
The Better Christ and His Gathered People

Lord's Table Message

Introduction

We are gathered this morning to celebrate together the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Ruler. This celebration is to cause us to remember Him as we reflect on what He has done for us. In this we do fellowship with Him – He is here, not in the cup or bread, but among His gathered people.

Hebrews has a long journey in magnifying Christ so as to mature believers. Through the Word this morning, I hope that we will fellowship with Christ as the One who is greater and better. As we worship Jesus in the Word and through our “Amen” to what it says about Him and for us, we will focus our souls on Him.

While we often become more aware of sinfulness and smallness when coming closer to such stunning greatness, let us also loose our affections to run with gladness and gratefulness on these tracks of truth. We can only be satisfied with what we have tasted and savored. We will believe and obey only what we know. We will only worship what we respect and desire. We will enter in only where there is a door. We will only see where there is light. We will celebrate where there is joy.

Let us join then with the Word and Spirit to seek Him who loves to be found.

His Supreme Person

All through the book, our author has pointed to the superiority of Christ by speaking of “better” or “more excellent”. By indicating His better and more excellent person and provisions, he magnifies Christ to us. He places the telescope of his sermon/book up to our hearts and takes what is often distant and small and makes it appear as it truly is, large and near and wonderful.

His Better Name

Hebrews 1:1-4

His place and position are as superior to the angels as His fame and reputation, His Name, is to theirs. So while angels are great and wonderful, Christ is immeasurably superior to them. They are created by Him and serve us, while He is to be worshipped by all.

Having a superior Name, worship Him.

His Better Priesthood

Hebrews 4:14-16

Because we are vulnerable and visible to God, we need a compassionate High Priest so that we can have a confident access. His priesthood is superior to all others, even the Levitical. His priesthood gains and grants an immediate and direct access. His mediation inspires confident coming. When we draw near to where grace reigns, we receive mercy and have helping grace just in time.

Having a compassionate priest, boldly come.

His Better Hope

Hebrews 7:18-19

Jesus brings us a better hope, a better confident expectation. Through His setting aside the Law and the introduction of that better hope, we draw near to God. That better hope is Jesus Himself. He is in heaven, having died and been raised, for us. Rather than a system designed to bar access while inviting nearness, we have a Person who is Himself the pioneer of the way to heaven and the one who awaits our spiritual entering by prayer now and our physical entering at death.

Having a better hope, draw near.

His Better Covenant

Hebrews 7:22

The permanence and eternalness of Christ's priesthood guarantees the superiority of His covenant and promises. What was old and incomplete and unable has been fulfilled and completed by the Lord. Thus He brings better promises for His people. And most grandly, He is able to save all who draw near.

Having a better promise, be saved.

His Better Ministry

Hebrews 8:6-7;9:11-14

Since the Lord mediates a better covenant based on better promises, He has a better ministry, a better serving. The routine work of daily sacrifice inside the courtyard of the tabernacle and the Temple is now the ministry of walking with God in love for Him and love for others every moment and every where. It is an exaltation of the “work at the church” but an exaltation of all of life as worship and ministry.

Having a better ministry, serve God

His Better Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:23-27

We are not saved by the repetitious sacrifice of bulls and goats, but by the once for all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the outpouring of His life in death that brings pardon and life. By the sacrifice of himself, He has put away sin. Soon He will appear, not to deal with sin, but deliver His people.

Having a better sacrifice, eagerly wait.

His Better Country/City

Hebrews 11:13-16

God has provided a better country than Israel and a better city than Jerusalem for His people. Even His Old Covenant people, with eyes of faith, looked behind and beyond the earthly to long for the heavenly. When they or we are this kind of people, God is not ashamed to be called our God.

Having a better city, desire it.

His Better Provision

Hebrews 11:39-40

Through Christ, God has planned down through redemptive history to bring about something immeasurably better for His people. A commended faith trusts God even when what is promised waits fulfillment after death. They did not receive because something better was promised and we will receive it together. This better provision is the perfection of the glorified realities, the newness of the new heavens and new earth. All this great perfection and provision is located in Christ.

Having a better provision, believe God.

