

13—Hebrews 5:1-10—The Hope of Eternal Salvation Part 2

I. Introduction

- A. I'm not sure how to ask this in a way that each of you gets this but does your faith in Christ cost you anything? And what I mean by that is this, would your faith in Christ and the fruit of obedience cost you anything? Your job, your property, your happiness, your reputation, your community, and your family?
 - 1. If you were faced with any or all of those losses, what would you do?
- B. Let me ask it a different way? Do you live in freedom or bondage? Are you living under compulsion? Or are you freely following Christ?
 - 1. Free from the guilt and punishment of sin that comes through Christ?
 - 2. Free from the fear of death?
 - 3. Free from the power of the enemy, Satan?
 - 4. Free to gladly obey Jesus as though persecution or famine could not separate you from Christ?
- C. This text is supposed to give you endurance in face of loss.

II. Main Point

- A. Jesus is the better high priest than Aaron because Christ was declared to be the eternal King and eternal High Priest and through his obedient, he became the source of eternal salvation.

III. Outline

- A. The High Priest who pleaded for and gave over his life completely
- B. The Son who learned Obedience through Suffering
- C. The One who became the source of Eternal Salvation

IV. Exposition

- A. I'm certain we don't know just how amazing Christ is. But that's why we continue to come and drink from the deep waters of God's Word. We waded off into some rather difficult waters this morning and I know that I will be lacking in my explanation of them but I pray that I speak that which is true even though it will be incomplete. If we have no sense of Christ's greatness then we might not endure in the face of trials. Therefore we press on into who Christ is again today. He is that Good Shepherd we all need who knows how to represent us before God because he is the God-Man who was qualified to be our high priest forever as he offered up prayers and was heard for his humble submission to God.
 - 1. We've already been told that Jesus was a merciful and faithful high priest because he was made like us in every respect yet without sin.
 - a) My guess is this is more than difficult for us to grasp. Maybe you think that Jesus really had no difficulties because he was the God-Man. When things got tough, he just turned on his "super powers" and resisted. We might think his temptations and weaknesses were not genuinely real and nothing like ours.
 - b) So, we need first to believe that God's Son emptied himself. That doesn't mean he ceased to be God. It doesn't mean he did not also have the full divine nature. But rather he did not hold on to it but he humbled himself and became a servant in the likeness of man (Phil. 2).
 - (1) The best image of this I'm aware of is that his divine nature is veiled. He did not seek access to it for help but rather as our text this morning describes—Hebrews 5:7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears.
 - (a) In other words, he trusted the Father and we see that in the way he offered up prayers.
 - (b) That doesn't sound like someone who turned on their divine powers to me though he was God. He refused to make use of them that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.
 - i) This description is worth exploring. Prayer is the common word used throughout the Bible which is still significant. But the image of this word for supplication is that of someone coming with an olive branch wrapped in white wool pleading for protection.
 - ii) Added to that image is that of loud cries or better yet, groaning. These describe sounds that are really not even words at all. They are animal-like howling.
 - (1) The exact same word is used in Exodus 3:7 when the people cried out for salvation from Egypt.

- iii) Additionally, not only was Jesus praying, holding out the olive branch for protection and groaning but he was weeping with tears.
 - (1) When God healed Hezekiah, this is what he instructed Isaiah to tell Hezekiah:
 - (a) 2 Kings 20:5 “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD
 - (c) Do you believe Jesus was made like us in every respect? Do you believe he took on our weaknesses? Do you believe he lived his life as a man in the days of his flesh or you think he was secretly tapping into his divine nature for help when the going got tough?
 - (2) To think of Jesus rightly is to see him tested with various trials “in the days of his flesh” as being tested in genuine human weakness.
 - (a) Did he pass the tests? Is he the better high priest?
- 2. Well, Jesus—the Son of God, appointed High Priest forever—appealed as we just talked about to the Father who was able to save him from death.
 - a) The preacher says this happened in the days of his flesh. While this image is best seen in the Garden of Gethsemane, “It is best to see this entire verse as a depiction of the utter dependance upon God that characterized the Son’s earthly life and came to its climax in Gethsemane and on the cross.” (Schreiner 163)
 - (1) Mark tells us in Mark 14:34–36 ³⁴“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” ³⁵ And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”
 - (a) We all know what that cup is. It is the cross...it is death.
 - (b) Hebrews goes on to say there at the end of verse 7 that “he was heard because of his reverence.”
 - i) This word for reverence is that of awe or devotion or humble submission. In other words, God heard his prayer because the Son had “given his life completely into the Father’s hands every time.” (Schreiner 164).
 - ii) But how did he answer his prayer because he did in fact die?
 - (1) It seems the only obvious answer is the resurrection. When God raised him from the dead, he was raised to life forever. He trusted the Father even unto death and life was on the other side of it.
 - (2) You might be thinking that’s not how I normally would think of this. He still died.
 - (a) But Jesus spoke like this to Lazarus’ sister, Martha in John 11:25–26 ²⁵ “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
 - (b) Well the resurrection fits nicely with the claims from verses 5 and 6. For Jesus is the eternal begotten Son appointed to rule at God’s right hand as well as the eternal High Priest to represent the people of God.
 - b) Verse 7 “insists that Jesus has been qualified for his high-priestly service by his agony and tears, his supplication and suffering, throughout which his trust in God never failed” (Bruce 129). That is, he did not exalt himself and demand the priesthood. He earned it.
 - (1) “The fact that the cup was not removed qualifies him all the more to sympathize with his people” (Bruce 130).
 - (a) “When (we) are faced with the mystery and trial of unanswered prayer (we) know that (our) high priest was tested in the same way and did not seek a way of escape by supernatural means of a kind that (we) do not also have at our disposal” (Bruce 130).
 - (b) It comes down to this even for us: Matthew 10:39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
 - i) Losing our lives now in glad submission to the Lord ends with eternal life.

