**Hebrews 7:23-27** Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26 Such a high priest meets our need-- one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

 Wow, here we are again at this great day of the Resurrection of Jesus. There is no more important day. There is no event, happening, movement, era or holiday greater than this one. Why? Because this event changed the world. This event altered history. This event brings to fruition all that God said would be in his Holy Word. This event clarifies and proclaims that all of God’s Word is true. All of this culminating from the simple and yet eloquent proclamation of one of God’s Angels: **“You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.”**

What awesome and wonderful words. For on this morning the message and truth of Jesus went out. Through the resurrection Jesus has been proclaimed God’s Son. Jesus has been proclaimed our Redeemer. Jesus has since affirmed that because He lives so shall we! Yes, the resurrection of Jesus is the heart and core, the foundation and cornerstone of our Christian faith. Again, there is no greater, no more exciting day than this one.

 As we marvel at this message and victory of Jesus let us do so, as we have been throughout the Lent season, by focusing on Jesus our Great High Priest. Today our theme will be: **JESUS IS OUR ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST.**

 The first thing we need to do is make sure you understand just what all this hoopla and talk about the High Priest is all about. The office of the High Priest was the main religious office of the Old Testament. As such, because the office of the High Priest is established and linked to the ceremonial laws of God we understand that this office then serves as a “shadow,” a foretaste of what is to be. Remember what you learned in Lent. A shadow is a part of Old Testament prophecy, most often connected with the ceremonial or religious laws of the Jews. Shadows were designed to give insight, depth and meaning to the rituals you were doing as a Jew. Most important shadows were pointing ahead to Jesus, pointing to what He would do, what He would be for us.

 In our Lutheran Catechism book, we learn about three of the great offices found in Scripture that were all shadows of the Christ to come. We heard of the Prophet, High Priest and King that the Savior would be. The prophet was a shadow of the fact that the Savior would come and proclaim the truth and wonder of God for all of us. The prophet, God’s spokesman, would reveal the deep mysteries of God and with that revealing would show us the depth and beauty of God’s eternal salvation. The king of the Old Testament foreshadowed how the Christ would come to protect and guard His people from enemies that would hurt and destroy them. Unlike mere human kings who make the people fight for him, Jesus our King went to battle for us, took on our enemies of sin, death and the devil that he might destroy their power over us. Jesus, sitting at the right hand of God, continues his rule and reign for the sake of his Holy Christian Church.

 And then there was the office of the High Priest. Again the central figure in all of Jewish worship life. He was the one who oversaw, regulated and drove home the lessons of what Temple life and worship was all about. Unfortunately, the OT High Priests were all men, sinful men, who often lost sight of the point and purpose of their office. They were to be the representatives of God. They were to be the mediators between God and His people. They were to lead people to see the grace, mercy and love of God. They failed miserably, which is why the people of Jesus’ day so quickly and readily abandoned him. Even though Jesus was the fulfillment of what their religion was about, the High Priest had failed to keep this truth and wonder before the people.

 What do we need to learn about Jesus as our Eternal High Priest? We will focus on some of the things our text declares of Jesus and how he is the best thing yet.

 Note what the text said first: **“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office.”** Here is a truth about those who served before Jesus, they came and they went. They were men, sinful men subject to death and being no more. Jesus on the other hand was God’s Son. He too, became subject to death, but not because of his own sins. The biggest difference is this: Jesus died and Jesus came back to life. Jesus ascended into Heaven where he sits at the right hand of God continuing to serve as our mediator, continuing to plead and work on behalf of us poor and lowly sinners. Jesus holds his office forever! And that is what our text proclaimed: “**But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.”**

What is the value of that? Again we turn to our text and hear what it says, **“Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”** Jesus saves us. What is great is to grasp that the word of this verse translated as “completely” can also be readily understood as meaning “forever.” There is that message again, Jesus is our forever High Priest. Jesus is always there to intercede, to be our mediator before God.

 I don’t know about you, but I sit down and I think of all the deals that have been made, broken and made again in this world of ours. I can’t think of many contracts or disputes of this world that could have been considered perfect and flawless, that saw to it that each side got exactly what they wanted and needed. Yet, when you understand that Jesus is your Mediator, your perfect mediator you grasp just how awesome that is. He is the perfect one because Jesus completely understands God and Jesus completely understands mankind. And the deal Jesus has brokered is absolutely awesome.

