

# How good a salvation do we have?

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. Welcome to this pre-recorded service for the 7th of March 2021.

! As you can see on the screen, we've got a little bit of a different program for you! There's something for Calvary Kids, which is available separately but included in this broadcast, and there is a series of five Easter questions that might be asked by neighbours or friends, which is also available separately.

So here we are from Calvary Church here in Brighton, an independent Bible teaching Baptist church with a congregation of back in a year ago, 70 or 80 people based here on the south coast of England.

My name is Philip Wells. I've worked for the church here for quite a long time, and I serve as pastor elder. So those are the notices. You've got other things that will be intimated by email.

And what we're going to do this morning is up there. These two questions are available separately. This is me doing the welcome. And in a moment, we'll do a song.

[ 1 : 28 ] And there it is on the screen of what we're going to be doing. Let me start us off with a couple of readings. One from Zechariah 14. You don't need to look it up. I'll just read it out.

It says, Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle. On that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah." Quite a remarkable little verse describing mountains moving at the touch of the Lord, and making a way of escape. And without going into any further detail, let's just think of that as the Lord who was able to move mountains to get his people out of trouble, to form a way of escape.

And we have the same thing in Exodus. In the story of Exodus, when the people were escaping from Egypt, and they had Pharaoh's army behind them, and the Red Sea in front of them, and they didn't know which way to turn. But God made a way, in this case not through the mountain, but through the sea. And the psalmist looks back on that and says, The water saw you, O God, the water saw you and writhed. The very depths were convulsed.

The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder, your arrows flashed back and forth, your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world, the earth trembled and quaked, your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.

[ 3 : 31 ] You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Psalm 77. And the psalmist took that past historical work of God in redeeming his people to be basic to his own understanding of who God was for him, and who God indeed remains. And we need to be trusting that God is able to move mountains to get his people out of trouble, and to part the sea to take them through, because he's able to do that sort of thing. He leads his people like a flock in those days by the hands of Moses and Aaron, but now by a better shepherd by the hand of Jesus. And surely we can trust him to lead us through, even if it means dividing the mountains or dividing the waters. And just one more thing before we sing a song we've been reading recently in the book of Esther, where God does a mighty redemption for his people, delivering them from certain death. But this time he does it by things that are apparently totally irrelevant.

He just puts various circumstances together. And in that way, sort of, instead of by the right hand of very visible power, by the left hand of subtle subtlety, and working things together behind the scenes, produces no lesser redemption than he did for the people in Egypt. Anyway, those are

some thoughts just to get us going. And we're going to sing the song, When I was lost, you came and rescued me, reached down into the pit and lifted me. And what he did in redemption for his people en masse in days gone by, he's done individually and personally for each one of us who have been saved and redeemed by him, When I was lost, you came and rescued me. When I was lost, you came and rescued me. When I was lost, you came and rescued me, reached down into the pit and lifted me. Oh Lord, such love, I was as far from you as I could be. You know all the things I've ever done. But Jesus' blood has cancelled everyone. Oh Lord, such grace to qualify me as your own.

God bless you. There is a new song in my mouth. There is a deep cry in my heart. A hymn of praise to almighty God. Hallelujah.

[ 6 : 38 ] Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And now I stand firm on this rock. My life is hidden now. With Christ in God, the old has gone. And the new has come. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Your love has lifted me. Now I have come into your family. For the Son of God has died for me. Oh Lord, such peace.

Such peace. I am as loved by you as I could be. In the full assurance of your love. Now with every confidence we come. Oh Lord, such joy to know that you delighted us.

There is a new song in my mouth. There is a deep cry in my heart. A hymn of praise to almighty God. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And now I stand firm on this rock. My life is hidden now. With Christ in God, the old has gone. And the new has come. Hallelujah.

[ 8 : 33 ] Hallelujah. Your love has lifted me. Many are the wonders you have done. And many are the things you have planned. How beautiful the grace that gives to us. All that we don't deserve. All that we cannot earn. But is a gift of love.

There is a new song in my mouth. There is a deep cry in my heart. A hymn of praise to almighty God. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And now I stand firm on this rock. My life is hidden now. With Christ in God, the old has gone. And the new has come. Hallelujah.

Alleluia. Your love has lifted me. Your love has lifted me.

Your love has lifted me. Your love has lifted me. Your love has lifted me.

