

# Keep Moving Forward Series

## Move Forward Toward Jesus (Hebrews 10:14-17)

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By  
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### At A Glance:

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus the High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18, 5:7-10)
- III. Jesus Provides the Best Approach to God (Heb. 10:14-17)
- IV. The Desired Response (Heb. 10:19-25)
- V. Conclusion

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*These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.*

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# Move Forward Toward Jesus

## I. Introduction

### A. Illustration: Visiting Memorial Stadium University of Nebraska

1. As many of you know, I love football. I enjoyed playing it while I was able to. I enjoy learning about it. When I graduated from college, I was hoping to find a job close enough to the college I played at so that I could move right into coaching football as I worked in the church.
2. While in college I got to visit several different major college football stadiums, which was also fun. On one trip, I got a free all-access pass to Nebraska football. I was standing up at my friend's wedding and his soon to be father-in-law worked at the University of Nebraska. His ID card got us into any building we wanted and any area of any building. We were able to walk right into the football stadium and look at the weight room. He took us to see the five National Championship trophies. We got to go into the luxury VIP suites. Unfortunately, the field was under construction and was only dirt and large equipment at the time, so we didn't get to go out onto the field, however we did walk around the stands for a while.
3. Nothing was off limits, and we were free to go anywhere we wanted because we weren't limited to a tour. We had all-access. If our group of groomsmen had tried to do that on our own, we would have been kicked out. In fact, that happened when I was with another group at the Air Force Academy stadium in Colorado Springs as we played a little football on their field. The security guard kicked us out when he found us. Why? Because we didn't know anyone that gave us the authority to be there. But in Nebraska, we had the authority through my friend's father-in-law.

B. The author of Hebrews is going to explain the authority and access given to disciples because of their association with Jesus. Jesus has the ID card that gets us into many different buildings of the university of the kingdom of God. Through Jesus' authority and leadership, disciples receive many blessings from God. We even gain access to the most off-limits part of heaven—the very throne room of God in the most holy place (Heb. 6:19). As disciples, we can go where only the high priest could go and only once a year. It is a place that we can enter with confidence because of Jesus.

C. One of the reasons people should value and continue to pursue Christianity is because of the all-access pass Jesus provides to those who belong to Him. There are many tremendous benefits that are given by Jesus to those who belong to Him including full access to God the Father. We have confidence to enter the presence of God whenever we desire so that we can find the help we need (Heb. 4:16). We can learn about the important role Jesus plays in the spiritual benefits we enjoy through the main section of the book of Hebrews.

## II. Jesus the High Priest (Heb. 3:7-11)

A. Hebrews can be a challenging book for those who aren't familiar with the historical events communicated in the Old Testament. Since Hebrews draws heavily on the ideas and images of the Old Testament, those who are unfamiliar with the Old Testament will have a difficult time

following the structure and progression of ideas throughout Hebrews. The author of Hebrews assumes familiarity with all the different Old Testament concepts he uses to teach the spiritual lessons that are needed for spiritual growth and health.

- B. The next major theme taken from the Old Testament is the role and function of the high priest which is discussed extensively in Hebrews 4:14-10:26. Without a background knowledge of what a high priest is, what they do, and why they're important, this largest section of the book of Hebrews is going to be misunderstood. The main idea of Hebrews is the fact that Jesus is better than any other religious alternative including Judaism. The theme of Jesus being our high priest was introduced in an earlier section of the book (Heb. 2:17-18). He previews this idea again in Hebrews 3:1 to prepare us for the main (and longest) section of this letter. Now, in chapters four through ten, the author of Hebrews more fully explains the importance of Jesus as our great high priest.
- C. As usual, the author of Hebrews begins by grounding his main points in the Scriptures of the Old Testament (Heb. 5:5-6) but then moves on to explaining the main elements of Jesus being our high priest,
  - <sup>17</sup> Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brothers so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Heb. 2:17-18)
- D. The idea of needing a priest is a foreign and unfamiliar concept to many today unless they have a background in specific religious systems such as Catholicism. The most common way to approach spiritual matters in our modern way of thinking is to assume each individual person is on their own unique journey and this journey is between them and God. Others don't have any right to get involved in another person's spiritual journey. However, if we were to approach God on the moral merits of our own life, the outcome would not be a positive one.
- E. The Biblical view of the way people should approach God is very different. Individuals do not go directly to God without the help of a spiritual leader. The spiritual journey is communal, and it requires the assistance of other spiritual leaders who intercede for individuals by standing between the individual and God. That is what a priest does, these spiritual leaders go between God and the worshipper and assist the individual in approaching God on God's terms. Priests are familiar with God's word and requirements and help the people worship God in an approved manner. They make sure individual worshipers deal with their own moral failures—called sin—the way God requires. In Judaism, this meant making the proper sacrifices in the right way. At the highest level of spiritual leadership was one man who was called the high priest who had unique and sole responsibilities before God to intercede for the people of God. Our attention is being drawn to the highest level of spiritual leadership in God's economy.
- F. The confusing part in all this for us today is that the Bible teaches disciples do have direct access to God and a person's pursuit of God is an individual matter in some ways—we are all personally responsible for ourselves before God. However, this individual pursuit of God is still intended to be communal, and it still requires someone to be between us and God as priest and

