



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Hebrews 2:17-18

Fall 2026

"The Umpire"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are in the Book of Hebrews. If you're visiting, we've just begun the book and we are in chapter 2, but we're finishing up that chapter this morning with verses 17 and 18.

Hebrews chapter 2, verses 17 and 18;

¹⁷Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 2: 17-18

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we do come in prayer for Your help, Your mercy, as we have just read. It is true of You that You are a God of mercy...and Your Son has experienced all the difficulties of life that we experience, yet without sin. And so He can be, 'a faithful and

merciful high priest', (vs17), as we will consider. Bless us as we do that, for this is a great text.

There is no text that isn't great; it's all God-breathed, and it's all of You. And yet we need a guide through it, and You have given us that in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, who has sealed our hearts, the hearts of every believing person, until the Day of Redemption. He not only protects us and guides us, He interprets the Bible for us—and I pray for that ministry, that You would open our minds to the things we've read, and that You would even guide us beyond the sermon itself and to the proper applications of this great text.

So LORD, bless us; build us up in the faith, nourish us spiritually; sanctify us;
"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and Redeemer." (*Psa 19:14*)

And bless us materially, LORD. We have material needs, and we have listed some of them in the Calendar of Concern. LORD, there are saints here who need our prayers, and yet we don't know what their needs are, or they haven't been made known, or they just continue on—You know who they are. We are all dependent upon You for every breath of life that we take. We live and move and exist in You, and so we need to realize everything that comes into our life is ultimately from You. It may trouble us, but it has a purpose, and You know it. But every moment of health that we enjoy is a gift from You. May we be grateful for that, and not take it for granted, and be mindful of those who are suffering at this time.—So LORD, bless us in that way.

And bless our time now together. We pray that it would be a time not only of study and learning, but a time of worship. Every moment of our lives should be worshipful. I pray that for all of us.

Bless us now, we pray.

In Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) It has been called the loneliest job in sports – officiating. In baseball, it is being an umpire, calling balls and strikes, people out or safe—calls that often result in arguments from players and boos from fans, or managers who storm out of the dugout and go toe-to-toe with the umpire, and even kick dirt on his uniform.

It's a lonely job—but it's a necessary job for the game. Baseball couldn't function without an umpire to mediate, to make quick decisions...like who got to the base first, the ball or the batter?

Now, that's even truer in life. Job understood that; hard times reduced a great man to an invalid sitting on an ash heap, surrounded by unsympathetic and accusing friends. He knew that he was helpless; he felt completely inadequate before God...and insecure. It seemed that God was against him. He needed someone to plead his case with the LORD and give help. But he said, “There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.” (Job 9:33). He had no ‘mediator’ he had no ‘negotiator’ who could reconcile him and God.

But Job did have an umpire in the heavens that he couldn't see—the one every Christian has, that those weak, fearful saints in Rome had; the Son of God...‘God in God's court.’

That’s the encouragement of the last two verses of chapter 2 of the Book of Hebrews. Our umpire is a priest, the “high priest”, who reconciled us to God—and always prays for us in trials, and supplies our needs.

The Book of Hebrews is the only place where Christ is called our “high priest”, and, our “great high priest”. So this subject is an important contribution of this book: Christ's priesthood. The writer begins it at the end of the chapter by saying, "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things..." (vs17a). Meaning, ‘In order to be our priest, He had to become one of us’.

In verse 14, he wrote Jesus became a man, He ‘shared flesh and blood’ with us. So He was a true man—and is a true man. This is why it was necessary, “...so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest...”. (vs17b).

A priest represents the people to God; a prophet represents God to the people. God spoke to the people through a prophet. The priest speaks to God for the people—prays and offers sacrifices for them. Christ could only do that by becoming one of us. He had to become a man in order to represent men. He had to become human in order to represent humans.

And to do it correctly He had to be 'like us', (as the writer says), 'in all things' (vs17). And what that means is, 'He went through life as we do'. He came into this world the way we do. He was born physically, and He developed naturally, from infancy to childhood, to adolescence and adulthood. Luke tells us in his Gospel that He had to learn, just as we do; He studied. We might think, 'Well, He is the Son of God. He has the Bible all memorized. He knows it all. He is the one that brought it forth.'

But, in His human nature He had to learn it, and so I assume as a child He was in the synagogue frequently, going over the scrolls and learning the Scriptures, because He had mastered them by the time His ministry began.