[ 10 : 06 ] Your love has lifted me Your love has lifted me Your love has lifted me Your love has lifted me Your love has lifted me Your love has lifted me Reached down into the pit and lifted me O Lord, such love, such grace. Let's pray together. And as we conclude our prayer, we'll say the Lord's Prayer, which will be up on the screen.

Lord our God, we reach out to you in prayer. We lift our heart up to you in prayer. We, as it were, stretch out our hands to you in prayer and ask that our prayers might ascend to the highest place, the place of the throne, the place of sovereign rule, the place of almightyness, the place from which the mountains are moved, the seas are split, and you lead your people and nothing can thwart your plans. So we look to you and ask that we might be brought to a place of faith and worship and trust and dependence upon you. We want to look up and honour you, the God of faithfulness, the God of steadfastness, the God of dependability, the God who does not lead his people up blind alleys just to make fun of them, but the God who can be trusted, even in the valley of the shadow of death. So Lord, we look to you. We look to you as individuals in our own lives. We look to you as a church because we have need of your provision and guidance and redemption. We look to you to honour your son, to honour the promises that you have made that his church will be built, to honour the promises given to him and the task given to him, that he should save his people and none should be lost, but all raised on the last day.

O Lord, by your Holy Spirit, help us not to lose grip of these promises. Help us not to lose sight of them. Help us not to have our hearts grow cold. Help us not to be distracted by issues and problems in this world, but help us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, the forerunner who has gone before us and to put all our hope in him. So Lord, we come confessing our sins to you and asking for forgiveness. You know, Lord, what goes on in our hearts and in our lives and you know that we are constantly in need of forgiveness and we want to turn to you in repentance. We base our approach not on how good we've been or that we're good people, but rather we rest our, based our approach on what Christ has done in shedding his blood for us and reaching down into the pit and lifting us.

And we pray, Lord, simply that you will look upon us and not forget us. Not, not, may our situation not be overlooked by you, but will you please be with us and not fail us nor forsake us. Will you be the one who restores our souls, lifts up our heads and leads us in a sense in victory. So may we taste something of the joys of the river that makes glad the city of God. May we have a sight of something of the glories that await. May we be nerved in our faint endeavour. May we be given fresh courage. May we be able to strengthen weak knees, as it were, and get along to serve you. And we pray that you would bring glory to yourself in our nation and in our city and even in this part of our city where we seek to serve you.

Bless the churches, bless all the gospel work that goes on and restore, we pray, and bless and give increase and harvest as you have done in the past. So we bring our prayers to you and ask that you will be glorified. Hear our prayers we ask. Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[15:14] Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Okay, we've got a pre-recorded children's slot. If parents want to see this at a separate point, this is going to be available separately. But now just something for you guys, a few kids. Here we go.

Well, hello everybody, and particularly to the kids from Calvary, Calvary Kids. The next few Sunday mornings, we're going to do some stuff for Easter, especially for you. And I'm going to be helped by my two buddies here. Covey, who you remember from Christmas, he's really pleased to see you.

And Ludwig, Ludwig the Lamb, and he's very pleased to see you as well. And Ludwig seems to be rather strangely equipped today. You've got something on your head, haven't you? Yes, you have.

And we'll find out a little bit more about that. So we're going to do a little thing here with the three of us. And there's an activity for kids to do, as long as mum and dad are agreeable to that.

And we're going to have a song, and Anja is going to sing the song. So I'm just going to find the right place to click. And this is to do with Covey going skydiving. That's you, isn't it?

[16:48] So why are you skydiving? You've always wanted to be a skydiver. Okay, well, that seems a bit of a thing. So Covey goes skydiving. He's always wanted to be a skydiver. And you're going to help, are you? Yeah, okay, why have you got that thing on your head? It's a protective helmet, is it? Okay, well, let's find out why you need a protective helmet. So we've got a little video of Covey going skydiving. And we'll watch the video.

Perhaps we could see it again, because that happened rather quickly, didn't it? Are you okay at the end of that? You were? Okay. We've got a couple of pictures of their landing, because you probably want to know how the landing went. We've got a picture of him landing on the banisters, I think.

That was okay, was it? Yeah, and another rather awkward landing.

And then just to show that everything was okay. Was it okay? Yeah, okay. A final, just that there, everything okay. Yeah, they're quite happy with that. So that was what your helmet was for, was it?

