

The Eternal Perfection of the Once for All Offering

Hebrews 7:25-28

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“Sacrificed for their sins, once-for-all.” I want this phrase to grip us this morning with the mighty hand of its truth. What Jesus did in His earthly death and resurrection was a once-for-all sacrifice for sin. It was sufficient and final and eternal. His sacrifice on Calvary was the great reality which had cast its shadow in the Old Testament sacrifice. So the author of Hebrews keeps asking us, “If this is the final, sufficient and superior sacrifice, why are you returning to the weak and powerless shadows?”

But isn't this what we all do? Isn't this our nature? Don't we see this in our fallen world? Let me explain. We are always trying to do things right and it is never perfect and it is never finished. We wake up everyday carrying out the same routine and each day runs into the next. You clean your house, and it may not have been perfect, but wait a day and it will look like you didn't touch a thing. You repair the brakes on the car but now you need new tires. You do the laundry in your home day after day, week after week and it never seems to end. And even if you are able to reach that victorious moment when the last load has been removed, dried, folded, and put away, you are not actually done, because you look down and see very clothes you are wearing are now dirty.

It seems futile. It seems never ending and it's never perfect. And not only do we experience this in our daily activities but we see this within ourselves. We feel the repetitive fallenness of our humanity in the sins we constantly battle. Once we seem to have victory in one area of our life, the Lord reveals yet another area of sin.

Imagine this with the Levitical priests, day after day, sacrificing for sins. It never seems to be enough. Tomorrow there will be another sin and another sacrifice. I wonder, did they ever think, “This has got to stop. There has to be a better way. We can't keep doing this forever.” Did they get frustrated in the rote routine of slaughter after slaughter? It seems futile, it is never ending, and it is never perfect. But this is our fallen state. We live in a broken world just as the Levitical priests did and we are broken people just like the Levitical priests were. The old system, the old way, did not fully accomplish what was needed. But this morning we will see there is a new way, a new hope. There is one, who is perfect, who lives forever, and has finished the work for all of us. Let's pray.

Father my words are just that my words. I pray that through Your Holy Spirit this morning that you will give my words life as I proclaim Your words, Your truths. Help us to understand the depth of what Christ accomplished on that cross. We may never fully understand in this life what all was accomplished on that day and on that cross but with Your help will we begin to understand. May we not become rote and routine in our listening and reading of Your Word nor in our preaching of it too. I ask you to bless us this morning through your Word. Amen.

We will begin in verse 23 in chapter 7.

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

His Majestic Purity (v.26)

The priesthood of Jesus is superior because of Jesus' holiness. If Old Testament priests needed cleansing of their own sin, how much more must the perfect high priest be without sin. And this is what we need – this kind of priest.

26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

His Sufficiency

The phrase, “for it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest” is often translated “It is fitting for us to have this kind of priest.” What does that mean? God knew exactly what we needed and He provided that exact priest. He is exactly suited both to the character of God (v.26) and to the need of man (v.27). The perfect mediator. He is the perfection of God, incarnated to the likeness of man and He was tempted in every way, yet never sinned so that He has compassion to give you grace in your time of need and still be your holy mediator before God, every single day until He presents you without blemish to the Father.

What is your need today? Freedom from debt? A new job? A spouse? If you are a child of God, you have already been given what you need and it is in the sacrifice of Christ. I do not know all the hungers of your heart. But this one thing I am absolutely sure of: Jesus our priest meets our need.

His Characteristics

What kind of priest was He? He was the kind of priest that is exactly suited to meet our need because of His characteristics. When you go to apply for a job, they want to know what

qualifications you have for the job in the same way Christ met all of the qualifications to be the perfect high priest between God and His people. First, He had to be holy.

- Holy – Here is that inner quality and power of God’s central attribute. Holiness could not be merely added to Him like one adds clothes such as Aaron had to do on the Day of Atonement to enter the holy of holies. Holiness had to be His skin, and bones and blood. This was not holiness in theory or in prospect or in hope. It was who He was, He was holy. We know that this was so for even at His birth, Mary was told that He would be “that holy one conceived in her.”
- Innocent – He must also be blameless, not guilty of any charge against Him. If holiness is His internal character, then blamelessness is His outward conduct. Many may be ready to charge Him with wrongdoing, but investigation reveals that what He was on the inside, holy, directed His every choice He made on the outside to actually glorify God. He alone never fell short of the glory of God!
- undefiled – Our sufficient priest must live among sinful humanity, but must not be contaminated by contact with it. Imagine what it was like for Jesus to walk among sinful men and women and children as the holy and blameless one. All of His rubbing shoulders with sinful humanity did not defile or contaminate or corrupt Him. Sin did not rub off on Him.
- Separate – The phrase here refers to His not being connected with their depravity. It does not mean that Jesus lived in isolation from sinful people. It is quite evident from the Gospel records that Jesus spent a lot of time with sinners. What this means is that Jesus was not connected to the root of depravity inherited from Adam. Being virgin born, He is set apart from the whole of men and women born in sin. Therefore His priesthood is superior to that of the Levites.
- Exalted – Finally, our sufficient priest must have God’s seal of approval. Whenever you purchase something authentic you want proof, a stamp, a letter, a sticker, that claims it’s authenticity. This “seal of approval” was stamped on the Son in His resurrection and ascension and exaltation.

As one author put, “Jesus is everything we are not, so that He can stand before God on our behalf.”