He had to learn, as you and I do.

He grew physically.

He learned discipline in His life.

He experienced all of the challenges of life that we experience.

He grew in His body, His mind, and His emotions.

And yet in all of this, He remained who He was, (and is eternally), the Son of God. He continued to be omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent in His divine nature. He never stopped being God. That's the reason, as we are told at the end that, 'He is able to come to our aid and give us help.' (vs18b). He is God, He is the Almighty. He is sufficient...and more so, He is reliable.

But He is also able to do that with the wisdom and the sympathy that He obtained because He knows our condition. He put Himself in it, in our condition, "in all things". (vs17a).

As Paul put it in Philippians chapter 2, verse 7, He "emptied Himself." It doesn't mean He emptied Himself of His deity, (as some have said). What it simply means is, He became a servant...He put Himself under His Father's authority, and His divine attributes only at the Father's direction.

So what He did, He did as, "...He sees His Father doing;". [He speaks of that in John 5, (vs19), very clearly.] He was under His Father's authority as a man, and He lived an obedient life. So His life that He lived is as 'fully God and fully man', and in complete obedience to the Father.

He learned obedience at every stage of life—and as He did, 'increased in wisdom'. (Luke 2:52). He lived life as we live it. He experienced joy and sorrow, peace and anger—righteous anger. He never sinned, but He knew from experience all of the emotions of life and the experiences of life. So when the author of Hebrews describes the nature of the Lord's priestly ministry, he describes Jesus as being both "merciful and faithful". (vs17).

Both are equally important, but the author puts some emphasis here on the Lord's *mercy*, to remind us of the Lord's concern and His interest in us. He is intensely interested in every one of us—and was in those saints in Rome who were suffering.

Later in chapter 5, verse 2, it is said that every high priest is to, "deal gently with the ignorant". But if you've read your Bibles and you've studied through them, you know that that didn't always happen. It was often the priests who were ignorant, and even callous. When Hannah was barren and in great anguish, praying for a son, the high priest Eli saw her over there praying, and praying so earnestly that he thought she was drunk; and rebuked her for it. He was spiritually dull and insensitive to those needs that she had. His sons were even worse, Hophni and Phinehas. They were gluttons who took advantage of the women serving in the tabernacle.

And then the priests in our Lord's day, especially the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, were completely cold, secular men...unbelieving and unfeeling in their duties.

And there were some who believed at that time that the high priest should be detached from the people. The Jewish sage of the 1st century, Philo, wrote that, 'The priest should not show his feelings', and, 'to be impassive, above it, and not make a connection with the people.'

That's very different from our Lord, who 'wept over Jerusalem' loudly, (*Luk 19:41*), who stood before Lazarus' tomb and wept visibly before all, (*Jhn 11:35*), and is often described in the Gospels as 'feeling compassion' for the people.

That's our high priest; He is not detached from us, He is not indifferent to our circumstances and the trials we go through...He is merciful. He has been where we are, He has real life experience...and He understands our situation even better than we do. He knows our trials and has compassion on us—and with the weakest and the most wayward of us.

He is like that father in 'The Parable of the Prodigal Son', who is waiting for his son every day to come home. And when he does, runs to him, and he embraces him. That is the Godhead, and that's Christ. He is not harsh or impatient, He is merciful toward us.

And, 'He is faithful toward God'. He is faithful in the "things pertaining to God", the author writes, (*vs17*)—those "things" having to do with sin and salvation, and specifically the work of "*propitiation*". (*ibid.*). That's the reason He came into this world and served as our high priest, "...to make propitiation for the sins of the people.", the author writes.

Now, that word *propitiation* may seem like a big word to some of you, but it is one of the most important words in the Bible. It's not used many times but it defines the Lord's ministry for us. So, it's important that we understand what it means.

Unfortunately, we lose it in some of the versions that we have:

The New International Version translates this as "make atonement";

And the Revised Standard Version translates it "expiation".

Both of those state a truth, Christ did 'expiate', (or 'remove' sin) through His death.

And He did, "make atonement", (satisfied God's justice).

But the actual word is "propitiation", which is more than removing sin. It is removing it in a certain way...it is, '*removing it by turning away the wrath of God*', which man's sin has provoked.