Shall we take it off? Because you don't really need to be protected at the moment. Okay, so that's um, uh, parachuting, skydiving. And my thought is that it's easy to parachute down, isn't it? Yeah.

But it's not easy to parachute up.

No, it's actually impossible to parachute upwards. I guess we could play the video backwards, but let's not do that. So it's impossible. It's easy to parachute down, but impossible to parachute up.

[19:04] Well, we're going to think about Easter and Jesus's ups and downs or downs and ups.

There's a part of the Bible, Philippians chapter 2, verses 1 to 11, that maybe you could read at home. And I've just picked out some bits of it. It's about Jesus's ups and downs or downs and ups.

And it starts off that though he was in very nature God, he didn't count equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing and took on him the form of a servant and became obedient to death. So he's going down. So you see my hand going down, even death on the cross.

So he went down to death on the cross.

And therefore God highly exalted him. Yes, he did. Oh, and what does exalt mean? Do you know what exalt means? Made him high. That's right. God made Jesus very high and lifted him up so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Are you happy with that? And you're happy with that. Well, you're a Christian lamb, aren't you?

Yeah. Okay. So let's just look at that. Jesus came down. And boys and girls, whoever you're with, tell them in what way did Jesus come down?

By becoming human and dying on the cross. Maybe that's what you thought. And Jesus came down, like you came down, like that. But he also went up. Yeah, he did. That's an impossible thing. He went up.

Something supernatural about this. In what way did Jesus go up? Just tell the person that you're with. In what way did Jesus go up?

[ 21 : 05 ] Did you get this answer? By God raising him from the dead and taking him to the highest place, the highest place in heaven, the throne, the right hand of God. God raised him to the highest place. He went up.

And then another question. When he came down, what did he achieve? Do you know what he achieved? Okay. But don't tell anybody. Okay. Don't tell anybody. So there is an answer to that. Ask the person that you're with, if it's your mum and dad or whoever it is, did he achieve anything by coming down? He did.

And did he achieve anything by going up? Was there a reason by going up? What difference did that make? Did he go up so that something? And the answer is something to do with knees. So that's something to do with knees.

And I want to ask you boys and girls, has that happened to your knee? Have a look at the Bible and see what happens to knees. So there's Jesus's ups and downs. And you were a skydiver in that, weren't you? Yeah. And you were a protective helmeted helper, weren't you?

Yeah. Okay. Well, that's our little thought and the activity. Well, making a parachute. If you get permission, please get permission. You need a clean hanky or a cloth, something like that. You need some string to tie the corners to. And then you tie them to a volunteer cuddly animal.

[ 22 : 42 ] So there's got to be a cuddly animal that doesn't mind this happening to them. And then you need a safe place to drop. So we used our stairs, but you need somewhere safe. So please get permission for this.

And if you've had a success, it'd be great to send in a video. Maybe we can play it next time. So that's the activity. And the song is from Anya and Lilia and Daniel. And they're going to sing My Lighthouse.

Let's say a prayer and then hand over to them. Thank you that Jesus came down for us, for our salvation. Thank you that he went up so that every knee should bow before him. We pray that our knees would bow to him.

Thank you for this. Amen. Amen. Yeah. Amen. Do you want to say goodbye? Okay. Okay. Don't get carried away. Don't get carried away.

See you next week and out with a song. Bye-bye. Bye-bye.

[ 24 : 19 ] Bye-bye.

I won't give up tomorrow, grace With each morning I'll rise and sing My God, Thou will lead me through You are me, is it my town will sing You are me, is it my town will sing My lighthouse, my lighthouse Shining in the dark, I'll sing

My lighthouse, my lighthouse I'll be my small, look at me I'll sing, I'll sing, I'll sing My lighthouse, my lighthouse I'll sing, I'll sing, I'll sing My lighthouse, my lighthouse You are me, is it my lighthouse, my lighthouse Shining in the darkness, I'll fall to fall My lighthouse, my lighthouse

I'll be my small, look at me So it's impossible to parachute upwards It would be a supernatural thing But the power of God lifts us up Beyond what nature and our own strength can do And that's the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ We're now going to have a reading This is Christopher is kindly once again The reader And we're going to read in Hebrews chapter 7 From verse 11 through to chapter 8 verse 2 And you notice in chapter 8 he says what the whole point is Thanks Christopher Hebrews chapter 7 verse 11

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood For on the basis of it the law was given to the people Why was there still need for another priest to come?

