



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

All Things New

June 5, 2022

Hebrews 9:1-14

Clint Pressley

⁹ Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. ² For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

(Pastor prays)

I have been trying to get at this passage all week. I have been reading it over and over and dissecting it. I come up with an outline and then throw that outline away. I read an article

yesterday that spoke to this and realized that there is something missing. If I go to my refrigerator this afternoon and find something other than a red Coke can, if I find a Diet Coke or one with no caffeine, I know there is something missing.

When you read verses 1-10, you realize what this pastor is doing with his people. Now remember, this is a preacher, and he's writing a sermon to his people who are threatening to go back to Judaism. He's reminding them there's *something*. We need to walk through the passage.

I just want to point out some things in this passage. It's broken up into three sections. In verses 1-5, the preacher looks over his shoulder at the old way of doing things in Judaism. In verses 6-10 you have the shadow priest. You have the priest that would be in the holy place and then the high priest, on the day of atonement, would go into the most holy place. And then in verses 11-14, he stops and says all of that was nothing more than a precursor to the grace of God found in Jesus.

Join me there in verse 1. I'll just blow through it and point out some furniture. In verse 1 it says that even the first covenant had regulations for worship. God has designed every one of us to worship. That worship is broken by our own sin. We cannot worship a holy God as sinful people. From the very beginning he gave them a Tabernacle, a tent. He gave them a place where he would meet with His people. He brought them out of Egypt, met them in the desert and He would meet with them. He was too holy and they were too sinful to meet face to face, so He built the Tabernacle. And He gave them regulations. God doesn't just call us to worship. He gives us the actual way to worship. That's why we do the things we do. You're not allowed just to worship any way you want. God says, "I don't just call *for* worship, I want to show you *how* to worship." Here in a Christian Church, you sing psalms, hymns and songs of praise. You read the Bible out loud. You have the preached word. There is worship prescribed by the Bible.

In verse 2 He meets with them in a Tabernacle. In that Tabernacle there are two sections. In the first section is the holy place. In that section you find the lampstand, that's the menorah. You might be familiar with that term or the seven-stemmed candlestick, a root of which it looks like a tree. And the idea is the tree of life. There is the light pointing to that which gives us light who is Christ. There's a lampstand. Look at another piece of furniture. There's a table. On that table

is the bread and Exodus tells us there's wine. It's a reminder of God's good provision that He gives to His people. Jesus would look inside there and say, "I am the bread of life."

Keep reading in verse 3. There's another section. The curtain is important. Here is The Holy of Holies. It's the *most* holy place. The curtains are important for Christians because when Jesus died on the cross you will remember, as He breathed His last, the Gospel writers tell us that from top to bottom that curtain split open. This is saying, "You are now through the blood of Christ; welcome into the presence of God." But for this purpose, we are reminded of this old way of doing things. There was a second curtain behind that curtain. And behind it was the most holy place. Verse 4 says, there's a golden altar of incense that would symbolize the prayers of God's people. There was a pleasing aroma going up to Heaven.

There inside the Holy of Holies is the Ark of the Covenant. The people of God didn't go anywhere without the Ark of the Covenant. It's interesting to hear the three things in the Ark of the Covenant. In verse 4 we find that it is covered in gold and there is an urn inside that holds three things. You have manna. It's a reminder of God's good provision for His people when they wandered in the desert. You also had Aaron's staff or rod that budded, a reminder that God could take that which is dead and make it alive. And in the Ark of the Covenant you have The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments tell us about God's law.

That's all of those things in the Ark of the Covenant, but notice in verse 5 there are cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. The mercy seat is where the high priest would come in on the day of atonement, one day of the year, Yom Kippur. He would take blood and put it on the mercy seat because the law of God tells us we deserve to die. The bloodshed would be a reminder that God forgives through the shedding of blood, pointing to Christ. So in verses 1-5 you have this the old system. The preacher is looking over his shoulder.

In verses 6-8, he talked about the priests and what the priests would do. It's a ritual. You see him in verse 6, *These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties,* In verse 7 you see that one time a year the high priest goes in and offers blood for himself and for the unintentional sinners, the people. And all this religious stuff goes on in verse 8 and then the preacher says, okay. By all of this is God doing something. The Holy Spirit is indicating that the way into the presence of God is not yet open. In verse 9 is a symbol. ⁹ *(which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement,*

gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, You see that word, "symbolic." That is a parable that is there to teach us. We read the Old Testament to teach us to look forward to the good things that are to come. Verse 10 says, all it is is religion. You're only dealing with food and drink, washings and regulations. That is there until the time of *reformation*. That word means there's one coming to make it right.

Verses 1-10 tell us that all the religion in the world cannot make you right before God. There is no substitute for grace. There is no substitute for what God has done for us in Christ.

There is No Substitute for Grace

In verse 11, I want to just start asking some questions and see if we can get at the intent of the author through questions. Here's the first one.

What is your testimony?

