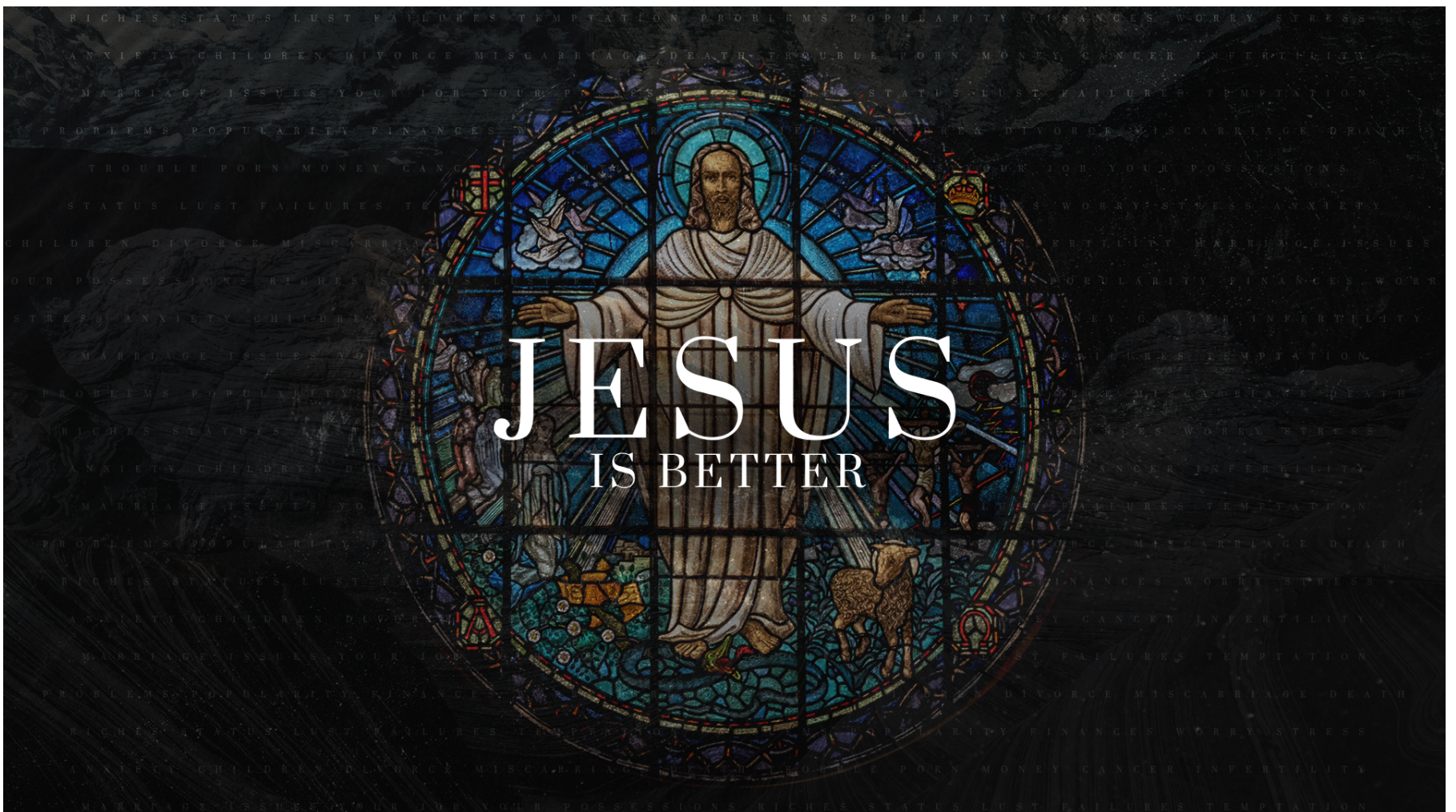


October 13, 2019

# NORTH METRO CHURCH

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## NMC SERMON SERIES CONTENT



### **“Jesus is Better” SERIES OVERVIEW:**

“Jesus is Better” is a study through the book of Hebrews where the author, who is writing to a group of people who are struggling with their faith, is aiming at convincing them of one paramount truth: Jesus is better. He is better than the angels. He’s better than the prophets. He’s better than Moses. His priesthood is better than Aaron’s. His new covenant is better than the old covenant they could never fulfill. His blood is better than the blood of bulls and goats. In every way and at every turn, Jesus is better.

# THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

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**Author:** Although some include the Book of Hebrews among the apostle Paul's writings, the certain identity of the author remains an enigma. Missing is Paul's customary salutation common to his other works. In addition, the suggestion that the writer of this epistle relied upon knowledge and information provided by others who were actual eye-witnesses of Christ Jesus (2:3) makes Pauline authorship doubtful. Some attribute Luke as its writer; others suggest Hebrews may have been written by Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, or Aquila and Priscilla. Regardless of the human hand that held the pen, the Holy Spirit of God is the divine author of all Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16); therefore, Hebrews speaks with the same canonical authority as the other sixty-five books of the Bible.

**Date of Writing:** The early church father Clement quoted from the Book of Hebrews in A.D. 95. However, internal evidence such as the fact that Timothy was alive at the time the epistle was written and the absence of any evidence showing the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system that occurred with Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 indicates the book was written around A.D. 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** The late Dr. Walter Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute and writer of the best-selling book *Kingdom of the Cults*, quipped in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner that the Book of Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to other Hebrews telling the Hebrews to stop acting like Hebrews. In truth, many of the early Jewish believers were slipping back into the rites and rituals of Judaism in order to escape the mounting persecution. This letter, then, is an exhortation for those persecuted believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ.