[ 28 : 11 ] One in the order of Melchizedek Not in the order of Aaron But when there is a change of the priesthood There must also be a change of the law He of whom these things are said Belong to a different tribe And no one from that tribe Has ever served at the altar For it is clear That our Lord descended from Judah And in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests And what we have said Is even more clear If another priest like Melchizedek appears One who has become a priest Not on the basis of a regulation As to his ancestry But on the basis of the power Of an indestructible life For it is declared You are a priest forever In the order of Melchizedek The former regulation is set aside Because it was weak and useless For the law made nothing perfect And a

better hope is introduced By which we draw near to God And it was not without an oath  
Others became priests without an oath But he became a priest with an oath When God said to him  
The Lord has sworn And will not change his mind You are a priest forever Because of this oath  
Jesus became the guarantee Of a better covenant Now there have been many of those priests  
Since death prevented from continuing in office But because Jesus lives forever He has 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 Such a high priest 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 For his own sins And then for the sins of  
the people He sacrificed for their sins once  
But all When he offered himself For the Lord appoints as high priests Men who are weak But the  
oath Which came after the law Appointed the Son Who has been made perfect forever The point of  
what we are saying Is this We do have such a high priest Who sat down at the right hand On the  
throne of the majesty in heaven And who serves in the sanctuary The true tabernacle Set up by the  
Lord Not by man Amen We read in Hebrews At another time That we have this As an anchor for the  
soul Firm and secure An anchor within the sanctuary Within the holy place An anchor that goes  
right into heaven And into As it were The place of the presence of God And here is a song again  
About hope and trust My hope is built on nothingness  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness In every high and stormy gale My anchor holds within the veil  
If you're interested in the number It's 779 My hope is built on nothingness Than Jesus' blood and  
righteousness My hope is built on nothingness My hope is built on nothingness Than Jesus' blood  
and righteousness No merit of my own I claim But holy trust in Jesus' name When darkness fails  
His lovely face  
I rest on His unchanging grace In every high and stormy gale My anchor holds and will not fail  
Christ alone Cornerstone We've made strong In the Savior's love Through the storm He is Lord  
Lord of all He is Lord He is Lord His blood, support me in the rising flood.  
[ 33 : 17 ] When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and say.  
I trust His righteous character, His counsel, promises and power.  
His name and honor are at stake, to save me from the burning lake.  
Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Saviour's love.  
Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.  
[ 34 : 21 ] When the last child His voice shall sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found, Who's in His  
righteousness alone?  
Faultless to stand before the throne. Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Saviour's  
love.  
Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.  
Christ alone, cornerstone, we've made strong in the Saviour's love.  
Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.  
[ 35 : 40 ] Let's pray as we hear God's word. Oh Lord, you said that if we meditate on your word,  
we'll be like trees planted by streams of water, that we will not wither up, that we will bear fruit in  
due season.  
And we pray that this might be the case as we meditate on your word this morning. Help, speak and  
hear alike. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we've prayed and let's come back into Hebrews.  
This is the question that the writer is addressing all the way through. What will keep us from slipping  
back or slipping away or slipping off, as I put it there? And they're slipping off the path, the  
dangerous path at the edge.  
What will keep us on the path? And as I said last time, there is the sort of church discipline, church  
community aspect, the disapproval of others. What would church people say if they, what they  
think, if they knew what I was plotting or planning or where I was heading in my life?  
And, yep, the community were to encourage one another. And then the role of personal disciplines,  
which, of course, are extremely valuable. But to think that if my own disciplines, I'm strong, I can  
pray longer, pray longer, read more, study harder, live better in my own strength.  
[ 37 : 15 ] It's a little bit like Peter, isn't it, who was headed for a fall. To be sure, we strengthen  
feeble knees and get on and get up, but it's not our own strength, is it? The writer to the Hebrews  
would say that what we need is to constantly replenish our sense of how great Jesus is.

And that living contact with him, that living communion with him is the real thing that keeps us going from the inside. Fix your eyes on Jesus, he says, and come to him, the great high priest in heaven, and get help from him.

And the writer wants us to know how great Jesus is. So that's where we're going along that path again this morning. Just to remind you the path that we've been on.

We started off with the divinity of the sun. He's far better than the angels. Then he takes us through the humanity of the sun. It's Abraham's descendants that he helps.

