

Better salvation, better Saviour

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[0:00] I wanted to include the boys and girls, so I'll just see if you've got any boys and girls here. Okay, good. I'll try and look in all the right places.

Let's say a prayer before we start. Lord, we're dealing with some really important things, and none of us is worthy to do this, but please will you come and make this very special and very powerful, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, the writer who wrote this book that Ruth read from, the writer of the Hebrews, wanted to persuade people of things, and I want to do the same thing this morning.

I want to persuade you that Jesus Christ is a brilliant saviour. And if you're a Christian, I want you to feel glad and impressed that he is your saviour.

And there's lots of other things going on around, but I don't want... This is a sort of antidote to becoming bitter and thankless and dissatisfied, but to remember, almost like with a kick up the backside, really, Jesus is great.

[1:19] So that's what this letter is about. And then, conversely, if he is not your saviour, to realise what you're missing and to see the consequences of your position and to invite you to turn and change and turn towards Jesus Christ.

And I'll just say as a footnote that having Jesus as saviour is not a little compartment in your life. It changes the whole of everything. It changes the whole of everything to have Jesus as your saviour. There's nothing that the Lord Jesus Christ does not touch and want to have his way with. And there's nothing that the Lord Jesus Christ won't uphold underneath, like it says, underneath of the everlasting arms.

And as we navigate through life, without Jesus as saviour, we're completely lost. We're completely at sea and completely adrift, but we have his strong arms underneath us.

Then that's the way to navigate through life and death. Because as we've learnt, life contains death. And if we haven't come to terms with that, we haven't come to terms with life.

[2:31] So that's what I want to try and... That's the background of what I'm trying to do to say that Jesus is a great saviour. And if you weren't used to this letter, you might have been a bit puzzled about what was read.

It's comparing the Old Testament and the New Testament. And we were looking, weren't we, boys and girls, at the tabernacle, this lovely model. We've been looking at that for quite a while, so I won't go all over that again.

But there is the picture of the tabernacle where, in the old days, people used to go to meet God.

And there were barriers and things that they had to do, but the idea was to meet God.

And they had somebody to help them, who was this guy. Anybody tell us what that guy's name was? Hands up. Priest, that's right. So here's the people. They're coming to meet God in the tabernacle, but they need the priest to help them.

So what I'm going to do, three things this morning. Number one, the problem of sins polluting. Okay, the problem of sins polluting.

[3:33] Anybody tell us what pollution is? Something is dirty.

Yeah, that's right. So you can have air pollution, so the sort of dirty stuff in the air that we don't really want to breathe. But sin pollutes.

It makes things dirty. The problem of sins polluting. Number two, the power of blood sprinkling.

Number three, the success of Christ sacrificing. Okay, those are the three things we'll look at.

Number one, the problem of sins polluting. Number two, the power of blood sprinkling. Number three, the success of Christ sacrificing. So let's do the problem of sins polluting. Right, anybody know where Henfield is? Just the three of us. Okay. Henfield is on the, there's a cycle route, boys and girls.

[4:34] It's a walk called the Downs Link. And it goes from Shoreham all the way nearly to Guildford on that. It's a lovely, it used to be a railway track.

And so it's nice and flat. And when our children about your age, we got our bicycles and we cycled along there. And then we came home and then we cycled another bit.

And when my daughter Eleanor was a bit older, the two of us cycled along the Downs Link to Henfield. I think we might have a picture of Henfield.

Oh, there's a picture of us cycling. And there's Henfield. It's a lovely, pretty village. A lovely, pretty village. And we cycled along there.

And we cycled through fields because I don't know whether the track was quite complete, but we ended up cycling through a field. And the field had cows.

[5:35] And it was a muddy field. Now just use your imagination. A lot of cows. Muddy field. Cycling through it.

There's the cows. And, now just think, cows. Mud. When we arrived in Henfield, we were walking through this pretty, pretty village with our bicycles.

And we thought, Oh! Henfield doesn't have smell. And I thought, Oh, what a smelly place this is.

So there's the smell. There's the Henfield smell look. Like that. And, after a while, we realised that we hadn't got quite the right idea of it.

