

**Hebrews 7: 20-25; “A Surety of a Better Covenant”, Sermon # 27 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on February 6th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

We have been looking at a very interesting subject; the better hope which comes to those who are under the New Covenant which Jesus Christ our Lord has brought in by His becoming our great High Priest. In these verses we will look at His becoming our Surety, the Guarantee of our salvation. His High Priestly ministry is described for us here in these verses as, 1st of all – Unchangeable – Because He continues forever. (verses 22-24) And 2nd – It is Effectual – Because He always lives to make intercession for us. (verse 25) In opening up these truths to you, I hope that you will become convinced, that when You have believed in Jesus with a saving faith, that He will not fail in any of His High Priestly work to save you, to keep you, and and to help you in your efforts to become a righteous and a holy person, and bring you to eternal glory in God’s good time.

1st of all – Christ’s Priestly Ministry is Unchangeable, because He continues forever.

Now, we should understand what this word “surety” means, if we would understand this passage at all. A surety is a person who stands between a creditor and a debtor, and promises to pay the bill or the loan for the debtor, if, or because, they cannot pay the debt themselves. The Greek word, εγγυος, (heg-u-os) which is translated *surety* is only used this once in the New Testament, but in other Greek authors it is frequently used for a person who undertakes for another. The root out of which this word was developed, in general, signifies a part of a man’s body, and in particular, the hand. For it was the usual practice with a surety that he would shake hands with the person to whom they bound themselves to pay on their behalf.

In Proverbs 6, verses 1-6, we have a good example of this – “My son, if you become surety for your friend, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, you are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth.” “So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; for you have come into the hand of your friend; go and humble yourself; plead with your friend.” “Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids.” “Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler.” Now, this is a warning addressed to the person who would be godly; that you should not become surety for someone, even if they are your friend, it says here. Because you may indeed bring yourself into the bondage of having to pay their debt. You may be snared as it says here by your own words.

Standing surety is when you sign a piece of paper, or you shake hands with someone, saying that you promise you will pay their debt. If they will not, you may then have to suffer the consequence of paying what was not originally your responsibility to pay. You may care very much for that person. You may want very much to believe that they will be faithful to pay their own debt. But then they actually go into the situation of trying to pay it off, an expensive item like a car or a house, or some other expensive item, and then they default on the loan that they took out. You co-signed the loan and so now it is your responsibility to pay it off so that your friend’s obligation to pay would be fulfilled.

The lesson here is two-fold. You should tell your friend or relative to pay for what they would like to buy, by their taking responsibility for themselves, and working hard to pay for that item. And second – Do not assume responsibility in co-signing loans. You should not stand surety for them unless you are willing to pay off the debt entirely yourself. For there are many people who mean well when they loan money. But actually they may not have the means, long term, to pay it off. In the great and profound situation that we are talking about here – All mankind, all of us here, are the debtors. God the Father is the Creditor, the One who has created all, owns all, and has covenanted with us all as men; as we were represented in Adam, the Federal Head of our race. God shook hands with us all, so to speak, in him. He created Adam, and He has created each of us so that we would take up our responsibility to pay Him our worship and our obedience. We, as we are

descendants of Adam, are obligated to keep all of the commandments of God's holy law, because it is what He expects of all men, having given us life.

He has given each of us a mind and a heart, a body and a will to fulfill His righteous expectation of us, that we will be righteous and holy people. This is often called the covenant of works by theologians. God created the first man Adam, and the first woman Eve, upright. God's righteous expectation of them was that they would worship of Him exclusively. He commanded them to be obedient to Him, to keep His one good command that He gave to them; not to eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. He told them that if they defaulted on this covenant agreement, they would die. They did not keep His commandment. They fell from their original righteousness. And they died. Adam brought sin into this world, and death through sin.

