**God Remembers His Priest**

**Zechariah 3:1-10 (ESV)**

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Would you turn with me in your Bibles to Zechariah chapter 3? My name is Daniel Sheaffer. I’m the Children and Family Minister here. What a sweet, sweet year that Lindsey and I have had to get to know many of you and a church family that now is home. We thank you for your love and support for us. What a joy it is to know so many of you and be loved by you!

***1*** *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.* ***2*** *And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”* ***3*** *Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.* ***4*** *And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”* ***5*** *And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.*

***6*** *And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua,* ***7*** *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.* ***8*** *Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.* ***9*** *For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.* ***10*** *In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.”*

As I was studying and going through this passage at length over the last few weeks, what popped into my head when I saw Joshua standing with filthy garments, was this American tv show back in the early 2000’s all the way up to 2009, called *Dirty Jobs*. I don’t know if any of you have watched *Dirty Jobs*, but the host’s name is Mike Rowe. In every episode, what he would do, if you’re not familiar with it, is he would go alongside with these employees that would do these dirty jobs day in and day out. You would get to see some of what are described as the dirtiest jobs that there are to offer. He would go right along with it. After recording 200 episodes, 200 dirty jobs, he was asked to narrow down his ultimate top ten. Aren’t you curious as to what those are? I was, so I began to do a little research. He said the top ten are a concrete chipper. (Pastor Daniel made a vibrating sound.) There was a sewer inspector. I’m not going to try to enact that one. (Laughter!) There was a bat biologist. There was a chicken male and female sorter. I don’t even want to know. (Laughter!) There was a snake wrangler. Then finally, number one was a shark suit tester. (Laughter!) This is what he says about a shark suit tester. “You put on the suit; you hop in the water; you cover yourself with the scent of blood. The sharks come in, and you let them bite you. If you’re unharmed, the suit works. (Laughter!) If you don’t, it’s unfortunate.”

No matter how dirty the job was or how dangerous it was, after the end of every episode, he would wipe his hands off, take off the suit or whatever it was he was wearing, go into his double-wide trailer, and take a shower. That shower would get rid of any dirt, grime, mess that you can imagine, and he came out of that double-wide trailer as if nothing had happened. It’s pretty simple. It was a matter of ten, fifteen, maybe twenty minutes if he was wanting a longer shower. Then the dirt was gone.

But today, even though Joshua has went through all of these ceremonial cleansings, washings, incense and the like, he stands before the court of heaven completely incapable of helping himself. This was a defilement that no animals could take away, no incense could burn off, and no washings could get rid of. Before the piercing gaze of a holy and righteous God, there was no attempt to hide his true condition. He was seen. He was exposed, and he was filthy. Let’s see what happens.

Before we look at verses 1 and 2, there is one thing that I want to mention that is going to be helpful as we look our way through this passage. The fourth vision of Zechariah that we’re now in and the fifth vision of Zechariah that is coming next week, are the most important of all of the visions of Zechariah. I believe I can say that because vision 1 and vision 8 go together. They have similar elements in them. With visions 2 and 7, there is the same thing. With visions 3 and 6, there is the same thing. So what we’re doing is we’re seeing what is in the very center is the most important and it is these two positions; the role of priest and the role of king. The role of the priest and the role of the king provide the very center for how God is going to restore the fortunes of His people. It doesn’t mean that the first vision and the eighth vision and the other visions aren’t important. They absolutely are. But what we’re going towards, how God is going to transform and change His people is through these two positions. There must be a priest from the line of Aaron serving in the temple and a king from the line of David reigning on the throne. This is what has to happen if God is going to move history forward. God remembers His people as He promised. In this vision, God remembers His priest and He restores him.

So my goal for us today is that when we see this vision, that it will lead us to behold the glory of our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus. Because we can’t sit here and look and know the New Testament and see this vision and not see Him everywhere. May you be changed, whether you’re a believer in Christ, that you would continue to behold His face and be transformed as 2 Corinthians says, from one degree of glory to the next. Or that you would behold His face for the first time. Our God remembers and our God restores. He does that first by

**Providing an Indisputable Defense (1-2)**

***1*** *Then he* (this angel) *showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.*

Let’s stop there for a second. Here is the scene. We just moved, as Pastor Josh preached last week about the glory of Jerusalem, that God is going to be a wall of fire around her midst. We’re looking at the outer walls. We’re looking outside the city. We’re looking in the places where people live. Now we’re moving outward into the very heart of the temple. We’ve gone from outside the walls and we’ve come through and we’re going into the temple courtyard. Then we move from the temple courtyard into the Holy Place. Then we take off the veil and we go and we’re seeing into the Holy of Holies in heaven. This is not just the temple in Jerusalem, but heaven itself.