I think there was some influence in maybe the '40s, and the '50s, when the Revised Standard Version was written...when we didn't want to stress the wrath of God. Rather, 'We want a loving God, so let's put *expiation* in there rather than propitiation.'

But you can't avoid the wrath of God if you are studying the Bible...the Bible teaches it! God hates sin—and divine wrath is against every evil thing. And that's not just the Old Testament picture of God. [That's how some want to describe God: 'Well, in the Old Testament, He is a wrathful God, a God of war, a God of vengeance. In the New Testament, it's a God of love and compassion.'] No! He is both...He's the God of the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament.

John chapter 3, verse 36, written by the Apostle John, ('*The Apostle of Love*' as he is sometimes described), where he says in verse 36, "...he who does not obey the Son..." (who does not believe in the Son), "...will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."— presently. If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, what he is saying is, 'The wrath of God presently abides on you in this place.' Romans chapter 1, verse 18;

"For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness..."

Now, that's a statement worth a lot of study:

The unbeliever understands intuitively that he is a creature, she is a creature...and that there is a God. ..but he hates that and, 'suppresses the truth of unrighteousness', (*ibid.*); and does so, so cleverly that he or she doesn't really even understand that's what he or she is doing.

Well, that's the reason we need a Savior. We need, 'An *umpire* to put his hand on us both, (the Lord God and us), and bring us together, because God's wrath is real, and it is **against** sin and sinners, (which we all are).

Salvation is not deliverance from psychological problems, or loneliness and alienation...[although God does restore us to a sound mind as we obey Him and study the Word of God and are sanctified; and He puts us in a family—at the moment of faith, we are joined to a host of believers, locally and throughout history. We have a family and God gives us joy in those relationships...and they're very necessary. It's all part of salvation, it accompanies salvation.] ...but salvation is essentially deliverance from judgment. And that's the reason John the Baptist spoke to the crowds about fleeing "the wrath to come", (*Mat 3:7*)—it is real...and the only way to turn away and remove it is to satisfy God's justice, **which requires the legal punishment of sin.**

God is holy. He does not approve of lying and cheating, or murder and immorality, or cruelty...sin of any kind or to any degree. And the underlying sin of all, is *unbelief*. Wherever there is unbelief, there is sin; that's Romans 14, verse 23; "...whatever is not from faith is sin." So a man can live a very moral life and an upstanding life, and do wonderful things, yet be an atheist and be a terrible sinner.

So He must deal with sin as a righteous judge and punish it. And He will; there is a day coming, which is a day of judgment. In fact, Paul told the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17, verse 31, that God "has fixed a day". I don't know if that disturbed any of them. It may have, because a few of them did believe...even though the rest scoffed at him when he talked about the resurrection. But "...He has fixed a day" for it—it's coming.

But the Good News of the Gospel is that there is also a way of escape. It is Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice that satisfied God's justice, and turned away His wrath; **that** is *propitiation*.

It doesn't mean that 'the suffering Son' transformed a wrathful God into a loving God, as though He had to placate the Father and make Him love sinners. That's neither biblical, nor is it a logical idea. There is no division between the Father and the Son. They are distinct from one another, but they are the same essence...they are united.

Christ didn't act independently so that He could change the attitude of the Father toward people. There is One God who exists in three Persons—and all three are united and of the same mind:

The Father *designed* the plan of salvation,
The Son *accomplished* the plan of salvation,
The Holy Spirit *applies* salvation.

God the Father initiated salvation. He didn't need to be convinced to be a loving God—He is: "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son..." (*Jhn 3:16*). He sent His Son to die to pay our debt, "...to make propitiation for the sins of **the people**." (*vs17b*). And who are "the people"?

Well, according to verse 13, they are 'The children God gave to Christ'; they are "the descendants of Abraham", according to verse 16. They are the elect, those 'chosen from the foundation of the world, according to God's plan', according to Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4, (and many other passages, by the way).

But, in regard to the giving of the Gospel...in terms of that, who are they?
They are "believers" ...because the elect believe.

And whoever believes in Jesus by trusting in Him as God's Son and His priestly sacrifice on the cross...not only do we believe in Him as the God-man, we believe in what He did—His person and His work. So those who do believe, they will receive from the Father forgiveness—and they will be saved from the wrath to come, delivered from it.

