

Hebrews 9:11-15 "Jesus, the Fulfiller of the Earthly Blueprint"

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[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

The text we're looking at today. If you're familiar with house building, or if you're familiar with general construction or general contracting, you know that one of the first things to be done is that you would make a blueprint or drawings or architectural drawings of what's being, what's the project is that's being proposed to be built. These blueprints must be very detailed. They must have everything that's required to complete the building. Some of these things would be the footings of the building. Some of these things would be the concrete work. Other things would be the framing, the electrical, the plumbing, the HVAC. All these things are required for a building to be functional. They're all required for it to pass inspection, and they're all required to be living. If you don't have these, you can't live in it because it won't function properly. Some of you have heard me talk about before the time that myself and Amy, my wife, we built a house in Perth, Ontario, during COVID. And during this time, we had to make plans or blueprints of the house. So, and we decided to do it ourselves. And we did it. We drew them up. We had a friend also help us. And then we presented it to the township of Perth, and they rejected it right away because it wasn't detailed enough, because we didn't know everything that needed to be on the plan. So we had to hire a professional to do it, get the stamp of approval, and then it was passed. The thing about blueprints is that they will never look as good as the building when it's completed and when you're standing before it. They'll never look as good. They may look super fancy with all the drawings and all the certain things it tells you to do, the schedule of the building. But it'll never look as good as the building itself when it's completed and you're before it. What the writer to the book of Hebrews does is that he's showing that there is a blueprint.

It's come. It's already been created. And what he's pointing to, he points to the completed work through the blueprint. He argues, and what I hope to show you, is that the completed work is far greater than the blueprint, than what's been already made. The text I'm speaking on today is just over halfway through the book of Hebrews. Normally you would want to start at the beginning of a book. When you start it, you want to start at the beginning, go to the end, because you want to know the line of thought.

[3:49] But because I'm preaching on the lectionary, I'm just, we're going right into the middle of it. The lectionary, if you're not familiar with it, is in the book of, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. And what it is, is that it gives you on Sunday the texts that are to be read. So Ross read the Hebrews text, I read the Gospel text. At the beginning of the

service, we read a part of the Psalm that's proposed to be read today. And what the lectionary was, at the time it was created, was that the people who came to church on Sunday couldn't, they couldn't read. Most of them couldn't read. They're farmers, they're laborers, they didn't have time to learn how to read. They went to work at a very young age, so they couldn't read. So they created this lectionary so that those, when they came to church, they would hear key scriptures through the year that would be read to them, and then they would hear scripture. They wouldn't get everything, but they would get the key scripture moments. So that's what we're looking at. But that's a complete sidetrack. Just one of those Anglican geek moments. So how do I hope to show you that the completed work is better than the blueprint? Well, the texts that Ross read were dropped right in the middle of the argument. And the argument is between the old covenant and the new covenant. And it gives us the points. This text that we're looking at, it already lays out the points for us.

Which is very helpful for me, for PrEP. What the points are is that it procures redemption. It purifies our conscience and sanctifies our service. I'll say it again. It procures our redemption, purifies our conscience, and sanctifies our service. So turn with me, if you haven't already, I believe the scripture will also be on the screen, to Hebrews 9, verses 11 to 15. It's helpful to have your Bibles. If you don't have one, grab one up there. Because it's good to see what happens before and what happens after, and the text itself. Because you never know, I might be up here not even saying the right text to you. You have no idea. It's good to have your Bible with you. And also for this sermon, because it's such a dense little verses, we need to jump around a bit in the book of Hebrews to get the full scope of it. So I may have already lost you with this idea of old covenant and new covenant. What the heck is that? Now just a quick explainer of it. A covenant is kind of like a contract a little bit, but a covenant is more serious. Normally they're impossible to break, and if they are broken, it normally results in death, or the repercussions feel like death. If it's broken, there's the consequence and repercussions of death. When you buy a phone, we all have phones, you make a contract with the company, and if you break it, there's a fee. A covenant is made with someone, and it's for life or until it's fulfilled. In the Bible, God makes covenants with his people to show his love and commitment for them. Oftentimes we confuse a covenant with a contract when we come to God, but God makes covenants because he wants to show us his deep, deep commitment to us. And you see it all through the Old Testament into the New, and we experience it ourselves as we walk and follow Christ.

