

Today if you hear his voice... (ii)

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] Well, good morning everybody. John writes in the book of Revelation, 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. There was no longer any sea.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new. That's the final hope and anticipation of the Christian gospel, the final rest as it's referred to in the book of the Hebrews.

That's what we're going to be thinking about today. So, welcome to this pre-recorded meeting for Calvary Evangelical Church in Brighton here, recorded for the 30th of August 2020.

[1 : 22] Still not able to meet together, but we hope we'll be able to make some progress before too long. I'll say the usual brief introduction for those who are tuning in for the first time.

We are here in Brighton, Sussex, UK, south coast of England. We are a group of people who believe in Jesus Christ and who've been saved by his grace and for his praise and honour.

There's usually 70 or 80 of us meet in what we remember as being normal times, and we're from all sorts of different countries and backgrounds, but the Lord has brought us together.

My name's Philip Wells. I'm one of a team of elders here at Calvary. I'm leading this morning. Other notices will be circulated in the usual way.

So, welcome to you. If you're regular or if you've just dropped in, I'm going to click and show what's happening in the rest of today.

[2 : 26] The rest of this morning, rather. So, we're going to do the things that we usually do when we meet together. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. changed. May we so meet with you and so respond to your word that we do indeed arrive safely in your final rest. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

We're going to sing, actually, as we have sung on previous occasions, from Psalm 95. It's the foundation of the text that we're still looking at. It talks about today, so it was relevant when today was last week and it's relevant when today is today.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. It begins with this heartfelt praise. Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord. Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation.

[4 : 03] Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth.

The mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands form the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

So we're going to have Psalm 95. Come with all joy to sing to God, a saving rock, the living Lord. In glad thanksgiving, seek his face, with songs of victory and grace.

In holiness and light arrayed, above all gods that we have made.

[5 : 31] He is the one almighty King, and is the glory that we sing.

The earth is his from east to west, from ocean floor to mountain crest. He made the sea and formed the lands.

God's breath. God is our shepherd. God alone we are his people, all his own.
But if you hear his voice today, do not reject what he will say.

[7 : 03] When Israel wandered from God's path, they suffered forty years of wrath.

That generation went astray. They did not want to know his way.

They put their saviour to the test. And saw his path, but lost their rest.

Now having sung, we're going to pray together. And to bring us into prayer, I've put on the screen this confession.

It's somewhat like the confession in the Anglican prayer book. So as we come to pray, I'd invite us to say together out loud these words of confession and then move into a prayer of adoration.

[8 : 15] Let us pray. Let us pray. Amen. Mighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

We humbly ask you for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, please send your Holy Spirit into our hearts with fresh power, as we offer ourselves again, totally, in your service today.

Make us more the people you want us to be. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. And let's bring our worship to God in as we continue in prayer.

We bring our worship to you, almighty God. We honour you as majestic creator of the universe, as expressed in your creation, bigger, deeper, more wise, more detailed, more immense, more caring and loving than we can fathom.

[9 : 35] We praise and honour the Father, from whom all things flow, the source of all life and light and wisdom and holiness. We honour the Father, who in love planned the salvation of us sinners and chose before the foundation of the world to bring that plan into perfect effect in time and space.

and the Father, who will do all things for the praise of his glorious grace. We praise and honour the Son, through whom and for whom are all things, the exact expression of the Father, worthy of no less honour and worship, the one who took human flesh, walked this earth, endured the contradiction of sinners, and was subject to human condemnation and died on the cross.

We honour the Son, who was raised from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling all things.

The Son, who will one day return in person and be the judge of all and the one who makes all things new. We praise and thank and honour you.

We praise and honour the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. We praise the one who brooded over the waters in creation, who fills the world with life, who is now given to your people in the new covenant, the one who brings new life, who opens the heart, who brings life to the dead soul, who indwells each believer, who teaches us to pray, teaches us to long for heaven, teaches us to hate sin and love holiness, the one who brings us the presence of the Father and the Son, who brings heaven into us until the day we are brought to heaven.

