

## A Final Benediction

Hebrews 13:20-21

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, August 20, 2023

Good morning, everyone. Today, we are looking at our last sermon in the book of Hebrews. It's number 59; I counted it up. We started this book in February of 2022. And in fact, I was driving to church today and I looked at all the smoke, and I remembered the times that we worshipped the Lord in the tent in the smoke, you guys remember that? There were some smoky days, hot days, cold days, just about everything, and it's a good reminder of that. But today, we're closing out this series that we started way back then. For some of you, this is the first book of the Bible that you have gone through with us here at Grace Fellowship Church, but we love to do this. We like to study the Bible verse by verse, chapter by chapter. If you're interested, you can go online, and we have gone through about seven or eight books in our time together. Everything from the Gospel of John to the book of Romans to Jonah, Ephesians, Titus, some of those types of books. You can study those with us online, but this is our final message in the book of Hebrews.

And as we're looking at it, I want to ask you this question to get started. But how many of you have climbed up Mount Cheam before? Anybody? Oh, a lot of you guys, okay. Wouldn't be a good thing to do today, I don't think. You know what it's like to get into that truck and go up the old logging road and climb. The last time I was on a logging road, I had a cup of coffee with me, don't do that. But you know how to go up that logging road, climb up and up and up until you feel like you're on top of the world, right? You feel like you're at the height of everything. Now, let me ask you another question. For those of you who have done that. What was it like when you got there? What was the reaction, I asked my neighbor that the other day because he climbed up Mount Cheam. And he said one word, "glorious." He said it was glorious because there was no rain. There were no clouds. There was nothing blocking his view. And he was so far up in the air that it felt like there was nothing around but him and God, and he just wanted to worship. I mentioned that because this morning, we are in the last section of this book of Hebrews. And this is what you find there. When you come to this chapter, as the author goes up and up and up into the letter, and he comes to the top where he feels like he's standing on top of the world. He pauses for a moment to look around at the landscape to go back over everything that we've studied, and he uses one word, "glory." He says this has been glorious. It's so wonderful that it makes me want to worship God.

If you would open your Bibles to the book of Hebrews, if you haven't done that already. And we're going to read from Chapter 13, starting in verse 20, together. Hebrews 13:20, it says this, it says,

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

Grace be with you all.

Now, as you read that, you can just tell that that's the end of the book because after verse 25, the author has nothing more to say. That's the final words here, and so he's doing what most people do at the end of a letter in the New Testament. And that is he turns to the audience, and he makes some personal remarks. He mentions in verse 23, that our brother Timothy has been released. Apparently, they had a relationship with Timothy, the one that the letters of Timothy were written to. So he gives them an update on him. And then in verse 24, he says, "Those from Italy greet you," because that's where he's writing the letter from; that's the location that he's giving it to them somewhere in Italy or probably Rome.

And as he does that, in the midst of this, he says something interesting that I want to look at with you this morning in verse 20. When he says, "now." That means now in light of all we've said before, now in light of what we've talked about, now that the letter is coming to a close and we've gone through 13 chapters of the book, what is your response supposed to be? And let me just summarize. He says, "Now the God of peace through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory." In other words, this is your response at the end of the book of Hebrews. And this should be your reaction as you look back over all this material and draw to a close. You need to give God glory. And not just glory but look in your Bibles glory forever. And not just glory forever, but glory forever and ever. I mean, one forever is enough, isn't it? But he gives two of them to highlight the fact that the glory should never stop. When you think of what Christ has done for you on the cross, and in His resurrection, the praise should go on and on and on and on, forever and ever, into the ages and the ages.

The word "glory" here is the word *doxa* in Greek, which comes from a Hebrew word that means heavy. It refers to the fact that God is the heaviest thing in the universe. If you were to put everything else on one side of the scale, and put God on the other, He would be biggest. He's always the biggest, always the tallest, always the strongest. In the 21st century, we like to talk of a personal God. And by that we mean a God who oftentimes is as timid and weak and mild as we are; the God of the Bible is not like that. The God of Scripture reigns over everything. He does what He wants when He wants with whomever He wants. Nothing can stop Him. And in fact, He's so great that the book of Hebrews spends the entire letter describing God, and how God has saved you.

