

A Greater Sacrifice

Jesus is Greater #15 - Pastor Gary Combs - November 3, 2024 - Hebrews 9:15-28

INTRO: Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, “JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews.” Remember our theme verse is:

Hebrews 1:4 (NLT) This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

Today, we’re in part #15 of our series in a message entitled, “A Greater Sacrifice.” Jesus has made a greater sacrifice. What do you think of when you hear the word sacrifice?

ILL: Perhaps you think of your mother or father and how they sacrificed to raise and care for you? Maybe you think of someone who donated a kidney? Perhaps a fireman who runs into a burning building to rescue a child? Or a soldier that jumps on a grenade to save his brothers? There are many kinds of sacrifices, but which is greater?

Have you ever heard of Charles Thomas Studd? Also known as C.T. Studd (1860—1931), he was a British missionary who served in China, India, and Africa. He also founded the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade. Despite being born into privileged circumstances and attaining athletic fame early in life as a cricket player, he relinquished everything to live by his motto:

“If Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.” — C.T. Studd

Need: How have you responded to Christ’s sacrifice? Are you put off by all the talk of blood and sacrifice that you see in the Bible? Does the idea of Christ’s crucifixion offend you and cause you to turn your eyes away? As one person said to me, “I just don’t get all the talk about blood and cross-carrying. I’m looking for a more positive spirituality.” Or perhaps you have heard the message of Christ’s sacrifice and it has moved you to repent of your sins and believe? You’ve understood the message of love that Christ’s great sacrifice has put on display?

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” — Jesus (*John 15:13*)

Trans: That’s what Christ did. His great love moved Him to make the greatest sacrifice in order to save those who believe in Him. For Jesus is greater and His sacrifice is greater.

BODY: In Hebrews 9:15-28, the author told the Hebrew believers that the sacrifice of Christ is greater than the sacrifices of the old covenant. We can understand that the sacrifice of Christ is greater than the sacrifices of the old covenant. Why is the sacrifice of Christ greater than the sacrifices of the old covenant? The text gives **three reasons** the sacrifice of Christ is greater than the sacrifices of the old covenant.

Read text: Hebrews 9:15-28 (ESV) 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took 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 that God commanded for you.” 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For 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. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own. 26 For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so 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.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IS GREATER BECAUSE...

1. It promises an eternal inheritance.

EXP: (15-21, 23) 1st, look at v.23 and notice the phrase “better sacrifices.” This is the big idea of this passage. Christ offers a better sacrifice. Now, look at v.15 “promised eternal inheritance.” The author uses a legal illustration of a promised inheritance set forth by a last will and testament that requires a death.

“**Better sacrifices**” (23) (κρείττοσιν θυσίαις, *kreittosin thusiais*) - more useful, more excellent sacrifice.

“**Therefore**” (15) (Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, *kai dia touto*) - KJV: “And for this cause.” Points back to “the blood of Christ” (14). The author now moves from the superiority of Christ’s heavenly Tabernacle to His sacrifice.

“**Mediator**” (15) (μεσίτης, *mesitēs*) - one who intervenes between two, a go-between.

“**Covenant**” (15, 4x) (διαθήκη, *diathēkē*) - a covenant, a testament or will.

“**Eternal inheritance**” (15) (κληρονομία, *klēronomia*) - an inheritance, one that lasts for eternity.

“**Redeems**” (15) (ἀπολύτρωσις, *apolutrōsis*) - a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption.

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“**Transgressions**” (15) (παράβασις, *parabasis*) - a going over; the breach of a definite, ratified law.

“**Will**” (16) (διαθήκη, *diathēkē*) - same word for covenant, but context implies the aspect of a will.

“**Inaugurated**” (18) (ἐγκαινίζω, *egkainizō*) - to renew, i.e. to inaugurate, consecrate, dedicate or initiate.

“**Blood**” (18, 7x) (αἷμα, *haima*) - blood of man or animals; refers to the seat of life

“**Water..scarlet wool..hyssop**” (19) - “the ceremony of sprinkling for purification is described” — Ellicott

Leviticus 14:6 (ESV) He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water.

The 3 elements point to Jesus: 1) Cedarwood: The cross, 2) Scarlet yarn: The color of the robe the Roman soldiers put on Christ and mocked Him (Matt. 27:28). And 3) Hyssop: The Roman soldiers lifted sour wine with a hyssop branch to Christ on the cross (John 19:28-30). — <https://www.garycombs.org/blog/oyb/leviticus-seen-through-the-lens-of-christ>

“**Sprinkled**” (19, 2x) (ρᾶννίζω, *rantizō*) - to sprinkle, to cleanse by sprinkling.

ARG: In Christ we are promised an eternal inheritance. This means it is...

1 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

We are joint heirs with Christ. We have inherited the Spirit, adoption, and all that is Christ's is ours!

Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...

