

Hebrews 9 (Part 2) :16-28 - Hebrews 10 (Part 1) :1-18 • The Perfect Sacrifice

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Hebrews 9:16 and the first statement right off the bat from the author of this letter says, *"¹⁶For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established."* And then he kind of repeats that idea in verse 17 by saying, *"¹⁷For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive."*

I don't know how many of you have a will. I've never gotten around to making one mostly because I don't have anything to give away really to speak of. But to be honest with you, it always kind of creeped me out. I remember years ago when my sister-in-law and her husband, Sue's oldest sister, they were getting ready to take a long motorcycle trip and motorcycles can be dangerous.

And Sue and I've taken plenty of trips on motorcycles too, but they decided this particular year they wanted to make out a will before they left. And they were like, "Hey, would you guys sign the will and witness this thing?" It was like . . . "Okay." We were all pretty young at the time and I just remember thinking, when you're young, you're kind of bulletproof. It's like, death, what's that? And I just remember kind of being creeped out a little bit just with the whole prospect.

But he's bringing up wills at this particular point in the letter to explain the fact that wills are only really in force once the person kicks the bucket. When they're still alive, the beneficiaries who are named in the will are helpless to take advantage of it because of the fact that the person is still alive.

And by the way, as we're reading this, you might, if you have a different translation than the one I'm reading, have a different word in verse 16 where it says *"where a will is involved,"* this is an interesting Greek word that in this context means last will and testament. So I think the ESV did a good job, but it's also translated "covenant" in other places.

And really you have to just look at the context to know whether you're talking about a last will and testament or a covenant, because they are slightly different meanings to the word. The point once again, is that a last will and testament is

only in force once the death of the testator. I learned that word just this week. A testator is the person who makes a will. Some of you've known that for a long time. I just learned it. So old dogs can learn new things.

The author goes on to say in verse 18, *"¹⁸Therefore not even the first covenant" (and he's referring to the mosaic covenant) "was inaugurated without blood."* And the mention of the word blood here is because blood is associated with death. Well, actually blood is associated with life, but when the blood is gone, death occurs. And so he says that a will or a covenant is really not in force without blood, or if you will, without death.

As we've said many times throughout the course of this study, this letter was written to Jews. That's why we called the book of Hebrews. And we've said many times as well that the reason the letter was being written was because these Jews were being tempted to go back under the law and move away from the death of Jesus Christ as the only means of being made righteous before God.

And so this author is writing to people who have a common understanding of things like blood. You and I will think of blood in terms of, I suppose, the physiological aspect, but in a Jewish mind, blood was sacred. Blood was the source of life and there was a great sacredness that was connected to it.

And it is important for us to understand that in order to really, truly lay hold of what the author is saying. And part of what they believed concerning blood was based out of the Old Testament. Well, much of it was based out of the Old Testament and all of the blood that goes. Have you ever noticed there's a lot of blood in the Old Testament? I mean, the Old Testament is just absolutely full of blood. They talk about blood, they use blood. And I think that's why a lot of people frankly don't like the Old Testament. It's kind of bloody.

Let me show you something the Lord actually said to them back in the book of Leviticus, chapter 17:11, He said:

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Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)

For the life of the flesh (or the life of a living thing, if you will) is in the blood, (and then the Lord goes on to say) and I have given it (the blood) for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

And what that means is by the giving of life. So the blood is the gift of life. It is that picture of the gift of life.

And so because of passages like this one in Leviticus and elsewhere in the Old Testament, the Jews had a very very high view of the sacredness of blood. And that is why from the Bible, if ever someone sheds blood in the form of murder, that person, according to the law of God, must be punished for the taking of that person's life or the shedding of blood.

You'll remember also the Jews were told that when they killed an animal, they had to make sure and drain it properly of all its blood. They were not to eat animal meat with its life blood still in it. That was against the law. But God was simply communicating to them the sacredness of blood as the source of life.

So he goes on now speaking of the blood, verse 19, saying, *"¹⁹For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people,"* (look at this) *"he took the blood"* (in this case it was the blood) *"of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,"* ²⁰*saying, "This is the blood of the covenant"* does that sound familiar? Something very similar to what Jesus said at the last supper.

