

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Teaching Plan
March 23, 2013
Hebrews 7:23-28
“WITH Jesus”

Memory Verse

“He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Heb 7:25, NIV

The Big Idea:

Sermon Scripture: *Approach the Throne: Part 2 – Jesus Makes Us Acceptable* (Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:1-28)

Sunday School Scripture: Hebrews 7:23-28

Sunday School Title: *“WITH Jesus”*

ESS: Without Jesus, we are enemies of God destined for punishment. But with Jesus, we have a permanent priest who offers complete salvation, continual grace, and eternal security.

REVIEW: Last week, we discussed the Old Testament system of sacrifices offered by the High Priest. To review, see if you can remember the inadequacies of the Old Testament High Priests and the perfections of Jesus as High Priest.

READ Hebrews 7:23-28 for help.

- The limitations of the Israelite High Priest
 - o He was human so his office didn't last forever
 - o He was sinful himself, so he had to offer sacrifices for himself, too
 - o The sacrifices he offered were only temporary and had to be offered again and again
- The perfections of Jesus' position of High Priest
 - o He is with God in Heaven to constantly & eternally intercede for us
 - o He was sinless, so His sacrifice was perfect
 - o His sacrifice was once and for all – no need to repeat sacrifices
 - o He was human, so he identifies with our struggles & temptations

Through the sacrifice of Jesus, our perfect High Priest, we can approach the throne of God with confidence! This week, we'll discuss how Jesus' sacrifice enables us to be acceptable before God.

Do you ever find yourself comparing your own life, house, job or body to someone else's? Describe a time in your life when you felt unworthy or inadequate – like you didn't quite measure up or weren't good enough.

In today's lesson, we'll see how Jesus' sacrifice has made us worthy and righteous in God's sight.

***The **BOLD** points match the learner's guide. The underlined words are blank in the learner's guide.*

PART 1: WITHOUT JESUS

Before we dive into the message Hebrews has for us, let's first remind ourselves of the basic message of the Gospel.

Do you believe babies are born innocent and pure or sinful?

Believe it or not, some believe that mankind is born innocent and have a natural proclivity to doing good. But the Bible says the opposite – that we are sinners from birth and we have to learn how to love and do good. And some people believe that living a good life and serving others will get you into Heaven one day. But the Bible says the opposite – that the only way to enter Heaven is through a love relationship with Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, we would live and die as sinners bound for Hell.

READ Romans 3:23 & 6:23

A. WITHOUT JESUS, WE ARE SINNERS DESERVING HELL.

READ Ephesians 2:1-3

B. WITHOUT JESUS, WE ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND WILL RECEIVE GOD'S WRATH.

READ Colossians 1:21

C. WITHOUT JESUS, WE ARE STRANGERS AND ENEMIES OF GOD.

Without Jesus, our position is pretty bleak. We're sinners, dead in our transgressions, separated from God and acting as adversaries towards Him. The result will be God's wrath experienced in Hell. But... the good news is we don't have to live without Jesus.

PART 2: WITH JESUS

READ Hebrews 7:23-28

In this passage, the author of Hebrews is reminding his readers that if they are believers, they live WITH, not WITHOUT Him. To help them understand the benefits of accepting and trusting Jesus as their Savior, the author pictures Jesus as the ultimate and supreme High Priest who serves as their representative before God. Last week, we talked about the *confidence* we can have WITH Jesus. Today, we'll look at the *salvation* we have WITH Jesus.

Through Jesus, we have:

A. A PERMANENT PRIEST

Hebrews 7:24 says, "because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood." In Old Testament times, the priests were chosen based on their ancestry, and they only served limited times because they eventually died. With Jesus, it's completely different.