His Final Sacrifice (v.27)

The priesthood of Jesus is superior because of Jesus’ sacrifice. If the Old Testament sacrifices had to be without spot or blemish, how much more must the final sacrifice be utterly perfect. Verse 26 speaks of what we need and verse 27 speaks of what Jesus did not need.

²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

How It Is Different

We must understand how Jesus' sacrifice is different from the Old Testament. This difference also sets it apart from all other religious sacrifices as well. Do not think that this is merely a message for Jews. No beloved, this is a message for pagans, for anyone who brings anything anytime in anyway to gain access to God and to gain His favor other than the final and sufficient work of Christ.

It may be daily or weekly or monthly or only at Christmas and Easter, but there is this sense of coming to God at this time and in this way because God will be pleased that I am here. Well, I have bad news for you. If you are even here this morning to draw near to God on any other grounds than the final sacrifice of Jesus, you may be near geographically but you are still distant spiritually. So how is Jesus sacrifice different from the Levitical priests?

- It is different in that it is not daily. All systems of religion including the Old Testament bring sacrifices on some regular basis. It is something we read in the Scriptures. And for many even in our day and time, people still try to do. Are there routines, habits, or actions that if you do not get to do routinely that you feel distant from God? Quit using those as your peace and security in your relationship with Him. This kind of religion is weak and wearying. What brings you near to the Father at any point in the day or night is that Jesus' one sacrifice of Himself put an utter end to all other sacrificing. May God be pleased to open eyes to see and hearts to feel and wills to embrace this saving truth. Jesus' sacrifice is not and cannot be, daily.
- It is different in that it is not for Himself. All of us know that all men we know have erred and sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. In the Old Testament, when the High Priest came on the annual Day of Atonement to sacrifice for sin, he had to offer sacrifice first for his own sin so that his offering up of the sacrifice for the nation could be accepted and he could enter the holy of holies. But this is not so with Jesus. When He was sacrificed, the sin He bore was not His own. He had none. He could have walked into the very presence of the Father without sacrificing anything. But He chose differently. He chose to sacrifice Himself for His elect people. Their sins were rolled on Him and He was sacrificed on the cross as our sin-bearer.

So these blessed, saving truths show us how the sacrifice of Jesus is sufficient and superior: not daily and not for Himself.

How It Is Final

There are phrases that uniquely identify products. We associate (and advertising makes sure that this is so) these phrases with these products. We all know what "the real thing" is and who can "save you 15% or more on car insurance." So we must always associate this phrase with the cross: "The once-for-all sacrifice." Now be clear about this once-for-all. It does not mean "once for everybody." What it does mean is "once for ever never to have to be done again." It is

final, finished, and done. No priest has since nor ever can again offer sacrifice for our sins. As a believer, this is what you have banked your soul on for eternity - the finished work of Jesus.

Jesus' offering of Himself is final and ultimately shows us what man's problem really is. Man's problem is sin. We tend to think that man's problems are social, emotional and psychological in nature. Man is lonely, alienated, unfulfilled, sick, searching for meaning, for hope, for purpose. While these all may be true, they are only symptoms and not the root of the problem. Jesus came to deal with the root of the problem - sin. Therefore, the consequences of sin are dealt with in the process of our sanctification. It's like this, you have chest pain. Giving you pain medicine won't solve the root problem. The root of the problem is blood is being restricted or stopped from flowing to a part of your heart. Pain medicine won't solve the problem but a stent will. And so men and women every day are searching for ways to medicate themselves through life, treating the symptoms but never reaching the root of their issue - sin. Beloved, Jesus is all we need. He is our sinless sacrifice. Rest your soul in Him.

His Eternal Appointment(v.28)

Jesus is superior as our priest because of His sinlessness, because of His sufficient and final sacrifice and because of His appointment. He was appointed as a Son. This sentence shows us two important truths about His eternal appointment as our priest

²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The Weakness of Men

We have already seen that men are weak. They are weak in their sin. And yet the Law appoints them as priests. In the shadow lands of the Old Testament, this is what was done as a pointer to that which was to come. We are not meant to return to them. It is only when we trust and embrace and obey Him in faith that those Old Testament sacrifices and New Testament ordinances serve in the way God ordained.

The Perfection of the Son

What the Law could not do, God did in the accompanying of His New Covenant with an oath. He appointed His Son as the final High Priest who would offer the final sacrifice. He was the perfect Son. And God's oath made Him a priest. We then truly honor Christ and glorify Him when we lean with all our trust on Him.

Reflect and Respond

I invite you today in this moment to do that. Trust and treasure the One who offered Himself as the once-for-all final sacrifice for your sin. Reflect on your works. If your works or service for this church or to God are a burden, then you have skewed your view of your salvation. You may be believing those services or actions are earning or proving your love for the Savior. Repent from trusting in those actions. We should ask ourselves why we are doing what we are doing but also remember we serve because of what has been done for us.

When you are in the monotony of the daily grind in the coming weeks, or in the daily struggle with sin, let this message be a reminder to you, these struggles will soon come to an end. Heaven will not be this way. One day there will be a time when all things will be finished, all things new, and perfect. There will be a time when all will be complete, forever. And as you think on these things, our future hope, remember that it was secured for us by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus, our Saviour.

³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

In Jesus very own words, "It is finished." He knew the weight of those words at that very moment. He is the perfect Lamb of God and He is your High Priest interceding for you. Stop working, start believing, and begin rejoicing in the finality of the sinless and sufficient once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.