

TEACH ME TO PRAY

HEBREWS 7:25

THE HELP OF THE SON



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY
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INTRODUCTION

Most Christians feel ashamed of their prayer life. We know we should pray more and for more. We want to pray more and for more. Jesus can help us with that. How? **How can Jesus help us to pray more and for more?** Hebrews 7:25 has an encouraging answer for us.

BACKGROUND

We've been looking at prayer using different images to teach us to pray:

- **The cross:** Taught us how to pray in Jesus name
- **The throne:** Taught us to pray with confidence
- **The battlefield:** Taught us to pray as in a war.
- **The supper:** Taught us to view prayer as communion
- **The door:** Taught us to pray for all our needs
- **The window:** Teaches us how to pray for perspective
- **The schedule:** Teaches us when to pray
- **The help:** The help of the Holy Spirit

Professor John Murray said, "The children of God have two divine intercessors. Christ is their intercessor in the court of heaven. The Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theaters of their own hearts."

Last time we looked at the help of the Spirit in the theater of our own hearts. This week we are looking at the help of the Son as he intercedes for us in the court of heaven.

The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, compared to the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings. The Apostle is encouraging the Hebrew Christians to look away from Old Testament shadows of Christ to fulfillment of them in Christ. In Hebrews 7:25, the Apostle helps us to find encouragement in the superiority of Christ's prayers.



In what way is Christ superior to the Old Testament priests?



1. JESUS LIVES FOREVER

Old Testament Priesthood

"The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office" (Heb. 7:23).

When an Old Testament priest died, his son became priest. As generation of priests passed away, they were shown to be weak, frail, temporary dying priests. Death seized them and kept them under its power. They could not keep themselves alive, never mind give life to others. The Old Testament priest Melchisedec was the closest any Old Testament priest came to living forever. He appeared suddenly as one without any genealogy or forefathers and there is no record of his death. He seemed to be a priest without beginning or end. But he only seemed to be.

New Testament Priesthood

"But he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever" (Hebrews 7:24).

Jesus not only seemed to be without beginning or end. He really was without beginning or end. He is a priest who "continues forever." But did Christ not die? He did. Then how can it be said, he "continues forever."

First, because he was a priest even as he died, in his death, while dead, and then as a resurrected from the dead. His priesthood was never interrupted. While his body was in the grave, his human soul was in heaven, where he was presenting his sacrifice to God. His priesthood continued without interruption.

Second, he "continues forever" because he now lives forever in heaven where he sits at the Father's right hand, making intercession for his people. This is why he lives. This is how he lives. This is how he has lived since his ascension to heaven. He is continually appearing in heaven for us.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Jesus is a reliable intercessor. He never takes a vacation, He never takes a break. He never hands over his responsibility to others. "He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Others that we rely on die: the best doctors, the best lawyers, the best helpers, the best counselors, the best pastors, they all die. But we can fully rely on Jesus because he continues forever.

Jesus is an experienced intercessor. Think of how long he's been doing this for. He's continued doing this for about 2000 years. How many prayers he has prayed for his people. How many different people he's prayed for, how many different situations, needs, problems. He has all the experience we need.

BECAUSE HE LIVES
I CAN FACE TOMORROW
BECAUSE HE LIVES
ALL FEAR IS GONE
BECAUSE I KNOW
HE HOLDS THE FUTURE
AND LIFE IS WORTH THE LIVING
JUST BECAUSE HE LIVES



Jesus lives to pray.
What does his prayer life look like?



2. JESUS PRAYS FOREVER

"...he always lives to make intercession for them" (25)

Who does he pray for?

He does not pray for everyone. He told us this in John 17:9: "I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours."

He prays for his people. Who are his people? "Those who come to God by him" (25). If you want to be in Jesus' prayers, there's only one condition: you must come to God through him. Your only hope of access to God and to his heavenly kingdom is Christ alone. If you are not coming to God through Christ, if you are not coming to God or coming in your own name or with some other hope than Christ, you have no guarantee that you are in Jesus' prayers. If you come as a sinner, depending on Christ alone for salvation, you can be sure that you are specifically and individually in Jesus's prayers.

He prays for those who will be his people in the future. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word" (20). If you are one of God's people it's because Jesus prayed for you before you came into God's family.

What does he pray for?

John 17 does not just tell us who Jesus prays for but how he prays and what he prays for.

- He prays for God's glory (1)
- He prays for our salvation (2)
- He prays for our education (3)
- He prays for our protection (11)
- He prays for our unity (11, 21, 23)
- He prays for our joy (13)
- He prays for our deliverance from the devil (15)
- He prays for our holiness (17)
- He prays for our mission (18)
- He prays for blessing on our witness (21)
- He prays that others would see God's love for us (23)
- He prays for us to be with him in heavenly glory (24)
- He prays for us to know God's love (26)

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Jesus is praying these prayers for you. Therefore we can echo these prayers with confidence that they are in line with God's will and pleasing to God's ear.

