

The Perfection of Christ's Everlasting Covenant

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If you will this morning, turn to our text which will be found in Hebrews 13:20-21. It's Hebrews 13:20-21. It's going to sound like a benediction but it's Paul's prayer for the saints that are in Christ.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, how excellent is thy name. I pray, Lord, and ask according to thy faithfulness that thou would be faithful this hour to bring forth thy truth, that you would settle us in thy truth, that you would come with power in thy truth to minister to the souls of thy people. O Lord, may you reveal this precious covenant this day that you have made long before we ever knew, long before there ever was a world. May you be glorified this day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

The Apostle Paul when writing this letter to the people of God, all throughout this letter it's a very special and precious letter. It starts and it has one theme running all the way through it and that is the preeminence of Christ. He begins by taking us to Christ is preeminent over the angels, he is preeminent over Moses and the law, he has preeminence over the priesthood. His covenant that was made with him, with Jesus Christ, is a greater covenant, a greater testament. His sacrifice was the greatest of all sacrifices, the perfect sacrifice. His faith is far greater than man's faith. We see this message going throughout all of Hebrews and Paul, his desire was to preach Christ crucified and his desire was to preach Christ, as he wrote his letters, his letters were filled with Christ and what Christ did for his people. When we come to the end of this letter is where we have this, if you will, an ending to this letter where Paul says these words and you can see and hear in the letter, if the Holy Spirit is pleased to search your heart this morning and take you to what the depth of what Paul is saying, his desire, his desire for the people of God to know. What is it he wants them to know? What is it he desires them to know in this prayer and in these two verses?

So this morning, I want to look at each part of what Paul wrote, what the Holy Spirit inspired, and as you see the theme in these two verses really is this covenant that was made with Christ, the Triune Lord, and the power that is in this covenant. That's where it bleeds into 21 when he tells us what the power of this covenant does for his people; what he does for his people; what he has done for his people; what because of this covenant, it is secured, it is steadfast, it is fixed, it is finished, whichever word you want to put in there.

Paul begins this by saying, "Now the God of peace." He addresses the Triune God as the God of peace. Now, back in the Old Testament, if you took a survey to those that were living at that time before Jesus was manifested, they would not tell you that God the Father was a God of peace. In fact, what we hear in the Scripture and read in the Scriptures is they were very fearful to even approach unto the mountain, the fiery mountain which resembled and saw God's presence in it, and they trembled at that. They needed a mediator. They needed one that would reconcile them to the Father. They saw what they could see, the holiness of God and how far man fell, and when that is revealed to you and I today, how far we really fell, the depth of what the fall plunged us into, what Adam by the covenant that was made with Adam, and the Lord making a covenant with him, putting him in the garden, telling him a covenant of obedience, "If you obey, you will have life," and Adam, as we're told in Corinthians and we're told throughout the word of God, represented all of mankind. So God represented in the garden, "If I was to make a covenant with man and if I was to leave this covenant with man for man's obedience to secure this covenant, this is what would happen." And it did, and all throughout history it has always been the same.

The error that's made in religion is when you come to the word of God, man still wants to believe that the covenant God made was with him, that it was made with man, so therefore, man has something left to do to close the deal in this covenant, but that's so far from the truth. The everlasting covenant, the covenant that was made, was made in this Triune Lord before there was the beauty of this earth, before there was a space, before there was anything that God made out of nothing. There was a covenant made where the Father, this is the beauty of the covenant, he knew, his foreknowledge knew that man could not keep a covenant with him and he elected a people that he would save from eternity and he said to the Son, "Go and die for these people," and the Son said, "I will willingly go and die for those people," and the Holy Spirit will seal those people in this covenant and reveal to them all throughout their life what Christ has done for them in this covenant.

