

Our Indestructible Guarantor

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Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[0 : 0 0] All right, so we are picking back up in our Hebrew series. Easter was great. That was awesome. We pushed pause. We focused in on the resurrection, but now we're back. We're in our ninth sermon in Hebrews. And so again, if you're new to us and you want to kind of catch up, man, I couldn't more highly recommend going back and listening to those other sermons, and you can listen to it on the app or online, oneharborchurch.com. So just so you know, today we're going to be covering a lot of ground. So we're going to be covering the last two verses of chapter six and then all of chapter seven. All right. And typically what I like to do is kind of read the whole passage that we're going to be preaching into and covering. I like to read it up front and then get into it. But for the sake of time, so we're not here too long, I'm going to read and preach a portion at a time. So little disclaimer for you there. All right. I just want us to remember too that this was a sermon and it was delivered to a first century Hebrew church that was heading in the wrong direction. They were actually drifting from their faith. They weren't rocking and rolling.

They weren't like on fire for Jesus. In fact, it might've becoming lukewarm to a little bit cold. And so the preacher is trying to get them back on course. That's what's happening here. And so he doesn't do it by giving them 10 tips, 10 great rules to become a better Christian. Actually, all he does is he keeps pointing them to Jesus over and over and over again. And these Hebrew Christians here, they would have grown up in Judaism. They would have been very familiar with the Old Testament scriptures. And so you see a lot of references to things that are very common in the Old Testament and people that would have grown up in Judaism, they would have been really familiar with. And maybe a lot of us, probably not so much today. Anyways, but as Christians, Christians, so they were steeped in Judaism, steeped in the Mosaic law and steeped in those traditions and those rituals. But now in Christ, they're called to this new way of life, this new faith. And slowly over time, what they're doing is they're drifting from that. They're turning their back. They're turning back to their old ways of life. And to be honest, man, we do that too.

Because like them, what we're doing is we're looking for a hope. We need a hope in something that seems like a guarantee. And I'm not saying that's wrong. It's actually wise to hope in something that has a guarantee to it, right? I mean, why put your hope in what you know is going to fail, like Bitcoin or essential oils? Just joking for all of you who may be into those things. Like, I'm a little bit jealous. I didn't get into that a lot earlier on. I'd have a lot more money in the bank, right? So actually, the Christian faith takes what you hope in very seriously, right?

It's actually a very common topic in Scripture because what we build our hope on matters most. The preacher of Hebrews is pointing this out in the verses we're about to read, and it starts out this way in Hebrews 6, verse 19. It says, we have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. I mean, it talks about the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, right? That's what we want. We want that like, that steadfast anchor, which, I mean, a lot of people like what's more common, like what we would call it today or other religions, is inner peace, like this anchor for the soul, this calmness, this inner calmness, this inner peace, where our souls aren't like cranked up, and it feels like we're just in a tumble dryer on a roller coaster all the time. And that's the elusive state that we're all searching for. But just because you're a Christian, it doesn't mean you're guaranteed that, right?

It's like, hey, I got saved, now I just have inner peace. I have this steadfast state, and my soul is just good and calm and just like, man, I am just skating through life, no problems. It's not even true for us. So how do we get that? How do we get that inner peace? Where do we go? So our culture today, it gives us competing answers for how to achieve that, how to get that. One of the biggies is, man, you have to find your authentic self. You know, find who you really are. Get in touch with your

inner child or, you know, self-discovery. It's what the 20th century philosopher Charles Taylor calls expressive individualism. He actually says we are in the era of expressive individualism, which is this, we must celebrate how every individual chooses to define themselves. And yet another cultural narrative that we live in, that we probably know today, is that you can buy your way to inner peace. Man, just the more wealth, the more possessions you have, that's a way to just feel secure, to be happy, to like have comfort from knowing that, man, my future, I don't have to worry about it. But still another big push in our day is to build our hope on politics or politicians.

[5 : 09] We're figuring out how to structure society so perfectly that everyone is going to be happy and secure. And I'm not just picking on one side, oh, this is true for both sides of the left and right.

Democrat and Republican, whether you're a capitalist and a socialist, we're all trying to find and put our hope in some kind of structure, some kind of system, political system or political figure that we think is going to give us hope. And we put our hope on those things. And here's what Hebrews is saying, our faith rejects all these false hopes. It calls us to build our hope on Jesus alone, who has gone before us into the place of peace behind the inner curtain, which is referring to the place where God is, where God dwells. And our soul is only going to find peace where God is.

As St. Augustine said in the third century or the fourth century, our soul is restless until it rests in you, speaking of God. So this passage, what it does, it gives us the person, God, and the place, the inner curtain, where our hope should be built on. But in case you haven't noticed, you and I, we aren't there. We aren't there. Jesus is there. That's what it says there. Jesus is there. He's gone before us. So the question we have to wrestle with is this. Well, how is this a guarantee? How can this really be a guarantee for you and me? Okay, Jesus is there. He's waiting for me. But the first thing we want to know is, what do I have to do to get there? And that's why we need to learn about Melchizedek.

