



AUTO-SERMON TRANSCRIPT

What are some warning signs that our hearts are drifting from Jesus?

> Priests & Kings, 2 of 3, March 17th, 2024

"God's steadfast purpose anchors us to diligent hope in Jesus."

Hebrews 6:13-7:10 by Michael Lockstampfor (@miklocks)

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[Music]

with an illustration. Has anybody done much boating? Boating very much? I actually learned a lot of boating from Ashley Rozicki and the Rozicki family.

So have you ever thought about like if you haven't been boating, which is me, like if you're ever thought about how to set up roadways on the water? If you've got 50 boats all trying to get down the same little inlet,

how do they know where to go? And especially if none of them want to slow down. Because all of the stupid things that people do on the roads, they also do in boats.

I don't know if you've ever thought about that. but they just-- - That's not a softer one. - You got something softer, but softer is relative at 50 miles an hour. So what they do is they set up these poles,

and you gotta keep the green one on, I don't know my right from my left, you gotta keep the green one on this side, if you're looking at me, and the red one on this side, and you stay in between the two poles,

and that's called a channel. channel, right? So somebody has, am I right? Yeah, okay. So somebody has gone through and marked off a pathway where it is deep enough for you to drive your boat quickly.

So you get up to speed and the problem is not usually things on top of the water that you're gonna run into 'cause you can kind of see those things. The issue is the things that you cannot see underneath the water that are gonna pull your propellers off of the bottom of your boat.

So the purpose of the channel is twofold. One, it makes a lane so that people can go back and forth and pass each other and there's some rules to the road. But it also gives you some peace of mind to know that people have navigated this channel enough times and they know that they can go pretty quickly down this channel without risk of hitting anything underneath the water.



Or there's no sandbars, there's no... wrecks that are sunk in. There's no big trees. And so you've got this thing, this kind of a safe zone. Now,

that's literally-- I have explained to you all of my knowledge about boating. Like, that is all that I know. It is not very much, but I think it is enough to help me drive a boat. In case of emergency,

I could probably make it happen. So this past week, I had the privilege of going in there. spending some time with some other pastors and one of the pastors has a second job and so he also can afford a boat and so he was generous enough to take us out on his boat for a day and we're driving down the channel and we're going and he's blaring music and it's fun and I'm up in the front of the boat like in

front of the cabin and I've got you know some of my good friends that are there and we're talking and we're laughing and and I look up and I'm like hmm the green thing is supposed to be on the other side we're out of the channel and we're not slowing down like we're still going 50 miles an hour I'm like I don't know a lot but I know that that stick should be on the other side of where the boat is pointing and

so I look behind me to the cabin where I expect it to see Pastor Billy. Captain, Captain William, as I came to call him that day, Captain William navigating our vessel. However,

I did not see Captain William. I saw Pastor Ben from Sebring, who has as much experience driving boats as I do,

and apparently not any more information than I do about what a channel is. Because I look behind me and he's just like... you got to turn you got to turn the boat what we're why you've got to get in the channel what's the channel and so I'm screaming at Pastor Ben and that gets Pastor Billy the captain Williams attention and he turns around and sees where we're at and and he steps up and steers us,

and crisis averted, no sandbars were hit, no pastors were injured in the making of this illustration. Everybody made it home alive, right? The thing about warning signs is you have to know what they are in order for them to mean anything to you,

right? Like, somebody has gone through a lot of work to set those posts, in water. In fact, I was talking to some folks from Fort Myers, they were saying that's one of the things that's taken the most time for Fort Myers to recover is the channel markers,

because it takes so much work to dig those posts down. So somebody has gone through and done a ton of work to set up some warning signs so that you can know where you can speed on to your heart's content and where you need to slow it down a bit and save the manatees.

manatees, right? But if you don't know how to read the symbol, if you don't know how to read the warning sign, it's useless. I think that there's times where we're going through life and there are warning signs flashing all across our dashboard and we just keep cruising as though there's nothing wrong because we didn't even think that that could possibly be an indicator that something might be wrong.



