He does in relation to His ruling over this kingdom. This will be seen if you will turn over with me to 1st Corinthians 15, verses 20-28.

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.” “For as in

Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” “But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.” “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” “For He has put all things under his feet.” “But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who puts all things under Him is excepted.” “Now when all things are made subject to Him then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

So we need to see Christ as our great High Priest who, because of His great work of redemption is ruling and reigning over a Mediatorial Kingdom all through this Church age. At the end of the Age, at His 2nd Coming, He will deliver up this kingdom to the Father. All of His enemies, politically, morally, spiritually, are being put under His feet during the whole time of this Age, but when Christ returns, all people who opposed Him during the whole time of the Church Age, they will be raised, and judged, and cast into hell. The last enemy when all of His enemies are put under His feet will be death itself. That great enemy of death will be put under His feet when all of His saints who lived from the beginning of the world, until its end, will be raised to a glorious resurrection, where our redemption will be completed by our receiving a glorious resurrection body.

We ourselves groan within ourselves, now, don’t we? We are eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, it says in Romans 8: 24. Why do we have such a sure hope? It is because Jesus has finished His work of redemption on our behalf. He has entered into His glory, and He is now welcoming all of His saints into heaven after they have run their course, here on earth, and have learned from Him how they can be righteous and holy people. The priests of old stood to minister. Christ is presently seated, because His redemptive work is done. He is now applying all the benefits of that work to us who believe in Him. All glory, honor, majesty, and authority has been given to Him by the Father.

He is now in a state of rest and ease concerning all that He has accomplished when He was in travail for our souls as He went to the cross. Now He is triumphant, He is ruling and He is interceding for His people. He will intercede so that the work in us will be finished. My beloved brethren, let us always be looking forward to the Day when Christ will return, when the work in us shall be complete; when we shall see our Lord face to face, and be changed to be like Him! He is a Priest forever ruling on a throne. He is a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the priest who met Abraham as he returned from the slaughter of the kings. He was the typical priest who represented Christ to Abraham, and blessed him as the one who had all the promises of God in Christ.

He said to Abraham – Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. If Melchizedek said this to Abraham, it must be true that Christ is saying the same thing to us today. He will deliver all of our enemies into our hand because of the greatness of His work as a Priestly King. He will deliver us from the world, our flesh, and the Devil. Abraham delivered his nephew Lot from the hands of the kings who had taken him captive, but he also delivered his whole society around him there in the land of Canaan, from the tyranny of wicked men. He went to war when it was evident that he needed to do so. And God delivered his enemies into his hands. Even so, Christ blesses us as we go about to do the Lord’s work in our generation.

What is our work in our generation? It is becoming more like Christ in the way that He ministered while He was here upon the earth. It is nothing less than seeing those whom we love and care about in this society delivered from their greatest spiritual enemies; the world, the flesh, and the Devil, through our preaching to them the gospel of Christ. In the process of this we may come into conflict with wicked men in positions of political authority, even as our Lord did. But our Lord superintends all of these things providentially from His throne on high. And He intervenes by His Providentially leading us into every aspect of our own personal ministry. We live

out the truth of the Bible in our lives. We minister to people around us according to the gifts and the grace that He has given us. Let us learn to see our lives in this way, rather than simply living to ourselves. Christ is in His session. Let us pray – Thy Kingdom Come!

2nd – I want to introduce you to the idea of Christ’s being a Minister of the Sanctuary.

Christ, it says in our text, “is a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” “For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices.” “Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.” So here, once again, we see that the Old Covenant priestly ministry in the tabernacle, typified what the Lord Jesus would do in His High Priestly ministry. Here, specifically, in relation to the High Priest ministering in the holy of holies. Christ is presently ministering in the true Tabernacle which is heaven.

For the words in verse 2 say this in the original; that Jesus is a Minister of the “holies”. This word in this epistle, as William Gouge says in his commentary is frequently attributed to the place where holy things were administered. He says – “In like manner another word of the plural number and neuter gender, *επουγανια* is put for heaven.” “We translate it “heavenly places”. “The word is thus taken for a place, and it is fitly translated sanctuary.” Here it is being metaphorically used, and it is referring to heaven. The Jewish sanctuary was a type of this. But after Christ offered His sacrifice for sins on our behalf, He then entered this sanctuary, to minister as our great High Priest. He sanctifies and prepares this place for His people by His righteous and holy presence and His intercession on our behalf.