Then there's the comparison with the stages of Revelation, the Mosaic stage, which was great. Moses was a good servant in the house, but Jesus is the son who is better.

[ 38 : 30 ] Then he went to this idea of the rest which is yet to come. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, but make every effort to enter that rest.

So there is still a rest, he says. It wasn't, that wasn't achieved when the people entered the promised land. There is still a rest, the eternal rest of God, which we are still to be making every effort to get to.

It puts us in the same position as the people crossing the desert, then the place of testing and patience and faith. And that's where we are.

And then he moved on to priesthood. He had this in his mind all the time. Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence to find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus, the son of God, is the great high priest. And that's something that he's been aiming to get to. And the priests, of course, connect people to God. And the Hebrews people had got their thoughts fixed on the Old Testament style of priests.

[ 39 : 33 ] The ones described and set up in the Law of Moses. But the writer says, look, you don't want to be settled in with that now that you've got the opportunity of Jesus, who does this far better as per the promise about the priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

That seminal promise in Psalm 110. Now, today, I want to look at these spiritual truths about the greatness of our salvation.

And in chapter 7, verses 11 to 28, I'm going to try and talk about those verses just now. The writer is talking about the Levitical style priesthood versus the Melchizedek style priesthood.

And, of course, that's entirely relevant to his first readers because they're thinking about going back to Judaism with the Levitical style priesthood. But I don't think it's just relevant to them, to that specific situation.

The themes he's touching on are so universal and so human. They address the human condition, not just the Jewish condition.

[ 40 : 47 ] And he's really striking at some basic spiritual themes, which I'm going to try and tap into. These themes bring us back to Jesus wherever we are, whoever we are, and wherever we're tempted to drift.

Be it people tempted to drift back to Judaism or people tempted to drift back into secularism or tempted to drift into nominalism or whatever it may be.

And I think he's picking on some fundamental themes. That's what I'm going to try and bring out. Now, he's using, as I say, the comparison between the Levitical style priesthood, which I've drawn there up on the left, and the Melchizedek style priesthood, which I've drawn.

You wouldn't have recognized that. It's not a fried egg he's holding. It's, he brings out bread and wine. That was the idea of that little drawing. But remember, there's an oath concerning the Melchizedek style priesthood.

He's promised on oath. There will be such a priest in the future. And that, of course, is fulfilled in Jesus. And this is a point the writers of Hebrews is keen to make. So let's have that little comparison there up on the screen and in our minds.

[ 42 : 01 ] But looking at the sort of more universal aspects which he's touching on through this method. So first of all, I want to say Jesus is a great savior and we have a great salvation because of our great need.

Now in verse 26, it says such a high priest meets our need. Now in the original, the word need isn't quite as prominent. It's really saying it's suitable to people like us.

Well, what are we like that we should need a priest? What is suitable to us? So let's think about our need.

Do we have need as a people who want to stand before God, as people who live in this world that's made by God? We look up. We have a creator who watches down over us.

Do we have a need in relation to him? I mean, who is he? He is fair. He is kind. He is just. He is giving and generous.

[ 43 : 07 ] He is faithful and unwavering. And if we're honest, we are the opposite of that in and of ourselves. We're not fair. We're biased. We pick and choose what we complain about so as to suit ourselves.

And we're not fundamentally and basically kind people. There is a deep unkindness in the human nature. And we're not fundamentally and essentially just people.

I know we, by God's grace, seek justice in many ways. But deep down, that's a flawed sense. We're disproportionate in the things that we find unjust.

And there's some hugely unjust things we don't bat an eyelid for. And some things that are just a little bit unjust. We make a big, big fuss about them. That's human nature. That's sinful human nature.

And God is giving and generous. And we have a deep selfishness, which is very difficult to eradicate from within us. And God is faithful. And we're people who cheat.

[ 44 : 11 ] That's what we are by nature. And that still remains within Christian people, although they have new hearts. Yet sin isn't eradicated. So that stuff's still around.

And who, like that, would dare approach God direct? Who would dare approach God and say, I have some prayers I want you to answer. I've got a life I want you to bless.

Bearing in mind we're so unlike Him. Who would dare approach God direct? How can we come to Him without real shame and guilt?

How can we come with confidence and peace? Because that's what it's all about. Well, this is our deep need. And this high priest meets our need.

