



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Rich in Joy

June 19, 2022

Hebrews 10:1-18

Clint Pressley

10 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

*“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;*

*⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.*

*⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”*

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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,

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.*

(Pastor prays)

Life is hard. Money is tight. Relationships are complicated and real happiness is increasingly hard to find. It seems elusive and spotty. In almost any given situation, it's hard to know what to say anymore. You don't want to be offensive presenting the truth but you also don't want to compromise on what the Bible says. Being a Christian in 2022 can feel like a complicated thing. That's why the book of Hebrews has meant so much to me over the last six months. Because the writer here keeps taking his congregation back to the deep things of Christ and what it means to be bathed and saturated in the profound love and grace of God found in Christ. And as this world gets meaner and darker and stranger, we don't need *less* theology, we need *more*! We need more of the riches of grace found in Jesus. How does that keep us safe? How does that make us strong? How does that help us cope? And how does that feel us with joy?

Now this passage is packed with Old Testament imagery, so we need to go through it slowly. But not so slow that we don't get the point of the text and the joy of being in Christ. To do that I want to use several questions to help us unlock some of the great treasures found here. My hope today is that you will...

Take Joyful Security in the Riches of Being a Christian

Let's get at this passage with questions. Here's the first one.

What is real?

When I was in New York at the Statue of Liberty, there was a booth that had a Rolex watch for sale for \$25. It wasn't long before it became unreliable and finally fell apart. It wasn't real. Let's read verse one slowly. **10** *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.* Shadow. In my front yard I can stand in an oak tree's shadow. It tells me that there is a real tree there. The entire Old Testament points to another genuine reality. It points to the good things to come. Then I'm asking, what are the good things to come? Paul addresses this in Colossians 2:16-17. ¹⁶ *Therefore let no one pass*

judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

All the religion in the world can't get you close to God. All the leisure in the world can't ease your soul. And in the text at the end of verse 1 we see that if you keep doing the same things thinking you are going to find soul-cleansing joy, then you miss the whole point of the Bible.

10 *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.* All of the Old Testament sacrificial systems and religious rituals are there to point us to Christ, His life, death and resurrection to save you from sin. What is real? Christ is real. Let's ask another question.

What works?

What is actually working in your life to satisfy your soul? The preacher says here at the end of verse 1 that all that religion isn't working. Most of us haven't tried Judaism but we've tried all kinds of other stuff. We've tried exercise, Netflix and partying. We've tried drinking beer, sex and video games. We've tried TikTok, hobbies and dating apps or any number of good things we spend our time doing to stay ahead of pain or burden.

One of my favorite characters from American history is Theodore Roosevelt. I think he was a great President, a great man. But he lived with tragedy. As a young man he married a beautiful woman named Alice and she became pregnant. The baby was born healthy but something turned south. He wasn't there for the birth and he was trying to get home. His mom was there in the house helping his wife as she gave birth to the child, there to help with the baby. And as it turns out, his mother contracted a fever and that night his wife contracted a disease. On Valentine's Day, his mother and his wife died on that one day. It was such a blow to his soul he didn't think he could take it. He gave his baby daughter to his sister and left. He went out West and spent the rest of his life living actively, vigorously. That's why he was such an active man, just trying to stay ahead of it. But at some point, that breaks down. It's why we trust in the sufficiency of what Christ has done for us on the cross, it works. It works to forgive, heal, strengthen, change and restore. Salvation is a miracle that defies explanation. What is real? Christ. What works? The Gospel.

How is your conscience?

In the movie "Tombstone" when Wyatt Earp tells someone he's going to Tombstone to get rich, the person says, "I've never seen a rich man without a guilty conscience." Wyatt Earp says, "I've already got the guilty conscience, might as well have the money!" How is your conscience?

That's the problem that all the Old Testament religion couldn't help. We see it in verses 2-3.

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

Sacrifices didn't take the sin, the internal guilt and foulness away. You're just reminded over and over again that God in His mercy is withholding wrath even though sin creates death. It's what's inside of us that's the problem. And his point is that the Old Testament sacrifice didn't save. How is your conscience? Do you stand before God on your own merit and niceness or have you surrendered to the grace of God found in Jesus? Only the transforming power of the Gospel can actually get the stain out of your conscience.

