

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 1 of 10

This month on The Scripture-Driven Church broadcast we're remembering the Protestant Reformation. One of the key truths that the Reformers recovered from Roman Catholic darkness is the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, through the intercession of the one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus.

Every believer has the priceless privilege of access to the very throne room of the Father through the mediation of the Son. This is God's precious gift of rest for every believer. We are to rest in the intercession of Christ. He does for us what no earthly priest, Levite or Catholic, could possibly do.

This week we present part one of a two-part message focusing on this glorious truth.

This morning I want to call your attention to a familiar passage of Scripture. It's found in the last part of Hebrews chapter 4, verses 9 through 16, and I want to focus our attention on verse 16 in particular this morning.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his [this is speaking of God's rest on the seventh day of the creation week]. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 2 of 10

---

man fall after the same example of unbelief [and here the writer is speaking of Israel's unbelief in the wilderness].

For the word of God is quick [that is, it is alive], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

## **Introduction**

The portion of Scripture we have before us this morning speaks to us about three things. It speaks to us about the power of the Word of God. It speaks to us about the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it speaks to us about His intercessory work on our behalf.

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 3 of 10

---

It also tells us how we are to approach our Lord when we come before Him in prayer. The key word in this passage is the word "rest." Resting in Him. Resting in the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. That will be our focus this morning.

These verses form one of the climax points in the book of Hebrews. The writer has been building up to this point. And so before we consider verses 9 through 16 together, and especially verse 16, I want to set the stage for us. We need to step back and briefly review what the writer has covered in the first 3-1/2 chapters, leading up to this point.

### **The Theme of Hebrews**

First of all, we need to think about the overall theme of the book of Hebrews. The theme is "the superiority and the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ." The Holy Spirit through the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus Himself is superior. He is superior to the prophets. He is superior to the angels. He is superior to Moses. He is superior to the priests of the old covenant system. He is superior to Abraham, our father in the faith. And He is superior to all the saints who are mentioned later on in the great roll call of faith in chapter 11.

Hebrews also tells us that Jesus' atonement is superior. It is superior to the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant. And that is because Jesus' priesthood is superior. He is a High Priest not in the Levitical line, but after the order of Melchizedek. And Hebrews tells us that by being both our Great High Priest and the perfect sacrifice for our sins, that Jesus is our all-sufficient Savior. He is the

---

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 4 of 10

---

author and finisher, the perfecter, of our faith. So that's the theme of the book – the superiority and the all-sufficiency of Christ.

### **Why Hebrews Was Written**

Secondly, we need to remind ourselves why the book of Hebrews was written. It's clear from the later chapters of Hebrews that the author is writing this book to people who might be tempted to fall back away from Christ into Judaism, into legalism. They might be tempted to try to add legalistic Judaism to the Gospel. So the writer is exhorting them to recognize the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old, and he's encouraging them to stand firm in the New Covenant. He's reminding them that the reality of the New Covenant in Christ is far superior to the shadows and the types of the Old Covenant.

### **What Leads Up To This Passage**

And thirdly, we also need to remind ourselves of what the writer of Hebrews has been saying, in building up to the climactic passage that we just read.

In chapter 1, the writer tells us that Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets. God spoke in times past by prophets, he reminds us, but today He speaks to us by His own Son. He also reminds us that Jesus participated in the creation of the universe itself as the second person of the Godhead.

Then the writer reminds us that Jesus is superior to the angels. Now if we didn't read on into chapter 2, that comparison might seem strange. We say, of course

---

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 5 of 10

---

Jesus is superior to the angels. He's God himself. Why even draw such a comparison? And why should the writer spend most of the first chapter of Hebrews talking about it, when it would seem so obvious?

Well, in chapter 2 the writer explains the reason for that comparison. He tells us that Jesus was made lower than the angels – He was made lower than beings that He created – by coming to earth to live in a body like ours. The reason for this, we're told in chapter 2 verses 10 and 11, is so that He might be made perfect or complete as the author of our salvation, through sufferings.

Now the term "made perfect" or "made complete" doesn't imply any sinfulness or propensity toward sin on Jesus' part. It means perfect in the sense of completeness. It means the proving of the fact that Jesus was fully qualified as our substitute. And because Jesus was made lower than the angels and suffered in human flesh He is, we are told, not ashamed to call us – the ones He is saving and sanctifying – He's not ashamed to call us His brethren. The writer concludes chapter 2 by saying that because Jesus suffered in being tempted, He is able to aid those who are being tempted. And that's going to be especially important as we move on.

In chapter 3, the writer goes on to tell us that Jesus is superior to Moses. Moses was considered the greatest of the prophets by the Jews. But in John 1:17 we're told, that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And in Hebrews 3, Moses is spoken of as a servant over God's house, but Jesus is

---

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 6 of 10

---

the Son ruling over His own house. And the writer tells us that we, along with Moses and all of our fellow-believers through all of time, we are all members of that same household of faith.

