

**Bethel**

**Pulpit**

**“This Man”**

Sermon Number 449

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,  
by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom,  
on Lord's day evening, 2nd January, 2022**

**Text:** *“But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7. 24, 25).*

Last Friday, we were thinking of things that come to an end [at Pastor's retirement service], of things that do not continue. “Here have we no continuing city.” Because of the solemn article of death, there are many things that will *not* continue. And how often, beloved friends, in our daily lives we are looking for something, perhaps at a market, and they say they no longer continue that line of things. Well, change and decay are marked upon everything that we see, nothing really continuing.

But the emphasis of this beautiful verse is this: that there are some things that *do* continue, some glorious things that *will* continue, and they will continue for ever. The emphasis is where these glorious things that have no end are to be found. It is beautifully revealed here. There is only one place where they can be found, and that is in a Person, and it is because that blessed Person continueth ever that all the blessings of His grace will continue for ever, and His unworthy people saved by grace, in heaven shall continue for ever.

So this verse begins with something that really attracts us: “This Man.” Like that poor, old man in Huntington's days in London who had that revelation in his lost condition. He said, “I looked up into heaven. I could see there a Man whom I love, and that Man loves me.” “This Man.” John Kent sings of Him: “This glorious Man.” We do believe in the pure, spotless humanity of the incarnate Son of God. “This Man.” In our early days it was very attractive to us, the sacred humanity of this Man. He “takes the dying traitor's place and suffers in his stead.”

“This Man.” The Old Testament speaks well of Him. “A Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ... as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Don't some of you say, These are

the very things that I need, that I seek after! Well, they are to be found in this Man. They are still to be found in this Man. And then we have that beautiful assertion: “And this Man shall be the peace.” Real, lasting, eternal peace can be found nowhere else but in this glorious Man.

But how the Epistle to the Hebrews takes it up. “Consider how great this Man.” Consider how this Man “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” And here, “This Man ... continueth ever.” So there is a solid foundation here. There is a solid foundation for our hope. There is a solid foundation here for the new year that has now just begun: this Man who continueth ever. One thing is sure: there will be many days in the new year where you will see some person is not continuing because of death, and other things are not continuing because of the Covid, and there are changes being made by the government. We might go on and on about all these prospective changes, and there like a bright light shining in the sky, the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings, over all and above all, this Man, no change, no variation.

That is why I felt led to read the first chapter (Hebrews 1). Even the earth, even the heavens, the work of the Lord’s hands, they shall perish. We are perishing sinners in a perishing world. “But Thou remainest.” Hold it fast. “But Thou remainest” – the Rock of Ages that can never move. Now all these other things shall wax old. Like a vesture they shall be folded up, they shall change. “But Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.”

“This Man, because He continueth ever.” Of course, the point here in the context: the old dispensation, and there were many Jews being tempted severely to turn back to the old paths of the ceremonial law. The argument was very plausible. God appointed it, and if God appointed it, who are you to say it has come to an end? But speaking of the priesthood, which was really the foundation of the ceremonial law, the apostle says, “They were *not* suffered to continue by reason of death.” Like the first Aaron, he died, and we read of these others afterwards. We know the names of some, others we do not. There was still the priesthood going year after year, but those priests *could not* continue. They *could not* continue by reason of death.

“But this Man.” O the contrast, the difference! “But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an *unchangeable* priesthood.” So there is

not just the emphasis here that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, this Man, ever continues, but the emphasis is that *He continues in His everlasting priesthood*. I do hope there are many here who love the priesthood of Christ. I remember as a very young man being asked to give a lecture on a Saturday evening at Hope Chapel, Rochdale, on the everlasting priesthood of the Son of God.

“Before the throne of God above  
I have a great, a perfect plea;  
A great High Priest whose name is Love,  
Who ever lives and pleads for me.”

Can you come in there?

“This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.” So gloriously, not only He continues – continues as the Son of God, continues as the One who is almighty, continues as the great Head of the church – but He continues as our great and glorious High Priest. So I would like to speak of one or two of these blessed things, and blessed to His poor, unworthy people, in which He continues in His priesthood.

