

Perfected While Being Sanctified

We are back in Hebrews. I am enjoying being back in Hebrews. I actually missed it, and I missed the mental exercise, but it's worth it.

I hope that those who attended group last week, I've heard lots of good things about the discussion that came from our sermon last week, and we talked about moving beyond the shadow last week, moving beyond the shadow, and I want to share this. I didn't point this out last week, but I want to share this morning that not all shadows are bad, and not every mention of shadows in the scripture is a negative thing, because in the Psalms, we are encouraged to be so close to God that we're in His shadow, and so there are times in the Bible when shadows are good, but our discussion last week was not one of those, because it was where we forsake the God who's casting the shadow, and we chase the shadow instead of Jesus. Amen? Amen.

Because as we learned last week, the shadow has nothing to offer. The shadow only produces imperfect forgiveness, because it offers imperfect sacrifices, and of course, last week we were talking about how the law, and the old covenant, and the sacrifices, and the temple, and the tabernacle, all those things were imperfect sacrifices that could not give the perfect forgiveness that you and I needed, but God, amen? What a powerful little statement. But God sent Jesus, and He offered His body a perfect sacrifice for sin, which produced perfect forgiveness for all those who put their faith in His work on the cross, and with that perfect forgiveness through Jesus, God begins a new covenant with humanity, and we're really at a transition point here in Hebrews where the writer is now going to transition.

A lot of the previous 10 chapters have dealt with how the old covenant was just a picture, or a type, or a shadow of what was now the new reality, and so this little section, our section this morning, Hebrews chapter 10 verses 11 through 18, is a transition paragraph. He is going to conclude everything He's been saying about the old testament covenant, and now begin to introduce with power and authority what you and I have as New Testament believers in the new covenant that God has established through the sacrifice which Jesus made. And so if you will, turn with me to Hebrews chapter 10.

We're going to start in verse 11 reading, and it says, But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. From that time, waiting till his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering, he has perfected those who are being sanctified forever.

Father, we thank you, Lord, for your scripture this morning. Thank you, Father, that thank you, Lord, that you take us where we are, and you begin to move us to where you want us to be. Sometimes that process is difficult.

Sometimes that journey is hard. Sometimes that journey produces grief and sorrow. But yet, Father, your word is true, and your word never returns void.

But yet, all that you say, and all that you purpose, and all that you plan comes to pass. And this morning, Father, as we dig into this section of scripture, help us to understand, Lord, that while you have perfected salvation, you sanctify those who are walking this life. Father, I pray that you would help me to speak your words this morning.

Holy Spirit, I ask that you would anoint the ears to hear what you would say. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

As many of you are aware, events took place this past week that were very difficult. And I find it interesting, having spoken to several people, that having heard the news of Charlie and being shot, and ultimately dying, maybe you would agree, everyone I've seen to spoken to, there's this unnatural, uncommon, I mean, I didn't know Charlie, but yet there's this heaviness that has seemed to just hit my spirit when I heard it. And everything that has transpired since then, there's this heaviness.

I don't know how else to describe it. There's this awareness of like, wow. And it's interesting because most people say, ah, he was just some right-wing extremist getting what he deserved.

That's not the truth. It's very interesting. I watched the video, lots of stuff.

And I will say this. I think this was Wednesday when this happened. Thursday, I purposely avoided all social media, all internet.

I turned everything off because I wanted to, as I was reminded of it, put my attention where it belonged. And so every time I thought of it, every time it came up, I would just, in the moment that I was, I would just begin to pray for the nation. I would begin to pray for the family.

I'd begin to pray for whatever God brought to my mind and not to be influenced by what the bobbleheads are going to say, because they all are going to be this, that, and the other. One of the videos I did watch, I think it was Saturday, that just in the half an hour before this happened, Charlie was in the very same tent preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who were standing around listening. And it's a true statement to say that we live in troubling times and that we must be aware of the day and age that we live in.

Because Matthew chapter 24 teaches some very interesting concepts. It says that in the last days, violence would increase along with many other things. But we are to stand bold for the faith, despite all that raises its head to come against the word of God.