Remember when he lifted the cup at the end of the supper? He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood (1Corinthians 11:25; Luke 22:20). So this is very similar language. But Moses said, *"This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."*

He goes on to say in verse 21, *"²¹And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent"* (that refers to the tabernacle) *"and all the vessels used in worship. ²²Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."* So you'll notice in this passage that the author reminds us that every aspect of the old covenant system was sanctified and purified by the sprinkling of blood. Human blood? No, we were told that Moses took the blood of goats and calves and that sort of thing.

So that kind of brings up a question in our mind because the author is going to say later on in this chapter . . . or actually I'm thinking in the next chapter. And he said before that the blood of animals isn't sufficient to take away the sins of man. We've made that point in the past. He's going to make it again. So the question kind of naturally comes up. How is it that the blood of animals was sufficient to purify the tabernacle, the people, and all of the articles for worship? If it was insufficient to cover the sin of mankind, why was it sufficient to purify

the articles of worship related to the Old Testament tabernacle and sacrificial system?

And the answer is given to us in verse 23. Look with me in your Bible. *"²³Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites,"* and there is your answer. This is why the blood of animals was sufficient to purify the articles and the tabernacle under the old covenants because they were just copies.

They weren't the real thing. They were just copies. So the blood of animals could do it because it was a picture of what was to come. But he goes on, you'll notice I didn't finish reading verse 23. The rest of the verse says, *"but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."* And of course, he's referring, by better sacrifices, to the blood of Jesus Christ and so forth.

It goes on in verse 24, *"²⁴For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."* Jesus, we're told here, entered into the holy of holies of heaven, and there with His blood, offered the perfect sacrifice to purify all who would come to Him by faith.

Verse 25, he says, *"²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,"* and we talked about this last week. We talked about the fact that the repetition of the high priest was an annual event. He had to go in annually to atone for the sins of all of Israel. And he says that's not the way Jesus goes in. He doesn't go in repeatedly.

Why? Verse 26 tells you. Look at verse 26, *"²⁶for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is,"* (and this is something he said before and is going to say again) *"he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

And then he adds this important note in verse 27, *"²⁷And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."*

And I love these couple of verses here because it underscores what we emphasized last week, of course. And that is that the sacrifice for our sin is completed. It's done. It's over. The penalty has been paid. And so when Jesus comes back, and He's coming back, by the way, He's not going to come to deal with sin.

He's already dealt with sin. He dealt with sin in His first coming. And He finished that work and it's what He said on the cross. *"It is finished,"* (John 19:30). So when He returns a second time, He does not come to deal with sin. He comes to basically hand salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

It's kind of interesting, isn't it, that we think about ourselves, we talk about ourselves as saved. I'm saved. We say, 'Hey, have you been saved? I'm saved. I got saved by Jesus Christ. Thank you Lord.' But do you know that we have not yet received our salvation? Not even close. I mean, if this is all we get, we got ripped off. No no no no. This is just a down payment. We have received a down payment, like an earnest agreement, and it's lovely.

God has given us His Holy Spirit and all the wonderful promises of heaven. But it's just a down payment. Life on earth still continues to be pretty rotten for the most part. And death is still around and sickness and all the other junk. Things that tend to take up all of our time and attention. So we know that we have not received the fullness of what He has prepared for us.

That happens when He comes back. Jesus returns to give salvation for those who are waiting. And we await that day. We anticipate that day. We long for that day because we long to be released from these corruptible bodies and so forth. But He is coming back.

Verse 27 also says something else that's very interesting in case you've ever been approached by someone who believes in reincarnation. Because verse 27 blows that out of the water. Did you catch what he said? He says, *"just as it is appointed for man to die once,"* and then the judgment. So if somebody says, I believe in reincarnation, you just take him to this verse and say, well, the Bible disagrees. It is appointed on demand to die once and after that, judgment. You're not going to come back as an animal or as another person or something.

Have you ever noticed when people who believe in reincarnation, they were always something amazing in a past life. I mean, they were never a dog or a flea, or something that is ugly. They were like a king. I was a pharaoh in my past life, something like that. Anyway, all right, so we move on.

Now we get into a little bit of the first half of chapter 10. And again, this is a continuation of the same thoughts. He says, *"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,"* (and notice the strength of that statement) *"by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near."*

Why? Because it's a shadow. It's just a shadow. It's a shadow of the realities. The law is a shadow. You know what's interesting about this Greek word? I actually looked it up and it's quite interesting. Have you ever noticed when you're standing outside in the bright sunlight, your shadow is perfectly defined and you can look down on the ground and there it is?

