

Good morning Foothills family my name is Jamin... I am the high school ministry director here at Foothills... and I am so glad you're here... if I have not had a chance to meet you I look forward to doing so out on the patio...

Real quick I want to give a shoutout to the online community... thank you for tuning in... whether in Cameron Park or across the world... you are a part of the foothills family too... so thanks for staying connected!

I hope you all had a great Christmas... for some of you I know Christmas can cause some anxiety and stress because all the family is around... and with that comes a lot of interesting conversations... and sometimes heated conversations... so I hope all your relationships are still in tack lol... and you had a great Christmas and ate a lot of good food... because I know I did...

Guys... it's the last Sunday of the year... isn't that kind of crazy... I don't know about you... but for me this year felt like it went by super fast... is that just me?

I am noticing the older I get... it feels like time keeps speeding up... and the days... the weeks... the months just go so faster and faster... anybody else feel that?

I think that is especially true... in the holiday season... I remember when it was the beginning of November... heading into winter I was so excited for the holidays... the traditions... cold weather... the whole holiday atmosphere... and I blink at here we are... its basically all over... and the new year is upon us...

Life moves so fast... and I have noticed that... Its so easy to get caught up in the busyness of life... the hurry... the rush... the schedules... all the things the going on... that **its so easy to miss out... and you loose focus on... what truly matters...**

And lets just be real... I think no matter who you are... whether you have been tracking with Jesus for a long time or you accepted Christ last week... we are all susceptible to distraction... from what truly matters... and that is Jesus...

Even as someone who works at a church... its my job to be a professional Christian... and yet everyday I have to remind myself... stay focused on what truly matters... its not the programs... the events... the numbers... it all about Jesus...

We see this throughout the Bible... David... a man after God's own heart... a hero of the faith... someone we look up to in so many ways... one of the greatest Kings of Israels... distracted... by the lust in his eyes... you know the story...

We see this with the Jews... God's people... the Pharisees... they were so distracted by the law... their systems... the legalities... that when the Messiah came... Jesus... the person that they were waiting for... they completely missed it... distracted...

We see this with Peter... one of Jesus' closest followers... who lived and walked with Jesus... God in the flesh... he lived with him!... and yet he was still distracted...

Matthew 16... We see Peter getting distracted by his own agenda... Peter wants to keep Jesus safe... we didn't want him to die on the cross... And Jesus rebukes him and says get behind me Satan...

One of the closest followers of Jesus... his inner circle... distracted...

We are all susceptible to distraction... especially when we become so busy... in seasons like this...

See friends... distraction... is just another way to say deception...

What do I mean by this?

Well when you are distracted... you are being deceived by the devil to think that the temporary things of this world... are more important than... your eternal relationship with Jesus...

When you are distracted you are being deceived to think that the secondary... everything else... other than Jesus... is more important than the primary...

Distraction is deception...

And in the moment... when are so caught up in the busy that we don't even realize we are being distracted... until after the fact... that is just another level of the Devil's deception...

Distraction is deception... it so easy to be distracted no matter where you are at in your walk with Jesus...

Think about it... when was the last time you were distracted... your eyes were more focused on things other than Jesus?

When you are distracted... your eyes... your focus... turns towards... where?

Yourself... it becomes all about you... which is exactly what the devil wants... think back to the Garden... Genesis 3... Adam and Eve... the fall of man... What did the devil do?... he shifted their focus... off God... and obeying him...

And deceived them to think... no its all about you!... you can become like God... you can become great... "God didn't really say "don't eat the fruit"... just eat the fruit so... YOU can have the knowledge of God...

The Devils is constantly trying to distract you and me ... deceive you and me... to make it all about us... taking our focus off what truly matters... and that is Jesus

So Friends where is your focus at? In the busyness of this season... heading into the new year... where are your eyes focused?

Your money... your job... your status... your things... your family... the stuff you own... your social media...

Be honest with yourself... Is your focus on yourself... the world... the temporary... the secondary?

Or are you focused on what truly matters... and that is Jesus...?

THE most important thing... in this holiday season... in this coming new year... in everyday of your life... is Jesus...

As someone who genuinely cares for each one of you... I don't want you to go into this new year... distracted and deceived... I don't want the devil to win... it breaks my heart... it makes me angry... when the Devil gets a victory...

And the victory for the Devil is you being distracted... to think that its all about you...! It's what happened in the Garden... thousands of years ago... don't let it happen to you today...

