

Hebrews 10:1-18 — Jesus Is A Greater Sacrifice

December 21, 2019

Welcome to CrossWinds. As many of you know, for the month of December we are in a small study of the book of Hebrews where we are looking at snapshots of Jesus. The goal of the series is to help us see Jesus better and love him more. We want to worship Jesus more passionately this Christmas season.

In a sentence, the theme of the book of Hebrews is “Jesus is greater.” How great is Jesus? *The book of Hebrews tells us Jesus is greater than anything God did in the past. Jesus is so great, there is nothing greater God could do for us in the future other than what he has already done for us through Jesus.* That means Jesus is a pretty big deal. That is why we celebrate his birth at Christmas.

The messages of this series all have built off the theme of Jesus is greater.

Pastor Jordan brought us to Hebrews 2 where we learned why Jesus is a greater savior. Last week, Pastor Kris Neider took us to Hebrews 4 and 5 where we learned why Jesus is a greater high priest than any of the high priests in the Old Testament sacrificial system. After Christmas, Pastor Chris Rasmussen will take us to Hebrews 8 where we will learn how Jesus gave us a greater covenant.

This week, it is my privilege to take us to Hebrews 10, where we will see how Jesus came to solve the problem of our sin by being a greater sacrifice for sin. Jesus is a greater sacrifice for sin than was ever found under the old covenant. Jesus’ death for our sin is so great, that you and I can’t be any more forgiven of our sin than we already are right now simply by trusting in Jesus. If

complete and total forgiveness of our sins that lasts forever doesn't bring joy to your heart this Christmas season, I am not sure what would. That is what Jesus came to provide.

Turn in your copy of God's Word either in a pew Bible, a paper Bible or a phone Bible to Hebrews 10. We are going to read the first 18 verses. While you are turning, let me mentally transport you back a few thousand years to the time of the Old Testament. Let me show you how God instructed his people to handle the problem of sin and guilt in the days before Jesus. When the people sinned in those days, they were to put their hands on the head of an animal then confess their sins onto an animal. That animal was killed in their place as a virtual substitute. That animal died for their sin. That showed them that sin was serious stuff in God's eyes. The Old Testament priests were constantly killing animals to cover the sins of the people. It was a bloody mess in the temple that went from dawn to dusk. The priests would sacrifice thousands of animals per day to cover the sins of the people.

During the week of Passover, there would be as many as 300,000 lambs slain.¹ Under the altar, where animals were slain, there was a drain that ran out of the side of the temple and down a hill into the Kidron Valley. There was so much blood shed on the altar that the Kidron Brook in the valley ran red for an entire week from all the animal blood. Some ancient Jewish documents claim that during Passover week the drain at the



¹ A passage from Josephus says that at least 256,500 lambs were killed in the Temple for a Passover in one year between 66-70 A.D (Jewish Wars 6.9.3). If 144 priests were killing six lambs a minute (10 seconds per lamb), it would only take about 5 hours to kill over a quarter million lambs. This high number is possible.

base of the altar that ran into the valley was intentionally plugged so the blood overflowed from the altar and covered the floor of the temple. The priests walked in a pool of blood.

While I don't know if that is true, we do know that around 300,000 lambs were slaughtered in the Passover week to cover the sins of the people. That is a lot of death to cover a lot of sin.

While the death of these animals to cover sin was what God commanded, there were great deficiencies when it came to an animal dying in the place of a human being to cover his or her sin. The only way to solve the problems with animal sacrifice was to replace it with Christ's sacrifice, which is what we will see this morning.

Let's read these verse before we study them together.

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will

put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Hebrews 10:1–18 (ESV)

These verses break into two parts. The first four verses show us the problems with the Old Testament sacrificial system when it came to handling the problem of our sin. The next 14 verses show us why the sacrifice of Jesus is much greater than the sacrifice of animals which was originally commanded in the Old Testament sacrificial system. In fact, the sacrifice of Jesus deals with the problem of sin so completely that Jesus is the final solution to the problem sin. He is such a great solution to sin that even God cannot improve on what he has already done for us through Jesus.

