



Message **Transcript**

Superior Ministry

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In the heart of human nature, it's always this idea that we want something better. It's rare that we're content. We always want something better. Whether we're talking about schools, we want our kids to be in the best schools, and oftentimes, even when they're young, we want them in the best schools, we want them go off to college, you want them in the best schools. If we're employed, we want the best jobs, that have the best pay, with the best retirement. We want the best of everything. We want to live in the best neighborhoods. We want to have the best neighbors. It seems like we're always looking for an upgrade on something.

I mean, even when it comes to athletic teams, we often hope that our team will get one of those better players and when they come to our team, then we have a better team and we like to compare and it's in the heart of us from the time that we're young. I mean, some of you may remember this phrase as a kid, na, na, na, na, boo, boo, remember that? I mean, it was this idea, I have something you don't have, and I'm better than you or I'm faster than you and you can't get it.

In the heart of us, there's something about that where we want to know that we have what's best. As we've been studying the Book of Hebrews, we've been taking a look at our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and taking a look at who he is and how he is better than any other high priest that served, but today, I want to talk about why his ministry is superior, why his ministry is the best.

For those of you that are Christians, you want to hear this message, because you want to know often how to answer somebody when they think that you're arrogant

because you believe Jesus Christ is the only way, the truth and the life. They began to talk to you about, "Hey, why can you say that? I mean, I know this person over here and this person over here, and they're not Christian, and they're a good person." For you, who are nonbelievers, some of you that are exploring the faith, and you're saying, "I'm not so sure where I am yet with Jesus? How do I know that Jesus Christ is real? How do I know he's the only way? How do I know he's the one that I need to give my life to?"

I believe that God has a word for you because what God wants to point out through his word is that the ministry or the service of Jesus Christ is superior to all other charlatans or anyone else that pretends to be God. To look at that today, we're going to be in Hebrews chapter eight, I'd like to read through those 13 verses there. Then, we'll unpack and take a look at four ways that the ministry of Jesus Christ is superior to any other ministry. I think, as you hear this today, it should bring your heart an incredible deal of hope and joy.

Hear the word of the Lord. It says now, "The main point, and what has been said is this, we have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary, and then the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer."

Now, if he were on the Earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve as a copy and shadow of the

heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle for, see, he says that you make all things according to the pattern, which was shown you on the mountain, but now he has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

For if that covenant had been built, had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second. For finding fault with him, he says, "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "For I will affect a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant with which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not continue in my covenant and I did not care for them," says the Lord, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel. After those days," says the Lord, "I will put my laws into their mouth, into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen and everyone his brother saying, 'Know the Lord, for all will know me from the least to the greatest of them, for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.'"

When he said a New Covenant, he made the first obsolete, but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Here is this author is telling us about this high priestly ministry of Jesus and how he's so perfect and powerful and present and wonderful and awesome and good. He's reminding these people of why his ministry is superior because all of us want to know when we're in times of trouble

or distress, we're living our lives or who we're going to rejoice with, who cares about our lives.

The author of Hebrews wants you to know, the Lord Jesus Christ does. No matter who you are, and no matter what you're going through, there's a ministry that the Lord wants to have in your life that's superior to any other place that you can go. We're going to take a look at four good ways that the Lord's ministry is superior to anybody else.

Here's the first, we have a great high priest who number one, ministers in a superior location. The minister is in a superior location. Now he's been talking about the son and who the son is, and the great high priest that he is and even though he's holy, he welcomes us to come. Then, chapter eight, he begins to move us forward by summarizing and going ahead.

Here's what he says, now, the main point, and what has been said is this, when I read this part of the passage, I think, if you haven't been paying attention for the last several weeks, specifically, the last two, I'm going to tell you what you need to know and I'm going to tell you what you need to remember. If you've ever written a doctrinal thesis, or you've ever read one, which is even more boring, you'll know that when you get to a place, it's redundancy sometimes and you're saying the same thing.

Now, the main points of this, if you miss everything else, get this now. Well, what's the main point? The main point is this that we have such a high priest. That's the main point. Who has him? You all have him. If you have Jesus, you have everything

that we've been talking about. If you have Jesus, you have everything you need for life and godliness. If you have Jesus, you need look nowhere else. That's the main point. What does he tell us about this high priest who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens?

Now, when we talk about real estate, there's three words when you talk about real estate that are really important, you know what they are, right? Location, location, location, right? That's the most important. A bad house in a good location might cost more than a good house in a bad location. He's saying, Jesus is ministering from the most premier location. Where's he ministering from? The right hand of the throne of God.

What's the right hand of the throne of God? We know God is spirit. He really doesn't have a right hand. God, the Father doesn't have a right hand. He's the spirit. The place of the right hand of the throne of God is a place of designated Jesus's authority and power and exaltation and worthiness that he's greater than anyone else. It means it sets Jesus Christ apart from anyone else who would claim to be a minister, anyone else who would claim to speak for God. Jesus Christ is the greatest of all time. That's what he's saying. That's the main point. You have this high priest, and that's where he's located.

Now, we know that he came to Earth and that the word became flesh, but when Jesus Christ died on the cross, his work was completed. His work was finished. If you were here on Good Friday, we talked about that verse in John 19 verse 30 that said, "It is finished," the one Greek word tetelestai. It means it's done. It's over.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, and three days later, rose from the dead, and then was on the Earth for a period of days, and then ascended into heaven, what did he do when he ascended into heaven? He took a seat. Why do you sit down? Because his atoning work was finished. It was completed once and for all, for all time. We're going to see as we go through this book of Hebrews, that priests of the day would offer sacrifices on a daily basis over and over and over, because they needed to continually cover the sins of the people because guess what? The people in the first century and thousands of years ago are just like us. They still sinned. They had to cover it and cover it and cover it but when Jesus died, he covered our sins once and for all.