What is the story that you would tell about your conversion to Christianity? The preacher says it like this. ¹¹ *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)* Do you see that turn in verse 11, that contrast word "but"? *But when Christ appeared.* This is the in-breaking of Christ. Here is the Lord Jesus breaking into your life. A lot of people say that Chapter 9 verse 11 is the most monumental verse in the entire book of Hebrews because it turns the corner from the old religion to the new grace found in Jesus. Here's the contrast. Here's God breaking in. If you have somebody you are praying for who is not yet a Christian or you're praying that God will soften their heart and they would warm up to the Gospel. You pray that they would change and often that does happen. But you know that's not the only sign of conversion.

Connie and I were walking yesterday morning and we're talking about Hebrews Chapter 9 and she's reading a book by Melissa Kruger I would just recommend. Anything Melissa Kruger writes, read it. Melissa Kruger talked about the conversion of Paul and how Paul, if you remember before, he was a killer and murderer and hated God, hated Christians. He never warmed up to the Gospel; but something happened to him on the road to Damascus. Do you have a testimony? Is there is there evidence in your life that you have been converted, that

something has changed in your life? You actually have believed and there is fruit in your life.

What is your testimony?

Let me ask you another question.

Do you actually feel blessed?

Verse 11 tells us that when Christ appeared, He came as a high priest of good things to come.

Do you believe that God is actually working out His good plan in your life? Can you look back in your short life and you can say “God has actually been good to me”? Can you actually say that

where you are right now that you feel genuinely blessed? Do you trust God’s good design in

your life? If you have been on social media long enough, you have seen a hashtag, #blessed.

Most of the time when I see #blessed it’s somebody at a Chick-fil-A who got an extra sandwich

or something. Do you feel like where you are right now is in God's good design? I want to see

somebody at cemetery with a #blessed. Or I want to see somebody in a hospital room when

you stand beside the one you love so desperately and she breathes her last and you're able to

say, “the Lord gives in the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” Do you trust that

God, the good Potter, is molding you? He's molding you into a vessel for His good pleasure and

not your own. And that all that you've been through is part of him molding you into what He

wants. You can say that is a good plan. Do you actually feel it is enough for you that God loved

you to the degree that He gave His only son Jesus on the cross? You go to the cross and you

stand there and you feel blessed because of what God did for you at the cross. Do you feel

blessed?

I have another question as we move a little further into verse 12.

In your own life, are you settled?

Let me show you what I mean in verse 12. There is a settledness in what God has done for us in

Christ. Verse 12 tells us, ¹²*he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.* You

see the two— “once for all” and then “eternal redemption.” Settled. Have you believed in the

finished work of Jesus? Is there a sense in your life that that relationship to God has been

settled? We do not presume on God's grace. We do not say “once saved always saved”

flippantly. What we trust is that Jesus Christ lived perfectly, died on the cross. He did that one time for all. And when He did, He settled it. And if you put your faith in Jesus, that is settled. Have you believed or are you still trying to? Have you put your faith in the finished work of Jesus? Are you content with the gospel of God found in Jesus? Is that going to be enough for you? Here's another question.

Do you feel loved?

There's a lot of love right here in verse 12 and you'll see it again in verse 14. ¹² *he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.* It's the idea of redemption. There's a lot to see there. What I would just draw your attention to is the word "redemption." The writer of Hebrews is the preacher. He's talking to his people. And in order for them to get the full idea of salvation and how it works so they would feel loved, he's trying to think of the words to say. Redemption. He had to go down to the slave market to get that word. A lot of words can describe what it means to be saved but this time he's chosen the word "redemption." It came from the slave market. We have a historical memory that's not that far back, and much to our everlasting shame, we can look back and see in the United States slavery. So you understand some of the language. You know the word "manumission," to set your slaves free. George Washington did this when his wife died; he set her slaves free. It's one thing to free some slaves, that's not this word. This word "redemption" is to go down there and you see they are shackled and chained. You know what it's going to cost. The cost is the blood of your son Jesus. God the father says, "I'll do that and redeem that slave." But it's not just that we've been set free in Christ. God the father purchased the slave and brings the slave home to sit at the table. You look around and everything you see is now yours. You see the word "redemption" is that you weren't just set free; you were set free and are loved as a son or a daughter in Christ.

Do you feel loved, not just freed? When you understand, you go to the cross of Jesus and you stand there and you draw your confidence over the fact that God loved you like that. Then you don't search somewhere else for some cheap love because it doesn't match up to the love you have from God the father found in Jesus. Do you feel loved?

I am going to ask you another question.

Do you like theology? Do you love doctrine?

Do you not just want to be saved and go to church, but you actually have a real interest in theology? It's the study of God or Christianity, the study of Christ or doctrine. It's those definitions of what we believe. Do you really like doctrine? Let me show you where I get this in verse 14. Verse 13 and 14 is an argument. He's making an argument from lesser to greater. So you read verse 13, it's the lesser - it's the old way. Verse 14 is the greater. ¹³ *For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,* ¹⁴ *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God,* pause there. You see that phrase? I want you to drill in here with me. You see that phrase, "eternal spirit." There's been a lot of talk about what does that mean. What does that mean?

