

# He Was Heard

Hebrews 5:7-11

*Halifax: 20 November 2022*

## **Introduction:**

Last week, in preaching through the book of Hebrews, I came to chapter 5.

- We covered the first six verses, and today I want to move on to verses 7-11.

I want to take a few minutes to review what we looked at last week because it is closely tied together with what we are looking at this week.

- Last week, we saw that God graciously appointed priests to offer sacrifices for our sins, and that ultimately, He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our priest forever.
  - I pointed out to you that the only reason there was ever in the world such a thing as a priest to offer sacrifices for sin was because God thought it up.
  - Immediately after the fall, God appointed fathers to serve as priests, offering sacrifices for their families, and though men gradually suppressed things about God because they did not like Him—they changed the truth of God into a lie and so began to worship more and more idolatrous versions of Him—many of them continued to have priests offering sacrifices for sins. Priests were ubiquitous.
  - We know for certain that at the time of the flood, when Noah and his family were the only survivors, the whole world knew of priests offering sacrifices for sin.
    - All the idolatry that we see among the nations came about because men did not like to retain the true knowledge of God, however, God chose one nation, the people that came from Abraham, to preserve His truth.
    - Abraham's descendants, Israel, were as prone to idolatry as the other nations, but God kept sending them prophets and kept chastening them to bring them back to the truth. He wanted to preserve His truth through them and through them to bring forth His Son, the priest who would take away the sin of the world.
  - We looked at how, in the time of Moses, God revealed most clearly that no one was at all worthy to come before Him.
    - After bringing them (the very people He had chosen out of the all the world to be His people) out of Egypt and gathering them at Sinai to worship Him,
      - He showed them that they were entirely unfit to draw near to Him because He was holy and they were sinful.
      - He gave them all kinds of washings and preparations before He presented Himself to them, and He told them if they so much as touched the mountain that He was to be revealed upon, they must die!
    - At that time, He instituted the office of the high priest, one man who was appointed to offer sacrifices for the people's sins at only one altar.
      - He made it clear that no one could approach Him without a priest to offer sacrifices for their sins.
      - An elaborate system of ceremonies and rituals was instituted and it became the central feature of Israel's worship. They were the people who were reconciled to God by the blood sacrifices that were offered by the priest at the one altar.

- All of these rituals were designed to point to God’s Son who would be born to the people in the fullness of time and who would be the final priest, the one who would be priest forever and who would offer the one sacrifice that takes away sin forever.
- This priest, of course, is Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin 2000 years ago.
  - He was the Son of God who came from heaven and was made flesh (fully human) in order that He might be the priest that we need for salvation, the only one who could save us.
- Last week, we saw that it was of God’s incredible grace and mercy that we were given a priest to take away our sins;
  - This week, we will look at how Christ faithfully carried out the work that the Father gave Him to do so that by Him we might be saved.
- For our Scripture reading, I am going to read both the portion that we covered last week (vv. 1-6) as well as the portion that we are looking at this week (vv 7-11).
  - We will do that now.
  - Please give careful attention to the word of God.
  - May the Lord enable you to listen with understanding and to receive the truth.

**Hebrews 5:1-11: For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. <sup>4</sup> And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” <sup>6</sup> As *He* also says in another**

***place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”; <sup>7</sup> who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, <sup>8</sup> though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, <sup>10</sup> called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” <sup>11</sup> of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.***

Thus far, the reading of God’s holy word.

- Thanks be to God.

**I. The focus of our text (vs 7-11) is on Christ in office.**

A. He is the priest the Father appointed for us.

1. I say again, this is what we saw last week.

- a. God showed His intention to be merciful by appointing priests to offer sacrifices for sin.
  - It showed that this was the only way that anyone could have fellowship with Him and be accepted by Him.
  - And He showed that in His great mercy He would accept sinners in this way.