There are three characters in this story that Zechariah sees, that he would be familiar with. The first familiar face that he sees is someone he knows, Joshua the high priest. Now, we’ll look at this in a little bit, but Ezra chapter 3 details who he was. Joshua, this high priest, who helped Ezra rebuild the temple, is here in this vision. This is the first time throughout any of the visions that we’ve seen that Zechariah sees somebody that he knows, and it’s Joshua, the high priest.

Now, when you’re sitting at a ballgame and whether you’re there for your grandson or granddaughter or your sibling or maybe you’re the parent and you’re there for your children, aren’t you going to pay a little bit more attention when you see them go into the game? When they enter into the game, it’s like, “Oh, stop what we’re doing. Put the popcorn down. Put the phone down. They’re in the game.” Zechariah is looking and he sees Joshua. Wouldn’t you think that he’s paying a little bit more attention at this point? What happens? He sees Joshua the high priest, and what is Joshua doing? What does it say? It says he is doing what? He’s standing.

This may not mean much to you at first, but when we see the high priest going and standing, to an ancient Israelite, they would have known right away what is going on. They would know what kind of day this is. This is from Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement. It’s the day that the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies and he would sprinkle blood seven times on the mercy seat after he had taken the smoke, so that way he can’t gaze upon the Lord and he goes out after making atonement for the people. This is one time a year. So the high priest is standing before God and Zechariah would have thought immediately that this was the Day of Atonement. Joshua just isn’t in the temple, but he’s in the temple of heaven itself. So Zechariah sees a familiar face and then he sees a familiar advocate. Joshua is standing before the angel of the LORD.

For the first time in two hundred years, now the angel of the LORD is back. This is the same angel, and just to go through and help you see the importance of this, this is the angel who saw Hagar in her affliction in Genesis 16. He is the God who sees. This is the angel who said to Abraham, “Stop! Don’t sacrifice your son.” He’s the one who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” He’s the one who the donkey of Balaam saw and turned aside in Numbers 22-24. He’s the one who stood before Joshua at the battle of Jericho. He’s the one who appeared to Gideon. He’s the one who appeared to the parents of Samson and to Elijah at Sinai. He’s the one who executed judgment on Egypt, on Israel, on Assyria. Since He executed judgment on Assyria back in Isaiah 37, He’s been absent. There have been no appearances, only silence. Now He’s back, and what’s He going to do this time? Well, this angel is in one way distinct from God, from Yahweh, but speaks as if He is Yahweh Himself because He is Yahweh Himself. This is the pre-incarnate Christ. It’s why Jude can say in

**Jude 5** Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Zechariah sees a familiar advocate. Next, he sees a familiar adversary. Look who else is there.

***1*** *Then he* *showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.*

The only reason that Satan is here in this courtroom is to accuse Joshua. He is always the one who has opposed God’s work in the world. He’s the one that tempted our first parents. He’s the one who ever opposes God’s reign, God’s king, God’s priest, and God’s purposes for salvation. Here he is again, standing before the angel of Yahweh, just like he did, Job. He’s there to accuse. Look at what God says.

***2*** *And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”*

There is no rebuke like God’s rebuke, is there? You see Jesus and the disciples are asleep on the Sea of Galilee. The wind comes and there is a great storm. The disciples are there struggling and Jesus is asleep in the boat. They wake Him up and say, “Lord, don’t you care that we’re perishing?” Then He says, “O you of little faith.” Then what does He do? He stands, He rebukes, and there is silence. Or the demons, when Jesus encounters them they are in someone and Jesus rebukes them and they’re cast out and there is peace. If you look over one chapter or two, you’ll see this is what God has already told His people.

