“Book of Hebrews – Chapter 10”

Jesus - our Once-and-for-all Sacrifice

[ Series Title ~ ‘In Christ Alone - Towards spiritual maturity!’ ]

Or

[ Jesus … Simply The Best! ]

9.30a.m. Sunday 28 May, 2017

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the Laidley Baptist Church (Qld).

Introduction

Today we are looking at the 10th Chapter of Hebrews. One of my favourite chapters, because speaks to us about Christ’s once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins. I’d say it’s a pretty important chapter in the Bible. The reason that you and I are here today is this Chapter in Hebrews, that shows us that we have been bought with a price, the once-and-for-all sacrificial blood of the Son of God. Let’s get into it, but first let’s pray …

Gracious God & our Heavenly Father, Open our hearts to your precious Word today. Reveal afresh your love to us through the once-and-for-all sacrifice of your Son, Jesus. Thank you that His sacrifice was enough for our sins … forever. Thank you for giving us eternal hope – it can only be found here in You.

Bless your Holy name Jesus. Amen

Open your Bibles - let’s read through Hebrews Chapter 10 together
The Old Testament Sacrifices insufficient (v1-4)

The writer is making it abundantly clear in the first few verses of Chapter 10 that the Old Testament sacrifices didn’t quite cut it (pardon the pun). The Law was just a shadow … a rough outline of what was to come … an indication of the reality of what really existed in Heaven. The good things to come – that is, the finished work of Jesus the Messiah.

The Law was not a true representation. It couldn’t be a true replica of what God was going to do about sin once-and-for-all. There is NO reality in the Law because of its failure to permanently deal with the sin issue. The reality was yet to come.

Year after year, dragging, cutting and making sacrifices – a repetitious cycle that essentially did nothing to accomplish the ultimate. It wasn’t perfect.

THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT THE LAW COULD NEVER DO → MAKE ANYONE OR ANYTHING PERFECT!!

That’s the whole point to the Book of Hebrews. No one could be brought to spiritual maturity. The blood of bulls and goats under the Law could not bring one Old Testament saint to a level of spiritual maturity. Neither could it give them a complete cleansing of their conscience (Chapter 9). They could never be thoroughly cleansed forever from the guilt of sin.

The fact that the sacrifices had to be repeated every year tells us that this system is insufficient. If the Law had been perfect then the sacrifices would have ceased. The writer tells us that sacrifices were still being made – that’s what informs us that the book was written prior to the Temple being destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

If you were a worshipper under the Law, you would never come away feeling thoroughly cleansed. Today, the believer no longer has to feel the guilt of sin – it has been taken away completely!

What did the sacrificial system do?

It helped them remember their sins each year. It reminded the people of their sin … in a guilt sense. It reminded them that the sacrifice only covered their sins for the past year … it didn’t remove them. Under the Old Covenant the sins were remembered, but under the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:12) God said that He would remember their sins no more.

When Jesus died, he died for the sins of the Old Testament saints as well. Their sins, up to that point, were only covered. Animal blood couldn’t remove or take away sin. It was impossible. It only covered them. For the Old Testament saint, their sin was out of God’s sight, but it was not removed.
The Sufficiency of the sacrifice of the Messiah (v5-10)

What the animal blood could not do, Jesus' blood was able to do. Verses 5-7 tell us what God considers a once-and-for-all perfect sacrifice. The ONLY sacrifice acceptable before God is one that comes through perfect obedience and faith (1 Samuel 15:22).

Animals can't offer their blood in perfect obedience and faith. That's why it was necessary for the Messiah to come (in the flesh). He quotes Psalm 40:6-8 to show that only obedience brings perfection. It is because of Jesus' obedience that perfection can be imparted. God prepared a human body for Himself so that He might be the One to die for humanity. It was God's will to arrange this final sacrifice – a ONCE AND FOR ALL sacrifice. Never been done before!