Anybody like to suggest what the actual thing was? It wasn't actually Henfield that smelt. Yeah, it was, it was, all the things the cows had kindly left behind, which was stuck to our bicycles and our shoes.

[6:44] And, so it wasn't Henfield that smelt. It was us. So we, we, we, we, we'd cycled through Caboo.

And it was on the bicycles. And as we were, so we were going through Henfield. Oh! But we didn't realise that it was us, you see.

Now then, sin. We were visiting Henfield. Christians want to visit heaven. When we pray, we want to go into heaven. And we want to meet God.

But what the Bible is saying is, that the problem is, that when we go there, we bring, our sin with us. The pollution of our sin. And if we just look at the text. So if you can look across at a Bible, let's just see. There's quite a lot of things here.

[7:49] 9, 15, it says, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant. He died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed.

And in verse 14, it says, to cleanse our consciences. Or actually, verse 14 says, how much more then will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death.

So, this is talking about cleansing, and it's talking about sin. And I think we've got quite a few verses like this. So, 9, 22 says, in fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed.

Because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. There's no putting away of sin. It says that the problem is sin, which needs cleansing. And in 9, 26, it says, he would have had to appear many times, but he appeared to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In 9, 28, it says, Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation.

[9:18] And in 9, 23, now notice what it says here. It was necessary then for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices. So, boys and girls, the copies was this.

These are the copies of what's really happened in heaven. The tabernacle was a copy, and that got disinfected. It got cleansed. And he says, and how much more the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

So, he says that heaven needs to be cleaned. And it needs to be cleaned because when we enter heaven, we make it dirty. And so, there needs to be a cleansing.

And the problem is sins polluting. And lots of verses there are saying that the problem that Jesus came to deal with was the problem of sin.

Now, when we were cycling, we thought, yeah, we're fine. It's Henfield that smells. But it was actually, Henfield was okay. It was us that was the problem. And sin's a bit like that because we're so used to our sin that we think, well, that's normal.

[10:31] That's the way everybody thinks. That's the way everybody behaves. We might even say, actually, I'm a pretty good person. People even say, oh, actually, deep down, I'm a good person.

And I want to say that is such a contradiction to what Jesus says. It's such a contradiction to what Jesus came to do.

because Jesus is no use at all to good people. So if you're sitting or listening or watching at home and you think, actually, I'm a pretty good person, I want to tell you that Christianity is no use to you. Jesus has got nothing to do with you because Jesus didn't come for good people. Jesus said, I came for sinners. And there's a text that says, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And that's wonderful if you know deep down you're a sinful person. And it challenges you if you're thinking, deep down, I'm a good person.

[11:52] Because if you think, deep down, I'm a good person, then I think, why was Jesus bothering? What a waste of his time to come to earth if everybody's good, if we're all really good people.

It's a bit of a, you know, it's almost like saying Jesus didn't know what he was up to. He came to save sinners. And if we could only realise it, that's us.

And if you're having a trouble thinking that you're a sinner, I invite you to just look at your own personal inconsistencies. For example, the things that you expect other people to do, and you criticise them for doing that, look at that person, saying that, look at that.

And then find, actually, you do exactly the same thing. So you convict yourself. Or, perhaps put it this way, look at the way you treat God.

Just look seriously at the way you treat God. You live in his world, which is a world flooded with his goodness, flooded with his presence, flooded with his working, and you treat him with mistrust, with ingratitude, and you even try and make him somebody that he isn't.

[13:13] That's called making an idol. That's one of the worst sins. And you say, I think God is like this. Or, I like to think of God as such and such. And the way you treat God, well, you think that's fine.

It is not fine. It is appalling. The way human beings treat God, and if you think deep down you're good, then think again. Look at the way you refuse to take him at his word.

He's said things, he's shown things, and you take no notice at all. God has said he is the most important person in the world, and you say he isn't.

Well, here is the problem of sins polluting. So, number one. I just thought about racism. Racism is when you sort of attribute to somebody because of their ethnicity, oh, I know what that person is going to be like.

You know, you can't trust people from such and such a country or such and such a background.

That's prejudice. And I'm just wondering whether I could try and pin that on you and say, that's how people treat God.