Just to remind you a few things that we've talked about in chapter 2:9 of the book of Hebrews, it tells you that God became man. In other words, God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end came to the earth, took on flesh, made Himself a little lower than the angels to save sinners like you and me. Doesn't that make you want to

praise? Shouldn't we stop right now and have Greg come back up here and play a song for us? You sinned as a man; Jesus saved you as a man. You failed as a member of the human race; He went to the cross as a member of our race to purchase your redemption.

Then in chapter 4:14 it says that He became a great high priest for us as well and passed through the heavens. You couldn't pass through heaven yourself. There's no way you could get there on your own, and so this is what Jesus did. He made a way to heaven for you and threw the doors open wide. Chapter 6:19 says he became the anchor of the soul. Chapter 9:12 says Jesus entered the holy place once and for all. Chapter 10:12 says He became a perfect sacrifice. But the point is that all of this happened because of God. The Universe didn't do this for you. Fate or chance didn't do this for you. It didn't happen by accident; it was through the Lord.

And what the author of Hebrews is saying now is that the way to respond is to worship. You want to open up your heart and sing. Where I grew up, some of the churches would actually do this in the middle of the service. They would just break out into song. I don't know if you guys came from churches like this, but if the pastor said something that really moved the people, one of them would just start singing and the piano player would run up on stage, and they would just start bursting up into a chorus of "Amazing Grace." Now, I don't recommend that because it'll wear the piano player out going back and forth like this during the whole service, and it's pretty distracting. But it does highlight the fact that this is how worship works: it works by having the gospel go in and then out of you. And it happens when the word of God and then the message of Christ penetrates your ears, goes into your hearts, and comes out of your mouth in song. The Puritans used to say your theology leads to doxology. There's a reciprocal effect here. One thing leads to the other, which is hard to do at times. There are seasons of life when worship is difficult because we're feeling low or we're going through a valley and that type of thing. But this passage reminds us that in seasons like that we worship God because He's God. We praise Him because of what He has done for us in every season.

The story is told of the time George Whitfield was asked why he was so passionate in his worship. And he said that "If you saw Jesus hanging on the cross the way I did, you would be passionate too." Friends, one glimpse of Jesus, and it just changes the way you look at everything.

And that's what we're going to talk about this morning, as we're taught wrapping up Hebrews, we're gonna look at two ways to glorify God at the end of this book. We're getting these from the text; we always want to do that, but this is our outline. In this final message in Hebrews 13:20-21, we're going to look at two ways to glorify God here in our worship.

And the first one is to praise Him. This is what the author does. The first way to glorify God, at the end of the letter is he praises him, which means that after all that he has talked about in the letter, he lifts up his hands in worship.

Before we get into this, it might help to explain what's going on when you look at verse 20. This is what's known as a benediction. It's a Latin word that means to bless something, which is what the early Christians would do at the end of a church service. After they had prayed their prayers and sang their songs, the pastor would come up here on the stage, and he would do this. And he would lift his hands and he would bless the people by reading something like this. He would read "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus, our Lord equip you." That's the sense that the passage is set in. He would do that, and then he would dismiss everybody. That tradition didn't start with a church, it actually goes back to the Jews. The Book of Numbers tells us that the high priest was told to give a benediction at the end of the morning and evening sacrifice because after the Jews had brought their offerings to the Lord and presented their animals for a sacrifice, and prayed their prayers, so that the priests would do this and bless the congregation. They did that in the days of the tabernacle, they did in the days of the temple, they did in the days of the synagogue after the temple was torn down, and then it made its way into the church. And this is what you're reading here.

