

March 10, 2019
Pastor Ken Hepner

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:
20. “The Power in the Precious Blood of Jesus”
Hebrews 9:11 – 22

Introduction:

This morning we are returning to our study of the letter to the Greek-speaking, ethnic Jewish people had come to believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior when they heard the message of the Gospel. They opened their hearts to believe and receive His presence. The Holy Spirit came to live in their hearts, and made their spirits alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Where the Holy Spirit comes to dwell, He makes Himself known in that human life, in character, in mindset, in will, and in our desires. We bear the fruit of His presence! **The distinguishing characteristic of His presence in our lives is the Agape Love of God burning in our hearts and lives.** Romans 5:5 *“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”*

So, our author reminds them of the great work of grace they all had received as the Spirit of God came to live in their hearts, and poured out His love into them, which they demonstrated by loving and caring for the people around them.

Hebrews 6:10 – 12 NLT *“For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for and **how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true.** Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God’s promises because of their faith and endurance.”*

Listen to his powerful words of counsel and admonition in the text. **Keep on Loving Others,** for in so doing you make certain what you are hoping for, the salvation of your souls. **Remain Faithful and endure to the very end of your lives on earth** Love God and others deeply so that you do not permit the enemy of your souls to make you spiritually dull or indifferent to the things of God. **We choose how we will live our lives and what or whom we will choose to love in life!**

There is a reason why we must know and understand the truth about being motivated by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts as we respond b faith to what Jesus did for us on the Cross. This entire letter is a call to **Perseverance** in the **Walk** of **Faith** in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. **If we are to remain steadfast in our walk of faith in Christ Jesus, we must have greater motivation than our human will and determination moving us to obey God’s laws!**

But as our author writes, they are in grave danger of turning away from following Jesus and turning back to legalistic righteousness! He writes this letter as a clear call to his readers to remain faithful to Jesus. The Hebrew author again and again makes the clear and vital point

that Jesus is the only way for human beings to be brought into a right relationship with God Almighty.

Jesus alone makes us to be sons and daughters of God, adopted into His family, cleansed and purified of sins and self-interest, and people who are inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Jesus alone can give us this kind of **Open Access** to God the Father as **Friends** by grace through faith in Christ's atoning work! The author sees this access to God as the essence of pure religion in the heart of a person.

We left off of our study last week by looking at the content of Hebrews 9:11, 12, where we saw the superiority of the sacrifice our Lord Jesus came to make for the forgiveness of and the cleansing of the power of sin! We left off with three insights that lead us in to the message this week:

Insight #1 – Jesus came into this world from eternity. The author says Jesus paragenomenos in the Greek text. This is not the word that would have been used for Jesus came to help us. It is a word that denotes: “Jesus came alongside us, put His arms around us, and lifts us.” The picture is of an exhausted runner who desperately hopes against all odds to run the last 200 yards of a marathon. He or she is spent. He or she bends over and stumbles, seemingly unable to go again. A person from the crowd comes out to him or her, puts his arms around the person sustaining their weight until they recover and can move forward for the last 200 yards.

This is the picture in the Greek language the author wants his readers to see concerning the ministry of Jesus for our souls. He is our paragenomenos who came alongside us, when we were exhausted and wearied by sin. He strengthened us and went as our Great High Priest into heaven itself to make the way for us all to fellowship with the Father personally!

Insight #2 – The Biblical authors record that Jesus gave us access into the Most Holy presence of God when He died for us in substitute for our sins. Matthew 27:50 – 53 is the most complete account:

NLT “Then Jesus shouted out again and he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from the top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead after Jesus' resurrection. They left the cemetery, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.”

Insight #3 – The essence of **True Religion** in the sight of God is that it creates **Access** to the Presence of **God** in the lives of those who practice it. Its function is to bring us into a right relationship with God. This world is a pale shadow and imperfect copy of what is in heaven. The essence of pure religion God our Father delights in is to come to Him with a freshly **Purified Heart, Soul**, mind, and body! There can be no heart and soul purity without sacrifice!

