

“Saved to the Uttermost by Him Who Always Lives”

Hebrews 7:25

Introduction: If you have your Bibles I would invite you to turn them to Hebrews 7, Hebrews chapter 7.

One day three young boys found themselves wandering through the forest behind their country home and in their adventure they happened upon a gently flowing stream. Piecing together a makeshift raft made out of tree limbs they decided to wield their way down the lazy river. Little did they know that a few bends later this stream would join with other streams to become a river raging through a canyon filled with mighty rocks jutting out from the river floor. Quickly this lazy ride was shaping up to be a life threatening voyage into the jaws of death. Somehow they made it through the white capped waters and found themselves once again floating along in relative peace. As the boys exhaled with a sigh of deep relief they were startled to see an older man rowing a canoe towards them as fast as he could. As he cruised up beside their makeshift raft he commanded them to get into his canoe. The urgency in his voice convinced them that they should probably follow orders, and it seemed to them that they had barely gotten into the canoe and the old man had already rowed them safely to shore. It was only when they were safely on shore that they heard the thundering sound of water rushing over a major drop. Within moments they realized that this man had just saved them from certain death. They thanked him profusely and meandered back through the woods to find their way home.

Two weeks later these same three boys found themselves at that gentle stream in the woods once again. After playing in the water for a while they once again made a makeshift raft and found themselves floating down the river, enjoying the beautiful day. Not to worry, they talked about how they would be sure to find the shore before the rapids so as to be sure not to put themselves in danger once again. But the water gained speed before they were ready and they found their paddling arms to be of no avail in the mighty current. Once again they amazingly survived the rapids, only to see the same old man paddling furiously to rescue them once again from the giant waterfall that would most certainly take their lives. With a strong warning from the old man and a profuse thank you from the boys, they parted ways once again.

And yet, two months later the boys found themselves at the calm stream in the woods once again. They just couldn't resist the building of the raft and eventually found themselves floating down the river once again. This time they had brought with them flat sticks that would serve as their oars when they needed to paddle to shore. But those oars would not be sufficient to fight against the strong current that gushed them along into the chute of certain death. As they once again made it out the other side of the rapids they looked to the shore wanting to alert the old man of their presence and seek his salvation once again. They yelled and yelled and there was no response. Then suddenly, as their raft inched closer and closer to the falls they saw a middle aged man run to the shore to see what the commotion was all about. They yelled for help and he yelled back to let them know that his father had just passed away, and that he himself was not proficient to canoe out to save them. Their man of salvation had died, and soon they would too.

There is great and confident hope in a Savior who lives. There is no hope in a Savior who is dead. These boys learned this most valuable lesson – a Savior must live if a Savior is to save. Today is Resurrection Day. It is the first day of the week, the day of the week that the Scriptures tell us was the day of Jesus Christ's rising from the dead. He was dead because of sin. In fact, the Scriptures make clear to us that all men will die because of sin. Sin is rebellion against the Creator God that must be met with the righteous punishment of this Holy God. All men have been created by God. All men have rebelled against God and gone their own way and been their own

god. All men must answer to their Holy Creator God and face the punishment that is due their sin. All men – except Jesus. All men have sinned – except Jesus. All men must die because of this sin – except Jesus. All men must face the eternal wrath of God against their sin – all men except Jesus. And yet, near the end of all four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ we find him lying in a grave. He is in a grave because he was killed upon a Roman cross on Friday. His death was not the result of his own sin – as though he had to face the judgment of God the Father upon His own head. Rather, he died our death. He laid down his life upon that cross to take the punishment of our sins. He bore our grief and carried our sorrows. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement that is able to bring us peace was laid on him. It is by His wounds that we are healed. And so, he lays in a grave because our sin has put him to death. One of the most fundamental truths of the Christian Gospel is that if Jesus remains in that grave we have no hope of salvation. If he is dead we are like those three boys floating on a makeshift raft, looking to the shore for our savior and paddling as hard as we can for shore with no hope of reaching it before the waterfall takes our life. But as we have read in Scripture and sung about together and confessed belief in through prayer – Jesus lives! And so I point you to the text of Hebrews chapter 7. In the flow of thought of this glorious chapter in this pivotal book we find one of the most precious verses in all of our Bible. Verse 25 says – “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” From this verse I want to make one simple point – Because Jesus Lives, Jesus Saves. This is the main declaration of this verse – Because Jesus Lives, Jesus Saves.

