

Redemption Accomplished

Hebrews 9:15-22

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We turn again this morning to the Book of Hebrews as we continue. So by way of introduction, I want to let you know that we will be completing chapter 9 and 10 of Hebrews prior to the summer break. And then during the summer, we will go into a summer series that will prepare us for a return to Hebrews in September. And it is an opportunity for us to go deeper in the summer with some of the underlying narratives throughout Scripture that will lead us back to Hebrews 11, what is called the Hall of Faith. But last Sunday, this Sunday, and next, we've decided that we are going to take a slower approach to Hebrews 9—not because of its length, but because of its depth. The depth which it goes into with regard to the work of Christ and his work on the cross.

Last week we looked at the ways in which the Old Testament through God's design built a tent of the Holy of Holies, and then the Most Holy Place, and then outside of the tent where the sacrifices were offered, and the work of the high priest, and how Christ in his work on the cross and his ascension and his work as high priest in the Most Holy Place that is not made by human hands but is at the right hand of God the Father is the one who is the perfect and forever sacrifice for his people. And so this week we go a little bit further in looking at the nature of redemption. And so there is a great book by John Murray called *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. So this week is redemption accomplished. Next week is redemption applied. Not that it won't be today, but you get the idea in terms of theme, as we look at these verses. And together, Hebrews 9:15-22.

But before I read it, I want to encourage you, to ask you to go with me with your imagination open, with your hearts wide open, to see in greater detail the beauty of Christ. What do I mean? The gospel of Jesus Christ and his work on the cross is irreducible. Although in recognizing its irreducibility, we oftentimes simplify the gospel in such a way, not intentionally, but that in some ways robs it of its complexity, its beauty. And therefore, we become impoverished in our nourishment from the gospel—not because we mean to, but because in an effort to make it clear, at times we reduce it to too simple a formula. And how that in some ways distorts our understanding of who the Father is and who Christ is. And let me say, at the very basis of the gospel, what is the motivation for the cross? If we are not careful, we reduce the gospel in such a way that we miss the motivation for the cross. And if we miss the motivation for the cross, it robs us of the great nourishment of the grace of God. So I want you to see it in its multidimensional form. We do so by looking at these verses. And so please listen or read along as you can see it on the screens before you or if you brought your Bible.

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under

the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. [ESV]

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Will you pray with me?

Now, Heavenly Father, we ask that you by the power and presence of your Holy Spirit will open our eyes that we would see wondrous things in your Word. And may it be the finest meal that we could ever feast on. May it change us as a people. May it encourage us spiritually. May it transform the way in which we understand our relationship with you. May it also transform our experience of our relationship with you. Help us to see the beauty of Christ and the accomplishment of redemption. Help the teacher. In Jesus' name. Amen.

So you see in your outline, we have the will and blood sacrifice. Last week we looked at the actual tent and the design of the tent, the architecture of the tent, the importance of the tent of meeting where God had instructed Moses and the people had built in their encampment in Gilgal, how they were to worship the Lord, and the sacrifices that were offered there on the day of atonement, not only for intentional sins but specifically for unintentional sins. And one of the things we looked at was though the offering of these sacrifices were effective for the people to be able to experience and know the forgiveness of sin, the thing which could not take place was the removal of guilt from the conscience. It could not purify the conscience. That could only happen through Christ.

So this week as we look at this text, the preacher of Hebrews goes a little bit deeper to explain why that is and how that is. So we're going to look together at how this redemption is actually accomplished. We do so by looking at this word, "the will." Now, in Greek is pronounced *diatheke*. Now, *diatheke* can be translated as the word "covenant," which we see in this text. But it also is able to be translated as another word which we also see in this text. They are not perfectly synonymous, but rather, one is under the umbrella of the other. So covenant, as we looked at last week, is not simply a legal testament, a legal document, a legal relationship. It is in Biblical understanding—it encapsulates God's loving relationship to say to the people of God, "I will be your God, and you will be my people." It is first and foremost a relationship.

Now, inside this covenant relationship, it has legal details. It has a legal structure. But it never stays there alone. And the word *diatheke* when it is translated as "will" here is giving us the legal structure. And he does this in a way that we can understand and so can his hearers. So let's look at this word "will" as you will see here as it was written in verse 16. For it says again, "For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established." So what he's doing is he's going a little bit deeper into the New Covenant to explain how and in what way this is particularly good news for the people of God. Two aspects you will see in the outline. First speaking of Christ when it says here in verse 16, "For where a will is involved," that is, a document, for our understanding, is given, and in that document is explained all the benefits and all the blessings that will come to those beneficiaries of the one who died. And so he uses the word "will" there.

