

GM // onliners

Continuing in Hebrews... [if got Bible chapter 9]

Serious pastoral letter or sermon.

If it was 1 sermon ... man ... homeboy could preach.

I think 30 minutes is long ... he was on a roll for about 3 hours straight. :)

But the preacher is calling them/us to watch out for the faith drift we all are in danger of.

Our faith has always been counter-culture.

Whatever the prevailing culture is will have values that cut against the Gospel.

These things creep into our hearts so gradually and slowly it's almost impossible to detect.

The other dangerous drift is that our hearts grow cold toward the Gospel.

The things that once excited our hearts become familiar and a bit vanilla.

The temptation is to go look for the next big thing: aka spiritual fad or superior-program.

But Hebrews reminds us that it's all about Jesus.

Nothing is superior to him.

This particular passage is about a foundational truth in the Gospel.

It's central to the understanding of our salvation and what Christianity is built on.

And if you're here to explore the Christian faith ... glad you're here, encourage you to keep coming ...

I think today will be really helpful for you.

Hebrews 9

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of **holiness**. **2** For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the **Holy Place**. **3** Behind the second curtain was a second section called the **Most Holy Place**, **4** having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. **5** Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, **7** but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and **not without taking blood**, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. **8** By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing **9** (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, **10** but deal only with food and drink and various

washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the

vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

So these Hebrew Christians are getting a reminder in the Old Covenant sacrificial system and the importance of blood.

They would have been experts in this stuff.

But for us ... we aren't as immersed in it as they were.

The notion of blood might even alarm us a little bit.

But here is what the Bible says about the importance of blood ...

Hebrews 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

This is a foundation truth ...

It's like learning addition.

You won't be able to do any other kind of math until you get this one down.

But still it seems extreme doesn't it?

Why would a gracious loving God demand blood sacrifices?

And I would agree with you... it is extreme.

But I think that's what God is trying to make us understand.

Sin Is More Serious Than We Realize

We get the concept that bad things deserve big punishment.

The worse the crime the longer the time.

But the difference between our legal system and God's is that we have gradations of justice depending on the law that was broken.

And these penalties are ever changing.

Back in the 1800's if you stole a loaf of bread you could get 20 years hard labor. [ex. Valjean in Les Miserables]

Today, you might get a small fine, but no jail time.

It used to be that the punishment for murder was death.

Our society has evolved to change that to life in prison with a chance of parole in some cases.

Here's the thing about crime and punishment.

The punishment for a crime tells us how severe the crime is.

Stealing a candy bar from a liquor store is not the same as being a serial killer.

That just makes sense ...

Not all crime is the same.

But God's justice over sin is totally different to ours.

We can't project our ever-changing standard understanding of justice onto God's justice.

God's penalty for sin has never changed.

The first sin was breaking His first law of “Don’t take a fruit off a certain tree.”

Sounds kind of like ... “Don’t steal a loaf of bread.”

What was God’s penalty for that?

Death.

Seems a little too severe!?

Well, if you look at justice from man’s perspective it does.

We see punishment as the appropriate response to the particular law being broken.

So a sin or transgression is law-breaking.

But God says sin is different ... it’s not just about breaking rules.

Actually, moreso, it’s about rejecting Him as God.

It’s about breaking relationship with Him.

We covered that in last week’s sermon about covenant.

If you weren’t here, you can listen online or on our app.

But that’s the difference between our understanding of justice and God’s.

It’s about covenant relationship.

And from the very beginning he said disobedience ...
breaking the covenantal demands ... rejecting Him as God
...

It always deserves death.

And in case you think that's too harsh ... think about this ...

Simple sin always leads to sinning in greater severity.

After Adam and Eve's simple sin of eating forbidden fruit, the next sin was Cain murdering Abel.

See, once we are corrupted by sin the opportunities are endless for how we can hurt each other.

God loves his creatures and he knows sin has one end goal ...

To destroy you and those around you.

That's why God takes all sin as seriously as he does.

However, at the same time God is also merciful and gracious.

