

Hebrews 2025 | Drawing Near Through a Better Hope

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Hebrews 7:1-22

If you have your Bibles, go to Hebrews chapter 7. That is where we will be at this morning. On Wednesday I got to take my little boy, G, hunting for the first time this season because it's been so busy but we finally found a moment to go out. We were in our blind hunting on the back side of our farm out by 1346. We were sitting there for a little bit when all of a sudden we see a doe walk out. I said, "Hey, G, there's a doe!" He looks up, sees it, and gets that little shake of excitement. He gets his gun up and I tell him what to do. He's done this before but this is the first time this year. Then, all of a sudden- BOOM! The deer falls down. He made a great shot and he was super excited. I said, "YEAH! GOOD JOB! THIS IS AWESOME!" We were high fiving each other. It was so great.

Then we heard yells from the woods. "HEY, GET OFF MY LAND!" G's eyes got so big. He was looking at me, I was looking at him, and the guy was still yelling. "HEY, I'M GOING TO CALL THE GAME WARDEN! YOU'RE GOING TO GET ARRESTED!" G said, "Dad, we've got to go! We've got to get out of here!" I said, "No, we're on our land. It's fine." He said, "Dad, we've got to go!" Then we hear the yelling again, "GET OFF MY LAND! I'M GOING TO CALL THE COPS!" G said again, "Dad, we have to go right now!" He was so worried. He didn't know what was going on. He shot a doe and now thinks he's getting arrested and going to jail. G is panicked. I said, "Listen, G." I had his attention. His eyes were big and he was looking at me. I said, "Listen, G, this land that we're on is Papaw's land, I'm Papaw's son, and you're with me. So guess what? You're a grandson. I promise you. We are ok." Then, here comes the yelling again so I call my neighbor on the phone and say, "Hey, it's me, Kory. I'm the one that shot." He said, "Oh, okay. I thought it was somebody else." We had a good laugh about it. He thought it was somebody trespassing on his land. Of course, G, in that moment thought we were going to get arrested. He literally thought we were going to jail. I said, "No, no, no. You're good and you're

good because we're on Papaw's land and you're with me. I'm the son and you're the grandson so we are good. We are okay to be here."

As I was reading through Hebrews chapter 7 this week that story kept popping up in my mind because here is what I thought- how many Hebrew kids walking towards the temple had those same fears? If you were a Hebrew kid walking towards the temple during this time there would have been a little bit of fear because there would have been a lot of "no trespassing" signs. There is the court of the gentiles, court of the women, court of the men, and court of the priests. You can't go into the temple and there would have been a big veil that says "stay out." There were all of these warnings that told you, you can go here but you can't go there. Then you have these stories of people who went in and died. You have stories of people yelling... *come in here and you die...* then boom you're dead. So I can just imagine these little Hebrew kids walking towards the temple and asking their dad if they're okay to be there. They would have approached all of these things with fear because they knew there were things they can do and things they can't do.

Can you imagine a little Hebrew boy walking up to the temple asking his dad, "Hey, can we go further? Am I okay? Can I go here?" He knows he can't go IN there because that is like the dead zone. Imagine a guy walking up, grabbing the little kid by the hand, and saying... *Hey, little buddy. Do you want to go inside?...* The kid would say... *No, no, no. We can't go in there...* The guy says... *Yes, we can because that is my Father's house, I'm his Son, and you're with me. Let's go...* Imagine walking that kid into the very presence of God not because he can be there but it's because he's with the person who can be there.

Here is what we're going to see this morning. It's that you're going to have a choice. These Hebrew people that are hearing the sermon have a choice. They can stay with their priest and stay with their religious system and here is the reality- it gets them close to God but here's the trouble- it can't get them near to him. And this is what we're going to see- Jesus, the better high priest, is going to grab us by the hand and say... *Hey, don't just get close to God. Don't just get close through religion, works, sacrifice, and all the things. Don't just stay outside and be kind of near or close to him. Why don't you grab my hand and draw near to God and go into his very*

presence because he is my dad, I'm his son, and you're with me?... That is what he's trying to convince this little church to do, to keep holding onto Jesus the son who is a way better priest than all the priests who came before him. And that is going to be the decision we have to make. Are we going to stay with our ways to get close to God like religions, works, bible study, or whatever it is? Are we going to get close to the things of God OR are we going to grab onto Jesus who brings us near and who draws us right into the very presence of God?