And so, we're going to open it up. up today in our series that we've been going through called Greater Than Priests and Kings. We're gonna look at a little bit of a warning sign, and hopefully it will help us to recenter where we keep our focus, and more importantly, where we anchor our hope. As we go through this morning, God's steadfast purpose anchors us to diligent hope in Jesus Christ.

So as we start on that adventure today, hopefully it'll be a little bit less adrenaline filled as that day, but let's pause and we'll pray together the disciples prayer. This is a model of prayer that Jesus left for the people who were gonna be his disciples.

They were gonna follow after him. And so this is not a magic spell. This isn't gonna like increase your bank account just by praying this three times a day. But it is the, it is the, thing that Jesus said, "If you wanna pray,

you should pray like this." And I'm not really that smart. So I'm just gonna do what Jesus said to do. And so when we pray, we pray this. And so I invite you to pray together with us. The words are on the screen if you'd like to pray out loud.

But the most important thing is not what we say with our mouth but what we pray with our hearts. So let's bow our hearts together and let's pray. Our Father.

Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the King.

kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. I'd like to invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 6.

I'm going to begin in verse 13. Now if you're a guest with us, you don't have a Bible. There's blue Bibles kind of tucked in the chairs around and we're going to be in Hebrews chapter 6 on page 1246.

1247 today. And the cool thing about these blue Bibles is they've got like really big text so you can read them from space. And if you don't have a Bible at home and you'd like to take one home,

then I'd encourage you to just write your name in the front of that one and take it on home, let it be a gift. My wife has graciously reminded me too that as we've been going through Hebrews, we got some Hebrews journals.

They've got the text of Hebrews on one side and blank on the other side. on the other side and those are on the bookcase out there. So if you'd like to follow along and kind of keep a journal, those are our gift to you as well.

We're gonna be in Hebrews chapter six in verse 13 and we're kind of picking up in the middle of an argument, in the middle of a conversation, there's a group of people that they started off walking with Jesus.

Jesus or they kind of grew up in church they had a religious system and a thing that they did they were Jewish and so they often went to the temple and they regularly offered sacrifices and then they put their faith in Jesus they said Jesus is the perfect sacrifice but the more that they put their faith in Jesus the more hostility they got from their community there some of them lost their jobs some of them lost



their some of And so they said, you know, this following Jesus thing is not any easier than the way I was living before. And the old ways were good enough for me.

So I'm just kinda, I'm not saying that he's not the way. I'm just saying I'm gonna practice the old ways again. I'm gonna go back to that old time religion. And so the author writes to just encourage them,

hey, hey, hey, don't drift away. Don't drift away. Like stay in the channel. anchor your hope on Jesus. And he's gonna do that by pointing to a couple of passages in the Old Testament in the Hebrew Scriptures.

So if you're not familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, I'm hopeful that I'm gonna be able to go slow enough today to kinda catch you up and explain. I don't like dropping names and just kinda not explaining who the people are. But we're gonna do a ton of background information today with the hopes that...

that as we go next week, we can draw some further and deeper conclusions. So it's gonna seem like there's just a lot of information. I'm gonna try and digest this a little bit.

So Hebrews chapter six, beginning in verse 13. And I'll read 13 through 18 to begin. For when God made a promise to Abraham,

since he had no one greater word than Abraham, whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying surely I will bless you and multiply you, and thus Abraham,

having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes, an oath is final for confirmation.

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the air. heirs of the promise, the unchangeable characteristics of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath so that by two unchangeable things,

in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

We'll pause there. The author here here is retelling a story that happens in Genesis 12. In Genesis 12,

God calls a guy named Abram and will later change his name to Abraham and most people know him by Abraham so I'm just going to call him Abraham. Actually, I might just call him Abe because that's fun. So God shows up to Abe and Abe is just a normal dude.

He's just living his life. He's probably a pagan. He lives his life. in Mesopotamia and the land of Ur. And so he lived in a worldview system where they had multiple gods.

