

Jesus Is Priest and Interceder  
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You can go ahead and turn to Hebrews chapter 3, 'cause that's where we're gonna be at least starting off. Ok. We are going to be starting off in Hebrews chapter 3. It's at the tail end of the Bible following Paul's letters; for instance, those two—Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and then you come to Hebrews. What we are going to be doing today is continuing on in our summer sermon series where we are looking at different aspects of exactly who Jesus is. And as we do so, we're basing this largely out of Colossians chapter 1, where Paul bursts into praise for exactly who Jesus is, what He has done, the aspects of His nature, and what that means for us. In Colossians 1:19-20 he says

*In Him [speaking of Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.*

What this is hitting on is the reality, the aspect of Christ, where Christ is priest and interceder. It also hits on the reality that Jesus is the sacrifice. That's what it's talking about when it speaks about reconciling that comes through the blood of the cross. Just as we get into this, before we get into Hebrews chapter 3, I just need to explain the significance of a priest, ok? A priest is someone who stands between God—the holy, righteous, all-powerful, pure God—and fallen, sinful man. He is one who stands in the gap, who pleads and intercedes on man's behalf for God's reconciliation. He is...his role is to make sacrifice for the sins of the people—come before God, enter the presence of God, make a sacrifice for the sins of the people for whom he is asking forgiveness. And he goes to God and he intercedes on their behalf to ask for and receive the forgiveness of sins. Ok? Now, that is something that the first century world understood very well. It's something that oftentimes doesn't translate into our culture because we don't still practice sacrifice on a regular basis. But that is...at least I hope we don't, like, slaughter animals, you know, for sacrifice. That's an issue, and we can talk about that afterwards. But no, we do sacrifice things that are of value to us, giving them to God. But this is what he is talking about, is Jesus Christ—He acts as the priest and interceder. He made a sacrifice of Himself, spilling and shedding His own blood, His own death on the cross, so that we could be forgiven of sin. But then He also turns around and He is resurrected so that He can also be the priest and interceder who offers up this sacrifice to the Father, and thereby is able to intermeditate and to be able to intercede and negotiate, so-to-speak, the forgiveness of our sins, making peace between heaven and earth. Ok? So that's the idea of priest and interceder.

Now we're gonna jump into Hebrews chapter 3. And what we're going to do is we're actually going to start off in Hebrews chapter 3; we're going to go over to Deuteronomy 18, and you'll see why, hopefully, in just a little bit; and then we'll come back to Hebrews 4. Ok? So we'll go to Hebrews chapter 3. I'm going to read verses 1 through 6 and invite you to follow along with me.

*Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession [Ok, He's the high priest of those who are followers of Christ], who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, just as Moses was also faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are His house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*

Going to just point out a couple of things to you in this passage here real quick. First of all is that Jesus is the high priest. It says that He is the high priest of our confession. It means that ultimately He is the One who goes into God's presence, into the Holy of Holies, offering sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. That is His role. He is the One who holds that role forever. Ok? That is His role. Any high priest prior to that, in the Jewish nation, was just a symbol of a representative of the One who would come. The whole point of their role was so they could point to the One who would come, who would be the ultimate, perfect high priest, Jesus.

Ok, now, He's worthy of more glory than Moses. It's interesting, the thought flow in verse 1 through 3. It says, he says, 'Listen, those of you who are followers of Christ, consider Jesus, the One who is, you know, the high priest,

He's the sent One, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful, just as Moses was also faithful, and who has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses.' Now what the writer of Hebrews is doing is he is writing to people of the Hebrew nation; this letter is a letter to Hebrew people...Israelites, Jews, ok? And he is speaking to them in the language of Judaism, where they understand what it is to be a priest and to offer sacrifice and seek the forgiveness of sins. And what he is doing is he is saying 'Listen, Moses was good. He was the greatest prophet that came up to this point. But he was nothing compared to Jesus. Ok? He doesn't hold a match to Jesus, and Jesus is worthy of more glory and honor than Moses.' Why is that? Well, the writer of Hebrews kind of explains a little bit. First of all, he explains that Jesus is faithful in authority over us, verse 6. It says that Jesus is faithful over God's house as a son. Ok? And he clarifies and says that we are His house...the believers, those who are followers of God, are God's house. We are His temple, His body, His family. And so, it explains that Jesus is faithful. How is He faithful? Because He is the Son who rules over us. He is the head of the church; He is the head of the body; He is the One who rules over us and who is in total authority over believers. Ok? This hits on and hints at a basic presupposition that we, as followers of Christ...if you are a follower of Christ, your basic presupposition, your basic stance in life, should be that it's not that you're perfect, but your basic stance in life should be that whenever you see...wherever you see in your life that your life does not match up with what Christ expects of you, your commitment is to allow Him to change you through the power of His Spirit from the inside out. Your commitment is that 'If I know that this is not what God wants me to do, I'm a follower of Christ so no matter what it costs me, I will follow Him instead of choosing what I want to do. Because that is my commitment. It doesn't matter that I'm perfect. I fall, I struggle, I have to be picked back up. And thankfully I have a high priest who is faithful over my whole...like myself and the body of believers, as a Son. He has authority.' It's like this idea of the Father bestows authority on the Son. That's Jesus. He's a faithful Son who has authority over everyone.