In fact, this benediction is one of the longest ones in the Bible. It contains 60 words in English because in the mind of the author, this is how to close the letter. He wants to praise God. And He does it by praising Him for three things here. So the first thing he praises Him for is His peace. If you look in verse 20, it says, "Now, the God of peace." And why does he say that? Of all the things to praise God for at the end of the book, why does he mention peace? Well, he mentions it because it highlights what Jesus came to do, and that is to bring peace between God and man. I think we all understand that we need to understand that. Before Jesus came into the world, you did not have peace with God, did you? And before He entered your heart, the two of you were not on good terms. On the contrary, you were at war. There was nothing but hostility between you and God because God was over here, you were over here, and there was a great wall in between you. But when He showed up, Jesus stopped it. He tore the wall of hostility down because He took on human flesh. Jesus did not take on animal flesh because the animals we're not at war with God like you were. He didn't take on the nature of a cat because He didn't need to save cats; He saved men. In His death, Christ allowed the Father to take our sins and put them on Him. He allowed the Lord God to take His righteousness and put it on us. And it stopped the war. Our sin started the war; His death stopped it. Our sin created the conflict with God; His cross ended it. The cross is the centerpiece of the Bible. It's where all the purposes of God meet in time and eternity. At the cross, your sin was paid for, and your guilt was pardoned, and the wrath of God was satisfied. At the cross, God's victory was revealed, Satan was defeated, and the power of Hell was vanquished. At the cross, God's love was displayed, His mercy was presented, His grace was set forth and given to you full and free. And it happened in this verse, so you can have peace.

And the question the author of Hebrews is asking here is this. If you can't worship God when that's being presented, when can you do it? You have to praise Him. Now listen, friends, think about this. You have peace with God. You. I'm going to step on your toes. You rotten, stinking sinner. You former murderer, adulterer, blasphemer. You former liar, cheat, swindler. You former legalist, hypocrite,

Pharisee. Coveter, idolater, gossip. Drunken person, angry person, jealous person no matter what it is. You can be justified, sanctified, redeemed, and made holy all through the blood of Christ. Can we say Amen this morning? That's how peace was established. You don't do it through works; you do it through Him. It doesn't happen by your efforts; it happens by the gospel, which should cause you to become overwhelmed with gratitude. Alleluia! Thank You, Jesus. This is where the praise comes from.

Let me give you a second thing to praise God for in this passage. The first one is the peace. Here's another one: the resurrection. We praise Him for His peace. We praise Him for the resurrection. If you look in verse 20, the benediction continues this way when it says, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep." When you read this, what it's saying is that after Christ went to the cross, this is what He did. God raised Him. And He brought Him back to life in order to show you His power.

Thousands of people died on crosses in the first century. I don't if you ever thought about this, but the Romans, some historians have found some numbers that the Romans kept that said, as many as maybe 40,000 crucifixions happened during the Roman Empire, probably more. What made Christ's cross so special? He was raised. What made His death so different was the fact that after He died, He came back to life again. The resurrection was like a finger pointing from heaven to the earth, saying, "This is the Messiah, this is the Son of God, you need to wake up and pay attention to it."

In order to explain this, the author calls Jesus in this verse, "the Great Shepherd of the sheep" to show you that what He was like was a shepherd. And not just any Shepherd, but in some translations, this says, "that great Shepherd," a specific one. In order to say that Jesus was the shepherd God promised Israel in the Old Covenant. In passages like Ezekiel 34:23, where it says, "Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant, David." Or Isaiah 40:10, which says, "Behold, the Lord God will come with might, and like a shepherd, He will tend His flock." The author is saying Jesus is the One who fulfilled those types of things because not only was He resurrected, but He did it as Israel's Messiah, the One who was prophesied long ago.

It's been said that if the resurrection proves anything, it is that you cannot stop Jesus. The devil can't stop Him, and the demons can't stop Him. The government can't stop Him, and neither can crooked politicians like Pontius Pilate. The grave can't stop Him; death can't stop Him. All the powers of hell can't stop Him, which means you can ask Him for anything, and He can do it. If you need to overcome sin, He overcame sin. If you need to overcome death, He overcame death at the resurrection. If you need hope to overcome despair, I can't think of anything more despairing than what happened to Him at the cross. He overcame it. You can too. The reason the author makes a big deal of this is because in a moment, if you look back in your Bibles, he's going to say in verse 21, "Now may the God of peace equip you." In other words, he's going to pray for the Lord to equip you and prepare you to do something because the writer is not just asking God to save you, but he wants you to be equipped for ministry. But before he does that, he puts all this stuff in the middle to show you why God can equip

you. And that is because he raised Jesus from the dead. God can enable you to do anything because you don't have a weak Savior this morning. You have one who can defeat death itself.