Because he loves his creatures ... even the ones who sin ...

He made a way around the death penalty.

Not by doing away with it.

That would be unjust.

But He allowed for a substitute on our behalf.

Which means another death must happen in place of the sinner.

Right from the beginning this happened.

God covered Adam and Eve with animal skins after their original sin.

An animal was sacrificed in their place.

They were literally covered in the death of that animal.

Adam and Eve, through sin, brought death into the world.

God, through grace, saved them from death by the death of another creature.

But this isn't just so that God would leave them alone.

The blood of a sacrifice was our way back into relationship with God.

Because Of Sin We Need Blood To Approach A Holy God

That is what the tabernacle teaches us in the Old Covenant.

At the beginning of the chapter the preacher mentions the tabernacle ...

It had two compartments ...

The first was the Holy Place where priests could come and perform their ritual duties of worship.

This was a degree of drawing closer to God's presence.

Then there was a second section ... divided by a thick veil.

This was called the MOST HOLY PLACE.

God gave it that title.

He was saying ... there is not a more holy place on the whole earth than that little room in the tabernacle.

And no one got to go in there ... except the High Priest once a year.

Hebrews 9:7

But in the second [MOST HOLY PLACE] only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

That one verse is a summary of Leviticus 16 ...

Leviticus 16:2-3, 14-16

2 and the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother [who was High Priest] not to come at any time into the

Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, **so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.**

Lesson, no one can stand before God and live. But...

3 But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

God makes a way ...

A bull was sacrificed for Aaron's sin.

A ram was sacrificed for the sins of Israel.

Here is what the High Priest must do with the blood to be able to meet with God and not die.

14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. 16 Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the

people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

The High Priest could only come into God's presence with blood.

And He had to sprinkle the blood between him and God's mercy seat.

That shows something important.

The blood of a sacrifice must stand between us and God in order for us to draw near to him.

So how does that work for us today?

Thankfully, we don't need to join the 4H club and start raising livestock to make sacrifices all the time ...

Hebrews 9:24-25

24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the

foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

We still need blood ... but thankfully we have Jesus' blood.

Which is superior in every way to the old sacrifices...

It's once for all.

That means ...

Jesus' Blood Redeems Us From Sin

In verse 26 it says he came to "put away sin".

That doesn't mean he's ignoring it.

The Greek word for "put away sin" is an interesting one ...

It's only used twice in the whole Bible. Both times in Hebrews.

The closest English word we have for it is "abolition".

Think of America's abolition of slavery.

What did that mean?

It meant the institution, practice, cultural values and laws that allowed for and perpetuated slavery were annulled/voided ...

Those things no longer had any power over slaves.

Slaves no longer had to submit to their slave-masters...

They were redeemed / set free!

This is what Jesus did for us! He abolished sin!

He nullified and voided its power and consequences that it held us under.

And in so doing ... Jesus redeemed us from our slavery to sin.

We are no longer under sin's mastery.

The laws that gave sin its power are no longer the laws that govern us.

We belong to Jesus because he is our great redeemer.

We aren't under the old covenant where sin reigns.

We are under the new covenant where freedom in Jesus reigns!

This also means our eyes are opened to see sin for what it is.

Before, we were blind and without understanding.

We wouldn't have called our choices or actions sinful.

But in Jesus that changes B/C ...

Jesus' Blood Corrects Our Corrupted Conscience

It says that in Hebrews 9:14 ...

“how much more will the blood of Christ ... purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

So our conscience gets a blood bath ...

But what does that mean?

The conscience is that part of us that tells us what's right and wrong.

Like Jiminy Cricket in Pinocchio sang ... “Take the straight and narrow path, and if you start to slide ... Always let your conscience be your guide.”

We are raised to believe this fallacy as truth.

Prevailing culture tells us that our conscience is that 1 part of us that still gets it right when it comes to discerning good and evil... **[like an umpire calling balls and strikes]**

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Our conscience is a malleable thing.

It's shaped by the values of the community it is immersed in.

