

## EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

### Message #21

### Hebrews 10:11-18

You and I live in a shallow world that tries to say if you dream it and work hard for it, you can achieve it. Some have called this the American dream. It is a bunch of boloney because we all have limitations, and just because we can dream it does not mean we can accomplish it.

For example, every competitor in the Olympics dreams about winning a gold medal. Every marathon runner that earns a spot on the Olympic team trains to do just that. But on race day all but one have their dreams shattered. There is much more to it than a dream. You could dream about learning and speaking all languages of the world, but I don't care how much of a scholar you are, or how much of a brilliant mind you have, you won't make it.

But the most dangerous place where this idea, if you dream it and work hard for it you can make it, is seen is when it comes to a relationship with God. Most people of this world believe if they try to be good and do good things they will make it to heaven. God's Word says "No way."

**THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF THE O.T. PRIESTS PROVES THAT CHRIST'S SACRIFICIAL WORK FOR OUR SINS IS THE ONLY SACRIFICE THAT CAN GIVE US A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY GOD AND ACCESS TO THE HOLY GOD.**

I don't care what work you do or how many O.T. laws you try to apply, you will not have one bit of access to God due to any of this. This book of Hebrews forces us to look straight at Jesus Christ. There are four main theological points developed in these verses:

**THEOLOGICAL POINT #1** – The priestly ministry of the O.T. priests. **10:11**

There are three critical facts brought out about the O.T. priests in this one verse:

**Fact #1** - Every O.T. priest stands. **10:11a**

No O.T. priest could sit down when in the confines of the tabernacle. In fact, standing was one of the prerequisites of priestly service (Deuteronomy 18:5). There were no chairs that were part of the designed furniture. It was a place of constant action. There was smoke, blood, and washings. There was no time to sit down and there was no place for them to sit down. This point is critical to understanding that the work of the O.T. priest was never finished.

**Fact #2** - Every O.T. priest had to minister offerings and sacrifices daily. **10:11b**

Over and over again sacrifices had to be repeatedly offered. Peter O'Brien said "multiple sacrifices were offered repeatedly" (*Hebrews*, p. 355). Time after time he had to offer the same kinds of sacrifices. Not only did they have to keep offering the offerings day after day, but they had to offer the same sacrifices over and over again. Think of the amount of offerings these priests had to offer - morning, afternoon, and evening.

Not one of those sacrifices could take care of the sin issue.

**Fact #3** - Every O.T. priest offered sacrifices that could never take away sins. **10:11c**

The Greek is strong here; there is no possible way that any of those sacrifices could take away sin. The verb “take away” (περιαιρεω) is rare. The verb means to take something away entirely (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 354). The tense is aorist, so the meaning is there was no possibility at any point of time that any sacrifice offered by an O.T. priest could take sin entirely away.

Any forgiveness that one of these priests could offer through the animal sacrifices was short lived. There was no such thing as a final sacrifice for sin. The Levitical system was a system of forgiveness that was, as Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said, “very short term” (*Hebrews 10:11-18*, p. 3).

**There was no such thing as final and full forgiveness of sins in the O.T.** Plus even the forgiveness that does show up in the O.T. was very limited. For example, one could have their sins somewhat covered if he did not sin intentionally. However, if one sinned intentionally there was no chance for full and final forgiveness.

There were some cases in the O.T. when a person like David could see beyond the Levitical system and would appeal to the grace and mercy of God for forgiveness. One of the great examples of this is David’s prayer in Psalm 51. David knew there was no sacrifice that he could possibly offer that could cause him to be forgiven of his sin, so he appealed to the grace and mercy of God.

**THEOLOGICAL POINT #2** – The priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. **10:12-13**

Notice **verse 12** begins with a sharp contrasting conjunction “but” (δε). In sharp contrast to the O.T. priests and their ministries, we now come to the One who could accomplish everything.

We may recall that Jesus Christ is a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. What this means is that His priestly ministry is totally distinct from the O.T. Aaronic priestly ministry. In these two verses are two critical facts:

**Fact #1** - Jesus Christ is a Priest who offered one sacrifice for sins for all time. **10:12a**

Notice the offering was of Himself for sin and it was for all time. Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice that was good forever in being able to remove sin entirely.

**Fact #2** - Jesus Christ is a priest who sat down at the right hand of God. **10:12b-13**

Think about this for a moment, when a high priest would go into the Holy of Holies, he went in there on pins and needles hoping he would survive and not die. He would never think of sitting down because that would be like saying, “I am perfectly at home here in the presence of God.” No sinful human O.T. priest would dare even think that way. Jesus Christ feels perfectly at home in heaven.

He is sitting in heaven in the presence of God at His right hand. His work is complete. Not only has Jesus Christ sat down, and not only has He sat down in the presence of God, He has sat down at the right hand of God.

No O.T. priest would even think in these terms. No O.T. priest could sit down in the presence of God for two reasons: 1) He was sinful; and 2) His work was never finished. Jesus Christ can sit down because He is perfect and He finished His perfect work.

What this means is that there is nothing left for Him to do in regard to sin and salvation and sanctification. He can now sit in heaven and just wait for the finale when all His enemies will be crushed under His feet as is predicted in Psalm 110:1.

The work of Jesus Christ as Priest is so complete that He now sits at the right hand of God waiting for the time until all His enemies will be made His footstool.

**THEOLOGICAL POINT #3** – The Priestly sacrifice of Jesus Christ is perfect and eternal .  
**10:14**

The sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ one time is perfect . It perfects forever those who are sanctified. What this means is that by one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers are set apart to God forever. They cannot lose this status and there is no need of some other sacrifice.