First Peter 8 says, "The righteous died for the unrighteous once for all to bring you to God." Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him you might become the righteousness of God." A high priest never sat down. A priest never sat down. A priest was always ministering before the Lord. His work was never completed. When Jesus sat down in the heavens, he was saying, "It's done." I told you, it was done. It's finished. My atoning work is completely complete. That's what he wanted us to know.

He ministers from a wonderful place. He ministers from the right hand, the place of power, which tells us this, when you need something from God, there's one who can deliver to you. It also is pretty interesting for me because the book of Ephesians in chapter two and verse six tells us that positionally, when we trust in Jesus Christ, we

are seated in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus, that for those of us who have turned from our sins, and placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone, while we're physically here on this planet, positionally, we're in the heavens with Christ Jesus, for which he's ruling and reigning.

Now, that's pretty important because if you think about it, even in our lives today, many times we think about where we're going to go to church. That's a good question, right? Oftentimes, we think about this, which is closest to me? How long does it take me to get there? Is the traffic pattern okay? Can I park there? You can't here or are the seats comfortable? No. We know that. All those things, but those are things that go through our minds, but here's what I want you to know, when it comes to the person of Jesus, not where you attend, it's who you are attending to. It's where we give our attention.

Friends, I love Brave. I love Brave. I think Brave is one of the greatest places to minister. If I had my wish before the Lord, this is where I'd like to finish my ministry. I'd like to be here until the day I go home to meet Jesus. I hold it with an open hand, but that's what I hope. When I get to heaven, I'm not looking for Brave. I'm looking for the brave one, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen?

Amen.

Brave is only good to the extent that we're seeking the one who's sitting in at the right hand of the throne of God. Brave is only significant to the place that we're going to give him all of our adoration, glory and praise. Brave is only significant to the extent

we're going to preach his word, that we're going to seek him in prayer, that we want to serve him. Amen?

Here's the neat thing about Jesus, you may be familiar with this credit card commercial, it says this, I think it's Visa, "It's everywhere you want to be." Friends, because Jesus is located at the right hand of the throne of God, he's everywhere you want to be. It means if you're right here in Inglewood, you're in Westminster, you're in the United States, you go overseas to Czech Republic, Germany, India, Israel, wherever you go, you can call upon his name at any time and he holds the place of authority, the place of power, the place of glory. He's been exalted above the heavens in the Earth, and He is available to you any place at any time. That's good news, right?

That's good news, because he's ministering from a superior location. He's the King of kings and the Lord of lords. There's no earthly priest that can make that claim. There's no earthly priests that can minister from here and say, I'm God. Jesus is God and that's why he's in the throne of God ministering as God in this situation. He ministers in a superior location. That's the main point. We have this great high priest. He ministers in a superior location.

Number two, he does this, he ministers in a superior sanctuary. He ministers in a superior sanctuary. It says of him in verse two, "A minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." Think about this, when you think about the Old Testament, you can go back and study this and some of you may even know more about this than I do. I don't consider myself an expert on it, but if you study through the Old Testament, and you ask yourself, where's God's presence, you would

start with the tents of meeting.

Moses would go out and pitch a tent, and then he would go out to that tent, and God would descend and visit him there and all Israel would gather around and if they had questions they would ask Moses and the Bible says that God would talk to Moses face-to-face as a man talks to another man. In that tent of meeting, which then became the tabernacle, and if you're interested, you can go through the Old Testament.

I think Exodus 25 to 31 would be one of those places you could look, and you can see how the tabernacle was to be erected, and the pieces of furniture that needed to be there, because they were all representative of how God wanted to be approached in holiness. Whether it was the offering that had to be made on the altar, or whether it was the lab or that had to clean them, or whether it was the lampstand that represented the light of Christ and the Holy Spirit, or whether it was the showbread of the fresh word of God, or whatever it was, it was always of showing how to get into the presence of God.

All throughout Israel's history, there were animals being sacrificed and God being served and people going after God because that was what he set up. Then, came the temple period where it wasn't just a tent that they pitched, but it was an actual temple in Jerusalem where they had many of those same pieces, and God was clear this is how the temple should be built. This is how it should look. This is what the priests should wear. This is how he should dress. This is what he should have on his head.

This is what he should have on his chest, because it's so clear that God wants to be worshipped in holy array, and there's a certain way to approach the holiness of God.

Every Jew knew, from the scriptures, exactly how God was to be approached. God doesn't change his mind on who he is, but all of the way that they focused in that sanctuary or tabernacle or temple, was a foreshadowing of the one who was to come who would be the completeness of that sanctuary. That's why it's really interesting.

In the book of John, the Gospel of John, when he opens up, he opens up his gospel a little differently. He tells us in John 1:1, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. This unknown God that we don't know and that we're not going to understand, he's God, and he's always been there from the beginning. In John 1:14, he says an incredible thing, and the word, this very word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

This God became flesh. This God became a man and he lived among us. You know what the literal translation is? He pitched his tent among us. He tabernacled among us. When Jesus Christ came into the world, he came into the world as the tabernacle, the very presence of God. All of the shapes and shadows and types of the Old Testament, were all pointing to the coming Messiah, were all pointing to the one who was the fulfillment of all those things, the Holy One of God, the presence of God, God in flesh dwelling among us.

Now, you can understand, that's why the Jews got so upset when Jesus said something like this, in John chapter two you hear it, "Destroy this temple, and I will

rebuild it in three days." The Jews thought he's talking about the temple. It took 46 years to build and you think you're going to, but he wasn't talking about the temple? What was he talking about?

He was talking about himself being God. When you crucify me three days later, I'm going to arise and I am the temple of God. I am the presence of God. I am God. Why do you think the Jews wanted to kill them? Because for centuries and for generations, they have been told through their scriptures, what the tent of meeting was, and what the tabernacle was, and what the temple was and what the holiness of God was to be like, and here comes this radical saying, we don't need that anymore because I'm here.