spiritual leader. That person is Jesus (Heb. 9:24). Even in the New Testament, we haven't outgrown our spiritual need for someone more spiritually qualified to represent us before God. The author of Hebrews spends multiple chapters explaining why Jesus is the best High Priest and the best means of relating to and worshipping God than any other system—especially Judaism. Of all the ways of approaching God that exist, doing it through Jesus is the best possible avenue.

- G. Essentially, Jesus as the perfect High Priest, is the expert and specialist on God that is here to help everyone approach God the way God requires. Jesus is far superior to Moses (Heb. 3:3). Moses had his personal weaknesses, limitations, moral failures, and mistakes. Jesus, while being just like us in all the essential and necessary ways—being fully human—is perfect and without fault or mistake. Because Jesus is who He is, God the Father responds differently, and more positively, to Jesus on our behalf. Disciples, through their connection and association with Jesus, gain access to the resources and favor of God that they could not get access to on their own.
- H. The spiritual leadership of Jesus primarily relates to matters related to God—that which God is concerned about (“so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God”, v. 17). People go to doctors because they recognize their own limitations when it comes to physical health. People go to dentists to compensate for their lack of knowledge regarding oral health. People go to chiropractors to gain access to skills they don't have for their spine. In the same way, people should go to Jesus for the health of their soul and their relationship to God.
- I. Jesus fully understands what it is like to live as one of us—a human being in a broken world (“in all things He had to be made like His brothers”, v. 17). The result of Jesus gaining experiential knowledge of being one of us is that Jesus became perfectly qualified as a high priest (“For since He Himself was tempted in that which He suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted”, v. 18).<sup>1</sup> Jesus can help people spiritually because of His experience of life as one of us. Jesus can fully identify with our needs and problems.<sup>2</sup> Through His experience Jesus became the perfect spiritual leader for humanity being compassionate, lenient, and ready to forgive while also being responsible and trustworthy toward God the Father.<sup>3</sup> Jesus is fully qualified to help people spiritually as the physician of their soul who deals with spiritual sickness (Heb. 7:26, Mt. 9:12).
- J. Here is how the quality of Jesus' spiritual leadership and intercession is described,
  - <sup>7</sup> In the days of His humanity, He offered up both prayers and pleas with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His devout behavior. <sup>8</sup> Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the source of eternal

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 4:15, 5:2

<sup>2</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [Hebrews](#), ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 150.

<sup>3</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 2:17 “a merciful” and “faithful”

salvation for all those who obey Him, <sup>10</sup> being designated by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 5:7-10)

- K. Jesus has influence and pull with God the Father that no other person has because no one has lived a life as pleasing to God as Jesus did (“He was heard because of His devout behavior”, v. 7). This led to the effectiveness of His prayers and spiritual leadership on behalf of His disciples (“He offered up both prayers and pleas with loud crying and tears to the One”, v. 7).<sup>4</sup> Jesus passionately cared for the spiritual well-being of others and interceded for them as humanity’s high priest. Even after Jesus left earth and returned to heaven, at the Father’s right hand, He still intercedes for those who belong to Him (Heb. 7:25, Rm. 8:34). Jesus is actively promoting and working toward the spiritual interest of every person who trusts and loves Him.
- L. A major question arises from this passage, what does it mean for Jesus to have been perfected (“And having been perfected”, v. 9)? Doesn’t the Bible also teach that Jesus has always been morally perfect? How can a perfect being become more perfect? The question, and all the difficulties that come with it are the result of equivocation. The term and idea of perfection can refer to more than one quality. There isn’t just one form of perfection. Most people probably think perfection is referring to moral perfection. Jesus, as a morally perfect being, can’t become more morally perfect. The perfection being discussed here is one of qualification and credentialing. Jesus, became perfectly qualified to be humanity’s high priest based on His actions as a human being. His spiritual qualification for being our high priest comes because of His divine nature and His moral perfection. Jesus always acted by doing the right thing even in difficult situations while suffering. He spiritually cared for humanity by providing salvation in His willingness and obedience to death. The author of Hebrews is saying that Jesus became the most perfectly skilled, experienced, and qualified high priest because of the life He lived before God the Father as a human being.
- M. The result of learning obedience and the depth of faithfulness Jesus offered to the Father led to and resulted in Jesus being assigned the responsibility and role of being humanity’s eternal high priest (“being designated by God as High Priest”, v. 10). Jesus is the highest and ultimate spiritual leader of everyone who approaches and interacts with God the right way. Spiritual leadership and position, even for Jesus, is always earned. Credibility from God is given to those who qualify. While we don’t always get this right as limited human beings, God does. God never gives spiritual authority to those who are unqualified. Any position or role delegated by God is given to those who are worthy of it. In eternity, when Jesus’ rule is fully established on earth, every leader will be a good leader that is fully qualified for the role given to them by God.
- N. Look at the spiritual qualifications and credibility of Jesus! We respond to Jesus as our spiritual leader by holding firmly to our convictions about Jesus (Heb. 4:14). This whole section on Jesus as our high priest starts with this application. A confession is the verbal expression of some belief or opinion.<sup>5</sup> This confession is understood as the true message of God communicated by Jesus Himself, passed on by the apostles who were personally trained by Jesus, and accepted by

