

Jesus: Who Truly Meets Our Needs

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Preacher: Ian Naismith

[0 : 0 0] Good afternoon everyone. I repeat the welcome that Johnny gave at the beginning. Particularly delighted to have you with us if you're a visitor to the church here. We're about halfway through our studies in the book of Hebrews and I was quite amused when the first commentator picked up to try and help me with the passage we're looking at today said this, we have now reached the part of the letter which modern readers sometimes find a little difficult.

So it's all been very, very straightforward and easy to understand up till now and it's becoming maybe a little more tricky. Obviously the book of Hebrews, all of it has challenges for us. But perhaps the section we're coming into now for a 21st century Western audience is particularly difficult because it relates back to things that we maybe don't understand very easily and some of the arguments that the writer uses are ones which we wouldn't necessarily think of ourselves.

So we've got quite a long and quite complex passage today. So it would be a good beginning if we just gave ourselves a little bit of context for it. And I was thinking how could we very briefly sum up the book of Hebrews?

And I got it down to four words. These are my four words. Jesus is worth it. Now you may or may not think that's a good description. It really all depends on what do I mean by it.

What is Jesus worth? Jesus is worth the highest place in our thoughts and in our hearts. The writer of the Hebrews has emphasised to us that Jesus is greater than the prophets, he's greater than the angels, he's greater than Moses, he's greater than Joshua, he's greater than Aaron and the priests, and so on.

[1 : 3 9] Jesus is the one who deserves the highest place in our thoughts and in our hearts. And that is very much what the writer to Hebrews is trying to get across to us, and will be again in today's passage.

But there's another sense in which he's saying Jesus is worth it. And in that case, it is the problems that we experience in our lives. In particular, the writer's book of Hebrews was writing to people who are going through times of difficulty, of persecution, because they were Christians.

And some of them were saying, well, is it worth it? And periodically throughout the book, the writer emphasises, yes, it is worth it.

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. He is worth it. Whatever you face in this world is nothing compared to knowing Jesus. Jesus is worth it.

And again, in the passage we're looking at today, that is largely what he's trying to address. So people were saying we're going through these times of great difficulty. Can we really trust God's promises to us?

[2 : 4 6] And the writer says, yes, you can trust God's promises. They're foreboding Jesus, and Jesus is worth it. People were also saying, you've talked about Jesus as a high priest.

But we know our Jewish history and religion, and the priests all come from the tribe of Levi. And Jesus didn't come from the tribe of Levi. So how can he be a high priest? And again, the writer addresses that, and he says, actually, Jesus is greater than the high priest.

Jesus is worth it. Now we come today from all sorts of backgrounds, I suspect. For some of us, we may come saying Jesus is worth it.

He's worth the highest place in my heart and in my mind. And I really love him, and I want to give my life to him. Great, you have some of the testimonies earlier on of people really committed to doing God's will in their lives.

Other people might be saying, well, I'm not sure if Jesus is worth it. I find it difficult to be a Christian. In our country, we don't tend to get persecuted in the way some of our brothers and sisters in other countries do.

[3 : 51] But it can still be quite difficult to live as a Christian. I was quite shocked this week at some of the responses to the announcement that Dan Walker was going to be hosting breakfast television.

Dan Walker is a fairly well-known sports presenter at the moment. He's also a very fine Christian. And there were several articles written during the week that said, in effect, Dan Walker is a creationist.

Therefore, we can't trust him to read the news. It wasn't much more than that they were saying. Now, most of us probably don't get that, but in our own particular place of work, or the people we associate with, or at university, or whatever, if we stick our head above the parapet, sometimes people will mock us, or will try to put us down for our faith.

And it can be difficult. We need to be convinced Jesus is worth it. And sometimes in other things in life, if we go through times of illness, or of bereavement, or of family heartaches, again, people might say, well, is it really worth it?

And the writer of Hebrews today is saying to us, yes, it's worth it. Jesus is worth anything that you can give for him. So what's the passage about?

