


JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

HEBREWS READING GUIDE

WEEK 15



JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

WEEK 15
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

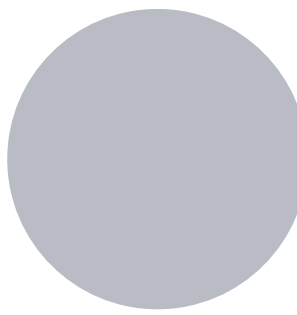
... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.




WEEK 15

HEBREWS 9:18-28



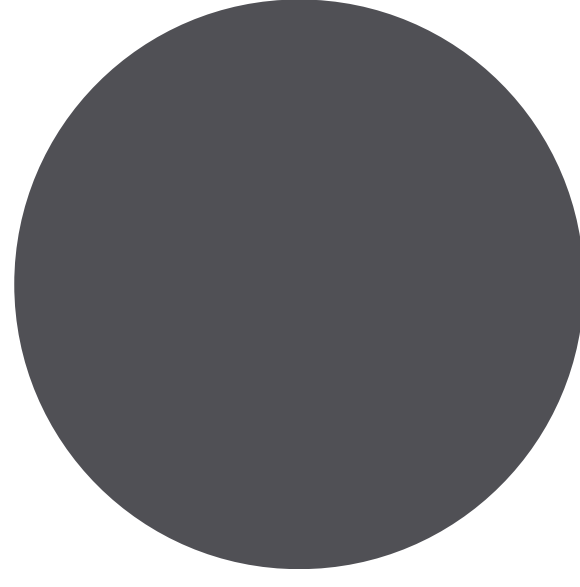
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DAY 1

THE NECESSITY OF BLOOD

First read Hebrews 9:18-21.

Death has always been part of covenant-making. In Ancient Israel, the angel of death passed over every home marked with blood because God said, ***“The blood shall be a sign”*** (Exodus 12:13).

Blood is still a sign.

Hebrews says ***“That is why”*** or ***“Therefore”*** the first covenant (through Moses) like the second covenant (through Christ) was inaugurated through death (v.18). This may seem odd. Perhaps it has been nagging at you this entire study. *Why is death necessary for God to make and keep promises? Why is blood necessary for relationship with God?* Well, because biblically speaking, life comes through death. Or we might say something old must die in order for something new to be born.

This principle is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching about what theologians call “the new birth.” Speaking with a religious teacher, Jesus explains that the Father ***“gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”*** (John 3:16). Through Jesus’ death we can be born again. The Apostle Paul developed this thought when writing to Christians in a first-century city called Corinth. He told them, ***“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”*** (2 Corinthians 5:17). *You see?* Through death, comes life. Releasing the old, welcomes the new. That’s why blood is necessary. That’s why death makes covenant possible. Blood is a sign. If someone has already died, no other blood must be spilled (see Hebrews 10:11).

DAY 1

THE NECESSITY OF BLOOD

1. What does this lesson teach us about the character of God?
2. Do you ever doubt that you are secure or safe from death? Why or why not?
3. How does Christ's death give us an assurance of salvation?

Heavenly Father ...

You are my hiding place, a sanctuary from death. Help me with my unbelief. It's easy to slip into fear. It's natural for me to go back to the old self. It's easy to find security in other places and people. Cause my heart to find life in you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS

First read Hebrews 9:22.

Forgiveness is costly. Well beyond words and sentiment, the writer of Hebrews explains that **“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”** (v.22). Forgiveness requires death. That’s because sin incurs a debt.

Paul warns his readers that **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23). This wage can’t be dismissed. This wage doesn’t disappear.

Jesus told a parable to illustrate the costliness of forgiveness. A servant owed his master an insurmountable debt. Because he didn't have the money the master ordered that the servant, his family, and all his possessions be sold to pay off the debt. The servant begged for mercy. The master, Jesus says, **“forgave him the debt”** (Matthew 18:27). In forgiving the debt the master is at a real loss. The debt isn’t dismissed nor does it simply disappear. By forgiving the servant he’s agreeing to shoulder the debt himself. In fact, without doing so, there’s no forgiveness.

Forgiveness is agreeing to pay the debt sin incurs.

Cosmically, our sin deserves death (see Genesis 2:16-17). Graciously, Jesus forgives us by enduring the real loss of his life. As Dr. Tim Keller writes in his book on the subject, **“Forgiveness ... is a form of voluntary suffering. In forgiving, rather than retaliating you make a choice to bear the cost”** (*Forgive*, 6). Forgiveness always requires a type of bloodshed.

DAY 2

THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS

1. How can we be sure that God has forgiven us of our sins?
2. How does this passage correct and/or confirm your understanding and practice of forgiveness?
3. How does the cost of Christ's forgiveness demonstrate the value of his forgiveness?

Heavenly Father ...