Scripture:

Hebrews 7:18-19 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

Notice the text we just read. There is a choice here. There is the "on the one hand" and there is "on the other hand." There are two hands you get to choose from. On the one hand there is the old commandments and the old ways. Remember, this was preached 2,000 years ago to a struggling church who have come out of Judaism. They have the old laws, the old temple, and the old priest system and many have left that, came to Jesus, and they're tempted to go back. He says if they go back then they're going back to the old way and notice what's wrong with the old way. It's been set aside. Why? Because of its weakness and uselessness. It can't make you perfect. It can't fix your sin problem. It can't actually bring you near to the presence of God. There is always going to be a chasm. There is always going to be a veil that says you can't come any closer. You're always going to be the kid in the blind a little bit scared that you're not in the right place. He says... *how about you choose the other hand. Choose the better hope who is Jesus, who is the Son, who is a greater priest, and who brings you right into the very presence of God...*

The obvious answer to that is this- you're going to have to prove that to us. You're going to have to prove that Jesus is actually better than all of our priestly systems, all of our sacrifices, and all of our temple because it's worked pretty good for a lot of generations. You're going to have to prove that Jesus is actually better than all of the Levitical priests that came before him and that is exactly what the preacher is going to do during our

time and the way he's going to do that is through a character named Melchizedek. We are going to see in verses one through ten who Melchizedek is. We are going to figure that out and then in verses eleven through nineteen we're going to see why Jesus is a better high priest than all the other priests and why his work is superior. So Melchizedek is superior and the work of Jesus is superior.

First, who is Melchizedek? Some of us have studied him. Some of us have never heard of him and that is probably similar to this little congregation hearing this sermon. The first question we are going to ask is this- who is he? Verse 1 says this, "For this Melchizedek..." Let's pause for a second and think about this Melchizedek character because if you look at the Old Testament there is only one time he shows up in the Bible. It's in Genesis chapter 14. There is this story- which we will get to in a little bit- with Abram who defeats these kings and then meets this guy, Melchizedek. That is the only mention he has. It's once in one chapter. Then we get Psalm 110 where God gives David this prophecy that there is going to be a forever priest from the order of Melchizedek, that guy in Genesis chapter 14. So he is only mentioned two times in the entire Old Testament and here is what's pretty crazy- he's mentioned zero times in the New Testament outside of Hebrews. He's never mentioned. This obscure person in the Old Testament is never mentioned.

So because we believe the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible and used men and breathed into them to show them things so that they could write things, can you imagine being the preacher to this congregation and the Holy Spirit revealing to you, pulling Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, and really for the first time seeing the connection?... *Hold on, Jesus is a priest not by the Levitical boys but by Melchizedek who is this priest king in the Old Testament...* He is beginning to make all of these connections and I'm sure he couldn't wait to preach this sermon!... *I cannot wait to preach this! I don't know how anybody else found this. Thank you, Holy Spirit!...*

Now, as part of his sermon, he shares this idea of Melchizedek. So, who is this guy? Our text says this, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of

everything.” Here is his identity. Melchizedek, he is a king priest. He’s a king from Salem and he’s a priest of the Most High God.

Now, you have to understand that everybody just said... *Oh, hold on. No, no, no. That can’t happen. You can’t be a king and a priest. Those are two different roles and they can’t overlap...* In fact, if you think about King Saul in 1 Samuel, he got in big trouble for acting like a priest. Do you remember that? Samuel was delayed so Saul went ahead and did the sacrifice himself. God judges Saul and takes away the kingdom from him. Kings can’t be priests. Priests can’t be kings. It’s like in our moment; you can’t be the president and also the Speaker of the House. Those two things are different. There is separation of power. Here there is a guy named Melchizedek in the Old Testament who is both. He’s a king and he’s also a priest. He is unique and we’re going to see in his uniqueness that he is way superior to everybody else.

