

The Rewards of Christ's Success Hebrews 10:11-18

Introduction

From chapter 7 onward the writer of Hebrews has been demonstrating the superiority of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sins over the old covenant system of continual offerings.

As 21st century Gentile readers largely untouched by any pressure to return to the old covenant Jewish liturgy, we might be asking ourselves, "So what?" What real difference does this make in a time and place so far removed from the pressures the original readers were facing? We might view all of this as a theological treatise for history buffs, philosophers, and academics. Nice to know in seminary settings, but of little practical use in the challenges of our everyday lives.

But as the author wraps up this section before moving on to the next, he corrects such a notion by unveiling the epic impact of the mission Christ has accomplished. Christ's success sends shock waves throughout the universe, like some massive atomic bomb, subjugating every enemy to the kingdom of God. It reaches deep into the recesses of every believer's heart and flows into the very cadence of their lives. And it seals our status

throughout eternity in the court of heaven itself.

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13** waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. **14** For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. **15** And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, **16** "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," **17** then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." **18** Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

1. Exaltation over His Enemies (11-13)
2. Ongoing Sanctification of Our Lives (14-16)
3. Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sin (17-18)

1. Exaltation over His Enemies (11-13)

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at

the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

The continual sacrifices for sins under the old covenant reminded the worshipers over and over again that their sins were not taken away yet. But Christ's sacrifice on the cross never had to be repeated. It took away sins forever for everyone trusting in Him.

The old covenant priests never sat down from their duties because their job was never done. Christ sat down because He had finished what He came into the world to do, not to rest but to reign.

He sat down not in a tabernacle or temple made with human hands, but in heaven itself at the right hand of God. There is no place of greater sovereign power and authority.

Hebrews 10:13

Waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

These words come from Psalm 110, the same Psalm that declares "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Psalm 110:1-2

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your

footstool.” ² The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!

So, even the OT prophecies connect the high priestly work of the Messiah with His universal reign.

He has sovereign power over all the universe, both the material and spiritual realms. Really important, because we need rescue in both. We are spiritual beings. We are physical beings. Jesus cares about both and rules over both.

Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Philippians 2:8-11

8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Clearly, even those who are Christ's enemies will bow to His authority and confess Him Lord. Nothing and no one falls outside of His rule. Including death itself.

1 Corinthians 15:25-26

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

The sovereign power of Jesus because of His successful mission means we have good news to proclaim to every nation on earth.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Why does Christ's success at the cross and the tomb mean so much?

Think of all of human history— who could ever purge the human race of its sin plague and its mounting guilt? And who could conquer death? The mightiest end up in the grave. All the advances of modern tech and medicine can at best only delay the inevitable. Jesus conquered both sin and death. He took our sin on Himself and paid for it completely. It is gone. He laid down His life and then broke the power of death by coming to life again. He has promised to raise our bodies from the dead.

Take a moment to think about the huge ramifications of such a victory. *You lay your dearest loved one in the grave, crushed by grief and overwhelmed by loneliness. It seems that you've lost everything. But because of Christ's success, death and the grave are not the end.* Your loved one is immediately with the Lord in spirit, and on the day of resurrection, even that dear body that you hugged and held will be brought back new, immortal and incorruptible.

And the sin that dogs our heels and poisons our hearts, that blinds our desires and soils our conscience is cancelled, its guilt and stain and power to be wiped clean. What it was like

to sin will become an increasingly distant memory, swallowed up by the light and life of eternity in the heavenly city, the new heavens and new earth where only righteousness dwells.

And the gloating success of demons and wicked people, pounding their chests in defiance, usurping the place of God in their empires and governments, hounding the people of God with their slander and persecution—all that empty pride and toxic power will be crushed to powder and driven away with the wind. No one will mock God then. No one will declare His laws hateful or primitive. No one can thwart His agenda. The little day of power they have now is momentary. They all will be gone and forgotten. *So do not fear and do not fret. Do not try to fight fire with fire. Keep your focus on proclaiming and displaying the gospel of Jesus.* Love God supremely. Love your neighbor as yourself. And tell people why you do so. Jesus will reign supreme. His successful cross work guarantees it.

Jesus won total victory when He completed His mission. Every enemy is going down. He exalted over all.

A fearful warning and a joy-filled promise—refuse to trust Him, to bow to Him. Fight Him instead. You cannot but lose. Bow to Him,

yield, trust—you cannot but win. His kingdom is supreme and it's forever. And His saints will reign forever with Him. You will taste His sweet victory over every enemy of darkness and death.

Jesus' success is not only wide in its impact. It is deep. It reaches to the root of who we are even now.

2. Ongoing Sanctification of Our Lives (14-16)

¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"

By successfully completing His mission, Jesus has perfected us for all time—past action with forever results

"Those who are being sanctified"—notice the present tense. Verse 10 reads "we have been sanctified," referring to our positional sanctification. Here "those who are being sanctified" refers to our progressive sanctification, the process of becoming more and more like Jesus through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Our belonging to Him changes us from the inside out.

So it is significant that the Holy Spirit Himself guarantees this transformation of who we are. He does so through the written Word. He is the divine agent of inspiration, bearing the holy writers of old along so that what they wrote comes from God not merely from men.

2 Peter 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit made this guarantee of our sanctification through the prophet Jeremiah, as he predicts the coming of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31.