At the beginning of the Bible, in the second book, the book of Exodus, which we're going to refer to a little bit, it's all about the liberation of God's people out of slavery from the land of Egypt, because they've become enslaved. They're in Egypt, they've been enslaved, the Egyptians are treating them poorly, and God sees it, and he liberates them. And then the rest of Exodus is a law, God gives them the law, the Ten Commandments we said at the beginning of the service. See, God liberates them, and this is normally referred to as the Mosaic Covenant, because Moses is the one who led them.

God spoke through Moses to the people, so it's called the Mosaic Covenant. Now this is where the Ten Commandments is given, and the designs for the tabernacle, the place of worship, and where God dealt among his people. And how to worship God, God explains it through rituals and ceremonies.

[8:14] The tabernacle had two rooms. This is very important for us to think about in our minds when we're talking about this text, because the text is all about these two rooms. But the two rooms, there's the Holy of Holies, and this is the place where God dwelt. This is the place where the high priest would come once a year to make atonement for the sins of his sins, then also atonement for the sins of the people. And these sins were for unintentional sins. So you come once a year. The other room was for the everyday rituals and ceremonies to make yourself clean before God. This was done through sacrifices of animals, through the blood of animals that were without blemish. So this is the blueprint. This is the blueprint that the writer of the book of Hebrews is referring to as he

makes his argument through it.

It's the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, through the temple, the tabernacle, through the Holy of Holies, and then also the other room where everyone would come for the everyday worship. Well, this finally gets us to our first point. We're eight minutes in, and we're at the first point. So look with me.

Hebrews, we're going to look at Hebrews 9, verses 11 to 12. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made of hands, that is, not of this creation, he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing and of eternal redemption.

See, up to this point in the book of Hebrews, the writer has been arguing that Jesus is the greater high priest. He's the better high priest, the one who lasts forever.

And how is Jesus better than the other high priests that are elected? Every high priest that comes before, or came before Jesus and came after Jesus, died. Christ did not die.

[10:22] If you look at chapter 7 in the book of Hebrews, verses 23 and onwards, it says this, talking about Jesus.

The former priests were many in number because they died, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. But Jesus holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever.

However, consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Because of the fall, humanity is continually in a state of death, physically and spiritually. So the office of the high priest had to be continually filled.

When the priest would die, the need for a high priest would continue. And this cycle would continue. It needed to be performed once a year, this idea of atonement, that the priest would enter the Holy of Holies.

[11:24] It was a continual cycle inaugurated at Mount Sinai. You see it in the book of Exodus. But because the human heart is inclined to sin, the ritual can never fully make people right before God.

Hence the continual cycle. Humanity became enslaved to it and started relying on it, on the ritual, to make them right before God, instead of going to God himself.

See, they would rely on their works and forget about God. They thought if they did this, they'd be good. And they forgot about relying on him to personally rely on God.

The thing about the ritual is that it was for unintentional sins. So it did not cover intentional sins. So sins, the people who made intentional sins, were always left with no hope.

It always weighed on them. A better high priest was needed. Look again at verse 11. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

[12:41] See, did you notice it says the good things have come? The ritual of atonement for the people's sins pointed to a better way. It was the blueprint. It pointed to something greater.

And Moses talked about it in the book of Deuteronomy. It points to it. And you see it all through the prophets. They're all pointing to something that is better. And when Jesus went to the cross for you and me, it came.

The blueprint came. The building was built. Jesus assumed the role of high priest. He assumed the role of the sacrifice that was needed.

And when he went to the cross through his blood, he entered into the tabernacle, not made with hands. He entered into the throne room of heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father to break the continual cycle that was happening of enslavement to sin and death.

The cycle was broken. And I don't know if you've noticed that in verse 12, right at the end of it, it says, by means of his own blood, thus securing eternal redemption.

[13:50] Now, this word redemption is very important here. When you see it in the Greek, it's very important. And the best way it's described, the commentaries describe it like this.

So if it provokes ill feelings, it's not the intention because what's going on here is that it's pointing to something greater.