Well, what's Moses? In the verse prior to that, in verse 5, it says that Moses was a faithful servant...not a faithful Son, a faithful servant...in that house. Ok? He was a faithful servant among God's people. Moses was faithful in all of God's house among His people, as a servant, to testify to things that were to be spoken later. That was his whole role as a servant, was to point towards, to testify to, the things that were to be, to the Word that would be spoken by God, i.e. Jesus. Ok? That was his whole role was...and he was faithful in that. Everything in his life was there to point towards the One who would ultimately come, who would have authority over everything, Jesus Christ, the faithful Son who has authority over us. Ok? Now then, what the writer of Hebrews is doing here is he is setting up kind of a comparison and a contrast between Moses and Jesus, ok? That's what he's doing. And basically he is saying, 'Listen, the whole point of Moses' life was to point towards Jesus. That was the whole point of his life, to prepare a people who would understand and be able to receive the Messiah when He comes.

Now then, this is where we're going to jump back into Deuteronomy 18, ok? So I invite you to turn with me there, Deuteronomy 18. And if you would like, keep a finger or a little bookmark, bulletin, something in Hebrews, 'cause we'll flip back to this. Deuteronomy 18, ok? I'll explain a little bit of what's going on here so that that way, as I read a little bit of this you have a context for it. What is going on is the people of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years at this point, ok? Now they are about to enter into the Promised Land, and God has told Moses, 'You are not going to go in with them. In fact, you are going to die here in the wilderness.' And so Moses gives a great farewell speech. And Deuteronomy 18 is in the middle of that speech, where Moses is declaring to them and reminding them of the Law of God. He's saying, 'Listen, this is what God has done for you. This is His expectations of you. This is the way that this works.' And he is reminding them of this. And in chapter 18 he explains, and he reminds them, 'Listen, this is the role of the priests, and when you come into the land,' in verse 9 he starts hitting on this, 'when you come into the land God is giving you, you will run into people who pursue the divine, who try to interact with God, communicate with Him, have a relationship with God, with the spiritual realm, in a way that is not proper. You are not to follow their example. Keep yourself apart from them, and you continue to follow God the way that God has ordained.' Now, in verse 15, he begins to explain the way that this is, the way that they are to do this. In verse 15 he says

*"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to My words that he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him."*

We're going to stop just right there for a moment. And before I jump into this and kind of unpack some of this for you, I need to explain that Moses...he is giving some good frame of reference for understanding who is a prophet and who is not. Ok? He goes on to elaborate a little on it. And there were numerous prophets of God who came,

who followed after. Ok? But they all pointed to one person, a single prophet I will argue, and I will show you why in just a moment. But you need to understand the role of a prophet. You see, a priest and a prophet in many ways are two sides of the same coin. Ok? I'll explain. A priest is someone, as I said earlier, who intercedes on behalf of sinful man so that he can communicate with God. He's an intermediary who allows you to communicate with God. We believe in the priesthood of the believer; but the priesthood of the believer, if you're a follower of Christ, you can communicate with God but it's not because of your own goodness. It's because, ultimately, you have have a great high priest through whom you have authority to go to God, Jesus Christ. Ok? Now, a prophet is, in many ways, kind of the flip side of that coin...where God cannot enter into the presence of sinful man without causing immediate destruction. And so a prophet is someone to whom...an intermediary to whom God speaks so that that way His people can hear a message, a word from Him. Ok? So a priest is one who communicates to God on behalf of the people; a prophet is someone who communicates to the people on behalf of God. Ok? There's this communication thing going on. What ends up happening, and what we'll see, is Jesus is both of those. He fills both of those roles. Ok?