The first thing is as *a Mediator*. A mediator, you young ones, you boys and girls, simply means this: a person who stands between. And the Lord Jesus stands between His Father, a holy God, and a guilty sinner. That is the only way we can ever venture before our God. I do not know if you have ever thought of this, but *every religion* has its priests. Even some of the more savage religions that have ever been discovered in Africa always have a priest. That is because there is still sufficient of the light of nature left in fallen mankind to know that no sinful man or woman can directly, immediately approach a great and holy God. So they have their witch doctors and all kinds of things, but they are like a kind of priest through whom they have to come to God. “There is ... *one Mediator* between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” and this is the foundation of His priesthood, where we can venture as sinners and where a holy God looks on us and not on His dear Son. That hymn has been blessed to thousands:

“But since my Saviour stands between,  
In garments dyed in blood,  
'Tis He, instead of me, is seen,  
When I approach to God.”

It is an unchangeable priesthood. He is still there. He always will be there, as that Mediator through whom a sinner may approach his God by faith.

“This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.” And the second thing is this: the great work of a priest was *to offer a sacrifice*. Under the Old Testament, the ceremonial law, there were all those numerous priests. It was this: they had to offer a sacrifice. Of course then, it was a sacrifice of lambs and bulls and goats. There were many sacrifices. “By one offering He” – this Man – “hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” He did not need to offer a second sacrifice. He never will offer another sacrifice. There never will be another sacrifice. O but the completeness, the all-sufficiency of that glorious sacrifice for all His beloved people in whose place He suffered! O what suffering there was as He laid down His life, and the end of the sacrifice must be the death of the Victim. “No man taketh it” – My life – “from Me.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” “And the blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanseth us from all sin.”

The third thing is *the privilege of prayer*. It is all bound up with Christ’s priesthood. We need to pray; we must pray.

“Long as they live must Christians pray;  
For only while they pray they live.”

Have you had to pray today? Did you pray last night? You have to pray tomorrow. You young ones, are you beginning to realise that you must pray? Perhaps some of you start to pray in little things. Perhaps some of you, your first prayers are at school. Some pray when they are very young. They pray about a simple thing, but they are amazed that the great God in heaven answers their prayer. It is for Jesus’ sake. It is on the grounds of His priesthood. It is on the grounds of His sacrifice. O the blessedness of prayer! Haven’t we proved it at Bethel! Don’t some of you, especially in all your needs and troubles, need it at present? Isn’t it the one thing, whatever we need or do not need, that we will not be able to do without in the new year? O to be a praying sinner!

“This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.” Which means He is unchangeably there at the Father’s right hand, once crucified, now risen and glorified, and He is unchangeably there, with heaven and earth at His command, waiting to answer prayer.

And the fourth thing: His unchangeable priesthood, that is *to intercede*. That means to pray for others. There is One in heaven who bears His people's names upon His heart, and He ever lives and ever prays for them. There are some things even with the Lord Jesus that are not continual. You say, Whatever do you mean? Well, He died once. That is something which is not going to be continual. There are things He did on earth. He did them once. But His intercession is continual. Well, we have it: "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." What it simply means, dear child of God: when you wake up and you cannot pray for yourself, there is a Man in heaven praying for you, and His prayer must prevail. We have a blessed example of it. Look at Simon Peter. He denied his Lord and Master. You can hardly believe it, and yet in a sense you can. He denied his Lord and Master with oaths and curses. Was there any hope for him? What a word that is: "But I have prayed for thee." May one or two of you this evening feel that locked up in your heart, the words of your great and glorious High Priest: "But I have prayed for thee."

"Jesus, our great High Priest,  
Offered His blood and died;  
Our guilty conscience seeks  
No sacrifice beside.  
His powerful blood did once atone,  
And now it pleads before the throne."

When we think of Christ's intercession, I do not think it means that our great High Priest has constantly, day and night, to be speaking in prayer in audible language. I do not think any of the godly divines have ever thought that for a moment. If you can follow me, His very presence in heaven on behalf of His people is His intercession. It is this:

"For all that come to God by Him,  
Salvation He demands."

How does He demand it?

"Points to their names upon His breast,  
And spreads His wounded hands."

That is His intercession, and it is an all-prevailing intercession. There is something beautiful in it, because we try to pray, but our prayers are so faulty, sin mixed with them, carnality, wandering thoughts. But our great

High Priest takes those prayers and He presents them perfect to His Father in heaven. That is why they are answered – not for our sake, not for your sake, not for my sake – for Jesus’ sake.