That brings you to one more thing to praise God for in this passage, and that is His covenant. So we praise Him for His peace. We praise Him for the resurrection. And the author also praises Him for His covenant, which is what you see as you read on in verse 20. Because it says, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord."

That phrase "eternal covenant" is what I want you to focus on because the term covenant comes from a word that means to bind something. That's what a covenant did. It bound or tied your name to someone else's. God knew that you could not come to Him on your own. You're way too sinful for that, so the idea is that the Lord in His mercy bound himself to you. You couldn't get to heaven; heaven came to you and made a covenant. This term is so important that in some of the old translations of the Bible, it doesn't call the two divisions of Scripture, the Old and New Testament, it calls them the Old and New Covenant. That's kind of what they were about. They're two different ways that God brought sinners to Himself, one through Israel, another one through the church. But there's other covenants in the Bible as well. There's the covenant God made with Noah, remember that? There's a covenant God made with Abraham. There's a covenant God made with David. But this one is special in its own way, because it's called an eternal covenant. Not a temporary one, but an eternal one. Not a short one, but an everlasting one that never ends. Because unlike the covenant God made with Israel, there will never be a time when this covenant will stop. The old covenant had its time, but now it's over. It had its day, but now it's finished. Which is why you don't come to church and bring an animal with you for sacrifice. You understand that way of life is done with now, but this covenant is special, because it is an everlasting one.

It's called eternal here because it gives you eternal things. The reason the author uses this word is to describe the fact that it provides you with eternal salvation, eternal rewards and eternal forgiveness. It's also called eternal because this covenant gives you an eternal sacrifice that never has to be repeated again. Jesus died one time for our sins and that was it because it took care of everything needed to save us.

And again, the point the author's making here is that the thought of this should lead you to worship. And as you reflect on these benefits that God has given you, everything from the peace, to the resurrection, to the eternal covenant, it should lift up your hearts in praise.

The subject of worship is confusing for some. So I want to pause for a moment and say a few words about it. But when most people think about worship today, they kind of have a wrong idea about it. They think about the music, right? So they say, "If I like the music, I can worship. And if I don't like the music, because my heart's not in it, then I can't worship. It hinders me from praising." But that's not true.

It's not the focus of this passage. If you look back in these words, where do you see the word music here? It's just not in there. And where does it say anything about songs? Now songs are very important. I'm not minimizing them. What I'm pointing out here is that true worship is primarily focused on the cross. And so if you have that, you can worship. And if the glory of the gospel is being presented, you can praise Him. This passage, it's going to talk about the glory of God in a moment before it gets there though it says, "Through Jesus, I have peace with God. And through Him, I have a resurrection. And through Him I have an eternal covenant, irregardless of anything else, of what the music's like. So as long as I have that the worship can just pour out of me."

One commentator said, "Wherever Christ is preached, that place becomes a house of worship." And if Christ is preached in a barn, it becomes a house of worship. It wasn't too long ago, we were worshiping God in a barn, weren't we? Right next to one. If He's preached in a field, that becomes a place of praise. If He's preached in a prison, it's the same way. You can turn the prison into a sanctuary for Him.

If you look back up in verse 15, this is why the author says these words to you because he describes the kind of worship God requires when he says in verse 15, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise. That is the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." A key word there is that word "continual" because it means in light of the cross and everything we've learned in this book, you should praise God continually because He deserves it. One time is not enough. Two times of praise is not sufficient. The hours between 9:30 and 11:30 on a Sunday morning doesn't cut it. You want to praise God 24 hours a day, seven days a week, morning, noon and night, He's worthy of nothing less. So the praise doesn't end when you leave this place, it kind of just ramps up. Our goal as a church is is not to ignite a dead battery. What we're trying to do when you come in here is take a living thing, living for God and pour gasoline on the fire, so you blow up. So that as you get up on Monday morning, you praise Him. And as you get up on Tuesday morning, you praise Him. And when you get up on Wednesday, your first thought is not about the text messages on your phone or the things you got to do at work or the laundry or that stuff with the kids. Your first thought is on Christ because you just can't get enough of Him. The reason you think this way towards God is because no matter how much you worship, that always leaves you wanting more. More of God, more of Christ, more of the cross. Many of you do this so well. I know you think of the cross continually you're continually praising God. I know for others, it's harder. It's difficult. You're in a slump right now. You feel like things aren't going well spiritually, that happens in life. If you read Pilgrims Progress, it talks about the Slough of Despond. But the answer is not to give up hope. The author wants you to keep going back to the reminder of what Christ has done for you.