[14:20] Oh, God, you can't trust people like that. Oh, God is just made up. Anyway, I just thought I'd have a little stab at that thought. Number two.

The power of blood sprinkling. The power of blood sprinkling. There is something that can take away the stain and the shame and the guilt and the pollution of sin.

Now then, what have we got here? So, in chapter 9, verse 18, it says, no, do I have 9, verse 18? Yeah, blood.

Nothing, the first covenant wasn't put into effect without blood. 19, he took the blood of calves together with water, scarlet wool and branches of his tip and sprinkled the blood.

Verse 20, he said, this is the blood of the covenant. Verse 21, he says, he sprinkled the blood on the tabernacle. In fact, verse 22, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood because without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

[15:25] And 25, he enters with blood and it's just full of blood. There's loads of blood here. And, so, hands up, boys and girls.

Anybody scraped their knee recently? No? Oh, well done. Anybody bumped their head recently? Yeah, bumped their head.

Anybody wounded recently? Yes. Oh, Sema bumped, had a bump recently. Yeah. What did you bump? Did you have a bump? Your knee hurts.

Okay. No visible wound though. Yeah, it's not nice, is it, when you bump your, oh, you've got a bump on your knee, have you? Or is that just because you haven't washed recently?

Yeah, if you, if you, if you, you just found yourself wounded.

[16:34] Anyway, the point being, if, if, I mean, boys and girls, you know what it's like to scrape your knee and you bleed, don't you? And you don't like bleeding because you think, oh, I must be hurting and it's not right to be bleeding.

But in the Bible, blood is really important. It shows that somebody got hurt. The blood shows that somebody got hurt. And actually, it shows that somebody died.

And this is what this bit of the Bible is about. And, now, boys and girls, can you tell me, did you notice the word for what they did with the blood? Because there was a word that came two or three times.

It's in verse 21. What, what do you do with blood? Sprinkled? What were you going to say?

You were going to say that? What were you going to say? Okay. Good. I think we'll do a little round of applause. Sprinkled.

[17:33] You do sprinkling. Right, we're going to think a little thing about sprinkling. So, there's a sort of sprinkling. Sprinkling like that. Now, what do you do with blood? You sprinkle it. Now then, I don't know, maybe, maybe you don't do this.

When our children were little, we could, there was enough room in the bath to put at least two of them in together. And they would, sometimes, they would play water games and sort of sort of splash each other.

Have you ever done that in the bath? You don't have to give any way any secret. just to imagine.

Yeah, okay. And it's a little sort of fun, isn't it? A little sort of sprinkle, a little sort of I'm sprinkling you and I'm sprinkling you back and like that.

So, sprinkling, you'd think it's just a little sort of harmless little thing. Sprinkly, sprinkle, sprinkle, like that. I want us to try and get another idea about sprinkling.

Now, you might need some help with this. So, this is my question. Who went to see the 123-meter spire in Salisbury and what did they leave behind?

[18:45] There's a picture of the 123-meter spire in Salisbury and what did they leave behind? So, the grown-ups can think about this as well. Who was it famously who went to visit the 123-meter spire in Salisbury and what did they leave behind?

It was Salisbury, wasn't it? Do you know who it was? You totally got it wrong. Right.

Well, she might have done, but that wasn't who I was thinking of. Any suggestions there?

123-meter spire. The Russians, that's what I was thinking of.

There were two Russians who, their career was spies and hitmen, whether they were doing that there, I don't know, there they are. They were photographed there and so they went to Salisbury and does anybody know what they went there to do or what they left behind?

Poison. I think that deserves a round of applause. Okay, I don't want to be unfair to them.

[20:05] I think it was that they were photographically pretty good evidence that that's what they did and they left behind a poison called Novichok.

Anybody know what Novichok is? Apart from a poison? Do you know what sort of poison it is? Do you know what you have to do with it? Anybody grown up know what you do with Novichok?

Is it a what? Fumes come out. Yeah, it's a nerve agent actually. So you just have to get a little bit on your skin and you're dead.

It's a really powerful nerve agent. So allegedly they put it on the door handle of the dissident's house and when he touched it he was done for and so was his daughter I think, wasn't it?