As you see, man does not have any part in that covenant other than the receiving of what the Lord has done for him, therefore, he is the God of peace, because, you see, when Adam plunged all of us into this fall, we have always been at enmity with God. Always. We have never wanted Christ to rule over us. Our sin has separated us from a holy and just God. But he's the God of peace. He had to make peace. How can God, a holy God, be at peace with a people over here that are sin-marred and are fallen in Adam? He brought forth the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he made this covenant with before the

foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ would come and he would perfectly obey everything and magnify the holiness of God's law and he would do that for you and I who couldn't do that, and he as the head of this covenant, would take the hand of us and join us to the Father based on his righteousness and his perfect obedience and his blood, and the Father would look upon the Son and he would look at all the perfection that the Son did and he would see the bride and the church in his Son, covered by the blood of the Son, covered in the righteousness of the Son, and he would accept them and be the God, the Father of peace to every one of us that are in Christ because of Christ. That's why he's the God of peace.

Paul said it this way in Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Peter said it this way in 1 Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." What you see in here is every time one of the saints would write about what we have with the Father, it was mentioned by what the Son had done, by the blood of the cross, by the sanctification of the Spirit.

So we see this Triune Lord doing all things for us, procuring this covenant, not leaving anything to us to receive it, to give a nod to, "Yes, that's good, Father. We'll do our part." Whatever. And that's why I said I want you, I pray the Holy Spirit seeks out today in your heart and reveals to you what covenant is made with you. Is it made with you or is it made with your surety? Is it made for one who performed all things for you? That's where rest is for the child of God. That's where peace is for the child of God. And Paul's desire for those here that he's writing to, all the saints that would ever come, is to know that he is a God of peace. There is peace between us and the Father because of the Son, because of what he's done.

That's what he said, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." His resurrected life, bringing Christ from the dead procured for us in this covenant, showed us that death cannot win in this covenant; that sin cannot win in this covenant; that the devil could not win in this covenant. That Christ by being brought forth from the grave by the Triune God, and I'll tell you, the Bible testifies to that, the Father brought him forth, the Son brought himself forth, and the Holy Spirit brought him forth. God in perfect unity brought forth the Son from death to live everlastingly, to live and reign in the place on the right hand of the Father, reigning in this covenant, reigning in this kingdom, reigning in everything in the life of the child of God. This isn't potential, this isn't, "Oh, I wish he would do that for me." This is fixed in the surety of this covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He died for the sins of his people as the firstfruits of the resurrection. That's what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:20 and 23, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." He went first. He secured our resurrection in him both bodily and both spiritually. We have no spiritual resurrection without Christ revealing himself. We have no bodily resurrection without the Lord raising us from the ground. We

have nothing without him. That's why I said the perfection of this covenant. Paul wants the people to know this everlasting covenant, you can't break it. It's secured in Christ. It's everlasting grace. It's the covenant of grace. It's not a covenant of works. It's not a covenant with man anywhere involved in it.

Is that good news to you today? Or is there a rebellious spirit in us, which we know what that is, we know that's the old nature that comes up and says, "It can't be that good. It can't be. There has to be something that I can do or I have to do. There has to be something that looks at my obedience." I hope you don't think that because I hope you see yourself in light of the Scriptures, that we're all unrighteous and, "There is none righteous, no, not one," and we're all sinners and fall short of the glory of God, and if so, we need salvation. We need salvation in another. We need another's blood to cover the multitude of sins.

Verse 23, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." When the Lord appears to the child of God, that's where we have life. We have resurrection life in the Son. "I am the resurrection and the life." In this covenant and in this reigning kingdom, what Christ has for us is life and that life is resurrection life. It's not just life so he says, "I give life and I give it more abundantly. There is more abundant life in me." This life has conquered death. This life has conquered the wicked one. This life has conquered our sin. That's what resurrection life is. That's what the beauty of being raised from the dead. It secured all of us that are in Christ. He's the firstfruits.

