

# The Superiority of Christ's Priesthood Part I

a sermon in the series  
Hebrews: An Epistle of Encouragement

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## Hebrews 7:11-19

*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

The idea of practicing a priesthood and sacrifices is somewhat foreign to us, simply because we don't have these things in our worship of God. Without the Old Testament's treatment of these subjects we would know far less. Yet, the practice of priest and sacrifice is very common in many religions throughout the world, even some that claim to be Christian. These religions rely on a human priest to mediate between them and God. The priests are responsible to fix the differences that God has with a sinner and provide the sinner access to God. Some will actually use sacrifices of animals, possessions, and, in some cases humans.

One of the reasons sacrifices are used to appease whatever god the people are worshipping is because of the guilt people incur when they sin. The conscience cries out for relief, and, therefore, to alleviate the pain brought about by guilt, some type of sacrifice is made to appease the god and ease the conscience. A priest is used because "the would-be worshiper" is stained with sin. He needs a go-between, someone who is consecrated and clean to represent him to the offended deity. There is within every human heart the knowledge of the Divine. There is a sense within each one of us and every person born that there is a God. Also lurking in the heart is the awareness of sin. So man, in order to approach this God that he innately knows he is unworthy of approaching, devised a system incorporating these things we have already discussed—priesthood and sacrifices.

But we should not criticize these different religions for using a system we call archaic and no longer necessary. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection we think we have no need of such things. May I remind you that you and I also practice a priesthood and a sacrificial system. Our faith is built upon a sacrificial system and a priesthood. Although these other religions are wrong in the way they use priests and sacrifices, the point is we are like them in that Jesus did not do away with the idea of priesthood nor sacrifices. Our text declares Jesus to be our High Priest and His own life the sacrifice that atones for sin. His sacrifice is the only one we need. Our eternity depends upon that one sacrifice and His priesthood. Therefore I am going to take advantage of what He has offered in His sacrifice for our sins and offering Himself as our High Priest.

I think it would be far better for us New Testament Gentile Christians to revamp our thinking and begin to see that we practice a religion, if I may use that terminology, that centers on a priesthood and a sacrifice. Notice I said a sacrifice and not sacrifices. Our whole basis of faith is centered on a priesthood and that one priest's ability to atone for our sins. There is no hope of eternal life for us, without someone better than us to mediate for us. We need someone who can appease the Father's righteous anger toward our sins. One day we must approach Him and draw near to His throne. But the guilt of our sin makes our approach death for us. Where is one who can plead our case and remove our guilt? Is there one whose own hands are pure from sin, so that he might represent me at the justice bar of God? Ah, yes there is one, it is Christ Jesus the Lord. My High Priest!

Dear saints, it is imperative and of the utmost importance that we come to view our faith, our religion, our Christianity on the basis of a priestly system that practices the use of a sacrifice and does all that the Old Testament priests did, only better. God through Christ Jesus did not do away with priesthood. We are a people of a priesthood. Therefore, it is important that we go back to the Old Testament and understand how the priesthood works, so that we see that we in the New Testament practice a priesthood not of many priests but of one—Christ Jesus the Lord.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is establishing here for us how a priesthood works and how the priesthood of Jesus Christ is far superior to the old Levitical priesthood. He shows us, as we studied last week in verses one through ten, that the Levitical priesthood was established under the old covenant. We also saw that God has established a priesthood that is of a different order than the sons of Aaron, a much higher order called the Melchisedec priesthood. In order to show us that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to the old Levitical priesthood the author begins in the eleventh verse to show that the Levitical priesthood has been changed and is no longer active.

*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? (Hebrews 7:11)*

The writer asks a question. If perfection, which means salvation, could come by the Levitical priesthood why would God raise up a new priesthood? What further need was there that

another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? There has come a high priest after the order of Melchisedec that is Christ Jesus the Lord. By His coming after the order of Melchisedec, the Levitical priesthood is done away with.