You and I, we don't *just* believe that Jesus died on the cross in the place of sinners and God raised Him from the dead and through Jesus we are saved. We certainly believe that. We believe that our God is working all things to take us somewhere doctrinal. We believe in a triune God. We believe in God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. In fact, we believe that the Trinity works in salvation. We believe that God the Father planned your salvation. We believe that God the Son accomplishes salvation at the cross so that we don't do anything to get it. And how are we saved is God the Spirit applies salvation into our lives.

Do you love doctrine? Brothers and sisters, in 2022-2023 you and I are gonna have to learn some theology. You need more than, "I love Jesus and that's enough." That's enough that you are saved, yes, but we are facing a world that's going to try everything and test everything that you believe. We are right in the middle of gay pride month now. How is a Christian supposed to think about those things? It needs to be more than just a reaction. We need to know from the Bible why we believe that God's good plan for the genders, male and female, that is good from Creation that a man and woman are together. Why do we stand against those things? The deeper you bore into what the Bible teaches, the stronger you'll be and the more you're able to withstand the oncoming onslaught to Christianity. Do you love theology, doctrine?

Let me ask another question. You'll find it in verse 14.

Do you understand grace?

Do you understand what it took to save you? The deeper you grow in grace the more humble you become, the less judgmental you are of other people because you knew what it took to save you. Do you see the grace? Let me just show it to you. ¹⁴ *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* Offered Himself.

Do you understand you're not saved because you decided to start *going after* God; God *came after* you. The idea here is that He took the initiative. Jesus offered Himself.

You understand what happened with the cross is not a tragedy. I'm reading a book about Thomas Jefferson written by a man named Thomas Kidds, a professor. He wrote a book about Thomas Jefferson and his spiritual life. Thomas Jefferson was a deist. He wanted to be called a Christian but because of his ethics. What he did not believe is that Jesus voluntarily went to the cross. He believed that the cross was a tragedy. You and I don't believe that. We believe that Jesus died on the cross on purpose. This text says He offered Himself. I can even go so far to say He premeditated it. Here is the intentional movement of God to save people like you. We believe in the substitutionary atonement. We believe that Jesus died on the cross as a substitute for sinners. Here is a picture of grace. We believe that Jesus died on the cross in the place of sinners (and that) is sufficient to save you; to secure you. It's sufficient to bring you joy and to carry you through life. We believe in grace. When you get a little taste of grace and you start thinking about grace and understanding grace you tend to extend grace to other people. Do you understand grace?

I'll give you another question from verse 14.

Is your conscience clear?

Sitting right here this morning, and you reflect back on your life, is your conscience clear? Notice what the text says that Jesus does for us in verse 14.

¹⁴ *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* Purify our conscience. Do you remember what he said in verse 9 about the conscience? That all the religion in the world is not enough to purify your conscience. He said that the only way to have

the inside clean is here, verse 14. It's what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross. There is nothing satisfactory. Religion is an unsatisfactory way to get your guilt removed. You know what happens when you feel guilty? If you have a guilty conscience, you actually become afraid morally. If you know you've committed sin, you're living in sin, you've done sin or if you have some secrets in your life, that secret sin has made it so that you turn into a moral coward. Because you know that you can't really say something about that because you've got this going on. This is different from "he who is without sin, cast the first stone." Here is cowardice that sets in because your conscience is guilty. Do you still feel the guilt of something you've done, maybe something terrible? Let's remember how salvation works. When Jesus died on the cross in the place of sinners and God raised Him from the dead, the blood of Jesus doesn't just forgive, it doesn't just pardon you. What Christ does because of His righteousness; He gives His righteousness to you. Your conscience is clean; it's as if you never committed the sin. It's as if you are as perfect as Jesus.

Do you understand grace? Have you taken the righteousness of Christ and it's on your life so that your conscience is clear?

I'll leave you with this one last question.

Are you living for Christ?

You're not just saved and right with God. We do want peace with God, peace with ourselves. But we are saved for something. Let's look at the end of verse 14. ¹⁴ *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* Isn't that what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:25. ²⁵ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.* And in Matthew 23:27, ²⁷ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.*

What does He say? All the religion in the world won't do you any good if your conscience hasn't been cleaned by the blood of Jesus. Your life is being lived not to *earn* righteousness but *because* of the righteousness given to you by God.

Now I've asked you a bunch of questions today. And the first one I put before you was, does your story begin with God and His grace and you turning from your sin to Christ? Is that your testimony? Do you feel blessed by that, you wonder at God's good grace given to you in Jesus. Are things settled? Do you sit here and feel loved by God in Christ? Do you love that you understand grace and because of that your conscience is clear? And with a clear conscience, are you living your life for Christ? If God has spoken to your heart this morning, I want to talk to you about what it is to understand the grace of God, knowing that there is no substitute for grace.

(Pastor prays)