- b. And God also showed that the One He appointed to be the priest who would actually do this was His one and only Son.
    - By prophecy, He declared that Christ was called and appointed by Him to have a permanent and ultimate priesthood.
    - The ritual service ended when He came, and was replaced by the preaching of the gospel.
      - As Paul said, “We preach Him.”
      - We preach remission of sins by the offering of Jesus Christ—that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life.
    - The Father revealed to us that He said to His Son, vs. 6, **“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”**
      - That is repeated again in verse 10.
      - There is going to be a full discussion about what it means for Him to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek when we get to chapter 7,
        - but what is essential to know at this point is that Christ is the priest that God appointed forever.
2. It is essential for us to know that He is God’s appointed way of salvation.
- a. We need to know this so that we will trust in Him for our salvation and have confidence, that in doing so, we will be saved.
    - God has appointed Him.
    - If you do not trust in Him, you cannot be pardoned. You have no offering for your sin. You are still under condemnation for your sin.
  - b. We need to know this not only so that we will be sure of Him, but also so that we will not look to anything else to save us.
    - Not our own works, not our own observances, not anything else.
    - All of our confidence needs to be placed in Jesus Christ.
    - It is to Him only that God said, “You are a priest forever.”
- B. Our text presents our dear Saviour to us in (as verse 7 says), **“the days of His flesh.”**
- 1. He, the Son of God, became flesh—a true human with a human body and spirit—when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary.
    - Because He became a true human being, He will be such forever.
    - He did not, of course, cease to be God, but He also became man and will have a human body and soul for ever.
  - But the phrase “in the days of His flesh” is more narrow than that.
  - 2. This phrase, “the days of His flesh” speaks of the time He spent in this fallen world—before He ascended into heaven.
    - It speaks of Him in the time when He was subject to all of our human infirmities—including death, temptation, sorrows, pain, shame, condemnation, grief, weariness, hunger, and so on.
    - The *days of His flesh*, therefore, speaks of His human nature not yet glorified, similar to the way God speaks of us when He remembers that we are flesh.

C. In our text, we see in particular what He was subjected to in the office of His priesthood.

1. As our priest, He was tied to our great problem—that we are under condemnation for our sin.
  - As Priest, it is His duty to offer sacrifice to take away our sin so that we would be delivered from that condemnation.
2. As our priest, He is so tied to us that He actually came under our condemnation.
  - By His association with us, He was condemned to perish in Hell forever.
    - Not because He had any sin, for He did not, but because as our priest He became fully associated Himself with our situation.
  - God appointed Him to represent us as our priest.
    - He was so closely tied together with us that if we were to sink into hell, which is where we were headed, He would go down with us.
    - And likewise, if He were delivered, it would not be without us.
      - He was inextricably bound together with us so that He could not be delivered apart from us.
    - God appointed Him to be a priest for condemned people!

TRANS> What should the one who was appointed to be our priest do in such a situation?

## II. **We are shown that Jesus did what a priest who is tied together with condemned people ought to do.**

- That He pled for our salvation (which was now His salvation).
- That He pled in the right manner (with vehement cries and tears)
- That He pled with the right person (God the Father, who was able to save).
  - Let's look at these three points...

A. He pled for salvation.

- Look at the text—in verse 7. It tells us that **in the days of His flesh** (when He was here) **He offered up prayers and supplications**.
- 1. The word *offered* is a word that speaks specifically of the offering of a priest for sin—for his own sins and for the sins of the people he represents.
  - In the case of Christ, He did not have sins of His own, except inasmuch as He had taken (and was given) responsibility for the sins of His people.
- 2. A necessary part of the priest's offering included prayers and supplications.
  - As He offered sacrifices for sin, he did so with prayer that God would accept the sacrifice and pardon the people. This was symbolised ritually by incense.
  - The word translated *supplication* was a common word in the day, but this is the only time it is used in the Bible.
    - We have other words that are rightly translated *supplication* in our English bibles, but this is the only time this particular word is used in the original.
  - Interestingly, it is a word that is related to the word *olive branch*.
    - You may have heard of someone who is in trouble extending the olive branch to make peace with the authorities he has offended.

- They would take an olive branch and wrap it with wool or baize and lift it up to plead for mercy. It was a humble supplication for peace.
  - Owen says, “It is noteworthy that in heathen writers, whenever this word is used with respect to their gods, it always involves expiation.” There would be a priest making supplication to their gods for the people, extending the olive branch as sacrifices were offered.
3. So here we have Jesus described as our priest who pled for mercy when He offered His sacrifice.
- It is what we see Him do on the cross, as prophetically depicted in Psalm 22—hanging on the cross, pleading for God to deliver Him.
  - He had but one offering to make—Himself—thus He says:
    - **Ps 22:19-21: But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! <sup>20</sup> Deliver Me from the sword, My precious *life* [Lit. “my only one” referring to His soul, His life] from the power of the dog. <sup>21</sup> Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen!**
- B. The manner of His pleading was exactly as it should have been: **He offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death...**
1. **Vehement cries and tears** speaks of the great fervency and intensity with which He made supplication
- He prayed as the One who alone understood the weightiness of the matter.
  - He prayed as One who grasped what it would be for Him and all the people whose salvation depended on His saving work to sink into the eternal pit under the wrath and curse of God.
    - Indeed, we are told that He Himself was cursed when He hung on the cross.
    - He experienced the horror that He came to deliver His people from.
    - He knew that everything depended upon the success of His work for the salvation of Himself and of the whole church with Him.
      - If He were not heard, there would be no redeemed church to serve God, no godly people to at last fill the earth and to worship God.
2. Without earnest prayers like this, His offering would not have been accepted.
- Of course, it could not be that He would not be heard. It could not be that He would fail, but that is not the point.
    - The fact that He could not fail did not mean that it was not absolutely necessary for Him to pray earnestly for deliverance.
      - It meant rather that He would not fail to do that.
      - If He had failed to pray appropriately, His offering would not have been accepted. His prayers for deliverance would not have been accepted, or acceptable.
    - It was not a situation where the outcome would be the same whatever He did because God decreed it.