All of us, who are descended from Adam, we are not only guilty of this original sin, because we were in him as our Federal Head, but all of us come forth from the womb speaking lies. (Psalm 58: 3) That is, we do not keep our covenant with God to love Him for having made us, and for His being our God. We do not love our neighbor as ourselves. Every part of our being, our mind, our heart our will, and our conscience, are all defiled by sin. The Bible tells us that neither Adam, nor ourselves, can keep this covenant, since the time that it was broken by Adam. Indeed, we confirm our disobedience to God's good commandments of His law, because all the faculties of our being have been affected by sin.

Now, this expectation which God had of Adam was explicitly called a "covenant" in Hosea chapter 6, verse 7 – "But like men they transgressed the covenant." The word "men" there, can, translated "Adam". "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant. (That is, the men of Ephraim and Judah were like Adam in that they transgressed the Old Covenant, the covenant of works) "There they dealt treacherously with Me." So Adam dealt treacherously with God, there in the beginning, and so did the Jews in that day, when Hosea the prophet wrote his prophecy. And we can apply it to ourselves in this day; that you and I deal treacherously with God when we promise Him our obedience, and then we cannot fulfill our promise.

We, like Adam have broken our covenant with God because all of us by nature are under the covenant of works because of our relationship to Adam's fall from righteousness, and our own confirmation of that fall, by our own sins. The covenant which the Jews were under in the time of the Old Covenant was, as our Confession states in Chapter 19, Paragraph 2 – "The same law that was first written in the heart of man." It "continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man."

The Jews, as our text says in verse 23, had many priests because they were prevented by death from continuing. And in verse 21 it says that they had become priests without an oath. There was nothing in them which assured that their ministrations would last or be effectual to any person in Israel. You can certainly see, can't you, how inadequate and weak the Old Covenant was. It was weak because of the spiritual weakness of the priests who ministered at the altar. When they were offering the sacrifices, they had to offer for themselves as well as the people who came to them. They were all sinfully weak.

But when our Lord Jesus Christ was made the High Priest of our salvation, the Father did so with an oath – The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Mechizedek. And verse 22 says – By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. The New Covenant is so much better than the Old because its surety is Jesus. There was no weakness in Jesus to keep the law. And there was no failure in all of His ministrations of offering Himself to God as the Surety to pay our sin debt and our obedience debt.

No Levitical or Aaronic priest could have ever become a surety for their fellow Israelites. They could only minister in an outward typical sense because they were looking forward to Christ's coming. They ministered for a time, according to the Old Covenant ceremonial law. And then because of weakness, they died. But the Lord Jesus who always existed as God the Son, and was

begotten of the Father in eternity past for this very purpose, He covenanted together with the Father in eternity past to take upon Himself human flesh, and become our Surety. The Father swore, and He will not repent concerning His Son, our Christ, our Great High Priest. Repentance or relenting of His purpose is impossible with God, for He cannot change. The Priesthood that He appointed Jesus to, was a forever priesthood.

The Lord Jesus, as God the Son, in eternity past, out of His love to the Father and to all of God's elect people, agreed in the Covenant of Redemption to become our Surety there in eternity past. He formally stated His willingness to be sent by the Father to become our Surety. He agreed ahead of time to pay our sin debt on the cross, and our debt to perfect obedience by His living His life righteously and perfectly to God in our place. He would fulfill the Covenant of works and establish the Covenant of Grace. He would bring in a better hope through the New Covenant that He would establish by His blood and righteousness. His Priesthood is unchangeable on three counts; that of God's appointing Him to His High-Priestly Office, and then His own fulfilling of God's Holy Law in every respect, by word and deed, loving God and His neighbor as Himself, in our place. And then as we shall see in this next point:

2nd – His High Priestly Ministry is Effectual – Because He always lives to make intercession for us. (verse 25)

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” We have seen thus far that Jesus, whose name means Savior, accomplished our redemption on the cross by becoming our Surety. He took our place in His perfect obedience to fulfill all righteousness. He went to the cross and endured indescribable agonies, all on our behalf. He fulfilled the whole law, ministering as a Priest in every matter related to satisfying God's justice. He offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. Indeed, He was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. Having done this, He, in connection with the work of the Father and the Holy Spirit, He must needs apply all the benefits of this great salvation which He purchased, to every person chosen of the Father; to everyone to whom God would show mercy, and give them salvation.