And so what we see here is when he says this, "the death of the one who made it must be established." So we see that what he's talking about is Christ. Because we see in verse 15, "Therefore, he is the mediator of the New Covenant." That is Christ. So what he's saying here is that Christ is the testator. He is the one who has established the will. He is the one who is bringing it to bear. He is the one who is announcing it. But he is also the ratifier. What does that mean? Notice what it says, "For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive." So Christ is the one who has established the will and its benefits, and the ones who will receive those benefits—he is also the ratifier. He is the one who has died. But here is an important key for us to remember. Deeply embedded in the gospel is this reality. John 6:

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

[John 6:37-40]

So the preacher of Hebrews is saying the will of the one who made it—that is Christ. But what we see is that Christ then says, “But guess what? I only do the will of the one who sent me.” Meaning Christ’s will is the Father’s will. He’s letting us into the Trinitarian economy. This isn’t just Jesus’s work; this is the Father’s work. And then he also speaks of the Holy Spirit in John 14, which tells us that it’s not only the will of the Father, it’s not only the will of Christ, it is also the will of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian economy means they are one God yet three persons having the same purpose, that Jesus is the one who brought about the will of the Father, made it plain. He’s the one who testified to it. But he’s also its ratifier. How can I say that? He says it because Jesus says it. What do I mean by ratifier? He puts it into place. But we might think of the work of Christ. He was crucified. That’s passive. He was crucified. But we recognize, if we remember from the gospel, John says in chapter 10:

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

[John 10:17-18]

Do you hear the active voice? That’s not passive. Yes, others put him on trial. Yes, others put him on the cross. Yes, others gave jeers to him. But they aren’t the ones who took his life. He laid it down himself. Do you see the difference? Jesus is not a reluctant martyr. His life was not stolen from him. Which is why it is an abomination to ever accuse the Jews of being the guilty ones who took Christ’s life, which has been uttered throughout the centuries. Yes, they were the vehicles who were the ones who publicly accused him. Yes, it was the Romans, the Gentiles who allowed it to happen. But we cannot point the finger. We cannot point the finger. For as my favorite musician of all time, BB King, once said the following words: “I was there when they crucified my Lord / I held the scabbard when the soldier drew his sword / I threw the dice when they pierced his side / But I’ve seen love conquer the great divide.”

The reality is it is not one people group. We all, in Adam and Eve, were there when they held the sword that pierced his side. But it was Jesus who put that will into place. He is the one who ratified it. This is important. This is multidimensional—as I spit. I’m excited about it. Because as I dug deeper into it, I began to have my brain explode as I began to see how beautiful is the feet of Christ. Jesus is the one who came by his own will. And he is the one who laid it down.

But not only is he the testator. Not only is he the ratifier. He is also the executor and its guarantee. Because we see, “For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.” And then he goes into the nature of the work of Moses. And yet the reality is, embedded within this, is all the teaching that the preacher of Hebrews has established, that Jesus was a sacrifice. But if he was merely a sacrifice and was not raised from the dead, then all he was, was a martyr. Even if it was by his own choice. But because of the resurrection, and because of his work as high priest which we’ve already established in this book, Jesus, as has already been declared, is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

How is that possible without the resurrection and without the ascension? Which means that Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father, is also the executor of God's will. We've already heard it said. He says, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." How can that be possible if Jesus is still in the grave? But because Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father, all that was established because of redemption, he has brought those who the Father has given unto himself. Because Jesus is the executor. He, by his wounds, by his blood, by his perfect sacrifice, by his purity and righteousness, is now seated at the right hand of the Father, and is also the guarantee that the benefits that come to us who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as he says, "Those who call on my name will receive all the benefits of my will. That is, receive the benefit of my redemption."