Jesus Christ our Lord has offered the one sacrifice for sins God the Father accepts for the purification of the human heart, soul, mind, and physical being. It is the free offer of God to take away our sins in Christ Jesus' sacrifice. Have you and I chosen to take by faith what Jesus our Lord has done to cleanse us and make our hearts pure?

I. Jesus Opens Access to God to Fellowship with Him as Friends:

Hebrews 9:11 – 14 NLT “*So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever. Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people’s bodies from ritual defilement. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered Himself to God as the perfect sacrifices for our sins.*”

Jesus our Lord has entered the heavenly Holy of Holies once for all, securing eternal redemption! He is High Priest of the good things already in place for everyone wishing to approach God (in verse 11. **He came before God through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not human-made**, and this was in keeping with his prophecy, as recorded in John 2:19b - 21.

“Jesus replied. ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ ‘What! They exclaimed. It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you can do it in three days?’ But by ‘this temple,’ Jesus meant his body.”

Jesus built the more perfect tabernacle himself by virtue of what he accomplished in his death and resurrection, by virtue not of the blood of animals but his own blood as the author writes in verses 11 and 12. What the earthly tabernacle foreshadowed has become the heavenly reality! Jesus embraced us all through what he suffered, and by clinging in faith to him we are become the very house of God the Church of Jesus, in which his presence abides today.

Hebrews 3:6 “*But Christ, the faithful Son, was in charge of the entire household. **And we are God’s household if we keep up our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ.**”*

The intent of religion is to give all of us Access to and Fellowship with the living God as Friends! Purity is demanded of one who would do so. God had commanded the people, “*Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.*” Leviticus 20:7 - 8. The Levitical code is full of regulations regarding the clean and the unclean, defilement and purification, ceremonial purity and impurity.

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of the red heifer when mixed with water also removed sin’s offense and restored the worshipers to **Ceremonial Purity**. To be thus sanctified was to be purified and restored to proper fellowship with God and his holy people. Yet, sin is more than ceremonial uncleanness and even more than moral defilement. **The rites and regulations provided only temporary benefit; the problem would return again and require yet another sin-offering so long as the inward weakness of the worshiper remained unaddressed.**

But Christ’s self-offering is perfect, not as an unblemished animal substituting for sinful humanity but as unblemished humanity atoning for sinful humanity. Once and for all, the

blood of Jesus is applied to our need. Concern for the ceremonial purity of the body has given way to the purification of the conscience or inner being. Covenant-keeping rites and regulations that required repeated slaying and that could not bring the worshiper out of repeated sin have given way to **Edifying** and **Glorifying** ministry in service to the living God. **All this has been accomplished through the eternal Spirit of God at work, both in Jesus during his days on earth and now in us who believe.**

The author is helping the readers to grasp the truth, that to be given access to the Father God at the Mercy Seat, required sacrifice for sins that went deeper than merely outward and ceremonial cleansing. Access to fellowship with God requires **Purity** of **Heart** and **Soul**, not just the body!

So, he states with passionate heart-cry, the sacrifice of Jesus our Lord enables us to be **Forgiven** of **Sins**, but it also enables us to **Leave** the **Life** of willful sin behind us and to walk with God in newness of life! The blood of animals brought people into the tabernacle of God, but left them in a place of feeling estrangement from God because they still felt guilty for what they had done! The sacrifice of Jesus was not only the payment of a **Debt** we could not pay, but a bestowal of a **Victory** over **Sins**!

There are four things about the sacrifice of Jesus for sins, things we must have firmly in our grasp if we are to understand the power of this victory Jesus bestows:

- 1.) Jesus' sacrifice was **Voluntary**. The animal's life was taken from it. The Lord Jesus willingly offered Himself, gave His life for His friends, that we may be redeemed!
- 2.) Jesus' sacrifice was **Spontaneous**. Animal sacrifices were the product of law. The sacrifice of Jesus was the product of love! We pay our bills when they are handed to us because we have to. We give gifts to our loved ones because we want to.
- 3.) Jesus' sacrifice was **Rational**. The animal offered in sacrifice did not know what was happening to it. Jesus knew exactly what He was choosing to do. Jesus died not as a victim, but with His eyes wide open to what was happening.
- 4.) Jesus' sacrifice was **Moral**. Animal sacrifices were carried out over and over in ritual but the offering Jesus made for us all was done through the eternal Spirit, as Jesus carried out the will of the Father to the letter! Behind His sacrifice was not ritual but holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love!