There was a sun god and a moon god and you brought your offerings to the different ones and tried to placate all those. And then God, the real one, shows up and says, "Abraham, I need you to move,

go, and I'm going to make a great nation out of you." Out of nowhere, he just shows up and says, "If you'll follow me, I'm going to bless you." the socks off of you. And everybody who curses you,

I'm going to curse. And everybody who blesses you, I'm going to bless. Like Abe, will you walk with me?" And Abe says, "Yeah, sure. Where are we going?" He says, "I'll



tell you when we get there." So just sets Abraham off in this course and no GPS says,

"You'll know when you get there. I'll tell you when you arrive." Which sounds like a little bit of faith, right? But God, as he makes this promise that he's going to bless Abraham. Abraham, the author here is making a point that he is blessing by an oath.

There's a legal argument here. There's two layers of legal commitment. One is the promise, and the second is an oath. So God says, "Hey,

Abraham, I'm going to do something for you." That's just His word. I promise. I'm going to do something for you. How many of us have had somebody who says... "I promise I'm gonna," and then didn't. Right?

So God says, "I promise I'm gonna." But in case that's not good enough, let me also swear an oath. And I'm going to swear an oath by the greatest thing that I can, which is me.

Now, that's some Cajones. Right? Like, if anybody else would have said, "I promise I'm gonna." swear by the greatest, I'm gonna swear by my name,

we'd kinda look at him and be like, come on, man. Like, Muhammad Ali, he was good. And maybe he was a great boxer, but was he like the greatest human being that ever lived? Was he the greatest entity that ever lived?

Like, I don't know that I would make that statement. But God says, I'm gonna swear by the greatest thing that I know, me. me." I promise,

and if that wasn't good enough, I'm going to swear by myself. So, he makes a promise and he swears an oath. God's word to Abraham was confirmed by an oath sworn to God's own greatness.

So, God makes a promise. Now, okay, cool. What do we do with this promise? Like, if God gives us a promise, what do we do? It's actually real simple. God promises. we wait and then God delivers the only thing that God is asking us to do is just wait and he's gonna do what he said he's gonna do God promises we wait and then God delivers that's what he says Abraham does now that if you know the story that's a

really generous summary of what Abraham did with his life because in fact a lot of what he did was not very patient and not very weighty, like weight, weighty. Like he was often trying to hurry God along,

like God I don't see how you're working, I need to do something, I'm running out of time here, I'm getting older, I'm past retirement age, my wife's getting older, I gotta figure out a way to help you out. And one of the things that I think God demonstrates in the life of Abraham is just how stinking patient God is,

when all he's asked him to do is weight. I'm gonna I'm gonna give you a child I'm gonna make you a father of many nations and it doesn't matter to me whether you're 100 or 200 like I'm gonna do it Abraham obtained the promise having patiently waited now Abraham is the father of the people that we we would call Israel,

the nation of Israel or the Hebrews or the Jewish people, they have a couple of different names and so sometimes we can get confused but they're all referring to

the same people. People who traced their lineage back to Abraham would be Jewish people,

they would be Hebrews often and they would be comprised of the biblical nation of Israel. Israel. Now, I really don't have time to talk about the relationship between biblical Israel and the current state of Israel.

I think there's a relationship there. I think we should be very careful about how we talk about that, but I don't really have time to get into the nuances of it. But they would ultimately trace their lineage back to Abraham.

We don't ever talk about Abraham as a king, but if I were to describe the story of Abraham, a guy who like started a nation, like led armies in battle and won them and acquired wealth to himself and ultimately his descendants become kings,

like wouldn't we say that somebody who did that, a nation starter would be a king? So I think as we're looking at Abraham, we should not just think of like, oh like the Bible flannograph character,

like we should think of a guy who actually had some substance. He was a king. He was wealthy in his day, and he was formidable in battle. There was a time where his nephew got kidnapped,

and had been kidnapped by an army of like five other kings. Like, okay, or four other kings. There were four kings who had kidnapped his nephew. And Abraham hears about it,

he's like, "You can't just take my boy." And he gets... gets a couple hundred guys together and they go and they take 'em back. They defeat an army that a group,

a confederation of five kings could not do. He leads an army that goes out and do it. I wonder if there's like a tactical strike force. Like I've got more, the more I read the Bible, the more I have more questions than answers.

