

Sermon Transcript
02.08.2026
Hebrews 8:1-6

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- Good morning. If you have a Bible, please open to Hebrews 8.
- As you do, let's take a poll. Who's planning to watch the Super Bowl? Who's rooting for the Seahawks? Patriots? Who had no idea who was playing until I just mentioned it?
- There are all kinds of ways to divide into groups. Seahawks fans, Patriots fan. Lefties vs. righties. Men vs. women.
- But let's talk about another way to segregate ourselves into those who follow instructions and those who don't. If you get some new piece of furniture that's marked assembly required, who's the kind of person who immediately grabs a toolbox and starts putting it together? Who reads the instructions?
- Some people can get away with no instructions, but I can't. Some people are handy, I'm not. In fact, even with instructions, I'm typically not comfortable in that realm.
- I remember getting the kids a little playhouse one Christmas and spending a couple of hours putting it together only to find that I had attached something completely backwards and upside down. And unfortunately, it wasn't merely cosmetic so I had to take the whole thing apart and put it back together.
- Its not that I'm unwilling to try, but I just seem to make a mess of it.
- For whatever reason, anytime I can't decide which way something faces and I end up guessing, I always guess wrong. 50/50 chance, but I have a 0% chance of getting it right.
- Put an 800 page book by John Owen or Jonathan Edwards in my hands and I'm right at home. Put some IKEA instructions in my hands and suddenly I'm a kindergartener trying to sound out Hop on Pop.
- I mention this because our text today will reference an instruction manual or blueprints for the building of the tabernacle. And that will then serve as an approximation or example or, to use the concept we've seen throughout Hebrews, a shadow or type of a new and better tabernacle, the very sanctuary or dwelling place of God Himself.
- So let's pray and we'll dive in together.
- Self, others, me.
- Well, we're finally in chap 8. We started chap 7 in early November so perhaps you're thinking, get to the point already. Well, we'll get to that. The author starts off by saying, here's the point.
- But you've waited this long, what's a few more minutes so, let's first recap to make sure we have a sense of our surroundings.
- Hebrews is about the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He's better than the angels, better than Moses, better than Joshua. He's a better priest whose offered a better sacrifice as part of a better covenant built on better promises resulting in a better reward.
- Christ is better.

- Now, why is that important in the historical context of the writing of this letter? Because these Hebrew Christians are being persecuted. Not yet to the point of later persecutions. The author will write, you haven't yet resisted to the point of shedding blood, but let's not minimize the persecution they were facing. Their homes and possessions were being confiscated, they were being ostracized, they were imprisoned.
- And most of the persecution at this point in history wasn't by the Romans. I did a 15 min video for the youth & young adults classes that they'll watch next week discussing early persecution & discussed that for the 1st century, most persecution was from Jews, not imperial authorities.
- So these Jews have converted to Christianity and their fellow Jews didn't like that. Like Saul persecuting his brethren according to the flesh, so these Christians were facing that trial. And with the trial comes a temptation.
- That temptation is described as falling away, apostasy. If only these Christians will leave their churches and return to the synagogues, the pain will stop. So that's the temptation. Its described in the book as falling away or neglecting or drifting or forsaking.
- And so the author writes this book to show the folly & futility of forsaking Christ & Christianity.
- His message is that Christ is better than every aspect of the Mosaic covenant. Why go back to the law, when the promise is better? Why go back to the Levitical priesthood when Christ's priesthood is better? Why go back to the Mosaic covenant when the new covenant is better?
- That's what the entire book is driving home, but in chapters 7-10, that's the real meat & heart of the book. The focus narrows from Christ's general superiority to His specific particular supremacy as a high priest.
- Perhaps you remember that poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that begins, how do I love thee, let me count the ways.
- That's what I think of in Heb 7-10. How is Christ a better priest, let me count the ways.
- First, He is better because He is eternal. Levitical priests were temporal.
- Second, He is better because His priesthood is based on promise and not law. As we've talked about, God's law can change, His promises cannot because God Himself cannot change.
- Third, His priesthood is better because He Himself is better. He is holy, innocent, unstained & so forth.
- Fourth, He is better because His work is permanent. The Aaronic priests would have to offer their daily and weekly and monthly and annual sacrifices because their work was insufficient, ineffective. Christ's work is better because it is efficacious, sufficient, permanent.
- Fifth, He is better because His work actually accomplished what it was intended to do. It could actually bridge the divide between God and man and usher men into the very presence of God and anchor them there. The Levitical priesthood instead communicated the inaccessibility and transcendence of God. As we've said, the entire idea of the temple symbolized a separation between Jew & Gentile, man & woman, and God & man. But Christ has united what sin fractures.