That's what Paul wants us to know, "that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." That little word "our," you could feel the love as Paul wrote those words to include those just like him. There's no preeminence of Paul here. There's no preeminence of one another. We are all where there is no male, nor free, nor bond, nor Greek, we're all one in Christ Jesus. I pray today that as the Lord reveals what he has done in this everlasting covenant, I pray that it humbles you because that's what the work of the Lord does. It humbles the child of God. It does not make him proud. It does not make him run out there and say, "Oh, look what God did for me and I'm doing for him." The words of eternal life are what the Lord has done for us, what he's done on our behalf, what he's done in this covenant.

Yes, the God of peace brought forth the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and that secured our eternal peace with the Prince of Peace. That secured our eternal, all those fruits of the Spirit of Christ, the joy, the love, the faith, the gentleness, the longsuffering, that's what we have in Christ as our covenant head, as the ruler and reigner of this kingdom, as our Joseph who when we're brought to him to the storehouse because we're in famine, because we have nothing to feed upon, he gives us the bread of life which is himself. He opens the storehouses and we feed upon what he's done and we feed upon what he is to us because that feeds into the next line that's given to our Lord, "that great shepherd of the sheep." That great shepherd. That means there's one and that's what Jesus said in John 10:16, he says, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and

they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." That great shepherd.

Think of the shepherd and what he is to his sheep. He is their protection. He has knowledge of what they do and where they go and what their tendencies are. He has all knowledge of them. Well, the metaphor is very flawed but what Christ has is not flawed. He has perfect knowledge of his people. He has perfect knowledge of the sin that easily besets us. He does remember our frame that we are dust. He knows what our tendencies are. He knows the old nature and how ugly it is in us. He knows what we are capable of without his keeping power.

Is that good news to you, that the one that cares for your soul, who provides all things for you, is the Lord who knows the very things that make us and we're more prone to sin with? Does that not ring out as the Gospel, that the Lord came to save his people from their sins and he knows what those sins are?

Nothing comes as a surprise and, you know, that's another thing, when we talk about this covenant and what was made with Adam, I mean, I've talked to people and I've read people and what a surprise that happened to God. I mean, he just couldn't believe it, that man would do that. Really? I mean, that this all-knowing God who made everything did not know that man put in a perfect situation still would not choose him? When sin would be introduced into the world, man would say, "I'll go with that," as opposed to the tree of life? No, that's the point I make today about this covenant. He foreknew. Everything was assured in the covenant head. Everything that we would ever need, the Father said, "I'm a God of peace and it's because of my Son, it's because he is the great Shepherd of the sheep."

Everything that we need, the protection, and think of the shepherd. Think of John 10. Think of Psalm 23. Think of those things that we have read many times in the Scriptures and think of the Psalmist, "I have no want, I have no desire, I have no lack because of the Shepherd, because he's done all things. He leadeth me. He restoreth me." I hope that that's what the Lord has written on your soul. I hope as you go from here today and all the many places we go and places that providence, God's providence leads us, that he reveals to you it's his providence. He's led you here. Is it for his glory? What is he doing on behalf of you or for you? What has he done in a covenant with you of this covenant of grace? Are you still thinking you're left to yourself and you have to bring glory to God because he can't do it himself in his Son? He hasn't done all of this with his Son that he is well-pleased? That there's another way to please the Father and that's with you? It's a terrible burden. It's a terrible law. It's the weight of Sinai. It's a yoke that we're not to carry. It's what the Pharisees in this life put upon the people of God and say, "You need to carry this burden. You need to do these things." Has the Lord never said to you what he's finished? What he's done and performed for you as that great Shepherd? That he keeps you? That he leads you? That he guides you? That he protects you? That he laid down his life for you?

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." We've already spoken a lot about covenant but Paul turns it, that the blood of Christ sealed it, it gave it power to put sin away forever, and it's not a covenant that, "Uh-oh, that was done a long time ago. Now I've got to..." It's everlasting covenant. I mean, I know we read these words over and over again but for the Holy Spirit to take us and delve us deep into what they mean, just what is everlasting? We buy batteries all the time. None of them are everlasting. We buy cars. Look at our bodies. They've changed over the years. They're breaking down. It's not everlasting. Nothing we know in this life is everlasting.