Now, in Deuteronomy 18 there's an interesting thing that you notice here. Moses is referring to a singular prophet like him. He knows that there will be others raised, but he says in verse 15, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you; listen to him.' Kind of reminds me of the Mount of Transfiguration, when Peter, John, James, they were up on the mountain with Jesus, and all of a sudden He is transformed by the Father, where they begin to see Him in His glory. And they are just totally excited. Peter says, 'Man, this is the most awesome thing in the world!' And it's interesting...who does he see with Jesus? Anybody? Moses...yes! Ok, Moses, and he sees Elijah. He sees Moses and Elijah, the two greatest prophets of the entire Old Testament. And they are coming there to minister to, or serve, Jesus just prior to His crucifixion, to encourage Him and serve His needs in the same way, shortly afterwards in the wilderness it says that angels were sent to minister to and serve Jesus after His forty-day fast after being tempted by Satan. In the same way, Moses and Elijah are sent to Jesus to minister to Him immediately before His crucifixion. And it's cool, because it actually reminds me of this because the Father...this is one of the two times in the Gospels that the Father speaks, and what He says...Peter is just saying, 'Man, this is the most awesome thing ever! Let's build some tents. Let's just stay here. Man, I wanna stay in the presence of Jesus and Moses and Elijah. And we should live here.' And God says, 'Peter, stop,' is basically what He's saying. He says, "*This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.*" And in the context of you have Moses there, you have Elijah, it makes me think...and they are serving Jesus...it makes me think perhaps Jesus is a prophet greater than them, who can reveal and speak on the Father's behalf more accurately, more fully, than any other prophet who has ever lived...because Jesus is not simply a prophet; He is one hundred percent God, one hundred percent man, brought together in one person. That is who He is, the second person of the Trinity. Moses refers to this singular prophet who will be like him.

There's a simple reality, though, that I really...well, I'll argue this point. This is part of the reason why I believe that Moses is a prophet like Jesus...or excuse me, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who is referred to. First of all, Jesus is confirmed by, oh I don't know, about three hundred and twenty-two prophecies from the Old Testament which He fulfilled perfectly. And I won't go into all of this because we don't have time, but the odds of that happening are

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insane, astronomical. It's something like one in 10 to the hundred and fifty-seventh power (1 in 10<sup>157</sup>), one with like a hundred and fifty-seven zeros, a 'googooglebazillion' whatever... Those are the odds, and interestingly, these were figured by a mathematician who, just out of curiosity, wanted to see. It was actually confirmed by the American Scientific Association. They did not agree with the conclusion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They

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just simply said the odds of someone actually fulfilling all these prophecies are 1 in 10<sup>157</sup>...in fact that's a pretty conservative estimate. It's actually probably a much worse chance than that, ok? But here's the thing. Jesus fulfills all of these, and He is confirmed by prophecy—both by prophecy He fulfilled and by prophecy that He spoke. For instance, in John 2, I think it's verse 19 where He says 'If you destroy this temple,' speaking about His body, 'I will raise it up again in three days.' Basically, 'You go ahead and kill Me; I'm gonna come back alive in three days.' It happened. Ok? And because of that...I don't know, that's a pretty powerful prophecy that you can prove false pretty easily, and it happened. I think He probably knows what He's talking about.

But Matthew develops this pretty well, and explains that Jesus is the prophet like Moses. It's interesting how much their lives parallel one another. In Matthew 2, Jesus was brought up out of Egypt in the same way that Moses was brought up out of Egypt. He began ministry by going through the waters of baptism in Matthew 3. Moses began his ministry with the people by going through the baptism, so-to-speak, of the Red Sea. They both wandered in the wilderness; Jesus wandered in the wilderness for forty days, in Matthew 4; Moses wandered in the wilderness for forty years. In Matthew 4:23 as Jesus is coming out of the wilderness, it states that Jesus healed all of their diseases. In the same way, God revealed Himself to His people as the God who heals all our diseases, Jehovah-