So what is the Gospel? We explain it like this. The Bible teaches that God is the holy creator who created all of us in His image. That's why you have dignity because the image of God is in us. But the image of God in us has been disfigured; it's blackened by sin. That sin is such that it has broken fellowship and has made us actual enemies of God. We actually deserve to be punished and sent to Hell. That puts us in a really bad spot. But God is not only just, He's also a loving God. He sends Jesus Christ, who's fully man and fully God. He lived perfectly and earned righteousness. He lived under the law and kept all the law as a human for us. Then he goes to the cross and there at the cross Jesus took the wrath of God for every sinner who will be saved. And anybody here who trusts in what Christ has done for us will be saved.

That leads us to another question.

Do you need your sin taken away?

I think this is one of the reasons many don't come to Christ. Maybe you would readily say, nobody is perfect or we are all sinners. And then you would rationalize it by comparing yourself to others and you might say, I'm basically a good person. And God becomes sort of a cosmic crutch for you when you are down or hurt or sad. But our real problem is embedded in verse 4 as the preacher says what the old religion cannot do. *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* To take away sin. The Gospel is only good news to you if you understand how unholy you actually are in your natural state. Your understanding of your own depravity informs your rejoicing and God's grace. John Newton, the author of the great hymn "Amazing Grace," said in his dying quote, although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great savior. When you think on the ocean of grace it took to save you, you don't mind giving a thimble of grace it takes to forgive others and move on. One of the traits of mature and growing Christians is the ability to get beyond being sinned against. It's being able to get over a being wronged and trusting God. Which brings us to our next question.

What is a Christian?

It's a long passage with a quote from the 40th Psalm that the preacher puts in the mouth of Jesus, and the punch is down in verse 10. Let's read verses 5-10.

⁵ *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,*

*"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;*

⁶ *in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.*

⁷ *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"*

⁸ *When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

So in verse 10 we find out the very definition of what a Christian is. Let's go through that list of words. We have been *sanctified* and we have been *made holy*, not by our own merits but by what Jesus has done. We have been sanctified how? By the offering of the body. Here you have Jesus as a man and our substitute dying on the cross, taking the penalty for every sinner who will be saved. We are sanctified by the body of Jesus Christ. The preacher doesn't use the full name very often but he does it right here. He tells us the full humanity Jesus, as a person dies for people, and Jesus as God. Jesus Christ, the two natures of Christ. We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. And here is the finished work of Christ, once and for all. So put it together, what is a Christian? A Christian is someone who has been made holy by trusting that Jesus died as his substitute for sins and that offering is all it ever takes to be saved. At the end of the sermon today I'm going to ask you to give your life to Christ and trust God to save you.

Now let's say you knew the answer to what is a Christian.

Why are you confident?

I've heard people say, you need to *know* that you *know* that you *know* that you are *saved*. Let me give you several reasons to be confident. It's in verses 12-13. 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.* It is God's initiative. Christ offered. It is for all time. That is the scope and the security. It is exclusive grace in that there is a single sacrifice for sins. And the work is done. Jesus sat down. It is finished. Jesus is Lord. He sits at the right hand of honor. And in verse 13 there is victory and the reference to Psalm 110:1. Don't let your confidence be in something that you have thought or done. Let it be in the all-sufficient work of God at the cross of Jesus. If you are confident in the grace of God, then the next two questions are for you.

Are you growing?

Look at the tenses and the two phrases in verse 14. It was by a single offering at the cross. The past tense is that He has perfected for all time. That one-time event was a changing event. It happened in the past as our anchor. It is the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The present tense is those who are being sanctified. Here is the ongoing work of God in your life

right now. What does God use to make you more like Christ? Everything! He uses His word, prayer, church, serving people, and family. He uses tests, hardship, sickness, and tragedy. He uses relationships, provision and property, decay of stuff. And He uses His children, marriage, and singleness. Are you growing?

What has changed?

In verse 16 the preacher quotes Jeremiah 31. Notice especially the end of verse 16. 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,”* I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds. The beauty of conversion is a soul change. It alters the very inner workings of your mind and thought. A book that is a good example that I would recommend is, *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* by Rosaria Butterfield.

What does God remember?

Verse 17, what a great verse. It's one we need to think deeply on. It's not enough that we say God forgets. That's not a good way to describe God forgetting. Forgetting is passive and is a human frailty, it's a weakness and decay, it means your memory fades and you lose your keys or your phones or forget dates. God remembers. Genesis 9:6 says, “I will see the rainbow and remember.” Genesis 30 says that God remembered Rachel. Psalm 103:14 says He knows our frame and remembers we are dust. What He will not remember is our sinfulness because it is taken away at the cross.

Take joyful security in the richness of being a Christian. As we close, I have some invitations. Come talk to one of our pastors if you need God to save you in Christ, if you need to pray for growth or you need to trust. Come pray if there is something you can't get past this morning.

(Pastor prays)