

Title: Always Able and Available
Text: Hebrews 7.25-28
Theme: The reliability and capability of Christ – our Priest
Series: Hebrews #19
Prop Stmtnt: As the great Priest, Christ is always available and always effective in our behalf.

Read Text:

Our text this morning is from Hebrews 7. This is a great text and is part of a great book that we have been studying together on Sunday mornings. However, the Bible does not begin with the book of Hebrews. The Bible begins with the book of beginnings (that is what Genesis means) and rightly so, because unless you know where you've come from, you are not going to be much good at figuring out where you are going. If you are going to understand Hebrews, you should not look at Hebrews in isolation from the rest of the book, just as you don't read one chapter of a novel 90% into the book and think you can understand the whole thing. Let me explain it this way.

Have you ever used a metal hanger to get into a locked car? The original purpose of the hanger was to hang up clothes, but over time it has served a number of other uses. That is sort of what it is like reading different portions of the Bible. Take for example, the book of Leviticus. The third book of the Bible is 27 chapters of exhaustive detail of laws for the nation of Israel regarding sacrifices, offerings, rules priests, cleanliness, festivals, the Sabbath year, Year of Jubilee, the recipe for the oil in the lamp in the Tabernacle, and the recipe for the bread. In addition are case studies about a blasphemer, laws and curses, plus, laws concerning vows. Leviticus is probably one of the reasons why many people never finish their goal of reading the Bible through in a year. "Oh man, I just couldn't handle all of that stuff about a sacrifice for this and that and all the stuff about sin and holiness. It's like, all a person would do would be going back and forth to the priest in order to make an offering for another sin!

Did it ever dawn on you that if you find it so difficult to read it, how do you think it must have been like for the children of Israel to live under it? Now, hold the phone for a second. If you were attempting to write a best-seller, would you include the book of Leviticus right close to the front? Of course not! So, why is the book of Leviticus in the Bible and why is it the third book? Israel was delivered by the mighty hand of God out of the land of Egypt. She was going to go to her own land, but she had to learn how to live in her land as the people of God. What are the people of God supposed to be concerned about? We are supposed to be concerned about the things of God. Are we? How many of you spent more time worrying about the primary elections that are coming up and the state of our economy and the securing of our borders and the oil catastrophe than you did this week on the fact that we have a nation that is desperately corrupt? Immediate concerns have a way of obscuring ultimate concerns. So, God gave the nation of Israel the Law. This way, their daily lives were ordered around dealing with ultimate concerns. And, live under it – they did and for those who really took it to heart, like those of you now, who when you read it, take it to heart, they realized several things. 1) Sin is

an incredibly serious issue to God. 2) In order to address our sin, we have to do it the way God commands us to. It is not up to us to come up with our own solution. 3) Access to God is difficult because God is so holy, we are so sinful that the sacrifices that he demands are unending. In the end, it is very easy to be overwhelmed with the seriousness of our sin. Like using a coat hanger to hang up clothes, the book of Leviticus had an initial use, but now we see in Leviticus another use. Leviticus, properly read helps us realize the need for Christ. Exodus and Leviticus help us see the need for Christ. However, this is not how these books were originally understood.

Ironically, the law, which was intended by God to help the Israelites be aware of their sin, became a point of pride. Instead of being wiped out because of their sin and their absolute need of God, they became proud of the fact that they had the law and no one else did. It is like someone being on death-row and being proud of it!

Read the OT! Read the book of Leviticus. Feel the weight of the law's demands. Feel the unending, unrelenting pressure of unresolved sin. Let the sense of frustration settle upon as you realize that for the rest of your life you will have to keep offering sacrifices because you will never perfectly keep the law, and even when you do keep portions of the law externally, you know full well that your heart is not always in it. We are not used to this, but we need this! We are used to ignoring the OT and simply saying that Jesus died on the cross so that we could go to heaven and we often do not really take to heart how serious our sin is to God. We need all of God's Word, not just the parts that assuage our guilt, we actually need to know our guilt. Then, when you realize how deep the stain of your sin is, and the weight of your guilt is crushing your soul and the chains of your bondage wrap tighter and tighter around you, then read the book of Hebrews and look to Christ! See Christ! See the Son! See the Savior! See the King! See your Priest! See your Salvation – full and free! That is what Hebrews does. It tells us over and over that there is no Savior like Christ! Therefore, there is no salvation apart from Christ.

V. 25 starts with the word, “consequently.” There is an argument that the AH has been making regarding the superiority of Christ. It goes like this: Because Christ is without beginning and end, because Christ is superior to the Abraham, he is superior to the Levitical priests, because Christ is the only perfectly effective priest, the perfectly established priest, and the permanently enduring priest...