I can say this with a story, but the story is told at the time Isaac Watts was going to church. And he was struggling with this because a lot of the churches in his in his time, let's just face it, they were boring. I don't know if you guys know this, but Isaac Watts wrote those hymns to try to help the worship services in his time to get better. They were very ceremonial and dry. They were a lot of mindless repetition of kneeling, standing, sitting that kind of drove him crazy. So he's trying to find a way to snap out of the

liturgy when he sat down and wrote these words, you've heard them before. "When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life my all." And what he was saying there, what Isaac Watts was telling us is that when you think of Jesus, it doesn't matter how boring the worship service is, you can worship. And when you survey the cross, it doesn't matter how ceremonial things are. That's how they were in his day anyway. You can praise God because this kind of love is so amazing, that it transcends transcends everything. It deserves my soul, my life, and my all.

Which brings us to another way to glorify God at the end of Hebrews. Just to review the first one here, the first one is to praise Him. And there's three things the author praises God for. He praises Him for His peace, His resurrection and His covenant. Those are themes that you've seen in the book of Hebrews. In fact, one commentator said this benediction is kind of like the book of Hebrews in miniature form. He's reminding you of the great subjects we've talked about. But the author of Hebrews is saying at the cross, Jesus gave you all of this, and our response is to give Him glory for it. Which brings you to another way to glorify God here, and that is to bring your request to Him or petition Him.

You praise Him but as you praise Him, a second way to glorify God, is to petition Him, or ask him for the things that you need. Both of those things are present in prayer. It's very appropriate in your prayer to lift up the name of God, worship Him, but it's also appropriate to go to Him with the things that you're wanting. And if you look in verse 20, this is what he does. He says, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus, our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will."

The phrase "equip you" is our focus, because this is where the author is transitioning from talking about the praise of God to the request. And the request is to equip. And that's the Greek word *katartizō*, which doesn't just mean to equip something, it means to fully equip it. The author is not praying for God to help you a little bit. He's praying for God to help you a lot. So you have all you need at the end of the day, and you're not lacking anything. That's the idea of the word. It's a term that was often used to describe a ship that was about to go on a journey because before the ship was set out to sail, the sailors would *katartizō* it. They would equip it for the voyage by putting everything on deck that the sailors would need for the journey. They would plan it out, they would write right down how long they would be gone, and they would put all the food tackle and supplies on it, or all the goods and merchandise they were going to sell. And what the author of Hebrews is doing in using this word is to ask the Lord to give the same thing to you. So that your ship will have all the supplies it needs, as you go through life. All the joy, peace, and hope you need; all the strength and power and grace you need; all the goodness and love and mercy.

If you notice, the verse says he's asking for God to do this in every good thing. How many good things? Every good thing. How many blessings does he want him to give you? Every one of them, right? Whatever it is, he wants to equip you to do it for the Lord Whatever task, whether it be leading in



worship, sharing the gospel, serving the nursery, preaching a sermon, helping your neighbor, passing out bulletins, working as an usher, reading in the lobby, giving people a ride, stacking chairs, sweeping the floors, cleaning the gym, taking out the trash, visiting someone who's sick. The author is asking God to prepare you for all of it because he knows you need help in all of it. You can't do this on your own. Can anybody do all that on their own? Can anybody serve the Lord on your own strength? You can't. He's asking Him to help you with that.

This word equip. It's also in the continual tense, which means he's not just praying for God to do this once but every day over and over and over again, because you need it over and over and over again. Remember, I told you earlier that in verse 20, the author is talking about the power of God and the resurrection. Now he's tying it into verse 21 to show you, this is why he's praying for this because the same God who raises Jesus from the dead can bless your life this way.