<sup>4</sup> The disciples of Jesus recognized His unique relationship with the Father and how the Father responded to the prayers of Jesus (Jn. 11:22). Jesus encouraged disciples to have the same confidence in their prayers to Him (Jn. 14:13, 15:16).

<sup>5</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 4:14 “our confession”

the people of God as a group (Heb. 1:1-3, 3:1, Heb. 10:23).<sup>6</sup> We regularly heard this challenge and encouragement throughout the book of Hebrews. Essentially, we are told repeatedly, be faithful and keep moving forward.

### III. Jesus Provides the Best Approach to God (Heb. 10:14-17)

- A. Once Jesus is confirmed as our high priest through Scripture, the author of Hebrews moves on to explain why Jesus is the best option available when it comes to approaching God. Jesus is the best way to relate to God compared to any other religious or spiritual system. Jesus is better than Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, the New Age, Mormonism, the Watchtower Organization (Jehovah's Witnesses), Freemasonry, or any other pathway. Jesus is better and more effective than any other alternative.
- B. At the heart of this claim is the superiority of the work Jesus accomplishes in the life of those who have a firm commitment to Him,
 

<sup>14</sup> For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. <sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, <sup>16</sup> "This is the covenant which I will make with them After those days, declares the Lord: I will put My laws upon their hearts, And write them on their mind," *He then says*, <sup>17</sup> "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will no longer remember." (Heb. 10:14-17)
- C. The way Jesus works in a person's life is superior to any other religious or spiritual option. No one can do better than Jesus in connecting humanity to the divine. The spiritual advantages Jesus made available to humanity through what He accomplished on the cross by His death and resurrection cannot be outdone by anyone else ("For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified", v. 14). Everything needed to change people from being self-centered and rebellious toward God to a person who loves God and is caring toward others is provided through Jesus' death and resurrection. While the process of being transformed into the person Jesus shapes us into is a lifelong process, the events that provide the spiritual resources we need to make that transformation happen were accomplished through specific events in the life of Jesus. Jesus only had to do what He did once because His actions were effective in securing what humanity needed.
- D. Again, we see the author of Hebrews emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God in communicating God's message to us ("the Holy Spirit also testifies to us", v. 15). How was the Holy Spirit speaking? The Holy Spirit is speaking to New Testament disciples through the Old Testament writings. This time the Old Testament book of Jeremiah is being quoted, two different verses from chapter thirty-one.
- E. The importance of the work Jesus does in people's lives is explained by quoting from Jeremiah 31:33 and 31:34. Jesus, as our high priest, accomplishes two primary works in every person's life who is properly connected to Him: 1) forgiveness of sin through salvation and 2) growth in godly character through sanctification. The spiritual work accomplished by Jesus as our high priest is better than any other previous high priest and the work they accomplished in the tabernacle or the temple. Jesus' personal offering of Himself for atonement is far better than

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<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:13, 1 Timothy 6:12-13

the annual cleansing of the most holy place (also called holy of holies) on the Day of Atonement. The work accomplished by other high priests had to be repeated every year because their sacrifice didn't completely spiritually cleanse the people of God (Heb. 9:7, Ex. 30:10, Lev. 16:1-34, 23:26-32). Jesus' sacrifice only had to be offered once because it was so effective—it never had to be repeated. Jesus' work as high priest is far superior to any other high priest. Through Jesus a new, and better, system of interacting with God was created.