Hebrews 10:16

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds.”

What we are in our hearts drives everything in our lives.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

And how we think in our minds determines what we say and do.

So we are talking about a foundational change at the level of our identity, our inner person, our spiritual DNA. Regeneration. Being born again.

This change in who we are comes from the Lord. No one else can do it. "I will do this," God says. It is a covenant promise. I cannot do it for myself.

The great reformation leader Martin Luther hits on this miracle in the preface to his commentary on Romans, with the great theme, "the just shall live by faith."

He observes that if I obey God merely out of duty and not from heart desire, it really is a hypocritical obedience and cannot amount to true righteousness. So we have to be changed at the level of desire, because we are sinners by birth and by choice.

Luther's explanation of this biblical concept of regeneration is what led to the conversion of John and Charles Wesley when they heard Luther's preface being read at a Bible study in Aldersgate. The impact of these gospel truths changed the course of European history and ignited the First Great Awakening in the American colonies, setting the foundation for our nation and its Ivy League schools and resulting in Scripture being inscribed on our public buildings.

We learned this during our Romans series. Works religions says, "Do good so you can receive good."

The gospel says, "Receive good so that you can do good."

Romans 8:12-17

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" **16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

It's not that we are sinless yet. It's that we now have the Holy Spirit desire and power to fight against sin. We are no longer under sin's tyranny. God is in us with living energy.

This new nature, this Holy Spirit indwelling—God's law in your heart and mind, is a reward of Christ's success. Thank God for it every day. Live your daily life in the Spirit and you

will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Walk the path of life not death.

Growth comes from life. Fruit comes from living things. It's not just adding and subtracting ornaments from your life like setting up and taking down a Christmas tree. What are you seeing in yourself that shows you are spiritually alive. Do you hunger for the Word? Is there a love for God in your heart? Love for others? Desire to do right. Distaste for evil—especially your own? Fruit of the Spirit?

3. Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sin (17-18)

¹⁷ then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." ¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

This is critically important. *Our lives are checkered with failure and sins. Even if we experience a great turning point and significant breakthroughs, we all have a past. Sometimes that past reaches out to condemn us and shame us.* We see this phenomenon especially when someone decides to run for public office. You can be sure the opposition will sift through every detail of the past, looking for dirt. Depending on who your enemies are, it can end your political career before you even get started. We often say politics is dirty, and most of us don't want to

have our names dragged through the mud of our past mistakes. That's almost worse than being smeared with outright falsehoods.

But even if all we've done that's wrong never goes public, it's there. We know it. God knows it. Satan knows it. And that's enough for it to be a nagging plague, a weapon in the hand of the accuser of the brethren.

But what if the Sovereign Judge of the Universe were to declare you innocent, all your sins—every single one of them—washed clean? Your record expunged forever.

There is a Pre-Trial Intervention program in our criminal justice system that allows for first-time offenders that qualify to take a course, do some community service, and pay a fee to have their record cleared. It's a one-time deal. If you mess up again, there's no second chance.

Okay, God doesn't say, if you pay this and do that, He will clear your record forever. You and I have too many sins on our record, and until we are glorified, we are going to add more. We can't pay enough. We can't be good enough. And we can't erase our past.

But Jesus the God-man paid an infinite price capable of clearing the sin record of every person on earth who ever lived. It is applied

only to those who want it and demonstrate that desire by trusting in Him to deliver them from sin and make them servants of righteousness, citizens of His kingdom, children in God's family. And there is no limit to the sin-crimes it erases.

Again, quoting the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." (verse 17)

All your sin failures. All your violations of the perfect law of God. Gone. God no longer sets His mind on them. You may still bear the temporal consequences of them, but not the guilt. Temporal consequences are small compared to eternal wrath.

Romans 8:31-34

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

*My chains are gone, I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me*

*And like a flood his mercy reigns
Unending love
Amazing grace*

Hebrews 10:18

Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Nothing more needs to be done. The old covenant has been replaced. The new covenant is in force and will be forever. The success Jesus accomplished with His one sacrifice guarantees it.

If you have turned from your sin to the Savior, if you are relying on His one-for-all sacrifice to wash clean your sin and purify your conscience—if God remembers your sins no more—then why would you keep churning over them? If even sacrifices are unnecessary, why the penance?

Conclusion

Revel in the rewards of Christ's success. His mission was on your behalf. What a Savior! What good news! It changes everything. It's wide. It's deep. It's forever.

1. Exaltation over His Enemies (11-13)
2. Ongoing Sanctification of Our Lives (14-16)
3. Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sin (17-18)

Discussion Questions

1. In what areas does knowing Christ is now enthroned at the right hand of God and will subjugate all His enemies (including death) help you in your daily living?
2. What does Christ's sovereign rule mean for all who set themselves in denial or opposition to Him (compare Psalm 2)?
3. Given what Christ says in Matthew 28:18-20 (the great commission), in what ways does His universal authority impact gospel witness?
4. How does the new covenant promise that God will write His law on our hearts and minds give us confidence and ability to grow in Christ (progressive sanctification) and serve Him?
5. Since the Holy Spirit is the agent of this regenerative work, what do you know about what the Spirit's work in a person looks like?
6. What are some manmade ways of trying to deal with sinful failures and rebellion, and in what ways is God's way of deliverance far superior?