Jesus' sacrifice was voluntary. It came with obedience. Jesus went to His death as an act of personal obedience on His own. Animals could never do that! God was never pleased with animal sacrifices as a final act of perfection.

When Jesus says in verse 9, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will', He is stating that He was coming willingly and obediently to the final sacrifice for sin. The result was that He took away the first covenant (Mosaic Covenant) and He established the second (The New Covenant). Perfection – something the Law could never do. By Jesus' death the sacrifices of the first covenant were taken away – and then a second was brought in. By the shedding of blood the New Covenant was inaugurated. The Law was done away with.

Verse 10 tells us that you and me as believers are now partakers of the fruits of His obedience. Because Jesus (Messiah) was willing to die, we (believers) have been sanctified once-and-for-all. This is positional sanctification. In other words, because of Jesus' blood we are in a continual state of being washed in God's sight. We are now in Him, In Christ, in a permanent, continuous state of salvation and sanctification. Permanently made holy in the sight of God. NOT POSSIBLE EXCEPT THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS THAT SAVES US ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL.

What is Jesus (our Messiah) now doing in Heaven? (v11-14)

Levitical Priests performed repetitious tasks – their work never finished. Daily sacrifices and rituals. It didn’t matter how many times they were offered, they could never take away sins. Sounds ludicrous doesn't it?

The Priesthood of Jesus is the opposite. His one-time offering dealt with the issue of sin forever. The Old Testament sacrifices didn't remove sins, but the sacrifice of Jesus did. Jesus’ work is effective forever!
Because Jesus’ work is finished, He is now seated at the right hand of God. Seated because His work is completed, waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool. He will remain in Heaven until He rises to judge at the Second Coming – to destroy His enemies.

Verse 14 tells us that as a result of His offering He perfected the saints forever. They are not perfect because of what they really are, but because of what they are in Christ (Positional sanctification). But as a believer today, you are only perfect because of what you are in Jesus Christ, as a result of His perfect sacrifice. In practice, we still sin, therefore in practice, there is a work going on – practical sanctification – The Holy Spirit is slowly conforming you more and more to the image of the Son of God. As we grow in grace, our ‘practices’ must be more and more conformed to our position.

As believers we have been perfected forever. It’s an abiding work – it goes on and on and on – forever! That’s why your salvation is secure, because His work permanently sanctifies you (as a believer) for ever. The Bible doesn’t teach that God’s work of sanctification is only temporary. His Work is forever. You have been perfected forever through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus’ blood. His blood perfects the saints forever because the sacrifice is permanent, once-and-for-all, and His blood is a better blood, offered in perfect obedience.

The New Covenant (v15-18)

On the cross, your sin (and the sin of all people past, present and future) was totally, effectively and permanently dealt with. This was testified by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31:33-34 is quoted. No more remembrance of sins; and no more consciousness of sin. So therefore, there is no more need for the Old Covenant, there is no more need for the Levitical System, there is no more need for the animal sacrifices. The Jewish believers here in the Book of Hebrews can now dispense with all of that without any loss. In fact Jesus fulfils the promises of the New Covenant.

Verse 18 sums it all up decisively → Since Jesus brought perfection and brought complete forgiveness, sin, as far as God is concerned, cannot even be remembered.

So why do we need the Levitical system anymore? These Jewish Believers already had it all – sins forgiven, not remembered anymore, the perfect sacrifice in Christ’s own blood.

And they wanted to go back to something less than this? You’re kidding!!
PRACTICAL APPLICATION – THE PRE-EMINANCE OF CHRIST IN THE WALK OF A BELIEVER (v19ff)

Now let’s get really practical for the last part of Chapter 10. This last section talks about the practical application of the Pre-eminence of the Son in the Walk of a Believer. How does Jesus’ perfect sacrifice make a difference in your walk as a believer?

- Exhortations (v19-25)
- Warning - The Danger of Wilful sin (26-31)
- Encouragement (v32-39)

EXHORTATIONS (v19-25)

The 1st basis for the encouragement in these verses is free access to God. Starts with ‘therefore’ → in light of what has been said up to this point in Hebrews.