## **SALVATION DOES NOT COME THROUGH MEN**

This teaches us our first point today, and that is salvation does not come through men. If perfection were through the Levitical priesthood, in other words if salvation could come through an order of preachers or priests who sacrificed for the people as mediators, then what need would there be for another priest? Evidentially another priest came because the first priesthood could not bring salvation. Salvation does not come by the Levitical priesthood.

There are many who hold to a theory that priests today have power to absolve (forgive) sin. They borrow this idea from the Old Testament Levitical priesthood. But the writer of the Hebrews declares that the Levitical priesthood could not save, and therefore, if any man would claim to be an extension of the Old Testament priesthood he must bring with it the inability to absolve sin.

For your eternity's sake listen, no priest can forgive you of sin, although they may claim to do so. If the Levitical priesthood, of whom priests today claim to be an extension of, could not forgive sin, then neither can they. The fact is, no priest, pastor, or preacher can save you from sin. Although we in evangelical Christianity don't practice priesthood in our churches, I fear we come as close to it as we possibly can. Often men look to pastors or preachers to be their mediators to God. We know that no pastor can forgive us and give us eternal life, yet we use them in much the same way people would use a priest to forgive sin and to mediate for them. Why is this? It is because we elevate pastors beyond the respect they deserve and we see them as having some spiritual power not available to laymen. We think things like, "there is nobody qualified to lead anybody to the Lord but the pastor." Thus, instead of witnessing to our loved one or friend, we call up the pastor and ask if he would visit the sinner and give them the gospel. At times we elevate preachers and pastors to a position of mediation. We say things like, "Nobody can pray like my pastor." "He can pray for me and all will be well." But dear friend, listen to me, neither a priest, pastor, nor preacher can save you because they are mere men. No man can mediate, that is, go between you and God.

Here in our text there are a couple of reasons why. First of all, because preachers and pastors are also sinners who need forgiveness. I need forgiveness just like you do. But in Hebrews chapter seven and verse twenty-seven it states that Jesus didn't need forgiveness nor did He need to offer sacrifices for sin.

*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, [maketh] the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. (Hebrews 7:27-28)*

Dear friends, do not look to this poor preacher today for salvation. I can only show you, as one beggar who has found bread, where the bread is, but I can't save you. I can't pray a prayer that would save you. Christ Jesus alone can do that, but not I. I too need a savior and my savior is Christ. So I bid you look to Jesus today and not to mere men.

The second reason why a priest, pastor, or preacher can't save is because we too are subject to death. Look at verses twenty-three through verse twenty-five of Hebrews chapter seven.

*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death (Hebrews 7:23).*

In other words, there was more than one Levitical priest because they kept dying and couldn't continue their priesthood, and as we learned last week at the age of fifty they had to retire. And so because of death or forced retirement they could not continue in their priesthood. But notice verse twenty-four speaking of Jesus our great High Priest.

*But this [man], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood (Hebrews 7:24).*

The priesthood doesn't change with Jesus. There is no successor after Christ, because He ever lives. The writer says as much in the twenty-fifth verse.

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).*

No man, especially a Levitical priest, could save because they could not continue in their priesthood. If a priest could grant salvation, then for salvation to continue the priest would have to remain. If salvation were in a man and that man died, who then would be your mediator? When he is gone, so is your salvation, where then is your hope?

We have a High Priest who has tasted death for us once and for all. He will not die again. Some priests today say when they commit the mass and they re-crucify the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no such doctrine in God's word. That is of Hell's spawning. I do not mean to sound so harsh but I plainly must speak the truth, there is no re-crucifying of Christ. Such is a damnable doctrine, for the Bible says He lifted Himself once for all as a sacrifice. He has been resurrected to ever live, He forever continues as our Priest who is our salvation. I know that right now He is interceding at the Father's right hand for me, preserving me, keeping me through all tests, trials, and tribulations. You sang about it already this morning through many trials and tribulations grace has brought you safe thus far, oh, dear friends, do you know what grace is? It is the love and mercy of Jesus our High Priest moving on our behalf. Salvation does not come through men but through one man—the God-Man Christ Jesus.