Why was the Old Testament sacrificial system insufficient to handle the problem of sin?

It was only a picture and couldn't bring access to God.

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

The writer of Hebrews said the law — that is God's ceremonial law, which determined all the sacrifices, holidays, and feasts — was only a shadow of the good things to come, not the true form of those realities. The word for shadow literally means a fuzzy shadow. It is like seeing a shadow of someone walking down the road that is cast on the wall of a building because the sun is late in the day. The shadow is just a rough shape of the original object but it is a far cry from seeing all the details and the substance of reality. A shadow doesn't have color. It doesn't have personality. It isn't the real object. We cannot touch it.

The writer of Hebrews tells us the Old Testament sacrificial system was intended to be nothing more than a living picture of how to handle sin. It never actually solved the problem of sin. When people lied, cheated, stole or sinned in any way, the only way to make that right was for a pure and spotless animal to die in their places for their sins. The old covenant just pictured that the only way to handle sin was by death. It pictured that the only way to avoid punishment for sin was by a pure and spotless substitute to take our places. That is what the picture of the Old Testament sacrificial system pointed toward.

Jesus is the reality. The Old Testament system was the shadow that pointed toward Jesus and what he came to do for us. Remember what John the Baptist said about Jesus when John saw him in the Gospel of John?

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29 (ESV)

In the Old Testament, lambs didn't take away sin. They just pictured that a pure a spotless lamb needed to die to take away sin. The Old Testament lambs were only a picture, an illustration, a fuzzy shadow. Jesus came along and he was not a fuzzy picture. He was the reality. He was the true lamb that died for the sin of the world. He is the lamb God provided to accomplish what animal lambs could never do.

Paul said the same things about the Old Testament sacrificial system. It was intended by God to be nothing more than a shadow, a rough picture of how forgiveness with God works, but the reality of true forgiveness is only found in Christ.

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:16–17 (ESV)

The good things to come that Paul talked about are forgiveness and new life from God through Christ, but these things were only foreshadowed by the Old Testament sacrifices.

Think of it this way. When Cindy and I started dating, I was thrilled when she let me have one of her pictures. I knew that when you are dating a girl and she lets you have her picture the relationship had gone big league. For the younger folks, we were dating in the days before Instagram existed so you couldn't get a girl's picture that way. We were dating in the days before before Facebook existed. We are really old. We were dating in the days before the Internet was created! In those days, pictures of your girlfriend were much harder to find than a simple Google search.

I had Cindy's picture on my desk so I could glance at it while studying. I have to admit, sometimes that picture became a distraction. I would catch myself staring at her picture daydreaming and being filled with gratitude that I was dating such a godly and beautiful woman.

Our relationship progressed and the day came when we were married. When we got married, I didn't throw her picture away, but I also didn't spend time staring at it in the living room. Her picture became functionally obsolete when I married her. I didn't need a photo of my wife when I had my wife in the flesh living with me. I would be a real weirdo if I kept staring at her photo in the living room when I actually had her there.

In the same way, the Old Testament sacrificial system was meant to be nothing more than a picture. It pictured the great cost of what it would take for us

to be made right with God on account of our sin. Sin is so serious that a pure and spotless substitute needed to die in our places to pay for our sins if we were to escape the just punishment for our sins. Jesus came and did what the Old Testament sacrifices pictured he would need to do to take care of sin.

To prove that the entire Old Testament sacrificial system was nothing more than a picture and sin was never actually paid for by the death of an animal, the writer of Hebrews reminded his audience, and reminds us, that nobody was made perfect by the sacrifice of an animal in the Old Testament. Even after an animal died for people's sin, they couldn't just walk into God's presence in the Holy of Holies. The reason they couldn't go into God's presence is because the death of the animal only pictured the covering of their sin. It didn't actually cover their sin. If animal death actually covered sin, people would have been welcomed into God's presence, which they weren't in the Old Testament.