 God had decreed that only those who were holy and perfect were going to get to heaven. Yet once Adam and Eve sinned that became a real problem for us. We couldn’t, we can’t and we never will be able as humans to keep perfectly the Law of God. As we learn in James: **“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”** God, in his perfect justice and righteousness had decreed that **“The soul who sins is the one that will die.”** It is clear by the Law of God that all of us are, by our very nature, headed to eternal death.

 But then God sent his Son Jesus as our Great High Priest, the one perfect mediator for us. Jesus knew our problem with sin and the death we faced. So Jesus came to be death for us. He came to pay for our sins, to atone for us, to provide us with complete and sure forgiveness of sins. He knew God needed perfect justice and He knew we needed complete forgiveness. Jesus was able to provide perfectly for both sides. God’s wrath and anger against sin, was taken out on Jesus. The punishment we deserve for our sins, is taken out on Jesus. That is why our text tells that Jesus saves us completely. His work is perfect. His atonement is complete. His salvation is forever for us. Jesus has provided the perfect contract, the perfect covenant of life: the gospel of salvation.

 But please don’t miss that important phrase: **“those who come to God through Him.”** It is true that sin has been paid for by Jesus for every single human being who has ever lived. But God has made one stipulation to this redemption. God calls upon us to have faith in Jesus. This faith is not about living right and being holy. This faith is not about emotions and feeling this or that for salvation. This faith is not some sort of ethereal, inner awakening of your goodness or some sort of spiritual experiential happening in your life. This faith is a gift of God. It is God helping you to: **“be sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see.”** It is you and I, knowing our rotten sinful selves, but at the same time totally trusting that in Jesus, God the Father forgives us. Faith is never apart from Jesus. Faith is never our act toward Jesus. Faith is the simple fact that we believe that because of what Jesus has done (He suffered and died and then rose from the dead), that He has served as the atoning sacrifice for our sins, all of them! The object and confidence of faith is always Jesus! Such is the only way that we can come to God through Jesus.

 Our text goes on: “**Such a High Priest meets out need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.”** Again here is Jesus. What these words do is help us to grasp all the more just how great a mediator Jesus is. He meets our every need. He is holy in every way. This word indicates the absence of all that is bad and wrong. Jesus is blameless. Here the word speaks of real ethical cleanliness, not just a mere ritual purity. Jesus is separated from us. He is in a class by himself. Jesus is exalted above the heavens. Here is the declaration that Jesus stands above and rules over everything that exists in the realm of God, both spiritual and material things. There is nothing not in the power of Jesus. Jesus holds in his hand all things.

 I don’t know about you, but to just hear these words, to contemplate them and what they say of Jesus leaves a person kind of breathless and in total awe. This is our Savior, our perfect and eternal High Priest!

 And then the last important line for ourselves today. **“He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.”** I honestly think this is one of the most astonishing things to hear about Jesus. Why? Just consider the full import of what these words mean.

 Here is the perfect, holy, blameless, above all, exalted Jesus. And yet, Jesus offered himself for our sins! He knew the horror, the pain and agony of enduring eternal hell for us. He went into the darkness of sin, took his stainless soul and became stained, his blameless heart and let evil shut it down. Jesus, the exalted Son of God, above all, greater than all, went to the cross, the common criminal’s just deserts, and all of this just for you and me. He sacrificed himself for our sins. He offered himself for us.

 What has happened is that our text has once again told us the whole point of Jesus. **“He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him.”** Our souls are saved. Our Savior Jesus has completely and wonderfully satisfied the demands of the Law of God for us. He has redeemed us, bought us back from the slavery of Satan and given us the heritage of being the children of God. Jesus has served, is serving and will continue to serve as our Eternal High Priest.

 I tell you, I have yet to fail to have the wonder of Jesus fill my soul and lift up my spirit. This day and the message of Jesus is all that I need to hear and know. Seriously, after that, nothing else matters. The world may think it is winning. Satan may think he is in control. Evil may look like it has the upper hand. But the real truth is that Jesus lives and because He lives, there is nothing to fear. He is our Great High Priest, the holy One, the Eternal one, who has paid for our sins and who has risen from the dead. In this resurrection is our hope, our comfort and our eternal Savior revealed. Believe! He has risen! He is your Savior! Amen.