How'd you like that for a segue? But that is what this preacher just swivels right to. Let's find out how this helps us. Hebrews 7 verse 1, it says this, For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. And to him, Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything.

He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem. That is king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever. Okay? So Melchizedek, like probably not too many of us are like keyed into who this guy is for good reason. He pops up once in the Bible, right? And then later on, centuries later in a psalm written about him. And that is it. But every good Jewish boy and girl would be very familiar with Abraham in this particular story.

[7 : 45] It's in Genesis 14 if you want to go later on and find it. So what's happened and what's led up to this point is Abraham's nephew Lot has been carried off as plunder because the king of his city lost in battle to an alliance of five other kings that came and fought and waged war. They were waging war against each other. So Abraham hears about it. He's like, whoa, whoa, my nephew, he's been captured. Him and his family has been taken off somewhere. And like a good uncle, he rounds up 318 dudes and defeats the armies of this five-nation alliance. Pretty impressive. And he comes back with all the plunder.

He's come back with all the people who have been taken, including his nephew. And then what happens is Abraham stops at this place called the Valley of the Kings. Abraham isn't a king, but he stops in the Valley of the Kings. And sure enough, kings come out to meet him. Out of nowhere comes this guy Melchizedek. And it says he is king of Salem, centuries later to be renamed Jerusalem, right?

And he's also a priest of God Most High. So here comes a rare combo for that day and age, king and priest. Those two things were never combined. That's like two degrees of awesomeness and power back then.

So by comparison to Melchizedek's killer resume, we have Abraham, right? He's there. He's in the Valley of Kings. He's a nomad, nobody from nowhere, right? Like he's, this is the part of Abraham's life where he's just wandering around as a sojourner in the land. He has no reputation. And still Melchizedek comes out loaded with bread and wine. That's like really easy to like this guy, right? He's like, man, how can we get more Melchizedek's in our life? But he comes out with like loaded with bread and wine. He doesn't have like one bottle of wine and one loaf of bread. Man, he comes out to just bless Abraham. And he not only blesses him with good food and drink, he also speaks this beautiful blessing over Abraham. And here's the thing, he only speaks it over Abraham, which

is kind of awkward because there's another king there, the king of Sodom. And then you have all the hundreds of people that Abraham had saved as well, including his soldiers. But Melchizedek hones in on Abraham and just blesses him. Look what it says in Genesis 14, 19. Blessed be Abraham by God most high, possessor or creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God most high, who has delivered your enemies into your hands.

Isn't that nice? Actually, it's way more than nice. See, I don't think we really understand the power of blessing like they did back then. We think of blessing as like, hey, I'm going to send out some good thoughts, some nice warm fuzzy feelings, some nice words to somebody to make them feel better.

[10:40] But back then, blessing was a serious thing. And people took blessing very serious.

Here's what, here's a scholar and a commentator. He writes about it. A blessing assumes that one, words have power, and two, our world is connected in unseen ways. For Hebrews, blessing assume that God is an active player in the universe. That human words spoken to God release God's creative power for good.

So Melchizedek singles out Abraham, right, man of faith, to bless his future. And he connects this blessing to be coming from God most high himself, which is also Abraham's God, right? And I just want us to appreciate this. Abraham is running around in Canaanite land. Everybody else is not worshiping God most high. So Melchizedek being a priest of God most high, this is like a rare sighting. Him and Abraham are on the same team here, like in faith. And so what happens? So what's Abraham's response to Melchizedek coming out with the bread and the wine and giving him this amazing blessing? He gives Melchizedek 10% of everything he has. He doesn't try to give him 10% before he does that to try to earn the blessing. No, he responds. He responds by giving him 10%. But when the king of Salem hears this, he then tries to make an alliance with Abraham, and Abraham rejects it. In one moment, Abraham rejected the same false hopes that tempt us today. Man, the false hope of expressive individualism. He rejects the glory and attention and potential celebrity for this incredible victory he just won, right? He could have easily got this right. Oh, Abraham, man, did you hear what he did? He went up against five kings with just 300 dudes and beat them? Abraham could have said, yeah, that was me. That was me. Just go and spread the word. But what does he do? Melchizedek says, like, man, God gave you that victory. And Abraham responds with, yeah, he did. Then he also rejects the false hope of wealth. He doesn't hold on to the wealth he just came into. He gives away 10% to God Most High. And he also rejects the false hope of politics and power. He rejects the king of Sodom's offer for an alliance. He rejects it all. So Abraham was no fool. He wasn't going to build his hope on these idols of the heart, and neither should we.