## Key Verses:

Hebrews 1:1-2: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

Hebrews 2:3: "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation..."

Hebrews 4:14-16: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Hebrews 12:1-2: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off

everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Hebrews addresses three separate groups: believers in Christ, unbelievers who had knowledge of and an intellectual acceptance of the facts of Christ, and unbelievers who were attracted to Christ, but who rejected Him ultimately. It's important to understand which group is being addressed in which passage. To fail to do so can cause us to draw conclusions inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.

The writer of Hebrews continually makes mention of the superiority of Christ in both His personage and in His ministering work. In the writings of the Old Testament, we understand the rituals and ceremonies of Judaism symbolically pointed to the coming of Messiah. In other words, the rites of Judaism were but shadows of things to come. Hebrews tells us that Christ Jesus is better than anything mere religion has to offer. All the pomp and circumstance of religion pales in comparison to the person, work, and ministry of Christ Jesus. It is the superiority of our Lord Jesus, then, that remains the theme of this eloquently written letter.

**Connections:** Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament does the Old Testament come into focus more than in the Book of Hebrews, which has as its foundation the Levitical priesthood. The writer to the Hebrews constantly compares the inadequacies of the Old Testament sacrificial system to the perfection and completion in Christ. Where the Old Covenant required continual sacrifices and a once-a-year atonement for sin offered by a human priest, the New Covenant provides a once-for-all sacrifice through Christ (Hebrews 10:10) and direct access to the throne of God for all who are in Him.

**Practical Application:** Rich in foundational Christian doctrine, the Epistle to the Hebrews also gives us encouraging examples of God's "faith heroes" who persevered in spite of great difficulties and adverse circumstances (Hebrews 11). These members of God's Hall of Faith provide overwhelming evidence as to the unconditional surety and absolute reliability of God. Likewise, we can maintain perfect confidence in God's rich promises, regardless of our circumstances, by meditating upon the rock-solid faithfulness of God's workings in the lives of His Old Testament saints.

The writer of Hebrews gives ample encouragement to believers, but there are five solemn warnings we must heed. There is the danger of neglect (Hebrews 2:1-4), the danger of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13), the danger of spiritual immaturity (Hebrews 5:11-6:20), the danger of failing to endure (Hebrews 10:26-39), and the inherent danger of refusing God (Hebrews 12:25-29). And so we find in this crowning masterpiece a great wealth of doctrine, a refreshing spring of encouragement, and a source of sound, practical warnings against slothfulness in our Christian walk. But there is still more, for in Hebrews we find a magnificently rendered portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Author and Finisher of our great salvation (Hebrews 12:2).

Source:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Hebrews.html>



# "JESUS IS BETTER"

## WEEK 6



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### Icebreaker:

Talk about a difficult lesson you have learned and how you learned it. How did this experience give you compassion for others who are in similar situation?

### Discussion Questions:

#### Read Hebrews 5:1-10, 4:14-16.

How would you summarize what the author is trying to communicate to their audience in this passage?

Some people believe they can't approach God on their own, but the author of Hebrews shows that we can approach God's throne directly, even boldly, through Jesus. Think about your religious upbringing. What part did priests, pastors or elders play in your church? When did you realize that, through Jesus, you could have a relationship directly with God?

How would you describe the role and responsibilities of a high priest?

What qualified Jesus to become the ultimate High Priest?

In what ways is Jesus different from and greater than former high priests?

How did Jesus' suffering and sacrifice for humanity show that He was the perfect High Priest?

How does it affect you knowing that Jesus can sympathize with your weakness?

What scenes from Jesus' life are called to mind by Hebrews 5:7-8?

In light of this, what does it look like for believers to approach the throne of grace with confidence?

Hebrews 5:8-9 explains that Jesus learned obedience through what He suffered, and was in doing so, was made perfect. Essentially, Jesus was "made perfect" in the sense that He became qualified through His perfect obedience to be the source of salvation to all believers. How can the experience and perfection of Jesus give us hope when we lack the obedience that God desires?

**Note on Hebrews 5:8-9**

"Although Jesus was God's Son, He learned the nature of obedience through what He suffered. One might have thought (the writer seems to be saying) that being God's Son would simply be a matter of sharing God's rule of the world, living in bliss and glory. Not so. The God who is the Father of Jesus is the God who made the world in the first place, and He remains deeply committed to his creation, even though it has become wayward and corrupt. Jesus must learn what it means to be His Father's obedient Son; and that will mean suffering, not because God is a sadist who simply wants to see his dear Son having a rough time of it, but because the world which God made and loves is dark and wicked place and the Son must suffer it's sorrows and pain in order to rescue it.

When it says that Jesus was made complete and perfect, it doesn't mean that He was imperfect before in the sense of being sinful. Rather He needed to attain the full stature of Sonship through experiencing the pain and grief of the Father Himself over His world gone wrong. He became truly and fully what in His nature He already was."

*\*Taken from N.T.Wright's "For Everyone Bible Study Guides: Hebrews"*

When we have sinned and are in trouble, or are dealing with the temptation of sin, we often hesitate to turn to God. We think we can handle it on our own, or we feel the need to "clean up our act" before we can approach Him. How can Jesus' understanding and sympathetic nature motivate you to turn to Him today in times of temptation and trouble?

How would your life be different if you released all of your problems to Jesus?

What additional questions or thoughts do you have?

What is your takeaway from today's discussion and how are you going to apply it to your life?

How can the people around you help you?