I. Because Jesus Lives

- a. Hebrews 7 is an argument for the superiority and permanence of Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews is written to Jewish people who knew the ins and outs of the Old Covenant. A covenant that was but a shadow put in place by God as a temporary picture to point to the eternal reality of Jesus Christ. A covenant that was carried out through human priests and animal sacrifices. The point of Hebrews is to show that Jesus Christ is superior to this Old covenant system of the Old Testament because His mediatorial work on the Cross of Calvary is permanent. Mankind needed the work of a mediator to represent them before God because of their sin, and this Jesus is the superior and permanent mediator because He lives.
- b. *Bodily Resurrection - Permanent Life*
 - i. In order for Jesus to be a superior and permanent priest to represent men before God the Father, this Jesus has to be eternally alive. You cannot represent and intercede for another man if you yourself are dead. Our three boys on the river learned this. And so follow the argument of the writer of Hebrews as he compares Jesus to the Old Covenant priests – the descendants of Aaron. Look with me back at verse 15. *Read 15-18.*
 - ii. The priests of the Old Covenant became priests because they were descendants of Aaron. As sons of the very first High Priest of the Old Covenant, Aaron’s lineage was responsible for the continuation of the priestly office and work of the Old Covenant. But this keeping and continuation of the Old Covenant was temporary because it was unable to make anything perfect. In other words this Old Covenant could not effectively expunge sin through the satisfaction of God’s righteous wrath. The death of a sacrificial lamb was not sufficient to take away the just and eternal judgment of sin. It was only sufficient to point ahead to a coming Sacrificial Lamb whose death could once and for all deal with sin. And so, there was need for a better way – a sufficient High Priest. And one has come – Jesus of Nazareth – fully God and fully man. He was not a priest who became priest because of what family he was born to, but rather Jesus became a priest because of the oath made by God. And so we have a better hope through which we can draw near to God. Look at verse 20. *Read 20-22.*
 - iii. Jesus was made a priest by the oath of God. The eternal, unchangeable, unalterable promise of God. Now, everything that God has said is eternally significant, but when he

makes an oath to something he is drawing special attention to it and making known to us how important it is. And so here, he has sworn and will not change his mind. Jesus is a priest forever – not after the order and lineage of Aaron – but after the order of Melchizedek. As the text says –this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. He is the surety of a better way for us to be brought to God. We can have sin permanently forgiven and life eternally granted in the presence of the Almighty God of Heaven because Jesus has been forever made a priest by the oath of God. Our covenant relationship with God is secured through the superiority and permanence of Jesus' priestly work.

- iv. And this is guaranteed for us through His bodily resurrection. His work on the Cross of Calvary laid him in the grave. His death as THE sacrificial Lamb was the fulfilling of His work as our priest. It was him bearing our sin before the Father and shedding His own blood so that there could be remission of sins. But if he remained dead in the grave, this priestly work of the shedding of blood would be just as insufficient as the Old Covenant priesthood.