[4 : 59] Just a very high-level overview, and then we'll get into it. So three sections we're going to look at, and each case we'll read the passage and then talk a little bit about it. In the first section, the writer's talking about an enduring promise.

Promises made thousands of years ago to Abraham, and he says it's still relevant today. And we can trust the promise because it comes from God. In the second section, he's talking about an exceptional priesthood.

We have this guy, Melchizedek, who really only appears twice in the Old Testament, but the writer of Hebrews makes quite a lot of them. And his priesthood is exceptional, exceptional in the sense that it's different from other priesthoods, also exceptional in the sense that it's better, that it's the best, exceptionally good.

And then finally at the end, the writer talks about an effective provision. And he talks about what Jesus has done and how that is sufficient to meet all our needs.

It's an enduring promise, an exceptional priesthood, and an effective provision. So let's read now the first part of that from Hebrews chapter 6 from verse 13.

[6 : 09] And it'll come up on the screen if you don't want to follow in your Bible. Look at our Bible 100. Hebrews 6 verse 13, and it says, When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.

And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves. And the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.

But God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the ears of what was promised. He confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have pled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.

He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So in this passage, we're introduced again to Abraham. And in particular, to the promise that God made to Abraham.

[7 : 33] Now, the particular verse he refers back to is in Genesis chapter 22. It's in the passage where Abraham is asked to offer up Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice. And at the last minute, God provides a ram instead for the sacrifice.

But the writer extends it more generally to Abraham's life and to the fact that God promised that he would have a descendant who were greater than the stars in the sky, greater than the sands in the seashore.

And yet, Abraham at that point was childless. And for many years, Abraham had to live on the promise of God. When he got way past the age where he was likely to have children, his wife Sarah was likely to have children, he had to rely on the promise of God and the fact that God would keep his promise.

And Abraham in that is seen as an example to us, as someone whom we can follow. And the writer of the Hebrews says, as we look at that, then there are a number of things that we can learn about God's promise.

And there's three pictures in particular I want to just look at very briefly. The first picture for us is one you would find in a courtroom. So if you're called to give evidence in a courtroom, you're asked either to affirm or if you're happy to swear on the Bible and to say, I swear by a mighty God that the evidence I give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

[8 : 58] And in a court of law, and it's been the same down through the centuries, obviously the same in the first century as well, if you swore by the name of God and said, I swear by God that what I'm saying is true, then that gave it some extra credibility.

You were swearing by someone, not just by saying, I'm saying this is right, you're saying, I swear by God that this is right, and I'm going to tell the truth because of that.

Now God doesn't need to swear by himself in that kind of sense because he is absolutely trustworthy. But Abraham says when God wanted to be really, really emphasizing the certainty of his promise, he chose to swear by his own name because there's no one who has a greater name than God.

And he wanted us to be absolutely certain that he will keep his promise. When he swore to Abraham in Genesis 22, and he swore by himself, he wanted Abraham to be absolutely certain that God would keep his promises.

And that's a great thing for us to learn today. We can be absolutely certain that God will keep his promises. When we might fail, when we might promise something and it might or might not happen, depending on how we feel or if we remember or whatever, God will keep his promises, not necessarily we'll see the answer immediately.

[10 : 23] Abraham had to wait for it, but we can be confident in God that he is utterly reliable. Now bring us to the second picture. The second picture is a picture of an anchor.

Now we have a kind of funny mixed metaphor towards the end of this passage. We've got an anchor that seems to be thrown behind a curtain. I think we don't want to take too much of that. We'll take the two separately and look at them.

So what the writer of the Hebrews says is we, if we're going through difficult times in our lives, we need to have this anchor, which is the hope that we have in the Lord Jesus.

Now in the Bible, hope is not just something we think might happen and might not happen. The hope is something that God has promised us that we know is going to happen. It's not got the uncertainty that there normally would be when we talk about hope.

And the writer of the Hebrews says this hope that we have in Jesus and this reliance that we have in God's promise, it should be like an anchor in our lives.