Hope built on our idols will let us down every time. See, our idols, what they do is they promise us blessing in return for our worship, which is to say, giving our time and our money and our allegiance and our hope to those things. And an idol can be anything that we turn to for peace or comfort or security or for trying to find meaning for our lives. And we all have idols. Every single one of I have idols in my heart. I want to ask this, man, let's stop again. What are your idols?

What are the things that you turn to instead of God? C.S. Lewis says, idols always break the hearts of their worshipers. And here's why that's true. Our idols can never deliver on their promises.

And here's why. They don't possess the power to pull it off. Anytime you put your hope in yourself or people or politicians or possessions or money, you're putting your hope in something that has very limited power. And in comparison to Jesus's power, everything else is inferior. In verse 4, it says, see how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils. And those descendants of Levi who received the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham.

[14:40] But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him, who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. Okay?

It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case, tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom, it's talking about Melchizedek here, by one of whom it testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Now, let me just get this out of the way. I will not be spending any time talking about Abraham's loins. Okay? But the main point of these verses, the main point of these verses is to show the Hebrew Christians that the former way of Judaism was inferior to the new way of Jesus. And he

uses a logical argument, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Therefore, Abraham and all Abraham's descendants in his loins were inferior. Okay? That's the only time I'm going to say the word loins for the rest of the service.

All right? That's it. But Abraham, he has no problem here with Melchizedek being superior and blessing him. And it wasn't just because he wants more free wine. And if it's true for Abraham, it was true for all of Israel who descended from Abraham. One of those tribes were the Levites, right? It talks about that in these verses, who were set apart to be priests for the rest of the nation. And so they have this priesthood, but they're saying, man, Melchizedek as the blesser over Abraham and all his descendants is superior to them even, who would come much later, which means even his priesthood is superior to their priesthood. Now, before we get lost in the sauce here, it's worth asking, man, why do we need to know all this? Like, we aren't Hebrews. What's the big deal? Because you and I are no different to those Hebrew Christians. They were wandering back to the culture that they were familiar with, that they were surrounded in, that they grew up in. And we do the same thing. We trade the superior for the inferior all the time. Every time we look and taste and touch what is out of bounds for us, or every time we lie or cheat, or every time our behavior is motivated to earn man's approval or praise, every time we get angry, every time we overwork or overspend or overborrow, every time we overeat or overdrink or overmedicate, every time we binge on social media or Netflix and all the rest of those things, every time we slip back into righteousness by works. That's how we trade the superior for the inferior.

That is how we trade Jesus for an idol. And whenever Jesus isn't the only thing we hope in, our hearts will turn to something else because our hearts are idol factories. They can't stop making idols out of anything. Do you know why that is? It's because an idol gives us hope. Even if it's a false hope, it gives us a hope that we desperately need and are looking for because deep down we recognize that this world isn't all that it should be. We hope because we long for the perfect.

[18:07] That's why we hope. That's why you have hope in your hearts. We all intrinsically know things aren't as they should be, and we long for what is perfect. We don't just want what's better. We ultimately want what's perfect. And we will always trade up for what's better than what we got. When you get something perfect, you stop trading up. That's what you do. Now, Jesus talks about that in the parable of the pearl of great price. Man, this guy goes and he's somewhere and he sees this pearl of great price.

Ooh, it is perfect. And what does he do? He sells everything that he has for that one pearl. He basically turns his back. This is all that I have. This is all who I am, and I am turning my back. I'm rejecting those things to take hold of this perfect thing. When we find the perfect, we stop trading up.

When we find the perfect, we stop trading up. And this is what the next passage in Hebrews is getting at with regards to the old priesthood and to Jesus. Now, this is a long section, so just hang in there with me. It'll be so worth it. Verse 11, now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron, right? He was the father of the Levitical priesthood. For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, Jesus, right? Jesus wasn't of the tribe of Levi, he was of the tribe of Judah. And no one in Judah has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110 says that, he's quoting that. For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness, for the law made nothing perfect. We want, we're always looking for the perfect, right? The law made nothing perfect. But on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath. They were just born into it. But this one, this Jesus, was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him, Father in heaven, who said to him, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, this is jumping down to verse 26, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners,

and exalted above the heavens. He has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a son who has been made perfect forever. The Hebrew Christians, by faith in Jesus, traded up to the perfect high priest. By faith in Jesus, they rejected the Levitical priesthood, the law that can make nothing perfect, and they turned to Christ. They laid hold of that great pearl of price, a greater, better, perfect high priest. Think about anything else you put your hope in. Think about it. Is it indestructible?

Will it last forever? Has it already been made perfect? Is it secured by the promise and power of God?

See, when we have that standard, when we're looking to that for what is perfect, like Jesus just isn't just a little bit better than all our idols could ever be, right? Man, it's not even a close contest.

