

Cross and sanctified life

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Last week we meditated on “looking at the cross” and today I would like to go into “Cross and sanctification.” The first aspect of the cross is that it represents one perfect all sufficient sacrifice. This is stated in Hebrews 10:8-14.

Let's read Hebrews 10:8-14

“First, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

What the writer is saying is by His sacrificial death on the cross Jesus made total, perfect, all sufficient provision for every need of every human being at any time and in any place forever. He never would have to do it again. If you read the preceding verses the writer is contrasting the priests of the Old Covenant with Jesus as the priest who offered Himself as a sacrifice. And he says about the Old Testament priests they never sat down. They always remained standing because their job was never finished. They could offer any number of sacrifices but always another sacrifice was going to be needed. But then he says about Jesus:

“But when this priest (Jesus) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,”

Why did He sit down? Because He was never going to have to do it again. By one sacrifice He had made total perfect provision for every need of every human being.

In very simple language the truth is this: All the evil due by justice to us came upon Jesus that all the good due to the sinless obedience of the Son of God might be made available to us.

The writer of Hebrews says about the sacrifices of the Old Testament in those sacrifices there was a reminder again made every year of sins. But they could not take away sins. Take,

for instance, the chief sacrifice of Israel, the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement. It was only valid for one year. It did not take away sin, it covered sin. It covered sin for the year till the sacrifice was due again. In a sense, it was a reminder of sin. Every year they were reminded you've got to deal with the sin issue. They could only deal with it for one year. But then the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

“God made Jesus to be sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with His righteousness.”

Christianity is not a set of rules. It's not a set of laws. Israel had had a set of laws for 14 centuries given by Moses. Paul tells us that the law is perfect, it's righteous, it's holy, it's good. We can never improve on the law of Moses if it comes to a law. If that would do it there would have been no need for Jesus to come. Christians who talk the most about grace sometimes know the least about it.

But the law of Moses failed. Not because there was anything wrong with the law but because there was a problem in us. We were unable to keep the law because of the weakness of our fleshly nature. Paul talks on this theme in Galatians 3:11–12.

“Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.”

The purpose of the cross is to bring us to the end of all our wisdom and all our strength and to show us that they are totally of no avail whatever. We can't achieve anything by obeying the law in our own strength. And we can only begin to enter into the grace of God when we've come to the end of ourselves.

A lot of you at the present time are going through problems and pressures in your lives and you're saying, “What's God doing?” The answer is God is gently but firmly bringing you to the end of yourself where the best you can do doesn't even begin to be good enough.

We are willing to receive from God, but very unwilling to let go of our own pride and plans. That's how it is with many of us. I want God's wisdom, I want God's strength, but I still want to hold on to my own, too. God does not deal on that basis. It has to come to the end of your own wisdom and your own strength before God will release His grace into your life.

“And God said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’”

“It seems the more vulnerable we realize that we really are, the more open we make ourselves to the presence of God, and the deeper our faith and our spirituality. On the contrary, the more we try to protect ourselves, to control our lives, and to avoid pain and weakness, the more we cut ourselves off from the presence of God.”

That’s really true. Because when we have our own strength, how can people identify God’s strength? They can’t see it. But when we’ve come to the end of our own strength and then we have strength, then we know it’s God. God’s strength is made perfect in my weakness.

I was born into such a godless family background. And I don’t know, how on earth my nonbelieving parents put me into a Christian boarding school, and how on earth that I grew with Godly conviction and faith. It’s nothing but a miracle. His strength was made perfect in my weakness.

So that’s why we need the cross. The second reason, because only the cross releases the grace of God. You can have all the rules and all the principals and all the teaching, but you can’t do it unless the grace of God is released through the cross. In fact, the more rules you get the worse your problems will become. And in the end you’re likely to throw it all overboard and say it’s no good, I just can’t do it. You’re perfectly right, you can’t do it, I can’t do it. There’s only one person who can do it and His name is Jesus. But when He is allowed to live in His live in us. When we’ve submitted to the cross and come to the end of ourselves then He’s abundantly able to do it. Then you would be able to say that I’m more than conqueror through Christ Jesus.

if we don’t do it perfectly right the first time, He doesn’t reject us. He says you made a good try, this is where you went wrong, now let’s do it again. To lay that axe at the root of that tree until that tree comes down. That’s how we fight sin, not just a prayer on a Sunday morning. During this journey He may correct you, He may do things in your life that you just don’t understand. But He’ll never give up on you.

Just bear in mind you’ve got another Father now and His name is God. He is very patient and very understanding and very gentle. He may take you through different paths and challenges but at the end you will shine like a pure gold for his glory.

What makes the church thrive, it is the confidence that “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:10).

Its is in hope and confidence that we testify to our weaknesses knowing that God is working through it. God is redeeming that which has been our great trials, disappointments, and heartbreaks. If you are genuinely suffering and struggling, whether it is emotional, physical or spiritual , be rest assures that God is there for you and His grace us sufficient in your weakness, that we may have confidence that when we are weak then only then are we truly strong.