rapha, in Exodus 15:26. Jesus then turns around in Matthew 5-7 and He gives the Law, God's Law, the explanation, the fulfillment, the full revelation of God's law, on the mountain...it's called the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. In the same way, Moses at the beginning of his ministry goes up on Mt. Sinai and reveals the Law to God's people who are standing there at its base. Moses and Jesus—their lives are set up very, very similarly. Jesus is the prophet like Moses. But this is something that we need to understand. The prophet that Moses was talking about would have to be more than just what Moses was. Being 'like' Moses was not enough. Moses was just a picture of, a shadow of, the prophet who was to come. He was basically saying, 'Listen, the prophet who is to come will be like me, but better!' Ok? Because he ends up saying in verses 15 through 18, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me...just as you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers.'"* What is happening is this...the people of Israel are there. They've left Egypt and they are coming into and they are experiencing God's presence as He begins to reveal it, in the first time in a very real, powerful, personal way for the very first time. They experience it, they hear His voice, they see some of His glory, it completely freaks them out. And their response is...and Moses is reminding them of this response...their response is 'Somebody else talk to Him. We can't be in His presence, we can't hear His voice, we can't see Him, or we will die! We are sinful people, and we will die if we are in His presence! We need somebody else to talk to Him.' And it's interesting, Moses says that the Lord said to him, God said to him, 'You know what, Moses? They're right. They do need somebody else who can speak on My behalf, who can be an intermediary, somebody who can be a prophet and a priest, somebody who can intercede on their behalf. And so, because of that, I'm going to raise up someone else.' Basically what He's telling Moses is 'Listen, don't get any idea that you're enough. There is someone else who is going to have to come, who will have to come and make that intercession possible. Because of that I will raise up a prophet from them, for them, a prophet kind of like you. But he will be able to succeed where you have failed. He will be able to bring My people into My presence without them experiencing the death and destruction that they deserve because of My justice, My holiness, and their sinfulness.'

See, the prophet would have to be more than Moses. The basic problem is this...Moses was a sinner. He was a sinner like you and me. He was a normal man who was just fallen and sinful. And the problem is that we need a perfect priest and interceder, and Jesus is the only one who can do that. Now the basic idea is this. Moses...sure. God, in His grace, allowed and enabled Moses to intercede on behalf of his people. And so Moses would be able to go to God and ask, and intercede, and beg for mercy and grace, and God gladly poured it out on His people. The problem is that Moses is also a sinner. So who is going to intercede on his behalf? See, the simple reality is that if Moses has to intercede on his own behalf he can't worry about somebody else. He's a sinner himself. He can't pay for, offer a sacrifice for, anyone that will actually pay the debt of their sin, because he has his own sin to worry about. And he will never be able to be good enough. He's a sinner. He can't save...Moses can't save you, in the same way that I can't save you. No one else can save you unless if they are a perfect, sinless person who can then turn around and, because they don't have to worry about their own sin, and because they are a perfect intermediary between God and man, who is both man and God, Jesus is the only one who fits this description...unless if it is that person, you do not have your sins paid for. Because there is only one high priest, Jesus Christ, who can pay for your sins, who can intercede on your behalf.

Let me just point this out. This is where Moses, his life begins to contrast with Jesus', because Jesus is similar to Joseph...or excuse me, to Moses...but Moses was not enough. Here's some interesting similarities, but striking differences. Moses was sinful, and because of that he was unable to lead his people into the Promised Land. Jesus was sinless; and because He died for our sins He is able to lead us into the promised eternity. Moses built a tabernacle so that the people could offer sacrifices and live near to God. Jesus became the temple who put away our sins so that God could live in us. Moses could only bring people to a place of fear in the presence of God; Jesus brought the presence of God into our hearts with the Spirit that sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts and tells us that we are the precious sons and daughters of God. Moses gave the Law. The people couldn't keep it, and three thousand people died in one day in Exodus 33 at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Jesus gave the Spirit. He died for our transgressions, and three thousand people were saved in one day in Acts 2 at the foot of Mt. Calvary. Moses was a prophet; Jesus was a savior. Moses was created; Jesus was the creator. Moses was a servant of God; Jesus was the Son of God. Moses died for his sin and abandoned his people as they went into the Promised Land. Jesus died for our sin and was raised to life so that He could say, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* Jesus was the true and better Moses, the priest and intercessor that Moses pointed towards with his whole life.

The cool thing is this, and this is part of the reason that I am absolutely convinced that Jesus Christ is the prophet, the intercessor, the priest that we have been waiting for, is because all of the Old Testament testifies to it. There have been other prophets who came prior to Jesus. But when Jesus came there is no further revelation needed, because Jesus did it perfectly. And the Old Testament points towards this and sets the stage where we expect it.