It's just right there. Deep, dark shadow. That's not what this word describes. In the Greek, this word describes a fuzzy shadow as if it's cloudy and you can barely see the outline of your shadow. And that's what the writer here of this letter is trying to convey about the mosaic law.

It's fuzzy. You can't see a perfect outline of what God intended. It's just a shadow that points toward the reality. And so he says to you and me that the law of God can never perfect the worshiper. And that's proven by the fact that they had to repeat the sacrifices every year.

They had to go back every year into the Holy of Holies, the high priest, take the blood of animals and do this work. If he was able to perfect them, it would be done. He would've done it, and it was like he was done, we're good. But the fact that they had to keep going back tells you something is not good enough.

Look at verse 2. He actually says that in verse 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? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year."* And so he's saying that under the old covenant, the people were forced to be reminded every single year: 'Oh yeah, we gotta go back. We gotta go back and do this. There is still this issue of sin that's standing between me and God. You gotta go.' That's Day of Atonement again. We gotta go back and do this again.

I know Christians who live that way. I know born again Christians who live that way. What I mean is they feel like they have to keep going back. And like do the whole thing all over again because they're like, 'Well Pastor, I just don't feel like I'm saved.' And it's all about their feelings. And they constantly live under condemnation and they never walk in the freedom of that once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ that ought to perpetually remind us sin has been dealt with.

The penalty is over. The penalty has been paid. Jesus paid it, and that doesn't mean that we don't go back and ask for forgiveness. You guys understand, right, that when we go back as believers and ask for forgiveness, that has nothing to do about bolstering your salvation or reaffirming your salvation. That had nothing to do with it.

When we go back and say, Lord, forgive me for my sin, we're making sure there's nothing in between us relationally. But from an eternal standpoint, Jesus finished the sacrifice on the cross. Now, the reason that we go back and ask for forgiveness, and we ought to do that, and Jesus taught us to do that, is because we walk through this world and we get dirty.

And we know that we fail on a regular basis. But our failure doesn't result in the loss of our salvation. It could very well result in the loss of intimacy with the Father because He still can't deal with sin. He still can't abide sin.

So we go to the Lord and we say, Lord, forgive me. Cleanse me, wash me anew. Just because I don't want anything between us. I don't want anything to hinder our fellowship. I know I'm going to heaven. I know what Jesus did for me. I know my sins are cleansed from that eternal standpoint of righteousness before God. I know that. But I also know that my daily faults and my daily mistakes can cause a rift relationally between you and me. And so I come to you and I say, Lord, just wash me and I ask you to forgive me.

It is not about getting saved again. That's an Old Testament idea of the repeated aspect of going into the Holy of Holies again to once again make atonement. No, it's been done. It's been done, and it is finished. But it couldn't be finished under the old Covenant.

Why? Verse 4 tells you, *"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* And I want you to notice the emphasis in that verse. It's not just hard. It's impossible. It is impossible for the blood of animals to take away the sins of man.

So we've learned some interesting things in our study of Hebrews about the animal sacrifices that were done during the old covenant. The first thing we've learned is that the only reason that those animal sacrifices and the blood from those animals could purify the tabernacle and the worship instruments is because they were copies. We learned that today. But secondly, we've learned, as we've just read, that the blood of animals can never stand in for the sin of mankind.

Only a human being can stand in for the sin of other humans. Only another human. An angel can't stand in your place and take your sin. An angel cannot represent mankind. There must be a human representative. We'll talk more about this in just a bit.

Now in verse 5, he goes on to quote Psalm chapter 40. Look with me in verse 5 and following. He says, *"Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,"* (and here's where the quote from Psalm 40 begins) *"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,"* (and that speaks of animal sacrifices) *"but a body have you prepared for me;"* this is the Messiah speaking, and this is important. Why was a body prepared for Jesus? Because He had to be a human to come and die on the cross for our sins. He had to be a human. He had to be. And this is something the author frankly touched on earlier. I don't know if you remember back in the second chapter, we'll put this up on the screen so you can see it together. Remember from Hebrews chapter 2, he wrote,

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Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV)

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood (and that just simply means since the children are human), *he himself* (became human, or if you will) *likewise partook of the same things* (which is flesh and blood), *that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death...*

This is very important for us to understand. I think a lot of people kind of wonder sometimes, why couldn't God just forgive us? And just be done with it. Why couldn't he just say, okay, listen, if you come to me and you ask for forgiveness, I'll forgive you and we'll be good. Why the death thing?