Now, that is a blessing that we will never be able to fully fathom...‘We’ve been delivered from the wrath of God’. This wrath of God that I speak of, will drive away the wicked like dust on a blast of wind, (That is how David describes it in Psalm 1, (vs3), but it will never touch us who have believed.)

It has already touched the Savior, it has already touched Christ, who is our *representative*. ‘He took our hell on the cross so that we could have His heaven’...and all we have done is receive salvation as a free gift!

Some have described faith as an open hand that receives a gift. It's not meritorious; we simply receive what He has done. He finished the work at Calvary, so now, regardless of the storms of life, we are safe and secure forever—that is the Gospel. And we can tell it and believe it because Christ was faithful in these things. If He had not been faithful, we would be lost because there would be no cross and there would be no salvation. But He was ‘faithful to the end’ and, “in the things pertaining to God”. (vs17).

And there were frequent attempts to keep Him from going to the cross. In verse 18, we're told that He, “was tempted”. From the beginning of His ministry, He was tempted to forsake His mission. You know that immediately after He was baptized, He went out into the wilderness for 40 days—and there He met the devil and was tested by him. There were three tests that are recorded, and each of those tests was designed to persuade Jesus to avoid the cross, to escape hardship, to take an easy way to the crown, and to the throne. Well, the easy way is always a temptation, isn't it?

Later, His own family tried to restrain Him by taking Him away from His ministry. They thought, ‘He had lost His mind’, that ‘He was a fanatic’. It's a curious thing to read; it's in Mark chapter 3, verse 21. They were concerned that ‘He had gone around the bend’, so they came to take Him away. But it was another attempt by Satan to avert the cross. They thought they were doing Him a favor, the right thing—but it was Satan working within them.

Peter rebuked the Lord for telling the disciples that He would be killed; "God forbid it, Lord!" (*Mat 16:22-23*). That's what he said, ‘Don't talk like a defeatist. You're the

King...You're not going to die! We're going to reign together!' [But it was Satan who was talking through a friend and giving 'positive counsel'...well-meaning counsel—but **wrong** counsel.] And that's what Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (*ibid.*)

And finally, the greatest temptation came in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus prayed that, "if it were possible" that, 'the Father might let the cup pass from Him', (*Mar 14:35*). [And 'the cup of suffering', 'the cup of God's wrath' is what He is speaking of. You have this in the Old Testament, where sometimes 'God's wrath' is described as being 'in a cup'. (*e.g. Jer 25:15*).]

Jesus knew exactly what the cross was...that it was hell. He saw it clearly, and He drew back in horror in His human nature. Later, (in chapter 5, verse 7), the author wrote that Jesus prayed with, "loud crying and tears". [That is only found here, in the Book of Hebrews. You don't find it in the Gospels.] He prayed with "loud crying and tears", the temptation to abandon the mission was intense.

But He didn't yield to it, not in the least, not for a moment. In all of it, He sought God's will in His human nature, and once it was confirmed to Him, He said, "Your will be done." (*Mat 26:42*). He got up; He went forth into the garden to meet the enemy. He went forth calmly and in complete control, and He gave Himself up as "a ransom for many" —for us. (*Mar 10:45*).

He knew the temptation to take the easy way and escape suffering. It's the temptation that these Hebrews were going through, experiencing...the temptation to escape trials for they had been beaten down by them.

It was becoming too much for them, and they thought:

'Let's just escape; let's go back to the synagogue. And let's reject all of this!'

That was the temptation. They hadn't done it, but that was the temptation.

Well, the Lord experienced that...and He experienced much more—more intensely than anything we have experienced...so intensely that He sweated blood, but

He didn't turn aside. (*Luk 22:44f*). He stayed firm to the end. "He was faithful", as the author wrote. (*Heb 3:2*). And "He was faithful" as a man...He trusted the Father. And that's what He said in verse 13, (and it's our model); "I will put My trust in Him."

He went through all of this just as we do—but far more intensely. And that's the encouragement for us; He understands our plight in this world of temptation and weakness because He's been there.

Now, it might seem that because He didn't sin, (and theologically we speak of His 'impeccability'), that doesn't mean that, 'He didn't sin'; rather it means He **could not** sin as, 'the Son of God' —and that kept His human nature from sinning.

Because of that, though, we might think, 'Well, He knows less about temptation than we do, because we've sinned and we know all of that...and the consequences.'