Because the reality is... its not all about you... its all about Jesus... him coming to this earth as a child... born in manger... living a perfect life... dying a brutal death... overcome the grave... so that you may have eternal life... that is what truly matters...

And this is something I really hope you've been able to grasp and internalize... and grow in... over the past few weeks as we have been digging into the book of Hebrews...

Its all about this amazing reality... that Jesus is everything... it points all to Him...

As we talked about in the first few weeks... He is greater than the angels and the prophets... He is God... Emmanuel... God with us... God is the flesh...

Without Jesus coming to this earth... there would be no Christmas... which remember Christmas is the prelude to Easter... So without Christmas there would be no Easter... no sacrifice on the cross...

no conquering of the grave... overcoming sin and death... without Jesus coming to this earth... there be no salvation for you and me...

Without him leaving the streets of Gold in heaven... to dwell in the dirt... in the filth of this sin filled planet... without Jesus... there would be no hope... no joy... no peace... no rest... and no way to be truly made righteous in the eyes of... God... no way to inherit eternal life...

Jesus is everything... and Hebrews hammers this home constantly... Which is why I think it is just the perfect series for this holiday season... Because every Sunday you attend you are being reminded and challenged... to lift your eyes off the temporary... off the busyness of life... off work... off family... lift your eyes off the secondary... and fix your eyes on Jesus...

The one who has bridged the Gap between us and heaven... between us sinful humans and the creator of the universe...

Our High Priest who makes it possible to enter the holy of Holies to be in the presence of God... Its about Jesus... who takes away our sin... There is nothing greater than him... so why focus on anything else...

And this is where we pick up today in Hebrew Chapter 8... So you can go ahead and find your way there... Hebrews Chapter 8 reading out the ESV...

Once again this passage is just pointing to Jesus... and his role as our High Priest...

Look with me at verse 1 and 2

"Now the point in what we are saying is this: **we have such a high priest**, one who is **seated at the right hand** of the throne of the Majesty in heaven [**Remember from last week... Jesus'... work is finished he is seated**]... 2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 **They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain." 6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as **much more excellent... than the old** as the covenant **he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises**. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second."

Now this passage relates a lot back to what Pastor Phil talked about last Sunday... he explained it beautifully... how Jesus is our High Priest... the author says in verse 1... we have such a high priest... he is referring back to chapter 7... where it explains that Jesus... is our High Priest... which is a huge statement that carries so much weight with it...

If you want a more detailed break down of what that means... go and watch last Sundays sermon on the website...

But just to refresh our memory... The High Priest is the spiritual representative and mediator... between God and the people of Israel.

Remember in the Old Testament the High Priest was appointed by God... and daily was offering sacrifices for the sins of the People...

Every day he would sacrifice bulls and goats... symbolically lay his hands on the animals... placing their sins on the animals... and would kill them... pouring out their blood... to make atonement for the people

And once year there was this holy day called the day of Atonement... where the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and Sacrifice a goat on behalf of the entire nation of Israel... to atone for their sins...

Remember when you hear this word Atone... it means to "Cover". I hope this is refreshing your memory from last Sunday...

So when the animal was killed the blood was sprinkled on the Alter... providing a temporary covering for sin... and highlighting the just penalty of death

It was a life for a life...
an innocent... pure... blameless... animal... in place of a sinful person...
The blood of an innocent was shed to cover the guilty...

But this system of the high priest and the animals sacrifices... the temple... as we read in verse 7... there was fault with it...

Not because God made something wrong... but because it was only temporary... it was designed to be a shadow of what was to come... and that was Jesus... it all points to him

Under the Old Covenant sins were just covered... Atoned for... but they were not taken away...

This Old covenant... points out our sin... and shows how we need a perfect lasting sacrifice... not just a temporary covering... the Old highlights how we need an eternal high priest... Jesus... to be made right with God...

That's why if you look back at verse 6... it explains why the New Covenant with Jesus... is far better than the Old Covenant... Verse 6 says... "Christ has obtained a ministry that is... **much more excellent than the old** as the covenant **HE mediates is better... since it is enacted on better promises.**"

The New Covenant between God and his People... you and me... followers of Jesus... is so much better... because it is enacted on the promises that the blood poured out by Jesus... on the cross... the ultimate sacrifice... doesn't just cover our sins... but goes even farther... to remove our sins...

(PAUSE)

John 1:29 says...