- It was one where it was necessary for Him to do all that He needed to do as our priest—and part of that was to pray with strong cries and tears. If He had not done that, His work would have failed.
- C. His prayers were also directed to the right person—as it says, **“to Him who was able to save Him from death.”**
1. That, of course, is God the Father who appointed Him to be a priest.
    - The Father was the One who declared “You are a priest after the order of Melchizedek.”
    - Therefore, the Father was the one who was to receive His priestly service and the only one who had the authority to determine whether His work was acceptable for the redemption of His people.
    - He was the only one who could save Jesus (the priest who represented us all) from death.
  2. Keep in mind, of course, that in praying that He would be saved from death, Jesus was not praying for Himself alone.
    - He was praying for Himself in His office as priest.
    - He was praying for Himself in association with those whose sins had brought Him to the point of death, and whose sins would actually bring about His death.
      - But He knew that the Father was able to deliver Him from death—to raise Him from the dead even though He had been brought to grave for the sins of His people.
      - He knew that He would be raised for our justification.
    - His prayer was a prayer of faith in God who raises the dead and who had promised to accept the offering that Christ carried out as our priest.
  3. Jesus was truly in the Father’s hands and His whole church was with Him.
    - When He cried out, “Why have you forsaken me,” He continued to believe that the Father would deliver Him and His people from eternal death.

TRANS> So as our priest, Jesus prayed just the way He ought to have prayed when He was bearing our sin.

### **III. The glorious result of His faithful work is declared.**

- A. We are told at the end of verse 7 that He **was heard...**
1. He was heard! Do you understand the significance of those words?
    - God heard Him and God accepted His plea and God the Father delivered Him from death...
      - That means that the Father accepted all of those for whom Jesus did this priestly work—all that the Father had given Him.
    - Because the Father heard Him, there is complete forgiveness of our sins.
    - Because the Father accepted Him, it means that all who are His are fully and freely justified, not through their own merit, but through the merit of this faithful priest that God appointed.

2. I point you again to Psalm 22 where this was gloriously prophesied.
- Our faithful high priest, Jesus Christ, is the one who prays in verse 1, **“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”**
  - He is the same one who prays in verse 4, **“Our Fathers trusted you; they trusted, and You delivered them. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.”**
    - He was rejected on our account and was sinking into death
  - You can see this in verse 15 where He says, **“You have brought me to the dust of death.”**
    - In verse 20, He cries out: **“Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog.”**
  - And then at the end of verse 21, there is this wonderful triumphant cry **“You have answered me.”**
    - That is the way it ought to be translated, and the way it is translated in the NKJV. Some of our English translations do not emphasise this triumphant cry the way it ought to be emphasised.
  - It is the shout of triumph at which the tone of the Psalm completely changes from desperate pleading to joyous praise and hope—
    - Our dear Saviour, thrilled with the Father’s gracious acceptance of His priestly work for His people now promises:
      - Vs. 22: **“I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.”**
        - He will see that the glorious gospel of His accepted offering for our sins will be declared in the assembly, the church, from then on!
        - He will see that God is praised for His saving mercy forever.
      - The reason is given in verse 24. It is because God **“has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted one; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard.”**
        - Again, it is because God answered Him when He was afflicted for our sins and cried out to Him for deliverance!
        - We, His people, are saved because He was heard!
  - That God answered is so momentous that it is to be the cause of the church’s worship ever after.
    - He goes on to say again, v. 25: **“My praise shall be of You in the great assembly.”**
    - He declares in verse 27 that this praise for God’s salvation will extend from Israel to the whole world: **“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.”**
    - He declares in verse 30 that this praise will continue from generation to generation. He says, **“A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, they will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this.”**

- That is exactly what He is doing today through His church.
- To this day, the good news continues that when Jesus our great high priest offered Himself on the cross and cried out to the Father to deliver Him from death, the Father answered Him and therefore we are saved.