Why death and dying and blood and gore and agony and all that other junk? Why? Why is that? Why is that necessary? Well, it was necessary because somebody had to pay. Somebody had to pay. God just can't simply sweep our sin under the rug and say it's no big deal. It is a big deal. And *"the wages of sin is death,"* (Romans 6:23).

That's what the word tells us. There's always a wage that goes along with sin and it's always death. Somebody had to die. Somebody had to pay. Well, who's going to pay? You going to pay? You want to pay? I don't want to. So God sends His Son, but not just sending Him as an apparition or a vision. He sends Him as a human to stand in for humans.

He had to be a human to die our death. But more than that, He had to be a perfect human. He had to be without sin completely. Because if He had committed even one single sin, Jesus would've been disqualified from dying on the cross for you, because He would've had to die for Himself.

I'd like to give my life for mankind. Sorry, you're disqualified. On what basis? You've sinned. See, I can't give my life for you. If I said, Lord, I want to give my life for these people here, He'd say, sorry, dude, you were disqualified the day you were conceived. Before you had even committed any sin. You were disqualified because you have a sinful nature.

So God sends His Son. And that is the beauty of the incarnation. The Holy Spirit coming upon Mary as a virgin, communicating nothing of man's sinful nature into this incredible embryo that grows to be the eternal Son of God. No sin. No stain of sin in this One, who then keeps the law perfectly. And then is qualified to give His life for you and for me. Because He has no sin of His own to atone for.

It's really incredible. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God. The spotless Lamb of God. And that is why way back in the Old Testament, during Passover, which was a picture of the sacrifice that Jesus would give, He told the Jews to select a lamb without spot or wrinkle, which is a way of saying no marks. No deformities. Perfect. It must be a perfect lamb that is sacrificed, that will save you from death. Because this is a picture of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God. And it's such an incredible incredible picture.

So He goes on here in verse 6. He says, *"in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure."* Because they can't do the job. And then He says in verse 7, *"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,'"* (and He's still quoting from this Psalm) *"as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."* And the writer of Hebrews is quoting Psalm chapter 40 out of the Septuagint. I don't know if you've ever heard that word before, but back in those days, the version of the Old Testament that they had was actually translated from Hebrew into Greek, and so they called it the Septuagint. There are some slight differences in wording.

If you compare this with your excellent Hebrew translation, in your Bible, you're going to find some slight differences in wording. But the point of all this is that Jesus is here declaring His willingness as prophesied in Psalm chapter 40, to come and be that perfect sacrifice of the new covenant for you and for me.

And it goes on to say in that section that *"as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."* or your Bible may say, in the volume of the book. And that essentially says: just as it declares Me throughout the course of the whole Testament, I have come. And you know what is so cool? The more I have studied through the Old Testament in my life, the more I see Jesus.

You think, well, you got to get into Matthew and into the New Testament before you can start seeing Jesus. Oh no. He is replete through the Old Testament. You read the Old Testament, He is there. You might not see the name Jesus, but the pictures are there over and over. We've already mentioned the spotless Passover lamb. These are the pictures that are given to us throughout the volume of the book and it is beautiful.

And then the author explains kind of his own commentary about Psalm 40 beginning in verse 8. He says, *"⁸When 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), ⁹then he added, 'Behold,' (this is the Messiah speaking) 'I have come to do your will.' He does away with the first in order to establish the second."* Isn't that beautiful?

And he says in verse 10, *"¹⁰And by that will" (the will of the one who came to die in our place) "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (and here's this phrase again) "once for all."* This is something that he has repeated in the past. He's going to repeat some more. The work of Jesus was *"once for all."* Jesus need not be sacrificed repeatedly.

Verse 11. *"¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet."* I love these three verses here. Because it talks about now even though the priests who stand and obviously when this letter was written the temple was probably still standing and the priests were still doing their work and they were going in and repeatedly doing these sacrifices.

But he says, when Jesus offered His sacrifice that once for all sacrifice, He sat down at the right hand of God. The right hand is, of course, means power. He sat down at the right hand, the power of God. What does that do for you when you hear that somebody sat down? Well, that tells me, it's done.

It is finished. And so He sat down. He sat down at the right hand of the power of the majesty of God because the work of redemption was finished. It's interesting. If you ever could peek into the Holy of Holies where the Jewish high priests would go in and sprinkle the blood once a year on the Day of Atonement, you'd find that there was no chair in there. They never sat down because the work was never finished. But Jesus sat down. It's done. It's done.