To be testified of what everlasting means, we need the Holy Spirit to testify to us what is everlasting in this covenant. It's made with one who is eternal. It is made with one who is everlasting, therefore, there is no lack in it. Remember, his mercy endureth forever. He doesn't run out of mercy.

I find that sometimes even with my children, I can have given to me a merciful spirit and I can have that mercy exercised in me for a period of time, but then that old nature will rise up in me and enough's enough sometimes, and it's like, "I'm not going to be merciful anymore." The great Shepherd is not that way. That great Shepherd as he has secured this everlasting covenant in the God of peace by his blood, never runs out of mercy and endures forever, and he is faithful to reveal what he has done in the power of his blood to the child of God.

Now David said something in 2 Samuel 23:5, he said, "Although my house be not so with God," these were very close to the last words that David would speak. I look back at David's life and I say, "Wow," on one hand very envious of that life and how close he was and how Christ was revealed to him in the greatest magnitude and he had such rest in his Lord, and that part I envy, but this part over here where he had a son who tried to kill him but then later in his life, even at this time, another son trying to usurp him, trying to go against the son that God the Father had given him and the Son gave him and said, "This is the one that's going to be in the kingdom." But no, there was such turmoil all the days in his earthly house. Think about that. We all have our loved ones sitting next to us, think about that and the depth of the Lord's love toward his own, to keep David.

Listen to what he says, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he," my Lord, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "hath made with me an everlasting covenant." You see, this everlasting covenant was revealed to David just as I pray to God it's revealed to us today many years later. It was revealed to David before Christ ever came. It's revealed to us after Christ came. The same covenant. The same everlasting covenant.

"He hath made with me an everlasting covenant." Now listen to what he says about this covenant, "ordered in all things." It's ordered in all things by the God of order; by the Lord who has provided all things, what David said in Psalm 57:2, he's done all things for me. He's performed all things for me. That's what he's talking about here. "This covenant that he has made with his Son, he has revealed that covenant to me and he has ordered all things in that covenant. Everything's wrong in my house. If it was left to me, my own

house is so out of order, but God didn't leave that covenant to me. This everlasting covenant," he says, "made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." It has a surety. The anchor, the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, he has made that covenant with him. It's an unwavering, unfaltering covenant. It's everlasting.

I can't stress the magnitude enough. I hope the Holy Spirit does at this hour to take you to the depth of David's soul, the agony that he saw in his life around him with his own family, but the faithfulness of his Lord to take him deeper than physical family. He saw his Lord. He saw the Lord who had ordered all things in the covenant for him. All things. He's ordered all things and he's made them sure in himself. David said, "Oh my gosh, if it was me, it isn't me, it isn't ordered in me. There's nothing sure in my house." And there wasn't except turmoil and sin.

"For this is all my salvation," David said. "This is all my salvation. Not the kingdom that I had under me, not that I was a warring king and I put... No, this, the Lord Jesus Christ, the covenant with my Head, the Lord Jesus Christ is all my salvation, and all my desire." And I believe it because you can hear the Lord coming forth through David. You don't hear him dwelling, and that's the last part of this verse, "although he make it not to grow." He looks back again at his family and he says, "You didn't spread this relationship with me, this covenant wasn't made with me and my family. It was made with me."

Oh, those words are scary to me because I have a family and I think, "O Lord, if you ever revealed that to me, that the covenant that you made was with me and not my family, oh, how heartbroken I would be." But would I? Would I be if sustained by my covenant-keeper who had performed all things for me? Where is my consolation? Where is the faith? It's in my Lord. It's in my Savior who has performed and this is all my salvation. May the Lord reveal the depth of what he has done for his people this hour in your soul if it pleases him. What a covenant.