And they brought it, so if I understand it, in a certain sort of container. Does anyone know what container they brought it in? You're just going to guess, aren't you? Yeah, go on.

[21:12] Was it perfume? I think it was. I think they brought it in a pretty scent bottle. So I've done their sort of pretty scent bottle. It's one of those where you go, you know, like that pretty scent bottle.

And somebody found it when they'd finished with it and they thought, oh, this is a pretty scent bottle. Poor person. If you do that, if you spray Novichok one squirt and you're completely discombobulated because it's so powerful, one little squirt of this, that's how powerful it is. So there's one little spray, there we go, oh, dear, it's a deadly power. And what I'd like you to think of is that's a bad sort of sprinkling.

isn't it? But it's a very powerful sprinkling. This Novichok, if you go, like that. Now then, what I'd like us to think, the blood of Jesus is described as sprinkling, but the blood has a very good effect. You just get sprayed with that and you're clean. The blood of Jesus has powerful effect to clean.

[22:44] And the word used here is sprinkling, but I'm saying that this sprinkling is powerful sprinkling. So what do you do with the blood? You sprinkle it.

And the blood of Jesus is like Novichok, only good power. And it says in chapter 9, verse 19, Moses sprinkled the scroll and the people and they were clean in an outward sense.

In verse 21, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies and they were clean. And if that worked in the Old Testament, how much more, verse 14, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, clean our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God.

And I invite you to ponder that thought that the terrible things that we have done, the blood of Jesus cleanses them. All the things in the past that we wish we hadn't done, the blood of Jesus cleanses them.

All the things on our conscience that make us feel awkward coming to God, the blood of Jesus cleanses them. All the things that we think, oh well God couldn't deal with that or that's too big, the blood of Jesus cleanses them because there is a powerful cleansing in the sprinkled blood.

[24:11] The blood is powerful to make clean. And I just say, is that any use to you? Yeah. I think that's so important, isn't it? Maybe Christian people have come to realize that and I want to commend that to you.

Have you understood that this is the effect of his sacrificial death and priestly work? He went to all that trouble so that our consciences could be clean, the record could be clean.

As far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us. He will blot out our transgressions, take away our iniquities. And that is something we're supposed to remember and notice and have in our minds.

the power of blood sprinkling. And if you haven't known the power of that, would you like to know the power of that? Would you like to ask God to show you how the blood of Jesus can cleanse your conscience and change your life?

Would you turn to him and ask him? Let's sing a song and then we'll come back to this subject. So we're going to sing this one. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

[25:36] Okay, boys and girls, we're still here or some of us are. We've looked at the problem of sins polluting. We've looked at the power of blood sprinkling. And we're now going to look at the success of Christ's sacrificing.

Now, any boys and girls know where that is? Is it Brighton Pier?

No. Is it Worthing Pier? No. Okay. Anybody know what it is? Is it Golden Gate Bridge?

No, that's where you'll usually do your Zoom from Golden Gate Bridge, don't you? I don't think it is. I didn't mean it to be that. Brenda knows.

It is the fourth bridge. It's the bridge over the fourth. And it where is this? It's the fourth bridge. Now, the fourth bridge is very famous.

[26:36] Sorry, I should stop doing that. It's very famous for, now, does anybody know what it's famous for? Because people say, oh, it's like fourth bridge. Let's see if anybody younger knows this.

Brenda, have a go. Go. right, I got a bit slightly interrupted by the traffic from here, but I think you said it's about painting it.

Yeah, when you get to one end, you have to start painting, by the time you've got to one end, you have to go back to the other end to start painting it again. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah, that's right. Yeah, so maybe with special paint, it's not the same now, but don't spoil the story. Yeah, it's famous for old paint. It's so big, you start painting at one end, and by the time you've got to the other end, you have to go back to this end and start doing it again.

It's like painting the fourth bridge, that's what people say. Always needing painting, because it's never finished. You get to one end, and you've got to go back and start painting the other end. Now, this is a little bit like the priest's work in the tabernacle.

[28:10] Do anybody know how often the high priest went in to offer the blood in the very inner bit? How often did that happen?

Correct. Once a year. Little, I think. Well done. Once a year. Once a year. And, but it was every year.