His Better Speaking

Hebrews 12:24

While Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, Christ's blood speaks of mercy and forgiveness. His speaking is better because of its place, in heaven, and its person, the Lord Jesus. Christ is the speaking of God. His Word in heaven and from heaven commands our attention and our approach.

Having a better speaking, refuse Him not.

Our Superior Privileges

The people of God, because of the superiority of Christ, have superior privileges. Through the phrase “we have” I want to press upon us that superiority, both in its privilege and in its responsibility.

The Word We Heard

Hebrews 2:1

This conclusion to chapter 1 presses home our responsibility in the light of the fullness and finality of the revelation in Jesus Christ. And we have this revelation in scripture so that it is accessible to all of us. Having now that kind of revelation, we had better pay close attention lest we drift. So here is a great privilege and a great danger. We have the Word and we tend to drift from it. So, we have to give it our attention.

Having the Word, pay attention.

A Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14; 8:1; 10:19-25

We have confidence to enter and we have a great high priest – what grand privileges. But are they great to us? Do we sense our distance from God and our need to draw near? Do we sense our dependence upon One to be there for us? Having then these two privileges, respond like this: draw near, hold fast your profession of faith and learn how to stir up one another for God and good. And the closer we come to the end of days, we must do this all the more, not the less.

Having a High Priest, draw near, hold fast and stir up.

An Anchor for the Soul

Hebrews 6:19

In the midst the danger of drift and doubt and denial, we have an anchor cast forward and upward into heaven. That is, we have Jesus. Jesus is our anchor. When we are anchored to Him then our soul flees to Him for refuge. Our blowing about with uncertainty and instability is a sure symptom that we are not setting our hope in our heavenly anchor.

Having an Anchor, hope in Him.

A Complete Sanctification

Hebrews 10:10

While God is at work in transformation, we have been set apart to God by His Divine decision and action. We are marked out by God's will, separated from the mass of depraved humanity and set apart for the holy God to become a holy people. This once for all act of God initiates a process whereby we behave what we have become. We do what we are.

Having been sanctified, be transformed.

A Better Possession

Hebrews 10:34

While all that surrounds entices us to crave, covet and possess, God places in our gaze the delights of a better possession. We have all that God has promised us in Christ. What we have is eternal, lasting and will not corrupt, decay or fade away. Craving and clinging to what God promises, to those better and eternal possessions, loosens

our hold on earthly ones so that we are poised to give them up. It so transforms us that we can joyfully accept the loss of our earthly possessions in God's providential care.

Having a better possession, let go.

A Lasting City

Hebrews 13:14-15

What a great privilege this is. We do not have an earthly locality, but a heavenly city. We are seeking what Abraham looked for. We are not of Jerusalem here on earth but of Mt. Zion, the new Jerusalem in heaven. We have no citizenship here; our citizenship that defines us is that of heaven.

Having a lasting city, offer praise sacrifices.

A Clear Conscience

Hebrews 13:18

Finally, we may have a clear conscience. We no longer need to live under the accusing frown of God. Our Redeemer has cleansed and quieted our consciences so that we have openness before others and in the presence of God. What a grand thing it is to be so forgiven that we do not feel guilty.

Having a clear conscience, act honorably.

Conclusion

So:

Having a superior Name, worship Him.

Having a compassionate priest, boldly come.

Having a better hope, draw near.

Having a better promise, be saved.

Having a better ministry, serve God

Having a better sacrifice, eagerly wait.

Having a better city, desire it.

Having a better provision, believe God.

Having a better speaking, refuse Him not.

Having the Word, pay attention.

Having a High Priest, draw near, hold fast and stir up.

Having an Anchor, hope in Him.

Having been sanctified, be transformed.

Having a better possession, let go.

Having a lasting city, offer praise sacrifices.

Having a clear conscience, act honorably.

Here then is the invitation that accompanies these excellencies and privileges: draw near.

Come on in; draw near to the throne of grace (4:16).

Come on in; draw near through the better hope (7:19).

Come on in; draw near to be saved (7:25).

Come on in; draw near to be made complete (10:1).

Come on in; draw near with a true heart (10:22).

Come on in; draw near believing He is real and He is a rewarder (11:6).

Draw near and celebrate the Lord's Table.

End Notes