Now, what is the will? What are the benefits? Yes, this text mentions, as we will get to in just a moment, that without blood sacrifice there's no forgiveness of sins. So we receive forgiveness of sins. But as I said last week, we still have to deal with this thing. And I wonder if you've wrestled with it. I wonder how you handle it. Some teachers in our day have said publicly within evangelicalism that we must unhitch the faith from the Old Testament. But if you unhitch the Old Testament from our faith, you unhitch the New Testament, too. Because the one book that quotes the Old Testament more than any other is the Book of Hebrews. You can't have the gospel without the Old Testament. And what we find in the Old Testament, as we've already read, is very discomfiting—this idea of blood sacrifice. It's gross. Even as we read, Moses taking the blood of sacrifice mixed with hyssop and sprinkling it onto the people of God—I mean, we can barely enter in a room without sort of antibacterial stuff. And we start hearing about this blood stuff. And we looked at it last week. We think it odd, maybe insane, as 21st century people, how people could do animal sacrifices.

But let's look at this. Because within this text, verses 16 to 19, one of the things we note is—actually, 16 through 22, there are five different references to blood. We have to deal with it. So let's deal with it, as we see it contextualized here. We've already established, but I'll repeat it again, that death is the result of sin. Death entered the world because of the disobedience of our first parents. We have sinful and broken natures. And as a result, we, too, die. So mortality, death, is an enemy, not a friend. It is a thief. But for there to be redemption, then mortality has to be reversed. It has to be dealt with. And in Leviticus 17:11, we hear the words that the life of the flesh is in the blood. So we have to first deal with why, then, blood sacrifice to reverse mortality? It's because there is life in the blood.

What does it mean? That sacrifice of blood is a way of demonstrating that life must be given for life if mortality is to be reversed. Now, you might say, "Well, that's just what you're saying." But we actually operate on this kind of economy all the time. If I came to your house and I took your finest piece of crystal, and I broke it, it's not going to be enough for me to go to Giant and bring, you know, Tupperware pieces to replace what that crystal would have held. I need to replace it. I need to reverse the brokenness by seeking to replace that which was broken. So if life is in the flesh—rather, if life is in the blood, and in our blood and in our flesh we commit sin, therefore blood must be sacrificed.

Now, one of the great church fathers, Saint Anselm, set it up this way. "God is infinite. Therefore, sin against the infinite carries with it infinite guilt. Infinite guilt, therefore, cannot be purged. Infinite guilt cannot be removed by a finite sacrifice," which is why the blood sacrifices of animals could not purge the conscience, could not clean it. It was only temporary, which is why the day of atonement had to be celebrated every year.

So before we go any further, again we have to ask: how is it, then, that my sin against an infinite God therefore carries with it infinite guilt? Again, we actually operate on this kind of economy all the time. Think about it. If I were your friend—and I am, Sandy Sharp, I'm just going to pick you out in the audience—and you were to come to me, and you were to tell me something that is very valuable to you. And you say to me, "Randy, I'm going to share this with you. This is important to me. But you cannot share this with anyone else. This is between you and me." And then I go out, and I go over here, and I

broadcast it with five or six friends. And then you find out that I did that. You would say that I betrayed you. You would say that I'm a traitor.

Now, that has a certain economy to it. It has an economy of scale. It's fairly local, although I can't control where all of that goes. Or if I change the story and I'm gossiping, I can't control where that goes. But again, it has a certain level of scale to it. But if someone is arrested because they sold secrets to a foreign enemy working for the National Security Agency just down the street, what have they done? They've done the same thing. They are a traitor, not different in kind, but different by degree. Therefore, the economy of scale of their guilt has with it a greater economy of consequence. Not because it is functionally a different sin than what I just described to you between me and one person. It's that we recognize that it carries with it greater weight. It takes on a greater corporate nature.

Same is the case with regard to sin in the Bible. Because God made us, if we take the Bible on its own merit, and created us in his image, and wanted us to live in perfect harmony with him, yet we simply said, "We do not want it. We want to go our own way," and we sin against him doing what he says we ought not to do, we therefore have offended an infinite God in infinite holiness. Therefore, our guilt has greater weight. It has a greater economy of scale. And it cannot be removed without a sacrifice on the same scale. This was Anselm's point. One, that sin must be paid for in the same nature. God became man. The human person must be infinite so that his work accomplishes limitless effect. Let me say that again. The human person must be infinite so that his work accomplishes limitless effect. Therefore, God became man and dwelt among us.

