

The High Priest of Our Confession: 6

Jesus' Ministry Is Based On A Better Sacrifice

Hebrews 5, 7-10

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” **Hebrews 4.14**

Over the last few weeks we have been studying the ministry of Jesus: The High Priest of Our Confession.

The ministry of Jesus is more excellent because:

- ⤴ it is of a better order
- ⤴ it is under a better covenant
- ⤴ it is administered in a better sanctuary
- ⤴ all made possible because of a better sacrifice.

Hebrews 10.1-39

Last time I concluded with the thought that the High Priestly ministry of Jesus is better because it is based on a completed sacrifice. We also saw that the New Covenant could only be ratified by the death of the testator. It is the death of Jesus that makes all the difference where the New Covenant is concerned. Jesus blood was not like the blood of another animal. Jesus blood was offered ONCE for ALL – there is no longer any need for annual sacrifices.

The writer to the Hebrews gives us three reasons in Chapter 10 why the sacrifice of Jesus is far better than those under the Old Covenant:

- It takes away sin (vs1-10)
- It need never be repeated (vs11-18)
- It opens the way to God (vs19-39)

(v1-10) It Takes Away Sin

The OT sacrifices were ineffective to take away sin (vs1-4)

Under the Old Covenant the sacrifices were just shadows and types of the good things to come- the law had only the shadow not the substance.

They were continually repeated every year showing us that they could never take away sin - they were ineffective to '*make perfect*'.

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins” (v2)

The apostle argues (v2) that if they were effective to deal with sin then they would have ceased to be offered.

These annual animal sacrifices served as a reminder of sin – why?, because it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

Jesus' sacrifice is very effective to remove and cleanse us from sin (vs5-20)

For the majority of the rest of the chapter the apostle shows us that Jesus' sacrifice is far better as it did what the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were unable to do.

He writes , quoting Psalm 40.6-8, that it was never really part of God's will to receive burnt offerings for sin, 'He had no pleasure in it' (vs8-9)

Jesus came saying 'I have come to do Your will O God' – it is that will of God that sanctifies us through the sacrifice of Jesus Himself (v10).

When we read the prophecy of **Isaiah 53** we see that it says (v10-11) 'it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.. He shall bear their iniquities'.

Hebrews & Psalms tell us that God got no pleasure in sacrifices and offerings because they were ineffective to change hearts and lives – but He got pleasure in the sacrifice of Jesus, because His sacrifice sanctifies us and 'cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God' (Hebrews 9.14)

When Jesus came He took away the first that He may establish the second – He did away with the sacrifices that the law demanded so that He could offer ONCE for ALL His own body.

(vs11-18) It Need Never Be Repeated

Let us look at the contrasts of the next few verses:

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins” (v11)

Under the Old Covenant the priests stood daily offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins

“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.” (v12-13)
but Jesus has sat down after offering one sacrifice just once, which perfects forever those who are being sanctified

With the sacrifice of Jesus there is remission of sin

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” Matthew 26.28

remission – this means to 'forgive, release, send away, dismiss'.

On the Day Atonement the sins of the people were confessed over the scapegoat and it was sent away into the wilderness. This is what Jesus did with our sins, they were laid on Him and sent away.

God chooses not to remember any more our sins and lawless deeds – they are forgiven and not brought up again. If our sins are then sent away and forgiven and there no longer remains any need for an offering for sin – it need never be repeated.

(vs19-39) It Opens The Way To God

The sacrifice of Jesus rent the veil of the Temple – this kept man from approaching God. Now full access to God is made available.

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus” (vs19) tells us that we can now enter the Holiest Place with boldness (lit. *freedom of speech*) because of the blood of Jesus.

Under the New Covenant, because of this better sacrifice, we can come boldly into the very presence of God – only the High Priest could do this under the Old Covenant and then only once a year for a very short while.

This is why He is High Priest of our confession – we can come into His presence freely confessing and proclaiming the promises of the Covenant

Listed in these verses are three royal invitations which we have because of this better sacrifice:

Let us draw near with a true heart (v22) – this drawing near is only made possible because of the blood of Jesus. Sin cannot come into His presence – sin has been removed from us and we can draw near with boldness in full assurance of faith.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope (v23) – We can come boldly and make our confession, bring our petitions, knowing that we stand not in our own merit but in the completed sacrifice of Jesus our Great High Priest. He who promised is faithful not only to cleanse us from all unrighteousness but grant our petitions and prayers.

Let us consider one another (v24) – When we come into the presence of God, let us encourage one another and exhort one another. We should be an example so that others themselves come along with us. We encourage each other by not forsaking to gather together. The boldness we have in heaven ought to lead to spiritual growth on earth.

The sacrifice of Jesus has purchased for us a living relationship and fellowship not just with God but one another – that's why we are exhorted to '**not forsake the assembling of ourselves together**' (v25). The Old Covenant worshipper did not enjoy such benefits, they could only come into the courtyards but we can enter right into the Holiest place

Final Warning

The last few verses of the chapter warn us against wilful sin. This is a warning to Christian believers not the lost. It is warning us of an unworthy attitude towards the completed work of redemption

Careless Christians start to drift through neglect; then they doubt the Word, then they grow cold toward the Word; the next step is deliberately sinning and despising their spiritual heritage.

We could translate verse 26 as “*for if we willingly go on sinning after we have known God's grace and forgiveness*” - verse 29 sheds some light on what it means to wilfully sin. It is not referring to a sin committed once or even twice. It is referring to someone who continues to live sinful lives, knowing it to be wrong.

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

Verse 29 states that it is to trample the blood sacrifice of Jesus underfoot – to despise the death of Jesus and insult the Holy Spirit of grace.

Oh what a sacrifice, how great, how splendid it is