- Sixth, as an implication of all of the above, we've seen that Christ's priesthood saves to the uttermost. It is holistic. The Levitical priesthood offered a type of salvation, but it was temporary and partial. The salvation that it offered was a shadow, a picture, a type.
- And so that brings us back to typology, the study of types. What are types? Well, they're God-ordained parallels or similarities between OT persons, events, and institutions and the NT fulfillment in Christ. And remember that types are marked by two main characteristics: correlation and escalation.
- By correlation, we mean that there is a genuine comparison, a similarity, an analogy. Christ is like Moses in some ways, like Joseph, like Jonah, like the temple, like the Passover. There is a genuine analogy, a sincere similarity, a comparison.
- But there is also escalation. Christ is like Moses, but better, like the Levitical priests, but better. Like Melchizedek, but better. So there is not only comparison, but also contrast.
- This will be crucial to understand as we get into our text today and look at the typological relationship between the OT tabernacle or temple and the NT anti-type or fulfillment.
- To grasp this, we need to understand a bit of how temples function in biblical literature.
- You can think of a temple as a place where heaven and earth overlap figuratively speaking.
- They are kinda like mountains in the Bible and in many religions.
- In Greek mythology, the gods dwell on Mount Olympus. Well, in the Bible, mountains are significant. God gives His law from Mount Sinai. Christ is transfigured on a mountain. Christ gives His law on the sermon on the Mount. Christ ascends from the mount of olives.
- What are mountains? Well, they're where heaven and earth overlap, where the earth, quite literally reaches to the heavens. So its no surprise that Israel's temple is on mount Zion.
- And that temple is decorated with various images which are floral in nature reminding one of the garden of Eden, the original dwelling place of God and man. The temple is thus a picture of what man possessed and lost in Eden, access to our Creator.
- The temple looks back to Eden, but it also looks forward to Christ who calls Himself the temple and it looks to the church which is called the temple and to God's heavenly dwelling place which is referenced as a sanctuary with temple imagery as we'll see in our text today.
- Now, in the Bible, there isn't just one temple. The temple was rebuilt and destroyed a couple of times. You have the first temple, built by whom? Solomon in the 10th century BC. And then its destroyed in about the 6th century BC when Babylon conquers Judah.
- About 50 years later, the Persian king Cyrus gives permission for the temple to be rebuilt. That's what the OT book of Ezra is about. Around 516BC the temple is completed and rededicated only to be renovated and expanded by Herod the Great around 20BC.
- Herod's renovated temple would be what you read about in the NT & it was eventually destroyed in 70AD & to this day, there's no temple in Israel. Rather, over that site is an Islamic Mosque.

- So there have been multiple temples in Israel's history, but all of them have the same basic meaning. They're where God symbolically dwells, where heaven and earth overlap. Not physically. Not literally.
- Paul says in Acts 17
 - *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.* (Acts 17:24–25)
- So, if He doesn't dwell in a temple, why is the temple called the house of the Lord?
- Well, because it's an analogy, a picture, a shadow, a type as we'll see in our text today although it won't speak of the temple, but rather of a tent. Why is that? Well, because before the temple was built, God's presence was said to dwell in the tabernacle or tent in the wilderness. You can think of the tabernacle as the mobile temple or the temple as the fixed tabernacle.
- With that in mind, let's look at our text for today. We'll start in vs. 1-2.