[11 : 27] It's quite interesting that in modern business speak, people talk about life anchors. You occasionally go on courses, people talk about what are your life anchors. Well, for the Christian, our life anchor is our hope in Jesus, our knowledge that we know him, that he has saved us from our sins, and that one day we will go to be with him.

That is what keeps us going through times of trouble. That is what helps us to understand that Jesus is worth it. And then the third picture is of the curtain.

It enters the inner sanctuaries, it's the hope that's been talked about behind the curtain, where our forerunner Jesus has entered on our behalf. So we're back into the pictures of the Jewish religion.

In the temple and previous to that, in the tabernacle, there was a curtain, there was a veil that only the high priest could go through, and only once a year.

It was where he went to make the sacrifice for atonement for the people. It was where he went to be in the very presence of God. With the death of the Lord Jesus, that curtain was torn in two, and the writer says, we have access freely into God's presence.

[12 : 40] But what he's thinking about particularly here is that Jesus is the one who's gone before us into the very presence of God, into heaven, if you like. Jesus has gone there as our forerunner, and if we know him, if our trust is in him, we will go to be with him.

He has entered on our behalf, and we will one day go to be with him. So that's why we can have confidence in God. That is why Jesus is worth it. God's word is reliable.

The hope that we have is an anchor for our souls in the difficulties of life. And whatever we face, we know there is someone who has gone before us, that the Lord Jesus is there preparing our place, and one day we will go to be with him.

Right, so that's the first part of the passage. Let's move on to chapter 7 now, and we're going to think about Melchizedek. So chapter 7, reading from verse 1. It says, This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High.

He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First his name, that's Melchizedek's name, means king of righteousness.

[13 : 55] Then also king of Salem means king of peace. Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

Just think how great he was. Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder. Now the law requires the descendants of Levi, who become priests, to collect a tenth from the people, that is, their brothers, even though their brothers are descended from Abraham.

This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi. Yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater.

In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die, but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham.

Because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor. If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood, from the basis of the law that was given to the people, why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?

[15 : 15] For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.

For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest, not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

For it is declared, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So we have this guy, Melchizedek, who's referred to repeatedly in this passage by the writer to the Hebrews.

Melchizedek is only mentioned in two places in the Old Testament. He's mentioned in the book of Genesis, and then he's referred to briefly in Psalm 110. In the book of Genesis, it comes about when Abraham has been at battle.

Abraham's nephew, Lot, had made a very foolish decision to go and live in Sodom, and there had been a bit of a war, and he'd been taken away as a captive, and Abraham went and rescued him, defeated those who were the enemies, brought back the plunder, and came back in triumph.

[16 : 37] And this man, Melchizedek, came out to meet Abraham, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything he had. And Melchizedek is described as both a king and a priest.

And the writer to the Hebrews, almost as an aside, makes mention of the fact that his name, Melchizedek, means king of righteousness, and the place he came from, Salem, means peace, so he's also king of peace.

And clearly that fits very well with our thoughts of the Lord Jesus. But we know really nothing of Melchizedek for certain beyond what we read in Genesis, and that very brief reference in Psalms.

And that means he's become a bit of a person of mystery, and people wonder, well, who really was Melchizedek? And there are two views, I think, main of that. And I'm going to use a current analogy to kind of hopefully help us understand.

This character on the screen now, many of you will recognize, is the Stig. So the Stig is best known as being the racing driver who's appeared on Top Gear and various other programs.

[17 : 41] He's a man of mystery. No one, in theory at least, knows who he is. He appears, he drives very fast, and he goes away again. But no one doubts that the Stig is a real person.

Behind that mask, there's someone who's got a father and a mother who lives somewhere in the UK, and there's someone, if we met in the streets, he would be a real person we could talk to and interact with.

He just is, kind of, we don't know exactly who he is. One of the views of Melchizedek is a bit like that. Well, he's a bit of a mystery figure, but he's just someone who is in the Old Testament, and the writer of the Hebrews is using him as an analogy.

