

JESUS IS BETTER

A SERMON SERIES ON HEBREWS



Session 1: Better than the Angels

If you have access to the internet and the means to show it to everyone then you might like to watch the Bible Projects overview on Hebrews <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fNWTZZwgbs&t=242s>

Read Chapters 1 & 2

1. What is your understanding of angels, their purpose, what they do, think through as many scripture passages you can think of that involve angels. (Some passages to help if needed: angels appear to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Balaam, Gideon, Manoah and his wife, Mary, Joseph...).

However the focus of this passage and study is on Jesus, not the angels!!

2. How had God spoken in the past. What are some of the 'many times and various ways'?

3. There are seven ways in which Jesus is described in v2-3. What are they? Which one stands out to you the most? Why?

4. God communicated through the prophets, why is Jesus better than the prophets for communicating?

5. If Jesus sustains all things, how does he sustain you?

6. Name some things that people value in this life that will eventually wear out. How do we begin to value them less and Jesus more?

7. How do we begin to “drift” away from the truth of the Gospel?

8. How do we “pay much closer attention to” the message of Jesus? What disciplines have you established in your life to make certain that you pay close attention?

9. In what ways did God validate the message of salvation when you first believed (v. 4)?

10. The Holy Spirit accomplishes many functions. What function is mentioned in this passage (v. 4)?

12. When you hear the words brother and sister, what attributes do you think of? What does it mean that Jesus calls believers brothers and sisters? (v.11-12)

13. Jesus is a better helper because He understands. How does empathy help you in your relationships? (v.14-18)

Session 2: Better than Moses

Read Chapters 3 & 4.13

1. What makes Moses such an important person? What is his relevance for us today?
2. How is Jesus better than Moses, what distinction is made between them?
3. The author says we acknowledge Jesus as our apostle and high priest, what does this mean?
4. 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts'. What does it mean to harden your heart?
5. Looking at the rest of the quoted scripture, what problems did Israel have?
6. How did God view Israel's conduct and how is this a warning to us?
7. How can we encourage one another daily? (v13) How literally do we/should we take 'daily'?
8. Who was excluded from entering God's rest? What is the rest being referred to?
9. What is the rest we are being offered today?
10. What do you consider to be the whole point of Sabbath? (the heart and soul of it)
11. We are encouraged to wield the sword of the Spirit (the word of God). How do we do this in our everyday life?

Session 3: A Better Priest

1. How do you feel when you see people representing your country, perhaps a sports team or athlete at the Olympics, a politician? Do you feel they represent you? What factors influence the way you feel?
2. Read Hebrews 4.14 – 5.10
3. Why do you think people need priests and gurus?
4. Looking at 4.14-16 regarding the believer's battle against temptation, what are the implications of Jesus' ability to sympathize with our weaknesses?
5. What do you do when you are tempted to sin? What do these verses suggest you do?
6. According to 5.1, what is the role of the high priest?
7. According to 5.2, what is the attitude of the high priest?
8. How does Jesus fit into the description of 5.1-3?
9. Read Hebrews 7.18-28
10. Looking at verses 7.18-19 Why is what we have now with Jesus as our High Priest better than what we had before?
11. How does Jesus' priesthood differ from Old Testament priests and what does it achieve according to 7:23-27? (If it doesn't come naturally draw the groups attention to v27, Jesus isn't just the High Priest, he is also the sacrifice.)
12. What does it mean for us today that Jesus is our High Priest?

Session 4: A Better Covenant

Opening Discussion

I did a quick search for 'Life Hacks', here are some I found (I don't know if they all work!!)

- *Use a clothes peg to hold a nail when hammering.*
- *Take a picture of your refrigerator before you go shopping for groceries. Refer to the photo before leaving the store to make sure you have everything you need.*
- *Place your smartphone in an empty cup to easily increase volume from speakers.*
- *Place a wooden spoon on top of a pot of boiling water; the water will not boil over.*
- *Damaged wood furniture? Rub the meat of a walnut on the dings and scratches to revitalize the piece.*

Does anyone have any other life hacks they want to share? If someone could provide you a life hack for one problem or annoyance you face, what would it be?

Today we are focusing on how Jesus provided the best 'life hack' for our biggest problem that 'old' methods couldn't fix.

Read Hebrews Chapter 8-9

1. What does 8.1-2 say about Jesus' current state? Why is it significant that Jesus is at God's right hand?

2. Verses 4 and 5 indicate that Jesus offers something different compared to earthly priests in the Jewish temples. In what way was the old covenant system of sacrifice a shadow of what was to come through Jesus? What does it mean by 'shadow'?

3. Looking at 6-13, why was the old covenant lacking?
4. Does this mean that God made a mistake by introducing the first covenant? If not what was the purpose of the old covenant'?
5. Why would the Jewish Christians have been tempted to return to the old covenant if the new one was superior?
6. As Christians, how might we be tempted to turn to old or earthly ways of religion rather than relationship with Jesus?
7. Looking at 9.1-10. What does this show you about the old way of offering sacrifice? (If you have time allow people to cast their eyes over Leviticus 4-7 to get a better feel for the 'old way'.)
8. Looking at 11-28 The high priests walked through a veil to enter God's presence in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:31-33). What veil did Jesus pass through according to Hebrews 9:11 and 4:14?
9. What did the sacrifice of animals accomplish? 10. What did Jesus' sacrifice accomplish (consider, too, the new covenant promises in Hebrews 8:10-12). 11. Why is Jesus' one sacrifice enough and does not need to be repeated or added to?
12. What will be distinctive about Jesus' mission when he returns?
13. Having spent a small amount of time comparing the two covenants, how do your heart and your head respond?

