

Hebrews Ch7v23-Ch8v2

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Preacher: Sam Ross

[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. Could you please open to Hebrews chapter 7.

! Hebrews chapter 7, and we're going to read from verse 23. So if you're using the church Bible there, it's on page 1205.

Hebrews chapter 7, and verse 23. Actually, turn over to page 1206.

Oh, thank you, Kevin. Good man. Before we read, let's pray and ask for God to help us as we open up his word.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords, maker of the whole universe, sustaining it right now by the power of your word, we've sung already how great you are.

[1 : 34] And yet we feel so small and weak and fragile. We have many things burdening us as we look out into the coming year.

We pray that by your Holy Spirit, the words that we're just about to read will be more than just words. That they be life to us.

Strength, comfort, encouragement to us. Speak to us now. Amen.

Evelyn's going to read it for us. Thanks, Evelyn. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 23.

Now, there have been many of those priests since death, prevented them from continuing in office. But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

[2 : 37] Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest truly meets our need.

One who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.

He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weaknesses. But the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Now, the main point of what we are saying is this. We do have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

Do you ever wonder, in the middle of your sin and failures, am I really forgiven?

[4 : 01] When you've messed up for what seems like the hundredth time, do you ever ask yourself, where is Jesus now? See, for most of us here, in the back of our minds, we know, right, that 2,000 years ago, Jesus died for our sin.

And he rose again so that we could be forgiven. That's the central truth of our faith, right? But when I've failed, again and again, that same sin that I've struggled with for years, I can't help but feel a vast gulf between Jesus dying on the cross for me 2,000 years ago and my on-the-ground reality of sin today.

And I ask, is Jesus really here with me in this? I wonder if anyone can relate to that feeling and those questions.

You feel the disconnect between what Jesus did for you back then and your day-to-day reality of sin, sadness, suffering.

But our text today, it just cuts through all of us and it drives at the heart of who Jesus is for you and for me today.

[5 : 43] Not just what he did for us way back when, but what he is doing for us right now in heaven. Read verse 24 and 25 again with me.

Because Jesus lives forever, he is a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

If you are a believer in Christ, Jesus is interceding for you right now in heaven. He is not distant from your situation.

He is all over it. He is interceding round the clock for everyone who comes to God through him. We are going to explore Jesus' intercession for us by answering three questions.

Firstly, who is it for? Secondly, what does it mean? And third, why does it matter for us today? So first one, it's brief. Who is it for?

[6 : 55] We just read in verse 25, Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through him. Now, there are lots of ways that people can try to come to God, right?

We can try to come to God through presenting to him the good things that we have done in our lives. But the Bible is clear that we can never do enough good things in our lives to meet God's holy standard.

We could try to come to God through religious practices like saying your prayers every day or attending church or giving generously to church. And as good as all that is, the Bible tells us that none of these things are ever enough.

verse 25 tells us that Jesus only intercedes for those who come to God through him.

Those are the only people he is able to save completely because they trust not in something that they've done, but in Jesus' perfect work for them.

[8 : 07] He lived a life of perfect obedience to God they couldn't live. He took the punishment they deserved for their sin.

Jesus only intercedes for those who come to the Father through faith in him. So for those who are outside of Christ, Jesus is not speaking words of intercession on their behalf.

rather, as the coming judge, he is speaking words of condemnation over them. Over those who have rejected him.

So, here's the first question. It's not easy to ask or to think about. But which words is Christ speaking over your life? Are they words of intercession?

Or are they words of condemnation? We need to be real about that. Jesus only intercedes for those who come to God through faith in him.

[9 : 23] But what does it mean that Jesus intercedes for believers? Well, the word intercedes in verse 25, it means to make an appeal for someone. means advocating for them, representing them, speaking on their behalf.

Now, I wonder, did any of you ever get in trouble with a teacher in school? Alex is shaking his head, and I 100% don't believe him.

You know, I think we all figured out that teacher in school that nobody wanted to cross.

You can picture that teacher in your mind right now? Asaph is pointing at me. Well, I was in my first year of secondary school, and I had figured out who that teacher was.

Now, our school had a rule, it was a funny rule. No one was allowed upstairs at lunchtime. What did I do? I followed my friends upstairs at lunchtime.

[10 : 36] And who appeared at the end of the corridor? The teacher that no one wanted to cross. She shouted from the very end of this really long corridor, she shouted, freeze!

And I wish that had been my response. But instead it was flight. I panicked. And I started power walking back to the stairs.

For I knew that I was halfway down the stairs, and she was hot on my heels, and at this point, I knew, and all my friends upstairs knew, I was well and truly goosed. She was red with fury, probably from running down the corridor, door.

And I was guilty. I got both barrels. I wasn't spared.

And as I went home that evening, I was sick with worry, because I didn't know how I could ever work with that teacher again, or even be in the same room as her.

[11 : 45] And here I was in first year. But my mum, she heard about this, and she arranged a meeting with this teacher. And she interceded for me.

She appealed to the teacher to show me a mercy and forgiveness that I did not deserve. And here's what happened. After serving the detention, the teacher never once held it against me again.

