

Beyond the Shadow

HVFC

September 7, 2025

Jesus is Better Series

Hebrews 10:1-9

It is good to be here this morning. I woke up Friday morning with temperatures at my house hovering around 35 degrees and it was amazing.

Bow season is starting, fall is coming, and the craziness of summer is winding down. And with that we are starting up our small groups again this Wednesday.

To give some context, when we took a break from Hebrews, here is a brief summary of the sermons from chapter 9.

The sermons were titled: Shadow of Heavenly things, Better Access, Life in the Blood.

The message I found in this chapter was an outline of how to Access God, first in the old way, and concluding with the blood of Jesus which gives us true access to God in our forgiven state. And one of the core messages was that true access to God comes from a heart that is focused on His will, rather than the external actions to earn righteousness.

Through Jesus we no longer have the guilt and shame of sin, and can experience the forgiveness Jesus offers to allow a relationship with God. That relationship is a call to live in a way that reflects the inner change we have experienced and to actively share the message of salvation.

And as a reminder, the book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who were contemplating going back to the old ways of Judaism, with sacrifices and torah, back to Moses. Yet, now there is a better way, and chapter 10 starts again with that reminder that the torah and OT system was fulfilled and completed in Jesus.

Open your bible to Hebrews 10 and let's begin reading in verse 1.

Hebrews 10:1-4

1 The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide cleansing for those who came to worship.

2 If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once, for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.

3 But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year.

4 For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

NLT

Let's pray.

This week I ran into an old friend of mine, and he ran up to me, mind you I haven't seen him in several weeks, and he almost without saying hello launches into this long question.

He said, hey I might come visit your church because the church I am going to just said that they are starting a series on this book and are going to be in it for at least a year. How can they spend a year in one book, I mean there is that chapter about the Holy Spirit, but a whole year. I don't want to go and listen to the same sermon for a year.

So I told him, well I have been in Hebrews all year, and he looked at me for a long minute and replied, really?

After we spoke a little more I challenged him to go and listen to the sermons at his church and promised that the Holy Spirit would give him something every week from each sermon, even if it is the same sermon, knowing that it won't be.

For me, I know that taking a book at a time and going through it has been so transformative for my faith.

Every week when I study, my eyes and mind are exposed to thoughts and concepts of scripture that I need for the season of life I am in.

And this week was no different. I could have just spoken on verse one today.

The writer begins chapter 10 looking back. Using the NKJV.

Hebrews 10:1

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

NKJV

The word "for" connects what has just been spoken to what is now getting ready to be spoken.

For the Law...

What is he speaking of?

Think Levitical priesthood, insufficient Old Covenant, the external cleaning rituals, the blood of bulls and sheep, veiled restrictive access to God.

All these things he covered in chapter 9.

And he wraps it all up nice and neat in the opening verses of chapter 10.

They were shadows.

Shadows are fascinating. They are created when light is blocked by an object.

Walking down the street on a sunny day will produce a shadow.

It is a shaded dark flat rendering that gives no details.

Shadows are a one-dimensional image. It has no life, no characteristics, no substance.

It only does one thing, it proclaims a greater reality is there.

The shadow cannot do anything.

The law is a shadow. An obscure visage of the real image.

And the writer speaks to how year after year they tried to offer sacrifices that would cleanse them from their sin.

How often do we do the same thing today?

Sure we don't offer sacrifices of sheep, but we often chase the shadow and offer sacrifices to cleanse our guilt.

How do we chase the shadow?

We seek ways to earn our blessings.

We do good things to help swing the pendulum in our favor.

We give money to those less fortunate.

I heard a speaker share an interesting thought about those who stand on street corners with signs asking for help.

He said they offer a service that is pure profit. Those men and women on the corner offer a place for those who are burdened with guilt to give a sacrifice to make themselves feel better about their life and choices.

Even today we still look for ways to absolve our emotions and feelings on our own terms.

The only problem is, once those sacrifices are made, and the guilt is pacified, we go back to the same ole lifestyle, feeling better.

The sins are never dealt with, just covered up, swept aside, hoping that we have learned our lesson, but it doesn't help our conscience.

Hebrews 10:2-3

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

NKJV

Imperfect sacrifices produce imperfect forgiveness.

I am often overcome with shock at how I will seek ways to absolve my sin with a sacrifice of my choosing.

The moment goes something like this.

Lord forgive me for my sin... (fill in the blank) and I know better. And because you hate sin so much, I know I need to do some form of penance to show I have learned my lesson.

Or Lord I know I don't deserve your goodness or blessing, but if you will answer this prayer I promise to pay you back by volunteering at ever function from now to New Years.

When we don't deal with our sin, we find ourselves trying to compensate for our shortcomings by offering up some sacrifice that God doesn't want.

Yet just like the blood of sheep was an imperfect sacrifice it and could not remove sin, it produced an imperfect forgiveness that never removed their guilt.

And still we attempt to offer insufficient sacrifices to assuage our guilt today.

The reason is we don't fully understand the gift God gave us in Jesus.

Because a perfect sacrifice produces perfect forgiveness.

Hebrews 10:4-5

4 For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer.

NLT

Have you ever done something that caused a lot of damage?

Totally your fault with no one else to blame?

And the person with whom the damage was done to, says hey it is ok, just don't worry about it?

During her first year of driving when it was icy, my daughter tried to stop on a road that was slightly going downhill at a red light. And thankfully she was not going fast, but slide into the car in front of her. The driver of the other car got out and they had two options. They could have gotten mad and called the police, or they could have looked at the accident, assessed the damage of which the car she hit had none, and tell her not to worry about it.

My daughter was fully to blame, and the driver had every right to demand she be punished for the accident. But seeing that she was a young driver, they told her not to worry about it.

We are all to blame for our sin. The bible says that we were tempted by our own desires and enticed by sin.

But God...

God prepared a body to offer, a perfect sacrifice that would bring perfect forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God told them that He would send His Seed to crush the serpents head and defeat sin.

God has given us the ability to move beyond the shadow into the reality and fullness of Jesus.

David wrote several times about this in the Psalms. He understood something about God that most never learn. Listen as I read.

P^s 51:1-17

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart —
These, O God, You will not despise.

NKJV

To the world the shadow makes sense. It allows people to act and seem the part while not losing their true identity inwardly.

In my reading last week, I was in Matthew 23, and as I read the words Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, I saw myself.

Often times I strive to look the part by tending to the shadow, because I don't want to deal with what is raging inwardly.

The battles with guilt and shame, with being not enough, the exhaustion and stress and anxiety that we all fight. When the world does its best to defeat us, or just the struggles of life with grief and pain. Fighting emotions of hopelessness and apathy. Or just my own selfish desires.

But Jesus has come to show me a way to move beyond the shadow and into the real life Jesus offers us.

Hebrews 10:9-10

9 Then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect.

10 For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

NLT

God doesn't desire for us to live defeated lives, constantly reminded of the guilt and shame of our sin.

His Will is for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the Body of Jesus.

Yet in some amazing way we have to choose to move beyond the shadow and embrace Jesus.

In closing I want to leave this last passage with us.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

NKJV

The readers of this letter were thinking of going back to the shadow.

I am sure the pressure and stress of the day, the persecution, and not able to escape the feelings of not doing enough were enticing them.

God doesn't want our version of animal sacrifices, sin offerings, burnt offerings or any other offering for our sin, he did not take pleasure in them.

God however prepared a body for Jesus, and proclaimed more than once that He was well pleased with Jesus and the offering of his body for our sin. That offering would be offered once and would be good enough for all mankind.

No matter how long you have been following Jesus, there is more for you.

Let's Pray.