**Zechariah 1:17** Cry out again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’”

He’s already said it. He says it again not just to Zechariah, but in the court of heaven. This is how he describes Joshua. He says

*Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”*

That’s what Joshua is. Now, in order for us to really dive in deep and see what he’s trying to say, Zechariah quotes other prophets a lot. He quotes Amos. He quotes Ezekiel. He quotes Jeremiah. They have all come before him. If we’re really going to understand what he’s saying, we have to look back and see what Amos said, what Ezekiel said, and what Jeremiah said. Zechariah quotes Amos 4. This is what Amos 4 says.

**Amos 4:6-11** “I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD. “I also withheld the rain from you…yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD…“I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD. “I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD.

This burning, this fire, the Lord’s judgment, Joshua has been spared. Even though Joshua went into exile, God has brought him back. We don’t know whether Joshua at this point has returned to God. We know he has returned to the land. We know he is being set up as a high priest. But God has plucked him as a brand from the burning from His own judgment. If God has plucked Joshua from His own judgment, will He not rebuke any charge that comes against him? Now, look at what happens. God has rebuked Satan and He said, “I have chosen Jerusalem. I have chosen Joshua. Even though his grandfather Seraiah, even though his father Jehozadak, both of them went into exile, I brought him back.”

What’s the result of this? Let me ask you a question. Do you see Satan say a word in this entire vision? No. The Lord’s rebuke brings silence. Satan’s whole goal there was to accuse Joshua, and when the Lord rebukes Satan, he is silent. He’s got nothing to say. This is an indisputable defense. Second, God restores the priesthood by

**Providing An Effective Cleansing (3-4)**

***3*** *Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.* ***4*** *And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”*

Joshua stands before the angel of the Lord in the court of heaven, guilty. Now, the Hebrew here doesn’t just mean that there is a stain on his linen clothing. It doesn’t just mean that maybe he forgot a washing. What this means is that he is covered in filth and human excrement. That is what is symbolized. This is shocking, is it not? Joshua comes and he stands before a holy God and he is covered in filth. He’s impure. He’s vile. He’s dirty. He’s abhorrent. I can imagine the host of heaven that is watching this scene saying, “Get him out of here!” The court of heaven watching this must have been thinking, “What is he thinking? He has no blood to offer, no clean garments, no sin offering, no incense, no coals for smoke to veil the mercy seat.” If you remember Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10, they came in as well. They came in to offer unauthorized fire or incense before the Lord and God meets them with divine judgment. But here in this vision, God says

*And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you,*

Isn’t this what God does? Isn’t this who He is?

**Micah 7:18-19** Who is a God like you, forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not hold on to his anger forever because he delights in faithful love. He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

So not only does God remove the filthy garments from him, He clothes him with pure vestments, in other words, festal robes. These are robes that you would wear for a time of celebration. The only other time that this word festal robes is mentioned in the Old Testament is Isaiah 3. Isaiah 3:22 is the only time where this is mentioned. In that context, what Isaiah is describing and again what Jeremiah is pulling from is he is saying, “Daughters of Zion, daughters of Jerusalem, all of the things that you had before, your crowns, your gold, your jewels, your vestments, your festal robes, they are all being taken off of you and stripped away because you’re going into exile. You’re going into judgment.” Now at this time, the Lord, in this vision, is showing His people as He is saying, “You are coming home. I am clothing you with these festal garments once again. Your exile is going to end.”

When I think about an example of what this means, I think of Luke chapter 15. You know Luke 15. You know the story of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. In the story of the prodigal son is that after he has defied his father, gone and spent all of his father’s inheritance, he comes to his senses in the filth of pigs and he says, “Oh, that I could go back to my father,” and he comes back. What is the father doing? The father is waiting and he sees him a long way off. He goes and he runs to him and he embraces him and he kisses him and he welcomes him home and restores him and he gives him the best robe and says, “Let’s celebrate! He’s come home!” This is our God, who delights in redeeming me and you and celebrates that we have come home and that we have been cleansed from our iniquity and our sin.

Third, God restores His priesthood by

**Providing A Glorious Clothing (5)**

***5*** *And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.*

I love this part of the vision! For the first time, we hear Zechariah speak. It’s as if Zechariah is seeing all of these things that have happened and he has seen the filth and he has seen the abhorrent clothes that Joshua comes before the pure and holy God with and he sees him being cleansed and clothed and the iniquity taken away and it’s as if, “I have to say something!” Zechariah is on the sidelines while the game is going on. He’s yelling out while this is happening. I can imagine the host of those in heaven, those in the game if you will, looking and saying, “Who said that?” This was Zechariah. What does he say?