[11 : 35] So, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring you praise and worship today. And we ask in this world with all its need, with all its trouble and sin and lostness, may your holy name be honoured in hearts and souls throughout the nations.

Bring people through the gospel to love you and serve you. And may you have all the praise and honour and glory, for we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now we're going to have those two readings from Scripture that we had last time.

Christopher's going to read us from chapter 3, and then Julia will follow on seamlessly, thanks to our video editor.

Thus we're going to read chapter 3 and chapter 4 of Hebrews. Thank you, Christopher and Julia.

Hebrews chapter 3. Therefore, holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest, whom we confess.

He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.

[13 : 00] For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house, and we are his house. If we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. So, as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, and for forty years saw what I did.

That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, the hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways. So, I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest. See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it's called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

We have come to share in Christ, if we hold firmly to the end, the confidence we had at first. As has just been said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.

[14:27] Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt, and with whom he was angry for forty years?

Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed?

So, we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did. But the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

Now we who have believed enter that rest. Just as God has said, so I declared on oath in my anger they shall never enter my rest. And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world.

[15:34] For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words, On the seventh day God rested from all his works, and again in the passage above he says, They shall never enter my rest.

Therefore, since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, God again set a certain day, calling it today.

This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. For the word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.

[16:49] It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The reading in Hebrews moves from this very realistic and challenging description of the intensity of the trial of the church before she enters God's rest.

[18:03] And it follows on with a similarly exalted description of the help that the church has in terms of the high priest.

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The reading speaks about the great high priest, and we're going to have a song about the great high priest, the one who ever lives and pleads for me.

It's number 503 in the book. If you have it, it will be on the screen before the throne of God above. I have a strong, a perfect plea.

A great high priest's name is love.

[19 : 32] Whoever lives and pleads for me My name is written on his hands My name is hidden in his throne I know that while in heaven we stand No power can force me to depart No power can force me to depart When Satan tempts 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 Because the sinless Savior died And sinful soul is counted through

The death of the judge is satisfied To look on him and pardon me To look on him and pardon me Behold him then, the risen Lamb My perfect spotless righteousness The great unchangeable I am The King of glory and of grace But with himself I cannot die My soul is purchased by this truth All I can sing with Christ on high With Christ my Saviour and my God With Christ my Saviour and my God

So we're going to think about those scriptures And we're going to have two bites of this cherry today So in a few minutes I'd like to try and recap Where we are and what we looked at last time And then after we've sung something else We'll look again at the text So let's pray for both those sessions Just now Lord your word is sharper than any two-edged sword So please help speaker and hearer alike And don't let us miss the power and effect of your word Please let us so hear that none of us Misses out on the promised rest Amen So let's do a brief recap Of where we've got to With the letter to the Hebrews I'd particularly like to go over last time

Because there's quite a lot in it So here's the standard introduction There's one of the people to whom The writer is writing Under pressure And despite the pressures We ask this person to hold on There's a sort of holding on Keep on And to run the race And to get to the end So there is a path to heaven There is a way to follow But at every point There is an alternative beckoning And the writer says to us Don't be so stupid As to step off the path Like the path in the book and film The Hobbit The way through Mirkwood Where Gandalf the wizard Said to Bilbo the Hobbit You're safe if you stick to the path But don't go off the path Don't leave the path Bilbo The letter to the Hebrews Is written to a group of people

Who had started well In a costly way They had started well But they were now in danger of drifting Getting sluggish As it says in 6.12 Or falling short of the final goal As it says in 4.1 Be careful that none of you Be found to fall short of it So the writer tells us That he's writing a word of exhortation Or a message of exhortation He says it's a short letter Seems quite long to me Exhortation could have these two sides to it Positive promises and encouragements And incentives This is good Worth going for And exhortation can also have the negative side And there are some frightening warnings in this book So we have these warnings That we've just been looking at Therefore since the promise of entering his rest Still stands Let us be careful That none of you be found To have fallen short of it

[24 : 42] And this inevitably raises the question About God's grace And his plans and purposes in election So does this mean that all the stuff about God's choice of us And that he will keep his chosen ones So that they certainly arrive in heaven at the end Is that all wrong?