It says that we would be delivered up to tribulation and killed. Unfortunately, the heaviness that we are experiencing is a part of the reality of this scripture. It says we will be hated by many.

There will be offenses, there will be betrayals, and plenty of hate to go all around. And because of this, lawlessness will abound, and the love of many will grow cold. That's the reality that you and I live in today.

Okay, well I need some more batteries. Isn't that just like technology? The truth is, we live this reality. But yet Matthew chapter 24 doesn't stop there.

It says that in verse 13, he who endures to the end shall be saved. The reality is we're going to face these things. We're going to come against these things.

We're going to experience things like this in our life. But the promise is for those who endure to the end, we shall be saved. And this is the other promise, that this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations.

And then the end will come. It's hard for us to wrap our minds around sometimes that this will end one day. And that we have a purpose and a goal of spreading the gospel, even if it comes to our ultimate demise.

So I'm going to take this tether off because they're yanking on my head. Oh, you're okay. But the promise is that though they slay me, Jesus is still there.

I spoke several weeks ago in the beginning of chapter nine, and I thought about this this morning as I was driving to church, that one of the great promises that I found in Hebrews chapter nine was that there's the showbread. Thank you, sir. The showbread.

Are we good? All right. We talked about the showbread found in chapter nine and how it correlated to a passage in Romans chapter eight, verse twenty-eight that says, I'm not on now. Did I die? Are we good? Okay.

Thank you. Appreciate it, brother. Romans eight, twenty-eight, all things work together for those who are called according to his purposes.

I butchered that, but that's the scripture. And what was interesting about that is even though that Jesus teaches that there will be tribulation and that will be killed and will be hated and there'll be offenses and there'll be betrayals, his promise is that in all these circumstances, he would be present with us and that he would not leave us. Because one of the great facets of life is that we live in opposing realities.

Paul says that I live this life, but not in the flesh. I live it in the spirit. There's this opposing reality that we have.

And if you think about everything in life, it's this way, right? We have hot and cold. We have right and wrong. We have heaven and hell.

We have saved and unsaved. And life presents to us this polar opposites at times. And before Jesus came and walked this earth, the enemy had all the momentum.

Everything was weighted to his side because sin had painted us into a corner that there was no way out. It was imbalanced because sin had the upper hand. Because man, when he chose his sin, died in the book of Genesis.

And there was no way to find forgiveness because there was no sacrifice that had been given. But God in his wisdom provided a substitute until the day that Jesus could come and walk amongst us and prepare the perfect sacrifice to offer it on the cross, to be buried and to be risen again. Until that time, sin ruled humanity.

But Jesus created the ability to oppose sin and defeated it once for all time for all people. No longer do you and I have to succumb and submit to sin's power. And the writer begins his transition paragraph noting the opposites that now exist because Jesus has provided another way.

Verse 11 starts and says that the priest once stood daily offering sacrifices repeatedly because there had to have some kind of offering offered. But this man who had offered one offering took care of sin forever and he sat down. Do you see there's a contrast of those who continually stand and offer imperfect sacrifices compared to the one man who offered one sacrifice and then sat down because it was perfect.

So he's closing out the fact that there's these dueling realities that we have to deal with. The old covenant could not remove sin, could not remove the guilt of sin, but Jesus does because his work is done. It says that once he offered his sacrifice, he was able to sit down because there's no longer a sacrifice to be offered.

See this man Jesus, both man and God, the seed of God born from the Virgin of Mary, offered his body, a perfect body without sin, holy and most importantly worthy to deal with my sin problem. He, because of his sacrifice, took away the keys, the authority, the power of death, hell, and the

grave. No longer as man do we have to fear the reality that there's nothing I can do to escape death, hell, and the grave.

Jesus went and took that authority by securing a victory over sin. And he is now seated at the right hand of God. All this is what we have been talking about in Hebrews up to this point.

And I know that this is a repetition, but it is going somewhere. Because in Hebrews chapter 10, it says this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. From that time, waiting till his enemies are made his footstool.

He is waiting for the father to say that this age is over and to send Jesus back a second time to take his bride. If you'll remember in Hebrews chapter 9, verse 28, we talked about how Jesus is not coming back a second time to deal with sin. He has come once and he has dealt with sin.