This is the need for a go-between. Between people and God. Someone to bring us to God. That need is expressed in many places. And that role is expressed in many places.

[ 45 : 13 ] Just touching upon a couple of them. There's a famous verse in Job. Chapter 9, verse 33. Where he says, If only there was a daysman between us.

To lay his hand upon us both. That was a daysman. That's the old translation. New International Version says, Somebody to arbitrate between us. You know, an umpire.

Somebody to see fair play. An arbitrator. Somebody to lay his hand on both of us. If only there was such a person. Says Job. Well, he's expressing a universal need.

Somebody to bring us to God. In 1 Timothy 2, verse 5. Paul expresses the fulfillment of that need.

For there is one God. And one mediator. Between God and men. The man Christ Jesus. Who gave himself as a ransom for all.

[ 46 : 13 ] He is the one who is between God and men. And that's what we need. And our deep need of a mediator. So we deeply need this person.

This go-between. This advocate. Somebody to speak up for us in the presence of God. A mediator to bring us together. Or in the vocabulary of Hebrews. He's going to say this person is a priest.

We deeply need this priest. How can we live? How can we function? How can we survive a single day.

Or actually a single moment. Without this person. So, number one. We have a deep need. Number two.

This person who is Jesus the Saviour. His work is perfect. There is a perfection. So, chapter 7, verse 11. If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood.

[ 47 : 15 ] Why was there need for another priest to come? That's what he's aiming for. Perfection. And the Levitical priesthood didn't do it. Chapter 7, verse 19. The law made nothing perfect.

It didn't do what it was supposed to do. The law made nothing perfect. Chapter 7, verse 28. The law appoints as high priests men who are weak. But the oath which came after the law appointed the Son who has been made perfect forever.

So, his work is perfect. There is a perfectness. I just made that word up. A perfectness to it. What sort of perfection are we talking about here?

Well, in the words of a TV advert, it does what it says on the tin. That's perfection. It does what it says on the tin. And a perfect Saviour does what it says on the tin.

He saves. He brings us to God. That's what he manages to do. In verse 25 it says he's able to save completely those who come to God through him.

[ 48 : 24 ] So, he does this. He brings people to God. And this is what he does. And so, he doesn't sort of half do it. We were on a trip to the Eden Project once, and our visit happened to coincide with the visit of Her Majesty the Queen.

We hadn't realized this to begin with, because as we drove up to the car park, it said, we welcome you. We're so pleased you're with us. Your Majesty, this is the day we've been looking forward to. And we thought, well, we didn't realize we were that special. But then we realized, actually, it was the Queen who was visiting. And we did get to see her. We saw her about, I don't know, 20, 30 meters away.

And we loved her immediately. But it was only at a distance. We never actually got to meet her. And Jesus, that was an imperfect meeting, wasn't it?

Jesus is a perfect Savior. He really does bring us to God. He doesn't just get us in the mood. I mean, some styles of Christianity are strong on emotion and mood, aren't they?

[ 49 : 36 ] And you feel great. And then when you leave, you think, well, what was all that about? This is not just a mood thing. He brings us to God.

He is a perfect Savior. He does what it says on the tin. He doesn't just pat us on the head and say, God loves you. That's great. Now go away. He says, I am bringing you to God.

You have access to God through me. I am a perfect Savior. He brings us to the throne of God, which, let's believe what he says.

This is great, isn't it? Our prayers, for example, really do get to their destination. They are addressed to God and through the perfect work of Jesus, they arrive at the throne.

I've heard stories about packages that have been addressed to one person and put into the hands of a courier who will remain nameless.

[ 50 : 36 ] But there are some letters up there on the screen. And they don't get to the right place at all. They can go to a different country or a different continent. But Jesus is a perfect Savior.

And he brings us to God. So, for example, our prayers are not misdelivered. And our case is heard by the Almighty One.

He does hear us because the work of Jesus as a Savior is perfect. Let's move on. Number three. There is an eternal rock under our mortality. And I'm thinking of chapter 7, verse 16, where it says about Melchizedek, the one who has become a priest, not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

It's a strong contrast, isn't it? Not to do with genealogy, birth certificates, all the paperwork on that. Not to do with that.

[ 51 : 48 ] But on the basis of a resurrection, an indestructible life. Now, as a church, and a number of us as individuals over the past few months have tasted the bitterness of death.