So since the readers of Hebrews have this entrance to God, they need to learn how to use it. They are referred to as brothers & sisters indicating that they are fellow believers. They now have access to the Most Holy Place – not the earthly one, but now the heavenly one. They have access into the Holy of Holies in Heaven through the Melkizedekian High Priest. In other words, believers today have the same privilege as the High Priest in the Old Testament.

They now also have boldness and freedom to express the concerns of their hearts by means of the Messiah’s blood. Verse 20 says it is a ‘new and living way’. New because of the New Covenant and a better blood. Living because it consists of a living relationship with a living Person. Jesus shed blood conquered spiritual death and has brought life. So we now have access ‘through the veil’ (which is Jesus’ flesh), which was torn (Jesus body was broken).

The 2nd basis for encouragement is found in verse 21 – the sovereign power of this High Priest. This High Priest is ‘over the house of God’, not the earthly one, but the heavenly one. It is because of the better things about the heavenly house that we can be encouraged by the sovereign power of this High Priest in Jesus.

After the writer states the 2 bases for the encouragement, he now gives 4 exhortations.
1. An exhortation to FAITH – ‘let us draw near to God’ in a sense of worshipping Him. It doesn’t mean just once, it means to continually draw near. This is in contrast to their luke-warmness found in Chapter 4 (v14-16).

How do they draw near to God?

With a ‘sincere heart’ – with true/real devotion.

With ‘full assurance that faith brings’ – a mature/vigorous faith. God is able to perform that which He has promised.

Having our ‘hearts sprinkled’ – emphasises salvation through the blood, being justified and declared righteous, free from guilt. Positional sanctification → it happened in the past when they believed, and continues into the present.

Having our ‘bodies washed with pure water’ – Practical sanctification. Being cleansed as a result of having been regenerated (Titus 3:5, Ephesians 5:26). They been bathed and are still being bathed. Jesus is still washing them throughout their earthly travels through life. (O.T. Priests had to bathe – Exodus 29:4).

2. An exhortation to HOPE (v23) – ‘let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess’. The Hope is that Jesus is truly their Messiah. It is God who keeps them saved (cleansed) on the heavenly side, however to hold fast is the human side. The writer doesn’t say that the believers remain saved by holding fast but by holding fast they show outwardly the evidence of salvation. A lack of holding on does not mean that they were not saved to begin with, just a lack of evidence.

Why should they hold on? Because ‘He who promised is faithful’. It is dependant upon God’s power. Because they are saved He is holding them.

3. An exhortation to LOVE (v24) – they are to ‘consider’ (carefully investigate) - not to find fault or criticize, but to spur one another on to love & good deeds. Love is the inner attitude, good deeds are the outward action. Jesus said ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments’. The believers become lovers of Jesus by showing their love for the brethren by doing good deeds/works for them.

4. An exhortation to FELLOWSHIP (v25) – not giving up on gathering together. This is essential for believers to meet together. Note that it doesn’t say on what day of the week the Church should meet. That is up to each individual Church to make that decision. It is permissible to meet on a Sunday or Saturday or on a Friday, but it is not acceptable for the Church to stop meeting. They are to continue to gather together.

Sadly, some of the Jewish believers to whom he is writing have begun to disassociate themselves from other believers because of persecution. But this is reason why they must gather – to encourage on another, particularly in light of the coming judgment. There is an urgency (as you see the Day approaching). It is on the verge of happening. They are near to the coming judgment of A.D. 70 where the Temple and

Then the writer introduces a warning – the danger of wilful sin.

**THE DANGER OF WILFUL SIN (v26-31)**

Verse 26 gives us the principle for those believers who reject the truth. He has just warned them about coming judgment and they will fall into that judgment if they don’t heed what he has told them. He has just mentioned about the necessity of gathering together. In light of the fact that some have already stopped associating with other believers, a warning is given.