In fact, we went on in later years to work really closely together. She was the one who first trained me in public speaking. And she actually became one of my favourite teachers in school.

Now, I know that none of that could have happened if my mum had not interceded for me in that moment. And in an ultimate sense, Jesus intercedes for guilty sinners like you and me.

God will be not to some irrelevant figure like a teacher or a boss. No, he appeals to God the Father before whom we all stand condemned.

[12:57] So, how does he intercede for us? How does he seal our pardon? Well, to understand how, the writer of this text in Hebrews, he wants to bring us back to the role of the priest in the Old Testament and what they did in the temple.

Now, the role of priest back then in the Old Testament law and all the practices that went with it, they were fulfilled by Jesus. So, these practices, they no longer apply to us today, but Jesus has fulfilled them and in verse 24 we read, he has now become our true high priest forever.

Okay, so that's what he's doing for us in heaven. So, we're going to look at this former role of priest in the Old Testament to learn how Jesus, our true high priest, intercedes for us now.

Now, the priest had two main roles. number one, they made sacrifices. Number two, they interceded for God's people.

So, have a look at verse 26 and what it says of Jesus. It says, such a high priest truly meets our need, one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

[14:20] Okay, so that's setting Jesus apart from all the Old Testament priests who are sinful people. Jesus was blameless, and therefore, verse 27, unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people.

Why? He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. people. You see, the priests made animal sacrifices for their own sin and for the sin of the people, and this was meant to point them forward to a once-for-all sacrifice someday.

But Jesus, because he never sinned, he could sacrifice himself. He poured out his innocent blood for our sin as a once-for-all sacrifice.

No more sacrifices needed. So that's the first part. Jesus, our true high priest, made a once-and-for-all sacrifice.

Now here's the second part, because the second part of the priest's role was to intercede for the people. So, once a year, the high priest would go into the inner room of the temple called the Holy of Holies.

[15:43] That's where God's presence dwelt. And there, the high priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed animal, thereby pleading to God to forgive the people on the basis of the innocent blood that was shed.

Now how does that point us to Jesus? Read with me chapter 8, verse 1 and 2. We do have such a high priest, Jesus, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

So Jesus, after making his sacrifice on the cross, he entered into the presence of God, the Father in heaven.

God's name. And there he serves in the sanctuary, day after day after day. And just as like in the Old Testament, the priest served in an earthly temple by presenting the blood, so Jesus now, in this heavenly temple in heaven, is presenting his blood to the Father, showing his nail-pierced hands and feet, appealing to the Father moment by moment for the forgiveness of his people.

And this is ongoing today. He is pleading with the Father, on the basis of my blood shed on the cross, forgive their sin.

[17:31] that is what Jesus is doing for you and I right now in heaven. His work continues.

And it's not just a one-time event. Maybe the first day that you put your trust in Christ. No, it's happening every single day since then, moment by moment.

He ever lives to intercede for us. There's another really helpful verse on the screen. It's from 1 John 2 verse 1.

It says, My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

Right now in heaven, moment by moment, Jesus is appealing to the Father for our forgiveness on the basis of his blood shed.

[18:37] And his request is granted every single time because the sacrifice he made is totally sufficient for every sin of his people.

That is amazing news for you and for me if we are in Christ. His one sacrifice purchased our forgiveness.

His daily intercession applies that forgiveness to us. Let me say that again. His one sacrifice purchased our forgiveness. His daily intercession applies that forgiveness to us. I want you to imagine a courtroom. it's not a perfect analogy but it may tell us something. Imagine God the Father is the judge and we are on the dock guilty of sin and rebellion against God the Father.

And imagine that Satan is the prosecutor. Justice must be done, he shouts. The penalty for their rebellion is separation from God forever.

[19 : 55] Eternal death. And we are guilty. And we could try to list off some things we did in our lives but they could never make up for our rebellion.

Now I want you to imagine Jesus as a defense lawyer throwing open the doors of the court. and he walks up the aisle to God the Father and he shows him his wounded hands and feet saying they trusted in me.

I've taken their sin and the sentence that they deserved on the cross. Forgive them for the sake of my blood.

And the judge looks at Christ and looks at us and declares us pardoned of all our sin. And given every benefit that Christ deserved freed and adopted as children of the Father forever Satan dismayed slinks away.

But he'll be back to accuse again no doubt. And when he does Jesus will be there because he never stops being our advocate before the judge.

[21 : 19] He stays at the Father's side ever living to intercede for us. His one sacrifice purchased our forgiveness. His daily intercession applies that forgiveness to us again and again and again.

Now why does all this matter? I've got a couple suggestions and four different ways that I feel like this matters deeply in our lives.

Here's the first one that I propose. Your forgiven status is no formal technicality. It's a living, breathing, reality.

Now I wonder, does anyone here have a random qualification or award given to you years ago?

Maybe back in the day you did like a night class in photography or something or tea blending.

Or maybe you even spent 13 years learning Irish. Maybe. But if I were to ask you *cod is anam dit*, you'd probably look at me like I had two heads.