It's pointing to a great hope. The way it's described and the way the word makes sense within this text is that you have the picture, the best way to describe it is to picture a slave market.

And a slave market was where they were present. It was present in this time, and it was present during the African enslavement. The slave market was for captured slaves, not for bond servants that's talked about.

It was for captured slaves, people who weren't willing to become bond servants. These people were taken, and they became slaves. And the idea here is that the slave market, once the people were enslaved, there was no hope for them.

[14:50] They would become property. They'd be forced to do whatever their owners deemed fit until they died. They would go up onto the platform and be sold, or into the market and be sold.

But here's the thing. This is what the word redemption means. The idea is that when the people were presented to be sold, someone buys them.

And then immediately, right after the person buys them, he announces that you are free from your enslavement. No longer will there be pain.

No longer will there be eternal suffering. I redeem you for all eternity. That's the idea here, is that this redemption is made through the cross of Christ, because before it, the old covenant, the blueprint, enslaved you.

Because of our hearts, we wanted to do things ourself and not rely on God. That's what the blueprint points to, is through God's work. The blueprint of the earthly high priest pointed to the finished work.

[15:57] It points to the finished work, the work of the heavenly priest, who procures redemption. And it says here, once and for all in verse 12. It's done. It's been done once and through all, through Christ's work.

But what else does the completed work do? Well, look with me at verses 13 and 14. And this is point two. It purifies our conscience.

Look with me at it. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify, for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

See, Josiah earlier in the service led us through the Ten Commandments. And we all responded, inclined our hearts to keep this law. This is done in most Anglican churches during the season of Lent, because Lent is a season to remind us how deeply we need Christ.

It is a season where we're called to reflect on God's moral law and to realize how much we need Christ. Lent is a season of self-reflection and repentance that culminates in the celebration of Easter.

[17:24] Why bring this up? See, the law was given to the people of Israel as they entered into the promised land. But the promised land was full of nations that practiced other ways of worship.

It would have been called pagan worship. God gave them the law so they would be recognized as the living God's people and to keep them from falling into this pagan worship.

But here's the thing, the law can never be kept. It was to show the people they can never measure up as hard as they tried. It was to show them that only God is holy and they needed God in their lives.

The more they tried, the more they failed. The more their consciences would haunt them. Maybe you're here and you call yourself a Christian, but it feels like you constantly are failing at being one. You always go back to the things you know you shouldn't. You feel the weight of the law on your shoulders. Your conscience haunts you. Martin Luther, who is a famous reformer, one of the most famous ones, he struggled with this for a long time before he read the book of Romans in a thoughtful way.

[18:30] And he struggled with it. And he would go to extreme measures where he would punish himself by whipping his back. Or maybe you're here and you don't call yourself Christian, but you call yourself a good person.

You give to the poor. You help out your neighbor. You try to be polite and a good member of society. But if people truly knew your thoughts, you would fear they would never talk to you again. Because in your mind, you're not the way you portray yourself. You feel the weight of your self-imposed law on your shoulders because your conscience haunts you. You never live up to your own law.

When you try to live up to the standard of your own mind, your own law, you put yourself under a works-based model. And that's what the blueprint was as well. It became a works-based model for the people of Israel.

They thought, if I do this, then I'll get that. But that's not the gospel. The gospel is good news. That is bad news. So what is the gospel?

[19:29] And you may think, well, Matt, you've already talked about the cross. What is it? How else can you talk about it? Well, the writer of the Hebrews does it. And he does it in chapter 8. And we're going to look at it.

Chapter 8, verses 8 to 12, it says this. And he's quoting Jeremiah. I believe it's chapter 31 of Jeremiah he quotes. It says this. This is God talking.

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

For they did not continue in my covenant. And so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel.

After those days, declares the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be my people.

[20:30] They shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one of his brothers, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me. For the least of them to the greatest, for I will be merciful toward their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more.

See, Jeremiah points to the completed work. The blueprint left on its own does nothing. But did you notice in this text, it says, I will five times.

God is the one who will take the weight of the law and he does this through his son. If you believe that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, no longer do you need to measure up because Christ has done it for you.

