

Text: Hebrews 9:13-14

Title: Lord's Table: The Blood of Christ Cleanses the Conscience

Truth: The death of Christ we remember brings us eternal salvation.

Date/Location: Sunday December 5, 2021 at FBC

Order of Service

#286 Hallelujah! What a Savior

#289 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

#293 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Bible Message below

#315 if time permits

Introduction

We are here because of our Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me."

I. Three Different Ways to Try to Approach God, Not All Equal

A. Notice three different methods of religion that are outlined in this passage:

1. Dead works.
2. Animal sacrifice.
3. Christ's self-sacrifice.

B. Now observe the effectiveness of each of these ways.

1. Dead works. The adjective *dead* tells us everything we need to know. Consider Heb. 6:1, that dead works are something we need to repent from. James 2:17 and 2:26 says that faith without works is dead, so that not even dead faith—much less dead works—is effective in establishing or maintaining a relationship to God. Jesus rebuked the church in Sardis because they had so-called works but were devoid of spiritual life (Revelation 3:1).

Dead works are works done by a person with a view toward purifying themselves before God. But "good works" do no such

thing. File this away: if someone thinks that “good works” are getting them into favor with God, know that these works are actually “dead works.” Good works are only good if motivated by faith and love for God and in obedience to His word.

2. Animal sacrifice. The effectiveness of these come from the blood of those animals, meaning the extinguishing of their lives as a payment for sin-debt. Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. This is one reason why it is impossible for “dead works” to achieve any standing with God, for they have no “value” equivalent to the sins of the person, for the wages of sin is death.

In contrast, there is *some* value in the animal sacrifice. The text indicates this when it says, “the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, **sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh.**” The flesh refers to ceremonial cleanness and outward rectitude before the Law. They did not go “deeper” than that into the soul. A sacrifice could be offered by a person with a rotten attitude inside. Although it is conveyed in an *if-statement*, the *if* is assumed true for the sake of what the author is saying, so it is true.

For the time in which animal sacrifice was instituted, it was a good thing. But it was not, as some think, the entirety of the picture. If people thought that without inner faith they could please God with some outward ritual sacrifices, they were gravely mistaken. Faith is a *must* to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Furthermore, these sacrifices were repetitive, always offered over and over, so there was some kind of deficiency in them. That lack is called out in Hebrews 10:4—“it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” In other words, though these sacrifices did do something, namely sanctify/purify the flesh, they did not go any deeper than that.

Thus we find that the first two potential approaches to God are not workable. The third is...

3. Christ’s self-sacrifice. The effectiveness of the work of Christ comes from the blood of Christ, meaning the extinguishing of

His life in payment for the sin-debt of people, including me and you.

The great nature of the Sacrificer compared to the animal sacrifices of old means that the apostle can make a lesser to greater case to help us understand the situation:

Lesser	Greater
Blood of bulls and goats Ashes of a heifer	Blood of Christ
Sanctifies for purifying the flesh	Cleanse the conscience

You can see how not only the **sacrifice** is greater, but the **result** is much greater. To cleanse the conscience, the deepest part of the human psyche, if you will, is tremendous. A faithfully carried out animal sacrifice would not leave the worshipper with that knowledge and therefore feeling. The feeling is that our sins are gone, taken away, completely addressed, never more to be brought up against us for eternity.

II. More About the Offering of Christ from Heb. 9:14

A. It was an offering made in blood. As mentioned above, the blood of Christ refers to His life, that is, the taking of His life. It is not just red blood cells and plasma and stuff that we are talking about here. That is a primary means by which physical life is sustained. If you take that away, something more than mere material is gone. The spiritual is gone as well. Blood poured out means death. Let that sink in, dear ones. Jesus DIED for you. He died. His body was tortured and His soul was enveloped by the wrath of God for our sins.

Heb. 9:11-12 tell us that by means of this blood, He entered into the heavenly dwelling place of God because he had obtained eternal redemption.

B. It was an offering made through the Holy Spirit. The “eternal Spirit” is none other than the Holy Spirit. Everything Jesus did was in the power of and in accord with God the Spirit. The Spirit was poured out upon Him without measure or limit (John 3:34). The Spirit

helped Him to manage through the deep trial of death for sin, until, I believe, the moment at which He was left alone under God's hot wrath against sin.

C. It was an offering without spot. He was the lamb of God, without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:19); holy, blameless, separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26), without sin (Heb. 4:15), who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), who committed no sin (1 Peter 2:22), in whom there is no sin (1 John 3:5).

He did this to make **us** without spot and blameless (2 Peter 3:14, Eph. 5:27).

III. A Few Eternal Things in the book of Hebrews

Heb. 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of **eternal salvation** to all who obey Him,

Heb. 6:2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.

Heb. 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained **eternal redemption**.

Heb. 9:14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb. 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the **eternal inheritance**.

And we can have **eternal life** (John 3:15).

Conclusion

Finally, from verse 14, the death of Christ was intended not only to cleanse us from dead works, but to put us into service of the great King, the living God. May we be about serving Him in grateful remembrance of what He has done for us.

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