And the answer is no It's not all wrong But the certainty of the outcome Does not invalidate the means of getting there That's a quote from Professor Gaffin of Westminster Theological Seminary He's saying that God will certainly bring his people To final salvation But he will use means Like encouraging them with positive things And warning them with frightening warnings The certainty of the outcome Does not invalidate the means of getting there So we looked at these chapters And they really just make this point Today if you hear his voice Do not harden your hearts And he's addressing it to his readers At that point Of course we're reading it at our point in history And the basis for this is Psalm 95 Which was written a long time ago In the time of David So thinking of this warning Psalm 95 is the basis

For the writer's warning He says verse 7 So NIV says so The Greek says therefore As the Holy Spirit says Present tense The Holy Spirit is speaking Through Psalm 95 to us And you get this remarkable word Today In verse 7 Today if you hear his voice It's in verse 15 Today if you hear his voice It's in chapter 4 verse 7 God has set a certain day Calling it today When a long time later He spoke through David Today if you hear his voice And so on So the basis for this warning This current relevant Present warning Is Psalm 95 And we try to delve a little bit Into this matter of the time sequence And the different time locations

That God used And it's still today And in fact he goes on to say End of chapter 4 The word of God I think particularly meaning this word But all words of God It applies to But in particular this word Is

living and active Sharper than any double-edged sword It penetrates to dividing soul and spirit Joints and marrow It judges the thought and attitudes of our hearts So this is a living word And it gets right to us And says today What are your motives?

What are your intentions? What are your thoughts and attitudes In your heart? Psalm 95 is the basis of the warning And the promise of rest Is the subject of the warning It's mentioned in verse 11 They shall never enter my rest It's mentioned in verse 18 They would never enter his rest It's in 4 verse 1 Since the promise of entering his rest Still stands 4 verse 3 We who have believed Enter that rest Meaning in the future Just as God has said To those people They shall never enter my rest Verse 5 They shall never enter my rest Verse 6 It remains that some Will enter that rest Means that some Will enter that rest Verse What's the next one?

[28 : 44] Verse 8 If Joshua had given them rest It wouldn't have been Repeated again later Another day Verse 9 There remains then A Sabbath rest Using the word Sabbath Which means rest Maybe it's a word He made up himself Because there's very few Examples of this being used If any There remains a Sabbath rest And in verse 10 We enter God's rest And verse 11 Let us make every effort To enter that rest So the rest Is really important This is the subject This is what it's all about Entering God's rest And the point that the psalm is making Is that People can have all the promises And all the privileges And even seem to start out well But still fail And not arrive And that's the point that

Psalm 95 is making That's the point that the writer's making So let's just If we may I don't want to Try your patience on this But let's just go over again The sequence of events And the The overall overview of this So they were I'm just going back To over the history of Israel They were In Egypt As slaves And God Said he would Redeem them And rescue them And he made A promise A good news promise Verse 2 Chapter 4 Verse 2 Good news was preached to them As it is to us That we're in the same boat in this A promise of entering his rest And That was the promise that was given A promised land In fact And there's the land With the temple in it And the city Which wasn't there But it would be later on And there's the barrier To entering the land And as they Make the journey Across the desert

They face the problem Of thirst They And Faced with that challenge They fail They Harden their hearts And that's what it says In the time of testing In the desert At Meribah The grumbling place They mistrusted God's provision They Underestimated How good God was And you remember That Moses Hit the rock He hit it the wrong way Hit it twice And he was supposed To speak to it But God provided water In the desert God knows what we need We must not Harden our hearts By Entertaining the possibility That he'll let us down On that And then Following the sequence Through They get to the border Of the promised land And there The promise was to enter But They are filled with fear At the report That they get And Again Mistrust And mistrust