If you don't believe that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you will never measure up. But you can if you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Trust in him.

Through Christ being our high priest, our hearts become new and willingly accept God's law. That's why we say, write these laws in our hearts, incline our hearts to these laws.

[21:39] But if we don't follow it, if we follow it to impress him or elevate ourselves, we become under the works-based law. But if we follow it out of devotion to God's love towards us, no longer does our conscience haunt us because we can trust in Christ and then we can say willingly, nothing to the cross I bring, simply to the cross I cling.

The old covenant could never achieve this because it was done with animals. Animals could never pay the price that was required. And because of Christ's completed work, we can serve God out of love and not gain.

Look again with me at verses 13 and 14. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish purify our conscience and from dead works to serve the living God.

See, something that's very tempting is to view our service to God as acts of earning. But that instantly puts us under the old covenant again. This is a very common thing among pastors.

They start to view their ministries as their identities and how it performs dictates their mood and standing before God. Please pray for myself, for George, for Daniel Avitan, for Josiah, for Jono, and all others in leadership positions because this can so easily creep in and we can succumb to this temptation.

[23:20] Please pray for us. But people who aren't in leadership positions can also fall prey to this, that they view their service as a way of

gaining merit to God. And this isn't a new thing either.

When we read the Gospels, we always are reading about the Pharisees and how they dedicated their lives to memorizing Scripture. They dedicated their lives to doing the law of God perfectly. And they dedicated their lives to serving the people of Israel. But a quick reading will show you that their ministries were poisoned by pride and self-promotion and gain.

And Jesus is quick to call them out on it. This is not just a religious issue either. It's a human issue. This idea of gaining merit. Service becomes the marker of how we measure oneself in society. The more you serve, the more you should be glorified by society. This is where the notion of virtue signaling comes from. I recently read an article, I don't remember where I read it, but I remember reading it, that the premise of this article is that you can judge someone now by if they're a good person or not, by if they return their shopping cart to the shopping corral.

[24:33] You can judge them on this now. And that deems you in society if you're a good person or not. And let me tell you, as someone who was a cart pusher for most of his teenage years, we did not care if someone returned their cart or not.

It just gave us work to do. But we are at this point now that we have these unspoken laws within our culture that the way we can measure ourselves and measure others against to see if we measure up or not.

So what are we left with? If Christians are called to serve their God and if non-Christians are called to serve society but both fail to do it, how do we go from here?

We have to go to the cross where Jesus performed the duty of high priest. We have to trust in his blood and we have to realize we can only serve God through Jesus' work, not our own.

If we don't or choose not to, once again, we are left under the burden of the old covenant of the blueprint. Here we see the old covenant, the blueprint, was that, a blueprint, something looking forward to fulfillment of the good things to come.

[25:43] We see that the new covenant, which is done through Christ's shedding of his blood, which the blueprint pointed to, is the completed work. Look at verse 15.

Therefore, Christ is the mediator of the 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.

It's all through Christ's finished work on the cross. He lived the perfect life. He was completely unblemished. He lived the perfect life.

He died for the sins that we commit for the burden that was supposed to be put on us, the wrath of God. He went to the cross and he rose again for us so that we can come before God, that we can enter in to the Holy of Holies because of Christ's redeeming work of being our high priest.

That is what is going on in the text here. It is a great hope. That is the Christian hope that Christ came for us. See, through Jesus we have redemption, eternal redemption.

[26:57] You don't have to continue this cycle. We go to the cross. Through Jesus our consciences are purified. When we feel like we're not measuring up, remember the cross.

It is finished. Give your struggles to Christ. Tell your brothers or sisters in Christ what you're dealing with and pray together. And through Jesus our service becomes sanctified because remember the work is already completed.

Nothing we do will merit us before God. Everything we do is a blessing because Christ has done it already. That's what's going on in Hebrews. That is the story. That is the gospel.

That is what everything points to. The pinnacle moment of the cross. That is the gospel. And let us pray. Heavenly Father, Father, we thank you for Christ.

We thank you that he is our high priest who will never die. We thank you that he sits at your right hand, that he mediates for us and intercedes for us. Father, help us to trust in his finished work and not in our own work.

[28:03] And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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