"Behold, the Lamb of God... who **takes away the sin** of the world!" Jesus is the sacrifice for us... that doesn't just cover our sins... but completely erases it from our record...

He takes it away... this is HUGE... we talked about it last week... Jesus wipes us clean from all the wrong we have done...

That is why when you accept Christ... it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "17 Therefore, if ANYONE is in Christ, he is a new creation. **The old has passed away... behold, the new has come.**"

If you are a follower of Jesus... if your eyes are fixed on what is most important... if you do what it says in Romans 10:9... "Declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

If that is you... I have great news...

God... Creator of the universe.... Author and sustainer of all things... Yahweh... the one who has the power to send your soul to heaven or Hell... Our all powerful, Holy, Father... VIEWS YOU... as a new creation...

When you believe in Jesus... God looks at you as if he is looking at his son Jesus... because when he sees you... he is seeing someone... who is cleansed as white as snow... whose record has been wiped... when he sees you he sees the perfect blood of Jesus...

Because it is by his blood... you are saved...

The blood of Jesus covers your heart... and your heart is what will be judged...

When you believe in Jesus and you die... and you go before the father... before the white throne of judgment... he looks at your heart... and judges you justly...

As a follower of Jesus he sees the blood of Jesus... the perfect sacrifice... that covers your heart... he sees a new creation... and though you have sinned and messed up countless times...

It is by his blood that covers you... you are able to enter the Holy of Holies... the presence of God...

Romans 5:8-9 says...

"8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified **by his blood**, how much more shall we be saved **from God's wrath through him!**"

What an amazing reality!... that despite all you have done... despite every time you have lusted after some... despite every time you watched that thing you know you shouldn't of watched....

Despite every time you have acted out in anger... despite everytime you have lied... gossiped... stolen... been envious...

Despite every sin you have ever committed...

Through the blood of Jesus... you are pardoned wrath you deserve...

By His blood you are made a new creation... God spares you and I from the punishment we deserve... the wrath we deserve... This is amazing...

Look at Hebrews 8:12

"For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more."

What an amazing truth!... He remembers your sins no more... lets just sit on that for a second...

"For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more."

All those sins that... YOU REMEMBER... that play on repeat in your head... that seem to haunt you... those things that just make you feel dirty...

and unworthy of his love... things that you look back on and you hate!... your disgusted with... "like why would I ever do something like that"...

"I will remember their sins no more," God says... even the ones your battling with right now... those sins your trying so hard to overcome... Those sins that got a grip on you... and can't seem shack them...

God remembers your sins no more! Scripture is SO CLEAR... he is merciful and forgives you... through the blood of Jesus... Romans 5:9

And that's the key... its through his blood on the cross... see... it should have been us on that cross... that is the type of punishment you and I deserve for our sins...

Not Jesus... it should have been us on that cross... that cross was made for wretched sinners...

But instead... John 3:16 happens...

Out of Love... that we don't deserve... while we were still sinners... Jesus steps in... our high priest mediates on our behalf... taking our punishment on himself... and letting us live...

Its all about Jesus...

Guys when you grasp this reality of what Jesus has done for you... that he is our high priest... who through his work on the cross... allows us to enter the holy of Holies... heaven...

When you accept this gift of salvation... when you are cleansed... by his blood...

It will forever change the way you live... you can't genuinely encounter the cross and not leave changed...

So how should this affect you and me?

There is so much freedom as a Christian... not freedom as in ... sin all you want because your forgiven... NO! That is completely wrong... That is a slap in the face of our high Priest... if your confused about that go read... Romans 6

But there is so much Freedom as a Christian... because you can live as God designed you to live... You can have joy in every circumstance... the good and the bad because you already have all you need... and that is Jesus...

You can have hope... always... because you know what is to come... heaven... paradise with the father... in the of holy of holies... made possible by our high priest...

By his blood we are spared from his wrath... that gives you joy always...

You can have peace in all things... because the prince of Peace is with you...

Freedom to live as God designed you to live...

Friends hear me on this... Freedom comes by lifting your eyes off yourself.. and looking to the cross

Take your focus off you... and focus on Jesus... and will find freedom...

Matthew 16:24

"24 Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross and follow me.**'"

True freedom comes through the denial of yourself... the denial of your wants... your desires... your pleasures... your comfort... and replacing that with the desires of Christ...

Freedom comes by taking yourself off the thrown of your life... and letting Jesus rule over your life... your money... your decisions... where you live... what you do for work...