**SALVATION DOES NOT COME BY THE LAW**

But the text clearly tells us a second thing and that is salvation does not come by the law. Salvation does not come by the priesthood nor the Mosaic law. Verse twelve:

*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law (Hebrews 7:12).*

There has to be an abrogation of the law because it is the law that appointed the Levitical priesthood. That is the reasoning here, this is his argument. Look at Hebrews 7:5. This was last week's text as you remember. He says,

*And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham (Hebrews 7:5).*

And so we see the law appointed the Levitical priesthood. Look at verse twenty-eight of the seventh chapter.

*For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ... (Hebrews 7:28)*

The word "maketh" means to appoint. It is the Old Testament law that appointed the priest. Who were they that were appointed? The sons of Levi. If the Old Testament law appointed the sons of Levi to serve as priests and there has been a changing of the priesthood, that means there has also been a changing of the law. If you change the priesthood from the Levitical order to the Melchisedec order, you have to change the law in order to do so.

Now our question this morning and it is a very good question, did the author of this epistle mean there had been a change of the section of the law that stipulates who can serve as a priest? Or did he mean the whole law had been changed? Some insist that the author is meaning that God changed only part of the law and some of the law still exists. They call the part that God changed the ceremonial law. They maintain that He left the moral law intact. Well, dear friend, as you are going to find out in a few weeks, you cannot interpret this passage with some view of the law that tricotomizes the law into three segments—moral, civil, and ceremonial. Throughout the Scripture the law is always referred to as a whole. The dividing of the law into three segments is an invention of theologians. Therefore an abrogation of the law is the entire law not just a part of it. The writer meant the whole law had been changed. It had, in fact, been replaced with a new law. Let us hear the text in Hebrews chapter seven verses eighteen and nineteen.

*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [did]; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:18-19).*

The writer of Hebrews says that there has been an annulling. What is an annulment? In the realm of marriage an annulment is where the marriage is dissolved. But unlike a divorce the mar-

riage is considered to have never taken place. In other words, the marriage is cancelled. If the law has been annulled, it means it has been cancelled. You can't interpret this to mean anything else. The law has been cancelled, and a new law has replaced it.

This morning I want you to see why the Old Testament law cannot save you. First, the author says it is because the law is weak. How could this author dare bring such accusation against the word of God? How could he say there had been a disannulling of the "commandment going before" because of its weakness? How can he say that God's word is weak? Does not the psalmist say that the word, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul?" (Psalm 19:7). So how can the apostle here say that the law is weak and had to be replaced? The apostle Paul said the same in Romans chapter eight and verse three. There we see that the weakness is not on the part of the law, but on the part of men and their flesh to keep the law.

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).*

Many today accept what is prevalent in modern Christianity. It is the common belief among many Christians that there is enough goodness in the human heart to recognize the truth of the gospel. The sinner when he hears the gospel can change his or her mind and choose to serve the Lord for the natural and innate goodness of the sinner will give the motivation to obey the gospel call. That may be what you think the gospel is, but it is the gospel according to men, it is not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the gospel the apostles preached. Paul says that there is no way that the law can bring salvation. The reason why you can't get saved by keeping the law is because the law is weak in the flesh.

Now what does that mean? The answer is in Romans the eight chapter verses seven and eight.

*Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:7).*

The law of God is perfect. The law of God is holy, but the law of God under the old covenant could not bring salvation because of the essence and nature of man. The flesh is resistant to submission to God. The essence or the nature of our flesh is selfishness. If you could disrobe sin and see its stark nakedness, you would see nothing more than selfishness. The flesh or nature of man is totally opposed to God. Thus the beloved apostle is telling us that the "carnal mind" is at war with God.