Leads to disobedience And God says Well you won't enter My rest And for 40 years They wandered In the desert So that line At the bottom there Is meant to Depict the 40 years Between Leaving Egypt And Finally entering The promised land 40 years Marked By Testing And trial In verse Chapter 3 Verse 8 It's called A day of testing NIV Translates it Time But it's a day Of testing And the day Lasts 40 years Verse 9 For your fathers Tested and tried me And for 40 years Saw what I did So 40 years Of testing And trial God testing them And then testing God And a really Intense time At the end of the 40 years Joshua Does actually bring them Into the promised land And so they do Enter But we then Discover That Joshua Has not Given them rest Because otherwise The psalm Wouldn't have been Written If Joshua Had given them Rest Then God Wouldn't be Speaking about Another day Saying today If you hear His voice Do not Harden your Hearts And the writer Says Actually this rest Is still On offer And the promise of rest Goes way beyond the promised land To the distant future To the world to come But he says In order to get there We must not harden Our hearts Today So whatever day You're watching this Or listening to this This is the day Not to harden Your heart And for me Not to harden My heart So when it says Today In some Remarkable God Way Today Means today So we looked

[33 : 46] So that's just to Recap That Scenario Of the Forty years Which the Psalm Refers to And it's the Psalm That the writer Uses To ram home This point To his hearers And then Just to recap Again The Rest Is linked With And identified With God's Own Rest God's own Fulfillment And joy Which was the Goal of creation So let's Think of Go back To creation And the Six days Of God's Activity And I have Them there One Two Three Separating The spaces Separating Light From darkness Waters Above Waters Beneath Waters To one Side And Waters To the Other And then

Filling The spaces With the Sun And the Moon Filling The sky With Birds The sea With fish And the Land With Animals And people Six

Days Of creation There God's Six days And Click Click The seventh Day Of rest Shabbat The rest Of God Day Seven Now day Seven Is an Unending Day There's no There's no Marker to end It Unlike the Other days And it Is this Day Of unending Rest That is God's Goal For creation He made It So that He could Enjoy it And Be Triumphant In it And I Invite us To think Of what This means For God As he Rests His own Joy In what He's Done His own Satisfaction At how Good it Is His own Bliss If you Like His own Triumph His own Glory His own Exaltation The Perfection Of this State And

God's Happiness At this On this Day of Rest That he Has Won And that Is the Goal Of creation That This Seventh Unending Blissful Day And As I Tried to Explain Last week It's This That the Writer Calls Us To Linking This Rest With The Land Of Rest This Is What The Salvation Promise Calls Us To In Other Words For Us To Enter Into God's Joy And His Satisfaction To Enter Into The Divine Bliss To Enter Into The Divine!

Triumph To Enter Into The Glory That God Dwells In To Enter Into That State Of Exaltation And Perfection And Happiness And This Is The Rest That Is On Offer To Us And No Wonder Having Primed Our Imaginations With Such A Glorious Prospect The Writer Says Don't Fail To Enter That Rest So That Is My Little Recap And The Recap Just Makes This Point Today If You Hear His Voice Do Not Harden Your Hearts They Harden Their Hearts They Did Not Enter God's Rest Do Not Harden Your Heart So Having Had That Recap We Will Sing Or Have Song To Us I Think I Recognize The Voice

Of The Singer The Reading Says Do Not Harden Your Hearts And The Song Expresses This Plea Never Let Our Hearts Grow Cold Never Let Us Go So We're Going To Sing Abba Father May We Be Yours And Yours Alone May My Will Forever!

[38 : 04] Father Let Me Be Yours And Yours Alone May My Will Forever Be Ever Never Let Never!

Let My Heart Come Never Let Me Go! Abba Let Let Be Yours And Yours Alone!

Abba Never Let Me Be Yours And Yours Alone May My Will Ever Be Ever My Love Never Let My Heart Come Never Let Let Me Go!

Father Father Let Me Be Yours And Yours Alone!

