

## Hebrews 5:7-9

MW Lent 3, February 28, '24  
Pastor Sam Rodebaugh

*In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*

It seems to change every year. One study says coffee is bad for you. Another says it doesn't hurt anything, and, in fact, may even be beneficial to have a cup of coffee per day. A few years ago, dieticians warned against eggs, and now eggs are good again. Some advocate for low-carb diets, others say that fats are what's to be avoided. What are we to believe?

One thing that can be helpful as we try to sort through what's good and what's bad for us is to consider the source. Who exactly is giving us advice? Do they have an agenda? Is it someone we can trust? Are they just after our money? Consider the source!

This is even more true when it comes to matters of the soul and eternity. Whom are we to trust? Go online and you can find all sorts of advice on finding the "true" path to God. Turn on the TV on a Sunday morning, and there will be some preacher telling you the guaranteed way to a happy and successful life. Sometimes you see street preachers on the corners with signs telling you what you need to know about God and the afterlife. Whom are we to believe?

This morning, you are again invited to **Keep Your Eyes on Jesus**. Many may claim to have all the answers about God and salvation. But there's absolutely no doubt about it, **Jesus Is Our [Only True] Source**.

Now, to be the only true source of salvation wasn't easy. It required a lot of hard work on the part of our Savior. Look at what our text says that Jesus did: He offered up prayers and supplications, yes, but these were accompanied by loud cries and tears. Every year during Lent, we remember how Jesus prayed and cried in the Garden of Gethsemane; we read that last week in the Passion History reading. This was when Jesus, with loud cries and tears, prayed desperately to the Father that He might take away the awful cup of suffering that the Son had been asked to drink. The idea of drinking this cup of suffering was horrifying! It meant suffering for Jesus, in the strongest sense of the word.

Jesus constantly said to Jesus, "Let this cup pass from me." I try to picture it like a cup of poison. If you were given a cup that you knew was filled with poison, and you knew that by drinking it all down you would save the rest of our lives here this morning—but that you yourself would experience a slow and painful death—would you drink it? Maybe you would! But I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be an easy decision to drink something that you knew would kill you. You might look around and ask, "Is there another way? Can anyone else do it?"

For Jesus, drinking the cup of suffering meant gulping down the poison of the world's sin. All of it. It meant swallowing the full anger of a holy God against the sins of the entire world—every last drop of that divine anger. In short, for Jesus, it meant suffering the agony of hell for every single sin, for every single sinner. The sins of Hitler, of Jack the Ripper, of you, of me—it would all be laid upon His innocent head. He knew He would suffer beyond imagining as He hung on that cursed tree.

So, in Gethsemane, Jesus prayed and cried out to His Father, who, as our text says, **“Was able to save Him from death.”** And yet, they both knew, there was only one way. So, even though Jesus asked if there was another way, all the while He made it clear that He was ready to do the Father’s will. “Your will be done,” He prayed. He would go to the cross and be forsaken by His Father, and Jesus would go through that isolation if that was what the Father wanted. And when it was made clear to Him that He *must* go to the cross and drink this cup of sin and hell, Jesus obeyed. He obeyed out of love for His Father. He obeyed out of love for a world in rebellion against its Creator. He obeyed out of love for you and me. In fact, in Hebrews chapter 12 we are told that **“for the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross.”** (Hebrews 12:2) With joy at being the Source of our salvation, Jesus was willing to suffer the tortures of hell. His pain, while not enjoyable in the slightest, led to His ultimate joy. And that was bringing you and me to be together with Him.

To be the Source of our salvation, Jesus prayed, He cried, He obeyed, He suffered... but finally, He also perfected. Our text reads, He was **“made perfect.”** Usually when we use the word “perfect” in everyday speaking, it doesn’t actually mean “perfect,” does it? We usually mean, “Really, really good,” since, after all, we’ve never really experienced what perfect is. “She’s perfect for me!” “Our new house is perfect!” But it’s never *actually* perfect, maybe just better than we expected. But perfection really entails being completely without flaw—no defects, no errors. Not just better than we expect; perfect means it can’t possibly improve.

Well, Jesus is that way. It says He was **“made perfect.”** Now, that kind of sounds strange to us. How was Jesus made perfect? Wasn’t He already perfect from His conception and birth? Yes, of course. He was already perfect in that He didn’t have original sin. But He needed to do more than that. He needed not only to be born perfect, He needed to continue on in that perfection in every single way. In chapter four of this letter, we are told that He **“was in all pointes tempted as we are, yet without sin.”** (Hebrews 4:15) So, when our text says that He was made perfect, it’s speaking about all He did on Earth to complete His mission to perfection.

He needed to be tempted with real temptations, the very same kind we face every day. He needed to face them yet remain perfect. He needed to go through the same daily struggles we do—hunger, weariness, sickness, the death of loved ones. And He went through all of that yet remained perfect. We might often think of our salvation in terms of “Jesus died for me, so I’m saved.” And that’s true, but He didn’t *only* die. He also lived. And He had to spend 33 years living in perfection, and through this He reached His goal of saving the world. And the salvation He won for you is *perfect*. Nothing more needs to be done. Jesus is the perfect, full and complete source of salvation. As He said on the cross, **“It is finished!”**

In our house, we have a lot of used furniture. We like to take discarded pieces and repurpose and refinish them. And I’m sure some people think that’s foolish, just spend the extra money, get something brand new that’s going to last. After all, if everything you own is just repurposed, you’re going to end up with a hodge podge collection of different styles of furniture. And that’s pretty much true in our house. Really, what we’re doing is just kicking the can down the road for when we *do* invest in new furniture. Repurposing old stuff is never meant as a permanent solution. We try to save old furniture, but it’s only going to last for a little bit of time until we have to replace that as well.

But Jesus saved and restored us **eternally**. That was a permanent solution. As the text says in verse 9, ***“He became the source of eternal salvation.”*** That’s amazing, because we were not worth even a temporary saving. Our sin has made us spiritual wrecks, good for nothing and ready to be cast into the trash pile of hell. All we have to do is take a hard look at all the junk our sinful nature cranks out on any given day to see how true this is: the unkind words; the selfish, self-centered motives; the laziness; the way we love to embellish the truth; our pathetic excuses for neglecting our responsibilities to God and our neighbor; the way we’re always right and everyone else is wrong—we could go on and on.

Nevertheless, Jesus salvaged us. He restored us. And He didn’t save us only to toss us aside later and replace us with something better. The salvation He won for us is eternal. He did that for our souls, and on Judgment Day, even our bodies will be restored to perfection and glory. That is our salvation we are talking about. Eternity, won and given over to us by Jesus who earned it through loud cries and tears. Being perfected, He became our source of salvation.

Now, we said at the outset that you have to consider the source. If someone is giving you information, you have to consider whether they’re trustworthy, whether they’re after our money, whether they have some hidden agenda. So, let’s consider the source. Is He trustworthy? Absolutely. It’s Jesus, true God and true man, the one about whom the Father said, ***“This is my beloved Son, in whom I’m well pleased.”*** Is He after your money? No, He’s after you. And He is the one who paid in order to get you. Does He have some hidden agenda? No. He tells us why He’s here. He says, ***“The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.”***

The source is legitimate, the source is reliable, and Jesus alone is the source. Through Him, we have eternal life. So, keep your eyes on Jesus who endured the cross to be your source of salvation. Amen.