Jesus is praying for us when we cannot/do not pray. We can stop praying for any number of reasons: backsliding, affliction, busyness, forgetfulness, coldness, disappointment, weakness, tiredness, dementia, dying, etc., but Jesus never stops praying and is always praying for us.

WHEN WE CANNOT START PRAYING
JESUS CANNOT STOP PRAYING

What's the biggest benefit of Jesus's prayers?



3. JESUS SAVES FOREVER

"...he is able to save to the uttermost..." (25).

A Powerful Salvation

The Old Testament priests could not save. No matter how many sacrifices or prayers they offered, they were not able to save anyone. No matter how willing they were, no matter how hard or long they worked, they could not save one person, not even the best person.

Jesus is able to save because his prayers are carried on his perfect sacrifice to God. His sacrifice of himself is a sweet savor to God that opens his ears and heart to Christ's prayers. He is able to save.

A Complete Salvation

"Uttermost" can mean completely, totally, perfectly. Unlike the Old Testament priests, whose sacrifices and prayers could only "save" people from being put out of the temple, the camp, or the city. It was a partial and limited salvation. Christ's sacrifice and prayers save from sin, from hell, and from eternal damnation. However far sin reaches, Christ's salvation saves from it. It is an uttermost salvation, a complete salvation.

A Forever Salvation

"Uttermost" can also mean forever. Unlike the Old Testament priests, whose sacrifices and prayers only had effect for a few hours before others were required, Christ's sacrifice and prayers are forever. He lives forever, prays forever, and therefore saves forever.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Ask Jesus to pray for your salvation. If you are not saved, if you are not a Christian, you can not only pray to Jesus for salvation, but ask him to pray for your salvation.

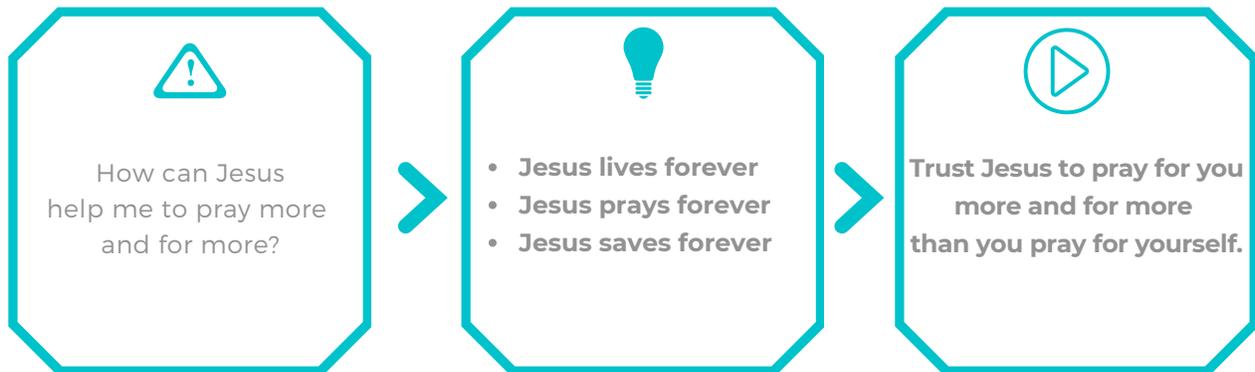
Thank Jesus for praying for your salvation. If you are saved, if you are a Christian, it's mainly because Jesus prayed for your salvation. Yes, you prayed for it, but he prayed more for it.

Pray for an "uttermost" salvation. Don't rest satisfied with a part-salvation or a part-time salvation that only works at some select times. Ask Jesus for a full salvation from all sin and all its consequences, and a full-time salvation that's always at work at all times.

AN UTTERMOST SALVATION IS
A FIRM, FULL, AND FOREVER SALVATION



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

Jesus's prayers help our prayers. When we know that Jesus is already praying more than us and praying for more for us, we will pray more and for more to him. We are joining our prayers to his.

Jesus's prayers save our souls. No one would ever be saved without Jesus praying for that. It's astonishing to think that Jesus prayed for me before I ever prayed to him and that he wanted more for me than I've ever wanted from him.

Prayer. Perfect Intercessor, thank you for praying more for me and for more for me than I have ever prayed for myself. Encourage me to pray more to you by the fact that you pray more for me.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you know and understand about Jesus's prayers before this sermon?
2. What discourages you about your prayers? How did this message encourage you?
3. What can we learn about Jesus's priesthood from the Old Testament priesthood?
4. Read John 17 aloud to help you hear Jesus praying for you right now.
5. How would you describe the meaning of "uttermost" in this verse?
6. How will Jesus's prayer change your prayers?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: (616) 878-9768
www.firstbyroncrc.org

Pastor David Murray
www.thestorychanger.life