Let's put it this way. This is where the Bible gets extremely amazing, and part of the reason I love the Old Testament, ok? Because everything in the Old Testament is a shadow of Jesus that was fulfilled perfectly, ok? Think about this, and this is something that I learned from Timothy Keller.

Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the Garden, and whose obedience is imputed to us. The first Adam (Adam and Eve...), that first Adam ate from the tree and we died. The second Adam died on a tree, and we live.

Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood that cries out now not for our condemnation but for our acquittal.

Jesus is the ark who shielded us from the raining wrath of God and out of which God brought a new creation.

Jesus is the true and better Abraham, who answered the call of God to leave the comfortable and familiar, and go out into the void not knowing whither he went to create a new people of God.

Jesus is the true and better Isaac, who is not just offered up by His Father on the mount, but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham "*Now I know you truly love me because you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me,*" now we can look at God taking His Son up the mountain and sacrificing Him and say, "Now we know that You love us because You have not withheld Your Son, Your only Son, the Son whom You love, from us."

Jesus is the true and better Jacob, who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved so that, like Jacob, we only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.

Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the King, forgives those who betrayed and sold Him and uses His new power to save them.

Jesus is the true and better Moses, who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord, and who mediates a new covenant.

Jesus is the true and better rock in the desert who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert for our thirsty hearts.

Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer who then intercedes for and saves His stupid friends.

Jesus is the true and better David, whose victory becomes His people's victory though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

Jesus is the true and better Esther, who didn't just risk losing an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn't just risk losing His life but gave His life to save His people.

Jesus is the true and better Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who would not succumb to the temptations of a worldly ruler but chose, rather, to enter the fires of God's justice on our behalf and emerge victorious and alive for us.

Jesus is the true and better Jonah, who was cast out into the storm so that we can be brought in.

Jesus is the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so that the Angel of Death will pass over us.

He is the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.

The Bible is not about you. It's all about Jesus, the one priest and interceder whom Moses foretold. And he said, 'Listen, God's people...be prepared because He will come. You will know Him by the prophecies. You will know Him by the words that He speaks, and the accuracy. And He will be the One who is able to take you into the

presence of God, where you no longer have to fear total destruction. Look for Him.' That was Moses' message in his final words, his farewell speech...look for Him. Be ready.

Let's put it this way. If Jesus is all this, if He really is everything that has been pointed towards, there's some very striking implications. You must listen to Him. Verse 15 and 19 in Deuteronomy 18...it's interesting, it's kind of...it forms a little beginning and an end kinda wrapped up in one where he says, 'Listen, God is going to raise up this prophet like me. When he comes, it is to him you must listen.' And then in verse 19, "*And whoever will not listen to My words,*" (this is God speaking), "*whoever will not listen to My words that he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.*" Basically God is saying, 'I am sending a prophet. I will make sure that He is well known, that I have affirmed Him with accurate prophecy. And when He comes you have two choices...you listen to Him or you reject Him. If you reject Him, if you do not listen to Him, if you do not heed His words and follow Him in your life, I will require it of you.'

One implication, if you're a follower of Christ, is...this is part of the reason that I believe our standard default position has to be, no matter how much I don't like it, if I am going to be a follower of Christ my default position is when I become aware that my life does not match up with what God expects of me, my commitment is to allow Him to change me instead of turning my back on Him. I will listen to Him, I will obey Him. Doesn't mean I do it perfectly; it means that I need His grace to continually be poured out in my life to enable me to do that.

But there's a second thing. If you are not a follower of Christ, if He's not your priest and interceder, the basic message that Moses would give is you are in big, big trouble. I mean, really, that's putting it in childish terms, but really that's what it's about. And I would submit to you that if you are not a follower of Christ, if He is not your priest and intercessor, the simple reality is you cannot offer a sacrifice that is sufficient for your own sin. You will never be good enough. You will never be able... Here's the thing. If Jesus really is all of this, if the Old Testament really does point to Him, then you have to listen to [Him]. And He says, "*I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" Basically, Jesus' assessment of your life is you are a screwed up sinner. You are selfish, you are prideful, you are greedy. You are a person who is filled with lust. You get angry. You have gods other than God; you worship and follow the wrong things. You have the wrong priorities in life. And that is His assessment of me, too. And His message is you will never be good enough to enter into His presence, into God's presence. And as long as you have not had a sacrifice made on your behalf, you will feel the condemnation and the judgment weighing on you throughout your life.