It is a bitter thing. A lot of the time we can ignore it, particularly if we're young. I think it'll never happen to us. But actually, to one extent or another, we're all tasting the power of death.

We've tasted bereavement, some of us, more bitterly than others. We've seen the reality of cancer, of the COVID disease.

We've heard of people who have died in circumstances, the risks of this life. We've seen people who have died because they've got older.

And these things are real. They are part of the human condition. They're unavoidable. And it's a fantasy. We think we can just ignore them and they go away.

[ 52 : 57 ] I mean, even the pains and sicknesses that we experience are, in a sense, a little touch of death in this fallen world. But here is a saviour who is untouchable by death.

He is untouchable by death because he has the power of an indestructible life. He cannot be destroyed. His life is indestructible.

Now, he is indestructible. Well, he himself tasted the full experience of death. He tasted death, didn't he? But having tasted it, he defeated it in his resurrection.

So, not according to genealogy, but according to the power of life indestructible. That's a phrase worth chewing on, isn't it? Power of an indestructible life.

Just looking in the garden or walking in the park, we can see dead leaves. And they're sort of falling and brown and withered and they're dying off.

[ 54 : 05 ] But underneath, we can see some trees with buds, some whole chestnut trees down our street. And the buds are there. You can see them welling up with new life.

And there's something, if you like, indestructible there. The buds come back and come back and come back. And here we are touched with mortality.

But here is something that we're in touch with, if you like, a rock under our feet of immortality.

There's an eternal rock under our feet of immortality, we who are mortal.

There's something of salvation here which endures beyond this life, beyond this world, into eternity. And because we are saved by someone with the power of an indestructible life.

Number four, there is a constant source of help. There is a constant source of help. Chapter seven, verse 24 says, Jesus lives forever and has a permanent priesthood.

[ 55 : 15 ] And then goes on to say, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. So he abides forever.

This abiding, he remains. He remains forever. And he is, his priesthood, where am I looking?

Here's a permanent priesthood. It's not one that you pass on, that gets passed on. It isn't like that.

In my community hat on, which I try to get involved with from time to time.

Over in the level, you may know that there are sometimes issues going on there of various sorts.

Antisocial behaviour and so on.

And there's a new set of PCSOs, community support officers, community support officers, who have been appointed. And unfortunately, they don't know the people.

[ 56 : 20 ] They don't know. They haven't been taught who you go to. They haven't been briefed on the different agencies that are involved.

I'm sure they are now, but at one point they were briefed with that. And we had to go through it all over again and had to learn the ropes all over again. But Jesus is not a priesthood where you have to go back to square one and try and learn all over again, because he abides forever.

His knowledge of the situation is constant and reliable and deep. And in verse 25, it says, he always lives to intercede for them.

He always lives to be interceding for them. To intercede is to approach on behalf of another in this sense, that he goes to God on behalf of us. And that's wonderful, isn't it?

Because we need the Lord day by day, and I would say moment by moment. And he is always alive.

[ 57 : 34 ] He is always living to intercede for us. In other words, the helpline doesn't close down at weekends. You know, we value your call.

The switchboard is open at nine o'clock on Monday. Don't bother us at the moment. He is ever living to make intercession for us. Our access is not intermittent.

You know, it's not like on Zoom where you suddenly get somebody frozen and you think, what are they saying? Are they listening? Lost all contact with them. God, our contact with God is not like that, that it comes and goes in blipses.

And fits and starts. And unlike solicitors who, in my experience, maybe, maybe I'm not typical. They tend to forget unless you keep pestering them.

But Jesus is not like this. He doesn't sort of get diverted onto other things. So he forgets what you've been asking him about. He is always on the case for us.

[ 58 : 38 ] He is ever living to make intercession for us. And brothers and sisters, that is so valuable, isn't it? Let's take that as what the Lord says and bank on it.

Number five. He has made one effective payment. Now the human conscience can't help but wrestle with this matter of payment.

I don't know whether you've noticed your conscience doing this, but it's part of the human makeup. And the human conscience says, day by day, have I paid my dues?

Is God going to accept me? Am I in debt to him? Do I have to keep on working? You know, I do this work, work, work, work. Push myself, push myself, push myself.

Prove myself, prove myself. Justify myself, justify myself. Something quite deep in the human makeup that thinks that way.