The flesh hates God because it desires to be its own ruler. Your flesh wants the rule over you. It resists and opposes everything that would be ruler or king over it. The law is good and holy, as Paul says in Romans 7:12, but it is the flesh that will never be placed under its commandment. Therefore, the law cannot save, unless you obey it perfectly. The only way the law could save is by perfect compliance. According to James chapter two, if you violate one law you have broken the whole law. The only way the Old Testament law could bring salvation is in perfect, complete, entire compliance, and obedience. But the flesh will never do that.

Let me give you an example. Let's say one of your small children has never gotten into a particular cabinet. Never had they even looked so much as if they wanted to get into that cabinet. But you want to make sure they don't ever get into it because you have some things in there that are harmful to them. So you go to them and say, "Now son, daughter, don't go into that cabinet." What do they do? They get into the cabinet. Now why such disobedience when they had shown no prior desire to get into the cabinet? Why do they get into the cabinet the moment you forbid them to do so? Because the flesh refuses all rulers except itself. Those darling little babies that you hold have a fleshly, sinful nature that opposes leadership, rulership, and dominion by anyone except themselves. The same is true about you who hold them. Our flesh is opposed to God's leadership.

Well some would argue and say a man or a woman has the ability to keep the law; and there were many that appear to do so. We see people who seem to keep the law. We call them righteous people, good people, moral people. In fact, many would not hesitate to call them Christians. Paul said of his pre-Christ days that he was blameless in the law, yet he was not a follower of Christ but a persecutor of Christ. There is an external obedience to the law but the law of God requires more than just outward actions. Paul as well as countless souls have performed outward obedience but have fallen in the realm of internal obedience. Now what is internal obedience? It is obedience from the heart; you love holiness and you love the God of holiness. You delight in Him and you want to please Him, not just because you are afraid of going to Hell, but simply because you delight and enjoy God. You obey God from the heart; that is internal obedience.

My question to you is, are you externally looking like you are obeying God, but is your heart far from loving the righteousness that you seem to be doing on the outside? You can on the outside appear to be very holy and very righteous, but, dear friend, the flesh can be in control at that very precise moment. If your obedience is not fueled by reliance upon God through faith then it is reliance upon self, and that is an abomination to God. All of your goodness is a refusal to submit to the goodness of God and have His kingship over you. A man can be good to other men and resist God at the same time. If we are trying to be good by our own abilities and not desiring to love God and obey God because our hearts wants to, then all of our goodness is rebellion of the highest order. God requires external obedience and internal obedience.

Could it be that you are truly opposed to Christ and hate Him? Hating God doesn't necessarily mean you have feelings of hatred, it simply means that you love self-control so much that you reject any form of Christ controlling your life. That is hating God, and the flesh will never submit to any law that requires the relinquishing of control to any power but itself. Therefore, the law could never save. If the flesh cannot submit to the law of God, there is no hope of the law saving you no matter how good it might be.

Second, Paul says not only was the law weak, but it is unprofitable. Unprofitable! This amazes me. The law, he says, is worthless as far as bringing salvation. In fact Paul says, in I Corinthians 15:56, "the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." What a statement. The very power of sin is the good perfect holy law of God. How can that be? How can God's law become the

power of sin? The answer is, the more the law says don't do something the more you want to do it. The more commandments the law gives, the more opportunities for our flesh and your flesh to gladly not submit and break those commandments. Therefore sin is multiplied. It abuses the good things of God, which in this case is the law. That is the power of sin.

Now, dear friend, there is no way we can replace the old law with new laws and say to people, "If you don't act like this, or you don't do this, then you're not a Christian." We can make all of these laws and regulations, but in the end all that is being aroused is the flesh, either to break them or try by self-reliance to fulfill them. In either case it is rebellion against God. There is no law that can save you except one, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2). Again, we will talk more about that in the eighth chapter of Hebrews.

And then third and last, the law cannot save you because, listen, even if from this moment on you could start perfectly obeying, and if there was some way you could get the flesh under control and never sin again, you still have a problem. The law cannot atone for sins that you have committed in the past. The law cannot make atonement for the sins that you are already guilty of. Look at Hebrews chapter nine and verse fifteen.