II. The Only Way for Sins to be Forgiven:

Hebrews 9:15 *“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”*

Christ, then, in keeping with his words at the Last Supper has instituted a new covenant. This promise is recorded for us in Mark 14:22 - 25: *“As they were eating Jesus took a loaf of bread and asked God's blessing on it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying,*

‘Take it, for it this is my body.’ And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and they all drank from it. And he said to them, ‘This is my blood, poured out for many, sealing the covenant between God and his people. I solemnly declare that I will not drink wine again until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’

Jesus alone could mediate the New Covenant with the Father God in heaven, for two reasons:

First, He came appointed as God's heir and spokesman, which we have already studied in Hebrews 1:2, 3a: *“But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. The Son reflects God’s own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command.”*

Second, He served obediently as a human being embracing all humankind as we have already studied in Hebrews 2:11 - 17, thus representing both parties of the covenant in his own person.

By His sacrificial death Jesus has brought about our redemption, verse 15: *“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”*

By his own unmerited death, he has overcome Satan, who wields the power of death and who exercised that power wrongly in this case, taking the life of the world's only innocent man. For death can rightly claim only those who have sinned against God. In overcoming death and thus nullifying Satan's power, Christ effectively set free forever, a powerless humanity enslaved to sin and subject to death.

When Jesus died, **He was not guilty of His own sins**, He was **Guilty** of our **Sins**, which He voluntarily took into Himself. The heavenly transaction took place in the Garden, where twice Jesus asks the Father God to “let this cup pass from me!” The cup Jesus did not want to drink was the dregs of human sin, our wicked ways, sinful actions, which are rooted in our insidious self-interest! Jesus chose to become our sin-bearer fulfilling Isaiah’s prophetic words:

But because Jesus chose to drink that cup we are now **Set Free** from **Sin** and the power of sin rooted in **Self-Interest**, and enabled to follow God's **Call** for our lives! In Hebrews 3:1 – 3 he writes, *“And so, dear friends who belong to God and are bound for heaven, think about Jesus whom we declare to be God’s Messenger and High Priest. For He was faithful to God, who appointed him ... and was entrusted with God’s entire house. But Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses, just as a person who builds a fine house deserves more praise than the house itself.”*

The author now provides an explanation for the necessity of Jesus' death. *Diathēkē* in the Greek can mean “covenant,” “testament,” or “will.” A last will and testament becomes operative only at the death of the one who wrote the will and testament. Likewise, the divine covenant required a death in order to become operative. In the case of a will, the person who made it must die for it to take effect. In the case of the covenant of Moses, provision was made for death to claim a substitute instead.

III. The Better and More Perfect Precious Blood of Jesus:

Hebrews 9:19 – 22 NLT *“For after Moses had given the people all of God’s laws, he took the blood calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God’s laws and all the people, using branches of the hyssop bushes and scarlet wool. Then he said, ‘This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you.’ And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling of blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”*

The author calls to mind the ritual of the great Day of Atonement described in detail for the reader in Leviticus 16. But the details here in this text, probably are derived from his knowledge as a Levite of contemporary temple practice. **The point is that Jesus brought a new will and final testament, and its provisions could not become operative until his own death as testator had occurred.**

The earthly sanctuary had to be cleansed of sin by the sprinkling of the blood of innocent animals sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. The penalty of sin is death, and a death is required for the sin to be covered. But must the heavenly sanctuary also be cleansed? Yes, claims the author. For the very reason that Christ has taken upon himself our sin and has entered the heavenly sanctuary. Without the covering blood, it too would be defiled. Because it is heaven's own sanctuary, the blood of earth's bulls and goats will not suffice.

The better sacrifice can be only the Precious Blood of heaven's Firstborn Son, who is also earth's last or second Adam. He has entered heaven's sanctuary to stand for us and plead our cause, see Hebrews 7:25: *“Therefore, he is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf.”*

Through the cleansing we have received through the precious blood of Jesus, and by this offering alone, we may approach God with open **Access** to Him as His **Friends**. **Forgiveness** is a **Costly Thing** in every relationship we have in life!