Then it says that he meets Abraham in this slaughtering of the kings. Talk about a good movie title- “Abraham and the Slaughtering of the Kings.” I would probably watch that. It would be a good movie. But you have this situation in Genesis 14 and I suggest you read it or listen to the audio because there are some crazy names, but it’s amazing. You have these four kings from the east and they go to the land of Canaan and invade and fight with five localized kings and actually defeat them. It’s this huge war with four kings versus five kings and the four kings defeat the five kings. But, one of the problems is Lot, Abraham’s nephew, is living in Canaan so he gets captured as a spoil of war by these four kings. Then, all of a sudden, Abraham hears about this battle and hears that his nephew has been captured. So Abraham gets 318 men together which isn’t very many when you’re going after four kings that just defeated five kings but he’s got the Lord on his side. It’s kind of like a David and Goliath story before the actual story of David and Goliath. He takes these 318 men on these seizures and night raids, conquers these four kings, gets his nephew back, and also gets all the spoils of war.

So, I just want you to imagine that for a moment. Four kings defeat five kings and then Abraham defeats the four kings. He now has the spoils of nine kingdoms that are now his. I just want you to picture this! Abraham in the Old Testament is a great man. He’s one of the patriarchs. Everybody

listening to this sermon knows that Abraham is one of the greatest guys in the Old Testament and we can say that this is one of his great days. This is a moment where he's probably flexing a little bit... *Yeah, check me out. I just slaughtered four kings. I'm kind of the man...* He has all these spoils of war and all these things. You have a great man, a great day, and he walks up on a guy named Melchizedek who is the king of Salem, who is the high priest of God, and then something crazy happens. It's almost shocking. We don't even know what to do with I in Genesis 14. Abraham is a great man having a great day. He sees Melchizedek and he is so blown away by Melchizedek that he gives Melchizedek a tenth of all of the spoils of war. He gave him a tenth of all that he had conquered, which is probably millions of dollars' worth of things. He gives it to this guy named Melchizedek and then we don't hear anything else about Melchizedek. He just kinds of fades out until Psalm 110. Who is this guy that the patriarch, Abraham, in his presence gave him a tithe, paid him ten percent of all that he had? Then something crazy happens. Melchizedek blesses Abraham. He gives him a blessing. I want you to just hold those two thoughts. Abraham gives Melchizedek a ten percent tithe and Melchizedek blesses Abraham. Hold those in your mind because we're going to see why that is so important and why it shows that Melchizedek is superior to all the priests they are following.

Let's go on to verse 2. We're getting a little bit more information about Melchizedek. It says this, "He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace." So his very name gives us information about him. He is a righteous king and he is a king of peace. Do you know what that means? He's a good king. He's a king that rules with righteousness. He's a king that always does right. He is a king with integrity and a king with character. He's also a king that brings peace and we can see how odd that is because if you ready history, most kings when they get a lot of power, become unrighteous often, are not men of integrity or character, and their power doesn't lead to peace but it leads to more power so they aren't kings of peace but they're kings of power. This is a very unique guy. He's a righteous guy and a guy who brings peace.