One of the Puritans had a most beautiful illustration. I am sure over the years I must have told it you before, but it bears repeating. He said a praying sinner is like a little girl who decides she wants a present for the father she loves, and she goes out to gather some flowers. She brings them back and her mother says, “That won’t do.” Some of the flowers are dead; some are withered; there are more weeds mixed up with them than flowers. She says, “Look, you can’t present them to your father like that.” That is what our prayers are like when they come forth from us: more weeds than prayer. What does the mother do? She takes all the weeds out, she takes the dead flowers away, she picks one or two special flowers that there are in the garden, she puts them in, she finds a beautiful vase for them, and says, “Now you take them to your father like that.” O what the Lord does with His people’s prayers! He takes out everything unworthy and sinful, He adds everything that is lacking, and then He presents them acceptably in heaven. Well, that simply is His all-prevailing intercession.

“This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able” – now that is another unchangeable thing, the blessed ability, the almighty ability of this Man in heaven. For,

“This wondrous Man of whom we tell,  
Is true Almighty God.”

“Wherefore He is able.” In the New Testament we have quite a few different things where we are told what the Lord is able to do. It would be an interesting thing for some of you young ones in Sunday school to look them up. He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” In this verse, “He is able ... to save ... to the uttermost.” He is an almighty Saviour. You can go on, the things that the Lord is able to do and which in love and mercy He will do, and what He has promised to do.

“Wherefore.” What does this *wherefore* mean? Well, I have told you over the years, when you get the word *wherefore*, look back to what has gone before. “Wherefore.” Because He is a Priest; He stands as a Mediator; because He has offered a sacrifice; because He ever intercedes for His people. “Wherefore” – because of all this, on no other ground – “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,

seeing *He ever liveth* to make intercession.” O these unchangeable blessings of the Epistle to the Hebrews! Here, “He is able” – that is an unchangeable thing. “He ever liveth” – that is an unchangeable thing. He can “save ... to the uttermost” – that is an unchangeable thing. It is a vast subject: save even to the uttermost.

“Yes, the very worst of sinners,  
Who upon His grace rely,  
Shall of endless bliss be winners;  
And shall sing, beyond the sky,  
Songs of praises  
To the Lamb that once did die.”

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” So coming to a close, who are those whom the Lord has promised to save, how ever evil and bad they have been, even uttermost sinners, saved to the uttermost? If you think about it, the love of the Holy Spirit in the revelation here! You might look to it. He is able to save to the uttermost His elect. That would be true. He is able to save to the uttermost those of whom we have been singing, who stand in everlasting union with Him. Well, that is true. He is able to save to the uttermost those that He has loved with an everlasting love. You might say, Yes, but what about unworthy me? How can I fit in? Well, can you fit in here? These are the ones that this great and glorious High Priest is going to save even to the uttermost: those “that come unto God by Him.”

By nature we do not really come to God through Christ our High Priest, our Mediator. But when the Lord begins to work in us savingly and graciously, we have to come to God, for if we stay away, we know we must for ever die. We have to come to God on the venture of faith. “If I perish, I perish.” But O we have to come to God. Our case is forcing us on. We need a Saviour. We need salvation. We need mercy. But we have to come to God. And there is something else. There is a secret power that is drawing us on. We do not realise it, but the Lord is watching, and He sees our attempt to come, and He lovingly, graciously draws us. So as driven by our case, drawn by His love, we come, and what do we come for? We come for mercy. We come for forgiveness. We come to be prepared for heaven. We come to be cleansed in the Saviour’s blood. We come hoping that He will receive us. And that word which was made such a blessing to one of our

young members years ago when Mr. Gurney quoted it at Bethesda in a half-conscious condition:

“If I ask Him to receive me,  
Will He say me nay?  
Not till earth and not till heaven  
Pass away.”

Able and willing! “Able ... to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Well, may you go home with that question; may the Lord Himself answer it: I am a sinner, but am I a sinner who has had to come unto God through our Lord Jesus?

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall,  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All.”

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.”

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The Saviour lives no more to die!  
He lives, the Lord enthroned on high!  
He lives, triumphant o’er the grave!  
He lives, eternally to save!

He lives, to still His people’s fears!  
He lives, to wipe away their tears!  
He lives, to calm their troubled heart!  
He lives, all blessings to impart!

He lives, all glory to His name!  
He lives, unchangeably the same!  
He lives, their mansions to prepare!  
He lives, to bring them safely there!

S. Medley