So it goes on. At the end of that passage we looked at, we saw there in verse 13, at the very end of that, it says that Jesus is waiting for His enemies to be put under His feet, and that of course causes us to look forward to the final consummation of things when Jesus will return to bring salvation. To bring victory to the nation of Israel against their enemies and so on and so on and so on.

Have you ever thought about the fact that the life of Jesus and what we read about in the Word of God creates this domino effect, where one aspect of the life of Christ produces the next and onto the next, like dominoes falling in order. You've seen people set up dominoes and you hit the first one and that knocks down the second and the second knocks down the third and so forth.

There's a picture of what Christ has accomplished, or the events of His life that lend themselves to the next event. And this was beautifully captured by a colleague of mine by the name of David Guzik, and I want to share this with you. Here's what he writes:

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The incarnation (which is that supernatural perfect birth of Jesus) **leads to His perfect life; His perfect life leads to His atoning death** (because He was qualified to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins); **His atoning death leads to His resurrection** (because death cannot maintain its hold on Him); **His resurrection leads to His ascension into glory; His ascension to glory leads to His return and triumph over every enemy.** – David Guzik

I just thought that was so well put. How each and every aspect of the life of Christ, the Ministry of Christ, brings upon itself the next element and so forth.

And then we come to verse 14. We're just about finished up here. He says, *"¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."* Now, I wanted you to pause over that verse just for a moment. Just hover there for just a moment because there are some time references given in this verse. You'll notice one is past tense and one is present tense. First for the past tense, *"For by a single offering he has perfected"* not is perfecting, but has perfected. Done.

It's over. It's in the past. He has perfected. You've been perfected. But then he goes on to say, all *"those who are being sanctified."* Or, if you will, made holy. You could actually translate this verse by saying that he has made holy, those

who are being made holy. And it sounds like it's a contradiction, but it's not because in God's understanding of things, the work is done.

And you have been perfected. And that might not sit very well with you because most of us are pretty aware of our sin and we don't like to even talk about it or think about it. But it seems so strange when God comes along and says, you've been perfected. And we're kind of like, oh no, I haven't.

Like I don't know who you're looking at God when you say that, but that just doesn't fit me. Oh no. Yes it does, because you see, it is Jesus who did the work, not you. And it's the same sort of a statement that says you are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Right now you're seated at Life Bible Ministry, and yet the Bible says you are seated right now with Christ in heavenly places.

It's done. It's already there in the understanding and the wisdom of God. But then we come back to the present tense where this verse says that you are also being sanctified. So there's this work of sanctification that's going on in our lives, and it's not fun most of the time.

Most of the time. It's painful and challenging and grievous to us as we're walking through the issues of life that God promises to use to sanctify us. I'll put that in easier terms: to knock the rough edges off us. That's what's going on. He's doing a work in your life and you thought He was mad at you.

You thought that He was angry at you, and He loves you. He's just sanctifying you. And that work goes on and will go on for the remainder of your time on this earth. And I don't mean to bum you out, but you're never going to achieve perfect holiness this side of the veil. I don't care what you've been told.

It ain't going to happen. We're moving that direction. God is forming us into the image of His beloved Son, but we're not going to be like that image until much later on. The Bible says it will be when we see Him as He is, we will be made like Him (1 John 3:2). And that's a beautiful and wonderful thing to look forward to, but it is happening also right now progressively.

You are being sanctified. You are being sanctified. You may not even be aware of it. What you're aware of is that life right now is painful, but that's often the sanctification process. And I want you to know that God loves you very much. And He disciplines those whom He loves to bring about that sanctification.

Verse 15. We're just going to read through verse 18, then we're going to be done.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,"

And now he's going back to quoting Jeremiah 31, which you quoted earlier in this letter.

*""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,"*

¹⁷then he adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

*¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin."
(ESV)*

Or if you will, there's no longer any need for an ongoing, sacrificial offering to take place because it's done. It is finished. And Jesus has paid the penalty for you and me and it's done. And there's no longer any need to go back and go do animal sacrifices.

This was an important statement to make to Jews who were being tempted to go back and do that. And the writer is making it very clear that would be a very unwise thing to do because you see all the sacrifices that need to happen are now done. The final perfect sacrifice has taken place.

Oh, I wish Christians could get that through their hearts that it's done, and that Jesus has accomplished the work, and there's nothing left to accomplish from the standpoint of your salvation. There is a very insidious belief that has wormed its way into the gospel over the years, and it goes something like this: Jesus Christ died on the cross to save me from my sins. When I put my faith in Him, I am born again and washed of all of my sin. But I must now live a holy life to maintain my salvation.

