

**Fixated:** Advent Meditations from the Book of Hebrews

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<https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products/26683/fixated>

Tim Chester has written 24 helpful reflections on Hebrews 1:1-5:10 which help us to focus on Jesus (and his supremacy and sufficiency) in the run up to Christmas. Each two or three page comment is accessible, engaging and insightful and ends with a brief suggestion for reflection. Preachers will find material here they can borrow and be provoked by.

As ever 10 of those are to be thanked for producing the book at an affordable price, especially if bought in numbers. Maybe a few of you from church might like to get this book for Advent.

I hope you find some of the following jottings, prayers, questions and song suggestions helpful:

### **Introductory jottings**

What things might you be said to be fixated on / engrossed by / obsessed with?

What are your first thoughts when you wake up?

Or your day dreams?

What are you distracted by?

What do you consciously devote your time and energies to?

What do you pursue?

How would an independent outside observer with access to a video of all your life (your mobile phone and your bank account) assess these things?

How's your celebration of Christmas?

In what ways is Jesus involved? Or side-lined?

### **Introduction**

Do you have Christian heroes who inspire you to wholehearted devotion to Jesus? Who? How?

(Maybe you should think about reading some Christian history or biographies – see e.g., <https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products/christian-life/biography>)

What do you find helps or hinders your devotion to Jesus and your keeping going in the Christian life?

Key Bible verses: Hebrews 12:1-3 (Suitable for memorisation?)

Song: By Faith We See The Hand of God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rYiZRj0FbA>

Do you feel like you're consciously, actively running the Christian race?

What sort of pace do you feel you are going at? Why?

Are your thoughts fixed on Jesus? (Hebrews 3:1)

How could we increasingly fix them there? Or help one another to do so?

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### **(1) Fixated on Jesus the Final Word – Hebrews 1:1-2 (p6ff)**

That's a useful contrast / summary, isn't it?

Old Testament to New Testament / prophets to Jesus =

Promise to fulfilment

Provisional to final

Partial to complete.

"Jesus is not the replacement of the Old Testament, but he is its resolution." (p6)

See further: Matthew 5:17-18; 2 Corinthians 1:20

Prayer:

Father God, thank you for the Old Testament, which so wonderfully prepares us for the coming of Jesus. But thank you above all for Jesus Himself, your Son, your full and final Word to humanity. Help us to listen to Him. Amen.

Song: You're the Word of God the Father (Townend) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atxCPChz5Oc>

### **(2) Fixated on Jesus the First Word - Hebrews 1:2 (p9f)**

It is indeed striking that Christianity is not first of all about the teaching of Christ, but about Christ Himself. We are not introduced, ultimately, to a philosophical system or to ideas or principles, but to a Person. The Word is made flesh, human, that we might know him personally, not just know about him. We need Jesus, not just the information or insight which Jesus could bring. Jesus does not offer us merely education or lifestyle tips, but Himself, his life. The joy of heaven will be more than "enlightenment". It will be to be with Jesus. He is the sum and centre of our faith.

As we think of Jesus as the Word of God the Father, it is helpful to think of Jesus as the self-expression, the communication of God. He perfectly translates the Father, and in this case nothing is lost in translation. The Son is all that the Father is except Father, and vice versa.

Summary: Jesus is the origin and goal of the universe. He is before and above all things.

It is an even more striking thought to recall that these great things are true of Jesus the God-Man even as he is a baby lying in the manger.

See also John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-18

Song: See Amid The Winter Snow – “Lo, within a manger lies / He who built the starry skies;”

[https://hymnary.org/text/see amid the winters snow](https://hymnary.org/text/see_amid_the_winters_snow)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPgo-UfyJgc>

### **(3) Fixated on Jesus the Glory of God - Hebrews 1:3 (p11f)**

Jesus the Light is God shining forth – the radiance of the glory of God. He is Light from Light. True God from True God. The Son is fully God, of one substance with the Father. The Son is all that the Father is except Father. He is eternally begotten of the Father, not made.

Jesus is the invisible God made visible. Jesus could say to his disciples: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.... If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” (John 14:9, 17) As John says, “No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” (John 1:18)

Jesus is the incomprehensible God made known. Of course we can never know God fully, but its wonderful that infinitely great as he is, we can know him truly in Jesus. Let’s praise God that he has revealed himself to us personally. May we delight in knowing God in Jesus Christ and seek to know him better and better until that day when we see him face to face and know him more fully, even as we are fully known.

