Hebrews 9:15-28

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Amen. It is good for us to be together this morning.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 9 verse 15. You can find this on page \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible in front of you if you don’t have one with you.

We’ve been studying the book of Hebrews now for almost half a year. Sometimes I think about it and it’s gone by so quickly but whenever I open the book to read it I feel like we’ve walking through this for three and a half years because this book is so rich with truth about Christ.

And we are studying the book of Hebrews this year, for that exact reason, because it is about Christ. Ultimately every book in the Scripture is going to point to the Lord Jesus in some way but Hebrews is especially focused with the person and work of Christ. How He is better than all other men and how His redemptive work is supreme compared to all other work that came before Him.

Last week, Pastor Birk walked us through the first half of chapter nine where we had an in depth look at the OT sacrificial system and how that relates to Christ.

In summary what we learned is that the Old Testament sacrificial worship system was always designed to be a picture of something else that was to come. Another way the Bible puts it is that the OT system was the shadow and Christ is the substance.

Just like how a shadow points to the real thing or how a picture points to the object it represents, so all of the features of the tabernacle and the Mosaic Covenant were intended to point to something greater, namely the sacrificial work that Christ was going to do for the people to end the repetitive, tedious, and ultimately futile nature of the system that came before.

So far, we have talked about the Levitical high priest in the OT and how it was his job to intercede for the people of Israel. The tabernacle where he operated was filled with all sorts of furniture and amenities for sacrifices and offerings and on one day of the year, the day of atonement, the high priest was to enter the inner sanctuary, where the presence of God was, and sprinkle the blood of special animal sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people.

All that we have learned so far and especially what we learned last week are vitally important for what we are studying today because today is where we see how Christ is what all of these different elements in the OT is pointing to.

Now before we read this passage, I want to remind us of two different problems that we should be thinking about as we dive into this text.

1. God is holy – It is a problem if you are not holy.

* Holiness - Morally pure and a cut above everything else
* The whole OT system is about having fellowship with God despite the people being sinful and God being holy

1. The inevitable exhaustion of the first system

* We’ve already seen this in depth – it is obvious the system was not designed for longevity
* I – Stationary bike at the bottom of a hill. You’re going to get a workout, but you are sure not going to get anywhere

And so, we come to a passage like this understanding God is holy, we are not, the old system was not sufficient, and there has to be a better way to make this all work out.

READ the passage

15-22

E – High Priest vs mediator

* There is a bit of an overlap but there is a definite distinction
* High Priest – Represents the people before God
  + This is more about legal, sacrificial, and cleansing
* Mediator – Brining two parties together
  + Carries with it the idea of a reconciliation and relationship

E – Mediator - This is more than just a legal declaration, but it is about fellowship and unity between two parties.

I – We use mediators all the time in our world when it comes to relationships

* Biblical Counseling – husband and wife – the counselor is in a sense acting as a mediator to bring the two parties together

T – And what is interesting here is that Jesus is the mediator, not just for the NT saints but also for the OT saints that came before His earthly ministry.

E – Look at what it says in verse 15 - since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant

Q – Who committed sins under the first covenant and have received redemption?

* That would be the OT saints

E – This answers a question that many people have when it comes to the salvation of those who came before the cross.

Q – How were they saved if they did not know about Jesus?

E – Although they did not know the details of the Christ as we know them, they still were given promises of God and they were also saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

* Their trust was still in God alone to save them from the penalty their sin requires

I - Credit card – OT Saints

* Debit card – NT Saints

T – And so as it says at the end of verse 15, the eternal inheritance is not just for those who cam after Christ who are saved, but also those who came before the cross and trusted in God for salvation.

E – Now if you are following me in your Bible I think the next few lines are some of the most confusing to understand but I think they can be resolved fairly easily.

*16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.*

*17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.*

Q – This doesn’t make any sense. Covenants are made all the time and no one dies.

* Well there are covenants that are inaugurated all the time that require the death of the one who made it.
* Different Bible teachers interpret this differently, but the last word in verse 15 is the key some use to make sense of this.
* “inheritance” – he’s talking about a will

E – And so in this case, if this is referring to some form of a will, someone does have to die in order for it to go into effect.

T – And that is the launching pad the author uses to go back to Moses

E – When the OT sacrificial system was first set up in the book of Exodus, sacrifices where made and the blood of those animals was sprinkled all over the holy objects to show that the tabernacle and its amenities had been cleansed with blood.

T – Let’s take a pause for a moment – maybe you are new to Christianity, an unbeliever, or a really just getting into studying the Bible and you have a question.

Q – Why is the Bible seemingly obsessed with this idea of blood?

E – It is as it says here in verse 22, “*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness!”*

E – Somebody has to die in order for you to be forgiven.

E – We see this idea of blood from the very beginning of the Bible all the way to the end.