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. (Hebrews 8:1–2)

- We're nearly 30 sermons into Heb & we finally get to the main point. That word point is from the same word as head, as in a man is the head of His wife. The sum, main point, leading thought, the principle idea of all that the author has said, the apex, the pinnacle, is this. Are you ready?
- Christ is sitting down.
- If that doesn't blow your mind, just wait. Because Christ's posture should change your life. But you'll have to wait on that as we don't get to the full implications until chapter 10.
- That's a distinct feature of Hebrews. The author will mention something and then not immediately expound its significance. It is like forewarning or like a preview of an upcoming episode. Next time on Survivor, next week on 24. Well, we won't get answers next time in Hebrews, but at least by May.
- Let me at least show you where this comes up so you can see it for yourself.
 - *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.* (Hebrews 10:11–14)
- For the author of Hebrews, the fact that Christ has sat down means everything. It means, His work is finished. Imagine you tell your kid to clean her room and you walk in and she's just sitting on the bed. What would you ask? Are you finished? You must be if you're just sitting there.
- Well, the fact that Christ is sitting will be evidence for the finality and sufficiency of His work. It is finished. Tetelestai.
- Where is the author getting this from?

- Well, Psalm 110. We spent most of chapter 7 looking at verse 4
 - *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."* (Psalm 110:4)
- But now we're back to verse 1 which says:
 - *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."* (Psalm 110:1)
- So Christ is sitting. And that sitting means something. It means that His work is complete. But, that isn't the only posture that we see in the NT. In the book of Acts, we read about the martyrdom of Stephen and right before he's killed he says this in Acts 7:56
 - *...Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.* (Acts 7:56)
- So why is He standing? Because though His work of making purification, atonement, is finished, His interceding work is ongoing.
- This corresponds to the way that the Father's work is described. In the gospels, Jesus says my Father is working until now and I am working. But I thought the OT said that God rested from all His works. Well, His work of creation ex nihilo is finished, but His work of providence, of holding the universe together is ongoing. As there is a sense in which the Father is working and resting, so there is a sense in which Jesus is sitting and standing.
- So what's happening in Acts 7. Well, imagine a courtroom scene. Jesus is like a defense attorney sitting next to Stephen and when the crowd accuses him of blasphemy, Christ suddenly stands and shouts I object.
- His work of making atonement is finished, but he always lives to make intercession for us as Hebrews 7:25 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.* (Hebrews 7:25)
- So when it comes to His work of propitiation, atonement, sacrifice, His work is done. He is sitting. But in another sense, He's still working.
- And not only is the fact that He is sitting significant, but in particular, where He is sitting.
- He's seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.
- As Ed has shown us extensively over the past two years, the fact that Christ is sitting on the throne speaks to His deity. Remember the HANDS analogy that Ed has taught us. Christ shares in the honors of God, the attributes of God, the names of God, the deeds of God, and the seat of God and thus He is God.
- You might get away with sitting on your dad's favorite chair, but no one gets away with sitting on God's throne except for God.
- So He's a priest, but He's also sitting on a throne so He's a king. As we saw with the example of Melchizedek, this is a significant combination of offices. In the OT, priests were from Levi and kings from Judah. There was no such phenomenon as a priest king.
- Not only is He a paradoxical combination of priest and king, but God and man. We see hints of the hypostatic union here. Christ is man in that He can die and make purification. But He is also God in that He sits on the divine throne.
- Again, contrast this with the Levitical priests. They could barely enter the holy of holies, only once a year, only after elaborate preparation. They would never dare to pull up a

chair. In fact, the only “chair” in the holy of holies was the mercy seat on which they would offer up the blood.