[22 : 27] you see technically you studied Irish for 13 years but it's so far removed from your present reality. I mean it's technically true but not real today.

And sometimes we can think about our forgiveness before God like that, right? Technically I'm forgiven. It's written down somewhere I don't know in a filing cabinet in heaven, but it doesn't feel real in my day-to-day reality of failing time and time again.

We say yes I know Jesus died for my sin but am I really forgiven for that? I've messed up time and time again. Now we realize from reading this passage that Jesus' forgiveness is a living breathing reality.

Because right in the moment of our sin we have an advocate in heaven who is pleading to the father for us. There is nothing distant or technical or removed about that.

That is real and true and you can build your life upon that. You are not just forgiven in the past. You are being forgiven right now because Jesus always lives to intercede for you.

[23 : 46] Do you believe it? Live in it. here is the second thing. You are never condemned.

We read this passage already earlier. Romans 8 34 says this. Paul, speaking of those whose faith is in Jesus, he says, who then is the one who condemns?

No one. Christ Jesus who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

You see, the devil spittires condemnation at us throughout the day. You're finished. You're disgusting.

You've gone too far. You'll never come back from this. Do you have those thoughts? I do. They especially happen when we failed again and again in that area of sin we've struggled with for years.

[24 : 52] But can you see Jesus right now sitting at God's right hand refuting every single condemnation the devil levels at you?

Satan screams condemned. The son declares forgiven. And whose word do you think holds the weight before God?

if you belong to him and Jesus presents his nail pierced hands and feet to the father again in our darkest moments of sin and says I was condemned for them.

They are free. Remember you are never condemned because Christ ever lives to intercede for you. And that leads to our next implication. You are completely saved. It's in our struggle with sin that we often wonder am I really saved?

[26 : 00] We naturally assume that our salvation is based on how well we're doing in the Christian life. But what if I'm still struggling with the same sin for decades? What if I'm plagued with doubts about God, if he's even good?

What if I neglect scripture and prayer? What if I allow idols to become more important than God in my life and I don't love Christ like I once did?

We can naturally begin to wonder am I still in Christ? Has my sin and foolishness taken me away from him? Remember verse 25 Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

Jesus doesn't save half the way and you've got to make the rest of the way. He saves completely. His one sacrifice, purchase our forgiveness, his daily intercession applies it to us.

right now in the middle of your sin, your doubts, idolatry, wondering, Jesus is pleading for you and me, Father, for the sake of my blood, forgive them for their neglectfulness and their wandering.

[27 : 27] Christ's intercession reminds us we are completely saved. No matter how we may feel, and our feelings go up and down, right? no matter how we feel or how we failed, Jesus ever lives to intercede for us and therefore we are completely saved.

Praise God for that. And here's the last implication. You have Jesus praying for you in temptation. I think we focus our whole attention on how Jesus pleads to the Father for us in our sin.

Is that the only time Jesus intercedes for us? No. We can actually find in Scripture other examples of Jesus interceding for his people. Now here's one in Luke 22.

This is interesting. And Jesus is speaking to Simon Peter before his death. And Jesus says this, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.

[28 : 43] You see that Jesus was praying for Simon Peter here before his sin of betrayal. And he intercedes for us in our everyday weaknesses and temptations, praying like he does.

In John 17, 11, he says, this is Jesus' words in his prayer. He says, Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name.

See, I don't know what it is you're suffering or struggling with in your life. It could be mental health. It could be overwhelming pressure at work. It could be relationships. It could be finance.

And the temptation is to despair. Just give up. Curse God. Walk away. Jesus is praying for you in your temptation.

So you have the strength to withstand. And even when we do fall, Peter definitely did, it's not game over, is it?

[29 : 49] Because Jesus is praying protection over you and me in temptation and in failure. God is to finish.

Let's return to the question we asked at the start. Where is Jesus now? In the middle of my sin and suffering.

Is he doing anything? Am I really forgiven? I pray that we can all answer those questions now with assurance.

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. He sees everything I am going through. He is passionately interceding for me with all his heart, applying his forgiveness in every moment of sin.

I am completely saved because his one sacrifice purchased my forgiveness. His daily intercession keeps on applying it to me.

[30 : 55] He is boldly praying strength for me in temptation. I am never condemned but completely safe in him.

Let's pray. I wonder which one of those applications stands out to you most.

Maybe you could take a moment, we could all take a moment to thank God for what Jesus is doing for us right now and that impact it has on our day-to-day life.

Amen. Our Lord Jesus Christ, sorry for thinking that you're distant and removed.

Sorry for so often forgetting what you're doing for us right now in heaven. Amen. Help us to remember we are never condemned if we are in Christ.

[32 : 35] Help us to remember we are completely saved and safe. Help us to remember that you're praying for us in temptation, in weakness, in failure.

Comfort us and strengthen us with this knowledge as we go out into the week, into the year ahead, that when those questions arise in our mind again, we can remember and we can see you there in our mind's eye at the right hand of the Father, passionately interceding for us.
Amen. Amen.