And if you notice, he doesn't stop there in the prayer because he goes on to pray that the Lord would work in us that which is pleasing in His sight, which is another broad term here that's not really defined. Because it makes you wonder, well, okay, well, what is pleasing in God's sight? And the answer is found in the previous expression when it refers to His will. This is what pleases God. This is what he's praying for, for God to work out His will in you. In other words, he's praying for you to be pleasing to God. That means he's not praying for God to make you rich. And he's not praying for God to make you successful at work, necessarily. And he's not praying for God to give you a perfect home with perfect kids and a perfect family and 2.3 cars in the garage. He's praying for you to be holy. And he's praying for you to be righteous in the eyes of God. He's praying for you to live a God-honouring life. In a sense, what he's really praying for is for the Lord not to leave you alone, that He would stay close to you as you sail on the journeys of life.

If you want to write some of these verses down, this is really helpful. But John 1:16 says, "For out of His fullness we have received and grace upon grace." Now where do we get the grace upon grace from? You get it from His fullness? Where do you get the power to live a God honoring life? Out of His endless supply, so there's never any fear of running out of it. As soon as one grace leaves you another grace takes its place. That's what he's praying for here.

If you want to write down another verse, Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." And that means how many blessings has God given you? Every blessing. How much favor Do you have? It's an infinite amount. Listen, if you had a thousand lives to live for the Lord, He would bless all of them. And if you had a million things to do for Him, He would give you the strength to do every single one of them. Because the idea in this verse is that God is not blessing you with an eyedropper that gives you a little bit here, and a little bit there. Instead, the picture that He's praying for is for an ocean to be poured into a bucket, so that you can't even contain it all. We've all had the experience of going to the beach, and seeing our kids walk up to the ocean with a bucket. It's pretty funny. And what are you going to do

with a bucket and all that water, it's just going to drench the whole thing. That's what he's praying for here. He wants your life to be drenched in blessing. Overflowing with goodness from God because that's where worship begins. That's how you praise Him.

Worship begins when you take your tiny life that has been saturated with grace, and you go to Him on a Sunday, and you say, "Here, Lord." And you hand it back to Him. It begins when you're just overflowing with His kindness, and you just sing because you can't help it. The music just comes out of you. I don't know what you guys were like, I remember when when we first brought our children home because I couldn't stop singing. I never sang that much in my life. I was just driving around just singing whatever's on the radio, singing the song I heard 20 years ago, because I was so overwhelmed with it. That's this prayer. Worship doesn't work when you come to God and say, "This is such a drag." And it doesn't start when you say, "This is so boring, let's get it over with." It happens when you say, "Thank you, Lord, you've given so much to me, I just have to give something back." I think so many times we forget this because we tell ourselves that in order to worship God, I gotta try harder. And in order to praise Him, I've got to dig down deep and pull myself up by my bootstraps. That's not what this is about. This is about letting God fill up your ship.

In one of the preaching magazines that I read, I came across a story a long time ago, of a little boy who was found on the streets of Chicago starving. He's about to die, and so some workers found him and they took him to the hospital where the nurses bathed him and dressed him and treated his wounds. And then they fed him. And when they fed him, the first thing that caught his attention was a big glass of milk on a tray. And what he said broke their hearts when he saw the milk because he said, "Can I have all of it?" He never had a glass of milk before. And so he's asking them, "Can I enjoy the whole thing?" And I mention that because I think a lot of Christians do that right now with their salvation. They look at all God has done for them in Christ, and they say, "Can I have all of it? Is this all for me?"

And what I mean is they go back through a book like Hebrews, and they look at a passage like Hebrews 4:14, where it says Jesus is a great high priest, and they say is that for me? Is that high priest mine, the one who passed through the heavens, the one who has a throne of grace, the one who gives mercy to help in time of need, can I make that promise my own? Friends, the answer is yes. The answer is yes, yes, yes, a thousand times yes. A million times yes. All of this is for you. If you're a child of God, the anchor of the soul is for you in Hebrews six.

Does anybody need an anchor today? Does your life feel like it's just going crazy in the storms of life? going this way and that way, turn on the news, you're up and down. He can be your anchor. So that all the turmoil inside you can stop. He can be a new and living way for you in Hebrews 10 Some of you have tried away to God it doesn't work. You've tried works. You've tried the law. You've tried commandments, none of it's helped you. He can be your way to God. In this passage in Hebrews 13, He can be your God of peace. You need peace? He can give you that as well, but the point is, God is not

holding any of this back. He is equipping you with all of it, and so what you do now is you bring Him worship.