Incidentally, when Jesus died in Matthew 27:51 it tells us the temple veil that kept people away from the presence of God in the Holy of Holies was torn in half by God's hand. This made it so people could come into God's very presence, not because of what animal death had done but because of what Jesus' death had done.

So the Old Testament system was deficient because it was only a shadow. It was only a living picture that reminded people day after day that the only way to handle sin was by the death of a pure and spotless substitute in their place. We know animal sacrifice didn't work because nobody could waltz into the

presence of God in the Holy of Holies after animal sacrifice because their sins were actually not atoned for by an animal.

It couldn't remove the guilt of sin.

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? Hebrews 10:2 (ESV)

In other words, if the Old Testament sacrifices had actually removed sin, people would no longer need to continually offer sacrifices for sin because they would no longer be burdened by the guilt of their sin. The problem is the Old Testament sacrifices never cleansed the worshipers' consciences. The best an Old Testament sacrifice could do was temporarily cover people's sin. It couldn't cure the problem of sin. The Old Testament sacrifices never removed the guilt people experienced for their sin.

Have you ever had a moment in your life when you were completely plagued by the guilt of your sin and what you had done? You were filled with shame. Do you remember wanting to hide in a corner and stay away from people because of the ugliness of your sin? For many of us in those moments of darkness we called out to God and asked Jesus Christ to forgive our sin. Some of us talk about how we could literally feel the weight of our sin, guilt, and shame being taken away because Jesus forgave us and took all of our sin, guilt, and shame away. If you have experienced that amazing feeling of forgiveness from Jesus, realize nobody in the Old Testament had that experience. Even after they sacrificed an animal for sin, people still felt guilty for their sin. Their guilt and shame was not taken away because all animal sacrifice did was picture what was necessary for forgiveness. Animal sacrifice never achieved forgiveness.

...According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper... Hebrews 9:9 (ESV)

In the Old Testament, not only did people leave still feeling guilty of sin after making an animal sacrifice because animals never actually took away sin, but they ended up further depressed because every time they sinned, there was another animal to sacrifice. The death of so many animals for their sin served as a constant reminder of their sin.

But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Hebrews 10:3–4 (ESV)

All the Old Testament sacrifices did was drum into people's brains that they were great sinners constantly in need of more forgiveness.

The death of an animal for our sin is woefully inadequate. If animal death could take away sin, there would be people lining up outside of slaughterhouses today with their hands on the head of cows and bulls confessing their sins onto that animal before it died so their sin would be taken away as those animals become steak and hamburger. The animal death in the old covenant was just a picture. It never took away sin. Even after the animal was dead, people were still left feeling guilty.

Theologians put it this way. All the Old Testament sacrifices could do was temporarily cover sin. The Old Testament sacrifices could never cure sin.

One way to better understand this is by picturing the two ways medicine is used in the medical community. Some medicine is designed to cure sickness. Other medicine is intended to provide comfort in sickness. Many of you know my wife has arthritis in her hands. The doctor told her there is no medicine that will cure her arthritis. Thankfully the doctor did have medicine that can cover the pain

of her arthritis. She puts that special cream on her hands every morning. There are days she feels so good she forgets she has arthritis because the pain is so well covered, but she is quickly reminded she is still sick on the days she forgets to put the cream on her hands in the morning. The pain comes back with a vengeance because she is not cured of her disease; she has only temporarily covered the pain of her disease. That is all the Old Testament sacrificial system. At best, it temporarily covered sin. That is why people still felt guilty after sacrificing an animal when they left the temple.

How does this compare to us in Christ? We will spend more time looking at this in a few minutes but let me give this to you as an appetizer.

**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1 (ESV)**

Now all of our sin is completely forgiven by Jesus. The problem of our sin is not temporarily covered. It is completely cured by Jesus. This is why as Christians we can confess our sin to Christ and feel that overwhelming sense of forgiveness from Jesus because he paid for all our sin and he takes our sin away from us. We are no longer guilty. We will not be condemned for our sin. Jesus takes all of our sin away from us.