- ii) On a very practical level, “it means that when we lose platform, or position, or privilege, or pay, or authority, or respect, or work, or elections, or jobs, or followers, or friends, or health, or limbs, or ease, we might find more of our life in Christ” (Karen Prior).
- B. Now we move to verse 8 which seems as though we are wadding out deeper into the unknown waters for some of us as we look at the Son who learned obedience through what he suffered.
 - 1. We are working through Proverbs right now on Wednesday nights. The obvious pattern in that book is that of a father teaching his son wisdom. The father imparts instruction of God’s law to his son to show him how to be wise in following God’s perfect ways. It is the most basic and natural means of teaching.
 - a) To learn obedience will involve lots of correction and discipline over the years for disobedient sons and daughters.
 - 2. As we consider Jesus, God’s Son, learning obedience through suffering we must understand the difference. Jesus was not moving from disobedience to obedience like we do.
 - a) His suffering was actually due to his obedience and he learned from the suffering that came about from his humble submissiveness to the Father’s will.
 - (1) The eagerness to obey God in the face of more suffering is displayed in Isaiah 50.
 - (a) Isaiah 50:4–9 ⁴ The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. ⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. ⁶ I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. ⁷ But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. ⁹ Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.
 - i) It seems right to think this is the same person as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 that we often talk about.
 - (b) (Bruce 131-132) “So the sufferings which Jesus endured were the necessary price of his obedience, more than that, they were...the very means by which he fulfilled the will of God. At the beginning of this public ministry, he silenced John the Baptist’s objections to baptizing him with the words ‘it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness’”
 - (c) “Unlike those others who were baptized by John in the Jordan, confessing their sins, it was with no consciousness of sin that he accepted baptism, but with the resolution to place himself unreservedly at God’s disposal for the accomplishment of his saving purpose—and if, in doing so, he associated himself publicly with sinners, that was something which he was going to do throughout his ministry, until he was ‘numbered with the transgressors’ on the cross.”
 - (d) “It is not by accident that he spoke of his impending death not only as the cup which he was going to drink but also as the baptism with which he was going to be baptized (Mark 10:38f.); the life of public obedience which started in the earlier baptism was crowned by the second baptism—the fulfillment of ‘all righteousness’ by the endurance of trial and suffering as the first baptism had anticipated.”
 - (2) What does that mean for those Christians he was speaking to? What does it mean for us?
 - (a) “Christians for whom this letter was intended found that their ongoing faith in Christ exposed them to trials and sufferings which they could possibly escape by renouncing their confession of faith. The question for them to face was: were they to fall back and lose everything or press on and gain the better country, the lasting one? The preacher urges them to press on, in spite of the suffering it may involve.”

- C. But how does he urge them to press on? Well, by telling the church what Christ accomplished in his perfect obedience—He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him and high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
1. It was necessary that Christ learn obedience through what he suffered and to fulfill all righteousness so that he was made perfect.
 - a) “Jesus’s perfecting and obedience had to be worked out in every stage of life. He wasn’t qualified to serve as priest until he passed all the tests.”
 - b) “His sufferings and death equipped and qualified him to serve as priest.”
 - c) And in doing so, he became the source of eternal salvation.
 - (1) Unlike the priesthood of the OT who had to offer sacrifices each year on the day of atonement by way of a high priest who offered up these sacrifices for the people and himself, Jesus offered up himself as the perfect sacrifice for all time.
 - (2) In him, we are forgiven and made right with God through faith in Christ. If we trust him, then our lives will end the same way Jesus’s did—resurrection and life eternal.
 - (3) This is only possible because Christ “completed his perfect obedience and drank the cup of suffering to the last drop and tasted death in all its bitterness in order to completely deliver us from the fear of death and death itself” (Bavinck v.3 417).
 - (4) Therefore all who obey him have eternal salvation. There’s nothing to fear. If obedience to Christ costs you your life what of it?
 - (a) Romans 8:31–39 ³¹ If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - (5) But does the “to all who obey him” cause a problem for you?
 - (a) “According to Hebrews there is no salvation apart from obedience” (Schreiner 166).
 - i) The wilderness generation perished because of their disobedience.
 - (1) They turned to other gods and did not trust the Lord even after seeing amazing miracles of deliverance from Egypt and walking on dry ground in the Red Sea.
 - ii) Sure...God is merciful and gracious to discipline us when we are wayward and go astray.
 - iii) But there’s a big difference in willful disobedience. There’s a big difference between one struggling and fighting sin to the one who thinks there’s nothing wrong with it.
 - iv) How does faith and obedience look?
 - (1) Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.
 - (2) “Because Abraham trusted the Lord, he obeyed him even though he wasn’t sure where he was going.” (Schreiner 166)
 - (3) Any faith that does not have the fruit of good works is dead. We are saved by faith alone but true faith is never alone.
 2. We have great hope and unshakeable assurance in this eternal salvation because Christ is the High Priest forever.
 - a) He rules forever from the righthand of God and he represents us as our great high priest who is also our perfect sacrifice. By his blood we are healed.