Session 5: A Better Hope

(Between session 4 & 5 the Sunday sermon series took a break for the Be Our Guest service. If you have met every week and will continue to meet every week through November then you will need to divide these 2 sessions over 3 weeks. If you are covering this session in 1 week then there is probably too much material to be able to cover it all)

Opening quiz

Below are five comparisons. Choose the object in each pair that carries more bacteria:

1. Kitchen floor in front of sink OR floor in front of the toilet

Answer: kitchen floor = 830 bacteria per sq. in.

floor in front of toilet = 764 bacteria per sq. in.

2. Dish towel OR kitchen drain

Answer: kitchen drain = 567,845 bacteria per sq. in.

dish towel = 408 bacteria per sq. in.

3. Rubbish bin OR kitchen tap

Answer: kitchen tap = 13,227 bacteria per sq. in.

Rubbish bin = 411 bacteria per sq. in.

4. Bathroom light switch OR child training potty

Answer: bathroom light switch = 217 bacteria per sq. in.

Potty = 191 bacteria per sq. in.

5. Toy OR buttons on a microwave

Answer: toy = 345 bacteria per sq. in.

microwave buttons = 214 bacteria per sq. in.

Read Hebrews 10

1. Hebrews 10:1 speaks about “good things to come.” What are those good things? (See also Hebrews 9:11.)
2. In what way is the law just a shadow of these good things?
3. Verses 4-8 say how the sacrifices of animals can not take away sin and that God did not desire them, yet they were offered in obedience to the Law which God gave. What then was the point, why did God ask them to do it and what is it that God does desire?
4. Read Hebrews 10:14. What does this verse declare is finished? What is still occurring? What does that look like in your life?
5. Verse 22 encourages us to draw near to God, the previous verses remind us of how that is possible. Look over them and remind each other what the imagery used means and its implication for us.
6. According to verse 22, what kind of heart should we have in approaching the Lord? How do we obtain that kind of heart?
7. How do we put into practice verse 23?
8. How do we “stir up one another to love and good works” according to verse 25?
9. Verse 25 encourages to keep meeting together, why is the author encouraging this? How much of a priority is it for you? How do we encourage others to without ‘being on their case’?
10. Inverses 19-25 there are four things we are encouraged to do in responses to Jesus’ sacrifice, once offered for everyone. Draw near to God, hold unswervingly to hope, spur one another on and continue to meet together. Take time to reflect on how you are doing in these four areas, which one currently needs the most attention? You can do this as a group, pairs or on your own.

(If you are stretching two studies over three weeks, this is a good time to wrap up and pray together)

Session 5b

11. Who are being talked about in verses 26-31?
12. What sin do you think is being referred to in v26? Is this talking about sins related to the weakness of our flesh or apostasy? (read the context of the passage, especially v29)
13. Looking at verses 32-39 How do you keep going when everything seems to be going wrong and the whole world is against you?
14. How can we better support Christians in countries where persecution happens all the time?

Read Hebrews 11

15. Read Hebrews 11:1. What does it say about faith? In what ways is this definition of faith true in your experience?
16. The individuals listed in the first 22 verses of Hebrews 11 were not without fault; how does their spotty past impact their example of faithfulness?
17. Looking at verses 13-16 is it right for believers to live as foreigners and strangers? Shouldn't we feel at home here since we know who made it and that God made it for our pleasure and believe God has put us here for a purpose? Do you feel like an alien and stranger?
18. Read verses 33-38. What does it say to you about the kind of life a believer might experience on earth? What is your story of "strength in weakness?"
19. Of all these witnesses of faith, who most encourages you? Why?
20. If your name was on the list what would you hope it would say about you?

Session 6: A Better Blessing

Has anyone run a marathon or taken on something similar. What did you do to prepare, what was it like when you actually ran it?

Read Hebrews 12

1. The writer of Hebrews likens the Christian life to running a race. He calls us to run with endurance. To run with endurance means remaining faithful to Christ – no matter what happens to us or what our faith in Christ costs us. How does the writer teach us to run with endurance? What are at least three things the passage teaches us about running with endurance in Hebrews 12:1-13
2. Look-up the following verses on enduring/persevering/abiding in God's Word. How do these verses add to your understanding of what it means to have an enduring faith in Jesus Christ? John 15:1-11, Romans 15:2-7, James 1:22-25.
3. Compare Hebrews 12:5–6 with its Old Testament equivalent in Proverbs 3:11–12. What is the same? What is different?
4. Hebrews 12:12–14 is a reference to Isaiah 35:3–8. Read the account in Isaiah. How do these verses encourage you to endure in the Lord?
5. Look again at 12.18-24, what is the difference between the two mountains? Imagine you have a friend listening in with no Jude-christian understanding. How do you explain what is being said about the mountains?
6. What is the purpose of the final “shaking”? How are we to respond to the anticipated shaking according to Hebrews?

Read Hebrews 13

7. verses 1-19 are backed full of short instructions. List all the areas that are covered by these instructions.

8. Discuss the list you have made, which if you are honest do you struggle with, don't do, wonder why it is there....?

9. What is God's promise in verse 5? What is the part we are to play?

10. Look at verse 7, who were those that first shared the Word of God with you? What do you remember about them?

11. What reasons does it give to obey and submit to leaders? What can you do if you do not have confidence in your leaders?

12. Chapter 13 has a few instructions who to pray for and through the instructions we can see how we can pray for ourselves and one another. Spend sometime praying through the issues and prayer points raised in the scripture before praying for one another.