Well, that's blasphemy Jesus because you're claiming that you're God. It's like, it's not blasphemy because I am God. That's who I am. That's why at the end of Jesus's life, the high priest was asking him, "Are you the Christ? Are you? Are you not going to answer me?" What did he say? "I am." I am. I've never tried to keep that from you. That's why it's not that the tabernacle or the temple, or the tent of meeting was bad. It's not like, this is the true temple as if the other one was false, but those were all just shapes and shadows, types and shadows of what was to come. Right?

I mean, if you're looking forward to something, it's not the picture of what's coming that's as important as what reality is. Some of you as you drive down the street, you may see billboards for concerts that are coming to town this summer. As a matter of fact, I was driving up I-25 recently, and I saw on the side of Empower Field at Mile High, some of the concert series that are coming this summer. I remember

thinking, okay, they're advertising for this, and they're putting out dates, hey, this is a billboard directing you to something live that is coming, and I saw signs like Luke Combs is coming and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Kenny Chesney, they're all coming to Empower Field at Mile High.

Now, if you liked those artists, you can buy a ticket and go. The whole reason for the billboard and the picture of this person is to show you that what's coming at the live event is better than the billboard. Everything in the Old Testament is a billboard pointing forward to the Messiah, so that when Jesus comes, you don't need the billboard ANYMORE because if you're going to purchase a ticket, and you're going to go to one of those shows, I promise you, if you like those bands, the show is going to be better than the billboard.

It would be weird, wouldn't it to say, "I don't want a ticket. I just want to buy the billboard. I'd like to hang that in my front yard and just look at it and just think about that that could happen someday." What God is telling us through His word is that the shadows and types of the Old Testament were all promising the coming Messiah and now that the coming Messiah is here, and he's the fulfillment of God's presence, we don't need the types and shadows anymore. They're obsolete. They don't do anything for us. Their whole purpose was to point us to Christ.

Once we have Christ, he has a superior ministry, because he's ministering in a superior location and he's ministering in a superior sanctuary. He's in the very presence of God. That's what he's trying to tell us. You say, "Well, I'm not Jewish, and I don't

live in the first century, so I don't get it," here's what I mean, no matter what denomination you go to, there's different practices and rituals that they will have you do.

If you study them, some of them can be valid in your Christian experience and walk, but what I find is that sometimes people would rather prefer those religious preferences and standing and sitting and doing things in a certain way and going through the motions when they don't even know Christ. They're afraid to realize that that was all pointing to Jesus and now that you have Jesus, you don't need to do all the rituals anymore.

When you come to Brave Church, we're not here to give you rituals so that if you do those rituals, you get closer to God. We're here to put Jesus Christ on display so you can have the living presence of God in your life and worship him and honor him and pray to him and seek him and hear him so that you can grow as a believer in Christ. That's what he's saying.

We have this tendency because all of us in our hearts would prefer to be religious than be in a relationship. If you don't think that that's true, just think about your own life. When it comes time for people to get married, some people, I got to get married in a church. That's the only way God will honor it. Can't get married on a beach. Yeah, you can especially if I'm officiating. You definitely can.

We have all these things. If I don't stand and sit at just the right time, or the priests doesn't pray this prayer in just the right way, listen, I'm not against different

types of liturgy that are different than ours. Every church has a form and a style of worship. We can be attracted to one more than other as long as Jesus Christ is being honored. There's nothing wrong with having a kneeling rail and kneeling. There's nothing wrong with praying routine prayers, as long as Jesus has been honored.

I'm not putting down rituals and routines in and of themselves. What I'm saying is, sometimes we preference the rituals and routines to having a personal relationship with Jesus. There's a lot of people that have different rituals and routines that love Jesus, and that's fine. There's different ways to honor and worship him, and that's fine, but Jesus has a superior ministry. He has a superior sanctuary because he himself is our sanctuary.

Everything in our Old Testament that's so true and that we read about, we read about this God who never changes, but we were reading billboards and our Old Testament is pointing to Jesus. That's why when he came, and I quote the scripture often, that's why when he came, he told the religious leaders of the day, you diligently study the scriptures, because you think that in them you have life. Yet, these are the various scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

He was saying, you're studying the scriptures, that's good, I wrote them. You're studying the scriptures, that's good, they testify about me, but they've all been a billboard pointing to me, and here I am in front of you, and you're rejecting the various scriptures that are telling you that I'm coming. That's the problem. We live in a day and age sometimes, for sure, with nonbelievers who would rather go through religious practices than have a relationship with Christ. Even sometimes, as Christians, once we

come to Christ, we think there's all these things we got to do in a certain order in a certain way and if we do them in that order, in a certain way, in a certain time, then God's going to love us more.

No, sir. No, ma'am. He ministers in a superior sanctuary. He ministers in a superior location, and he loves you with an unconditional love. The first one, superior location. Second one, superior sanctuary. Third one is this, we have a great high priest who ministers in a superior manner. He ministers in a superior manner or a superior way. Here, the word of the Lord in verse three he says, "For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary that the high priest also have something to offer."

Here's the question that Jews would have asked, "Well, if you're high priest Jesus is in heaven, and he sits down, I mean, is he lazy? Is he going to do anything?" I mean, we know what a high priest does. They're ministering on our behalf because the Jew understood, the only way to God was through the priest. If they were going to give tithes, they gave it through the priests. If they were going to offer sacrifices, the priests would offer the sacrifices on behalf of God. They were going to worship or serve. It always came through the priest.

Now, they're not being offered temple service or synagogue service, and they don't have a priest they can call their own and they're asking the question, then, "Well, what's Jesus doing now? He just sitting around doing nothing. Doesn't do anything anymore," because priests offer gifts, and they offer sacrifice. Sacrifice is what they

offer to cover sin.