1. **Christ saves completely!** (25)

He is able speaks of more than possibility; it speaks of ability and authority. This is no mere chance, like a percentage game. This is certainty!

a. He is able

We have already seen from 2.18 that Christ is able to “help those who are tempted” and that is a great comfort. We have also seen from 4.15 that Christ is able “to sympathize with our weaknesses” and that too is a great comfort. The question is not in his ability. That issue is settled. The question is, do you believe him? The entire orientation of your

life comes to down to this. Are you willing to follow God and trust that He is what he claims to be and do, or, will you insist on going your own way?

b. He is able to save

The word (sozo) means to save, to rescue. The question is, save from what? Think about that for a second. We tend to think circumstantially, rather than in ultimate issues. Just as Israel's greatest need was not to have a nice little predictable life in the promised land, but Israel's greatest need was to be made aware of her ultimate problem of sin, so too, we tend to think that our greatest needs are getting a better job, getting our kids to obey, getting healthy, maybe even fixing the economy. When we fail to consider our greatest need, then we are tempted to take these portions of the Bible and turn them into little promises to help us get, what we think is a better life now. What is Christ able to save us from? Can Christ save your marriage, or fix your kids or get you a better job or help your fantasy football team go undefeated this year? Please understand this! Christ is ultimately concerned about ultimate issues and that is what this text is about.

Is he able to save us from sin? Is he able to save us from death? Is he able to save us from hell? Is he able to save us from the kingdom of darkness? All of these things are true, but even they are not the ultimate saving that Christ does. Because we are sinners, we deserve God's wrath. When Christ died on the cross IN OUR PLACE, he took the wrath that should have been reserved for us. In the ultimate sense, Christ is able to save us from God IN ORDER THAT we could be saved to God. And because we are saved from God's wrath, we are saved from sin, saved from eternal death, saved from hell, saved from the kingdom of darkness, saved from isolation, loneliness, hopelessness, despair, self-centeredness and self-worship. And we are saved to God, to his kingdom, his family, his bride, his church, his light, his freedom, his acceptance his eternity. Christ is able to save.

c. He is able to save completely

The word that is translated completely has the idea of quality and quantity. This is where I took the title from. Christ is always available. That is, his ability to save is always available. The greatest surgeon in the world will not do you any good if you can not get in to see him or her. The greatest surgeon in the world can only be in one place at one time and has to be able to eat and sleep. Even good surgeons cannot do it all.

d. He is able to save completely those who come to God through him.

We have already seen from (5.9) that Christ is the source of eternal salvation. Therefore, Christ is the means of eternal salvation. But, it is not until we get into this text that we start to see how this works. Our first clue is given here at the end of v. 25. Christ is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because Christ always lives to intercede.

To intercede means to meet on behalf of someone else. So, here is Christ, God, the Son and the Son of God, going to the Father on your behalf, (that is, as your advocate). What is he interceding for? What do you really need? The language echoes the same theme that Paul passionately expresses in Romans 8, in the 5 unanswerable questions. Christ always lives to intercede for those who come to God through him. That is, Christ is always able and always available to rescue those who trust him. Christ's capacity for effective ministry on your behalf is unlimited.

Now, let's say that you were charged with a capital offense and you were guilty. And your court date was coming up and I said, "Look, I'll talk to the judge for you." And you said, "Do you know the judge?" And I said, "Nope." How would that help you? Not a bit! However, if I knew the judge, and the judge was a judge of integrity, would that help you? No! It doesn't matter that I know the judge. If you are guilty and the judge is a judge of integrity – then my dear friend, you are in deep weeds. The effectiveness of Christ as our Priest who intercedes for us, is not based on the fact that there is a prior relationship and that God the Father knows Christ as His Son. The effectiveness is because Christ is God, the Son, and as the infinite God-man, he lived his life in our place, and he died in our place. And because He is God, the payment that he made on our behalf was an infinite payment that satisfied the wrath of God against our sin. The sentence of death that otherwise would be on us, was placed on Christ and the evidence of that is still seen in the scars in his hands. He ever lives to intercede. When you finally come to God and surrender your life to him by trusting in Christ alone as the only one who can save, he takes your case before the Father and in presenting himself as the sacrifice for your sin, you are in that moment instantaneously declared to be righteous in the eyes of Almighty God, Sovereign Judge of the entire Universe, who was and is and is to come. And when the highest and final authority forever and ever declares you to be righteous because of the righteousness of his Son applied to your account, then there is nothing in all of creation, neither height nor depth, nor sickness nor death, no demon, no enemy, and not even Satan himself can separate you from Him! Christ always lives to make intercession for them!