Sin is no longer a problem, but he is coming to claim a bride to fulfill the salvation that he has promised for all those who are eagerly awaiting him. No one knows the time. If you read further in Matthew chapter 24 and in 1 Thessalonians 4, it says that the Lord will descend and the dead in Christ will rise first and those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds.

So there is a second coming of Jesus and he is just waiting for the completion at which time his enemies will be his footstool. In other words, they will be utterly and completely humiliated and defeated. Amen.

And this again points to one of those opposing realities we have because most of us would feel like, well, I don't feel like sin is defeated in my life. It is a fight. It is a struggle.

But yet the reality is, 2,000 years ago Jesus completed all of this. And it is interesting, if you look at verses 11 through verses 13, everything is set in past tense. These are all things that have been done.

They are not things he is currently working on. The only thing that he is currently doing is waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool. But everything else is past tense.

It is work that has been completed. So he is concluding the subject matter of the book to this point because he is coming to now, when he is walking, the writer I am talking about, when he is alive, pinning this epistle, he has now come to the current day and age. All of this has been completed.

Now he is going to launch into the new covenant, the new testament, the place that you and I now live our life in today. And I believe one of the most important passages in this chapter, and maybe even the book of Hebrews is Hebrews 10, verse 14. And it says, for by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Think about that scripture. Leave that up there for a little bit. For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

I believe from this verse, you could preach or teach just about any truth found in the new testament. This is the foundational part of what the writer is saying is our reality now. You and I live in a time when Christ has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Our salvation is perfected. You and I are in a process. Because it teaches two things.

One, he has perfected us. Two, he is sanctifying us. And so I want to look at these two concepts this morning.

This is where I'm going to spend the rest of my morning talking about his perfected work and his sanctifying work. So let's look at perfected first. It says he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

I did something new this week in my study. Not that I looked up the Greek word, which I did, which is teleokon. And it means complete, perfected is complete, coming to maturity, completion, fullness, nothing more that has to be done.

And that is what Jesus has done for us. But what I did that I have never done in my life is looked up the type of verb that this word perfected is. Are you ready for this? English 104 or 201 or something, I don't know.

The word perfected is third person, singular, perfect, active, indicative. Can anybody tell me what that means? Don't worry, I couldn't either. So how many of you have beautiful, wonderful little technology slaves in your phone? I have two of them.

So I asked my phone, what is a verb in the third person, singular, perfect, active, indicative mean? You know what it means? It means that the verb, which is perfected, was completed by one person. Blew me away. And I know I shouldn't be blown away, but even the tense of the verb proves the truth of Scripture.

In other words, this was done for, it says, by one offering. Who offered that offering? Jesus Christ. He has perfected.

He has completed. He has matured. He has done all that needs done alone by himself with his offering.

It is a completed thing. Nothing more need be done. There was no help.

Jesus was enough to pay for my sin. He completed our salvation, if you will. With his one offering, our salvation is complete.

There's nothing else needs to be done. There is no other sacrifice for sin. Our passage concludes in chapter 18 with this thought that there is no more offerings for sin.

Why is that? Because this word tells us that it has been completed. There's nothing more to do. So for you and I who have placed our faith in Jesus, I ask this question, can you be saved any more than you are? It's interesting, huh? The answer is no.

Our salvation is perfect. It's completed on the cross. Sin was defeated by Jesus.

And what's interesting, once we place our faith in Jesus, we become spiritually alive. From any point after we have asked Jesus to forgive us of our sins, and we have brought him in, asked him to come into our heart, and we have placed our faith in him, from that point you are now spiritually alive. And I hate to say it this way, but you have your ticket punched for heaven, if you will.

Perfect example is the gentleman on the cross. He said he put his faith in Jesus, and Jesus says, today you will be with me. Nothing else need be done.

His faith was transferred into Jesus Christ. Jesus had paid for his salvation. It was complete.

It was done. Therefore, once his faith trusted in Jesus, he was eligible to enter heaven. That's where our salvation is perfected, because Jesus has done all of it.