[22 : 41] Not even a close contest. So then, why do we give our false idols, our false hopes, any of our time and attention in worship? Why do we slip back into that? I think this is why, and I think this is the message, the constant message of Hebrews. It's because we've buried that pearl of great price.

We haven't taken it out and looked at it. Our hearts haven't been captivated by it for a long time. And when, because when you see the real thing, when you behold that pearl and you keep on beholding that pearl of great price, when you keep on looking to Jesus and fixing your eyes on him, all the counterfeit gods, all the counterfeit idols, all the false hopes, they get exposed as worthless in comparison to him. And then it becomes easy to walk away from them like, no, thank you. I'm grabbing a hold of this. We all come in today hoping on something. All of us do. All of us have come in today hoping on something. But there is only one hope that is true. Hope built on Jesus is an indestructible guarantee. Hope built on Jesus is an indestructible guarantee. Everything about Melchizedek. And Jesus being a high priest after the order of Melchizedek is pointing to this fact. Hebrews 7.22. This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant, a better promise.

The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. But he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them. This is what I want us to think about. I want you to think about Jesus being your guarantor.

What does that mean? When do you need a guarantor? When you don't have the capital or the reputation to get what you need. My dad had to co-sign the lease on my first car as a 16-year-old. 94th century, red stick shift, four-cylinder. Without him, they would not have given me that car. I could have begged and pleaded. I could have done whatever I could, but they would not have given me that car. He had to sign as the guarantor that loan would be paid if I defaulted.

[25 : 26] They wouldn't come after me. They would come after him. He had the credit score. He had the assets to back that up. I did not. Jesus is like that for us. He is the guarantor of what we need but can't get on our own. A better promise, a better hope, a better covenant, a true salvation. And he has the power, the wealth, the position, the righteousness to guarantee it. And that salvation is infinitely more costly than a four-cylinder car. Jesus is this guarantor that is never going to die. His life is indestructible. Why is that good news? If my dad died when I was 16, Nissan could have come and reclaimed my car. When my guarantor died, they could have said, we don't like this. You know, the lease agreement was built on that. We can come and take your car and repossess it. But with Jesus, you and I never have to worry about our salvation being repossessed or reclaimed. He is our indestructible guarantor, which is why he will save us to the uttermost. What does that mean? Well, Dane Ortlund in his book *Gentle and Lonely*, I can't recommend that book highly enough. He puts it this way.

He puts it this way about Jesus saving us to the uttermost. And this is where we're going to end. The divine son never ceases to bring his atoning life, death, and resurrection before his father in a moment-by-moment way. Christ turns the father's eyes to his own righteousness, wrote Calvin, to avert his gaze from our sins. He so reconciles the father's heart to us that by his intercession, he prepares the way and access for us to the father's throne. Our sinning goes to the uttermost, but his saving grace goes to the uttermost. And his saving always outpaces and always overwhelms our sinning because he always lives to intercede for us. What is your hope built on? If you aren't a Christian, don't leave today without making Jesus your only hope. Everything else has and will let

you down. Your greatest need is salvation that can only come from him. Make him your guarantor for eternal life. And all you have to do, it says, is repent and believe. Believe on him. If you're a Christian,

I want to ask you this. What false hopes did you walk in with today? Take time now and this week in that community group to name them, to confess them. And our response is to repent. Repent and renounce these false hopes, these idols that we put our trust in. Repentance is turning from these idols and running to our Savior who always receives us with grace and forgiveness and restores us to the true hope and joy of our salvation. Now, as the band comes up, we are going to take a minute to pray quietly. And I want to invite you to reflect on what God has been saying this whole service, what he's been saying. What has he been stirring in your heart? Pray and ask him to lead you in how to respond.

So we're just going to take about 30 seconds of silence, just quietly, just do business with God in response to this. Let's pray. Jesus, we praise you who've paid our debts. We praise you who has forgiven us and we're forgiven us our sins and always forgives us our sins, who lives to intercede for us.

We need your help. Every moment of every day, we need your help to not go back to the false idols, the false hopes that turn us away from you. Help us today. Help us this week.

[30 : 26] Holy Spirit to turn from those idols toward Jesus. May he be our pearl of great price evermore. Amen.

We're going to continue responding with communion now. Here's the cool thing about communion. communion. Jesus, like Melchizedek, blesses his people with bread and wine.

It's a cool little picture of Melchizedek coming out to Abraham, the father of faith and salvation by faith. And he comes and he blesses him with bread and wine.

And every time we take communion, we're doing that. We're receiving from Jesus the blessing of his body broken for us and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

The blood upon which the new covenant rests. That he's our guarantor of this thing. And so as we take this today, let's drink with faith and thankfulness that Jesus is our great high priest, indestructible, ever living and interceding for us, who is able to save us to the uttermost.

[31 : 46] So let's take the bread together and drink the cup together. Amen.