- But Christ walks through the veil, through the shadow, and into the very presence of the heavenly throne room. The true tent as opposed to the copy. The substance as opposed to the shadow. The anti-type as opposed to the type. The fulfillment as opposed to the picture.
- In other words, the previous tabernacle or temple was a mirage. When the author says that Christ enters the true tabernacle, He doesn't mean that the physical tabernacle was false, but rather that it wasn't final, wasn't ultimate.
- This is like Jesus saying that He is the true bread or the true vine or the true light. That doesn't mean that the manna or Israel or the old covenant offered false bread or false light, but that it was imperfect, incomplete. Aaronic priests could enter the old symbol, but Christ has entered the true tent.
- A tent made not with human hands, but God Himself.
- BTW, that's a phrase we see often in the NT to distinguish between the shadow and substance.
- For instance,
 - *In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ...* (Colossians 2:11)
- That is contrasted with baptism in vs 12 which is a sign of a better circumcision, a circumcision of the heart. And then in vs. 17 it says:
 - *These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.* (Colossians 2:17)
- So shadow represents what is made by human hands, what belongs to the old covenant, substance represents what is done by God, what corresponds to the new and true.
- So to go back to Judaism would be to forsake what is true for what is partial, what is final for what is temporary, what is finished for what is incomplete, what is substance for what is shadow.
- So the point
- Jesus is the genuine high priest, whose real accomplishment is demonstrated by the fact that he has completed his work and is now God's coregent
- Let's keep going. Vs. 3.

For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. (Hebrews 8:3)

- What does it mean to be a priest? Well, as we saw back in chapter 5, you have to be appointed. You can be appointed on the basis of law like the Levites or promise like Christ, but you have to be appointed. It wasn't something you just volunteered for.
- You also have to have something to offer, gifts and sacrifices. And you have to have somewhere to offer it. A temple or tabernacle or sanctuary.
- So the Levites offered gifts and sacrifices as an inherent necessity of the job. A high priest who doesn't offer a sacrifice is like a preacher who doesn't preach or a fisherman who doesn't fish.

- So if that's an essential part of the priestly ministry, then it stands to reason that Christ Himself offered something.
- Now what He offers and when He offers it isn't the point here. Last week we saw that He offered up Himself and as you can imagine, we'll come back to that, as most of chapter 9 revolves around that, but the point for now is that Christ offered something or someone and thus He fulfills the role and responsibility of a high priest.
- Notice also the language of gifts and sacrifices. That could also correspond to the distinction we talked about earlier between what is finished, Christ's sacrifice, and what is ongoing, that is His offerings of intercession and other gifts. Whether the author means that or not, I'm not sure, but that's at least possibly in his mind.
- As the priests offered both gifts & sacrifices, so Christ offered a finished sacrifice, but ongoing gifts.
- Whether that's the author's point or not, it's certainly theologically true that we only come to God through Christ and thus our thanks and worship is always to the Father and through the Son and by the Spirit. He no longer ministers by means of sacrifice, that is finished, but He lives to make intercession and lives to offer our praises and prayers to the Father on our behalf.
- This is why thinking deeply & biblically is so important. Why we can't reduce things down to really simplistic statements. Imagine taking a high definition picture and compressing down to a minimum number of pixels. You lose the clarity and beauty and complexity of the picture.
- Well, that's what happens when we boast in half truths.
- Here's what I mean. We've seen in this text that Christ's work is finished, but in chapter 7, we saw that He's still working.
- What happens if we emphasize one of those to the neglect of the other?
- Well, if you stress that His work is finished and deny any ongoing ministry, then you rob yourself of Christ's work to intercede on your behalf or to sanctify you or empower you. In effect, you make Christ like the god of deism, relatively uninformed and uninvolved in your daily life.
- On the other hand, if you emphasize His ongoing ministry to the neglect of His finished work, you swerve into legalism and self-righteousness. Christ's atoning work isn't finished so you have to atone for yourself.
- Only by maintaining that tension can you boast that Christ's work is already, but not yet, finished and yet ongoing. Only then can you embrace the conviction of the law alongside the assurance of the gospel and thus avoid the feelings of condemnation.
- This is why I always say that theology is inherently practical. Its liberating. You shall know the truth and the truth will what? Set you free.
- Free from shame, free from the power of sin, free from fear, free from legalism. The only way to avoid one sin without swinging the pendulum into another is to embrace the theological tension of the glorious complexity of Christ's person and work.
- Let's keep going. Vss. 4-5.

Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that

you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”
(Hebrews 8:4–5)

- The language of this first sentence is confusing, but I think its just saying that we don't need another earthly priest. The law has appointed an abundance of those kinds of priests. In fact, if Christ was on earth, that would prove that He wasn't really a priest because that would symbolize that His work wasn't finished. We don't need a priest by law, but promise. We don't need a priest on earth, but in heaven.
- After all, the lawfully appointed earthly priest serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.
- Look at the words copy and shadow and then look later on at the word pattern. All of these are typological terms. In fact, the word pattern in Greek is typos from which we get the word typology.
- So notice the argument. Levitical priests, Aaronic priests, serve. They offer gifts and sacrifices. But where do they serve?
- In a copy, in a shadow. Not in the true tent.
- And for demonstration of that, the author quotes from Exodus 25:40 in which YHWH says:
 - *And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain. (Exodus 25:40)*
- God tells Moses, pay attention. Follow the instructions. Don't just wing it. Here is a blueprint. Use it and follow it to the T. In fact, its so important that we see it in Exodus 25:9
 - *Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. (Exodus 25:9)*
- And 26:30
 - *Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain. (Exodus 26:30)*
- And 27:8
 - *...As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made. (Exodus 27:8)*
- And Numbers 8
 - *And this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold. From its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern that the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand. (Numbers 8:4)*
- And when Stephen preaches in Acts 7 he includes that detail saying:
 - *Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. (Acts 7:44)*
- So God gave Moses a blueprint for the tabernacle which later served as a blueprint for the temple, but according to Hebrews, that blueprint represents something beyond itself. It stands for something. It is a copy or shadow of something.
- This reminds me of a couple of years ago when one of our members gave me a Lego set that was the office from The Office. Its got Kevin and his pot of chili, and Dwight's stapler in jello, and a check made out to science, and all kinds of other details.
- And the set came with a set of instructions. And I followed them to the letter and only made a couple of mistakes along the way.

- Now, I enjoy Lego about as much as the next guy, unless that next guy is Tony Phaup, but what made this set of particular interest to me was that it corresponds to something else. It is a picture of something else. It represents something else.
- That set is a picture of something else, a reminder of something else.
- And that's what the tabernacle was, that's what the tabernacle did. It figuratively or typologically represented God's residence in heaven.
- Now, there's a question as to whether or not the pattern corresponds to heaven itself or to a particular part of heaven. In other words, is heaven the sanctuary or is there a part of heaven in which there is a sanctuary? I read a bunch of different perspectives on that and concluded that for the purposes of this sermon, it doesn't really matter though I think the author is most likely saying that there is some sort of heavenly sanctuary, but what exactly that means, I don't know. I have no idea how to speak about a non-spatial space so I don't know if that distinction necessarily matters.
- What does matter is that the Aaronic priests ministered in a shadow, but Christ ministered in the real thing. What matters is that in some way the tabernacle and later temple pointed beyond themselves to something more real, more substantial.
- The priests could occasionally and temporarily enter behind the veil and serve in a copy of heaven, but Christ entered heaven itself.
- He has passed through the heavens as chapter 4 said.
- Or as 6:19-20 says:
 - *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* (Hebrews 6:19-20)
- He has entered the inner place behind the curtain, not the holy of holies, but the place where angels cry out holy, holy, holy. Not the picture, but the pure and primordial and perfect.
- And so, it stands to reason that His sacrifice is better. They offered iron pyrite, He offers gold. They offered cubic zirconium, He offered diamonds. They offered a xerox'd copy of the Declaration of Independence, He offered the real one that Nic Cage stole.
- The tabernacle and temple were blueprints, but once the thing is built, what happens to the instructions? They're thrown away. They're rendered obsolete. Once I build the Lego, I discard the instructions.
- Historically, that's exactly what we see with the temple. Destroyed in 70AD. Obsolete, no longer necessary. Why would you need an altar when there is no longer any sacrifice? Why would you need a veil separating God from man when that divide has been bridged? Why would you need courts separating the Jews from the Gentiles when the dividing wall of hostility has been removed as Ephesians 2 says?
- You see the tabernacle and temple played an important role in salvation history, but they weren't the point. They weren't the endgame, they weren't the goal, they weren't the substance.
- As we read in Colossians 2:
 - *These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.* (Colossians 2:17)