c. Permanent Life = Permanent Priesthood

- i. And so we read of this in verses 23-24. *Read 23-24.*
- ii. The priesthood of the Old Covenant required many priests who continued through the succession of heredity because not any one of them continued to live. In other words, the priestly work of the Old Covenant couldn't continue through one man because no one man of that priesthood lived forever. They all died. In fact, as you read about the life of Aaron – the brother of Abraham and the very first High Priest – you can't help but notice how big of a deal is made in the text of Numbers about his death.
 1. ²³ ***And the LORD said*** to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, ²⁴ "Let Aaron be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land that I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah. ²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. ²⁶ And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there." ²⁷ Moses did as the LORD commanded. And they went up Mount Hor ***in the sight of all the congregation.*** ²⁸ And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. ***And Aaron died there on the top of the mountain.*** Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. ²⁹ And when ***all the congregation saw that Aaron had perished,*** all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days. (Num. 20:23-29 ESV, emphasis added)
 2. The Lord commanded for Aaron's death to be this public of an event for all to see because the Lord was intent to make known the inferior and insufficient nature of Aaron as a go between. He could not effectively and permanently represent man before God – and this is made clear by the death he dies for his own sins.
- iii. But this Jesus – he holds a permanent priesthood because he continues on forever. He died – but this death was overcome by the resurrection. His life continues and because of this His priesthood is permanent. You see – permanent life equals permanent priesthood. And so the last phrase at the end of verse 25 makes plain – Jesus lives to intercede for us. He who died for us is now he who lives for us. He who bought our pardon through the shedding of his own blood is now He who lives to apply that pardon to our lives through His constant intercessory work. This permanent intercessory work depends upon his bodily resurrection. He cannot intercede for us from the grave. This priesthood of Jesus Christ on our behalf is made sure by his permanent life. Therefore – based on this

glorious reality we can boldly affirm from the first part of verse 25 that because Jesus lives, Jesus saves!

II. Jesus Saves

a. *The Crux*

- i. This is the point of this verse. And this strikes at the crux of the issue for every man, woman, boy, and girl in this room. The ultimate concern for your life today is not what you will eat for lunch, how big or small your house is, what you will find to entertain you today, or what relationships with others will bring joy to your life. The ultimate concern for each of us in this room is who is saving you! You see, we are all in that makeshift raft floating down the torrent of waters carrying us inescapably to the falls of eternal separation from God. The current of the water is our sin and the doom of destruction is the judgment of God upon us for that very sin. No matter how hard we might paddle to make it to shore, no effort of our own can save us.
- ii. This is what the writer of Hebrews is addressing as well. The Old Covenant system of human priests and animal sacrifices was in place because mankind has a sin problem. We have been separated from God by this sin and we need a way to get back into a right relationship with God. This is the crux of the issue for every person who has ever lived. This is their greatest need. These Old Covenant priests were meant to serve as shadows of the coming Great High Priest – but even after the coming of the Great High Priest many had continued to look to the Old Covenant priests as a means for their way back to God. This book is God’s definitive word on this very subject to make it known to all men everywhere that Jesus is superior and permanent and therefore he is the only way back to God. He alone can provide the salvation that all men need.

b. *The Nature*

- i. The nature of this salvation that is available only in Jesus is a salvation to the uttermost. He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him. This word uttermost could mean to the uttermost extent or to the uttermost time. It could be denoting the quality of the salvation or the time frame of the salvation that is found only in Christ. But it is also possible that both ideas are meant in this word. The salvation that only Jesus can give is a salvation that is complete and also a salvation that is forever. Or as A.W. Pink has said – “Combining the two meanings; a complete salvation is a never-ending one.” (Hebrews, pg. 416)
- ii. In other words, the priestly work of Jesus Christ is so superior and so permanent that the salvation we can know through this work on our behalf is a salvation that saves us from everything that we need saved from and it saves us from these things for all of time. There is no limit or end to this salvation. Its very nature proves it to be a “to the uttermost” kind of salvation. So, this is not just a rescue from the rapids one time or two times or three or four times. Rather, this is a salvation from the rapids for all time! The salvation offered through the High Priestly work of Jesus is a salvation that reaches into our past and saves us from the penalty of our sin, and this salvation changes our present estate by saving us from the power of sin over us, and it will one day in the future save us from the presence of sin when we have the eternal privilege of dwelling with God and He with us. Through Jesus we can be saved to the uttermost because He lives.