Christ was fully God and fully man. Therefore, he was infinite in his person, yet he was in the flesh. And in offering his life as a sacrifice, he accomplishes limitless redemption. We are utterly saved as we call on him by name. Because sin was committed in the flesh, and the life of the flesh is in the blood, blood sacrifice is required. But thanks be to God that it is not our blood. That while I may have been there, representatively, when the soldiers drew the sword, I should have been the one on the cross. We deserve the death. We deserve God's wrath and penalty.

But I want to stop there for just a moment before my final point. And if you have fallen asleep, let me encourage you to wake up. I want to say this to you as your pastor. That if you forget everything else I've ever said, which you probably have—if you forget everything else I've ever said, I would want you to remember these words. Because these are words, if these were the last words I ever preach, I would be happy. In our understanding of the gospel and even in our preaching of it—and I am guilty of it as anyone else—to make the gospel understandable, we often reduce it in such a way to make it understandable. But what happens when we reduce it in that way, what begins to happen, is we make it out to be simply a transaction. So therefore, it is often inferred or often thought that when we hear the gospel—Christ when to the cross, he died on the cross, God forgave us because of the work of Christ—it makes it sound, though, as if the following is true. That the Father only loves us because Jesus died. Do you hear that? We believe that the gospel teaches that the Father only loves us because Jesus died. If I told you that was an error, would you believe me? It is an error. Maybe not intentional, but it is an error.

Let me explain what I mean. When we see this final point under blood sacrifice, we cannot talk about the blood sacrifice of Christ without understanding its motivation. And its motivation is the provision of love. What do I mean? The cross does not cause the Father to love you and me. It is not a divine forensic legal transaction. Jesus did not die to persuade the Father to love. No, the Father in love planned and enabled the death of Christ. Is that not what our gospel teaches? 1 John 4: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God has been made manifest among us: that God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins." The removal of wrath. To be an offering in our place. It is his love that sent the Son.

So do you see? Jesus doesn't go to the cross as a divined way to persuade the Father to love us. Rather, the Father so loved the world that he sent his one and only Son. Now, why is this important to reestablish and not allow it to be reduced? It is because among many of you, dear brothers and sisters, among many of you is still a sneaking suspicion that the Father has not been persuaded to love you—that you must continue to try to persuade him. Deep within many people, those who are in the faith and those who are outside the faith, have heard the gospel and thought, "Well, this just sounds like divine child abuse, that Jesus had to go to make the ogre who is God happy again. And oh, what happy day, God finally loves us." That doesn't sound like the gospel. And then there are others who will say that "the only way that the Father loves me is because he only sees me through Christ." I must tell you that that is a reduction of what the gospel is.

God loved you, therefore he sent his Son. God, for the love of us, sent his Son, and for the glory of his name. Yes, sin had to be paid for. Yes, his wrath had to be satisfied. Yes, the debt must be paid. But the deepest motivation is that God is love. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. So, dear friends, let us expose and rightly reflect: do we still have within us this deep, abiding suspicion that maybe the Father isn't happy enough with us today? I declare to you in the name of Christ, because of the love that sent him, because of the love that was in the will of the one who laid down his life willingly, and because of the love that through the power of the Holy Spirit raised him from the dead, and because of the love that is the Trinitarian love that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father—your sins have been paid for. You have been made new. And your relationship is one of union and preciousness and intimacy and power and grace. It is from beginning to end the work of God's love, not one ounce of our trying to placate him.

This is still just part of the gospel. But how great, how great is our Lord. He is the will of the Father. He is our blood sacrifice. And by him and through him, established by the love of God, we can receive the cleansing of our conscience, the removal of sin as far away from as the east is from the west. But what is in its place is the preciousness of the love of a Father for his children. This is redemption accomplished. I say to you who have not received Christ as your savior to know that it is the Father's love for you this morning that says to you, "Come unto me. Call on my name by my Son, by this sacrifice, and I will make you new." Come, if you have not. But if you have, know this, dear brother and sister in Christ: what a great salvation we have. Amen? Let's pray.

Father, we ask that you would now enable us to rejoice inwardly and outwardly at the beauty and power of the gospel. Lord, may you make us a people rich, because we understand that this has been received as a gift of your love. But I also ask that then we would be a people of love, a people who live in gratitude, who love others as we have been loved. Will you do this, O Lord, in us? For those who have not received you or believed upon you, I ask you, Father, make your love so clear to them this morning that they might receive you as Savior. Lord, that we all may rejoice together with one voice that Jesus Christ is Lord. We give you thanks and praise. And it is in his might name we pray. Amen.