The Old Testament sacrificial system was ineffective for two reasons: 1. It was only a picture that couldn't bring us access to God. 2. It couldn't remove the guilt sin. Now let's look at how Jesus' sacrifice was much greater.

Why was Jesus' sacrifice of himself to handle the problem of sin so much greater?

It was always God's plan for Jesus to be the solution to the problem of sin.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" Hebrews 10:5-7 (ESV)

These are some exciting verses that give us a great window of insight.

The writer of Hebrews quoted from Psalm 40:6-8. He said these words were not just spoken by the Psalmist, they were spoken by Jesus to God the Father when he stood on the edge of heaven before he left to take on human flesh in the womb of Mary. We are eavesdropping into a conversation between two members of the Trinity moments before the incarnation took place in the womb of Mary.

The first thing Jesus said to God the Father was, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired... in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure." By detailing these different types of offerings, we know he was referring to the entire Old Testament sacrificial system. Jesus said that God the Father was not delighted by the Old Testament sacrificial system, even though he created the Old Testament sacrificial system. The reason God the Father was not delighted with the Old Testament sacrificial system is because he never intended Old Testament sacrifices to be the final solution for sin. Remember all God the Father gave them to be was a shadow, a living picture pointing people forward to what Jesus came to do.

Let me show you one example of how the Old Testament system was intended to be nothing more than a picture pointing to Jesus. Remember how the holiday of Passover began. When Israel was in slavery in Egypt, God sent Moses as its deliverer. God struck Egypt with a series of plagues, the last of which was the death of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt by the angel of death. God's people were intended to be the exception. They were to slaughter pure and spotless lambs then put the blood of the lambs on the frames of their doors. When the angel of death saw the blood of a pure and spotless lamb on a doorpost, he would pass over the house. Sure enough, the firstborn of Egypt died but the firstborn of Israel lived by the death of those pure and spotless lambs. From that time forward the people of Israel were to celebrate the holiday of Passover to remind them their ancestors were saved the by death of pure and spotless lambs.

Along came Jesus. I believe it is the Gospel of John that tells us Jesus died during Passover at the exact same time the Passover lambs were slain. Through Jesus' death all those who trust in his blood avoid not just earthly death but something much greater, eternal death in the Lake of Fire. God the Father began picturing what Jesus came to do with the Passover thousands of years before he came.

Look what else Jesus said in Psalm 40. Jesus said to God the Father, "you have prepared a body for me." Here is proof Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. Who created Jesus' body in Mary's womb? God the Father, not a human father. God's original plan was always that Jesus would take on a human body

that was created by God the Father in the womb of Mary to die for our sin and rise from the dead to give us new life. That was always God's plan to deal with sin from the beginning. It is Jesus taking on a body that God the Father delights in, not animal sacrifices.

As Jesus was about to go into the womb of Mary for the incarnation to take place he said, "It is written about me in the scroll of the book." In other words, if you look at the Old Testament you can see everywhere by direct prophecy, by types, and by allusion that God the Father had been telling people all along that his plan was always to send his son into the world in a human body to take care of the sin problem once and for all.

When Jesus rose from the dead, remember what Jesus did on the road to Emmaus with two of his disciples? He explained to them from the Old Testament how it was always God's plan to send him to die for sin and to rise from the grave. He proved his death and resurrection was always God the Father's plan to deal with sin from the Scripture.

Christ's sacrifice of himself for sin was greater because God the Father didn't delight in animal sacrifices. It was always God's plan for Jesus to take on a body and die to be the final solution to the problem of sin.

Jesus' death for our sin is so great it didn't add to the old sacrificial system, it completely replaced it.

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. Hebrews 10:8-9 (ESV)

The writer of Hebrews said that it was always God's will to do away with the temporary old covenant system and to replace it with Jesus.

