

Sunday September 10th sermon: "The Body of Christ Sacrificed -- The God of All Comforts (Pt 32)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Hebrews 10:4-10; John 6:37-40

God comforts us by the oath He made to Christ, appointing Him our high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The ultimate expression of Christ's joy in His redeeming work at Calvary is expressed in Hebrews 12:2, where we are exhorted to look unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame; and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God!"

The cross was no mere pro-forma event. It was the most detestable terror that any man could imagine. Jesus was made a curse there for us, and in our place. He was subject to all of God's promised wrath and judgment for the sinners He died to save.

And yet, Christ knew that it would be His Glory for all eternity, that He had done this in obedience to God, in delight to do His will, and with the joy set before Him in it all, to save His loved ones, you and me!

The writer of Hebrews next describes the logical outcome of God's will being delighted in by Christ, and His fulfilling of it.

Hebrews has already described how Christ's blood purges the consciences of His people. The redemption of our transgressions is by means of His death, so that we receive the promised everlasting life.

Christ has appeared in heaven itself to present before God His Own blood, by which sacrifice He has put away our sin once for all.

But now Hebrews carefully explains how Christ's delight to do God's will brings this about: Christ takes away what God does not delight in – animal sacrifices – and establishes God's will, which He does delight in.

This is a fundamental truth necessary to understand how God actually saves us: Christ takes away the animal sacrifices, that God does not delight in, and establishes the will of God, which Christ delights in.

It is in Christ's very body, acting as our high priest forever, that this crucial work is accomplished.

In fact, Christ has already finished this work. It is forever completed.

Note well, that in order for God's will to be established, it is imperative that animal sacrifices be taken away.

It is not simply that the animal sacrifices are powerless and ineffective to save us or take away our sin.

No, they must be taken away, to establish God's will for our salvation!

No doubt this is true, because so long as animal sacrifices are still observed, so long as the Jewish believers thought that animal offerings had any relevance to Gospel redemption, they could never fully trust in Jesus only!

Indeed, soon after Hebrews was written, God literally took away animal sacrifices, by using the wicked Roman army to destroy Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D.

There have been no Jewish animal sacrifices for sin since that day!

There is an irony in all this, that the Romans were also used by God in their evil and malignity to offer up Christ once for all on Calvary's tree.

In part, God used external means to take away the former sacrifices, and to do God's will in offering up God's Lamb for our crimes.

In order to nail down the end and purpose of God's will, it being the saving of His loved ones by the sacrifice of Christ, the writer adds this conclusion: "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all!"

Christ's sacrifice sets us apart to God! It makes us holy and blameless before Him! It cleanses us from all unrighteousness!

God's will is to save His people from sin and judgment and death!

God's will is not like our own wills. We are weak, and God is all powerful. God gets His will done, always, even though our wills are often thwarted.

Christ had already guaranteed the will of God in the saving of His people. In John 6, He made it clear, that He came to do God's will, and that everyone who God gives to Him, will come to Him. Christ will lose nothing of all of those given to Him, but will surely raise them all up at the last day. Everyone who believes on Jesus will certainly have everlasting life!

Jesus only intimated in John 6 that He would ensure God's will is done by giving His life for His people, but at Gethsemane, it was very clear that His death, which would take place later that very day, was necessary to accomplish God's will, no matter how horrible it was to Christ in His humanity.

As B. B. McKinney put it, "Not my will, but Thine be done, cried the Father's Own Son, as He knelt 'neath the old olive trees."

Jesus knew that very soon, He would take all the blame of His loved ones, in order to redeem us forever! Jesus was bound and determined to finish God's will, no matter what the cost to Him would be.

The work was finished at Calvary, and yet the outworking of the saving of the Lord's people takes place in time. The sacrifice is done and

complete, but we all come to Christ in time, when the Holy Ghost brings us to Him in faith.

The will of God is both already done, and still being done, but it is inexorable that it will certainly be done.

Peter described this truth in 2 Peter 3, when he answers the question, why hasn't God destroyed the wicked yet?

The answer is glorious: because God is not willing that any of His people should perish, but that all of us should come to repentance!

God is long suffering "to us-ward!" Not to the wicked who will one day be judged, but to God's people, that He gave to Christ, and that Christ promised He would redeem according to God's will.

God gave us to Christ before we had even been born! Were He to destroy this wicked world, Christ's people who had not yet been born, would never be saved, and God's will would be thwarted.

God would rather endure the haters and scoffers of this old world, than that His will to save us through Christ's death should fail for a single one of us!

One by one, throughout time, Jesus saves His people that God gave to Him, He finds His lost sheep that the Father gave to Him.

This world has lasted this long, without the final judgment, so that today's saints would surely come to Christ, and His sacrifice would save us, according to God's will.

No wonder we are so comforted by God's appointment of His Dear Son to be our faithful high priest, Who is sure not to lose a single one of the people that He died to save on the cross, and intercedes for even now.