So it brings me to our second point. How many of you would say that you are perfect, complete, with no more to learn and no need to grow in Jesus? All right, no hands went up, so I can't call anybody a liar. But none of us are perfect, right? Our salvation is, but we are not.

See, we still deal with sin, and we all fall short of the mark often. At least I do, so I included you in there with me. See, the believer is not perfected.

Rather, we are being sanctified. We are in the process of being made holy, which is called sanctification. So the next question I had is, how many of us are actively working and striving to be sanctified and become perfect? That's a trick question.

It reminds me, I've seen this done several times, talking about the fruit of the Spirit, and they talk about, you know, when you're thinking, ah, I need more peace in my life, and it's like, do you just like, peace, peace, peace, peace, hoping to grow the fruit of peace on you? That's not how we grow fruit, right? Fruit is a byproduct of how we grow into Christ. Well, our sanctification is the same thing. Remember how I shared perfected had this third point, indicative, singular, something, something, whatever? I did it again for the word sanctified.

The word sanctified, this one's even funner, is a verb, present, passive, participle, masculine, plural, accusative. Anybody else?

What that's saying about the word sanctified is that the object, which is us, we are the ones being sanctified, is having the action done to them, or they are receiving the action being done. It is a reception that we have. It is us not doing it, but it is us receiving it.

So what this means is that you and I can't work or strive to become sanctified according to Scripture. Rather, we must receive and accept the process that God is putting us through. Don't you just want to have a complaint box? It's like, Lord, I understand that I'm not perfect, but this, of all things, you have to put me through today.

Don't you wish there was a spiritual complaint box that you could fill out your little paper and stick it in? See God is the one who is sanctifying us. It is Him who is developing the Christ-likeness in us, which means that He is actively developing and growing Jesus' character in us by the work of the Holy Spirit to bring us to perfection. So it's very interesting.

Jesus has done something and completed it. He has perfected us, it says. That's a past tense word if you read it there in verse 14.

He has perfected those who are being sanctified. So the work is done, but yet we are in a process to become perfected, opposites. It seems like this whole sermon is about opposites, because Christ has done the work, but yet you and I have to go through the process to come to the point where we experience the perfection that God has for us.

News for you, you don't ever receive it on this side of earth, or this side of life should I say, because we will never arrive at where Jesus is. Here's the catch, for us to be being sanctified, it involves us surrendering our will to God and allowing Him to sanctify us. Guess what? God will not force sanctification on you.

You can choose to say, you know what God, no thanks, I don't want that. I choose no. And it's the truth.

See, we are in a process of God making us more like His Son, but in a way, we have a little bit of control, because if we're not willing to submit our will to God, God will not force us to do that.

There's a little bit of give and take. See, you and I can stop the process by refusing to surrender to God.

I don't know if this example works out 100%, but it's what came to my mind as I was chewing on this scripture and thinking about this. If you've known how we came to the church, we came to the church in 2020, and prior to that, we were associate pastors at Last Chance Chapel on the other side of Helena for about 15 years. And I was reminded of at least three times while I was at Last Chance Chapel that I had the ability to choose another path, if you will, from where God was bringing me.

And I know I have shared many times about how God used Last Chance Chapel to prepare me for becoming a pastor, and I think this helps us understand that we play a part in it to a degree. And so three times I was offered an off-ramp, if you will, an opportunity to go a different direction, to take a career or to move here or to do this or to do that, that would have altered my life significantly. And one, in 2010, the one I'm going to share this morning with you, I was working for Summit Aeronautics, it's a machine shop by the airport, Boeing now owns that facility, and it was very interesting because it was the only job that I've ever, I don't know if pined is the right word, but I was like, I coveted that job, I wanted to get a job at Summit Aeronautics.

And I chased it down and I went to all the interviews and I got hired. And during the first year that I was working at Summit Aeronautics, Boeing bought out the business. And to me, that was like, this was a stroke of luck.

You know, I mean, like, geez, now I'm a part of a huge corporation. There was benefits prior to this, I was self-employed, roofing, hard work, not fun, no benefits. We were having kids left and right.

And it's all my wife's fault, too, just all her fault. She's gorgeous, I don't know what to tell you. And I mean, so as I was looking at my trajectory in life, I was like, wow, I have a part of this business and there's benefits.