There is no other way. What do you trust in right now? Are you banking on in anyway, the icon, the religious jewelry that is hanging around your neck? Are you believing that your morality, your hard times, your kindnesses to others, your goodness compared to others, your religious involvement, your charitable deeds, your generosity to people in need, your illnesses, somehow qualify you for having already suffered and thereby earning some merit points with God? They don't!! Nothing in my hand, my life, my experience I bring to God that earns me any favor. Do not trust in any of that. Trust in Christ – alone. He is able to save completely. He alone is able to save completely. He is able to save and keep you forever and ever! He saves and he will not let you go. In the ultimate sense, your salvation is not based on how well you prayed a prayer, but is based on how well Christ lived and died in your place. When you trust Him, you are his – forever. He is able to keep you, from falling. Not only that, but he keeps you even when you stumble. His saving is so complete and so enduring and so final, that Jesus prayed for Peter, so that after he failed, he would not keep failing, but would instead help his brothers.

If you are in Christ, you will stumble, but you won't stay down. He saves completely.

F.F. Bruce wrote, "He lives eternally, eternally engaged to bless and protect those who have committed themselves to him."

You can rest on that. You can go to sleep on that. You can eat your picnic lunch in the presence of your enemies. You can go to the doctor on that, and go through surgery on that and go through the valley of the shadow of death on that and not fear evil on that. You can stand tall when you have fallen hard on that. You can pray boldly when you have failed miserably on that. You can rejoice on that. I say it like that, because in these last three verses, it's like the AH bursts out into a song of joy that just exalts Christ!

(because)

2. **Christ is a complete Savior** (26-28)

"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest" – meaning, "This is exactly what we need!!!" Here is one who is one of us, who walked in our shoes, who knows us, who feels what we feel, but look at this.

I love the gospel. I love to explain justification and see the affect that the Bible's teaching on adoption has. The doctrine of salvation is so wonderful, however, it is the Bible's teaching on Christ that informs our understanding of salvation. As the King/Priest, Jesus has secured our salvation and He alone provides for us a forgiveness that is full and free.

a. **He is perfect.** (holy, innocent, unstained)

The closer you look, the better he appears. Isn't that incredible? We are not used to that. For us, many times, the closer you look the more defects you see.

Perhaps you heard about the widow and widower who met and married rather quickly. On the first night of their honeymoon, he took off his toupee and put it in the top drawer of the dresser. Then he took out his false teeth and put them in the top drawer of the dresser. Then he took out his glass eye and put it in the top drawer of the dresser. Then he took off his wooden leg and put it in the top of dresser. After a bit, his startled bride said, "Honey, I'm not sure whether to sleep in bed or in the top drawer of the dresser." Sometimes, we don't look that great up close, do we? That is not the case with Christ.

The three words used here (holy, innocent and unstained) speak of his character as it relates to his qualification as our great priest. There is nothing that can disqualify him. Because he is perfect, "he has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sin."

b. **He is ascended** (separate from sinners and exalted)

Being separated from sinners and exalted refers to the fact that he is at the right hand of the Father, right now. What other priest has ever been able to be in that position? NONE!

c. **He is sufficient** (offered up himself)

Whoa! Did you get that? Here is the second reason why Christ is able to save completely. Here the AH brings up a point that he has never mentioned before, but it is a point that he unpacks in chapter 9. Here is why Christ is the greatest priest. He is not only the greatest one to make the offering, but he IS the offering. He, the priest, offered himself in our place. No one took his life from him. He laid down his life in your place. It was the only way for God's justice to be satisfied, for his wrath to be appeased, and for his great love for you to be poured out.

The offerer – Christ, was perfect. The offering was perfect. It fulfilled the law of God. There is nothing left for you to pay. All of our attempts to atone for our sin, and to earn or purchase forgiveness through our merits, through sacraments, through morality are not only useless, but do you realize that they are insulting to Christ because they are suggesting that his work on the cross, his atonement was not good enough. The truth is, I am not good enough. Christ is! Since the offering of Christ in your place was sufficient, there is no more sacrifice left to be made. Trust HIM!

Verse 28 is a summary of the chapter. The law provided a system that revealed our need of a perfect Savior and only Christ is that.

Why did God set it up this way? It certainly demonstrates the level of love that he has for each of his children – doesn't it? It also reveals that he does not leave to chance the fulfillment of his plan for our salvation and the redemption (buying back) of the world for His Son.

Conclusion:

- 1) Believing the gospel demands and results in a total re-orientation of your life.
- 2) Since Christ saves completely, you need to trust him completely.
- 3) God finishes what he starts (including your salvation).
- 4) Since God, through Christ took care of your greatest need, you can (and must) trust him for the rest.