Then we see some strange information about him. Verse 3 says this, "He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days

nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever." What does that mean that Melchizedek had no father, mother, or genealogy? What does it mean that he had no beginning of days and no ending of days? Does it mean that he's an eternal being? Some would say he is a preexisting Christ. This was Christ pre-incarnate revealing himself as Melchizedek. I don't think that is what's happening. I don't think this Melchizedek figure is actually an eternal being who doesn't actually have a mother or a father and I think you can prove it with the text because it says he is resembling the Son of man in these ways. So what is he trying to say? He's trying to say that when you go to Genesis chapter 14 these are the things we don't know about Melchizedek. We don't know who his dad is, we don't know who his mom is, and we don't know his genealogy which is very odd because you usually know everybody in the Old Testament, who their mom was, who their dad was, and their genealogy. We don't know when he was born. We don't know when he died. We don't have any of that information. All we have is this character, Melchizedek, and because we don't have that information it's as if he's still with us. It's as if he's eternal. He kind of resembles the one who is actually eternal who is the Lord Jesus Christ. So there is this connection. Melchizedek can be a forever priest because we don't have a record of his death. He is sort of lost in history. We don't have information about his beginning or his end so we're just going to say that he's actually been a priest alongside all the Levites. He's been this forever priest waiting for someone to come and take up his mantle who is the Lord Jesus.

So what is the connection that he, as this eternal, righteous, peaceful one that he is resembling, that he is like, and that he is pointing to? It's the Son. What do we know about Jesus? Jesus is actually our eternal priest. He actually has no beginning and he actually has no end. It doesn't just appear like that. No, it is true. He is our eternal God and he's not just somewhat righteous; he is fully righteous and he gives his righteousness to us as a free gift. He doesn't just have some peace; he gives his peace to us as his people. The connection is this- Jesus comes from Melchizedek as the ACTUAL eternal, the ACTUAL righteous, and the ACTUAL peaceful king who comes and rules forever. Those are the connections he is trying to make between Melchizedek and Jesus.

So what about these tithes and blessings? Because it's a big deal to these people. Now, let's just be honest, to us blessings and tithes are probably not as big of a deal as it was to them because to them if your dad didn't give you the blessing then that meant curse. You needed the blessing. Do you remember when the boys fought over Jacob's blessing? It was a big deal! There were laws around tithes. If you didn't then you were in big trouble. Tithes and blessings were a big deal so the preacher is going to use these things to show how great Melchizedek is. Look with me in verse 4, it says this, "See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils!"

Let's first just see how great this man, Melchizedek was. How do we know he was great? Because when Abraham saw him, he gave him a tenth of everything he had. That's pretty bizarre, right? He has all of this stuff, he sees this guy who is a king priest, and he is so enamored with him, he's so in awe of him that he just gives him a tenth of everything he has. Now, you might be thinking what the people were thinking... *Well, that is kind of normal. Even in the law the people have to give the Levites a tenth. Tithing was a part of the law so it really isn't that big of a deal that Abraham gave this tenth to Melchizedek because it was kind of expected...* We're going to see that's not actually the case and the preacher kind of anticipates that argument. Look at verse 5, it says this, "And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises."

I know that is kind of hard to untangle, but what is he trying to say here?... *I get your rebuttal that you think this tithe is what he has to do and that it is an obligation because that is what the law does. It obligates the people of Israel to give tithes to the Levites because they're a part of the people of Abraham. It's part of the law that you have to give tithes. It's an obligation but that was no so with Melchizedek...* Melchizedek wasn't one of the people of Abraham so there is no law for Abraham to give him a tithe. There is no law whatsoever so it's not obligation but rather adoration is the reason why Abraham gave him a tenth of all that he had. In other words, he didn't have to. He wanted to. It wasn't part of the law. It was

this extraordinary circumstance where he saw somebody who was so great, so marveling that he had to give him something. He had to give him something in adoration so Abraham gave him a tenth of all that he had. It was different than what you gave to the Levites. Abraham didn't have to. Abraham wanted to.

It's kind of like when you go to a food counter and order your own food on the iPad. Have any of you had that experience? You go to a cool place and they have the iPad with the menu. You're going through the menu but you don't know the menu and you don't know where the buttons are so it's taking a really long time. You get to the end of ordering your own food off of the tablet and what is the next question? What do you want to tip? I'll be honest, it might just be because I'm a curmudgeon and I'm a little bit cheap but is that tip going back to me? I get it. There are people that are cooking the food but I'm paying for the food. What is this tip for? It seems like I did the thing that deserves the tip so there is no way I want to tip. Then sometimes there will be somebody behind you who is watching and you don't want to be THAT guy that doesn't tip so you feel this obligation to tip because they're going to see and if you don't tip then they'll tell somebody you don't tip. Then the question is this- what do you give? Do you give 15%? That seems cheap. Do you give 20%? But you did everything! Eventually you just hit 20% but you're angry about the whole thing because you felt obligated. There was social pressure to tip. It wasn't a joy.