The words here can also be translated – “Of the holy ones”, or the saints. We are sanctified and set apart by God, the Father, to be holy and without blame before Him. What should our response be to this? It is evident. We ought express our love to the Father and to the Son for their predestinating plan for us, to make us holy like His Son. Christ not only became our Great High Priest, but we should also become the altar and the sacrifice. Hebrews 13: 10 says – “We have an altar from those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” And verse 12 says – “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” His altar was the wooden cross, and it was raised up on Golgotha, the place of the skull.

Since He has accomplished this great work, and He has entered heaven, He has become for us all who believe, wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’ Do you glory in the Lord, dear Christian? Do you make your boast in the One who loved You and gave Himself for you? He had to come into this world and tabernacle with real sinners like us to accomplish our redemption. John 1: 14 – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” He tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Christ had something to offer which no high priest in the time of the Old Covenant had.

He offered Himself. No man can by any means redeem His brother or give a ransom for his soul, it says in Psalm 49: 7 and 8. For the ransom of a soul is costly. You should cease trying forever. And so, this is why Christ had to come. He came as the righteous sacrifice to fulfill all the law, and lay down His life for His sheep. Now that He is risen and ascended, and entered the most holy place of heaven, His ministry now consists in letting His wounds plead for us. If you will turn with me to Zechariah chapter 3, verses 1-6, you will see how Christ did this for Joshua the high priest in the Old Testament times, in anticipation of His becoming His Great High Priest. “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.” “And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan!’” “The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!” “Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.” “Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’” “And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.’” “And I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’” “So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him.” “And the Angel of the Lord stood by.” “Then the Angel

of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: "If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here."

This is a wonderful picture of Christ's ministry presently, even though it took place in Old Covenant times. It is a perfect picture of New Covenant High Priestly intercession which is taking place in heaven now. Joshua had gotten himself into some sinful trouble. Probably approving of his sons marrying foreign wives. In Ezra 10: 18 it says – "And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives the following were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak." So Satan was accusing him over this, saying something to this effect: He claims to be your high priestly minister, but he is false and full of sin. He cannot minister to other on your behalf, because he is so utterly worldly and sinful that he approves of his sons marrying Pagan wives.

He deserves to be cast out of his office as high priest and brought down to hell. He is a hypocrite. He is unfaithful to you. This is probably what Satan was saying. But you will notice how the pre-incarnate Son of God, who is called the Angel of the Lord here, interceded for him. He says to Him – The Lord rebuke you Satan!" "The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!" "Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?" Now, brethren, if we see ourselves rightly, this is how we ought to see ourselves, as brands plucked from the fire. For God sees perfectly how we are in our flesh, no matter how spiritual we are before men. And even though our intentions to do God's will are good, if in our heart of hearts we are not perfect, then we very much need Christ's sacrifice and His intercession on a daily on-going basis.

And joyfully, we can say, that for all that God has chosen, this intercession takes place, and it proves effectual for them. Glory Hallelujah! Are you not thankful? Joshua was clothed with filthy garments; that is, the filthy garments of his own righteousness which were defiled by his sin. But Christ took these filthy garments away, and gave him better. This is New Covenant grace being applied to an Old Testament saint. Christ clothed Him in His own spotless white garment of righteousness. He would pay the purchase price at the cross to remove his iniquity. He would render a perfect obedience in His life as a Man, He would and become a substitutionary sacrifice for Joshua the high priest. Joshua's iniquity was removed from Him by the word of the Angel of the Lord Himself. Even so is yours and mine as we trust in Him.

And then we can also see here the beauty of Christ's on-going intercession for the saints. He gives him a clean turban and rich robes. The clean turban is the picture of His reinstating Joshua in his office as high priest following this incident. Verse 5 says – "And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on him.'" This must have been the thought of Zechariah's heart when he beheld this vision. He wished to see Joshua the high priest cleansed and restored to useful service to the Lord. Dear Christian, do you pray that those Christians around you who hold office in the church would be able to fulfill their ministry. They can, because of Christ's intercession. No matter how weak and sinful they are in their hearts, they can be brought out from under Satan's accusations and know the Lord's help to them in fulfilling their ministry.

Let us be like Zechariah in this regard. Let us, out of love to Christ for what He is doing, and out of love for them, for what He is doing for them, pray that they will be able to fulfill their ministry, whatever their position in the church. Let us think upon Jesus where He is now, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father. And let us be eternally grateful for all that He has done for us and all that He is doing for us, even now.