Did you catch that last part? That's not in the gospel. If it were, the gospel, wouldn't be the gospel because gospel means good news. That's not good news. That's bad news. Anything that puts any sort of emphasis on you is bad news, and yet so many people have embraced this bad news. And I received literally dozens of emails a week from people who have not only embraced this idea that I must keep myself saved, but they have since listened to the whisperings of the enemy who loves to accuse God's people, by the way. And they have come to

the place of believing that they are past the point of even being able to be saved, or at least they're concerned that is in fact the case.

I had a gal write me here recently. She said for the last 12 years I have lived in utter torment, believing that I am on my way to hell and there's nothing I can do about that. And she said the reason is because I gave my life to the Lord. And then for like 15 years I just totally went back to the world and lived like a heathen.

And now she said, I believe that I have sinned to such a degree that God will no longer accept me back. And my heart just breaks. My heart breaks because it is the lie of Satan. To get people to be hopeless. Let me tell you something, that's not God bringing torment to the heart of someone.

That's the enemy's M.O. He's all about torment. And he loves to pinpoint your sin, every little rotten detail, and get you to think about it. Because if he can get you to focus on it, and by the way, that's not a hard thing to do for him because you're already hardwired to focus on yourself. And so he comes along and gets you to focus on your mistakes.

And we've all made them, some of us in living color. And he gets you to think about your sin and to focus on your sin, and pretty soon there is no recovery because you are so fixated on what you've done wrong, that you can't even see the answer anymore. You can't even see the solution. The solution is right there.

Jesus on the cross, dying for your sins, giving Himself. Paying the penalty for your sin. And people can't see it. And they write me, and they're just out of their minds with torment. But they don't usually write me and just start asking. They don't come out and say that right at the get go.

The way it begins is Bible questions. And I've learned to recognize the same Bible questions over and over again. And there are all these passages about judgment and so forth. And they say, Pastor Paul, what does this verse mean? And then they write me back. And at first, I don't know what's going on in their life, so just answer it.

Well, it means dadadadada. They write me back, well, but does it mean dadadadada? And they want to know more. And then they give me another one, and then another one and another one. And pretty soon I realize the only thing they're reading in the Bible is damnation. That's all they can see. That's all they can see.

They can't see God's love anymore. It's gone. It's not even in view. And so eventually I realize what I'm dealing with these individuals. And you know what I say to them? I say, you know what, from this point forward, I will not answer one more question about judgment and hell and damnation, but you want to talk about Jesus, I am yours.

I'm with you all day long. I'll answer any question you want or have about the Savior and what He did on the cross. But you want to talk about damnation. Listen, that is your cocaine and you're addicted. You got to get your eyes off yourself and you got to get them on the solution because you know what happens when you put your eyes on the problem? It just gets bigger. It just gets bigger.

You guys all know the story about when the nation of Israel came to the promised land and Moses sent spies in. Most of those spies came back and what was their report? It was all about the problem. There's giants in the land. There's no way we can take it. Not in a million years. We're dead. Our children are dead. We're done for. Couldn't see the solution. Joshua and Caleb tried their best. They said God can do this. God is able. Put your faith in Him. No. They wouldn't have it. Only the problem. Only the problem. That's all they could see.

I meet up with those kind of Christians every single day. And again, it breaks my heart. Jesus is the answer, you guys. He said, "*I am the way*" (John 14:6). I am the way. We look to Him. We find the way because He is the way. Don't fall into the trap of just sitting and looking at your sin. You go look in a dark place and I guarantee all you're going to see is darkness. And you'll never walk away with a hopeful attitude.

Put your hope in Jesus. The Bible says where sin abounds, grace much more abounds (Romans 5:20). Amen. We need to get that through our hearts, you guys.

Let's stand together. We're going to have our usual prayer team up here to pray with you after the service. Father, God, thank you so much for your word. Thank you for the reminders. Thank you, Lord, by telling us again, Jesus is enough. What He did is perfect and it is finished. And now Lord, we rest in you for this finished work. Teach us, Lord, to trust in you for our temporal things too. And we pray that you would continue to fill us with your Spirit. Teach us the things that we need to learn and Lord, keep our eyes off ourselves and onto you. For you are the hope of our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. And all God's people said, amen. God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.