I will say, I'm not against tips. I actually love to tip but do you know when I love to tip? When I have great service. I love it when my wife and I go for a date night and we sit down somewhere, somebody comes up to us and gives us a menu, pulls out our chairs, takes our order, and gives extraordinary service. They tell us the specials and tell us what the best thing on the menu is. Then they write it down and they bring salads and appetizers. They take that away but then they bring more food. Then they ask us if we want dessert and it's just this great experience. They smile and they're friendly. After all of that, when you get the bill at the end and there is an option to tip. That is when I love to tip. That is when 20% isn't enough because our waiter or waitress was awesome. See, that's the difference here. This is not an obligation because he has to give 10% to this guy, Melchizedek. There is zero obligation. He is so enamored, he is so

in awe of this guy that his only response is to give this guy something. It isn't obligation. It's exaltation!

Now that we see that let's think about this idea of blessing because there is also a blessing that comes with this and we're going to see that the blessing shows that Melchizedek is superior to Abraham. Notice verse 7 says this, "It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior." It's beyond dispute. Whoever is the best blesses the guy that's not the best. It's beyond dispute so who gets the blessing? The guy that is superior blesses the guy that is inferior.

It's kind of like when we wrestle over who pays the bill at lunch. Have you ever taken somebody out to lunch or they take you out and then at the end it's a question of who pays? Do you split the bill because you're both on the same level? Do I get the bill because I have more means to do so than you? Or do you get the bill? I take college kids out to lunch a lot and they never fight for the bill. They never offer. It's always assumed I will get the bill because I'm an adult. I have more means to do so. It's just assumed so I will say, "here, I got this." Then every once in a while a business owner will take me out to lunch. I'll sit down and think about what I'm going to order. There is probably a zero percent chance I'm paying for the meal, right? At the end of the meal they are going to give a little flex and say, "hey, I got this." It's because they have more than I do.

It's this same kind of moment here. The one who usually has a little more buys for the one who doesn't have as much. It's that same story and blessing. The one who is above blesses the one who is lower. So who blessed who? Melchizedek blessed Abraham. That means he is superior to Abraham and that would've blown this little congregation's mind.

Now let's go back to the tithe for a moment. It says this in verse 8, "In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. 9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him." It goes back to the idea of tithes. In one sense you're giving tithes to mortal men who are dying but Abraham gave tithes to a guy that seems to live forever so there is this bigger thing that happened when Abraham did it. And here is something

that is really cool, he says... *Do you know what is actually true? All of the Levite priests who you want to go back and follow, who you want to go back and pay tithes to, you pay tithes to them because they get you close to God. Do you know what they did in the loins of Abraham? They all paid tithes to Melchizedek because Melchizedek is the only one that can get them close to God through the Lord Jesus Christ...* That is the bigger thing that is happening. All of the men that these people are wanting to give tithes to, gave tithes to Melchizedek in the loins of Abraham. So what is the point? He's trying to say that Melchizedek is a big deal. Abraham knew it, you should know it, and the reason he is a big deal is because he is the priest that in his line comes Jesus the forever priest. That is the idea. Melchizedek is a big deal and he wants to make sure we know that.

