

Hebrews

Hebrews 7:11-25 – Jesus Saves Completely

April 26, 2009

I. Hebrews 7:11-25

A. **Hebrews 7:11-25** . . . Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? [12] For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. [13] For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. [14] For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. [15] And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, [16] who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. [17] For it is attested of Him, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." [18] For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness [19] (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. [20] And inasmuch as it was not without an oath [21] (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever' "); [22] so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. [23] **The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, [24] but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. [25] Therefore He is able also to save forever (completely) those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

B. Prayer

II. **Review:** Last week I spoke to you about positional and practical perfection and why it so important to God – and why it should be equally important to us. As God says in **Hebrews 12:14** . . . Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification (*holiness*) without which no one will see the Lord. And

as I said last Sunday, this is the only way to be in the condition whereby we are considered worthy to enter into and remain in the presence of God.

A. Positional perfection does not make a willful, practicing sinner perfect. Nor does it put the one who continues to intentionally rebel against God into that condition whereby he is considered worthy to enter and remain in the presence of God.

1. **Hebrews 2:1-3a** . . . For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. [2] For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, [3] how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

2. **Matthew 7:21-23** . . . Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. [22] Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

B. However, the repentant sinner who turns away from his rebellious ways against God; and who puts his faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from sin; and who sincerely and persistently pursues practical perfection in this life – for the love of God and the good of others – such a person will be considered worthy to enter into and remain in the presence of God.

III. Why the Law Cannot Make Us Perfect

A. God says in **Hebrews 7:11** that the Law cannot make us perfect. And then in **Hebrews 7:18-19**, God affirms that truth by saying the Law is weak and useless because it cannot make anyone or anything perfect. So why is the Law spoken of as weak and useless in relation to perfecting us? Let me give you three reasons:

1. **First**, salvation through the Law comes only by keeping the whole law - flawlessly. To fail in just one area or to fail just once is to fail utterly. And utter failure leads to eternal damnation and separation from God. The scriptures make it clear no one has kept the Law perfectly and no one can - except Jesus.

2. **Second**, the Law cannot break Satan's power. Neither can the Law set us free from the enslaving power of sin. Only God can do this, and He did it through the sacrifice (death and resurrection) of

His son. The Law only teaches us of right from wrong. It leaves the full responsibility of obedience to us.

3. **Third**, the Law cannot empower us to do what is right – it can only point us in the right direction. Because the Law is inanimate, it has no life or power of its own. Therefore, it cannot impart life or power to us.
- B. So we see that the Law cannot make us perfect, and God affirms this in **Hebrews 10:1** . . . For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, **can never**, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.
- C. If the Law is considered weak and useless when it comes to making anyone perfect, does this mean the Law is bad? Does this mean the Law is unimportant for us today? Now that we have Christ, can we ignore it? Let me answer these questions by taking us to three portions of scripture that address these questions.
1. Is the Law bad? **Romans 7:12** . . . So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.
 2. Is the Law unimportant? **Galatians 3:23-26** . . . But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. [24] Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. [25] But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. [26] For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
 3. Can we ignore the Law? **Matthew 5:17-20** . . . Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. [18] For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. [19] Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- D. So we see that the Law's inability to put us in a condition whereby we are considered worthy to enter into and remain in the presence of God DOES NOT mean that the Law is worthless and something to be ignored. Though the Law cannot save us, it does educate us.

IV. What the Law Cannot Do, Christ Did and Continues To Do

A. Let's review a few statements in this portion of Hebrews:

1. **Hebrews 7:18-19** . . . For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness [19] (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of **a better hope**, through which we draw near to God.
2. **Hebrews 7:25** . . . Therefore He is able also **to save forever (completely)** those who draw near to God **through Him**, since He **always lives** to make intercession for them.