Yours And Yours Alone Yours And Yours Alone Well Having taken a little break let's look again at the general layout of these chapters and see what lessons we can learn from them and I got four lessons he said confidently I think it is four so number one the promise let's learn this the promise is future rest and this isn't a bit of the promise this isn't a sort of marginal optional backwater of salvation this is the promise of the gospel this is the main spring of salvation it is the promise of rest meaning to say of being at peace being in health being enriched being secure being at home being happy being with everybody that we love being with

[40 : 40] God all of those things but not now it is for the eternal future this life is not our aim it is the world to come that is our aim it is for the eternal future that's the rest and that's why the promise still stands and we'll enter that rest either when the Lord comes again or when we die and go to be with him and await the day of resurrection and all things being made new and that ought to reinterpret for us what death is death is not a disappointment and a failure and a tragedy and a loss although it seems like that to us at this end of things but that's not really how it is death is a tremendous victory death is like a runner crossing the finishing line and going yes done it death is not a disappointment but a triumph and really trumpets should sound at

Christian funerals in a sense because they certainly sound in heaven one more sinner safely across the desert and arrived home trumpets should sound we should fix our eyes ahead and as it says let's fix our eyes on Jesus who's gone before us the author and perfecter of our faith so here's lesson number one the promise is future rest number two now I've got that little picture the black line depicting the 40 years from beginning to end has got a bit thick but you don't mind that do you so lesson number two the days these days are the last days if you're interested the word in Greek the last is eschatos and it is going to crop up here in a moment what days are we in answer we're in the last days he says that

Hebrews 1 verse 1 in these last days in these last days he's spoken to us by his son now these days are like the wandering in the desert on the way to the promised land where that black bar represents from leaving Egypt to entering the promised land that is what our days are like between Christ's ascension our days between Christ's ascension into heaven and his final return these are

the last days that's what it says in these last days and this is really an argument to say there are no further complex stages this is it I know there are complex eschatological patterns about the tribulation and the last days all sorts of things like that but actually as the Bible puts it it's much simpler these are the last days the next big event is Christ's return and then it'll be a new heaven and a new earth so we don't need to make it any more complex than that these are the last days and I learnt a word when I was studying this I don't know whether you want to learn it with me de-eschatologisation meaning taking away that idea of lastness for these days in other words forgetting that we are awaiting!

Christ in the last days and the chap who used that word is one of the problems that we have we forget we're in the last days and we think oh these days are going to go on forever this is more or less heaven as we are now and the New Testament has this strong sense that we are in the last days and the next big event is Christ's coming now that's not to say that the New Testament expects that he will come tomorrow and that the New Testament Christ didn't return and hasn't returned that really isn't the point these are last days and whether Christ comes tomorrow or whether he waits another thousand years it doesn't alter the fact that these are the last days and we need to live with the consciousness that these are the last days and Jesus gave a specific warning about this didn't he he said keep watch you don't know when your

[45 : 39] Lord will come these are not days for thinking oh he won't come for a long time it's not really the last days lots of things are going to happen yet no these are the last days and we should live as if they're in the last days knowing the times is an important component of wisdom and we are to know what these days are they are the last days and they are days not to forget but to keep on and to keep traveling to the city because that's what we're supposed to do in this period of time third lesson trials so we've looked at the promise the days and the trials and this teaches us that the trials and tests are unavoidable our present situation is like the wandering in the desert and the desert was the place of trials testings and temptations there was the trial of thirst you remember will

