

Sunday October 15th sermon: "It's Christ's Sacrifice, or Wrath! The God of All Comforts (Pt 37)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Hebrews 10:19-31; Hebrews 12:18-29

God comforts us by the oath He made to Christ, appointing Him our high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Being made perfect by Christ's sacrifice, and having our High Priest in the Holiest place, where He sprinkled His Own blood for our sins, we are commanded to enter with boldness into that holy place before our God!

But there remain false priests, and blasphemous sacrifices, that Christ has done away with. There are still many who defy Christ, when He has told us that all of the other sacrifices for the forgiveness of sin have been done away with.

The only sacrifice is Christ upon the cross, and the only priest is Christ before the throne of Heaven for us!

If anybody goes back to the animal sacrifices, there is still no more offering for sin. Christ made the last such offering, and animal sacrifices have been abolished for all time. Turning back from Christ means walking away from the only sacrifice.

Those who abandon the Savior face horrible wrath for treading Christ underfoot, and counting the blood of the new covenant as an unholy thing.

Hebrews makes an urgent appeal, to recall the faith of former days, in the face of persecution and danger. The promises in Christ may be invisible to us in this life, but we embrace them by faith, believing God will keep His promises to us.

Hebrews provides many historic instances of just men trusting in God's promises, even though most of them never received them in this life. That proves God's word, that "the just shall live by faith."

These examples are encouragements to trust in the promises of Jesus, by the sacrifice of Jesus, and to continue on with Christ and His saints to the end.

The first example of Abel is typical: he offered the sacrifice that God required of him, an animal slain, to point to the promise of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice that was to come.

A final contrast is provided in Hebrews 12, between the old covenant and the New Covenant.

The old covenant portended wrath and judgment. The confrontation of the people by God on the mountain produced horrible fear in everyone. The law could not save, but only condemn the people, who could not keep it. Who should want to go back to that, with no peace and no salvation at all?

But the reality of the New Covenant, received NOW by faith in Christ, is the heavenly Jerusalem, spiritual Zion! We are come to that glorious place even now, with Christ as our high priest there!

We are even now in the congregation of the Firstborn, we are written down in heaven NOW, we have come with boldness before God the judge NOW by the blood of Jesus, we are joined NOW with the spirits of just men made perfect by Christ's sacrifice!

Most glorious of all, we have come to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the sprinkling of His Own blood which has taken away our sins and made us perfect!

Christ's blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel's animal sacrifice. The blood of Abel's sacrifice could never take away his sin. It

only pointed to the blood of the New Covenant, Christ's blood of sprinkling, that obtained a final redemption, a complete forgiveness, and the perfection of all who trust in Jesus.

Hebrews exhorts believers not to walk away from Christ, but to have faith in the promises, and understand the privileged place we occupy NOW in spiritual Zion.

Even as Cain was angry that his sacrifice was not accepted by God, so too the Jews grew angry that their animal sacrifices were no longer delightful to God.

But the sacrifice of Jesus is a sweet-smelling savor to God, and speaks better things than the sacrifice of Abel.

There is a final warning given in Hebrews 12: there is wrath to all those who do not heed the voice of Christ, Who speaks now from heaven itself. It is by Christ that God has spoken to us, and He has promised, from olden times, to overthrow all that which displeases Him.

He has declared that God does not delight in any sacrifice other than Christ's alone, which is the only forgiveness of sin. Those who trust in Christ alone will enter into His kingdom which cannot be moved.

Jesus gave us a foretaste of the glory of His kingdom, when He raised Lazarus from the grave. He revealed to Martha that glorious truth, that He Himself is the resurrection and the life, and whoever believes in Him shall never die.

It is a promise whose power was wrought at Calvary for us, when our sins were forgiven by the work of our great high priest there.

Nothing under the old covenant could compare, and those who go back to other sacrifices and other priests, go only to their doom.

We must lay hold of Jesus only! Only His blood of sprinkling washes us clean, and justifies all who believe in Him.

All the terrors of the law and of God's wrath fell on Jesus, as our great high priest. There is no wrath left for those who trust in Him.

He is our resurrection and our life, and in Christ, in the end, we shall never die.

We love the words of that glorious hymn by Augustus Toplady:

A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with God's righteousness on,
My person and off'ring to bring.
The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.

The work which His goodness began
The arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is yea and amen,
And never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now,
Not all things below or above,
Can make Him His purpose forgo,
Or sever my soul from His love.

My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace;
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is giv'n;
More happy, but not more secure,
The souls of the blessed in heav'n.