c. *The Power*

- i. Notice also the little word “able.” Jesus is *able* to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him. Not only is this salvation in every way and salvation for all time, but this is a salvation of power. This is not a “I really want to save you, but just can’t save you” kind of salvation. This is a “I am totally able, filled with complete power so as to be able to save you” kind of salvation. This is like the difference between the old

man who could row out and save the boys and the middle aged man who wasn't proficient with a canoe enough to do so. It is like this, only the gap is much wider between wanting to and being able to. I want to save all people of the world from the certain consequence of their sin. I don't want any of them to face the eternal fire of Hell. I long for them all to be blessed with eternal life. But I am not able to save anyone, including myself. I do not have the power, the ability, the resources – I can't save anyone, though I desire to.

- ii. Jesus desired to. The Triune God desired to save mankind from sin so the Son was sent and the Son died in our place, and the Son rose again, and now the Son is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him. Because Jesus lives, Jesus is able to save!
- iii. Is your Savior able to save? We all have a Savior. We are all aware of our need for salvation. We all inherently know that there is a problem that must be fixed. The question is – can the one you are looking to fix it actually fix it? Some people look to themselves to pull themselves out of the muck and mire of their own sin. Some people look to the power of religion to save them. Some look to the creativity of their own intellect to save them. But the question that must be asked is – does the Savior you look to have the ability to save?
- iv. These people who originally received these words in the first century were tempted to look to the Old Covenant system of human priests and animal sacrifices for their salvation. They were wrestling with who Jesus really was and whether or not he was really able to save. This verse seals the deal. Jesus alone is able to save. The Old Covenant system was inadequate and unable to make anyone perfect.

d. The Grounds

- i. This perfection, this cleansing from our sin and being made righteous before God can only be done through Jesus. And so the verse says Jesus is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him. There is but one way and that is through Christ. This is because there is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, and this is because there is but one man who holds the superior and permanent office of the Great High Priest. There is no other way – no other entrance into eternal life – no other truth that must be received – no other savior to be trusted. There is but one who is able to save to the uttermost and there is but one way to partake in that salvation and that is by drawing near to God through him. We must turn from all other saviors, we must repent of our rebellion against God, we must confess our sins, and we must believe all that is true about Christ and His finished work for us – and we must believe. Draw near to God through Christ – there is no other way!
- ii. This exclusive salvation offered through Jesus causes ulcers in our world. We live in a pluralistic day when there are many options for all things, and so we bring this consumeristic attitude to eternal salvation as well and those who proclaim the Scriptures faithfully and say that there is no other way to Heaven but through Jesus Christ – those claims are met with strong opposition. It seems so old-fashioned and antiquated to think that there can be only one way to eternal life. And yet, this verse, and every other verse that addresses the issue in Scripture, makes it clear – there is but one way.
- iii. Instead of losing sleep over there not being many ways – instead of thumbing our nose at God because He is so narrow minded and exclusive – instead of seeking to redefine the Scriptures so as to justify people being able to be reconciled to God by other means – instead of this – let us glory that there is A way! Let us give eternal praise to the God of Heaven that we can be saved at all – that he has provided for us a Savior who is able to

save us to the uttermost. Let us declare our trust in this One Savior – Jesus – and let us glory in the reality that we have been given a way to eternal life, and it is through Him! And so, on this Resurrection Sunday – we praise the Singular Savior who alone is able to save. There is no hope without Him. There is no salvation without Him. And this is all possible because He lives today! Because Jesus lives, Jesus saves!