READ Hebrews 7:16

This passage tells us that Jesus, the perfect High Priest, wasn't chosen based on His ancestry. He was chosen because He is powerful and indestructible!! What a great word to describe Jesus – indestructible. This means that we never have to worry about Jesus leaving or dying and someone else taking His place. He never takes a break or walks out. His position as priest will last for all eternity. He is the forever- steadfast, indestructible priest. Any time of the day, in the midst of any circumstance, God's people always have access to His throne through Jesus, the permanent, indestructible priest.

B. COMPLETE SALVATION

Hebrews 7:25 says that Jesus is able to "save completely those who come to God through Him." The King James Version of this verse says Jesus saves "to the uttermost." This wording means that Jesus saves us totally, completely, and perfectly. His salvation is complete in its work and comprehensive in its scope. Jesus saves us *from* every sin imaginable on Earth and *to* every blessing imaginable in Heaven. The salvation Jesus achieved on the cross and offers to every person is not incomplete or flawed in any way. It is complete and perfect, lacking nothing. This "complete" salvation requires no prerequisites or homework. No additional list of qualifications or responsibilities is necessary to accomplish or deserve Jesus' salvation. It is not based on works or merit, but only on Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The salvation Jesus offers is complete in every way, and it can be ours simply through faith and surrender. What a comfort this must have been to the original Jewish Christian readers of Hebrews! What a relief to know that the salvation Jesus offers is not based on how well one lived the Jewish life or how many rules you followed or how many sacrifices were made. Total and perfect salvation is available through Jesus alone.

How can this news of “complete salvation” be encouraging to us today? What does it tell us about the list of do’s and don’ts we often keep as Christians? Does Jesus’ complete salvation give you more or less freedom? How does it impact your daily life?

C. CONTINUAL GRACE

Hebrews 7:25 says Jesus “always lives to intercede for us.”

What does this mean to you – that Jesus intercedes for you? How do you picture this taking place in Heaven? In interceding, what does Jesus do and say on our behalf?

READ Luke 22:31-32

In this passage in Luke, we have an example of Jesus interceding for Peter. Jesus knows Satan’s plans, so He prays for Peter, that Peter’s faith would be strengthened. Isn’t it amazing to know that just as Jesus interceded for Peter, he does the same for us? Jesus is at the right hand of the father, praying specifically for us. His prayers help us ignore Satan’s accusations and resist his temptations. Jesus’ prayers provide strength and grace for us to endure difficult situations and give power for us to grow through hard times. And Jesus’ presence with the Father enables us to grow closer to God through the forgiving blood and persistent prayers of Jesus. As our perfect High Priest, Jesus is the provider of the grace and mercy we need minute by minute, day by day. The salvation He offers is complete and finished, but the mercy and grace He offers come as a continuous flow of blessings and strength, poured out onto those believers who trust and abide in Him.

D. ETERNAL SECURITY

Hebrews 7:27 says Jesus “sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.” Jesus, the sinless lamb of God voluntarily died on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice to God on our behalf. His life was perfect, and his sinless blood was spilled to satisfy God’s wrath against sin and to secure forgiveness for those who trust in Him. It was a “once and for all” thing. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was complete and sufficient. No further sacrifices need to be made. It happened once, it lasts for all eternity, and it is available to any and all who will believe.

In the Old Testament, the priest had to continually offer up sacrifices to atone for his own sins and for the people’s sins. Because the offerings were animals, not humans, and the people’s sins continued, the sacrifices were perpetual. It was a never ending cycle. No one animal sacrifice was ever enough. But with Jesus, the final and perfect sacrifice has been made “once and for all.” For believers, our forgiveness and hope of Heaven does not lie in frequent animal sacrifices or obeying a list of laws or doing the right thing. Our salvation is through Jesus alone. And based on His perfect and complete sacrifice, our salvation is secure. No amount of human effort or sin can cause a believer to lose his salvation because it finds its surety in Jesus, not in man.

Some people believe that Christians can lose their salvation. What could you say to counter this?

CONCLUSION: Without Jesus, we are enemies of God destined for punishment. But with Jesus, we have a permanent priest who offers complete salvation, continual grace, and eternal security.