Song: O Come All Ye Faithful - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8dgl4-bVPU>

### **(4) Fixated on Jesus the Powerful Word - Hebrews 1:3 (p14f)**

It’s a staggering thought, isn’t it, that the vast universe and everything in it is sustained by the powerful will and word of Jesus. Every sub-atomic particle moves at his direction. All the winds and waves do his bidding. Innumerable plants and animals owe their existence to him. And this infinite God loves and cares for you and me. If he can sustain all things, we can trust him to sustain us too. He is more than powerful enough to keep us going as his people and to get us safely to glory.

One way of summing up the message of Hebrews would be to say that Jesus is supreme and sufficient therefore we should stick with Jesus. We could have no more powerful Saviour. Jesus is all we need. May we prize him and stick close to him.

Song: Thou Whose Almighty Word - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iUYYir9ujY>

### **(5) Fixated on Jesus and his Finished Work - Hebrews 1:3 (p16f)**

Let’s give thanks for the finished work of Christ. He paid the price for sin in full. And so he could cry out from the cross: “It is finished!” (John 19:30) – “Complete! Accomplished! Achieved! Done!”. As the hymn puts it: “All that is needful hath been.” There’s nothing more

We need to DO because CHRIST has DONE it all. We receive his finished work with the empty hand of faith. We bring our sin; he brings full and free purification.

We're reminded of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice in the Communion service: he "made there by his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" .

John assures us that "the blood of Jesus, his [God's] Son purifies us from all sin". He "purifies us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7, 10)

Song: It is finished! The Messiah dies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAdzDk43YRU>

### **(6) Fixated on Jesus above the Angels - Hebrews 1:4 (p19f)**

What do you think of as most powerful and glorious? In what ways is Jesus even better?

Maybe we don't give angels much thought, but are there things which threaten to rival the supremacy of Jesus in our lives?

Further reading: Philippians 3:1-11

Father God, show me afresh the superiority of Jesus. Make me wholeheartedly devoted to him. Keep me from settling for less than Jesus. For his name's sake. Amen.

Song: All I Once Held Dear - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxpPla-BskY>

### **(7) Fixated on Jesus the King - Hebrews 1:5 (p22f)**

The verse quoted here speak of the Davidic King as the Son of God. Psalm 2v2 refers to The Lord's Anointed, the Messiah, the chosen and appointed King. Jesus fulfils the promises of a permanent Davidic King with an everlasting Kingdom. Jesus would have said, sung and prayed the Psalms. No doubt he prayed the prayer which God the Father encourages him to pray in Psalm 2v8 and he will indeed be given the nations. The progress of the gospel is an answer to that prayer which will culminate in the great multitude of all nations spoken of in the book of Revelation who will praise Jesus on the great final day.

Again, these reflections should remind us of the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus and encourage us to stick with him.

Jesus is, of course, in fact, in a totally different category from any human king, however great. By his very nature, Jesus is not just "a son of God" but *The* Son of God, God the Son by nature, by eternal generation or begetting. Even the best Old Testament kings (David and Solomon) were imperfect. Jesus is the perfect king who perfectly meets our needs.

Further reading: Psalm 72

Song: Jesus Shall Reign Where're the Sun - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcHXOnKZ3ME>

### **(8) Fixated on Jesus the Song of the Angels - Hebrews 1:6-9 (p25f)**

Take some time to worship Jesus! What is there to praise and thank him for? How might these verses from Hebrews / today's devotional inspire worship? Thank God for the peace

What other reasons have we seen so far in *Fixated* or in Hebrews to worship Jesus and him alone?

(What other things are you tempted to worship?)

(What would a life of worship of Jesus look like for you today / this week?)

(Reflect on v9. Do you ever think of Jesus as supremely joyful?)

Further reading: Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 7:9-end

Song: Join All The Glorious Names - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdHoPwp07LM>

### **(9) Fixated on Jesus the Life-Giving Creator - Hebrews 1:10-14 (p27f)**

There is a great distinction between Creator and Creation. And (as God) Jesus belongs on the Creator side of that dividing line. With the Father and the Holy Spirit, he is the uncreated Creator God who alone is worthy of worship. God alone has life in himself and is the source of all being and life, sustaining all existence.

How does v13 describe our era of human history? Jesus is enthroned in heaven until God the Father has put all his enemies under his feet. Through the gospel, more and more of Jesus' enemies are becoming his friends. And at last all his enemies will be subdued.