If we deliberately keep on sinning – this means a wilful continuous action, not just one simple isolated act of sin, but a habitually committed sin. In the case here in Hebrews, it is the sin to wilfully and permanently return to Judaism. It’s not saying here a sin out of ignorance, but one they commit wilfully. Planned, determined and committed with forethought.

The readers here have been planning it, but have not yet committed it. Hence the warning. These believers have already ‘received the knowledge of truth’. So if these readers insist on going back wilfully after reading this letter, it will show the enormity of their defection.

There will be ‘no sacrifice for sins left’. If they reject Jesus by going back, then they have no other sacrifice for sins. He was their final sacrifice. In the Old Testament there was no sacrifice for certain sins (adultery, murder, blasphemy). The people could not offer a sacrifice for these sins. Instead, they were subject to the penalty of death ... physical death. That is what will occur here, physical death.

While the cross covers all sins for eternity, there is a sin here that the Cross of Christ will not cover in this life. For eternity their sins are forever removed, but what is the sin that the blood of Christ will not cover while they are living?

The voluntary sin they commit wilfully after they become believers and after receiving a full warning. A sin they commit even though they know that it is wrong. Going back to Judaism and remaining there. They have gone back on their previous confession that Jesus is the Messiah. It involves separating themselves from other believers permanently to escape persecution. For this kind of sin there is no further sacrifice, and therefore subject to judgment – physical (not spiritual) judgement. Physical judgment → physical death (v28-29), death in the A.D. 70 judgment (v25, 27), and a loss of rewards in the next life (v35-36). The background here is in Numbers 15:29-31, which shows that for some sins there was no sacrifice.
The principle is that while for the believer, all sins are forgivable for eternity, not all sins can be rectified in this life.

**Verse 27** talks about a greater judgment, as a result of rejecting the only way. There are no extra sacrifices for wilful apostasy. Instead they will receive the judgment – ‘raging fire that will consume their enemies’. In A.D. 70 both the city and the Temple were destroyed by fire.

**Verse 28**, the writer reminds them that the Old Testament teaches the fact of physical judgement. Under Mosaic Law, at the word of 2 or 3 witnesses, a person could be executed. What kind of judgment? Physical judgment. Those who turn their backs on the One greater than Moses will suffer physical death in A.D. 70.

In **verse 29**, the punishment will be more sever under grace than under Moses. The rejection of the Law of Moses brought punishment. If Jesus is greater than Moses, then rejecting Jesus will bring even greater punishment. ‘*Someone who has trampled the Son of God underfoot*’ – means to flagrantly contempt or to have scorn, count it as worthless, to reject the work of God the Father, who sent the Son, and declared Him to be the Son of God.

These believers have already been sanctified by the blood (positionally sanctified), but now they are in danger of turning their backs on this sanctification by returning to Judaism. They were treating Jesus’ blood as no better than that of ordinary men. Basically suggesting that Jesus’ blood was just common blood. This makes Jesus’ blood unholy & implies that Jesus suffered just for his own sins. And yet this is the very blood by which they have been sanctified! They are believers but in danger of mistreating the blood of Christ.

It is also an insult against the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who does the work of regeneration and sanctification. By rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit, they put themselves in the same camp as the Jewish generation guilty of the unpardonable sin found in Matthew 12 – the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. That is, making the claim that Jesus was not the Messiah on the basis of his being demon-possessed. If these believers go back to Judaism they will face a physical death because they are visibly rejecting the work of the Triune God.

**Verses 30-31** – the writer shows the reason for judgement and why it is so severe. It is because of His character. The writer shows us from Deuteronomy 32:35-36 that vengeance is the Lords, and He will judge his people. God will judge them if the readers take this course of action. The Living God is aware if they commit this sin, therefore He will judge them … and the judgement is physical.