God provide what we absolutely need we face those similar trials now in the sense we're facing them as a church aren't we will God provide for future ministry and the trial is like that and the challenge is like that to trust God that he does know what we need and won't let us down challenges of guidance in the desert where are we and perhaps even sometimes where is God but the challenge to believe that crossing the desert God has this under control and he will lead and he will provide the challenge for courage when they got to the border this is too difficult for us we'll never manage this there are giants in the land and the challenge to believe God's promises over against and in opposition to that view which would say oh the human objections are too strong and God can't deal with this we need courage not to give in to fear and what the implication of this is that this truth is rather an uncomfortable truth perhaps we have to shift our thinking a bit to accommodate this but a major part of our experience here is temptation and trial we're not in heaven yet we shouldn't imagine we are we shouldn't pretend we are and we shouldn't be surprised by experiences that prove we're not in heaven yet a major part of our experience here is temptation and trial there is no believer who is not exposed to temptations that would send them to hell there is no believer who is not exposed to temptations that would send him or her meaning them to hell that's how serious our situation is in this world as we seek to enter his rest and fourthly so I've done an arrow between heaven and earth there fourthly a lesson about the saviour the saviour who has precious help and it's only when we realise the severity of the situation that we're actually in that we value the provision of the great high priest therefore since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens Jesus the son of God let us hold firmly to the faith we profess for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are yet was without sin let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need that's what I just read for 14 to 16 as we cross the desert as we face temptations help is at hand and real help is at hand powerful help is at hand and who is going to say they're not going to be bothered to ask for it gosh we certainly need it don't we who will not be somebody who is praying as we as we're in our time of need and how many days are our time of need answer every single day we're encouraged that our high priest understands our situation he understands us and he's not ashamed of us though we might be of ourselves we might say oh again

I need help again on this surely I feel so awful about this surely the Lord won't be bothered with me but he will and it says here he is not unable to sympathise with our weaknesses so let's approach

the throne of grace let's not be put off from asking at the throne of grace and it is a throne he sits on the throne it's a place of omnipotence and omnipotence at our disposal Lord I need enormous help well you ask you need it you can have it enormous help and let us approach this gracious throne so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need brothers and sisters that's the only way we're going to get across the desert that's the only way we're going to enter into this rest and as we make all diligence not to let's let's not fail to get the help that we need because we certainly need it those are the lessons let's just recap number one the promise the promise is a promise of rest and it still stands and that is the promise that runs the Christian life number two about the days the days are the last days we are in the final eschatological home run here these are the last days number three the trials that accompany the last days the trials that characterize crossing the desert days of testing and temptation those are the days that we're in this is the situation that we're in the trials are unavoidable these days are marked by trials and testing we should not be surprised at that and fourthly the saviour is so precious isn't he that he is in heaven for us that he is listening out for our prayer that as we pray he will not hesitate to send us the help that we need at the time that we need it because he's bringing us to heaven so let's be people who call on the one who stands ready to help us from heaven against our sore temptations we face sore meaning extreme temptations and if we're not sorely tempted today we certainly will be one day and we are tempted by the world and the flesh and the devil but he helps us against those and he helps us from ourselves sometimes we're our own worst enemies but he can help us because he is in heaven for us so here's my final point this is a tremendous encouragement to live every day in prayer isn't it let's come to his gracious throne and as it's called today let's be asking him today and receiving help today so that we may enter his rest amen well we've heard God's word and as we close we ask

[54 : 38] God's blessing in the words that the writers of the Hebrews ends his letter with when we've closed down will sing out with or play out with the song he will hold me fast it's number 1219 on the praise website this song it doesn't quite express the challenge but it does express the bottom line not so much expressing the warning as the reassurance in all our weakness in all our trials we have the help by which he will hold us fast he will bring us safe to glory and this is the bottom line for God's elect after all the promises and warnings he'll bring us there he will hold me fast so that's what we'll sing in a moment let's have our closing prayer now 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 for doing his will and may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen Amen until we meet him or until we see him face to face it's goodbye from me and God bless each and every one bye bye when I fear my faith will fail Christ will hold me fast when the tempter would prevail he will hold me fast

I could never keep my hope through life's fearful past for my love is often cold he must hold me fast he will hold me fast he will hold me fast for my savior loves me so he will hold me fast those he saves are his delight Christ will hold me fast precious in his holy sight he will hold me fast he will not let my soul be lost his promises will trust put by him at such a cost he will hold me fast he will hold me fast he will hold me fast for my savior loves me so he will hold me fast for my life he bled and died

Christ will hold me fast justice has been satisfied he will hold me fast praised by him to endless life he will hold me fast till our faith is turned to sight when he comes fast!

He will hold me fast he will hold me fast for my savior loves me so he will hold me fast he will hold me fast he will hold me fast fast for my savior loves me so he will hold me fast fast