- What is important to understand is that this idea of blood is not just talking about the physical substance with someone’s DNA in it. The theme of blood is pointing to a death.

-The blood of bulls and goats was not donated blood. It had to be taken via the death of the animal!

Q – Now have you ever thought this, where in the Bible do we see the first death?

-We see the first death of a man in Genesis 4 with the death of Able but the first death is implied in Genesis chapter 3 with the fall of man.

E – Now to give you a snap shot..

Q – Just after Adam and Eve sin against the Lord, what do they do?

* They are ashamed, so they hide themselves and craft clothing out of fig leaves
* It’s right after this that there is the confrontation from the Lord, the curses, and then the banishing from the garden.

Q – Now do you remember one of the last things God does before He drives Adam and Eve out of the garden?

* He makes them new clothes – made out of skin
* Now we don’t all need to be gardeners to understand that skin does not grow on trees.

E – And so God killed an animal and covered Adam and Eve with its skin to show that in order to deal with sin before God, there must be death.

E – This theme is picked back up more explicitly in the book of Leviticus.

Leviticus 17:11

11 ‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’

T – Now in order for there to be a genuine drawing near to the Lord, the author of Hebrews is reminding us that there has to be a cleaning.

* In order for their to be forgiveness of sin, there has to be an atonement.
* In order for their to be redemption, there has to be a sacrifice.

E – And so He explains that only Christ was able to make this kind of sacrifice that would actually deal with the problems at hand.

* Unlike the Levitical priests, Christ was the sacrifice.
* Unlike the Levitical priests, Christ only had to make one sacrifice
* Unlike the Levitical priests who ministered in a temple that was simply a picture of the real thing, Christ’s sacrifice was accepted and received as worthy in the courts of heaven itself.

E – Christ was able to make this sacrifice because as we have already seen in Hebrews, He is both Man and God.

*Hebrews 2:14–18*

*14Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*

*15and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

*16For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.*

*17Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

E – But it wasn’t enough for our High Priest to be just a man, we’ve already seen how the weak high priests of the law couldn’t make a sacrifice that was worth anything.

*Hebrews 7:26–27*

*26For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;*

*27who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

E – It had to be the death of God’s own Son, someone who was truly holy Himself, in order to make that kind of payment for us.

E – That is what it means when it says this is sacrifice was made at the consummation of the ages in verse 26

* This was the final act of atonement.
* It was the last sacrifice that needed to be made.
* When Jesus said “it is finished” on the cross, the justice of God had truly been satisfied.

E – That is why in…

*Hebrews 8:13*

*13When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*

E – The old system was no longer needed after Christ. It can now be done away with.

E – And as the ending of the chapter sates, Christ will be returning a second time for salvation, but when he comes back next time he won’t be dealing with sin in the sense that He is going to need to atone for anything.

* There will be judgement and there will be a kingdom, but sin has already been taken away through Christ’s work in His first coming.

T – Now when we think about these kinds of truths they are marvelous to think about but let’s take the rest of our time this morning to consider how to apply a passage such as this one.

* There are themes here that we have already seen in the book of Hebrews and some that we will see again but one of the beauties of the Scriptures is that although there is one meaning of the text, there are many ways we can apply the text.

Proposition: Three applications knowing that Christ is the mediator of a new covenant

1. **Understand that the forgiveness of sin requires blood v.15-22**
   1. **Blood cleanses unrighteousness**
   2. **Not just any blood is adequate**

 E – True forgiveness is transactional .

* Repentance is necessary for there to be true forgiveness
* Our forgiveness before God is the greatest example
* This is a motivation to forgive others.

E – How this is different than just apologizing

* This is not just remorse
* It is a two way transaction and a commitment to change

A – Elaborate on what this forgiveness should look like, how it should be a regular part of the Christian life, and how it will change someone’s life.

1. **Rejoice in the sufficient blood of Christ v.23-26**
   1. **The high priest who offered Himself**
   2. **The high priest who made only one sacrifice**
   3. **The high priest who entered heaven itself**

E – Discuss “This is the blood of the new covenant”

* 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
* This covenant, just like the Old Covenant, was ratified with blood.

E – The difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

-Law on tablets vs Law in your heart

-External cleansing of the flesh vs internal cleansing of the heart

-It is the beginning of God’s plan where there is now true change and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

A - How we should view this during communion.

* The sacrifice of Christ was once for all enough to inaugurate this new era in the kingdom of God.
* It is a rejoicing in the fact that Christ has already made his atoning work for the people and he full well intends to finish it.

1. **Live knowing that Christ is an eternal mediator v.27-28**
   1. **Assurance for God’s people**
   2. **Warning for God’s enemies**

-The OT saints waited for their high priest to return.

Draw this out

I have some touching up to do on this Wednesday.