

**Image:** Friend in position of influence accomplishing things that I would never be able to accomplish.

**Need:** Have you ever had such a friend? Myth of the perfect life. Things don't always go according to plan...that's the heresy of today. When things get bad, do we try to wade through it ourselves? What if we had a friend in a high place that could help us...wouldn't that be great? Well guess what? We do.

**Context:** The author of Hebrews frequently uses comparisons between what was and what is now. He calls the "new" "better" to contrast it with the inferiority and inability of what went before. Why would you want to lean on something inferior when you could trust in something better? That's the argument of Hebrews in a sentence. Jesus is better than the old system, so don't abandon your faith and return to something inferior. Remember, these guys were going through persecution for their faith...they were tempted to turn away and go back to what was easy. He says don't...you've got a friend in high places here waiting to help. The focus in this text is on the superior LOCATION of Jesus' ministry and what that means for them and us.

**Focus:** What is so great about this friend we have and how should we respond when life gets difficult?

- I. Our need demanded something more – not just anyone would do
  - A. Our sin cut us off from God, both in desire and ability.
    1. All of humanity is mired in this gulf that separates us from God
      - a. **Rom. 3** – Jew/Gentile all dead sin. None righteous, seek God, mouths open graves no fear
      - b. **Ephesians 2** – dead in sin, following lusts of flesh and the devil, destined for wrath
    2. Therefore we are limited in what we can do by ourselves
      - a. Augustine's argument on having moved to a lower plane. *Ontological change in us*
      - b. Jesus to the disciples in **John 6:44**, no one comes unless the Father draws
      - c. **1 Cor. 2** "**man w/o Spirit can't accept the things of the Spirit...spiritually discerned**"
    3. But then any system that is dependent on humanity is also limited.
      - a. Our self-made religions are deeply flawed because they can't overcome the weakness of sin. *Like someone who's drowning trying to save another drowning person...blind leading the blind.* A human can't overcome a human problem while he is affected by that same problem.
      - b. So too, here, there was a limitation in the OT system of the Law because the ones who were assigned as mediators were faced with the same limitation as those they were supposed to be mediating for. (**V. 3, all priests mediate between God and man**).
        - i. The limitations of the Law based on limitations of its mediators (**4-5**).
          01. Ministered in a copy of the true presence of God (**Ex. 25:40** – implies some kind of defect or inferiority). *It's the difference between buying a picture of the Mona Lisa (\$600 mil.) and a copy on the internet for \$20. Or looking online vs. going to the Louvre for yourself and seeing the real thing. Copy of the dec of Ind (national archives bldg) or Irish dec/ind (trinity college) vs. real thing (worth and feeling of patriotism).* Copies are inherently deficient compared to the real thing.
          02. The Law was limited because it was mediated by humans who were also beset with weakness (one of the previous arguments about Jesus being better).
        - ii. Law limited also on basis of the covenant on which it was founded (**6**).
          01. The Law was never meant to be the end (*next week*).
          02. Law was meant to lead us to Christ (**Gal. 3**).
    - B. Our access and help is only as good as our mediator.
      1. Limited and ineffective under old system or under our own power because of the effects of sin.
      2. If we're going to get into God's presence we need something more. *Not just anyone will do. We need someone who can stand outside humanity (so not limited by humanity's sin) while, somehow, also entering into the human experience in order to mediate for us.* Sound familiar?

*This is what he's been arguing all along. To these people who were thinking about shrinking away from the trust in Jesus to go back to the old system...*

- II. God knew what you needed, and He cared enough to send the very best...Jesus. He is that perfect mediator who has broken through to rescue us.
  - A. He broke sin's hold and can get us all the way into God's presence
    - 1. He entered by virtue of His sacrifice (**1b, 2**). He was good enough.
      - a. He sat, having offered the perfect sacrifice (**1b, 3b**). All priests bring have offerings. Him too. His brought once for all time. The author will go on in **ch. 9** to describe that sacrifice.
        - i. Aorist – “**was necessary to have ...to offer**” – completed action. Once for all. “**Sat**”
        - ii. Contrast with other priests. “**priests are to offer...**” continuous action...ongoing.
      - b. He continues to minister in God's presence today based on that same sacrifice. It hasn't lost any of its ability to save us (**2a**).
        - i. He isn't like the former priests. In fact if He's wouldn't even be qualified to be a priest in the old system (**4**) because He's not of the same order (Mel. vs. Levitical)
        - ii. But that's ok, because He doesn't minister in the Temple under the old system...that was a copy. Jesus ministers in the fullness of God's presence.
    - 2. He is the perfect mediator of the perfect covenant (**v. 6**). *Next week*.
      - a. From God's perspective He's perfect bc He satisfies His justice...sin punished in Christ.
      - b. From our perspective He's perfect bc He can get us into God's presence and keep us there.
  - B. He was, and is, exactly what we need (**v. 1**). – this is the **main point**...we have exactly the kind of mediator that our sinful position required
    - 1. He overcame our sin by His righteous sacrifice.
      - a. Those who have placed all of their faith in Jesus – not in themselves since we're limited by sin – aren't arrogant. We don't think we're good enough...that's why we have to trust in Jesus, because we're not. But we believe that He was good enough. And so we have an alien righteousness (Paul in **Phil. 3:9**). Not right of my own but that which comes through XC.
      - b. It's faith in His righteous sacrifice that gives us right-standing with God forever.
    - 2. Based on that eternal sacrifice, He forever sits in God's presence interceding for those who believe on the basis of His righteousness. He's the answer.

*So how do we live, then, given that we have such a mediator...such an advocate in such a lofty place?*

### III. We call on Him – our friend in the Highest Place

- A. He has given us access (**Heb. 4:14-16**) and is there to give us the help we need.
- B. He is glorified when we lean into Him. When we approach Him with things that only He can do.

**Conc.** Context – these folks wanting to go back to the old system. He says, there's nothing for you there. Don't retreat back, but, instead, lean hard into Jesus...He's already there in that better place that you're wanting to be in. Life is hard. You will have difficulty and you won't be able to handle it yourself. But we can't take it upon ourselves to deliver us. Think about who Christ is, where He is, and lean into Him.

**Image:** Poem at XCmas. *If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator, If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, So God sent us a Savior.*