(Whenever we see the Bible quoting the Bible, it is no bad thing to go back and think what the passage meant in its original context and whether anything from that context apart from the actual verses quoted contributes to the quoter's meaning).

Song: How Great Thou Art - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7 dtbmVdQY4>

### **(10) Fixated on Jesus our Great Salvation - Hebrews 2:1-4 (p30f)**

Can you sum up the logic and application of these verses? What does the writer want his readers to do and not do, and why?

How can you pay more careful attention to God's word and to the message of salvation in the Son?

What might distract us from this message or cause us to drift away?

Maybe there's a verse or section from Fixated or from Hebrews which you want to underline or memorise or return to tomorrow or next week.

Give thanks for the greatness of our salvation: full, free, sure, clearly proclaimed, confirmed by God.

Song: How Firm A Foundation Ye Saints of the Lord - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmyDwtv55Q>

### **(11) Fixated on Jesus the True Man - Hebrews 2:5-9 (p33f)**

Human beings have a higher status than angels in the sense that they are made in the image of God to rule the world under him. We are adopted into the family of our loving heavenly Father. Angels are awesome and powerful beings, but they are servants, ministers.

In our fallen world, we do not see all things subject to humanity. The world is out of sorts. We often make it worse, not better. But Jesus is a New and Second Adam, the Last Adam who will rule the world perfectly and put it to rights. Our destiny as human beings is fulfilled in him.

Jesus' full and true humanity means he perfectly meets our needs as human beings. This is another reason to be fixated on Jesus. Jesus shows us who we were meant to be. By his death he restores us to the relationship with God for which we were created.

Song: Praise to the holiest in the height - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPBE5r3a0UA>

### **(12) Fixated on Jesus the Second Adam - Hebrews 2:8-9 (p36f)**

Don't you think the Bible account of humanity and the world makes a lot of sense? It's psychologically compelling. It seems to fit the realities we see around us. The nobility and depravity of human nature are what we would expect from Scripture. The creation is wonderful yet flawed, fallen.

How wonderful the New Creation will be when we see Eden restored – only better! Eden will be fulfilled, perfected. The earth will be full of the glory of God. The Garden will become a Garden City. The race of Adam will be a great multitude. All through the saving work of the Second Adam.

Further reading: Revelation 21-22

Song: Joy To The World - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyciMYZq2-Y>

### **(13) Fixated on Jesus the Renewal of All Things - Hebrews 2:9-10 (p39f)**

As a human being, Jesus was a suitable substitute for human beings (in a way that the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament never really were – Hebrews 10:4). As a human being, Jesus kept the law we could never keep and faced the penalty of death our sins deserved (Romans 6:23). As a human being, he could die. As God, his death was of infinite value. Of course as God Christ could not die (he died as a man, according to his human nature). It makes sense that the grave could not hold the Son of God, that he overcame death and hell.

Jesus tasted death, the writer to the Hebrews says, “for everyone.” All who are saved will be saved through the blood of Jesus. He died for all sorts of people, for Jews and for Gentiles and people of all sorts of different backgrounds, men and women, young and old, rich and poor. Jesus’ death was sufficient for the salvation of all – it was of infinite worth and power. But Jesus only paid the penalty for sin for his sheep, his people. He redeemed all those he intended to redeem by paying the price for their sins. His death is efficient for all who will trust in him, all whom he will effectually call to whom he will grant saving faith. His death did not merely make salvation possible for us. He tasted death for us. He died for us. He died our death. We died in him, that we might live.

What grace of God that we do not taste the death we deserve! What grace that Christ (God the Son) should drink the cup of God’s wrath to its very dregs. Praise God that there is none left for us! Jesus gives us the cup of salvation and blessing.

Song: The Power Of The Cross (Oh To See The Dawn) -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P22lpmgJbs>

#### **(14) Fixated on Jesus our Perfect Pioneer - Hebrews 2:10, 18 (p42f)**

It should be a great comfort to us that Jesus our Lord is also Jesus our friend and brother. He was tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. He knows what it is like to live as a human being from inside, by personal experience, not just by virtue of his omniscient deity.

We can sometimes imagine that Jesus’ temptations weren’t real. But the Bible assures us they were. Though he was the God-Man, he was fully and truly human, weak and vulnerable and limited according to his human nature, just as we are. He got tired and hungry and so on. Jesus’ divinity did not detract from his human temptations.