In the Old Testament, sin was not cleansed. It was just covered. There's a big difference, did you know that? In the Old Testament, sin was covered in such a way until the Messiah got here where it can be cleansed. I remember when I was a teenager, when you used to have acne or pimples or those kinds of things, you get Clearasil or Oxy-10 pads. You wash your face in the morning. You wash your face at night. It didn't take that stuff away. It just kind of covered it up a little bit so people couldn't see it.

Ladies, I'm going to be a little more specific. There's this thing called foundation. Have you ever heard of it? When ladies put on foundation, they put it on understanding that the blemishes they're covering, they haven't gone anywhere, but nobody else can see them. That's what Old Testament was for. It was the covering of sin until the Messiah came.

In the New Testament, when Jesus paid for our sin, we were cleansed from the inside out. The warts, the blemishes, the things we didn't want, it's gone. It's different now. It's a superior way or manner in which Jesus is ministering. He's no longer just covering up sins saying, "One day, I'll deal with that but you got to understand I'm not looking at it anymore." He's saying, "I'm washing it all away, and I'll never remember it anymore." It's a fantastic new way of ministry. It's one the Old Testament did not have.

That was what he did was sin but what about gifts he still offers? Well, when it comes to worship, when it comes to prayer, when it comes to confessing sin, serving,

being obedient, or seeking forgiveness, they all come through Christ. We can't worship the living God except through Christ. We can't honor the living God except through Christ. We can't pray to God except through the living Christ. We can't confess our sin, except through the living Christ. We can't serve, unless we're serving through the living Christ. We can't be obedient apart from the living Christ. We can't even seek forgiveness apart from Christ.

The Bible says that we have one mediator, the man, Jesus Christ, First Timothy, 2:5. We still have a high priest on our behalf that ministers. That's why when you say, "Well, I know some people, they're not Christians, but they're good people. They're still spiritual. They do all these things." If they're not doing it through Christ, it's meaningless.

Let me say it again, because some of you don't understand this, what I'm saying is some people that you think are good, that are spiritual, are doing things that you think are spiritual, but apart from Christ, they're meaningless. Your response is, "But Jeff, they're good people." Good according to whose definition? The Bible says there is no one good. No, not one. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Why are they good? If you're not good, and I'm not good, and no one's good, how are they good?

You're just talking from an earthly standpoint comparing them to something that's even worse. God says, "We still need a mediator." We can't worship God apart from Christ. We wouldn't even know God, if Christ hadn't come on our behalf. We wouldn't know Christ, if he hadn't awakened our hearts and shown us the way to faith. We

would not know anything apart from Christ. Christ is our Mediator between God and man and he's a superior mediator. He ministers in a superior manner. If you have Christ, you don't need other high priests to go through. All you need is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, I want you to know something today that through Christ, and through his sacrifice on the cross, he's forgiven all your sins. There is no need for another sacrifice. That's really good news this morning because I find that there's some people that have a hard time coming in to church on Sunday because of the Saturday night that they had. I know there's empty seats here because some that normally attend had a bad Saturday night, according to their idea last night, and don't feel like they can be here until they work it off and make things right.

Friends, when Jesus Christ laid down his life on a cross, he already worked off all your sin. When you've turned from your sin and turn to Christ, you are completely 100% forgiven, and he doesn't minister to you so that you will do good things for him. You're not getting right with God so that he'll love you. He already loves you unconditionally. It's those things that prompt you to love God the way he wants you to love him.

I'll be candid with you, when I first became a Christian, I was so excited. I knew that I knew that I knew that Jesus Christ had washed away all my sin. I knew I wasn't religious anymore. I knew I had a personal relationship with Christ but then I began to get disciplined. I started to feel like a burden.

I read my Bible, and then it felt like a burden, like all this behavior, I need to change and all this stuff I need to do, and I got to attend church, and I got to serve, and I got to give money, and I got to, I got to, I got to. It just felt burdensome. You ever felt that? It felt burdensome to me. Maybe some of you are way more spiritual than I was, but it felt burdensome to me.

Finally, I got to a point where I realized, I don't have to do all these things so that God will like me. I recognized God already loves me and he already likes me, and I'm already adopted, and I'm already holy, and I'm already righteous, and I'm already forgiven, and I'm already loved, and because he loves me so unconditionally, he's offering me a way to bring him the greatest honor and to bring me the greatest joy. And I want in on that.

I don't attend church today because I have to. I'm not coming here for a paycheck. It's an honor to get to come into the presence of God with God's people and serve him. It's an honor to be able to give back to the Lord. It's an honor to be able to serve him. It's an honor to be able to grow in him. It's an honor that he loves me unconditionally and even on my best days, and my worst days, he doesn't change his mind about me. Praise the Lord.

Friends, some of you need to hear that truth today because some of you, although born again, and although genuinely know Jesus, are still trying to work for your salvation. God never tells you to work for your salvation. He says, work out your salvation. Let God work in and through you. There's freedom in Christ. There's joy in

Christ. Yet, most of us tend to go back and prefer rituals. I'm not putting down any denomination because we can call ourselves nondenominational and that'd be a denomination.

I mean, all of us have rituals that we do. My wife and I happen to eat in a restaurant last night. There was an old Catholic Church, a small little place. It was really cool to eat there and stuff, an Italian restaurant. Now, one of the tables was in what was formerly the confessional booth and we thought maybe we should get that table next time. As I was there, I was thinking how many people have sat there across from a priest and confess their sins and what things have really gone on in the hearts of people in this place over time when they weren't there eating spaghetti, and chicken parm and all that kind of stuff, right?

Some of us prefer that because in some ways, religion is easier than a relationship because religion tells me, if I do these things that I've set up in my mind to do, then God will be pleased. I'll just do them and make sure I do them better than others, versus, I just want to give up the entirety of my life to Christ and let him do his work in and through me, and my life is his and I'm not working for him anymore. I'm letting him work through me.