But Abraham was a legit guy. guy and that Israel exists, that when I say Israel, or when I say Jewish people, or when I say Hebrews,

the fact that Israel exists as a people is confirmation of God's purpose. The fact that Israel exists is a confirmation of God's purpose and the purpose should give us a diligent hope.

If I were to say Amalekites, Amalekites, like that's just, maybe if you've read the Bible a couple of times, you're like, okay, cool, I heard about them one time. Like, so what? There's no Amalekites in the news.

But they were contemporaries of Abraham. The fact that Abraham's descendants continue and they know who they are and they know what their story is, is this confirmation that God was doing something in history.

And that purpose, should give us a diligent hope. The concern for the author, if you look at verses we didn't read, but in Hebrews chapter six and verses 11 and 12,

and we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness and have the full assurance of hope until the end so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.



The thing is when we know the stories, we begin to just kind of assume that they are taken for granted. Of course Abraham existed. I've heard that story a thousand times.

Have you ever thought about the fact that there was nobody preserving the Amalekites? That maybe the fact that you've heard about Abraham says something about God's activity and history? And the fact that if Israel exists as a people is confirmations of God's purpose.

then we should have a diligent hope, not a sluggish hope. We shouldn't just look at the word and go, "Oh yeah, of course, I've heard these stories before." We should go, "Oh my gosh, there's no guarantee "that any of us has ever remembered." And yet we know this guy,

not because he was great, not because he had a bunch of camels, not because he had a bunch of cows, not because he could lead a strike force and capture back in Israel. his nephew, because God was walking with him and setting up a story through him that he could communicate his purpose to us.

And that's the big idea, if you get nothing else from this morning, the big idea for this morning, is that God's steadfast purpose, his purpose in selecting Abraham,

God's steadfast purpose anchors us to a diligent hope in Jesus. Jesus, a diligent hope. Not a sluggish hope,

not a, oh, if I slept good on Saturday night, hope. Not a, if I'm really feeling generous and forgiving on a Wednesday when my kids are just driving me bonkers.

A diligent hope in Jesus. The problem is we drift. And and I've heard that story a thousand times Jesus forgives my sins For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish But I've ever lasting life.

I heard that I've seen it. It's even made it to the NFL. That's how you know It's diluted its power, right? I know that stuff but We say okay,

I have been forgiven But that person really wronged me that person person really took advantage of the situation and I don't have it in me to forgive them.

Like they owe me something. We say, "God, they got to pay. I got in for free,

but they got to pay." Or we say, "God, you've been so generous and so gracious to me." me, and you've given me so much. "I just want to give back to you." And that's a good place to be,

but as we begin to be sluggish with that, we can just begin to write those checks and say, "Yeah, God, I gave you what you wanted from me." Like, I've done the requirement.

I've checked off the list. list of the things that make me right with you. I went to church and I gave some money. I attended and I tithed. What do you want? Like,

can't you just give me some blessing? Can't you just give me some, this is a dangerous prayer. Can't you just give me some patience? I've read my Bible and I prayed this week,



God. Like, why are things not working the way that they're supposed to work? We might meet the legal requirements Without having a genuine surrender of our soul to God So what are some warning signs that our hearts are drifting from Jesus?

What are some warning signs that our hearts are drifting from Jesus? Jesus. I hesitate to say, some of the warning signs that our heart is drifting from Jesus is a lot of what we just come to expect in church culture.

I can wear the Christian t-shirt. Doesn't mean I have to believe it. People won't ask me questions in the grocery store. They'll just assume I'm on their team. team. I gave money,

I tithed this week, and so my checkbook should balance out now, right? I came to church three out of the last four Sundays,

like I'm better than the national average, I'm doing great. But if I'm attending without surrendering,

surrendering, what am I doing? It's not the words that I say to God, it's the attitude of the heart that I bring. You've eaten meals with people who came but are not there.