Indeed, C. S. Lewis has suggested that Jesus’ temptations were much greater than ours because we so easily give in to them – and for us, in a manner of speaking, the temptation is then gone: we have yielded to it and it is no more. We fail the test. But Jesus never gave in to sin. He always endured and persevered. He always continued to fight the battle against sin and he was victorious. He was tested over the whole course of his perfect life. And he passed that test. His temptations showed him to be tried and tested.

Lewis said: ““Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. ... We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He

was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist.” (*Mere Christianity*)

Jesus is “perfected” by sufferings in the sense that he is fully proved and tested. He is like a metal that has been through the fire and is shown to be pure. Or like a veteran who has come through combat. He has proven his ability to resist the enemy.

Reflect on the wonderful difference Jesus demonstrates and makes possible (achieves) for humanity. He shows us, and wins for us, a new fulfilled, perfected way of being human. We look forward to sharing this kind of humanity with him in the New Creation.

On Christ’s pioneering saving work for us, we might think of this quotation from the Puritan Thomas Goodwin: “In God’s sight there are two men — Adam and Jesus Christ — and these two men have all other men hanging at their girdle strings.” (Cited in F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; London: The Tyndale Press, 1963), 127 and elsewhere. Apparently from “Christ Set Forth,” Goodwin’s Works, James Nichol edition, 1862, Vol. 4, p. 31.). See further Romans 5. Our standing before God depends not on us but on Christ our pioneer. He brings us in his wake, with him, dangling from his girdle strings. Whatever a girdle string is!

Song: What A Friend We Have In Jesus - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SCorW9r\\_Is](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SCorW9r_Is)

### **(15) Fixated on Jesus our Brother - Hebrews 2:11-15 (p45f)**

Isn’t it striking that the words of the Psalmist and the prophet Isaiah are quoted as the words of Jesus? Jesus would have said and sung the psalms in his earthly ministry. And Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of all the Scriptures with all its patterns and types (pictures, fore-shadowings etc.). Jesus is the true and better David, the true and better King, the Anointed One, the true and better Israel, the ultimate prophet and Servant of the Lord.

It is also perhaps a surprising thought for us to think of ourselves not only as Jesus’ brothers and sisters but also as his children (v13). Let’s praise God again for drawing us into his family and making us his sons and daughters and heirs by adoption and grace. Let’s thank God for all our brothers and sisters and pray for them.

Thank God that Jesus delivers us from the shame of sin.

Let us also pray that we might be unashamed of Jesus and his gospel (Romans 1:16; Mark 8:38).

Song: The message of the cross is foolishness To those who are perishing ... I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ <https://songsfromscripture.com/i-am-not-ashamed-of-the-gospel>

### **(16) Fixated on Jesus our Preacher and Worship Leader - Hebrews 2:11-13 (p48f)**



Some evangelicals have sometimes emphasised the New Testament teaching that the church meets for mutual edification, for us to build one another up. But we also meet to worship God and to meet with him in a special way, to renew covenant with him. Jesus ministers to us as we meet. We lift up our hearts and the Spirit unites us to Jesus who is in heaven. We are in him.

The minister (duly ordained and called) speaks in the Lord's Day service not as a private individual offering best thoughts from the Vicarage, telling some jokes and commenting on the news. He speaks as the authorised representative of Jesus. When the Bible is preached, God's voice is heard. Jesus is speaking to us in his Scriptures and through his servants.

From The Second Helvetic Confession:

"THE PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WORD OF GOD. Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is proclaimed, and received by the faithful; and that neither any other Word of God is to be invented nor is to be expected from heaven: and that now the Word itself which is preached is to be regarded, not the minister that preaches; for even if he be evil and a sinner, nevertheless the Word of God remains still true and good.

Neither do we think that therefore the outward preaching is to be thought as fruitless because the instruction in true religion depends on the inward illumination of the Spirit, or because it is written "And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour..., for they shall all know me" (Jer. 31:34), And "Neither he who plants nor he that waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (I Cor. 3:7). For although "No one can come to Christ unless he be drawn by the Father" (John 6:44), And unless the Holy Spirit inwardly illumines him, yet we know that it is surely the will of God that his Word should be preached outwardly also. God could indeed, by his Holy Spirit, or by the ministry of an angel, without the ministry of St. Peter, have taught Cornelius in the Acts; but, nevertheless, he refers him to Peter, of whom the angel speaking says, "He shall tell you what you ought to do."