- e. If you are here this morning and the Holy Spirit of God is at work in your life pointing out to you that you need salvation through Jesus Christ, I say to you – come to Jesus. Stop trusting in any other way. There is no other way that can actually save you from your sin. Because Jesus lives, Jesus is able to save you to the uttermost. So come to Jesus today to be saved from your sin.
- f. To those of you who know the salvation of Christ already, this verse holds foundational and yet life-transforming meaning. The truth that this resurrected Jesus has a permanent and superior salvation because of the very fact that he has risen from the grave is a foundational truth at the very heart of your faith. And as a foundational truth it has life-transforming power. So:
 - i. We should have a permanent confidence in our permanent High Priest.
 - 1. If it is true that he ever lives to make intercession for us, then our confidence in the salvation we know can be rested completely and assuredly on His continued High Priestly work. Every believer has moments of doubt in their salvation. Every believer struggles with continued belief. Every believer wavers in their faith in the face of their sin. The answer is not to believe harder or to try harder or to do more – the answer is Jesus. He alone is able to save. His representation of us before God is all sufficient to save.
 - 2. And so our confidence is not based upon us or upon our experience, but rather our permanent confidence is fixed upon our permanent High Priest.
 - ii. This permanent confidence in Christ's work on our behalf should then propel in our hearts radical obedience that is pleasing to God. Permanent confidence in Christ's permanent work as High Priest should free us from self-righteous effort to somehow earn God's eternal favor through acts of obedience, and permanent confidence in my Lord's intercession on my behalf sets the stage for radical obedience. And as a follower of Christ obedience is at the heart of the life of faith in Christ. We do not earn salvation through obedience, but salvation should produce the fruit of obedience in our lives. But we often struggle with this obedience to God, and there are direct links here between our obedience and our settled confidence in the High Priestly work of Jesus. So for instance:
 - 1. Obedience to the Lord is often diminished by plaguing doubts about my standing with God. In other words, when I am not operating in my walk of faith with a settled confidence in Christ's permanent Priesthood my heart will be plagued with doubts about my standing with God. And if I am unsure of my standing before God I will be paralyzed in my obedience to God. I might obey, but my obedience will be convoluted by my doubt. Jesus' Permanent Priesthood answers this. Because He lives to ever intercede for me I can have permanent confidence in my standing before God and radical obedience can grow in my heart because doubt and fear no longer paralyze my relationship with the God of Heaven. His wounds ever plead my case and so my obedience does not have to. By freeing ourselves from guilt based obedience that seeks to earn God's eternal favor, we can grow in radical obedience that is free from doubt about my standing before God based on the confidence that Christ's permanent priesthood gives.
 - 2. Obedience is also often misinformed by fear of impending wrath or a fall from grace. In other words, we often worry that we somehow have incurred God's well-deserved wrath through our sin on any given day. We tend to think of God as an angry parent waiting to pounce on His kids and drop the hammer of

discipline on our lives. We become fearful of God and fearful of our standing with Him as though we could somehow fall away from His grace. Jesus' Permanent Priesthood answers this. As the apostle John says in 1 John 4 there is no fear in love, and God's love for us as seen through the High Priestly work of Jesus guarantees this love for us forever. Perfect love, as known by us in Christ, casts out fear. God will never treat you in any way that is apart from love – and this is guaranteed for you through the Permanent High Priestly work of Jesus Christ. This frees your obedience to Him from the fear of wrath and this liberates you as a follower of Christ to grow in more and more obedience.

3. And finally, obedience is often minimalized by lack of fervent zeal. It is hard to obey when we simply do not feel like obeying. It is difficult to attempt great things for Jesus when our heart is not in it and our zeal is lagging. Jesus' Permanent Priesthood answers this. We have a Savior who is not content to leave us as He found us. He is not content to simply begin the work of salvation and guarantee our freedom from eternal judgment, but rather his permanent priesthood guarantees for us His constant concern for our growth in grace. His is alive today, seated at the right hand of the Father pleading for our growth in grace. He intercedes for us that we would rightly and radically follow Him and glorify His name in the world. What a deeply motivating truth this is to our obedience. Jesus Himself is pleading my case. He knows my frame, he understands my struggle, he has faced my every temptation, and with this knowledge he intercedes for me! This should produce in our hearts radical obedience. Free from guilt, free from free, liberated from doubt, and confident of God's grace because of the constant intercession of my Savior – my life should ever grow in more and more obedience!

Conclusion: And all of this is true because Jesus Lives! Because Jesus lives, Jesus Saves! Let's pray!

Benediction: 1 Peter 1:1-5