So if you grew up in a tribe of cannibals ...

Your conscience would be shaped to believe that killing your enemies & eating them is good.

If you grew up in America in the last 50 or so years ...

Your conscience would believe that the ultimate good is for you to pursue what makes you happiest.

Our conscience is trained by the collective social conscience that we live in.

But Jesus' blood comes and purifies our conscience ...

It brings us into a true understanding of what is and isn't sin.

It's like resetting the strike zone back to where it should be. We start calling balls and strikes the right way.

Between our clean conscience and the Holy Spirit's conviction ... we are without excuse to go on sinning.

A pastor named Matt Smethurst tweeted this the other day,
and I thought it sums it up really well:

“Fake grace: All is forgiven so you can flirt with sin.

Real grace: All is forgiven so you can flee sin.”

We are called to live in a new way ... to serve God.

But even when we fail to do that, which we will ...

We need not despair ... B/C ...

Jesus' Blood Seals Us For Redemption

The Hebrew's had a word for all this atoning sacrifice we've
been talking about...

It's Kaphar ... **[have fun saying that this week!]**

All through Leviticus when it talked about sin offerings and
guilt offerings as atonement, the word Kaphar was most
often used.

This verb was an ancient construction term that meant to
cover a surface with this sealant called pitch.

**To Kaphar something was to completely cover it or seal
it with pitch.**

And so a sacrifice of atonement was to perform Kaphar ... to cover something impure and sinful under the blood of that sacrifice.

The blood from atonement sacrifice was put on everything to purify it: the tabernacle, High Priest, priests, Israelites.

That is what Jesus' atonement did for us.

We are completely covered and sealed in His blood.

What is a sealant's purpose?

To protect from the influence of harmful outside elements.

This is what happens when you are saved by faith in Jesus.

His sacrifice, his blood covers you, it seals you.

You are fused with his blood so that God only ever sees you covered in the blood of Jesus.

The blood that is necessary to draw near to God.

The blood that takes away our sin.

The blood that corrects and protects our conscience.

When you really get this it shifts where you put your hope.

When you sin, guilt and shame will try to convince you the blood isn't enough.

Somehow you got to do something to fix it.
So we put our trust in good works rather than Jesus' blood.
But this will only lead to pride and despair.

Our only hope for salvation is in Christ's blood.
And that hope is for you, but its also for others ...
Which is why, when we understand more fully the power of
Jesus' blood, it changes how we treat each other.
You'll have so much more grace and mercy for people, b/c
they are just like you.
They need the blood of Jesus just as much as you do.
So we don't hold on to bitterness, anger, hurt ...
We don't keep a list of people's sins.
Just as the blood sets you free and cleanses you ... it does
it for them as well.

And so we come together with an assurance that looks
forward to Jesus' return with eagerness.

Hebrews 9:27-28

**27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and
after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been
offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a
second time, not to deal with sin but to save those
who are eagerly waiting for him.**

BAND COME UP

NOT A CHRISTIAN:

- That last verse says that we all will die one day.
- Then comes judgment.
- If you are not covered in the blood of Jesus that can only come by faith, judgment awaits you.
- That means eternal death in hell.
- Separation from God forever in a place torment.
- But God was gracious and sent His only son to die, shedding his blood for you.
- Take hold of that truth and that promise by faith.
- By faith, repent of your sins and turn to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

CHRISTIANS:

- Are you nursing guilt and shame today?
- Are holding on to grudges, bitterness toward people?
- The blood of Jesus means you can let it all go ...
- You are sealed in His blood.
- So we can boldly approach God without fear of judgment.

PRAY: End with inviting Jesus' real presence for communion.

COMMUNION:

- This is a sacred moment where Jesus invites us to partake of his body and blood.
- Think about the significance of that based on all that we looked at today.
- As you take communion we are promised the real presence of Jesus will be with us.
- We get to commune with him.
- We are reminded that we are sealed/united to Him by his blood.
- So let's take it with faith and with thankfulness for His sacrifice in our place.