When Jesus died, He rose again. Death could not keep Him down. He rose victorious from the grave, and He knew that all power in heaven and earth had been given to Him. According to the plan and purpose of God, He only stayed on this earth 40 days after His resurrection, in order to reveal His resurrection to His apostles, and to give them instructions concerning their future ministry, and the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In doing these things He was laying the actual foundation of the New Testament Church, and commissioning His apostles to their work. In Luke 24: 46, it says: “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.’” “And you are witnesses of these things.”

“Behold, I sent the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.” “Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.” “And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.” Ah, my brethren, this began phase 2 in God's plan for Christ's High Priestly ministry – That of His ever living to make intercession for His people. What a blessed thing this is that our Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, all those who come to God through Him. He is the only Mediator between God and men, but as a Mediator He is also a Priest. Christ ever lives, not only for His own honor, but also for our good. That is, to do us good in His continuing on forever as our High Priest.

Dear believer – You not only needed Christ High Priestly work to obey God's law fully on your behalf so that you could be justified; that is, declared righteous in God's sight. But you needed Christ's High Priestly work of suffering for your sins, so that you might die to sin and live to righteousness. And furthermore, you continually need His glorious work for you now, as He sits at

the Father's right hand. For He ever lives, it says here, to make intercession for you, from that exalted position. His being able to save to the uttermost relates to His power and ability to do great things for you in relation to your sanctification; your being delivered from the power of sin, and your being made happy forever by His powerful working in your heart and life. He is able to save to the uttermost. Whatever is needed in terms of His bestowing the blessings of your salvation on you, it will be granted to you, for Christ's sake, because of what He lived and died to purchase for you, and because He ever lives to make it over to you.

Romans 8: 31-34 – “What then shall we say to these things?” If God is for us, who can be against us?” “he who did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?” “Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?” “It is God who justifies.” “Who is he who condemns?” “It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Will you not see, dear believer, that Christ intercedes for you at the right hand of the Father out of love for you personally; that He might save you to the uttermost. Whatever it will take, He will give you every blessing that He sees that you will need to save you from your sins, and bring you to Himself to be with Him forever.

How often do you see love in a court of law? But here you see it, and it is in God's court! God's law has been satisfied by Christ's loving God with all His heart on your behalf. God's justice is satisfied by His dying on the cross for His love for sinners everywhere, as many as will come to God through Him. Christ's love in His suffering for you, and His grace which He gives to you daily to sanctify, will certainly be enough, and more than enough, to sustain you through any trial that you will go through. Romans 8: 34 and 35 – “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Verses 37-39 – “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor power, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, you and I are to think of it this way; that Christ's love should be understood by us in terms of His interceding for us at the Father's right hand in all the difficult situations that we go through in life. Nothing can separate you from that love, for He ever lives to make intercession for you. His wounds plead for your sins, that they would be forgiven, and that you would then be cleansed, and freed from all oppression, and bondage related to sin. His prayers and pleadings before the Father on your behalf insure that you will make progress in holiness, and learn to manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit in relationship to people around you.

And you will over time, because of His intercession, learn to obey all of God's commandments by faith in Him, because He is faithful and true to you personally to give you wisdom and to supply you with power to do what is right. He will teach you the things that you will need to learn in relation to doing what is right and loving other people. And He will be right there with you in your greatest struggles with your flesh and your greatest battles with temptations and with the evil one, so that you will overcome him. If this is the case, then will you not start see your great Savior in this way; as Your great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for you? Do not let the strength of your own flesh, or the power of the Devil be seen by you as greater than the strength of Christ who has overcome the world, died so that you might be saved, and who ever lives to make intercession for you. Be strong in the the Lord and in His mighty power.