I'm afraid we come to the table of Jesus and we say, "Yeah, I made it." You better do something spectacular here today 'cause you're on borrowed time.

What are some warning signs that our hearts are drifting from Jesus? The original audience, the people who received the letter, the sermon that we call Hebrews today,

had drifted back, I think, into the Jewish sacrificial system. So they had gone back to offering lambs and things for atonement, instead of trusting Jesus for atonement And I'm this it's not I'm reading in between the lines But in chapter 6 and verse 6 when he says you're crucifying again,

you're savior I think he's referring back to going through the atonement process again They've gone back to what they knew as as a kid So let me put this on a on a timeline and those lines are not easy to see.

I'm sorry. I got some lasers here though That'll help You So here we are today. And the folks who got the letter of Hebrews, probably around 65 A.D., and Jesus was around 33 A.D.,

right, so they trusted in Jesus shortly after he had had his ministry on the world. But they bought into Levi's priesthood, the sacrificial system that had been set up in the book of Leviticus that said,

"If you sin against something, then you got to kill an animal and the blood of the goats and stuff is going to pay for your sin. They said yeah yeah that's older that's older that's what I grew up doing that's the way things ought to go and so yeah I'm not sure he does some atonement but I also got to buy in like I feel a whole lot better going once a year and offering a lamb and seeing the thing die than

just trusting that he died once for all so I gonna go above and beyond, and I'm gonna do some extra stuff. And he's saying you're putting your hope in the wrong thing.

You've gone back to the old ways. So the author has already claimed that Jesus is superior to the law of Moses,

that Leviticus is in. in chapter three. So what do we do?

God's steadfast purpose anchors us to diligent hope in Jesus. Let's continue reading. In verse 19.

19, we have this 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. For this Melchizedek, King David, is here with you. of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham,

returning from slaughter of the kings and blessed him. And to him, Abraham apportioned a 10th 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. We'll pause there. So he says, we anchor our hope. We have this strong encouragement to hold fast the hope set before us.

We have this sure steadfast anchor of the soul. Jesus has gone before us as a forerunner, accomplishing atonement after the order of Melchizedek.

What's a Melchizedek? Can you say that? Melchizedek. Maybe we got enough allergies in the room, we can get real Hebrew. Melchizedek.

I immediately regretted that. Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is a guy in the Old Testament. He's somebody that Abraham, in the course of Abraham's life, he has interactions with this guy Melchizedek. Now if you have never heard of him before,

that's fine. Like there's only eight whole verses in the whole Old Testament that talk about Melchizedek at all. Well, maybe nine total. total. Like the story is very,

very brief. In Genesis, I have it here, in Genesis, I want to say the right number. In Genesis 14, 17 through 24 is the whole story that we have,

all the information that we're going to have about Melchizedek. He's a very minor character. In fact, you could read the whole life of Abraham, and like it wouldn't even register that he was significant at all. You could read the life of Abraham,

the life of Isaac. the life of Jacob, the life of their, I'm taking of Joseph, the life of Joseph. You could read the whole book of Genesis and go like Melchizedek,

what? Like there's a lot of names in there and Melchizedek is not a major one. Like it's a little bit insignificant. So it's odd that this author in Hebrews is like,

yeah, we've got a priest after the order of Melchizedek. So what is he talking about? Well, the priesthood is hereditary. So you can only be a priest if your dad was a priest,

right? So if we're talking about Leviticus, the book of Leviticus, and Levi's priesthood, Levi's priesthood actually comes from Levi. He was a guy.

The guy's name was Levi. And he had sons, and their sons all became priests. the priesthood in Exodus 28. He was born in Genesis 29, and he was the great, great grandson of Abraham. So Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob had a different name too. Jacob's other name was Israel.

Israel had 12 sons. One of his sons was Levi. The descendants of Levi then are all the priests. priests. Does that make sense? It's kind of simple, but sometimes when we talk about the nation of Israel,

we forget the fact that God's dealing with one family, and they're pretty jacked up. If God can show grace to Abe's family, there's hope for me, and I'm encouraged by that.