(from Chapter 1: Of The Holy Scripture Being The True Word of God, written by Heinrich Bullinger in 1562 and revised in 1564 ) <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm>

Further reading: Hebrews 12:18-end

Song: Now in reverence and awe ... Jesus, let me meet you in your word (Graham Kendrick) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LvugGjJwhk>

### **(17) Fixated on Jesus our Atonement - Hebrews 2:16-17 (p51f)**

Give thanks for Jesus, the Second and Last Adam, The Proper Man, The True and Perfect Human Being who shows us Humanity Fulfilled.

Now perhaps we are in a better position to give a fuller answer to Anselm's famous question, Why Did God Become Man?

Christmas was for Easter. Jesus was born to die.

For every look at ourselves (and our sin), we do well to take several looks at Jesus (and his sinless sacrifice which puts away sin).

Jesus brought atonement, AT ONE MENT – his death reconciled us to God and made us at one, at peace with him. We were enemies of God, now we are his friends, brought back, brought home, for the relationship for which we were made. (See further Romans 5)

If you have the NIV you may have spotted the footnote for v17 that the word for "make atonement for" means to turn aside the wrath (the holy anger of God) by the payment of a price. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2; 4:10). His death in our place absorbs the holy anger of God at our sin. Justice divine is satisfied. God himself delivers us from God's own wrath by his own sacrifice of Himself (in the person of God the Son).

Song: Now Why This Fear - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qliFljZGnkM>

### **(18) Fixated on Jesus the Culmination of the Ages - Hebrews 3:1-6 (p53f)**

You might find this 5-minute Gospel Coalition video from Dr Don Carson on "Jesus is better" in Hebrews helpful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbDaRsWi8ho>

Jesus is better than the prophets / Old Testament revelation

Jesus is better than the angels

Jesus is better than Moses

Better than Aaron

Jesus' priesthood is better than Levi's priesthood

Jesus brings a better Covenant

Jesus' sacrifice is better

Jesus has entered a better heavenly Temple

So stick with Jesus! Don't be distracted from him or drift away from him. Or seek alternatives. Or be seduced by rivals. Jesus is supreme and sufficient. He is the one we really need and all we really need. Let us be fixated on him this Christmas and always!

For the word better (stronger / nobler) in Hebrews see 1:4; 7:7, 19, 22; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24.

Song: Jesus Shall Take The Highest Honour - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv33W6W\\_ssw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv33W6W_ssw)

### **(19) Fixated on Jesus our Inheritance - Hebrews 3:7-4:2 (p56f)**

Look again at Hebrews 3v7. It's as if the writer to the Hebrews makes two mistakes as he quotes Psalm 95. He should have said "So, as *the Psalmist said*:" but rather he says, "So, as the *Holy Spirit says*:" Do you see the differences? Of course the Psalms were written by human writers out of and for their original contexts. But the Bible is God's Word to his church for all ages. What the Bible says, God says. The Bible is breathed out by God, God-spirited. God spoke through David (4v7). The Bible is God's word which comes to us on the breath of his Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks the words of Scripture to all God's people today. We must understand it carefully, of course, thinking about its original context, but the Bible is ever-relevant and applicable to us. It is not just God's words to them then but God's words for us now. Christ addresses you and me in the Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that same Spirit is at work in our hearts to grant us understanding (illumination). Let us always come to God's words humbly and expectantly ready to live in the light of all that the Holy Spirit says to us today. May we be quick to repent and respond rightly to God's Word. (Isaiah 66:2)

Further reading: Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10 especially vv5, 11.

The Collect for the Last Sunday after Trinity (sometimes called Bible Sunday):

Blessed Lord,  
 who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:  
 help us so to hear them,  
 to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
 that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
 we may embrace and for ever hold fast  
 the hope of everlasting life,  
 which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
 who is alive and reigns with you,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever.  
 Amen.

Who could you encourage today? This week? How? Maybe you could open the Bible with someone or share something from the Scriptures?

Song: Speak O Lord as we come to you - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tPp8ov7cks>

### **(20) Fixated on Jesus our Sabbath Rest - Hebrews 4:1-11 (p59f)**

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

How is it that we can rest in Jesus? (On what basis?)

Why should we?

How can we? (How do we receive / experience that rest?)

What threatens our rest?

Just as we think about the tenses of our salvation (we are saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved) we could think about the tenses of our rest: we have rest in Christ by faith, we should increasingly seek to rest in Christ, we shall be given full and perfect rest in Christ one day.