Turn with me just briefly over to Hebrews 9. Let's look at verse 11 real quick. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands," this is his body, "that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood," that's the everlasting covenant, in his blood, "by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place," once, perfect, everything he did was perfect. That's not leaving for you and I to enter in there to do something for the Father. He entered once as the great High Priest. Entered once into the holy place "having obtained eternal redemption for us." He did it. We're secure in him. Our salvation is secure in him. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh," back in the day, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit," see the Triune Lord, "offered himself without spot to God," the Father, without spot. He's the only one who could. You and I have spots. In Christ we have no spot. In his righteousness, no spot. "Without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" There's the power of the resurrection. There's the power of Christ to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Serve him, how? In what his Son has finished. Oh, does that mean you have a life of just sitting by the side? No, it's a living life. It's by the living faith of the Son of God. That's what Paul said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave his life for me." That faith is a faith that carries the child of God in this life for the glory of his Lord, to show forth the glory, the fruit of his Lord.

Paul tells us in Hebrews 7 that this testament or this covenant is so much greater than the other, the old, the covenant made with Adam, the covenant that was made in the Old Testament. Even the whole Old Testament, all of those types and all of those ways to come to the Father, how imperfect they were because man could not do them. What was the whole purpose of that? To show the same thing that happened in the garden, the need of the perfection of the covenant Head. His work. What he has done.

Hebrews 7:22 says, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament," or a better covenant, same word.

But all of this, this morning, I want to say this, all that we've just heard, what the God of peace, what did he secure in this covenant that as our God of peace, as our resurrected Lord, as that great Shepherd, as the blood of the everlasting covenant, to me, I just sit there and it's like, "Selah." The glory of heaven is opened. I mean, it's just hearing those word of Christ on the cross say, "It is finished. I've done it all." I'm not sitting down here saying, "Okay, Lord, look at all that you did, what about me?" He comes back in 21 and he says, "All of this, did you hear what I just said to you? My desire is for you to know this Lord who has performed all things for you because he makes you perfect in him, in every good work to do his will." So that's his work? Yes. That's his power? Yes. And it's assured and it's certain in the covenant Head, in the reigning Lord, in the Lord who performs all for his people.

He, "Make you perfect in every good work," he maketh, "to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." Notice the zealously of the Holy Spirit to keep reminding us, "It's not you. It's Christ. It's always what Christ has done for his people." Paul said it this way in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." Paul constantly reminding us this is what the God and Lord Jesus Christ did in himself. This is what the Father purposed in his Son. This is what the Holy Spirit brings forth for us to see what Christ has done. "I will send you a Comforter and he'll tell you all that I've ever done. He'll testify of me."

Of course, Ephesians 2:10 tells us, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained," when? In this everlasting covenant. In this covenant made before the foundation of the world. "You mean what he works in me in an hour or two hours from now is known to him?" Absolutely. It's his work. Nothing surprises the God of these Scriptures, the eternal God.

"Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." That's that living faith, to walk in what Christ has done.

1 Peter 5:10 says, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while." I know we sit here and go, "Well, we could do without that part." I'll tell you what, dear ones, if we didn't suffer in this life, if we didn't suffer through trials and we didn't suffer through hardship, we would have no desire for him. He weans us from this earth. He weans us from this place that we are strangers and pilgrims to, to reveal what we have in him. This is what sin has caused. This is the remedy and sin will always be the source of our suffering. We're fallen, but in Christ we're perfect.

"After that ye have suffered a while, make you," love those words, "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." All of him. May the Lord impress upon you in this hour all of him.

Then how else could we end today in everything that's been said, except what Paul says, "to whom," to whom, the Lord Christ, the Triune God, "be glory for ever and ever. Amen." All glory belongs to him. Do you see it? Do you desire all glory to be to him?

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:17, "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." My prayer for you today is I believe the same prayer Paul had for the saints that he addressed this to, that you would know the God of peace, that he would reveal himself to you and all that he has done as our perfect surety and that you would be brought to desire his glory above all other things.

Our text one more time, Hebrews 13:20-21, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Dear heavenly Father, come with thy loving power to our souls to reveal this great covenant we have in thy Son and, Lord, may you be glorified, may you have all praise for the great great things thou hast done. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.