But the truth is really the opposite because He withstood temptation to the end...and He experienced temptation *in the fullest force* of it. We've never experience that; we'd fail long before the temptation becomes that intense.

Kent Hughes, who was pastor of the College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, has written a number of books and commentaries...and he illustrated that point from an engineering perspective by asking, 'Which bridge underwent the greatest stress; the one that collapsed under the first load of traffic, or the one that bears the same load of traffic day after day, year after year?'

Well, that's Christ. He knows the full intensity of temptation—something that none of us knows and so He can sympathize with us all the more, and give us help in the wisest way. That's what the author says in verse 18b, 'Because He was tempted', "...He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

Now, that means two things: *First*, because He did not waiver in His mission but went to the cross and drained the cup of God's wrath to the dregs—He's able to give help...the help of redemption; He is able to save us. He paid the debt that we owe—He paid it all! "It is finished."; that's what He declared from the cross. (*Jhn 18:50*).

Imagine your life, your conscience, is a slate full of charges of sin...every kind of sin you've ever committed—and they convict you...but that slate has been wiped clean! That's what Christ did at the cross.—And “It is finished”, as I’ve said...as He said. If He had failed the test and He had yielded to temptation, He would have become a fellow sinner with us and unable to save. His faithfulness enabled Him to be our Savior.

So *first* of all, He gives help to us by His sacrifice, by being a *propitiation* for our sins and saving us from the wrath to come. **There is no greater blessing than that.**

But *secondly*, He is also able to give us help every day in the struggles of life. A priest not only offers sacrifices, he offers prayers—and the Lord does that for us with full understanding. He not only suffered the greatest temptations to avoid the cross, but all through His life He suffered daily the trials that are common to all of us: hunger, thirst, fatigue. We see that in the Gospels, but that was His life, like it is ours.

And since He was perfect and holy, His exposure to the filth and wickedness of this age was far more offensive to Him than it is to us. He wasn't sheltered from it, or from the charms of this world as well; the various kinds of seduction, and moral and material enticements that are so common to every place...and every age. The world is attractive—He saw it, understood it, felt the draw of it...though without yielding to it in any way. —“Without sin”, in other words. But He knows the pull of the world, He knows the influence that it can have on us—and He knows how to help.

We live in a world of sorrow that's filled with tragedies, sickness, and death in which people need someone to come alongside and give encouragement. So Paul tells us in Galatians 6, (vs2), that we're to, “Bear one another's burdens...”, that is part of our ministry of this family that we are part of through God's grace.

Well we often wonder though, through these difficulties when some tragedy comes into our life, ‘The why it's occurred’; ‘Why did this happen to me?’ Or, ‘Why did this happen to my friend or someone in my family?’

In one sense, the reason is simply this; ‘That that's the kind of world we live in. We're in a fallen world.’

This world is not the way it was designed to be when God created it; sin intervened. It is all part of God's plan, of course, but this is not the ideal—and not the way it's going to be forever.

But we live in that kind of a world; we live in a fallen world, and in that world tragedy happens to everyone. God doesn't prevent that from touching us, rather, He uses it in our lives. But 'We all go through these kinds of things'...that's one way to explain it.

The righteous suffer. They also suffer persecution, like these Hebrew saints in Rome. The loss of family, of children, of wealth, of health...that takes us back to Job, who was nearly broken under all of it. He cried out, 'I need an umpire!', almost in despair...we all do.

And we have it in Christ! The world rejects that 'umpire', ('kicks dirt on Him'); and Satan hates that umpire. He tried to break Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, but he can't. So he opposes the saints, the Lord's people, and in doing that, he casts doubt on them and on their integrity and their faithfulness—and casts doubt within our own minds at times, of Christ's work and His love and His compassion for us.

In Revelation 12, verse 10, he is called, "...the accuser of our brethren...who accuses them before our God day and night." He makes those same accusations to us here, and sowing doubts in our minds, reminding us of our weakness and our failures... and they have the ring of truth because they are true; we fail every day. And these doubts that he sows within us can make us not only doubt ourselves, but doubt God — just like the experience that Job had.

We wonder why things happen: Maybe it's the death of a child, and you wonder, 'Why did my child die?' That's a hard thing for any parent to take. I can't imagine how difficult that is, (or I can only imagine it). Or, 'Why am I afflicted with this particular physical issue, this chronic disease? What did I do? Is God really for me, or am I just some twig caught in the gears of some great, impersonal machine?'