Then later in chapter 3 the writer tells us what happened to Israel in the wilderness under Moses. And he sets it before us as an object lesson – a warning for believers in the present day. He reminds us that the generation of Israelites that was brought up out of Egypt was not permitted to enter the promised land of Canaan. Why was that? It was because of their unbelief. God said of that generation, "They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "

So they died in the wilderness in unbelief. Unbelief in what? Well, the writer makes it plain in chapter 4 verse 2. Their unbelief was unbelief in the Gospel. He tells us that the same Gospel is preached to us today that was preached to Israel in the wilderness – the Gospel of redemption through the Messiah. There has been, is now, and always will be only one way to God – through faith in Jesus Christ. In those days, it was the Gospel looking forward to the cross. For us today, it is the same Gospel looking back upon the cross. But we're told that in the case of that generation of Israelites in the wilderness, the preaching of the Gospel did not profit them. In the original, it says that it was of no advantage to them. And the reason was that the hearing of the Gospel was not mixed with faith to produce salvation.

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 7 of 10

---

The preaching of the Gospel was not united with faith, and we know from Ephesians and elsewhere that faith is the gift of God. The Holy Spirit, in the work of bringing an individual to salvation, unites the message of the Gospel with faith in the heart. The writer of Hebrews reminds us in chapter 4, verse 10 that those who have entered into God's rest have ceased from their own works, just as God ceased His work on the seventh day of creation week. God ceased from His work on the seventh day because creation was complete. We cease from reliance on our works because Christ's work of salvation on our behalf is complete.

And in chapter 4, the writer also reminds us that even though that generation of Israelites failed to keep the faith, God's promise of eternal rest for believers remains unchanged.

### **Be Diligent to Enter Into Rest – For Three Reasons**

So that brings us to the passage we're focusing upon this morning. What is the writer saying to us? First of all, in verse 11, he exhorts us to be diligent to enter into that rest, to rest in Christ, to not fall away through disobedience.

Why does he do that? We have the answer in verse 12: "For the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 8 of 10

---

The little conjunction "For" at the beginning of verse 12 leads us to the answer. The word could also be translated, "The reason is that" or simply, "because." The writer is saying, be diligent to enter into the rest that is in Christ, and don't fall away, because you cannot fool God. Verses 12 through 15 make it plain why this is true. There are three reasons.

First, the Word of God reveals who you are. As verse 12 tells us, God's Word is a discerner – in the original this is the Greek word from which we get our English word "critic" – the Word is a critic of your thoughts and your intentions. You need the Word of God to speak to you and tell you if we are truly resting in Christ. You're not fit to judge this on our own, apart from the Word of God. Our feelings rise and fall. Circumstances can confuse us. We need to rely upon the Word of God as our discerner, our critic. And the Scriptures have the life and the power to do this.

Second, you cannot hide anything from God. In verse 13 the writer reminds us that all things are naked and open before Him to whom we must give account. Who you are, what you are, what you do, and what you think – these things are all laid bare before God.

You don't get any more plain-spoken than that. The two-edged sword of God's Word has once and for all laid open everything about you. You can't hide anything from God.

---



Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 9 of 10

---

Thirdly, the writer also reminds us that Jesus understands your situation from first-hand experience. In verses 14 and 15 we are told that the One to whom we must give an account is also our High Priest. He understands what we're going through in this life from firsthand experience in human flesh. He was tested in all points as we are – in all the points where you and I fail – but He did not sin.

So God possesses complete and intimate knowledge of us – everything. But how does that tie back to the idea of entering into God's rest in the previous verses? What the inspired writer is telling us is that a vital, practical, day-to-day part of entering into that rest from works, is to rest in the intercessory work of Christ on your behalf. If you are truly resting in Christ for your salvation, then one of the out-workings, one of the evidences of your faith in Christ, should be that you are resting day by day in the intercession of Christ before the Father on your behalf. You should be coming before Him day by day, entering into that rest.

And that brings us to verse 16. Verse 16 tells us how you should come before God, and what your expectation should be as you come: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

### **Let Us Therefore Come**

"Let us therefore come" the writer says. In the original this speaks of approaching or drawing near. It's a term that was used in many ancient writings to describe what took place when someone came into the court of a monarch or ruler.

---

Series: *Remembering the Reformation*

Title: "Resting in the Intercession of Christ" (Part 1)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 10/10/2010

Page 10 of 10

---

We need to remember that we are drawing near and approaching the Holy God and Sovereign of the universe, and the One who is ushering us into the presence of the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[To be continued on our next broadcast]

#### **About the Broadcast**

*The Scripture-Driven Church* airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to preach the Gospel to the lost, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to this ministry. Thank you for praying for us.

The broadcast is supported entirely by the gifts of God's people. If the Lord leads you to help us, you can do so in any of these ways:

- Call us toll-free at 888-804-9655 to give a gift using your credit card
- Give a gift by credit card at our secure website, [www.teachingtheword.org](http://www.teachingtheword.org)
- Mail your contribution to TTW, Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158

**TeachingtheWord Ministries** is recognized as a tax-exempt religious organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. Your gifts are fully tax deductible.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study  
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**