Now for some encouragement to finish off the Chapter.
ENCOURAGEMENT (v32-39)

Verses 32-34 the writer encourages the people & asks them to remember their former, courageous faith, when they were first saved. When they were first saved and ‘endured in a great conflict full of suffering’. They suffered as real believers. He’s calling them remember their earlier days of faith as a deterrent to apostasy. They went through direct (personal) & indirect suffering. Being mocked & ridiculed, persecution to their possessions. They lost their property. They suffered indirectly because of their associations with other believers.

Verse 34 – they had compassion (inner agony) on those who were in jails and in prison. They joyfully accepted the confiscation of their possessions. Why? They had a knowledge of the One in Heaven – a much better possession, one that abides (lasts) forever.

So the writer now urges them, in light of that kind of faith, to continue in patient endurance so as not to lose their crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Again, there is nothing in these warnings that speak of losing their salvation. They will lose their physical lives and their rewards, but not their salvation.

Verse 35 - The lessons of the past are used as encouragement to endure patiently. They had a foundation of boldness, and they acted on it. The result was the assurance of victory. Confidence in the access they had into God’s presence. They must exercise patient endurance so they will not lose their rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

Trials are a part of the life of faith. They do not need more faith, just more patient endurance. Doing the will of God means they will receive rewards. As such they will receive the Promise → spiritual maturity in this life ... AND rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ in the next life.

Verses 37-38, the writer quotes Habakkuk 2:3-4 to show that God will fulfill his purpose in due time. It might look to us that He is lingering. Because of God’s intention to fulfill His purpose in His time, this will give them hope during periods of persecution. Shrinking back in fear is the sign of an unbeliever. The sign of a believer is living by faith. The just shall live by faith.

Verse 39 – application to these Jewish believers. They are the ones who have faith. But ‘we’ (the writer & the people he is writing to) are not ones who shrink back. They have salvation faith. The point is that their sufferings won’t last forever, but their salvation will last forever. God will fulfill His purpose. They must continue exercising patience & endurance, as they have done in the past.
CONCLUSION

Once again, a heavy Chapter. Lots in it. How are you feeling? Encouraged?

It’s interesting to see that right from the beginning, believers struggled with their faith, being persecuted, laughed at and mocked. But there is a reward (a crown) that will be given in due time. God’s time. We must persevere and be patient – waiting for the Day of the Lord.

Tomorrow morning I will officiate at the funeral of Margaret Strahan. To me and her friends and family, she is one who has persevered to the end. The victory of her faith. She has never given up on her faith in God, regardless of the suffering and the life that was dealt to her. Margaret knew of the once-and-for-all salvation through Christ her Lord. You could tell. She lived it out. What you believe you live out.

It will be such a blessing to be a part of her send-off Celebration tomorrow. I look forward to sharing in this time, this gathering of believers for the purpose of encouragement. You are invited to come and be encouraged as well.

Next week we will be at the Forest Hill School of Arts building. We will be looking at Hebrews 11 – ‘a faith to die for’. I have a great clip that I want to show as well.

Let’s Pray ... 

Gracious God & our Heavenly Father, Thank you God that your plans and purpose will one day be fulfilled. We wait for that day with patience and endurance and courage, knowing that You will do all that you have said and promised. We thank you for the promise of eternal salvation through the blood of Christ. Encourage us to hang onto it at all costs, not trampling it or treating it as common. Thank you that you are working in us and on us, maturing us spiritually. Encourage us to continue to be a fellowship that craves meeting together doing good works for each other, and declaring the mighty name of Jesus in our midst.

Encourage any today who have grown cold in their faith, to persevere and remember the early days of their faith. Give them courage to continue their journey of faith right to the end, and to not shrink back, but have boldness and complete trust and peace in the One true God.

We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Closing Song ~ How Deep the Father’s Love for us.
Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;
with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.
7 Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my God.’”

8 First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. 9 Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second.
10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. 14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16 “This is the covenant I will make with them
   after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts,
   and I will write them on their minds.”

17 Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts
   I will remember no more.”

18 And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

**A Call to Persevere in Faith**

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?
For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

“For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.”

And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.”

But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.