- The light of Christ casts a shadow backward over the entire OT, but now that Christ is here, the shadow has fulfilled its purpose. As John the Baptist says of Christ, now that He's here, I must decrease and He must increase. I'm a means, but He's the end.
- So as we'll read next time in vs. 13
 - *In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.* (Hebrews 8:13)
- Speaking of the new covenant, let's look at vs. 6.

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)

- As mentioned earlier, the word better plays a pivotal role in the flow of Hebrews. Christ is better is a way to sum up the book. Its the drumbeat that keeps the rhythm of the book.
- In chapter 1, Jesus is better than the angels. The ESV translates it as superior to the angels, but in Greek, its the same word translated as better here. In ch 6, the gospel brings better things. In ch 7, there is a better hope. In ch 8, we'll read of better promises. In ch 9, a better sacrifice. In ch 10, a better possession. In ch 11, a better country and better life. And in ch 12, a better word.
- The word better is like a breadcrumb to follow the author's argument and all of these better breadcrumbs are leading us to the sufficiency and supremacy of Christ and the new covenant.
- So here in vs. 6 we find a better ministry, better covenant, and better promises.
- And the ministry that is in view here has to do with mediation.
- As 1 Timothy 2:5 says
 - *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...* (1 Timothy 2:5)
- This Greek word translated mediator appears 6 times in the NT, three of which come in Hebrews. And whenever it speaks of mediation, the focus tends to be on his death. He mediates the covenant by means of sacrificing Himself.
- That fits with the language of the gospels where the New Covenant is inaugurated by means of His blood. As we say each week during communion, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.
- As we know from later in Hebrews, the blood of bulls & goats couldn't atone. So Christ's blood is better & thus His ministry is better & thus His mediation is better & thus His covenant is better.
- After all this covenant is enacted on better promises. And it comes WITH better promises. We talked about that quite a bit last week during theological equipping class.
- Part of what is new and improved about the new covenant is that it isn't just bare command. The new covenant comes with a new power and potency. In the old, God commands, but in the new, God fulfills those commands for and in us.
- As we've said, run John run, the law demands, but gives me neither feet nor hands, far BETTER news the gospel brings, it bids me fly and gives me wings.