APPLY: Try to be mindful this week that WITH JESUS, you have a High Priest permanently in God’s presence, interceding for you. Minute by minute, day by day, Jesus is praying for you, supplying you with the mercy, grace, and strength you need for every situation. As you go through each day this week, be aware that every blessing that comes your way – every happy moment, each ounce of strength you have, any love you offer to others or experience yourself – every good and perfect gift is from God, who hears Jesus’ prayers on your behalf. Thank Jesus for His constant and eternal intercession. Be specific in your gratitude. Name details from your day that you know came from His hand. And grow closer to God as you appreciate the High Priest that goes before Him on your behalf.

STUDY NOTES:

(These are for your personal study. This is NOT the lesson.)

Study Guide by David Guzik, 2001. Available online: www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david

Also there were many priests: The priesthood under the Law of Moses constantly changed, and so could be better or worse through the years. **But He ... has an unchangeable priesthood.** Jesus will never die, and has a *permanent* priesthood. We don't need to worry about a "bad priest" replacing Him!

Continues forever: This has the idea of "remaining as a servant." Jesus **continues forever**, and He **continues** as a servant, even after He ascended into heaven.

He is also able to save to the uttermost: The unchanging nature of Jesus' priesthood means that the salvation He gives is also unchanging, permanent, and secure. Most people read this verse as if it said Jesus is **able to save from the uttermost**. But it really says Jesus is **able to save to the uttermost**. Because He is our High Priest **forever**, He can save *forever*. The evangelist Billy Sunday had a great sermon, where he talked about how God saved him "from the gutter-most," because he was a gutter-drunk when God saved him. A great line, but not true to what the Bible says - we are saved not *from*, but *to* the uttermost! "The verb 'to save' is used absolutely, which means that Christ will save in the most comprehensive sense; he saves from all that humanity needs saving from." (Morris)

Those who come to God through Him: This tells us *who* Jesus is able to save. It means those who abide in the Son and have fellowship with the Father. Once saved always saved? Can a Christian lose his salvation? Abide in Jesus and you never need to worry about it.

He ever lives to make intercession for them: Certainly, this strengthens us - the knowledge that Jesus is praying for us, and that **He ever lives to pray** for us! How this would have encouraged these Jewish Christians who felt like giving up on the Christian life!

Romans 8:33-34 reflects how important Paul thought the intercessory work of Jesus was on our behalf. There, he pictures Jesus defending us against every charge or condemnation through His intercession for us. "Our blessed Lord is interceding for us, but He is in no sense appeasing God. All that God's holy Being and righteous government could demand was once for all, completely and forever, satisfied at the Cross." (Newell) Jesus' intercession on our behalf is not a matter of placating an angry Father who wants to destroy us. It is not a matter of continually chanting prayers on behalf of His people. It means He continually represents us before the Father, so that we can draw near through Him, and that He defends us against Satanic accusation and attack. Luke 22:31-32 gives an example of Jesus' intercession for His people: *Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.* Jesus prays to strengthen us in trial and attack, and against Satan's accusations.

For such a High Priest was fitting for us: The priests under the Law of Moses did not have the personal character of the Son of God. Jesus is **holy, harmless** (without guile or deception), **undefiled, separate from sinners** (in the sense of sharing in their sin). Jesus is far superior in His personal character than any earthly priest.

Has become higher than the heavens: The perfect character of Jesus is proven by two facts. First, by His exaltation in heaven. Second, by the fact that He did not need to **offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins** - which the other priests needed to do **daily!**

For the law appoints as high priests men who have weaknesses: Under the Law of Moses, the priests were always men with **weaknesses**. But Jesus a **Son who has been perfected forever**. Because He is a perfect High Priest, He was able to **offer up Himself** as a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Jesus is *perfectly* qualified to be our *perfect* High Priest - **perfected forever!**