He was a real person, a man, and although it says he didn't have father and mother, that's just figuratively we don't know who his father and mother was. He didn't have the normal human parents and human descendants, but he's a bit of a mystery, and he's used because of that as an example by the writer to the Hebrews.

Perhaps in support of that, I was interested, I've been reading Alec Mottier's latest book, which is really excellent. I really recommend it to you, The Christian's Pocket Guide to Loving the Old Testament.

[18 : 48] And what Alec Mottier suggests is that when Joshua conquered the land of Israel, that the king in Jerusalem at that time was someone called Adonai Zedek.

And Alec Mottier says, well, maybe there's been a Zedek dynasty of priest kings in Jerusalem, because Adonai Zedek means much the same as Melchizedek. And maybe when the reference is made to Psalm 110, to being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, in the first instance, it is thinking of David, who's made his throne in Jerusalem, being the king in Jerusalem, as being the kind of successor to Melchizedek.

In other words, Melchizedek was a real man who had descendants, and whose descendants were kings in Jerusalem. So that's one view. Second view, there's James Judi Dench.

Actually, if you look a bit closely, it's not James Judi Dench. It's Tracy Ellman dressed up to look like James Judi Dench. She's got the appearance of being a very well-known actress, but actually it's just someone who's playing her.

And the second view of Melchizedek is actually he wasn't just a normal man who happened to come across Abraham's pathway. Melchizedek was some heavenly being.

[20 : 02] Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, there's something called the Melchizedek Scroll. And that seems to suggest that Melchizedek was an angel who fought a battle against evil, who had some involvement in the atonement and so on, that he was a heavenly being.

Perhaps more relevantly to many of us, there are a lot of people who feel that Melchizedek was actually a pre-incarnation appearance of the Lord Jesus. Although it says he was like Jesus, actually this was Jesus appearing before he came into this world.

Actually, that is not the main point. Whatever view you take of Melchizedek, that is not the main point. It's very interesting, but it's not what the writer is trying to tell us.

It doesn't really matter to our understanding of the passage who Melchizedek is. Because the writer to Hebrews makes really two main points about Melchizedek.

Now he makes them in great detail, and we've not got time to go into the detail this afternoon, but two main points he makes about Melchizedek and his exceptional priesthood. The first thing he says is that Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus as the one of the order of Melchizedek has a better qualification to be a high priest even than the descendants of Aaron.

[21 : 19] And I love, I think, it's verse 16 of the passage where it says, Melchizedek became a priest not on the basis of regulation as to his ancestry, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

Very true of the Lord Jesus, the power of an indestructible life. So the priests in Israel were all from the tribe of Levi, the high priest. They would be descended, all of them, from Aaron.

The way he became a high priest was not by deciding, I'm going to set my life aside to serve God and you could come from anywhere and do that, as would be the case now. Rather, to be a priest, you had to be from the tribe of Levi.

That was the rule. The Levites didn't have any territory of their own, but the other Israelites gave 10% of everything they had and that was largely to support the Levites who were set apart as being particularly God's people, God's representatives, and among them, the priests.

And so quite legitimately, someone reading Hebrews saying, Jesus is seen as the great high priest, they could say, well, how can that be? Because he's not from the tribe of Levi, born in the tribe of Judah.

[22 : 28] And so the writer here is saying, doesn't matter who's born from the tribe of Judah because his priesthood isn't the priesthood of Aaron, it's the priesthood of Melchizedek.

And that's not based on who your father and your grandfather and so on, going back up to Aaron was. That is based on the character of the person. And Jesus has a better qualification to be the high priest because he is the one who is eternal and indestructible, as the writer says.

He is the one who is God's son. And that is the callback to Melchizedek. Yes, you can be a priest without being from the tribe of Levi because Melchizedek was a priest without being from the tribe of Levi.

And Jesus is from his lineage rather than from the lineage of Aaron. He has a better qualification than the normal priests for what he does.