The glory of the gospel and the freedom that we have in Christ is that's the truth of the gospel. Make no mistake about it. Jesus ministers from a superior location, in a superior sanctuary, in a superior manner. He really does. Notice verse five, four, and five, he says, "Now, if he were here on Earth, he would not be a priest at all since there are those who offer the gifts, according to the law, who serve as a copy and a

shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was worn by God, when he was about to erect the tabernacle." He says from Exodus 25:40, "See that you make all things according to the pattern which he has shown you on the mountain."

If Jesus were still on earth, he wouldn't be a priest. He couldn't be a priest. He didn't come from the iron line. He wasn't part of the Levitical tribe. He was from the tribe of Judah. That's why even when Jesus goes into the temple on the Earth, he never goes into the Holy of Holies. He wasn't welcome there. He wasn't of the right tribe. He couldn't do that, but as we've read for the last two weeks, he was from a different order of priests. He was from the order of Melchizedek, the King of Peace and the King of Righteousness and because he's always been part of that eternal order, he's able to minister as the eternal high priest from heaven to us.

If he was here on Earth, he couldn't do that because he wouldn't meet the requirements of the law, but they've all been fulfilled in him through his death, burial, and resurrection and now, he's our great high priest in the heavens, who ministers to us from heaven, in a superior sanctuary, in a superior way.

It means this, there are people in the church who can serve you and who can help you grow and you should be grateful for those around you that are helping pour into your life or helping you grow together or that you're being able to pour into others. That's wonderful, but there's nobody that replaces Jesus. You don't need anybody else. We don't have confessional here because you don't need to confess your sins to me so that I'll confess them to Christ. If you're a Christian, just confess them to Christ.

You don't need me so that you can worship God. If you want to worship God, just worship God through Jesus Christ. I'm here to facilitate your worship of him. I'm not the mediator between him. You and the Father are mediated by Jesus Christ himself, isn't that good news? That's what he's saying.

We have a superior location, a superior sanctuary, a superior manner. You say why? I'll make this final point because our high priest, Jesus Christ ministers in a superior covenant, in a superior covenant. We just got done reading about the fact that they were to build the tabernacle according to God's standards, but notice verse six, but now he has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

There's a New Covenant. There's a new promise. There's a new way of doing things. This covenant or promise, think about it like a will. For those of you that have a will, perhaps you have written down where your belongings and goods are going to go. If they're going to go to your children or your church, or your friends or your relatives, just how that's all going to play out in the event of an untimely death, you just don't know when you're going to go. You plan ahead so that you can make the decisions as to where you want to direct your thing, so that the government doesn't come in and do it for you. If you don't have a will get a will.

That's what it is, but you can make changes to that will all up until the time that you die. When you make changes, that final will is the will that counts. None of the other ones make a difference. You can have nine different wills, and in all nine, it's

going to your firstborn, it's going to your firstborn, but on your 10th, will you say, "You know what, I want it to go to my church or I want it to go to my nephew, or I want it to go here." That's the only binding one. Once that's signed, that's where it's going.

This New Covenant that Jesus is establishing or has established means that the other one's going to be obsolete. It's important that we take a look at this New Covenant. It's important that we take a look at this superior covenant. If the old one was a type and a shadow of what was to come, then we better take a look at what this New Covenant actually looks like because it says in verse seven, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second."

Now, it wasn't the first covenant was bad. It wasn't that it was awful. It just meant this, under the old covenant, through the law, you could become aware of your sin. You could become aware of the holiness of God, and you could become aware of your need for a savior, but the law couldn't save you. The law couldn't cleanse you. The law couldn't do anything for you other than to point out God's holiness, your unrighteousness and your need for God. That's what the Old Testament was for, pointing you forward to a day when the Messiah that would come and be able to take care of all the things that you needed.

Well, friends, now that the Messiah has come, there's a New Covenant. When I read this, I kind of think about those old westerns, there's a new sheriff in town. His name is Jesus. We're going to operate by a different way. What you're going to see in the following passages is quoted directly from Jeremiah 31 through... Jeremiah chapter 31, verses 31 to 34, Jeremiah chapter 31 verses 31 to 34, I encourage you to read

this because the Lord tells us about days that are coming,

I'll just read it from Hebrews because almost exactly verbatim of what Jeremiah 31 through 34 says, he says this, "Behold, days are coming," says the Lord, "When I will affect a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not continue in my covenant and I did not care for them," says the Lord.

That covenant, he says, was a conditional covenant. All throughout the Old Testament, here's what we read about, blessings and curses. God says, "If you honor me, I'll honor you. If you're disobedient to me, I'll punish you. Either way, the world's going to know that I'm God." I've read through the prophets. I remember I had an Old Testament prophet's class. It was from noon to 3:00, on a Wednesday afternoon, because I hated going.

I remember because every time I would go, is just God being so ruthless with his people and I was learning about how serious he was about sin. I would think, God, these are your children. These are your people. Why would you do that? Finally, it dawned on me one day because God's name was at stake. God wanted Israel to be a light to the nations. God told them, "If you do what I want you to do, I'll honor you in such a way that every other nation on the Earth will look on and say, 'Whoever their God is, we want to act like they're acting because we want the blessing they're getting.' If they disobey, every other nation would look on and say, 'Whoever their God

is, we don't want him mad at us. We don't want to act the way that they're acting."

Either way, God was going to get his glory. God says, "If you do what I want, I'll bless you, if you don't do what I want, I'll curse you, but either way, I'm going to be honored." That's the old covenant.

New Covenant, God says, "I'm going to do it a little different this time. It's not going to be a conditional covenant, it's going to be an unconditional covenant. It's going to be something I do for you, and establish with you that once you're part of, you'll never not be part of it again. It's a covenant that God authored. He said, "Well, when did it start?" It started at the end of Jesus's ministry through his death, burial and resurrection and his ascension into to heaven.

Now, I want to make clear something here. I mean, you can read about the New Covenant as well and Ezekiel 36 and 37. He'll talk about taking your heart of stone and making it a heart of flesh, and he's going to change you from the inside out. That's what he wants to do, that his ministry is going to look different.