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).*

The hope of all of the Old Testament saints was not a bull, or a goat, or a lamb. In Hebrews chapter ten and verse four, the Bible says it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Not one animal sacrifice in the Old Testament atoned for any sin. Only the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of the Old Testament saints, and it is the only atonement for our sins. Quoting again from the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans in chapter three and verse twenty-five, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." The Levitical priesthood with all of its sacrifices cumulative could not forgive sin. When they slaughtered those lambs by the hundreds, not one person's sins were forgiven by the blood of any of those lambs. On the Day of Atonement when the sacrifice was made and the high priest went in, that one day of the year, not one Israeli's sin was forgiven. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the sacrifice that would justify the ungodly. What was the reason then for the sacrifices? All of those sacrifices pointed to one sacrifice. They were a type or a shadow of one who would come by whose blood there would be forgiveness of sin.

Friends, there is nothing of the law that saves. Nothing. All that there is of the old law is death and condemnation. Yet our churches are full of people who are trying to work their way into Heaven. Paul would say of you, you are still trying to live by the law. The law then becomes the instrument of death, and in its wake is condemnation.

**SALVATION COMES THROUGH THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST**

## **Our High Priest is Perfect**

So if men cannot save and the law of God, which is perfect, holy and pure could not save, what hope is there? Salvation comes through the priesthood of Christ. That is why we practice priesthood; we are a people who still believe in a priesthood, a priesthood of one. Our High Priest is perfect and that is what the author of our text is saying. This word “perfect” is a constant theme for the book of Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews constantly thought about this term “perfect.” He began in Hebrews chapter two and verse ten speaking of Jesus.

*For it became him, for whom [are] all things, and by whom [are] all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).*

Again in Hebrews chapter five and nine the writer speaks of the perfection of our High Priest.

*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:9).*

And of course Hebrews seven and verse eleven which is part of our text, and then in verse nineteen of the same chapter seven the writer says,

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [did]; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:19).*

There is no perfection, salvation, or righteousness in the law that can be transferred to the sinner, which is what God requires for salvation. But in a few verses later in verse twenty-eight the door of hope is introduced which promises our perfection.

*For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, [maketh] the Son, who is consecrated for evermore (Hebrews 7:28).*

The word “consecrated” is the same Greek word for the word “perfection” that we have had in all of these other verses. Literally, the writer is stating that the Son has been perfected forevermore. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice; He is the perfection that was lacking in the law, Levitical priesthood and our flesh. Oh hallelujah! When John the Baptist looked at our Lord coming from the Judean hills to the muddy shores of Jordan, he pointed and said, “Behold the Lamb of God,” that man spoke more of the gospel than many preachers today. For in that statement he was saying here is the one who has been made to be our High Priest and our sacrifice, and He will fulfill all righteousness. In fact, when John the Baptist said, “Oh no Lord, it should be you baptizing me, I am not worthy to unloosen your shoes,” what did Jesus say to the preacher? He said it must be done to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus our High Priest has passed every test with flying colors. He obeyed the law of God perfectly so that when He died, His obedience was perfect. It lacked nothing. Hear me, sinner, that is why I bid you today to run to Jesus. His blood has been shed that you might have life and not death.

*There is a fountain filled with blood, where sinners plunge and lose their guilty stain.*

Perfect. Our lamb has not a blemish; our priest is better, because He is the better hope. Look again at verse nineteen.

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [did]; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:19).*

### **Our High Priest is a Better Hope**

The law gave no hope, but there is a better hope and that better hope is Jesus. He is a better hope because first, He can remove our sins. Hebrews chapter nine and verse twenty-six says,

*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26).*

Friends, Jesus by His death put away my sin forever. That is why I am happy; oh praise be to His glorious name! When I got on my knees before walking into this sanctuary this morning, I rejoiced that there was not one thing on my record against me. The blood has wiped it out, cancelled it. God cannot look at me and say, "You owe Me something." He cannot do that because to do so would say His Son's blood is insufficient. He removes our sin, so that the psalmist would say that our sins are as far as the east is from the west. Man, that is good news.