What a gift you've given me in forgiveness. No less that the price of your Son's life was the price of my sin. Help me to forgive as I have been forgiven—even when it's costly.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3 THE POWER OF PURIFICATION

First read Hebrews 9:23-24.

The old covenant is like a big setup. It's filled with “signposts” pointing to the new, the true, and the better ... a future consummation. They tell us a story. Hebrews has called these signposts **“a copy and shadow of the heavenly things”** (8:5).

The blood of animals points to the blood of Christ.
The recurring sacrifices point to the singular sacrifice of Christ.
The holy place in the temple, which priests entered, points to God’s presence which Christ entered (v.24b).

While each of these copies or signposts were meant to purify God’s people, by very definition they’re incomplete. And so it’s **“necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified ... with better sacrifices”** (v.23). Specifically, God’s people—who were cleansed through the old covenant—need cleansing. What’s more, this isn’t an isolated or one-time need. Though Christ entered God’s presence once, now he’s in the presence of God **“on our behalf”** (v.24). At this very moment, Jesus Christ intercedes for his people to the Heavenly Father. This reality is also a signpost of sorts.

You see, one day our purification will be complete. God’s people will be **“without spot or wrinkle or any such thing ... [we’ll] be holy and without blemish”** (Ephesians 5:27). Purified, we will be in the presence of God.

DAY 3 THE POWER OF PURIFICATION

1. What does it mean to be spiritually pure?
2. How is the Lord purifying you right now? In what ways is he making you new and clean and whole?
3. How does Christ's current intercession bring you comfort and peace today?

Heavenly Father ...

Wash me clean. Make me whole. Heal me well.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4 THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

First read Hebrews 9:25-26.

Christ's **"once for all"** sacrifice is the glue holding together the paragraphs and pages of Hebrews (v.26b, and see v.12, 7:27, 10:10). And the fact that he **"appeared once ... to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,"** demonstrates the sufficiency of Christ himself (v.26b). That is to say, the Father sees the substitution of his Son as the perfect payment for humanity's sin and the perfect satisfaction of his divine wrath because Jesus is of "infinite value" (*How Sufficient Was Jesus' Satisfaction?*, Dr. Daniel R. Hyde). Jesus is holy and he's human. He is over us yet he's with us. Eugene Peters brings this to life saying, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, MSG).

It's these two paradoxical realities--his holiness and humanity--that make his death more than sufficient. No other sacrifices could be necessary because no other debt is owed. Jesus doesn't have to **"offer himself repeatedly"** because God is eternally pleased with his singular offering (v.25a). However, in our sin and shame we're prone to offer "new sacrifices" to God. We promise better church attendance or to give more money in order to beseech divine favor. Such habits fail to see that Christ's "once for all" sacrifice is also the glue that holds us together. We're missing the goodness of this news. Since Christ is sufficient, no new mistake, addiction, mean word, or suffering could separate God from his people.

No new sacrifice will ever be necessary, because no new sin ever causes new separation. Christ is sufficient.

DAY 4 THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

1. What does Jesus' death teach us about Jesus himself?
2. What "new sacrifices" are you prone to offer to pay for your sins or keep God happy with you?
3. How does the sufficiency of Christ bring you comfort and healing amidst your daily struggles with sin and shame?

Heavenly Father ...

Thank you for the all-sufficient death of your Son. Help me to believe and trust, even though my sins persist, that he is all I need ... that he holds me together ... that he holds me in relationship with you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

First read Hebrews 9:27-28.

The Day of Judgment casts a long shadow throughout the story of Scripture. Jesus warns us ***“the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done”*** (Matthew 16:27). It’s a picture of the future. Jesus will be on his throne and all people from every nation and generation, the living and the dead, will be brought before Jesus and will be judged.

This is an ominous picture. After all, we’ve all done wrong. Not only so, but the idea of judgment is contrary to our modern values. The fact that someone sits in supreme authority over us betrays our view of autonomy, personhood, and morality.

Nevertheless, as sure as death, we will be judged (v.27). However, contrary to the picture many religious people paint of this day—good and bad deeds on a cosmic scale to see which is heavier—Hebrews points us to grace. You see, we don’t have to wait for a day of judgment to see if we’re guilty. We’re all guilty. But the gospel tells us that the judge himself received the just penalty for our wrongdoing. The writer tells us he came ***“to bear with the sins of many”*** (v.28a). What’s more, when the judge returns he will ***“save those who are eagerly waiting for him”*** (v.28b). That means for those who trust in Jesus, the Day of Judgment is a day of celebration, not doom. If we’ve found hope in Jesus’ first coming, we don’t have to fear his return. In fact, we are eager for that day when ***“justice will roll down like waters”*** (Amos 5:24).

DAY 5


THE RETURN OF CHRIST

1. Why is Christ's return such good news?
2. What fears and worries do you have about the future?
3. How ought Jesus' second coming change the way we live today?

Heavenly Father ...

Help my soul to find rest in the truth, goodness, and justice of your Son's forthcoming return.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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