And then the second thing the writer says is he has a higher status. Now to really understand that, we have to realize that ancestry was really, really important to the Jews.

[23 : 38] And you look back and you saw who your ancestors were. And that was something that gave you whatever status you had. And the writer here says this man Melchizedek had a higher status than the priests of the Old Testament, the priests of the Aaronic priesthood because Abraham gave him a tenth of his possessions and he blessed Abraham.

And Abraham was the ancestor of all the priests of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, and then the priests were descended down that line.

And so the writer says that because Melchizedek blessed Abraham, he was greater than Abraham. Because Abraham gave him a tithe, that was also a sign that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.

And because all the priests are descended from Abraham and therefore can't be superior to him, then Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood.

And Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. I hope that's made a little bit of sense. It is a long and quite complicated passage, but I do want to spend some time on the end of chapter 7, so we'll leave it there for Melchizedek and we'll move on.

[24 : 57] Let's read the following verses of this chapter. So after Hebrews 7, verse 18, the former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless, for the law made nothing perfect and a better hope is introduced by which we draw near to God.

And it was not without an oath. See, we're back again where we were in chapter 6. It was not without an oath. Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever. Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. Now, there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office.

But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he's able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

Such a high priest meets our need. One who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.

[26 : 15] He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the oath which came after the law appointed the Son who has been made perfect forever.

What the righteous Hebrews is doing now, he's moving on. He said Jesus is a greater high priest than the high priests under the Jewish tradition, but he's saying in particular he's greater because what he has achieved is very much greater than anything that they could ever achieve.

And so we have a number of comparisons between the high priest from the tribe of Levi, the descendants of Aaron, and our great high priest, the Lord Jesus.

And the writer points out a number of things. He says, first of all, under the tradition of Aaron, there were many high priests. You were appointed high priest, you did that job for a while, and then you died.

And then someone else took over as high priest. Ashton, by the time of Jesus, it seems that the high priest was more of a rotation, more of a yearly thing, but in principle, the high priest served for a while, then they died, and someone took over as high priest because they were just men like us.

[27 : 33] They were ordinary, normal, human beings. But the writer says when it comes to Jesus, you only need one high priest because Jesus is alive forever.

It's this idea again of this indestructible life. Jesus is the only high priest we need because he isn't a mortal man. Yes, he came, he lived as a man, he lived among us, lived a perfect life, but he is God, the Son of God, he is eternal.

And where the high priest could only serve for a while, Jesus can serve forever. Second thing he says about the high priests, again, they were just people like us.

They were sinners. They did things that were wrong, and when they came to God, the first thing they had to do was to make sacrifice for their own sins, for all the things that they'd done wrong before they could really make sacrifices for the sins of the people.

The sacrifice they made were for both their sins and for the people's sins. But our high priest, he is perfect. Some great wording in this passage.

[28 : 46] He is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. There was no need for Jesus to make a sacrifice for himself because he was absolutely sinless.

He was the only person who's ever lived in this world who never did anything wrong. And because of that, he didn't need to make sacrifice for his own sins, but he was able to sacrifice just for the sins of others, for our sins.

Third thing the writer says, the sacrifices that were made in the Old Testament under the Old Testament order had to be made regularly. He talks about daily, the Day of Atonement, the big sacrifice was once a year, but every day if you went to the temple, there would be people there making sacrifices.

They had to be made again and again because they weren't long-term effective. They were a repeated thing that had to be made to keep the people right with God, but they were something that could never really free them from the bondage to sin and to the law.

But Jesus made one sacrifice forever. He didn't need to go and repeat that sacrifice again and again because the one sacrifice he made, the sacrifice of himself, was sufficient to cover all our sins if we trust in him and sufficient to bring us forgiveness and a relationship with God.

[30 : 18] That brings us to the final contrast in the passage that the priests offered sacrifice of animals, the Lord Jesus offered the sacrifice of himself.