Think about the parent who has a wayward son or daughter for whom they have prayed and sought God for years. The parent may say the words simply enough: “I forgive you because I love you!” But the truth is that forgiveness has been wrought in deepest agony and heart-cry before God for that son or daughter, with lines of sorrow etched in the face, and tears shed for a broken heart. Forgiveness is a costly thing!

So it is with the **Divine Forgiveness** and inner **Cleansing** of **Sin** and **Self-Interest**, that we have all received from God Almighty. *“Without the shedding of blood (of the precious blood of Jesus our Savior and Lord) there is no forgiveness of sins.”* God Almighty is loving but He is also holy! The truth is the Lord cannot look at our sin and say, “it’s all right, I forgive you.” He must deal with our sin. And He did so Himself when Jesus shed His precious blood to cleanse us!

March 10, 2019 AM

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:

20. "The Power in the Precious Blood of Jesus!"

Hebrews 9:11 – 22

Introduction:

We are in a study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to refocus them on Jesus. He appeals to the reader to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit who came to dwell in their hearts when they were redeemed.

The distinguishing characteristic of His presence in us is agape/love, burning in our hearts motivating us to love God and others. Romans 5:5:

The author reminds them of how they loved God and others when they were first saved!
Hebrews 6:10 – 12 NLT: Keep on L_____ O_____ so you make certain what you are hoping for, your salvation. Remain F_____ to the end, finish well!

Hebrews is a call to P_____ in our W_____ of F_____ Jesus. They are in grave danger of falling away from the faith!

He makes the repeated point that only Jesus can give us O_____ A_____ to God the Father's holy presence as F_____.

We left off last week studying the superiority of the ministry of Jesus as our great High Priest of the New Covenant. We saw three insights from Hebrews 9:11, 12 NLT:

--Insight #1 Jesus as the paragenomenos ...

--Insight #2 When Jesus died the earthly temple veil was torn in two from top to bottom. The clearest picture is in Matthew 27:50 – 53 ...

--Insight #3 The essence of pure religious expression is to come to the Lord freshly
P_____ of sin and its roots in H_____, S_____, mind and physical body. Jesus entered into heaven itself to offer to God the one sacrifice that the Father accepts on our behalf

I. Jesus Opens Access to God, to Fellowship with God as His Friends:

Hebrews 9:11 – 14 NLT

Jesus our Lord has entered the heavenly Holy of Holies for us all, securing our eternal redemption! He gives us the ability to approach God. Verse 11, in keeping with His prophecy, recorded in John 2:19b – 21

Jesus built the more perfect tabernacle, “dwelling place of God on earth” by His D_____ and R_____.

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. Why do you think it is so important to the author of Hebrews that his readers remaining steadfast in faith in Jesus, expressing love to others to the end of life?
2. Why is it so important for us to know we have open access to God as His friends through the finished work of Jesus our Lord who redeemed us? What blocks that access to God's holy presence?
3. What are key differences between the priesthood of the Old Covenant priests as compared with the New Covenant priesthood of Jesus our Lord and Savior?
4. What was the benefit to the worshipers when they offered the shed blood of innocent animals in sacrifice to God?
5. In the Old Covenant, how thoroughly were the worshipers cleansed of sin and its nature imbedded in self-interest, by the blood of those innocent animals?
6. By contrast, what is the benefit to the worshipers who claim and make personal the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His body bearing our sins, and His precious blood shed for us?

7. If someone who does not know the message of the Gospel asked you to describe for them how God acts in Christ Jesus to forgive sin and cleanse the human heart and soul of past sins, how would you respond?

8. Read together aloud Romans 5:12 – 21 and discuss insights you have regarding what we received from the first Adam as compared to what we receive from the second Adam.

9. Read together aloud I Peter 1:17 through 2:3 and discuss insights you have regarding the cleansing of sin and self-interest Peter describes in this chapter.

10. What did the Spirit of God speak to your heart about accessing God's presence and power in our lives as we trust in Christ and are cleansed by His blood shed for us? Would you share with your HOME Group about it?