And for the first time I had health insurance in my life, I was like, man, look at you, God, you're just setting this up gorgeously for me. And then I went to church and Pastor John was standing there and he ambushed me at the back door. I'm telling the story, so it's my, it's my adjectives that I want to use.

And he asked me, he's like, Will, if I started a school of mission in Japan, would you run it? And it was a three month long thing. And you know how when you have these moments in life where thoughts can run through the mind at a million miles a second, and so I had about a second and this is what my mind thought. There's a chance at a stable career with a large corporation, comfort, security of insurance and steady work inside of a large building, my actual where I worked, I was inside of a building that was inside of a building.

So I had to go inside two buildings. I never saw the sunlight, but it's OK. I never had to deal with the snow.

Good job, desk job, lots of room for improvement, lots of room for growth. So all this flashes through my head. Opposed by the question being asked, the shifting uncertainty of raising my own money and doing ministry while raising a family abroad with little to no comforts, the language I didn't speak, where they suck raw sushi through a pouch.

No insurance, no help, just me and Jesus. Anybody ever had odds like this in your life? I had three of them while I was at Last Chance. And all this processed in blinding speed in my moment because I don't think I skipped a beat when I said, yeah.

Yeah, everything I have wanted was in front of me. But then Jesus comes along and says, hey, I have another way. And it's going to actually get you to where I want you to be in life.

Guess what Will Parsons had to do? Will Parsons had to surrender a little bit of will, a lot of will, actually. I had to choose not what I wanted, not what was best for me in the moment, not what would have benefited my family, so to say, in my personal thinking, to choose what Jesus was saying, hey, this is an option I have for you. But there's a lot of uncertainty that comes with it.

See, the process of sanctification involves allowing God to write on our hearts and our minds his will. And that's often where we run into problems with God. See, Hebrews chapter 10, verse 16 says, this is the covenant that I will make with them.

After those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds and I will write on them. And then he adds their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more. See, as God is changing or sanctifying us by putting his law in our hearts, he is developing within us the character of Jesus.

See, his goal is to have holy character produced in us. Which empowers holy living in the world. Not just holy actions.

Sometimes we get so wrapped up into the actions. We forget to submit our will to his sovereignty. And as we have learned, as we've talked in the book of Hebrews, almost every time it boils down to a heart issue.

It's an attitude. It's a positioning of the heart. Will I submit my will to God or will I choose my will over God? The biggest fight that we wrestle in life, me or God.

Me or God. And every decision, every moment we walk this earth, we struggle with that decision. Because our will is strong and we understand and we see things and there's things I know that I need to do and there's things I have to do and there's choices I have to make.

And God, if you would just understand my position. But God does. He does and he sees the picture bigger than we ever will.

Because typically when we are trying to enforce our will to say, I think this is what Jesus wants. But I just I'm struggling with it. A lot of times what that is, is this is what I want.

And Jesus, you need to bless me. This is the path I want because I see how this benefits. Me.

I see how this benefits me. This doesn't benefit God. I mean, yes, I can be a part of God's kingdom and but ultimately, whenever we choose our will over God's, we choose to benefit me.

Rarely will we ever make a decision that benefits other people's situations over our own. See, when our heart belongs to God, our character begins to change. Our character is a unique combination of qualities that make us who we are.

It is about moral and mental strengths, integrity and how we behave towards other people. And what's interesting about character is usually easier to determine other people's characters over years. See, the fruit of the spirit.

Our character traits that God is seeking to develop in all of us, we ever thought about that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. You know what those are? Their character traits. There's something that the world can use to identify us as belonging to Christ because we have joy in the situations where we probably shouldn't have joy, we have joy.

Why? Because there is Christ's character coming out in us. It's not my understanding of the situation and being full of anger and hate and grumpiness. It's my understanding that God is in control and I have submitted my will to him.

So that I can trust what he's doing and therefore I can have joy in the situation that I find myself in. Any of the fruit of the spirit fits their love, kindness, gentleness, patience, self control. All of it is whenever I choose to let go of my will and embrace the character that Christ is trying to build in me that God's character begins to show out of me.