And this is how the passage ends. If you look back in verse 21, remember, it starts with talking about the God of peace, so you can praise God, but he goes on to end on this note of worship, when it says, “Now may the God of peace, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory,” and not just the glory, but the glory “forever.” And not just the glory forever, but the glory “forever and ever.” That could be translated into the ages and ages. Which is a redundant thing to say because you know, “one ages” gets the point across, but he's saying this to demonstrate how great Christ is, and how much glory He deserves. He deserves so much glory that you should give it to Him into the ages and the ages. The glory should never stop. Listen, friends, you can worship Jesus Christ from now until eternity, I promise you, there will always be something else to worship Him for. And you can praise Him from now until forever, and the praise will never be finished. There will always be something more.

In fact, when you look at the book of Revelation, if you ever wonder what we're going to be doing when we come to Heaven, Revelation 5 says you're going to be worshipping Christ. Let me read this to you. But it says,

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,  
“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

What are you going to be doing in heaven? You're going to be giving glory to Jesus Christ. It goes on to tell you why because previously it says, “For He purchased for God with His blood, men from every tribe, tongue and people and nation.” You're going to worship Him because there's only one reason that anybody's in heaven, and it's because of Him. He deserves all the glory.

This morning, as you hear that, I'm guessing some of you may have a hard time relating to this today because you find it difficult to talk about the glory of God. Maybe because you don't know God. You have never put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is why your soul is so empty. That's why when your ship sets out to sail, there's nothing on the deck. It feels very hollow. Do you know what you need to do? You need to come to Christ. Remember these words Jesus said in John 7. He said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink, and out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.” That means if you're thirsty, not only will Jesus give you water, but He will give you rivers of water, more than you could ever need to drink. But the issue is that you have to come to Him. The question is not will Jesus receive you as a lost and dying sinner? The question is, “Will you believe?” He will receive; He said that in the Bible.

The Bible says He is the Son of God, one with the Father, the second member of the Trinity. He came into this world and took on human flesh to be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, and die on the cross so your sins could die on Him there. And you could be pardoned and forgiven if you give your life over to Him. Will you do that this morning, if you never have?

Next week, since we're done with a series on Hebrews, we're going to start a new series on the government called "The Christian and Civil Disobedience." It's actually designed to answer the question, is there a time to disobey the government? Because the answer is that there is. We obey God rather than man. And we've heard the expression "Christ is Lord and not Caesar," which is true. But as you know, it's not that simple. There are questions that come about in this discussion, like what does the disobedience look like? When do you do it? When do you not? And how far does it go? If you disobey the government, does it mean you stop paying taxes? And if you do that, does it mean you don't keep any government rules? I mean, are we only supposed to acknowledge Christian leaders and nobody else and this type of thing and that's what we're going to talk about in this series. It's going to take a few weeks to get through that. I appreciate you coming and being a part of that. Please be in prayer for that.

But for this week, let's close in a word of prayer and ask the Lord that He would help us to grow in our worship of Him as a result of what we have studied in this book.

Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank You for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ and for what He has done for us. We have studied this backwards and forwards, this way and that in this wonderful letter to the Hebrews. But Father, we don't want to have the word of God come into our hearts and do nothing. We want to praise You for it. We want to rejoice in what Christ has done.

Father, thank You for being a God that gives us an infinite amount of blessings. Lord, we often forget this because we live like we're not a blessed people. And we often act like that we have nothing to be grateful for. And yet we have so much to be grateful for in Christ. Thank You for the reminder of that, Lord. I do pray for our lives, that they would reflect this, in the good times and bad. I know that we do have our seasons of struggle, we have our seasons of joy as well as life gives us both. And Lord, help us to worship You in both, that Christ would be exalted.

Lord, and as we do come to the series on the government, we pray for wisdom in these things. Most churches have had to wrestle with this; we have already wrestled with it some, but it's important to do it again, to think through this issue as much as we can from every angle. And we pray that Christ would be glorified as we do that. It's our prayer in all things as a church. We want Him to be exalted, Him to be glorified, Him to be lifted up on the throne. May He receive glory in all the things we've said and talked about today. We pray this in Jesus' name and in no other name, amen.