***5*** *And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.”*

In Exodus 28, it describes the kind of turban that the high priest would wear.

**Exodus 28:36-38** “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the LORD.’ And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban. It shall be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

So what Aaron would have on this turban, on this crown that he would wear, is he would have this signet, this engraving. It would read in Hebrew, “Holy to the LORD.” Back seventy years ago, in Ezekiel 21 when Israel is being taken into exile, God says to King Zedekiah, “Remove the turban. Take off the crown.” Now, after seventy years of having no priest, no king, no duties, no temple, no mediation, no intercession whatsoever to speak of in Jerusalem, it didn’t mean that God still wasn’t at work. It didn’t mean that God still wasn’t caring for and working to restore His people. Look at the end of verse 5 with me.

*And the angel of the LORD was standing by.*

The Hebrew literally reads “the angel of Yahweh was standing.” We have to ask, it seems a little bit awkward why Zechariah would put this in his vision. Why would he mention this? It seems like it’s awkwardly put in. But Zechariah mentions it again because the angel of Yahweh has moved. When you go to a trial and the judge sits down, he is there until the court is at recess or until a verdict is given. But now, in the middle of this trial, the judge stands. He gets out of the seat of judgment, He walks over, and He stands right beside Joshua and He intercedes for him. I believe that Zechariah mentions this again for us to know that number one, it’s through His standing that we are clean. Number two, it’s His delight to do it. He doesn’t do it half-hearted. He doesn’t do it begrudgingly. He doesn’t do it annoyed and He’s not indifferent. Instead, it’s His joy and His delight to stand for you and for me and for Joshua.

**Zephaniah 3:17** The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

In those stories that Jesus told of the parable of the lost sheep, the coin and of the prodigal son, every time in that, you see someone singing and rejoicing. Often we read that and we think it has to be the angels in heaven that are rejoicing. It’s not just the angels in heaven. God is rejoicing! The Bible says in Luke 15 that there is joy before the angels in heaven. God is singing! God is rejoicing and He is so overcome by the salvation that He gives to us. This is the God we serve.

Well, God restores His priesthood fourth, by

**Promising Continued Access (6-7)**

***6*** *And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua,* ***7*** *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.*

Notice that this promise is conditional. God doesn’t say, “I’m going to do this regardless.” He says, “If you keep my charge, then I will give you the right of access into my courts.” This is not only the courts of the earthly temple, but the courts of the heavenly one. Turn with me to Ezra 3. This is right after 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. We’ll look at this briefly as you hold your place in Zechariah.

**Ezra 3:8-13** Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the LORD. And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David the king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundations of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people’s weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.

There was joy and there was sorrow because this rebuilt temple really was just a shell of the former glory of Solomon’s. But despite this, God promised that there was more to the story that was coming. Just because the rebuilt temple brought so much sorrow to those older men and women who saw the first one, it didn’t mean that the work of the priests in that new temple was any less important or that their work didn’t matter. They were to continue day by day by day to perform these temple duties, their priestly duties, trusting that God was going to give to them and to the nation of Israel what He promised Joshua here. They were to perform and be faithful, trusting that the right of access, the right to go and walk in the presence of God would extend not just to the earthly courts, but to the heavenly courts as well. Even though it might have seemed to some like meaningless work, it wasn’t going to be in vain. They were to work in faith and in hope that the promise would come.

You know decade after decade went by and there was silence. Then five hundred years later, there is another man by the name of Zachariah who goes into the temple. He sees and angel and that angel declares that there is going to come the forerunner to the Messiah, and that is going to come from him and from his wife, Elizabeth. He is going to be the one that is promised. Their work wasn’t in vain. God restores His priesthood by

**Promising A Permanent Rest (8-10)**

***8*** *Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you,*

Or your colleagues who serve before you,

*for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.*

This is the first of two signs in this story. Joshua and his other priests that serve alongside of him are a sign that the future priest is coming. The Branch that was already promised several times in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, and later in Zechariah, this Branch, let me tell you what a few of the things that He promises are. He promises total cleansing. He promises that He’s going to reign not just as a priest, but as a king. He’s going to build the temple. He’s going to bring permanent peace, and God is going to send Him. It is this Branch. Joshua and the other priests that served were a continual sign to Israel that Messiah is coming. “Messiah is coming! Wait for Him. We’re going to continue our priestly duties and we’re going to wait and hope that He’s coming.” And He did!