- The new covenant comes w/ the promise that the law isn't just written on tablets. Its written on your heart; & your circumcision isn't external, but internal, a circumcision of the heart.
- You aren't under the Mosaic covenant. You aren't under the Levitical priesthood. You are instead IN Christ. And that's better.
- The reason that this new covenant is better is because its established on the basis of better promises. We'll see those expounded next time.
- But for now, I just want to take a second and highlight how incredible this is.
- Hebrews is a deeply theological book, but that doctrine exists to stir your worship. To arouse your affections.
- That only happens if you follow the author's argument.
- So I want to just re-summarize what he's getting at.
- All of redemptive history, just like all of world history can be divided into two epochs. You have the time before Christ and the time of Christ. Not after Christ because Christ is eternal, so before Christ and anno domini, the year of our Lord.
- Before Christ, God gave us the law. And it was good for a number of things. It restrained sin to some degree, it revealed God's will, and it highlighted the utter depravity of mankind.
- But it didn't solve the problem, it exacerbated it, emphasized it.
- So along with the law, God established a priesthood. A priesthood of imperfect priests offering imperfect sacrifices in an imperfect sanctuary with imperfect results. Their work was never finished. Day after day after day for centuries and centuries, this was the pattern. Every day the smell of blood hovered over the city as a reminder of the stench of sin and the aroma of death.
- Why would you want to go back to that? Why would you want to put yourself under the law, under the shadow? Shadows don't satisfy your hunger or quench your thirst. Shadows can't stop an arrow or spear. Shadows can't save.
- But now, in Christ, we have more than a shadow. We have something better. Someone better. Someone substantial. A better priest, a holy priest, an eternal priest, who has offered a better sacrifice, an efficacious sacrifice, a sufficient sacrifice, in a better sanctuary, a heavenly sanctuary.
- And so He has gone not only through the veil that separates the holy place from the most holy place, but He has passed through the heavens itself and torn down the curtain that separates God from man, because He Himself is God and man.
- So He has gone into the holiest of holies, the very throne room of God, not the copy, but the true tent. And He has sat down. He isn't standing. His work of atonement is done. Tetelestai.
- But He isn't alone. As if all of the above wasn't enough, there is more. Christ is not alone on the throne. Because one of the most profound truths of the NT is the fact that we have been united to Christ. What is his is ours. Where He goes, we go.
- So as we read in Ephesians 1:3
 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...* (Ephesians 1:3)

- We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places because Christ Himself possesses every spiritual blessing in Himself and we are in Christ and He is in heaven.
- And as if that isn't enough, we read this in Eph 2:6
 - *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:6)
- Look at that. We are seated with him.
- We don't have a right to sit there on our own, but we aren't on our own, we are with Him, we are in Him. His righteousness has been imputed to us, reckoned to us, counted to us.
- I can't show up to Buckingham and demand entrance, but if I'm there with Prince William, I'd imagine they'd let me in.
- And I wouldn't dare to sit behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, but if Trump said, have a seat, I'd feel a lot more bold.
- That's been the author's point all along. He writes the book to inspire confidence, assurance. He writes that we might not fall back, but draw near.
- So I want to end with this analogy.
- Imagine I come over to your house & as soon as I come over I make myself at home. I don't even knock, I just walk in. And I don't ask to get a drink, I just go into the fridge. And I don't ask before putting my feet on your footrest, I just sit down and relax. There are a handful of you that that might fly for. With some of you I might have that relationship. But not many. That would be the height of presumption.
- But that's exactly how I act when I go to visit my mom or my in-laws. I make myself at home because there is a sense in which I am at home. I belong there.
- And what Hebrews is saying is that because of Christ, you belong with God. You belong in His presence. Not by birth but rebirth, not by works, but union with Christ. So don't be bashful, don't be fearful. Don't be timid. Draw near with confidence, boldness, courage.
- Christ is better. And you are united to Christ. And Christ has sat down at the throne of grace and beckoned you to draw near.
- That's the point.
- Let's pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- One of the things that we talked about today was theological tension or complexity. Not complex as in necessarily hard to understand, but complex in the sense of being layered.
- Christ is sitting and Christ is standing for instance, depending on whether you are referring to His work of atonement or intercession.
- Well, likewise, with communion, there is a layered meaning to it.
- It looks backward to the death of Christ and forward to the wedding supper of the Lamb.
- It looks upward to our communion with God, but also outward and our communion with others, as we eat from one loaf and drink from one cup.

- And it points us to examine ourselves. There is introspection as 1 Corinthians 11 says, but it does more than that.
- It is a time to mourn our sin, but also to celebrate, to rejoice.
- As wine is both bitter and sweet so there is both a bitterness to our sin and a sweetness to Christ's blood.
- So in light of our text today, I just want us to focus on the more celebratory mood. I want you to just think about the finished nature of Christ's work. Think about all of your sin, past, present, and future, being nailed to the cross, being imputed to Him as His perfect righteousness is imputed to you.
- Allow that truth to drive out the feelings of shame or despair or fear.
- Take a second and think and pray and we'll partake together.