I remember trying to prove that when I was a teenager. My sport was motocross and it wasn't the popular sport. There weren't a lot of people that did it. Everybody played basketball but I didn't do basketball; I did motocross. I remember having to explain to my buddies how great motocross was. One day I said, "Do you know a guy named Nicky Hayden?" They said, "No." I said, "Well, he's actually a superbike racer but he also does motocross and that is how I got to know him. He's a really cool guy. He's one of my friends." Then I said, "Do you know who Nicky Hayden's biggest fan was?" They said, "No." I said, "This guy named Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan is Nicky Hayden's biggest fan. He goes to all of his races. He buys him cars. He fanboys at Nicky Hayden." That was always my trump card. Michael Jordan, the biggest and greatest dude ever in the sports world is also a fan of a guy that rides a motorcycle! That is kind of cool! My whole point was that motorcycles were pretty awesome because the greatest in all of sports loves THAT. That is the preacher's point as well. Abraham, the biggest character, the guy who you say is your father, is a fanboy of Melchizedek so he's kind of a big deal.

Now let's see what's really cool about him- Jesus comes from him. That is where he gets his priestly role. It's from Melchizedek. So in the first part we see that Melchizedek is superior to all the priests these Hebrew people were following. Secondly, Jesus' work as a priest is better than what all the other priests are doing. In verse 11 we see that there is another priest and his name is Jesus. Verse 11 says this, "Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received

the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?" It's really simple. If the old system worked then you wouldn't need Jesus. If the law works, if good works work, if religion works, or if trying hard works then you don't need Jesus. If all the other religions work too then you don't need Jesus. All the other ones brought the law and the law cannot perfect you. That's the problem; they didn't work. They got you close to God but they didn't bring you near to him. That brought you right outside the temple. You're outside the door but you're not in the room. Only Jesus can kick down the door and bring you in the room. There is a big difference in following a religion and a relationship with Christ.

He is saying there is another priest and notice this. This other priest is from another tribe. Verse 12 says this, "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. 4 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests." So how can he be a priest if he's not from the Levites? He's from another tribe. He's from the tribe of Judah. Do you know what is unique about the tribe of Judah? They aren't priests. They are kings. From Judah comes the kings. No one has ever served the altar from Judah but here Jesus comes from Judah but he is also from Melchizedek. We see that he is a priest that is from another tribe and here is the connection- since he is from another tribe there are new rules. The old rules that applied to the Levitical priesthood, all the old order, the old laws, the old sacrifices, and the old temple were all Levitical stuff. Go read Leviticus! It's all in there! We're not under Leviticus anymore. We're under Jesus. He is from Judah. There is a new covenant. There are new rules and it's grace, mercy, and a better hope in Christ. You don't have to go to Leviticus and try to answer all the rules. There is a new priest that came from a new tribe and he has new ways for you to get to God and it's not by your works or the law. It's through the body of Christ.

Jesus comes from a different tribe, the tribe of Judah so of course the question is this- how is he allowed then to be the priest? The preacher is going to answer that next because there is another requirement now. The other requirement is not who you were born to but it's who God chooses

and the life you live. Notice what it says in verse 15, "This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

So there is another priest that arose after the likeness of Melchizedek and it's based on a different regulation. It's not based on the law, requirements, or bodily descent. In other words, it's not who your dad is anymore. That's not how you become a priest. It's not because your dad was Levi or your granddad was Levi. No, there is a whole other way. What is it? It's that you're chosen by God and that was Jesus. He was chosen by God. Secondly, it's by an indestructible life. It's not just how you were born. It's how you live. Jesus lived an indestructible life. The tomb could not hold him. He raised from the dead. He actually is the guy that can never die. Therefore, if you have him then you'll always have him. If you're holding his hand he's never going to leave you and he's never going to forsake you because he can't die. Every other priest or person that you're following are going to die and leave you. Jesus won't because he can't die. He has an indestructible life and that is how he gets to be priest. He is chosen and he has risen from the dead. He doesn't just have a birth certificate. No, he has a whole life that says he deserves it.