Makes me think of Kafka, "The Trial". Interesting book, not exactly fun reading. But yeah. He was not a Christian. And basically, the trial, the whole premise is there's this man who is accused of some crime. He's arrested, and he goes through the remainder of his life feeling a sense of condemnation and judgment. But he can't figure out what his crime is, nor who this judge is who is judging him. And it finally ends where he dies in total depression and just being resigned to his fate, because he realized that somehow he still stands guilty before this unknown judge, convicted of a crime that he isn't even sure of. He just knows that he stands condemned. That is an amazingly insightful assessment of the human situation apart from God. Kafka wasn't a Christian, by the way. It was an assessment of his own life. The condemnation that he felt was the judge and creator of the universe, the Father, and Jesus Christ. The problem is that he did not have anyone who had made a...he had not accepted the sacrifice that had been offered.

See, that's the horror of the Gospel, is that you will never be good enough, never. You will never measure up, by anything that you do. And that...and so God will hold you accountable for that. And that is a horrific thought. But this simple reality is, as well...and this is the beauty of the Gospel...is that you don't have to. Jesus Christ was sufficient. He lived a sinless life. He succeeded where you have failed. And the awesome thing about it is He says, 'I wanna do a trade with you. Here's the deal. You bring your sin to the table. What I will bring is life. I will take your sin, I will take your consequence, I will take your death. I will pay that because I can do it. I can pay the debt that you owe. And what I will give you in return is life. You can have my life.' That's the trade. Jesus stands in in our position, taking the death that we owe, the consequence that we owe, taking on the full justice and wrath of God that we deserve so that we can go free and we can be adopted as sons and daughters of God, so that we can enter into His presence and we can be justified and stand blameless before a holy and righteous God. He does what Moses failed to do...make it where we no longer have to be afraid, as the people in Israel were, as it talks about in Deuteronomy 18.

I'm just going to go back here to Hebrews chapter 4 real quick. If you are a believer, if you are a follower of Christ, if Jesus is your priest and interceder, I want to read this passage to you. Hebrews 4:14-16, because I believe this is one of the most beautiful passages in all of scripture. And it's a promise that is given to those who have Jesus as their priest and intercessor, priest and interceder. It says,

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

What the writer of Hebrews is saying is listen, if you are a follower of Christ, if He has paid the debt for your sins, that sacrifice was sufficient. And He didn't stay dead. He was resurrected. And because of that, He is not seated at the right hand of the Father, and His role and His joy, His pleasure, is to consistently intercede on your behalf before the Father, to bring you before the Father, so that when the Father looks at you He no longer sees your sin. He sees Jesus' righteousness...not because you're perfect, but because He was perfect. And so what he says is because of that, because we have this great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Don't back down, don't give up. You persevere. You press on and you keep going. And he says because we have this high priest who is...it's not that He is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses; quite to the contrary. He can sympathize with everything that you have been through. He has suffered. He has struggled. He has been tempted in the same ways that you have been. Yet He did it perfectly and without sinning. He continually kept His mind, His eye, His sights set on the Father, and obeying and following the Father's will. He did it perfectly, and He knows what it is to live the life you're living. He knows what it is to walk through the same griefs that you've walked through. He's not just some God up in the sky who can't identify with you. He has walked it, He's felt it, He understands our struggles. So because of that, because He's still this perfect priest, it says *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace."* We don't have to be afraid of entering into God's presence. Quite to the contrary, he says, 'You walk in like you own the place. You have full confidence, and you come before His throne confident of the fact that you are a son, a daughter, of the most high God, and you come before His throne of grace. It is not a throne of judgment for you. It is a throne of grace where He intends and desires and wants and begs for you to come to His presence so that He can continually pour out mercy and grace on you, through you, into the lives of other people. And he says whenever you come into any circum... when you are in time of need, you go with confidence to that throne of grace knowing that He will pour out the grace and mercy that you need, and more. Because you are a precious son or daughter of His.

It's cool...James 1 says that we are God's choice possession; those whom He has bought, we are His choice possession. We are the most valuable thing that He owns, because we have been paid for with the blood of His Son.

Simple reality is this...I'm gonna go ahead and ask you to stand with me. Something that we are called to do is to continually give witness to the reality of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the priest and interceder who has made our forgiveness possible. And what we are called to do is to turn around and introduce others to Him so that they can likewise have Him as their priest, their interceder, so that they can be made right with God.

[Congregation sings the prayer for witness song.]