When you deny yourself... and say Jesus lead me... do what ever you want with my finances... with my career... with my future... when you place it all at his feet... that is freedom...

Not attached to the world... not held down by the temporary... but solely following Jesus... looking towards the cross
And who better to lead your life than God himself... the author of creation... who know all things...

True freedom is found in the lowering of yourself... to follow him...

Just speaking form experience there is nothing better in life... nothing more fulfilling than living this passage out...

There is freedom in Christ... what do you need to surrender to God... saying God have your way... what is consuming your mind? That you just need to lay before the father...

Things that are shifting your focus off what truly matters... think through that... what is pulling you away... write it down... and pray through it...

This could be a really good thing to do especially heading into this new year... assess how you spend your time... what you think about... what you long to do... the things you desire... write it all out...

and if its taking priority over your relationship with Jesus... surrender it to Christ... deny yourself of it...

And your focus could be on good things... family... work... education... these aren't bad things...

But don't let good become the enemy of great...
don't idolize... don't elevate... the good things over the greatest thing and that is Jesus... the one who gives eternal life

If you have encountered the high priest... Jesus... you are to live like Jesus... like the high priest... that's the only right response to the work of Jesus on the cross...

And how did the high priest... Jesus... live... he was a servant... he came to serve the people... and to serve God...

Mark 10:45

"45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Selflessly serve like the high priest serves us... he didn't have to be our sacrifice... he doesn't need us... BUT... he went out of his way in unconditional love and sacrificed his life for us...

This is how we are to live... sacrificially... selflessly... the life of a Christian... is to live like Jesus... like a servant...

What ways do you need to lay aside your pride and live like a servant...?

Who is someone in your life you need to serve... to love... to forgive... to sacrifice for...

A co worker... a family member... a friend...

"Oh but they don't deserve it"..."look at all they have done to me"

Don't be a hypocrite...

Look at all the wrong you have done to God... all your sin... your lust... your pride... your jealousy... your gossip... all the wicked things you do...

And look how God responds to you... while you were a sinner... before you repented... even while you were still going against him...

God fully knew you would wrong him with your sin and yet he still chose to die for you

(Romans 5:8) "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

This is the example we are to follow...

I don't care if they don't deserve your love... or forgiveness... do as Jesus did for you...

What does that look like lived out in your life? Right now... this week... going in into the new year...

Now this is not easy I get that... living like a servant is not easy...

But god never promised this life to be easy... the Bible actually says the opposite... there are so many verse talking about how difficult this Christian walk is...

The servant of all servants Jesus... do you think it was easy for him to die as a sacrifice for your sins??...
NO!!

In the Gethsemane... before his brutal death... he was in so much stress... and anguish... scripture says he was sweating blood... as we was crying out to the father to spare him from this punishment... Jesus went through the hardest thing imaginable... carrying that cross...

So that us sinners could enter into the holy of Holies...

And this is the example we are to follow as Christians...!!

It wasn't easy for Jesus and wont be easy for you and me... but that's okay because the reward in heaven is so much greater than are temporary... struggles

And yet I worry some of you are struggling to forgive someone who said something mean to you... you rather stay in your comfort zone and not be inconvenienced by loving on someone...

You rather snap back and be defiant rather than being a servant...

And that is exactly what the devil wants... "Christians"... who are distracted... deceived by their pride... who think they are entitled to an easy life... a self-serving life...

The devil is just smiling knowing so many "Christians" have their eyes not on the Lord... not on the high priest... the most important thing of all... but looking solely at themselves... at their own wants... having no interest in serving... in sacrificing...

When was the last time you genuinely went out of your way to serve... to lay down your life... to sacrifice your time... your comfort... for the sake of someone who didn't deserve it...

This is the life of a Christian... selfless service...

If your not living this out... something has got to change... there is no such thing as a selfish servant... in the house of the Lord...

Selfishness has no place in the presence of the Almighty servant... for the sake of your faith... something has to change.

Because Friends... the light of Jesus shines the brightest... the light of Gods love... magnifies the most... when you lay down your pride... and sacrifice for someone else... and Jesus is the pinnacle of this...

So I challenge you... if you call yourself a Christian... which I think the majority of you do... start living like Christ...
A humble servant...

Your number one goal this new year should not be that of a self center one... but your goal... should be to live sacrificially... BE a servant... of others and the most high...

Not distracted or deceived... not focused on yourself... but Focused on Jesus... because he is everything...

Lets Pray...