- F. Jesus, as our high priest, offers a new and better way of relating to God ("This is the covenant which I will make with them After those days, declares the Lord: I will put My laws upon their hearts, And write them on their mind" (v. 16). In short, the word of God will be put inside people through Jesus as the high priest. This is much better than the old covenant which only exposed people to the word of God from the outside. In the Old Testament covenant of Law, the people had the requirements and regulations of God but they were on their own in trying to live by it. They had to rely on their own power which led to failure.
- G. In the New Testament covenant, God provides His divine power and assistance to help disciples change on the inside so they can be enabled to live according to God's moral standards. He gives them His Spirit to help them become the kind of person on the inside who delights to obey God and live the way He desires (Eph. 3:14-19). This work of Jesus in us is the essential core of the new covenant established by Jesus. Disciples can relate to God in a much healthier and more productive way through Jesus. Yes, they are forgiven, but more than that, they have the capability of becoming the type of person that pleases God as Jesus internalizes the word of God into them (Heb. 8:10).

#### IV. The Desired Response (Heb. 10:19-25)

- A. As we follow the repeated pattern throughout Hebrews, ideas are grounded in the word of God, the spiritual lesson is explained, then there is a movement toward the disciples' proper response through application. What difference does Jesus being our high priest make in our lives? What do we do with the truth we have learned and the understanding we have of the spiritual lesson being taught?
- B. Here is how the author of Hebrews desires disciples to respond to Jesus being the best high priest,

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers *and sisters*, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, *through* His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let's approach *God* with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (Heb. 10:19-25)

- C. Those who follow the spiritual leadership of Jesus develop a specific type of relationship with God. This way of relating to God is a new opportunity that is only made available through Jesus

(“by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us”, v. 19-20). Because of Jesus’ work in their life, disciples live life with God with an authentically devoted heart (“let’s approach God with a sincere heart”, v. 22). A person’s devotion to God will flow from the inside out—from their heart, the core of their being. These disciples genuinely express their true desires, thoughts, emotions, and decisions for God.<sup>7</sup> This sincerity of heart is more fully explained as a guilt free conscience and moral purity before God (“having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water”, v. 22).<sup>8</sup> Through Jesus individuals move toward God and draw near to Him through the attitudes of their heart.<sup>9</sup>

- D. Those who relate to God the Father through Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit live a confident and courageous Christian life (“in full assurance of faith”, v. 22). Disciples connected to Jesus in a healthy way are assured of their relationship and standing with God. They know, without a doubt, they are a child of God as they have witnessed God’s transforming work in their life. They know God is pleased with them and that He loves them. The Holy Spirit is actively changing them, and they can observe the difference. Their confidence and assurance is full and complete—it can’t be improved.<sup>10</sup> This confidence does not come from their own performance or their own moral goodness but from their trust in Jesus as He expressed Himself in the content of the gospel.<sup>11</sup>
- E. As a result of this confidence, disciples are firm in their commitment and devotion to Jesus (“Let’s hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering”, v. 23). True disciples take hold of Jesus and don’t let go no matter how bumpy the road becomes. They maintain the hope of the blessings of God with confidence with firm determination and resolution.<sup>12</sup> Disciples can’t be thrown off from their pursuit of Jesus like a horse or bull rider.
- F. Once again, we find the strong encouragement of developing and maintaining community with the people of God and other disciples (“Let’s consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds”, v. 24 and “but encouraging one another”, v. 25). Throughout Hebrews, we are continually told to encourage one another toward faithfulness. Disciples maintain their relationships and refuse to stop participating in the life of the church (“not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people”, v. 25). Our encouragement of one another increases over time especially as the environment we live in becomes more spiritually difficult (“and all the more as you see the day drawing near”, v. 25).
- G. In this passage we are given a whole list of different ways to apply the reality of Jesus being our high priest. Jesus being our spiritual leader impacts the attitudes of our heart toward God, the strength of our commitment, our moral purity and growth, the condition of and our response to our conscience, the hope we experience, and how we relate to and interact with others. Jesus impacts our lives in many significant ways!

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<sup>7</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 10:22 “sincere heart”

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

<sup>9</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 10:22 “Let’s approach”

<sup>10</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 10:22 “full assurance”

<sup>11</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 10:22 “of faith”

<sup>12</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Hebrews 10:23 “without wavering”



**V. Conclusion**

- A. Jesus is a knowledgeable, credible, and effective spiritual leader. He does an excellent job of bringing God and humanity together. He ushers us into a new system of relating to God that He initiated and provides. Jesus is better than any and all other spiritual options available to us.
- B. Since Jesus is so amazing and wonderful, we should maintain our confidence and commitment to Jesus and His message. Disciples live their lives with the hope that Jesus will fulfill all His good promises to us if we are faithful to Him until the end of our lives.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, holy brothers *and sisters*, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession: Jesus; (Heb. 3:1)