B. We are told the reason that the Father heard Him.

1. We are told that the Father heard Him because of His godly fear.
  - The word translated *godly fear* is from a family of words whose root means “to take or receive properly.”
    - For example, if someone hands you a fragile vessel worth millions of dollars, there is an appropriate way to handle it!
  - The word came to be used of a proper, devout response to God.
    - It speaks, in other words, of someone who responds to God and lives before God in a way that is appropriate—in a way that recognises who God is and the honour that should be shown to Him.
      - He is our Creator. He is the only lawgiver. He is the one who will judge all things in heaven and earth.
      - The person who has godly fear is very careful about pleasing God, about obeying God, and reverencing Him.
2. What we saw about Jesus in our text today was the way He responded to God when He served as our priest in the days of His flesh.
  - We saw that He understood the heavy implications of what it meant for Him to be our priest, and that with that understanding, He offered priestly prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears.
    - He did it in the right way and therefore God heard Him.
    - He heard Him because of His godly fear.
    - Jesus knew and fully understood what hung in the balances and therefore His offering pleased the Father.
  - Such was our faithful high priest!
    - There is none like Him.
3. We are told that even though He was a Son—literally, ‘Son though He was’, “**yet He learned obedience through the things that He suffered.**”
  - This does not mean that He was disobedient and then learned how to obey. The very thought is blasphemous.
  - It rather means that having become a man, He learned what it was to obey as a man when you are asked to do something you don’t want to do—in His case, even something that it would be wrong to want to do...
    - There would be something wrong with a person who wanted to be cut off from God and bear the pains of hell as a thing in itself.
      - He wanted to save us—yes indeed—but He despised the very thought of the cross in itself.



- He, therefore, learned by actually experiencing what it was to obey as He had to submit to the will of God all through His life.
  - He had to do things that were increasingly difficult and He obeyed or submitted all the way to the point of death on the cross.
  - He did not do this in theory—He actually experienced this obedience.
  - Even though He was the Son of God, He personally experienced obedience as a man.
- He knows all about it because He experienced it.
  - Because He did, He is able to save us.
  - And because he did, He is also able to help us when we must submit to hard things. He is able to sympathise because He has been there.
  - As I said to you before, what He had to do was harder than anything that you will ever have to do—much, much harder.
    - Yet, being our gracious high priest, He did it to save us and to please His Father.

C. We are told that He was thus perfected as our priest who saves us.

- **5:9: And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.**

1. What does it mean that Jesus was “perfected?”

- Some of you may remember that I pointed out that the word translated *perfected* is a key word in Hebrews.
  - In Greek, the root is *telos* which means *the end* or *the goal*—when something is complete and reaches its intended purpose.
  - There are fourteen occurrences of this root in the of Hebrews. It is used as an adjective, a noun, a verb, and an adverb, and often it is of Christ and His work.
- This word speaks of Jesus becoming, through His work, all that we need for salvation.
  - When it says that He **learned obedience through suffering** and so was **perfected**, it means that by His submission to His Father all the way to the cross, our Lord Jesus became exactly what we need for salvation.
    - This tells us that His suffering and His faithful prayers for our deliverance were absolutely necessary.
    - Before He had carried out this obedience, He did not have what we needed for salvation.
    - He actually had to pray these prayers and offer Himself as a sacrifice to be perfected—to become what was required for our salvation.

2. Being thus perfected, He is our sure salvation.

a. As it says, He is **the author of eternal salvation**.

- He is the *source* and *originator* of eternal life.
- As our priest, He took responsibility for our guilt, for our sin, and He faithfully did everything that was needed.

- He put Himself into our peril, took our curse upon His own shoulders, and bore it until the Father declared, “It is enough.”
  - There is nothing at all lacking in His work for the eternal salvation of the whole church.
- b. Everyone who obeys Him has this eternal salvation.
- The word translated *obey* here is the same word that was used of Him when it says that He learned obedience.
    - It is a word that emphasises submission.
  - If you wish to receive the eternal salvation that Jesus procured for His people, it comes by submitting to Him as your Saviour.
    - We have a hard time with this because we want to be able to save ourselves and feel that we ought to be able to do that.
    - But we can't.
      - God appointed His Son to be a priest and offer the only sacrifice that could take away our sin.
      - It was no light work. It was so great that He had to labour and sweat and cry out for deliverance. Only He has been made all that we need for salvation.
  - If you look anywhere else, you cannot be saved.
    - What He did was absolutely necessary.
    - If you obey Him, your salvation is absolutely certain. You cannot fail because He did not fail.
      - God, in answer to His prayer, raised Him from death.
      - The Bible says that He was raised for our justification.
      - If you submit to Him as Saviour, you will be saved. He is the author of eternal salvation.