Second, He is a better hope because He gives us a conscience free from guilt. We who are saved can literally walk into this sanctuary this morning and worship the Lord having pure and holy hands because our consciences are clean by the blood. In Hebrews 9:9 it tells us that the blood of bulls and goats could not do that. The writer says that all they were was a figure for the time and that they could not make him who offered them perfect in conscience. But in the fourteenth verse of that same chapter nine we read,

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14).*

Listen, guilt-ridden soul, listen, there is only one thing in Heaven or in Earth that can literally heal your conscience. Many people suffer today enormous amounts of physical illnesses due to a conscience riddled with guilt. There is one thing and one thing only that can rid your conscience of any stain; it is called Jesus and His blood. That is why Christians lift up the banner of His substitutionary death; it is the means of a clear conscience. All of the sins of my past are no longer held to my account, I am free of them.

Finally, He is a better hope because He gives me acceptance with God. Look at our text one more time.

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [did]; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:19).*

Look at that last phrase and drink it in. In the Old Testament no one drew nigh to God. And if God drew nigh to them their first thought was that they were going to die because they had seen God. But the truth is now because of Jesus Christ I have acceptance with God, and let me tell you something about that acceptance, that acceptance is unconditional. It means that at every single moment I am accepted by God because of justification, because of Jesus' atoning death there is not a single moment that God looks at me and says "unacceptable." Now that works contrary to everything in you and me. We see what we do wrong, and we say, "I can't be acceptable." Listen to me, the death of Christ is so powerful that not only did it forgive you of past sins, it forgives you of future sins. It made you unconditionally acceptable to God forever. There was nothing you could do to neither earn that acceptance nor maintain it. If it was purchased for you and given to you by grace then, tell me, pray tell me, what can you or I do to cancel His loving acceptance of us? Not a thing, if you are in Christ, you are unconditionally acceptable to God. Oh I wish I had thirty more minutes to talk about this, it is wonderful to be able to pray, "My Father." His death made access to the Father.

There was a soldier in the Union Army, a young man who lost his older brother and father in the war, so he went to Washington, D.C. to see President Lincoln to ask for an exemption from the military service so he could go back home and help his sister and mother with the spring planting on the farm. When he arrived in Washington after receiving a furlough from the military to go and plead his case, he went to the White House. He approached the doors and asked the to see the President, however, he was told, "You can't see the President. Don't you know there is a war going on? He is a busy man. You can't see him." Discouraged and disheartened, he left and was sitting on a little park bench not far from the White House when a small boy came up to him. The lad said, "Soldier, you look unhappy. What is wrong?" The soldier looked at him and began to spill out his heart to this young boy. He told about his situation with his father and brother having died in the war, and how he was the only man in the home and was needed desperately back at the farm. It was springtime, and he needed to help plant. The little boy took the soldier by the hand and led him around to the back of the White House. They went through the back door and past the guards and past all the generals, all the high-ranking government officials, until they got into the President's office. The little boy did not even knock, he just opened the door and went right in. There was President Lincoln and the Secretary of State looking over battle plans on the desk. President Lincoln looked up and said, "What can I do for you, Todd?" Todd said, "Daddy, this soldier needs to talk to you." Right then and there the soldier had a chance to plead his case before the President, and was exempted from military service due to the hardship he was under.

Dear friend, we have access to the Father through Jesus. It is the Son who brings us to His Father's throne and says, "Daddy there is someone here who needs to talk to you." And the Father always listens. Oh, I believe in a High Priest. And I practice priesthood. So should you. If you need sacrifice for sin today, go to Him. His sacrifice is complete enough to cleanse your conscience, to give you a new heart, and to give you a better hope. Amen.