Now, be clear, this ministry was made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah. He said this is for Jews, and we say today, "Well, I'm not Jewish. How do I get in on this covenant? How can I be a part of this?" Because I believe that this covenant, there's first fruits of it now, but one day in the millennial reign, when all Israel is saved, and God grabs them back in like he tells us in Romans chapter 11, that all of these things will be fulfilled to their full, but in the meantime, there's blessings of the New Covenant that are happening now.

You say, "Well, as a Gentile, as somebody that's non-Jewish, how do I get in on it?" I'm glad you asked because that's a question we should all ask. If this is a better covenant, if this is a New Covenant, what's it look like? Well, Galatians chapter three, verses six and seven tells us, it says, "Even so, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him his righteousness." In the Old Testament, the way Abraham was declared righteous was by believing God and putting that into practice. Verse seven, "Therefore, be sure it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

How do I, as a non-Jew get into the blessings of the New Covenant? By faith, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's grace to me, that's how I get in on the blessings of the New Covenant. That's the only way I can get in on it. I can't earn my way in. I can't change my nationality. I can't do it any. All I can do is turn from my sin and trust Jesus by faith. That's it. Once I have that, I'm considered a son of Abraham, and I have some of the blessings.

Now, think about how Jesus established this New Covenant. You'll remember this on the night that he was betrayed in Luke chapter 22 and verse 34, I believe, no, Luke chapter 22 and verse 20. Here's what he says, Luke chapter 22 and verse 20, after he had given them their body and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." It says in verse 20. Then, the same way he took the cup after they had eaten and saying, "This cup which is poured out for you, is the New Covenant in my blood."

Jesus was saying this, this New Covenant, I'm not going to sign with my hand.

I'm not going to sign and autograph it. What's going to make this covenant binding is I'm going to shed my blood. Later in this book, I believe it's Hebrews 9:22, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins." It's through the shed blood of Jesus that this covenant is binding. He had to go to the cross. He had to give up his life in order for this covenant to work.

That's why Paul picks up on this in First Corinthians when he's talking about taking communion, taking the Lord's Supper and not doing it in an unhealthy way, but coming with contrition and repentance and being ready to receive the gift that the Lord has given to us and be reminded of what he's done.

In First Corinthians chapter 11, verses 24 and 25, he quotes what Jesus did, he said, and when he given thanks, he broke the bread and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Verse 25, in the same way, he took the cup, also after supper saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." What's the New Covenant, it's the shed blood of Jesus.

The reason the Old Covenant didn't have that is they had blood that was shed by animals as a type of, or a shadow of showing the importance of covering sin, but Jesus Christ when he died once for all, cleanses us from all unrighteousness. That's what he's talking about. It's a New Covenant. It's a new way.

Now, this New Covenant is incredible because God promises some stuff in this covenant that's very different than any other covenant. I want to point out what some of

those things are. I'll give you six things this covenant is like. First of all, this covenant is gracious. It's gracious. It's filled with grace. It's not law. It's grace.

Law was, here's my standards. Keep them all or you're in big trouble. Grace is, you can't keep all my standards, but I'm going to take care of it all for you. Grace is unmerited favor. Grace is you can't earn it. Grace is I'm giving it to you, even though you're unworthy. That's grace. He said, it's not going to be like the covenant I made with their fathers.

Ephesians 2:89 says, "For it is by grace, you have been saved through faith." It's not your own doing. It's a gift of God so that no one should boast. It's grace. How do you get to know who Christ is? By grace. It's his divine favor on your behalf. If you've come to know the Lord, it's because he's the one that awakened your soul. He's the one that pointed you the way. He's the one that showed you to the father. He was the one that showed you he was the way the truth in life. It's all grace-filled. He would want you to know this morning, he loves you and he favors you, and he's given it to you or he's willing to give it to you, and you didn't do anything to earn it. As a matter of fact, you did just the opposite.

It's a gracious covenant. It means you don't come to church or come to gather or come to the word and read it to you, what must I do to get saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Believe Jesus that he's that gracious and he's that good. Let's continue on in this covenant, verse 10, "For this covenant that I'll make with the House of Israel after those days," says the Lord, "I will put my law in their minds and I will write them on their hearts." He's going to put the law in their mind and hearts.

I mean, it's not like gracious. It's internal. It's internal. It's not external.

The Old Testament was all external. You did this, you then must do this. You send this way, you must get this animal. You must offer this sacrifice in order to be covered. It's external. There's things I must do to demonstrate to God that I'm right with him, not in the New Covenant. The New Covenant comes from the inside out.

In Colossians chapter one and verses 26 and following, Paul talks about the mystery of the gospel, the mystery which has been hidden from past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to his saints, to whom God will to make known what is the riches of his glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is what? Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Friends, the Christian faith is not about external things. It's not about what you must do. It's not telling people, here's where I go to church, or here's how I worship, or here's the right way to pray. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory. When any man, woman, boy or girl decides that I'm going to turn from my sin and trust Jesus Christ alone by faith for everything, the Holy Spirit comes in and dwells you. He makes a deposit in you of his indwelling Spirit. He seals you for the day of redemption.

God begins to work from the inside out rather than from the outside in, and that Christianity is no longer a gospel of works. It's a gospel of grace of God doing the work in and through you. Many born again believers don't even know that. They don't even realize what has changed. What has changed is not what you have to do now to get right with God, it's that you've already been made right with God.

God now wants to use you as a conduit of his grace to others, and he's coming in and through your life to do that. That's why he's convicting you of sin. That's why he's changing your life. That's why he's growing you in new ways, so that you can be a conduit of his grace to others, and you can honor and worship him.