This was hard for many people in that day to understand because animal sacrifices had been part of their culture for more than a thousand years. They wanted to bolt Jesus onto the old system. They wanted to add Jesus to the sacrifices. The writer of Hebrews said, "That can't be done! The old system was only intended to be temporary. Jesus is so much greater he must replace the entire old covenant system that pointed to him." This why you and I no longer offer animal sacrifices today. Jesus' sacrifice for our sin was always what God wanted. Christ's sacrifice was so great it could do nothing less than completely replace all the sacrifices of the old covenant.

Maybe the best way to think about it is like a condemned house. If you leave the church and head north just a few blocks to 20th Street, there was a house with caution tape wrapped around it. Recently, excavators and big dumpsters showed up and workers tore the house down and took it away. I know why they tore the old house down.

The only way to put a new house on that lot was to take away the old defective house from the lot. That old house was defective. You can't build a new and perfect house on top of an old, defective house. You can't bolt a new house onto an old house. The old house couldn't handle the new house. A new house is so much greater it has to replace the old house. That is what Christ has done. From eternity past it was always God the Father's plan that his son would come. What Jesus did for us when he died on the cross was so revolutionary that he

replaced the entire old sacrificial system, which was only effective in being a road sign that pointed to Jesus. The old system never achieved any of the good things offered to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Why is Jesus so much better? He is so much greater than the old covenant that he eliminated the old covenant, which only served to point to him.

Jesus' death for our sin makes us pure before God once for all. No other sacrifice for sin needs to be made.

And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10 (ESV)

Sanctifies means to make holy. It means to take away sin so we are in a position that we can relate to God. Remember the old sacrificial system never did away with sin. It only temporarily covered sin. Nobody — except for the high priest once a year — could approach God in the Holy of Holies, and even then he had to bring a sacrifice for his own sin.

Christ is different. It says, “we *have been* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.” The tense of the verb is very important. It means everyone who places his or her faith and trust in Jesus *has been made holy before God forever*. It is a permanent, continual state without any more sacrifices for our sin ever needing to be offered again. Anyone who places his or her faith and trust in Jesus is in a permanent continual state of being holy, pure, and free from sin before him, not because of the perfection of our lives but because of our trust in the death of Jesus for the sin in our lives.

Remember Jesus didn't cover sin. He paid for all of our sin for all time by the one sacrifice of himself. This means that right now, no matter our sinfulness,

simply because of our faith in Jesus and the complete power of his death, we can approach God the Father directly. We can waltz into the Holy of Holies because we are pure and free from sin in God's eyes.

That doesn't mean we no longer sin. It means Jesus's death has so completely paid for all of our sin that God the Father looks at us and no longer sees our sin. I know you sinned this week. I sinned this week. When God the Father looks at us, if we have trusted Jesus, he doesn't see our sin. He sees the purity and holiness of Jesus.

Some people wonder what would happen if before they died, they committed a grievous act of sin. Would they be forgiven if they didn't have a chance to confess that sin in their final moments? The answer is, "Yes." We are not forgiven based on our ability to remember and confess sin. We are forgiven completely, once for all for all of eternity by our faith and trust in Jesus who completely pays for all of our sin.

My friends, we cannot be any more forgiven of our sin than we are right now by our simple faith and trust in Jesus. That is why the gospel is called good news. That is why we celebrate the birth of Jesus. One of the reasons Jesus came is to take care of the problem of sin once-and-for-all by the sacrifice of himself to pay for all of our sin for all time.

This is so much better than the old system where sins were only temporarily covered. How much greater can things get? We are completely forgiven forever by Jesus. No other sacrifice for sin needs to be made other than what Christ has already done. There is nothing we can do to receive it other than

simply placing our faith in what Christ has already done for us. We are made holy before God by Jesus. As additional good news, not only are we made holy forever before God, but we are now in the process of being made holy in this life by Jesus.