Okay, so you've got Levi's priesthood, which is descended from Levi, which is descended from Abraham's... who is just a guy that God shows up and says,

"Hey, I want you to walk with me, will you go?" And Abe says, "Sure, well, I got nothing else to do." So he goes with him. The Israelite priests were descendants of Levi,

but Jesus is also a Jew, he's a Hebrew, and his family lineage is traced back to which of the 12 sons of Israel. Israel? I heard Judah over here somewhere,

gold star. The one who named her son Judah knows that Jesus, Jesus' tribe is Judah, right? So he's got twelve sons, one of the twelve is the priests,

and Jesus is from one of the sons that is not the priests. So Jesus is technically not allowed to be a priest according to the Levitical priesthood which is where the atonement was delivered.

Like Jesus came first to the Israelites and preached the message to them. So the author says Jesus is a priest not after the order of Levi but after the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is a Hebrew name and I'll just take it apart for you. Melchizedek Melek means king, and sedek means righteousness. So he's the king of righteousness. Like, that sounds really, it sounds complicated when you're reading, and he says, he is by name, he is, he is first by translation of his name, King of Righteousness. But all he's saying is,

his name means King of Righteousness. So that's just what Melchizedek means. So you've learned Hebrew a bit today. He's also the king of righteousness. of Salem. Salem is the name of the town that he was king over,

but Salem means peace. So he's the king of Salem, he's the king of peace. Now, this Salem could be the same town that the Jebusites take over,

and they call, and that David takes over later and calls Jerusalem. Salem, so the king of Jerusalem. is the king of peace,

right? Again, I have more questions than I have answers and I'm not going to give you all my questions.



But so he's the king of righteousness, he's the king of peace, and he's the king of God most high. high. It is a very specific term,

God most high. When we think about religion, when we talk about religion, if you ask somebody what religion are you, most of the time they're gonna answer with a system.

I'm a Buddhist, I'm a Christian, I'm a Muslim, I practice Islam. Like when we think of religion, we think of a system. When they thought about religion,

they didn't think of a system, they thought of a person. They thought of a personality. Like they identified themselves with their deity. Who is the person that you follow? I follow Yahweh,

or I follow Amuru, or I follow Dagan, or I follow Marduk. Like they would take their God's names and they would use them as their identifier.

They would always be. be identified with the kind of person that you wanted to be. So like, God is a generic term, wasn't actually helpful for them because they wanted to know what kind of God do you worship? What kind of God are you identified with?

And it's interesting that Melchizedek is priest of God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth, who is the one who's talking to Abraham and just had him move into town.

It seems like God had prepared somebody who had some kind of a special relationship with the one true God before Abraham, who was a priest of the Most High God,

before Levi had even been born. It's it's really interesting in the book of Daniel is that Daniel uses this term a lot He and that's a that's a book that's written by believers faithful believers who are trying to follow Yahweh in a pagan culture and Then instead of trying to teach them the name of God like Moses did to Pharaoh They just say we worship God most high the one who made everything and here we see that

that Melchizedek is a priest of God Most High. The question for me from just these small verses is, are we subscribers to a system?

Are we subscribers to a religious system, or are we apprenticing with Jesus? Are we subscribers to a religious system?

Like, is it more important that we are caught Christian than that we actually practice what Jesus taught? Do I care more what you call me than I care what I am actually doing week over week?

Am I more concerned that our nation is called Christian than that it actually practices values that honor Christ? I get cynical around Christmas and I love the bumper stickers.

I don't love them. I really get frustrated with the bumper stickers that say keep Christ in Christmas. And I love, there's somebody snarky and I'm sure they didn't mean it,

but like it hit a chord with me and said let's keep Christ in Christians. I thought, yeah, like that's the thing that I would rather advocate for. I care less what you call the holiday and more what you're on.

with it. 'Cause you can call it Christmas and make it all about the gifts. Or you can call it anything else that you want. But focus on Jesus there and the gift that he is from God and celebrate that in a thousand different ways.