[ 59 : 39 ] The hymn writer put it like this. Could my zeal, no respite, no. In other words, do I just have to keep burning myself out to be right with God and still not sure that I've done that.

Could my tears forever flow? No matter how much I express regret, does that pay the payment for sin? All for sin could not atone.

Thou must save and thou alone. This is the beauty, isn't it? And the wonder of Protestant understanding of salvation. One ransom payment made a finished work. Nothing more to add. No more to do. All done. All done for us on the cross. And this is the point he makes in verse 27.

Unlike other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day. First for his own sins, then for the sins of the people. He doesn't have to keep on doing it and neither do we.

[ 60 : 47 ] He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. Once for all translates just one word, which I would say once and for all, on one occasion.

He sacrificed for their sins once and for all when he offered himself. There he is on the cross and crying out, whatever it is, tetelestai, it is finished.

You could imagine in some costume drama, the two male protagonists with a beef against each other saying, right. I'm fed up with this constant going on at one another, this constant getting at one another.

Let's settle this once and for all. We will have a duel to the death. And yes, you can imagine them settling this matter. Let's settle this matter once and for all. And they go and have a duel.

And then, well, they might think, well, that's finished. Well, whatever the validity of the illustration, Jesus did say, let's settle this matter of sin once and for all.

[ 62 : 00 ] So there's no going back. There's no contest about this. There's no issues left.

I will pay for the sins of my people once and for all. I'll put OFA there. And when I've done that, this will be signed in blood.

No further payment needed. Or as we say colloquially, paid on the nail. He made one sacrifice.

He sacrificed for their sins once and for all when he offered himself. One effective payment. All our sins, brothers and sisters, from the past, the ones that wake you up in the middle of the night and think, did I do that?

Oh, how could I? I'm so cringing with embarrassment and shame. And our sins that we continue to commit day by day.

[ 62 : 59 ] Oh, the Lord have mercy on us. And all the sins that will be in the future. He knows them all. Nailed to the cross.

Paid on the nail. One effective payment. This is such a great relief to our conscience, isn't it? And makes him such a wonderful saviour.

He's a great saviour because he made one effective payment. And I say, how good is that? So we were asking about the greatness of salvation and how good a salvation do we have.

Well, how good a salvation do we have? And the points that I made was follows. Well, we need a great salvation because our need is very real and very deep. Who would dare to approach God without a great priest, without a great saviour?

And then I said, following the passage, there is a perfection, a perfectness about the work of Jesus and his priesthood. He does what it says on the tin. He brings us to God.

[ 64 : 08 ] Then I said, following the idea of an indestructible life, there is an eternal rock under the feet of our mortality. There is something unshakable and enduring forever, enduring even through death about this saviour and this salvation.

There is a constant source of help because he lives forever to make intercession for us. And he has made one effective payment, paid on the nail, no further payment needed.

And here is how good our salvation is. And is it the sort of salvation you'd say, well, I think I can get better elsewhere. You know, we have the best possible.

We have an unrivalled, matchless, priceless salvation in Jesus Christ. And that's the question. Who on earth would turn away from this?

Well, may God help us. Amen. The writer says the point of what we're saying is this. We have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

[ 65 : 28 ] We have a high priest. Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, who ever lives and pleads for me. So we'll go out singing this song and have a closing prayer afterwards.

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high preem.

God above, I have a stronger perfect feeling, a great high priest whose blamest love, whoever lives and pleads for me.

My name is written on his hands, my name is written in his clothes, I know that while in heaven he stands, no power can force me to depart, no power can force me to depart.  
When faith intends me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within, I look to help and see him there, who made an end of all my sin.

[ 67 : 08 ] Because the sinner, Savior died, when sinful souls, it dropped to three. But the judge is satisfied to look on him and pardon me.

Behold him then, the risen Lamb, my perfect spot, less righteous head.

The great unchangeable I am, the King of glory and of grace.

But with himself I cannot die. My soul is purged, life is joy. My life is saved with Christ on high.

With Christ my Savior and my God. With Christ my Savior and my God. Let's close with this familiar prayer from the letter to the Hebrews.

[ 68 : 35 ] May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant, brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good, equip you with everything good, for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Amen. Amen. That's it from me. If you're watching in real time, we've got a Zoom-type meeting this evening, and hope to see you then.

But otherwise, it's goodbye from me. Bye-bye.