All of that is the voice of Satan, as it was for Job—Satan speaking through the voices of his friends; or Satan speaking in a strange voice in his conscience, (or our

conscience), causing doubts and confusion. He does that with us, it's part of the spiritual battle we're in.

But we have an umpire who stands between us, who calls him 'out'! Who shows the devil His wounded hands, and He says, 'I paid their debt; it's taken away. I experienced their punishment in their place. They are now innocent!'

It's the scene in Zechariah chapter 3, when Joshua, the high priest, was clothed in filthy garments from head to toe, and Satan stood beside him accusing him, pointing to him—and the LORD rebuked Satan and called Joshua, "a brand plucked from the fire." And then He clothed the priest in clean garments from head to toe. (*Zec 3:1-5*). Just as the Lord defended Joshua, He defends each one of us—and He silences Satan.

We can't know the reason for the things that happen in our lives. God doesn't tell us this side of heaven why this or that happened. 'But then at that time, when we're there, He will.'

Just a month or two ago, we finished the Book of Revelation, and twice in the Book of Revelation, there is the statement made that God, "will wipe every tear from their eyes"; chapter 7, (*vs17*), and chapter 21, (*vs4*). That is coming—but now we must trust Him. Now, we must walk by faith.

Long ago, Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 29, verse 29, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us...". God's providence is filled with secret things—the reasons for why tragedies happen, and the sorrows we have ...those are the secret things. Someday, He will explain it all to us.

But today we have the things revealed: Such as 'God is sovereign', and, "...who works all things according to the counsel of His will...", Ephesians chapter 1, verse 11.

And 'He is holy', and 'He is good', and 'He is loving'; and He is the, "God of all comfort", 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 3. He cares for us as His children. 'Nothing happens to God's people without a purpose' ...a good purpose—that's Romans 8, verse 28. These are the things revealed.

In heaven He will make known everything to us. Until then, “we walk by faith not by sight”. (2Cor 5:7). That's *great faith*...which He gives us. It's a gift, and He strengthens us in it; He strengthens our faith.

And He does that through our reading of the Word of God, and fellowship with one another, and our participation in the ordinances...all of that.

And what the writer made known here for the first time to those weak, fearful saints in Rome, is that, ‘They are not alone’. Not abandoned; they have a champion in heaven, a high priest. “A great high priest”! (Heb 4:14). There is no greater friend than He is, than our Lord is.

He has been tempted to the full intensity of temptation.

He has witnessed and experienced tragedy.

He knows rejection and sorrow and suffering.

And so He knows the need for help and how to give it. He prays wisely and applies His power and strength to us...He’s doing that right now.

We're to ‘bear one another's burdens’. But we are faithless people and we don't do those kinds of things, the things that we ought to do—but He does. Even when I fail or you fail, God doesn't fail, Christ never fails. So when we pray, we can appeal to His mercy and know that He sympathizes with us.

Have you ever thought as you're on your knees and you're really going through some protracted problem, and you keep praying for it, and you wonder, ‘Is anybody hearing what I'm praying? Do my prayers penetrate the ceiling?’

Yes, they do! He hears everything. He is fully engaged in your life. His timing is not your timing; His timing is better. He sympathizes with us; He’s the, “God of all comfort”. (2Cor 1:3).

His humanity assures us of His sympathy, and His deity assures us of His strength. He is well able to help and always willing to bless.

He is our merciful and faithful high priest.

That's the assurance that every believer in Jesus Christ has.

He has made propitiation for us.

He has satisfied the justice of God and extinguished God's wrath toward us.

He has put His hand on both God and us and made us friends,

He is 'the umpire'.

We are forgiven, and we are made His children:

And we have received all of that by grace alone through faith alone.

Is that true of you? Are you a believer? If not then look to Christ, trust in Him as your Savior and the priest who always is able and willing to come to our aid.

May God help you to do that.

(Closing prayer) Father, what a great truth that is that we have sung; "You will hold us fast". No one can pluck us out of your hand, Father, or out of your Son's hand—we are doubly secure. And someday, "our faith will become sight".

We look forward to that. Keep us faithful in the meantime, Father, help us to lay hold of these great truths. We have a high priest, Who is all-wise and all-powerful...may we rely on Him and not ourselves.

Now,

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.

In Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)