And that gets to the heartbeat of what Christ is calling us to do. Are we subscribers to a religious system or are we apprenticing with Jesus? Jesus? Are we trying to learn from and follow him?

Now, there's no reference like the data, the biblical data on Melchizedek is very small. He doesn't have anybody before him and there's no record of anybody who descends from him.

Like he pops up and then he's gone, which is kind of weird. Like if you've read any of the Bible, you know that they're really into genealogies and this guy doesn't have one. one. So the author says, "Could he be eternal?" And it's kind of a stretch.

But he says, there's a mystery here. There's a mystery here, this character that shows up, that points to something that God is doing outside or within the plan.

And God's plan, his steadfast purpose, should anchor us with a diligent hope in Jesus. Let's continue. reading in verse four, chapter seven,

verse four. 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 that takes tithes from the people,

that is from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man, who does not have the power not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed,

excuse me, and blessed him who had the promises. 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 is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, tithes, paid tithes through Abraham for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

So this is a little bit of a goofy passage. I'll give you just a quick lesson here. A tithe is kind of a loaded word in our modern culture,

but the definition is real simple. A tithe equals a tenth, or ten percent. That's what the word means. And if you go through the Hebrew law,

the tithe, the thing that people are actually required to give back to God in their legal system, which is both a religious system and also a governmental system, is actually significantly more than 10 % of their income.

Like they are often doing 10 % of 10 % of 10%, and they end up with what's closer to 10 % of their income. like 30 % or something like that. I haven't done the math in a long, actually I've never done the math, you know me. I haven't read about the math in a long time but it's somewhere closer to 30%.

And so he's saying like it's often a religious gift, it goes to something and it functioned as their taxes too because God set up not just a religious system in the temple but also a government system too.

too. And so the people of the Old Testament often gave tithes. The point that he's making here is that Abraham, when he came back from that battle, gave 10 % of everything that he had acquired in that battle to win back his nephew,

he gave 10 % to Melchizedek. So he paid a tithe to a different guy. Before Levi was even born,

born. So you've got the Hebrews here that are reading the letter. They're kind of buying back in to Levi's priesthood and he's just making the point that and Psalm went in,

he says, you're a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek and Melchizedek tithe was back here done by Abraham, Levi wasn't even born.

born yet, when Abraham's paying tithes to Melchizedek. And so he's saying, you're putting your hope in a priesthood, an atonement that's gonna give you a priesthood that actually paid homage and gave honor to somebody else.

You're devoting your soul to something that's less than what God designed for your whole being to be. So,

and he even makes the case that because Levi hadn't been born yet, because it's kind of a weird phrase, but because Levi hadn't been born yet, he was still in the loins of his ancestor, then Levi also paid tithes to Melchizedek.

And then Melchizedek blesses Abraham and Levi. There's somebody who's who's outside of Israel by whom Israel is blessed.

And God has already promised that the one who blesses Abraham is blessed by the Father. So you've got this priesthood that exists outside of Israel that now the author is saying,

"We ought to be bought into that." Is there anybody that gets a little bit frustrated by that? 'cause there's a sense,

and I got frustrated this week. I went down so many rabid trails this week, trying to figure out a way because I tried. What it sounds like to me, what the author is saying here is all you really need is Genesis and the New Testament.

Like if you get Jesus, if you got Genesis and everything gets made and then you get Jesus, then that's really all you need. All that middle part, that's just fluff. That's just God dealing with some people that couldn't follow the rules that they agreed to abide by.

Like, can't we just get rid of all that stuff? Why do we gotta read the Old Testament? Like, why does it matter about the, why do we have a whole book called Leviticus to talk about the Levitical priesthood if Melchizedek had already surpassed it?

Like, why are we wasting our time with all the prophets and God continually... continually telling people, "Hey, you should get right with me." And then continually going, "I'm good doing my own thing." And then him judging them.