Now we get to our key verses. There is a better way to draw near to God. Look at verse 18. You have two choices. This is where it gets really real for you. Notice what it says, "For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God." So there are two hands. The one hand is Judaism for them and for us it's religion. It's trying hard, it's doing good, it's being a good person, it's reading your Bible, it's coming to church, it's doing works that you think are going to make you right to God, or it's having a priest even now. That is the one hand. You can choose that. Do you know what it will get you? It will get you close to God but it won't get you near to him. And here is the problem with the former- it's been set aside. It's been done away with. It's been thrown out. Why? Because of its weakness and uselessness. I didn't say that. He said it. He

looks at all of Judaism and says it was great until it gave birth to the Messiah. Now it's been rolled up, thrown away, and it's useless and weak. You don't need that religion anymore because you Christ who can actually save you. It's weak and it's useless and I can say to you if you're following religion, good works, or your own efforts that they're weak and useless at making you perfect. Notice what it says. It says for nothing is made perfect by the law. In other words, there is a problem with you. You're broken, you're a sinner, and you're separated from God. You can't take the law and commandments and make yourself perfect. You can't try hard, be good, and make yourself perfect because they don't have the ability to make you into a perfect person. You can't just try hard and look at some rules and make it near to God. You can get close to him but you can't GET him because you'll always be imperfect. So, what do you need? There is another hand.

Notice, on this hand there is priest, religion, and your stuff. It can't get you perfect and won't get you near to God. Then, on the other hand, look with me, it says this, "a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God." There is a better hope. Do you know who the better hope is? Jesus, the high priest that comes from Melchizedek. A king who is righteous and peaceful. A priest who can truly intercede between you and God. A priest that is not just righteous but gives you his righteousness. He can actually make you perfect. He can actually cause you to go right into the very presence of God.

See, the command is to draw near to God. You can't get near God without Jesus. You can't get near God with the Son. You're like the little kid at the temple. You can't go in there but Jesus can say... *hey, come with me. It's my dad and I'm his son. Let's go...* That is how you get it. If you have a priest and religion then you can only get to the door. You have to have the son to go into the room, to go into his presence, to come and draw near to God. It takes Jesus and only Jesus.

There are a few things going on in our cultural moment that I'm super excited about and thankful to God for and one of those is that there is a resurgence among young people that are flocking back to the church. They're flocking back to religion. You can see it. There are even stats on it. And it wasn't hard to predict because if it's true what we believe then

secularism eventually don't work. It just doesn't work! It can't hold real hope, real meaning, real purpose, or real truth. Eventually when you just live life however you want and unmoor yourself from reality then reality bites. If you think gravity isn't real and you jump then you hit and it hurts. The secularization of our culture leads to a lot of things and brokenness and we have this new generation that is coming through and saying they don't want that. They want to go back to the old stuff and I am so pumped about that in many ways but here is my fear. I think that some of those young teens and young men and women can come back to church, get close to God, but not be near him. They can decide they like the biblical worldview, biblical marriage, and biblical truth and they can come through a religious system, do hard, work hard, and get really close to God through their religion and worldview and be a champion of Christian morality but not know Christ. We can get right up to the door and be so excited to be close to the things of God but there is a guy who says take me by the hand and I'll take you through the door and into the room. I'll take you right into the very presence of God. That is the decision this group has to make. Do you want close to God? That is all of Judaism. It's all snuggled up close. God is all over it. You can be snuggled up close but you're outside. The older son was close but he didn't know his father. You, through religion, goodness, and all the stuff, can be really close to God but not actually be near him.

What is the command? You have a better hope. You have a better option. You can actually draw near to God through his Son. That is what we want. We want to be the scared little boy in the blind... *Daddy, we got to go. We got to go!... No, no, no. This is my dad's house. I'm the son and you're with me. We're good...* That is what you get with Jesus... *Yes, this is my daddy's house. I'm the Son and you're with me. Guess what? He's making you a son too so grab me by the hand and let's run near into the very presence of God because I'm a better high priest than everybody that has come before me...*

You have a choice. Do you want all the religion you can have that gets you really close to God or do you want Jesus who takes you right into his presence? It's religion or relationship and the relationship makes all the difference. It's who you're with that matters.

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