ILL: When my father died, he left a last will and testament. He designated me and my siblings as inheritors of an estate intended for our college education. It was mostly Sears stock, valued in the early 70's around \$50-60. According to his instructions, as the firstborn, I had access to it first, and could use as much as needed, but hopefully there would be enough for all of us. My senior year of HS, the fund looked more than sufficient, but after my first year in college, a severe recession hit and Sears stock plunged to \$10-15 a share. I ended up taking student loans to give time for it to recover enough for my siblings' education.

APP: There's no such thing as an “eternal” inheritance in this world, but in Christ, we have “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” for us! The Israelites had a conditional covenant with God that if they obeyed, they would thrive in the inheritance of the Promised Land. But their sacrifices and covenant was insufficient and they lost their inheritance. But in Christ we have a greater sacrifice that promises an eternal inheritance!

2. It provides a complete forgiveness of sin.

EXP: (22-26) Look at v.22: “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

“**Purified**” (22,23 2x) (καθαρίζω, *katharizō*) - to make clean, cleanse, purify.

“**Shedding of blood**” (22) (αἵματεκχυσία, *haimatekchysia*) (HL) - blood shedding. A reference to Lev. 17:11

Leviticus 17:11 (ESV) For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

“**No forgiveness**” (22) (ἄφεσις, *aphesis*) - forgiveness or pardon, of sins, remission of the penalty.

“**Copies**” (23) (ὑπόδειγμα, *hypodeigma*) - a sign, representation, figure, copy; an example: for imitation

“**Heavenly**” (23,24 - 3x) (οὐρανός, *ouranos*) - Where God dwells and other heavenly beings

“**Made with hands**” (24) (χειροποίητος, *cheiropoiētos*) - not man made, but “into heaven itself.”

“**End of the ages**” (26) (συντέλεια, *sunteleia*) - completion, end; (of a dispensation). “Last days” (Heb. 1:2).

“**Put away sin**” (26) (ἀθέτησις, *athetēsis*) - abolition, disannulling, put away, rejection; cancellation

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ARG: The old sacrifices had to be repeated, but Christ's sacrifice has taken sin away once for all.

Colossians 2:13-14 (NIV) ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

ILL: Have you heard of North Carolina statute SB562? It's referred to as the "Second Chance Act." Passed in 2020, also called the "clean slate bill," it provides an opportunity to individuals who committed, or were charged with, non-violent crimes to have their record expunged of the crime. Not everyone is eligible, but it is most helpful to the young person who is having trouble applying for a job that requires a criminal background check. After a judge expunges their record, they have a clean slate.

APP: The sacrifice of Christ is greater because it provides a complete forgiveness of sin. You have a clean slate. Your sin has been expunged, "put away," taken away and "nailed to the cross."

3. It produces an eager expectation of His return.

EXP: (27-28) Look at v.28: It says that Christ "will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." Because Christ's sacrifice has made us joint heirs and given us clean records, we not only do not fear His return and God's judgment, we look forward to it!

"Appointed for man" (27) (ἀπόκειμαι, *apokeimai*) - to be laid away, laid by, reserved; reserved for one.

"Die once" (27) (ἀποθνήσκω, *apothnēskō*) - to die; of the natural death of man.

"Judgment" (27) (κρίσις, *krisis*) - Lit., "a separating." a trial, judgment. Before God.

"Bear the sins of many" (28) (ἀναφέρω, *anapherō*) - to put upon the altar. "Put away" (26) was a judicial expungement of sin. "Bear" is a priestly action. Sin's power is annulled (26). Sin's penalty is removed (28).

"Will appear" (28) (ὀπτανομαι, *optanomai*) - He has "appeared" (26) and He "will appear" (28) a 2nd time.

"Not to deal with sin" (28) (χωρίς, *chōris*) - separate, apart. Because He already did that at His 1st.

"Save those" (28) (σωτηρία, *sōtēria*) - salvation, to save. The final part, which is glorification.

"Eagerly waiting" (28) (ἀπεκδέχομαι, *apekdechomai*) - assiduously and patiently waiting, expecting fully.

ARG: In Christ we do not fear His appearing, but "eagerly await" His return.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NIV) ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

We do not fear the judgement because Christ has set us free from sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2 (NLT) ¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

ILL: I remember losing sleep when I had to go to court at 16 for a ticket making a U-turn. I didn't have a lawyer and I was guilty, but I didn't notice the sign because it was new. Still had to pay.

APP: The sacrifice of Christ is greater because it produces an eager expectation of His return.

CONCLUSION: Are you ready to die and face God's judgment? The Word says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Will you face death alone? Or will you accept Christ's great sacrifice for your sins and know freedom today and eager expectation of Christ's return. His sacrifice is greater because it 1) promises an eternal inheritance, 2) complete forgiveness, and 3) hope for the future, living in eager expectation of Christ's return. Let's pray.