And then them saying, "Oh, we were wrong. We probably should have worshiped you the whole time." And he's like, "Yeah, I tried to tell you that." And they're like, "Yeah, but now we're kind of distracted because you've given us everything that we need and we're just kind of satisfied and we're just kind of going to drift away." Like why do we need all of those generations of stories of things,

of the ways that God was patient? with these foolish people who I identify with so much. Your character is determined over time.

If you and I just meet for the first time, I don't know anything about you except for what you tell me. And there's some really good liars out there. And so I often try to give people the benefit of the doubt and I try to give them the opportunity to demonstrate their character,

but it's gonna take time. If I only see you once a week and it's only in this hour, like there are a bunch of things that go on in my head on a Sunday morning and I'm probably not gonna connect with you very well.

This is the only time we see each other. But if we get together and we have conversations, we have conversations. outside of this room, or you come over to pizza night and we feed you pizza, like I'll get to know you better.

But it's gonna take time. Character is demonstrated over time. And God, in His grace, in His mercy to us, has recorded for us generations of His patience with people that just didn't get it most of the time.

We learn God's kidding. by observing his activity over generations. You want to know what God's like?

God's like the dad that comes in and cleans up the mess every single time. God's the the the the father who says you're not gonna be able to pay this debt.

I'll pay it for you and then the kid just... just kills themselves trying to pay it and they end up in debt anyway and he's the one who runs to them and says, let me pay it for you, please. We need to know that he is the God most high.

He is the maker of heaven and earth. Like absolutely he is sovereign over all of his creation but we also need to know that he is Yahweh, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious,

slow. to anger and abounding instead fast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands for giving iniquity and transgression and sin but who will by no means clear the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation we need to know that his word is firm instead fast and reliable and we need to know that his character is compassion

When Jesus looks at the crowds, he knows they're just hungry. He knows they're just watching the clock for lunch. He knows that they just came for bread. And he looked at those selfish,

simple, easily entertained people. He had compassion. and he moved towards them and he graciously took the time to show them how their sin was killing them and he said,

"I have life if you'll take it and I want nothing more than to give it to you." No,

Kizadek is a man. mystery. I wanted to find the tie this week that tied him into the genealogy of Jesus. I wanted to find the verse to point to that said that Tamar was somehow from Salem and Salem could be like the same one that,

I wanted to find it and I couldn't find it. And I was mad. Like God, why are you pointing us to this guy? Like he doesn't even, he doesn't fit in the story. Like it seems like he sidesteps everything that you're,

he says, no, no, no, no, he doesn't sidestep it. But I want you to know that I have had a purpose from the beginning. And that purpose was not actually dependent on anybody getting it right. That if Israel,

if Jacob, if any of them had walked away and the whole thing had burned down, I still had a plan. plan. I still was gonna accomplish my purpose and God's steadfast purpose can anchor my soul in the diligent hope that Jesus is the fulfillment of everything that I need.

So there's a mystery here that I can get frustrated with and I can say, "God, it's not fair "that you didn't explain it to me." He says, "I didn't need to explain it to you. "I told you everything you need. "Will you trust me with what you have?" So what mystery of God is he inviting us to trust his character in?

Of everything that we know about him, he's demonstrated his character over and over again and still will leave these little breadcrumbs of mysteries so that we can learn to trust him. What mystery of God is he inviting us to trust his character in?

God's steadfast purpose anchors us to diligent hope in Jesus. Let's pray bigger than me.

I thank you that that you don't need my permission to do anything at all. I thank you that you're God and that I'm not. And I thank you for all of the times that I have come to you demanding answers.

You've graciously and completely pointed out your character to me and Taught me over and over again that I can trust you My understanding will fail The people that I trusted will fail My own abilities My own cleverness all of those things will fail.

But I pray that you'd help us to trust you, to earnestly cling to you for our hope. To not neglect the ways that you have communicated your character to us.

To not project on you the failures of those who have represented you. Or to help us to see you clearly.

Or to help us to trust you in the mystery. Help us to believe the things that you have communicated clearly And know that it is enough You are enough It's in Jesus name that we ask Amen

[Music]