

Sunday June 4th sermon: "Redeemed by Christ's Blood -- The God of All Comforts (Pt 18)"

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

Hebrews 9:11-14; Matthew 20:17-28

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

Because Christ has obtained a better priesthood, He is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises.

Where is the priest's work done? Where is the sacrifice presented to God for the propitiation of our sins? Under the Mosaic covenant, in that man-made tabernacle, upon the mercy seat, was where the priest presented the blood of atonement for sin.

What was done there was but a figure or picture, using sacrifices which could not make anyone perfect, nor cleanse the guilty conscience of its sin. They had to be repeated over and over again, which is why the way into the holiest place of God was not yet made manifest.

But Christ does His priestly work in the heavenly tabernacle, before the very throne of God.

Christ does not offer up to God the blood of animals as Aaron did.

Christ presents His Own blood once for all in the holy place! Hebrews first mentions the sacrificial blood of Jesus in verse 12 of chapter 9.

His is a better sacrifice! His is a far richer blood than that of the animals!

Christ is the only morally perfect sacrifice for sin. He is God of very God, and yet He is clothed in the humanity of His people. He is sinless and perfect, God's Lamb without spot or blemish.

His blood is of infinite value as a propitiation of God's wrath for our crimes.

Only one death of our Savior is required! Only one entrance before the heavenly mercy seat is needed!

But then Hebrews exclaims that, by His one sacrifice, Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us!

Our redemption by Christ's blood is forever! It never fades away, or is overcome at all!

The sacrifice of Jesus is the great price paid to set us free from the curse of the law. It is the horrible cost borne by Christ to rescue us.

Hebrews argues the supremacy of Christ's blood and sacrifice by comparison: if the blood of animals could cleanse man ceremonially, temporally, and outwardly, how much more will the blood of Christ cleanse sinners inwardly, spiritually, perfectly, and forever!

After all, Jesus offered up Himself completely perfect and righteous unto God by the eternal Holy Spirit. Here we see emphasized all three persons of the triune God involved in our redemption.

God never dies, but Christ as God and Man did die for us. His blood is that of the human nature taken on by God the Son, and thus its value is inestimable.

Because He is God the Son, because He is incarnate in our flesh, because of the power of the eternal Holy Spirit within Christ in His humanity, and because of His human moral and spiritual perfection and obedience to His Father, His sacrifice presented in glory has a transforming and liberating power for His people.

First, it cleanses our consciences from dead works.

Recall that Hebrews has already told us, that the animal sacrifices could never cleanse the guilty conscience from sin. But the blood of Christ does!

Our dead works are rotten, corrupt works, no matter how we view them.

Our consciences are condemned by our sin and our corrupt deeds. No matter how we try to dress them up, all our "righteousnesses" are like filthy rags before God. Our consciences know that, though we would like to deny it.

But Christ's blood cleanses our consciences from filthy works!

The blood of Jesus sacrificed for us takes away the pollution of our guilt, by satisfying God's justice in our place. Therefore, our consciences are at peace with a holy God.

Not only does it take away our guilt and shame, but it also purges us from relying upon our works to make us right with God. The constant fear and prodigious efforts, to provide our own righteousness to God, enslaves our minds and consciences, because we know we can never be good enough.

Pity the poor Roman Catholic people, who can never be at peace with God, because their own works are never enough, and may very well fail them in the end unto eternal damnation.

But the blood of Jesus purges the believer's conscience from both guilt and the vain reliance upon works righteousness.

It sets the whole of our hope upon Jesus and His sacrifice as God's Lamb, and removes all hope from ourselves.

But note well the transformation that follows -- our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God!

Having purged away our fear, our guilt, and our vain efforts to save ourselves, now we serve the living God! Our service is the product of a clean conscience before God, no longer out of fear and self-interest.

We are no longer trying to vindicate ourselves to God, but rather to love and fear Him for saving us by the blood of His Dear Son!

Believers WILL serve the living God, when Christ has purged our consciences from dead works.

But our service to God is the result, not the cause, of our forgiveness and cleansing of sin by Christ's blood.

Our works do not save us, but we work for God because He has saved us.

Paul says the same thing in Ephesians 2: "we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, lest any man should boast."

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, as God fore-ordained we would."

Thus, Hebrews 9:11-14 tracks very closely the promises of the New Covenant: God would make us to know Him, and to know His law, and to keep it, because He shows mercy to our unrighteousness, and forgives us our sins.

Jesus foretold this during His ministry. He came as a servant to His people, to give His life a ransom for many. That ransom paid the price for our redemption from sin and death.

As we have seen before, those New Covenant promises were executed by Christ's "blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sin." In all this, He is our great high priest by a solemn oath of God.

In all these things, God has comforted us by the oath He made to Christ, to make Him our priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

All this explains what was promised in the very beginning of Hebrews – Christ by Himself purged our sins!

At the Lord's Table, we rejoice over the priestly work of our Redeemer, for He told us to remember how His body was broken at Calvary for us, and His blood of the New Covenant was shed for the remission of our sin.

Think of how foreboding, and alarming, and tragic those words must have been to the disciples of Jesus! They couldn't grasp how a dying Messiah could save anyone!

As two of them said unknowingly to Christ afterwards, "we had thought that it would be Messiah Who would redeem Israel!"

All the while, our blessed Jesus WAS redeeming all His people Whom He loves for eternity!

No wonder Philip P. Bliss penned these glorious words:

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

Refrain:

Sing, O sing, of my Redeemer!
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will tell the wondrous story,
How my lost estate to save,
In His boundless love and mercy,

He the ransom freely gave.

I will praise my dear Redeemer,
His triumphant pow'r I'll tell,
How the victory He giveth
Over sin and death and hell.

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His heav'nly love to me;
He from death to life hath brought me,
Son of God, with Him to be.