Christianity is internal, not external. This is different than any other religion you read about in the world. There is no other religion in the world, Islam, Hindu Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints, Mormon, anybody else that claims Christ is in me. This is the hope we have. See, everywhere I go, I can call on the Lord because he's in heaven, and he's available but I want you to know this, if you're a believer, everywhere you go, Christ is already in you. The God of the universe then dwells you. We are his temple, the Bible says. We are the temple of the living God.

First Peter 2:5 says that we are living stones being built into a holy priesthood. I mean, most of us have this idea that when we come to church, or we go to a funeral, or we go to a wedding, and we're dressed up super well, there's certain behaviors we need to obtain. I've talked about this before. We go to church, like don't talk like that in church, don't act like that in church, don't dress that way. Don't climb on the chairs. We're in church. I mean, all those different things. That tends to be how we talk. As if when we leave church, those things are all okay now.

God says, "No, you don't understand. You are bought with a price. You're called to honor me with your body. I dwell in you." You are the living temple of God. Everywhere you go, that's God working it out in and through you. That's why for some of you who become Christians who are still feeling the conviction of the Holy Spirit in

your life.

It's not God showing you that because you got to get saved. It's God's showing you that because you are saved, and he's trying to grow you in the likeness in the image of Jesus. He's internal. It's Christ in me. He's Christ in you, the God of glory, amen. It's a ministry that works from the inside out, not the outside in. It's a gracious covenant. It's an eternal covenant.

Let me give you the third one. This is a personal covenant. Notice what he says. He says, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." It's personal. You can know God personally. Right? Sometimes with our High Priest, we think that because a minister is wearing a robe or he's doing certain things, or he's gone to seminary, or he studied certain ways, then they are more special or they're more holy, and I need them to get there. Jesus Christ is personal. He wants you to know him personally.

He not only wants to hear you talk to him. Do you know he wants to talk to you? He wants you to know his voice. I mean, there's certain people in my life I know so well that I don't even need to see who's calling on caller ID. I could pick up the phone and by the way, they say hello. Not only do I know who it is, but the kind of day that they're having. It tells they're upset, frustrated, happy, exhilarated, panicked. I know them.

Jesus says, "You can know me like that. Come to me, all of you who are weary and heavy laden. I'll give you rest, rest for your soul. I want to know you. I know everything about you. I want you to know everything about me. I'm inviting you to come that our relationship with God is personal now. It's not just going through a priest who

will tell us, "Yeah, your sins are forgiven." Kind of remember junior high dating?

I mean, I know it's been a long time for me, but I do. You write on a little piece of paper, "Will you go with me?" Yes, no, maybe. Then, you give it to that girl's friend and then throughout the day, she would take it to the girl and then it would come back and you'd anticipate, yes. Then, you're going out but you don't even know it going out means because you're never got to talk to each other anyway. That's old covenant stuff.

New Covenant stuff can go directly to the source. When you say, "Hey, are you here for me?" You'll hear the high priest say to you, "I've always been here for you. I love you with an unconditional love." It's always been yes and amen. That's our God. Amen. It's the gracious covenant, an internal covenant, a personal covenant.

Let me give another one. This is an experiential covenant. Not only is it personal, you can know God you can experience him. Notice what it says, it says, "They shall know me." He's going to go on and say, no one's going to have to tell their neighbor know the Lord and know the Lord and the fulfillment of all that's going to be in the millennial kingdom. The fulfillment, there's going to come a day when we don't need to tell anybody, "Hey, you got to know Jesus," because in the millennial kingdom, everybody that's there has already trusted Jesus. There's coming a day for all national Israel and for all of us who have believed that we're not going to go round and tell anybody, "Know the Lord, know the Lord, know the Lord."

The first fruits of that are for those of us who genuinely know Jesus. Here's the

truth, we can experience him now presently. John 17:3 says, "Now, this is Eternal Life. What's eternal life? That they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. You can experience the person of Jesus. You can talk to Jesus. He'll talk back to you. You can get to know him. You can learn his voice. You can learn his ways. You can learn his will. He will direct your paths if you want him to do that very thing.

For all of us, we're at different stages in that journey. For all of us, none of us have arrived. There's all sorts of things that we're learning about Jesus and experiencing of him. God's going to give us an eternity for those of us who know him to experience him to the full even more, but you can experience him now.

We've already talked about the next one, but I really want to highlight it, this New Covenant, not only is gracious, internal, personal and experiential, but involves forgiveness. It involves forgiveness. Notice what God says, "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." I'll remember their sins, no more.

Friends, there is no person on the planet that can make you that promise. There are sins that you can sin against the person even if they told you I won't remember that again, they'll remember it again. If you're married, you know I'm telling the truth. I mean, we have this way of, yeah, I forgive you, but it kind of hurt. I remember that it hurt. Jesus's like, "Yeah, I took all the hurt to the cross and I'm not counting that against you at all. If you are mine, then my shed blood has forgiven you and my body is paid for your life. I'm not holding your sin against you."

I wanted to read you a couple of scriptures from God's word that you could bank on today. How about Luke chapter 23 and verse 34. He says this, even when Jesus was on the cross, what was he saying? He's hanging there. He's been there six hours, mocked, beaten, scourged, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing." In other words, I'm not holding this against them, even though they are doing this on purpose to the very one you sent to rescue them. I forgive them.

First, John 1:9 says, "We confess our sins. God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In Hebrews 10, chapter 17 that we're going to get to in a couple of weeks, here's what he says, Hebrews 10:17 says it this way, "And their sins in their lawless deeds, I will remember no more." How about some of the Old Testament promises, Psalm 103 and verse 12, says it like this, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

Isaiah 118, "Come now. Let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they're like crimson, they will be like wool." Why all this talk on forgiveness? Because one of the greatest burdens we carry in our life is unforgiveness. We don't think we're forgiven that's why it's hard to forgive anybody else. If you don't know that you're forgiven, you can't forgive anybody else. One of the biggest challenges in the church is unforgiveness. The reason we have a hard time forgiving others is we don't realize what penalties have been paid for us.