He didn't need sacrifice. Sacrifice of animals could have been ineffective from that point of view. The effective sacrifice before God was the sacrifice, the willing sacrifice of his son, taking my place on the cross, dying my death so that I could be forgiven, so that I could know God and have real hope for the future.

And the sacrifice of Jesus is so much greater than all the other sacrifices. It's a once-for-all sacrifice and is a sacrifice of the one who is absolutely perfect and sinless who gave himself for our sins.

And that is why Jesus is worth it. Worth the greatest praise that we can give him because he gave himself for us. He died for our sins.

I've done pretty well gone, but let's just draw a couple of conclusions to take away with us. So we thought at the beginning about the promises that God made and the first thing I hope we can take away is that we can trust God's promises.

[31 : 36] That what God has said to us and what God has done for us through the Lord Jesus and the hope if we're Christians that we'll go to be with the Lord when we leave this earth, that can be the anchor for the soul, that can be the thing that we can really depend on.

It's when we come to times of trouble that our faith is really tested and the genuineness of our faith becomes apparent or otherwise. One of the really sad things about the death of Terry Wogan a couple of weeks ago was some of the obituaries in the paper said that Wogan lost his faith when he lost his daughter at a young age.

She died as a child. At that stage, Wogan decided that the Christian faith he'd been taught as a child in Ireland that that wasn't worth anything and he left it behind. He felt he'd just been brainwashed.

I contrast that with a lady in the Christian Fellowship and my work lady called Mary who had just been diagnosed with cancer for the second time and Mary sent me a text.

Let me just read it to you. I know that God has me by the hand and won't let me go. I know that God is in the midst of this with me and I shall not be moved.

[32 : 50] I have been proclaiming that the big C in my life is Christ. Cancer is a small C. And that is for those who have their faith in the Lord Jesus, those who know they can utterly depend on them.

That is when our faith becomes most evident. When we come to the time of trial, when things are difficult for us and yet we can say I have absolute confidence in Jesus.

I know he won't let me down. I trust God's promises completely and absolutely. I know what Jesus has done for me in dying on the cross and because of that I know he will always keep his promises.

He will always be with me. We can trust God's promises. And the second thing what we just looked at is we can rely on Jesus' sacrifice.

One of the great lessons of Hebrews is we can't rely on ourselves. That we, like the priests we've been talking about, like all the characters we've looked at over the previous chapters. We are sinful, we are flawed, and we can't do it by ourselves.

[33 : 58] And yet we can be absolutely confident if our trust is in Jesus. If we believe that he died for us, if we turn to him as being the only one who can bring us forgiveness. We can rely on that once for all, perfect, eternal sacrifice.

We can know that we have a future that is secure, that we have a real hope that can be an anchor for us. I think the challenge for us today is do we have that hope?

Are we relying on Jesus? Absolutely. Is there any element of me that says I'm relying on myself, trying to live a good life, and do my best, and God will be okay with that? The clear message of this passage is God will not be okay with us trying to do our best because our best is just totally inadequate.

we need to rely on the one who is perfect. We need to rely on Jesus' sacrifice for us. So let's leave with our thoughts focused on the cross of the Lord Jesus where he went and where he took our sins, and let each of us examine ourselves to see whether we truly are trusting in him, whether we are relying on him, whether we have his salvation and his hope for the future.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you even in the difficult passages you have so much to say to us. We thank you particularly if this passage points us to your faithfulness, to the fact that we can rely absolutely on you, and to the fact that Jesus, our great high priest, has offered his own blood for us.

[35 : 30] He has died in our place, and so we can have forgiveness, we can have peace with yourself. And so we take for ourselves the words that were written by Isaac Watts that says, Jesus, my great high priest, offered his blood and died.

My guilty conscience seeks no sacrifice beside. His powerful blood did once atone, and now he pleads before the throne. May each of us have that assurance in our lives that Jesus has sacrificed and felt for us.

We pray that you will give us that and help us to have our trust wholly in him. Thank you for being with us. We commit ourselves to you now in his name. Amen. Amen.