I believe the majority of Christian living is learning to submit to God. As I alluded to earlier, all too often most life is lived with this prayer and motto, God I'm going this way, come with me and bless me. There's even a scripture that talks about this and it says, we will say I'm going to go to this city and I'm going to sell and I'm going to live and I'm going to do business.

But what we should say is if the Lord wills, there's that little four letter word again, don't go on it. If it's the Lord's will, I will go to this city and live and make business and do things like that. All too often we make decisions and we charge ahead saying, come on God, this is what we're doing now.

Follow me, bless me, come with me. We live life on our terms, using our wisdom, following cultural norms and expect God to grant our wishes, I mean, our petitions for our life. See, salvation, sanctification is a process.

Yes, we're saved, but we are also being saved day by day. One of my favorite commentators so far in Hebrews is Alexander McLaren, and he made this quote about the process of salvation and submitting to the Lordship of Jesus. I want to read it to you, and I love this guy.

You could just tell he was one of these compassionate people because he says, oh, brethren, if we are not ascending the ladder that reaches to heaven, which is Christ himself, we are descending. If we are not growing, we are dwindling. If we cannot say that we are being sanctified, we are being made more and more common and profane, again, opposing realities.

Why don't you stand with me this morning? One of the truths about life is that in life, if things stagnate, they die. And I love McLaren's quote, you're always going somewhere, you're either climbing the ladder to submit to God, or you're descending the ladder to submit to the devil. I hate to say it that way, but that's the truth of it.

We're either growing or we're dwindling. Jesus came and perfected those who are being sanctified. But yet you and I must submit to that sanctification by submitting our will, our wants, our desires, our thoughts, our addictions, and our selfishness to the plan of Jesus Christ.

So we have the option to live life our way, to reject the process of becoming holy. However, we will only experience the perfect salvation that Jesus accomplished for us if we're willing to allow the process of sanctification. What I've loved about this little section of Hebrews, and we're going to get into it next week, it's all been concerning how we access God.

We gain access to God not by the trifles that we do, the actions that we try to have holy living with, sacrifices that we make, whatever external practice you can call it, that's not how we access God anymore. We access God through the position of our heart in submitting our will to Him and allowing His law to be written on our hearts, His will to govern the thoughts of our mind, to bring us through the process of sanctification. I thought I'd end with the song we sang a little bit today.

It says, I will follow Jesus. Because it really set up, we're just doing acapella, really set up the sermon well. Because it's something that you and I must choose to do, to set our will aside and say, Jesus, I'm choosing your character over my will.

You guys are going to have to help me because this is not going to be good for me. But how do you start it, babe? Go for it. Yeah, I have decided.

Thank you. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus.

I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back. No turning back.

Go with me, still I will follow. Lo, none go with me, still I will follow. With me, still I will follow.

No turning back. Father, you hear the cry of our heart this morning. And Lord, even as we have experienced the trials and tribulations of this past week, we have borne the heaviness that has come with this vile act.

But yet, Father, your words are true. And as we sang in that new song this morning, though you kill me, my home is heaven. And Father, we stand before you this morning, understanding that there are difficult days.

There are hard things and tribulations that we must walk through. But these are not things that should surprise us because your word tells us that we will have these things. But yet, it is through walking these difficult paths that we have the ability to surrender our will to you.

So that when we are hated upon, we can return love. When our peace is shaken, we can turn to you and have the peace of the Heavenly Father in our lives. Father, to return blessings for cursings.

Father, to have your character. To choose to be like Jesus in our situations. Because it is very easy for us to choose not to be like Jesus.

This morning, Father, I pray that you would help us to see that you are calling us to a different path. You are calling us to walk opposite of what our heart wants. But to submit to you.

To trust you. Father, that we would allow your process of sanctification to have its complete work. So that Christ might be developed within me.

So that as I walk and live this life, Christ might be seen by those I'm around. That is our purpose. To spread the gospel.

Help us to submit to your will. To let your laws be written upon our hearts and our minds. That would govern our actions and that would govern our words.

It would govern our thoughts. We submit this to you and we ask that you would help us where we struggle. In Jesus name, Amen.