Some of us may take this the wrong way. Since no matter how much we sin, we cannot lose our salvation from Jesus, does that mean we should go out and party hard and sin as much as possible because we have a permanent get-out-of-jail-free card from Jesus? Absolutely not! If we know Christ, there will be a growing desire for the holiness of Christ to be lived out in our lives. The holiness before God that is given to us by Christ will start to work its way out of our lives.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1–4 (ESV)

In other words when we become Christians, we are so closely identified with Christ that just as Jesus' died but was raised to new life, in a similar way our old lives and old ways of looking at things die and when we came to Christ and we are raised to live a new life that is pleasing to him. We don't want to live in sin. We want to live like Jesus.

Jesus' death for our sin removes the guilt of our sin forever.

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, Hebrews 10:11–12 (ESV)

These two verses are a series of contrasts between how the old covenant handled our sin and how the new covenant with Jesus handles our sin. In the old

covenant, the priests were constantly offering the same sacrifices which could never take away sin. They only covered sin. In contrast, Jesus offered one single sacrifice for sin that didn't cover sin but actually paid for all sin. Jesus' one sacrifice of himself for sin was enough to pay for all sin for all time.

This is why during the old covenant, in the temple the one piece of furniture you did not find was a chair. The reason there was no chair is because under the old covenant, a priest's work was never done. The priests never sat down. The priests were constantly making sacrifices for sin from dawn to dusk. There were no coffee breaks.

While there was no chair in the temple because the work was never done and it was only a figurative covering for sin, Jesus has sat down at the right hand of God the Father because he actually paid for sin. His one sacrifice paid for all sin for all time, forever. His work is done. All our sin, guilt, and shame is taken away.

Contrast those two systems. Would anybody want to remain under the old covenant which was constant work to only cover sin instead of the new covenant where all the work is done? Our sin is now covered for all eternity by Jesus. How could God improve upon this? Why more could God do for us to take care of the problem of sin than he has already done for us? This is why we celebrate Christmas and what Jesus came to do.

Jesus' death for sin destroyed the enemy.

...he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. Hebrews 10:12-13 (ESV)

The sacrifices in the Old Testament didn't do a thing to get rid of Satan. They didn't dent his armor. When Jesus died on the cross he dealt a death blow to Satan and God's enemies. Jesus destroyed the one who has the power of death by destroying the weapon of death. Speaking of Jesus, Paul said this to the Colossians about how Jesus destroyed God's demonic enemies.

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Colossians 2:15 (ESV)

The rulers and authorities are the powerful fallen angels called demons. On the cross, Jesus destroyed their power. He disarmed them and rendered them helpless against Jesus' might.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil... Hebrews 2:14 (ESV)

Jesus's death and resurrection also destroyed Satan, who has the power of death. We can picture Satan and his demonic hordes at work. They knew Jesus had united himself permanently with human flesh. The one who created everything had become a human being. Satan saw humanity as Christ's great weakness, his fatal flaw. If Satan could just kill Jesus, he would destroy the Son of God and be in victory over him. Death is the greatest weapon Satan has at his disposal. Satan used his greatest weapon against Jesus to take his life. You and I know what happened. Jesus went into death then burst out the other side of death rising to new life to be the firstborn of God's new creation. In so doing, Jesus destroyed Satan's greatest weapon, the weapon of death. All the demons are impotent against Jesus and Satan is destroyed. His great weapon of death proved useless against Jesus.

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1 Corinthians 2:8 (ESV)

Now that Jesus has conquered Satan and the fallen angels, what is he doing?

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Psalm 110:1 (ESV)

Right now it is not a question of who has won the victory. It is only a matter of time until the full installment of Christ's victory is applied to our lives and this world.

This reminds me of Hiroo Onoda. Some of you may have heard of him. World War II ended in 1945. He was a Japanese soldier stationed on an island in the Philippines. In 1945, when pamphlets were dropped telling him the war was over and that Japan surrendered, he didn't believe it. He thought it was a trick. For the next 29 years he hid on



that island in the Philippines using it as his jungle outpost and fighting for Japan. His former commanding officer visited him 29 years after the war was over to convince him to surrender. The war was over.