***9*** *For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.*

Do you remember the inscription that was on the forehead of the high priest; Holy to the LORD? Now it’s not just the high priest that is going to have that on their foreheads. It’s going to be every single person who believes in this Branch. It’s going to be every single person. So the high priest is not just going to be holy to the LORD. Every single person is going to be holy to Him. When sin is finally atoned for, God says, “I am going to remove this iniquity, all of it, in a single day.” It’s similar to the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was one time a year, when the high priest would go in and atonement would be made for the year. Now, it’s not just for the year. It’s going to be forever.

***10*** *In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.”*

The last time we saw vine and fig tree was during the reign of Solomon. Solomon brought the people rest, but it was only temporary. Now, the one who is going to come, the greater Solomon is going to give a permanent rest.

When we look at these five ways that God restores His priesthood, we can see that they’re for us as well. You have an indisputable defense. The angel of Yahweh is not just Joshua’s advocate. He’s yours. 1 John 2:1 says that Jesus Christ is our advocate, the righteous one. Paul says

**Romans 8:33** Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?

The answer is no one.

**Romans 8:33-34** It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Think with me for a minute. What are the sins that you have committed or that you continue to commit before the Lord, that bring you the most shame? Whether they’re done by commission or by omission, what are the things that bring you the most shame? What are the things that you seem like you can’t get rid of? Or it seems like, “God’s not going to forgive that, is He?” Or even if you know that He will forgive, you don’t live in the freedom that you should enjoy. If you have come to Jesus, there is only one person that could condemn you for that, and He has stood for you. He has said, “Forgiven!” The one person that was going to accuse you the most, Satan himself, is silenced. If Satan is silenced, so is everybody else. Whether it’s abortion, pornography, racism, you abusing someone else, your anger, your pride, your jealousy, your gossip, your immorality, your partiality, your adultery, your idolatry, your neglect of heavenly things, your ungodly speech, whatever the case may be, He can forgive you and He has forgiven you. What grace!

**Revelation 12:9-10** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Satan has been thrown down and there is no one in heaven to accuse us. What joy! You have an effective cleansing; His own blood. You are completely forgiven by the grace of God. Even though you have come with filthy garments, He gives you these pure white robes of celebration and says, “My son has come home!” You have a glorious clothing. It is His righteousness that has been given to you. It’s nothing that you have done. It’s your sinful life for His; His righteous life for yours. You don’t need to come to His throne of grace and say, “Lord, I need to do more.” He gives them to you as a gift. You have continued access. He has made you a priest so you can boldly, Hebrews tells us, approach the throne of grace anytime that you want. It’s not one time of year. It’s not one time on specific days. Anytime that you want, you can go and you can offer spiritual sacrifices out of thanksgiving, out of the grace and power of His Spirit that works in you.

**Hebrews 10:19-23** Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”

Finally, you have a permanent rest. You can rest from your works and you can trust that it is God who makes you righteous. So now the works that you do are not to earn, but to say thank you. He will give you full and complete rest when He takes you to heaven or when He comes again. Now, many of you I know have experienced hard, difficult trials. Don’t you long for that rest? Don’t you just long to say, “I want to rest. Yes, I’m resting in what you’ve done for me, but Lord, the thorns of this earth feel a little bit deeper today. They cut a little bit more.” He will give you this rest. Continue believing and continue trusting.

Now you get to invite people. You get to say, “Won’t you come? I have a fig tree. I have a vine. Won’t you come and experience what I have experienced?” Whatever you have in your hands, I don’t care if it’s filthy garments, guess what? He took mine. Jesus says

**Matthew 11:28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

For those of us who know and love Christ, just like God remembered and restored His priest, He has remembered and restored us. If you are here and you have not had that rest, if you know that you’ve been trying to get to heaven and trying to earn His righteousness on your own, whatever it is you’re trusting in, will you not just receive His grace as a gift? Will you turn from your sin and would you repent and trust in His saving work on the cross and come into the rest that He provides? I close with

**Romans 5:1-2** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

May we be faithful to live in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ and remember that this grace that we’ve been shown shouldn’t give us license towards sin so that grace may abound. It should lead us to faithfulness, to holiness, and to thank the Lord for the grace we’ve been given.