Through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, everyone who believes is “eternally qualified for access” to God. The moment one believes on Jesus Christ, he is instantly a set apart saint. If you are a believer you are a saint. You are a true saint made so by the work of Jesus Christ.

Now if you are a believer you have been set apart to God forever. You have been perfected forever. **This is a key point because you are not set apart just to be saved so you don’t go to hell. You are set apart in perfection so you may have access to God (Heb. 10:19).** The result of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is that we are set apart for access to God and to worship. God expects this of us and apparently some did not get this point because they were forsaking themselves from gathering together (Heb. 10:25).

We have not just been saved so we won’t go to hell. We have been saved to have access to a Holy God. Notice the text says we have been “perfected for all time.” This is a forever perfection which we cannot lose. There is no such thing as being saved one day and being lost another day. There is no such thing as losing your salvation because you failed. If you believe in Jesus Christ you are perfected forever and have been set apart and have access to God.

**THEOLOGICAL POINT #4** – The Priestly work of Jesus Christ produces the confirming ministry of the Holy Spirit. **10:15-18**

Now we may observe that in this section of Hebrews is a lengthy quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34. The ultimate fulfillment of this perfect sanctifying work of Jesus Christ will be when the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled, when Jesus Christ is reigning on this earth.

When the writer uses this quote to connect us to the Holy Spirit, we learn that the Holy Spirit confirms the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in our behalf through the Scriptures. Dr. S. L. Johnson said this specific ministry of the Holy Spirit is not so much to the heart as to the word (*Ibid.*, p. 5). As we search the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit confirms truth about our relationship to God and we may also notice that the writer includes himself by use of the pronoun “us” (**verse 15**).

The Levitical system was a system that could never give anyone the peace that they were forever right with God. The Levitical system could never give any the peace that all of their sins were gone. But God said I can and will give My peace because I will give every believer My Holy Spirit. As believers carefully study the Bible, they will begin to have the assurance of their status with God which will be produced by the Holy Spirit.

No O.T. priest could give the assurance concerning sin that the Holy Spirit gives concerning the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit confirms three main realities:

**Confirmed Reality #1** - The Holy Spirit confirms the covenant reality that one day we will have a perfect heart and mind . **10:16**

There will come a day when our hearts and minds understand and apply Scriptures in a new way. For the believer now, spiritual progress is a struggle and a war. We are like Paul at times who know what we should do but just don't do it. That will all change one day in the future (notice the time is futuristic, "I will").

We have been promised a day when God's Word will be the constant reality of our minds and hearts. There will come a day in which we will never struggle with the flesh again. Our hearts and minds will understand the Word and apply the Word.

From a practical perspective, once the Holy Spirit has taken up residency in us, there ought to be a new desire to know God's Word in a very serious and systematic way.

**Confirmed Reality #2** - The Holy Spirit confirms the reality that one day God will not remember our sins and lawless works. **10:17**

Over and over again, Hebrews brings up the fact that having access to God means sin is gone. There will come a day when God will never again remember our sins or lawbreaking works.

The writer of Hebrews is not simply speaking here of God having a mere act of lack of memory. He is speaking of a volitional decision of God to never remember our sins and lawless works ever again because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

There is an old saying which says "He who falls into sin is a human; he who grieves at sin is a saint; he who boasts about sin is a devil; He who forgives sin and forgets sin is God."

**Confirmed Reality #3** - The Holy Spirit confirms that we have such forgiveness in Jesus Christ that there is no other offering necessary. **10:18**

This is the climactic statement of the paragraph - this kind of forgiveness of sins that God gives because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ means there is no longer any other offering for sin.

If God never remembers condemnatory sin because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there is no need for any other offering ever. God is not looking for any other sacrifice.

This point shuts the door to the Roman Catholic heresy of purgatory, which says by additional sacrifices you can get a person into heaven. This shuts the door on your works and your penance. We do not need to add one thing to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because through Him we have complete access to God.

There are many Protestant churches who think that one of the ways they really add to their relationship with God is through their confessions and raising hands and going forward. Years ago in the United States this business of going forward in a church to make some public confession was presented as a means of finding forgiveness and gaining access to God.

Well I tell you on the basis of this book of Hebrews that this is false. **Access to God is through Jesus Christ and Christ alone. Salvation is granted to us on the basis of what Christ did, not on the basis of what we do. It is by pure grace. The moment you believe in Jesus Christ you have complete access to God.**

There is no more offering for sin. Jesus Christ accomplished everything. We don't need to do one thing except believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

George Guthrie, a professor of Greek Exegesis at a seminary, told the story of a woman he knew of in Brazil whose name was Dona. Dona had taken in a little girl named Carmelita who was seven years old and gave her a home. The little girl's mother was a prostitute and she didn't know who her father even was. So Dona took in this little girl and loved her and raised her. Twenty years later Dona was in a car accident and was killed. The night before the funeral after almost everyone had left the funeral home, Carmelita sat by the casket weeping and then she leaned over the casket and said, "Thank you, thank you." Dona reached out to that little girl in pure grace. She gave her clothes, food and love when the little girl had nothing to offer at all. All Carmelita could say was "thank you."

That is exactly what God does for us when we believe on Jesus Christ. He puts us into His family and in pure grace He gives us total access to His riches. There was nothing in us that deserved this and God did this for us when we had nothing to offer. All we really are left to do is say "Thank you!"