Friends, the New Covenant reminds us that God paid for all your sins, once for

all. Even the sins that you send this week, or this morning on the way to church are the ones that you're considering sending right now before you leave the Worship Center today, they all been forgiven if you're in Christ. The reason we confess them is to restore fellowship and relationship with the Father, but Jesus died for our sins once for all. He's already sat down. [inaudible 00:53:28] come to Jesus said, "Lord, I did this." He would say, "I know. I forgave this. Thanks for confessing it so we can be back in fellowship together." That's a New Covenant.

Our sin is not just covered, it's cleansed. Believer, listen to me, those of you who have trusted in Jesus Christ and are living with shame, and doubt, and guilt and iniquity, and burden and weighed down, would you please let it go today? Would you please bring that to the foot of the cross and recognize you are a child of the Most High God, that you are his daughter and he loves you unconditionally, that you are his son, and he can't love you anymore? That because he shed his blood for you, you belong to him, not only now but for all eternity.

You are cleansed. You are washed. You are white as snow. You are pure. When Jesus brings you to heaven, and if he were here today presenting you to his father, here's how he present you, he wouldn't bring up all your sins, believer, and he wouldn't talk about all your faults, believer, and he wouldn't talk about all your struggles, believer. He would say this, "This is my son. This is my daughter. They love me. I've cleansed them of everything. I see them as completely righteous and dad, I love them so you can love them too." Amen.

Graciousness, it's internal, personal, experiential, involves forgiveness. Let me

give the final one, its present. You don't need to wait for this. On the night Jesus was betrayed, he began to establish and inaugurate the New Covenant which will find its fulfillment in the millennium, but it's present now, because notice what he says in verse 13, when he says a New Covenant, he has made the first obsolete, but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old, is ready to disappear.

Does that mean you throw away your Old Testament? No, because those are billboards pointing to Christ. Those are learning God's ways. The Old Testament is all of God's Word. We love the Old Testament here because it all points us to Jesus. Every time we read the Old Testament, we learn about Jesus, but once we have Jesus, we don't need the types and the shadows of what the Old Testament was promising because we have the promised one. At Romans 10:4 says, "Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." You said, "Well, you mean, the law is no good?" No, the law is perfect.

The law is wonderful. It still does its job. It still shows that God is holy, and you're a sinner and in need of a Savior, but it can't do anything for you. Now, that you have Christ, you don't need the law because Christ is the fulfillment of the law and the one who fulfilled the law through His Holy Spirit lives in you so the law is fulfilled in you. The law is good to the extent that the one who fulfilled it, dwells in you, and once I have Christ, I don't need the law showing me all the bad things I am. I need Christ teaching me about who I am in him, so that I can fulfill the law and let Christ live his perfect law out in and through me, Amen.

Now, if you hear me say, "Well, Jeff, you don't think we need the 10 commandments?" I love the 10 commandments, now. Now, that I have Christ, now that he's fulfilled all those in me. It doesn't mean I go break the law, because I have Christ. It means Christ has fulfilled that law and wants me to fulfill it, but I can't fulfill that law apart from Christ in me, but praise God, he lives in me and is growing me to be the fulfillment of the law, and through what he wants to do in my life. That's the joy of the New Covenant. You can experience it now. If the new ones' here, the old ones' obsolete. It's an old model. It was good. It served its purpose.

My Schwinn five speed banana seat, high rise handlebars, served its purpose. It was good. If you saw me driving around on it and riding around on it, you'd be like, "What's he riding on that thing for? He weighs too much for that bike." But when I was seven, I was perfect. That got me around. Now, I prefer an automobile.

When the New Covenant has come that Jesus established, we don't need to go back to the old. We don't need to work for our salvation. We let Christ work out our salvation. We're thankful for the victory we already have. We're thankful that we're already forgiven. We're thankful that we're already righteous. We're thankful that we're already holy. We're thankful that we're already good, not because of anything we've done, but because of who Christ is in us. Amen.

The Ministry of the gospel is a superior ministry because we have a great high priest that serves in a superior location, in a superior sanctuary, in a superior manner, and in a superior covenant. We all have access to the New Covenant and Christ. If

you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus, make today your day. Make now your time. Listen to what he's telling you. He's not asking you to get religion. He's asking you to repent of your sin and trust Jesus Christ alone by faith, and he'll come be your great high priest.

If he is your great high priest, here's what he's saying to you, "Would you please believe everything I'm telling you? Would you please believe that you're completely forgiven? Would you please believe that I'm totally gracious? Would you please believe I can't love you any more than I already do? Would you please believe I can't like you any more than I already do? Would you rest in the fact that you belong to me? Would you allow me to do a work through you, rather than you trying to get all right with me when you're already been made right with me through the cross?"

It all comes back to the cross. It all comes back to the shed blood of Jesus. It all comes back to his giving of his life on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. That's why today as we end, I want us to celebrate communion together because the juice that you're going to hold in your hand and the wafer you're going to hold, are representative elements of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's what unites us and brings us together.

As you hear this song played over you, as you prepare your heart to celebrate the Lord's Supper together, maybe you want to sit and reflect, maybe you want to stand and sing, however you want to prepare your heart, to take these elements. I want you to hear this song and worship the Lord and be prepared. I'll come back up on this campus, Pastor Justin will in Westminster and we will take the elements together

as a family, but would you pray with me today?

Father in heaven, we give you all the glory and honor for who you are and we pray in this moment that you would do a work that can only be attributed to you. If you're listening today, and you know you've never given your life to the Lord and you want him as your Lord and Savior, here's how you can pray, Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner, but I believe you're God. I know you've died on the cross and shed your blood for me. Right now I want to turn from my sin and place all my faith in you. Come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

God, for what you're doing, we give you all the praise and honor as we remember what you've done in our lives and what you're continuing to do as we prepare our hearts to take this meal together that you established, and we give you all the praise and honor in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Can we give God some praise this morning for who he is?