B. God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, made positional and practical perfection possible for us.

1. **Romans 8:1-4** . . . Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. [3] For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, **He condemned sin in the flesh**, [4] so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
 - a. The scriptures teach us that because we are descendants of Adam and Eve, we are born with a sin nature and the desire to sin. What is more, the scripture says every one of us has sinned – which means every one of us is under the condemnation of God for rebelling against Him in going our own sinful, selfish way.
 - b. But there is more – sin enslaves, our flesh desires sinful things, and the devil is committed to luring us onto his side so that we become full-fledged opponents of God.
 - c. Therefore, it is not only hard to do what is right, it is seemingly impossible – just as it is seemingly impossible for a hardened drug addict or a long-time alcoholic to kick his habit apart from outside help.

2. However, into this dismal picture came a savior – One who could rescue us from both the penalty of sin and also the power and practice of sin. This savior is Jesus.
 - a. He alone is able to permanently set things right between God and us (*the One we have so deeply offended*).
 - b. He alone is able to break the enslaving power of sin so that we need not sin any longer. For the Christian, this means that our flesh is no longer dominant in any area – unless we give it dominance. This means that the allurements of the world only attract us insofar as we desire them. And this means the devil cannot tempt us in ways we cannot resist.
 - c. He alone is able to give us a new nature – a nature that is divine in its origin – which means we can, with our new nature,
 - (1) understand God and enjoy intimate fellowship with Him.
 - (2) With our new nature we can rule over our old sinful nature so it no longer rules over us.
 - (3) Because of our new nature we can be conformed to the likeness of Jesus – from the inside out (*values, beliefs, desires, thoughts, words, deeds*).
 - (4) And with our new nature, we can live a godly, holy life in accordance with God’s will for us.
 - d. He alone is able to empower us with a power that enables us to win every battle against our flesh, the world, and the devil – so that we are able to live, on a daily basis, the life He saved us to live (*practical perfection*).
 - (1) However, empowerment does not equal victory, for empowerment does not make us do what is right. It only makes it possible for all who want to do what is right to do what is right. But if we want to do what is right, if we want to love God supremely and please Him completely and serve Him cheerfully, the power is ours to do it.
 - (2) **Jude 1:24** . . . Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy. . . .
 - e. He alone shows us the great love of God – in ways our humanity can understand – so we can go from fear based obedience (*which retains an element of selfishness*) to love driven submission whereby God is the reward of our love, the

- satisfaction of our desires, the fulfillment of our expectations, and the hope of our future (*thus being free of all selfishness*).
- f. And when we sin, again, after coming to the knowledge of the truth, He alone intercedes for us before the Father. And why is this intercession so important? Because when we sin after being born again, the devil accuses us before God and demands that God cast us out of His presence and out of His eternal kingdom.
3. All this that Christ does for us (*which the Law did not do*) is why the scripture says in:
- a. **I Corinthians 15:21-22** . . . For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.
 - b. **II Corinthians 5:17** . . . Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

V. Conclusion

- A. We will never rise to the heights of sinless perfection in this life. But if we are not seriously, purposefully, and persistently pursuing that practical perfection which goes hand-in-hand with positional perfection, the most obvious reasons could be that:
- 1. we have not yet repented of our rebellion against God,
 - 2. we haven't come to the place of having a broken and contrite heart over our sin,
 - 3. we still lack a healthy fear of God,
 - 4. we still aren't connecting how we live with the glory God receives in the world,
 - 5. we aren't picking up our cross – daily – in order to put self to death and keep self dead,
 - 6. we haven't yet come to the place where we want God's will done in our life as it is done in heaven,
 - 7. we are not nurturing a hunger and thirst for righteousness,
 - 8. we are not nurturing a love for God that transcends our love of self, and everything else,
 - 9. and we still haven't made God the supreme end of all we hope for, desire, dream of, and pursue.
- B. What the Law could not do - perfect us positionally and practically, Christ did – and He longs to do this for you!! May you let Him, and may you co-operate with Him!!