You have to keep on, because once a year, once a year wasn't enough. They had to go back the next year, and the next year, and the next year, and there were sacrifices that were repeated day by day by day as well.

And, this bit of the Bible talks about that quite a bit. It says in 9-7, the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood.

So, once a year meant it was a bit difficult. So, we don't only have church once a year. We can have church every week. We can have church every day if we wanted to.

[29:10] But, they could only do this once a year, so it was a bit difficult. But, it was every year. And, in verse 25, it says, Christ, didn't enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the most holy place every year.

Then, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. So, Jesus doesn't have to die on the cross every year, and then go into heaven every year, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, because it's never quite finished.

He's never quite done it. It needs doing all over again. because Jesus did it once, and nobody needs to do it again, and he did finish it, and it's all settled, and it's completed.

And, that's the point here. The success of Christ's sacrificing. The high priest, every year, would go in, and they would wait to see whether he would come out again. So, just imagine the high priest going in, because it's quite dangerous to go into the presence of God, because God is holy, so he goes in, you know, he goes in like that, and then, and they wait, and then, he comes out, and everybody thinks, whoa, he's come out, that's good.

Like that. God accepted our sacrifices. But Jesus, it says, entered once into the holy place. Verse 12, it says this several times.

[30:52] He entered. He entered the most holy place once. Once for all, by his own blood. And there's lots of onces in here. Verse 25, he, he didn't go again and again.

Verse 26, he didn't have to suffer many times, but he has appeared once for all, at the end of the ages, to do away with sin, by the sacrifice of himself.

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once, to take away the sins of many people. And he will appear a second time.

So he doesn't do this over and over again. He did it once, because he did it right. He did it once, because he finished it. He sacrificed once, and entered heaven once, just like human beings die once, and then face judgment.

Christ died once, to take away the sins of the many. And when he comes from the holy place, when will that be, when he, when we see him again?

[32:04] When will that be? Do you know? Because the high priest went in and came out again, and Jesus will one day be seen again.

Do you know when that is? Well, he is in heaven at the moment, but one, but he will come from heaven, at a certain time. Do anybody know when that's going to be?

I don't mean a date, I mean, what's the name of that time? At the end of the age? Yes, when he comes again, his second coming, his appearing.

And he will, it says here, he will, in verse 28, he will appear a second time, not to do with sin, but to bring salvation for those who are waiting for him.

And, it's, it's saying that the, the success of what he did, it was finished. Christ was sacrificed once, to take away the sins of the many, and will appear again, to bring salvation to those who wait for him.

[33:07] So, this is saying that there's something about what Jesus did, that's finished. He actually said on the cross, didn't he? When he, when he had the work that the father gave him to do, and he died on the cross, and he shouted out, done it.

Finished. Accomplished. Settled. Sorted. It is finished. And, because he's done that work, and he's finished it, all sorts of things followed from that.

For example, we can enter heaven without polluting it. We can come, and, all the arrangements are done for that, we can go into heaven, and we won't pollute it. We can be, thinking about our relationship with God, and not, burdened with our shame and guilt, because Jesus has done everything that's necessary, to cleanse us.

We can come into the holy place, and pray. He's opened that way for us, and we can come and pray. We can visit heaven, and, when we get there, it won't be the stench of our sin, that we bring with us, but the sweet aroma of Christ, as we come into heaven, we're welcome there.

It's cleansed. And, we can live in this world with confidence. We can live in this world with confidence, because we have promises like, I will never leave you, nor forsake you, because of the success, the finished work of Christ, the success of Christ's sacrificing.

[34:40] And, those are the things we thought of, the problem of sins polluting, the power of blood sprinkling, and the success of Christ's sacrificing.

And, because of those things, I want to encourage Christian people, as the writers of the Hebrews would do, to keep, keep going, to keep running the race, to keep trusting, to keep pressing forward, not to go off track, but to stay on track.

And, like it says, like it says, like it says, so I can find it. No, I won't be able to find it. Like it says, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand, of the throne of God.

Consider him, who endured such opposition, from sinful men, so that you won't grow weary, and lose heart. Think about Jesus. Don't grow weary. Don't lose heart. Press on. Run the race.

Let's close with a song.