What difference does it make to serve Christ and others from rest, rather than seeking to achieve it by our own efforts? Do we live out of grace, gift, plenty, fullness, rather than from a sense of deficit and desperation, trying to win favour and fill the void?

Lord, thank you for Jesus and the rest he gives. Thank you for the reality of it here and now even in the midst of busyness and responsibilities. Deliver me from the sense that I need to justify myself. Give me wisdom about what I take on. And help me to cast all my anxieties on you, knowing that you care for me. Thank you that your grace is sufficient for me. Bring me at last to that eternal and perfect rest which Jesus has won for me. Amen.

Song: Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDeiy9-t2GE>

### **(21) Fixated on Jesus our Healer - Hebrews 4:12 (p62f)**

Do we welcome the wounds of Jesus, our friend (Proverbs 27:6), the divine surgeon? We may need to be pruned if we are to be fruitful (John 15). Sometimes his word will need to rebuke and correct (2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus is kind and wise and skilful. We are in safe hands!

The sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) might slay us but the word and Spirit of God give new life (Ezekiel 37).

You might like to examine yourself and repent of sins of thought, word or deed, and sins of omission.

You may want to use a penitential Psalm such as Psalm 51.

Or a General Confession such as this from The Book of Common Prayer might be helpful:

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us: But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders; Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults, Restore thou them that are penitent, According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord: And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Song: Search Me O God and Know My Heart Today - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PjAvjYJ71I> (cf. Psalm 139:23f)

**(22) Fixated on Jesus our Sympathetic Priest - Hebrews 4:13-16 (p65f)**

What good news it is that God knows us completely and loves us anyway! Our deepest darkest secrets are already known to him. He sees all the skeletons in our closet. And he can deal with it. He has dealt with it in Jesus. We are thoroughly known and thoroughly loved. He knows us and loves us even better than we know and love ourselves.

We can't pretend to God. We don't need to. We need not fear losing face before the Lord God who sees and knows all things. Embarrassment is pointless. We have no need of masks.

The Book of Common Prayer Collect for Purity reminds us of God's perfect knowledge of us:

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We can approach the throne of God's grace with confidence in Jesus. God's undeserved love is freely available to us.

If we doubt our welcome to heaven, we might imagine Jesus our High Priest praying for us. (Imagine hearing him pray for you. How could the prayers of the perfect Son of God who has died for us not prevail with God the Father?) Yes, our sins are real and great. But so is his love, his sacrifice. His prayers are more powerful than our guilt. We can be sure we will find the help we need. Let us draw near to God, knowing that he will draw near to us.

Song: Before the throne of God above - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LULK2nZ6sCc>

**(23) Fixated on Jesus our Gentle Saviour - Hebrews 5:1-10 (p67f)**

On Jesus' gentleness:

He says: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29)

See also Matthew 21:5. Or think of examples in the gospels where Jesus shows kindness, compassion and care. Jesus often rebukes the self-righteous religious leaders, but he shows a particular concern for the weak, the poor, the needy and the marginalised. Remember he is a doctor who came for those who know themselves to be sick, not for those who think they are healthy without him thank you very much! (See Matthew 9:12-13)

If you'd like to explore this theme of Jesus' love further, you might be interested in *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* By Dane C. Ortlund (Crossway, 2020)

<https://www.crossway.org/books/gentle-and-lowly-hcj/>

I posted some favourite bits etc. here: <https://marclloyd.blogspot.com/2020/08/dane-ortlund-gentle-and-lowly.html>

Song: Only by grace can we enter - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F21gQwATaac>

#### **(24) Fixated on Jesus the Source of Eternal Salvation - Hebrews 5:7-10 (p70f)**

v7: In addition to Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane, we might also think of his prayers and cries from the cross. Jesus was not saved from death. He did not save himself but others, despite the (ironic) jeers of the onlookers. But he was saved through death. He punched a hole in the other side of the tomb so that it is not a dead-end but a gateway to glory for the Christian. The tomb has become a womb through which we are re-born to everlasting life.

See further Psalm 22 on the suffering and vindication of the Messiah.

Maybe as we approach Christmas and we remember Jesus born to die, it might be no bad thing to listen to an Easter hymn:

Song: Jesus lives! Thy terror now can no more, O death, appal us - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYaOHEGgGCE>

A very merry and Jesus fixated Christmas to you!