

## Hebrews 7:26

### Winsome and Harmless

Jesus Christ is the High Priest who stands between us and the wrath of God. He is holy in all His nature and being. But, Holiness is rather off-putting for the defiled. It reminds us of our own filth, our own wickedness... the testimony about Jesus in scripture though is that the wicked and sinful people of His day flocked to Him. Why? It is because of this: Not only was He holy, He was harmless. His harmlessness promised and delivered acceptance for ALL who come to Him regardless of their sin. Scripture shows us that the only one who ever really had a problem with Jesus were the ones who pretended that they were holy, thus His holiness condemned them. But for the sinner, the holiness of Christ was tempered by His harmlessness...

#### I. THE FACT OF HIS HARMLESSNESS

A. Defined:

1. Harmless - innocent
2. innocent, harmless, free from malice, who does no evil

3. Not guilty of causing harm...

B. Opposed - not like Romans 16:17-18

*“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” (Romans 16:17–20, NKJV)*

C. Clarified - He had no sin present

*“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.” (Romans 7:18)*

*“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.” (Romans 7:21, NKJV)*

1. Nor did he have any easily besetting sin...

*“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1–2)*

*“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21)*

*“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)*

*““Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;” (1 Peter 2:22, NKJV)*

2. Where Holiness is all positive in relation to God's nature. (thus holy is about nature)  
harmless is about his life. The first is all positive holiness the second is all avoidance of any evil.

## **II. THE FLAVOR OF HIS HARMLESSNESS**

### **A. Harmless Toward Us**

1. It is important for us to understand that Jesus is the most helpful and harmless person in the whole of the world. In this harmlessness He is absolutely safe for us to run to.

**John 8.1-11**

2. There is no harm in Him for us - There is no foul judgement for our sin. He will one day judge the sin of the world, but that day is not yet and there is now a winsome loveliness that calls sinners to Him...

a. Prostitutes

b. Tax collectors

c. Those hated and rejected by the better class of people...

3. No matter what our sin, Jesus stands ready to receive us unto Himself and offer the forgiveness purchased by His blood. His death removes the guilt that separates us from our God. His blood is the expiation of our guilt... the removal of that which is against us, and that which is itself harmful to us ... Jesus has paid the price for our sin and our forgiveness... and in this light it is important that we realize that this is part of the beauty of His call to Himself ...

B. Harmless FOR us

*“At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have*

*revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

*(Matthew 11:25–30)*

1. Some things of note
  - a. God is the one who opens the eyes which see.
  - b. The revelation of Jesus is the work of God and the revelation of God is the manifestation of Christ... and while the holiness of God might be terrifying for us (and in one sense, it should be) that holiness calls us to forsake our sin and come. He promises rest
  - c. He promises healing
    - d. He promises that which our souls need above all else.
- C. Harmless Before us

1. He is presented to us as holy, but also as harmless... His holiness without His harmlessness would leave us distanced and afraid to come into His presence... But there is in His harmlessness, nothing off-putting, nothing that demands we leave Him alone... nothing that warns us that He will reject us. It is part of His beauty and part of His call to us to repent.
2. Consider the different spirit that was in His disciples...

### **Luke 9.51-56**

3. Jesus rebuked the sons of thunder, James and John because they did not understand who they were as Christ's followers. They also did not understand who He was... their vision was that of the world. If you reject us, we will reject you and destroy you as a warning to others. It is a response based in pride, based in arrogance and based in a false understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ.

## **III. THE FATHER OF HIS HARMLESSNESS**

- A. God is the Author

1. The temptation is to pit this “softer” expression of the nature of Christ against the Holiness of God as if the two were in conflict. It is a generalized misunderstanding which makes some people feel like God is schizophrenic... Like the God of the OT and the God of the New need to meet...
  2. But nothing could be further from the truth. Keep in mind that the death of Jesus Christ has been the plan of God, ordained according to His purpose since before time itself began.
- B. God chose to create to save
1. Remember that you were chosen in the beloved before the foundation of the world. This is neither vague, nor hyperbole... this is not an exaggeration. It is a simple statement of the Word of God... and whether we fully understand it or not in no way alters its truth.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to*

*Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:3–6, NKJV)*

2. We were chosen in love, we were chosen according to the "good pleasure of God" But that also has an impact on how we see God now. He is FOR us also... Consider 2Corinthians 5...

*“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18–19, NKJV)*

3. Does this sound like the work of a vindictive tyrant that wants nothing more than to destroy you?

### C. God Loves

1. If God is in Christ reconciling us to Himself then we MUST consider the reality that God does, in fact love us and desire what is best for us... that God is working out a GOOD purpose for those of us who are found in Christ.

2. Now, here is the hitch... we don't know who is and who isn't... but the good news is that we do not need to! We don't need to know... for nowhere in scripture are we told to seek to become elect of God, that we should strive to be chosen... those things are God's business NOT ours.

#### D. God Forgives

1. We are told to do 2 things.
  - a. Repent of our sins
  - b. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ
  - c. Repent of our sins
  - d. Believe that He will keep His word.
2. This is the consistent testimony of Scripture whenever the gospel is proclaimed...

*“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38, NKJV)*

3. Here is the testimony of God toward us:

*"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes*

*unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9–10, NKJV)*

a. Confessing Jesus as Lord is the testimony of repentance. It is the determination that God is right, that all men including yourself, are liars and wretches and worthy of death, that your own sins and life are consistently aimed away from God and you desire to walk with and toward Him. It is the surrender of your life into the hand of God in all ways... coupled with this confession is the clarity and understanding that God is exactly who He says He is, and that His word is truth. We believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for it is the payment and the testimony of God that our sins have been removed.

E. God beckons, draws, converts and enlivens, rewarding us for what He Himself has done in us!

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

*(Hebrews 11:6, NKJV)*

#### **IV. THE FORCE OF HIS HARMLESSNESS**

A. The force or impact of His harmlessness is twofold. First It strips away every pretense of reason not to come to Jesus for forgiveness.

1. Make no mistake, men will still find "reasons" not to come but in the final analysis it all boils down to one...

*“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19, NKJV)*

2. Men will still refuse to come to Jesus, but it is the simple truth of their own dead hearts that is the reason.

3. When we see His beauty and His holiness we are captured by His loveliness but most of us are also a bit put off by His purity... we can never be and know that we are not worthy ... but when God displays the nature of Jesus' harmlessness his lovely nature and kindness are displayed in rich relief, and all of our suppositions about his person fade away in the light of the beauty of His love and majesty

B. Secondly, It calls us and challenges us to be harmless and winsome in our own lives.

1. God sends us with the message of reconciliation... and yet we often present it as a message of pugnaciousness.
2. We are called, not to call down fire, but rather to pray for mercy and awakening. Let our lives and our testimony be such that the testimony of the world around us is this:
  - a. We may not agree with them, but they make it hard for us to hate them!
  - b. I may not believe in their Jesus, but the Jesus they proclaim is one I would trust if I did.
3. We are called to preach Christ as He is presented in Scripture. Faithfully, compassionately and winsomely.
4. If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that we are the greatest barrier to the gospel with which we must contend...
5. Let us also be harmless in our person and in our love for the fallen world we have been commissioned to reach with the gospel.