That is what it is like for Satan and his demons at this point. Jesus has conquered them. The war is over. It is only a matter of time until Jesus finishes mopping up the resistance and all his enemies are made a footstool for his feet. Satan and his demons keep on fighting even though they know their defeat is certain. The victory is ours through Jesus.

The old covenant didn't do anything to stop the power of Satan and his demonic horde. Under the new covenant, Satan, demons, death, and all the

powers of darkness are rendered helpless in front of Jesus. How much better can it get than the sacrifice of Christ? What better good news could God give us.?

Jesus' death for our sin doesn't just perfect us before God forever, it is perfects us now.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10:14 (ESV)

The writer of Hebrews returned to his theme. Jesus' death is one single offering that perfects us for all time. No matter what happens in life, no matter how much we fail, no matter how much we sin, the good news is when God looks at us, because of how completely Jesus paid for sin, we are seen as completely perfect by God forever.

While we are still in this life, we struggle with sin. Here is the good news. The victory over sin by Jesus through his death and resurrection is so complete that it doesn't just effect our status before God, it frees us from the power of sin here and now. It is by our faith in the death of Jesus that we are being sanctified, that is, being made holy here and now.

If you are struggling with sin this morning, the answer to victory over sin is not trying harder to defeat sin. It is enjoying the victory already won for you by Christ more. The more we enjoy the complete victory over sin already obtained for us by Jesus, the more the power of sin is broken in our lives. The more we enjoy Jesus and his victory over sin, the less we desire sin and its temporary pleasures. The great news is Jesus doesn't just free us from sin before God for eternity. He frees us from the power of sin today!

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (ESV)

Jesus' death for our sin fulfills the promise of the new covenant.

And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Hebrews 10:15–18 (ESV)

The writer of Hebrew turned to Jeremiah 31, where the Holy Spirit inspired Jeremiah to write about a day in the future where God would make a new covenant with his people, a completely new way of relating to us. What would it be like when the new covenant came? Instead of God's laws being written on tablets of stone, like the Ten Commandments, they would be written on people's hearts because the Holy Spirit would dwell inside people, guiding them into right and away from wrong. The Holy Spirit also said through Jeremiah that when the new covenant came people would know it had arrived because in that time God would remember people's sins and lawless deeds no more. The reason God would remember people's sins and lawless deeds no more in the new covenant is because they would all be completely and totally forgiven by Jesus. My friends, the new covenant is here! Jesus has come! The old covenant system with its sacrifices are now. That is why we no longer sacrifice animals. We have Jesus. God's final solution to the problem of sin.

Conclusion

We have such good news to celebrate at Christmas. We used to be under an old system of relating to God with animal sacrifices that were just a picture of

what it would take to handle sin. Animals sacrifices never took away our sin so shame and guilt persisted. Nobody was able to approach God in the Holy of Holies.

Then we had Christmas. Jesus came.

He came to fulfill what was God the Father's plan from eternity past. He came to be the final solution for sin. He came to fulfill all the Old Testament shadows that pointed to him. Jesus took on flesh to be the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice for sin that would cover all sin for all time of those who place their faith and trust in him. His sacrifice was so great it replaced the entire Old Testament sacrificial system. It was so great that Jesus took away all our sin, all our guilt, and all our shame. Jesus' sacrifice was so great he makes us perfect before God forever. Jesus' sacrifice was so great that he doesn't just make us holy before God forever but his sacrifice for sin makes us holy here and now. Jesus' sacrifice was so great he disarmed Satan and all the fallen angels. He destroyed the power of death. *My friends, what else could God do for us to take care of our sin problem other than what he has already done for us through Jesus?*

This Christmas, may your heart overflow with gratitude to Jesus as we do not slaughter lambs but instead open presents and are reminded of the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's own son.



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