
Magnifying Christ at the Table

Hebrews 9:23-28

Introduction The book of Hebrews was written to both bring us to Christ and to cause us to cling to Christ. Its theme is to magnify Christ and mature saints. Its author is known only to God. Its audience were suffering Christians who were in spiritual danger. It is a discourse, a sermon. So it presents its own challenge – to preach sermons from a sermon.

Hebrews exalts Christ as superior and thus we ought to hear and heed, to believe and obey. His superiority means that yearning and craving for other things is always a turning away from Him. We are offered inferior substitutes that appear dazzling and desirable. We need faith to believe that what He promises, namely Himself, is vastly superior and worthy.

Yet we have been given something simple and ordinary through which we are to see and savor this great Savior – the bread and the cup. So I want to take two texts from Hebrews and stir up our holy memories to remember and relish our Redeemer. I want to magnify Him and His table through the lens of Hebrews.

The Sacrificed Body of our Redeemer

Hebrews 10:5-10

5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ”

8 When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [ESV]

The Old Testament sacrifices were not intended nor desired by God to actually deal with the problem of sin, its cause or consequences. Those sacrifices pleased God when offered in faith – but they still pointed both to the sins committed and to the need for a full and final solution.

So the Lord Jesus takes on a human body in which to do the will God and to be sacrificed as the lamb of God. So He lived a sinless life of righteousness and holiness, perfectly doing the will of God. Standing between the Old and New, he brings to an end the intention of the Old by being its fulfillment, the reality to which it pointed, thus establishing the New Covenant. He, in that body, was the offering for sin through his once and for all sacrifice.

So the author of Hebrews concludes that the once for all offering of Christ as our sacrifice also set us apart, sanctified us, to God once for all. The full and final definitive work of Jesus brings about a full and final and definitive sanctification of his people. Out of that once for all being set apart unto God comes the call to persevere, to keep on believing, to not falter. Since you are owned and pos-

essed by God having been set apart to Him, then persevere to the end. Do not fall; do not doubt; do not drift.

This is one of the purposes of Hebrews, to so exalt Christ that you will be enabled and encouraged to press on in spite of and in the presence of tremendous hardship, suffering and opposition. This is why we come to the table regularly. We come so that remembering and celebrating His death gives us grace to go on and not give up. We gather here to so that you will not drift, will not doubt and do not despair. You have your Redeemer and Ruler above you and the body of Christ around you, so press on and proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

As we take up the bread this morning, let us remember the sinless obedience of Jesus and the sacrifice of the Lord on our behalf. This bread is neither his true body nor is He especially present in it. This we do to remember. Further, when we take this symbol of His broken body this broken bread, we must recognize unified body, the church. We remember his broken body and we acknowledge one another. What we do here is not individualistic, it is corporate. We do this together.

As we receive the bread, let us reflect on His broken body for us, His unified body. Let us rejoice in the forgiveness of sin and freedom from guilt that such a redemption has brought us.

<Pray over the bread and serve>

The Outpoured Life of our Redeemer

Hebrews 9:11-14

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 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 an eternal redemption. 13 For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, 14 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. [ESV]

Hebrews shows the superiority of the outpoured life of Christ in His blood. The old covenant priests entered a man-made tent with the blood of animals sacrificed. But they did it over and over again. And it never secured eternal redemption. But Jesus entered into the heavenly tabernacle, not with, but through His blood, that is, through His outpoured life. His resurrection and ascension thus secured our eternal redemption.

Further, the old covenant sacrifices were only for the purifying of the flesh. They were operating in the realm of the flesh, the law. Here it is, then – HOW MUCH MORE then is the greater work of Jesus whose blood purifies our consciences so that we are not doing dead works, rather we are serving the living God. Do you see it? Here is a life outpoured for salvation so that we may pour out our lives in service. We are not the servants of a dead letter, but of a living Lord. His work on

the cross freed us from the slavery to sin, to law and to the realm of the flesh so that we might be free to live for the living God.

This is one of the purposes of Hebrews, to exalt Christ, to magnify Him through a clear and compelling argument for the superiority of His work. Using the Old Covenant categories and rites, the author/preacher of Hebrews turns the spotlight on the centrality and superiority of our Savior's redemption. So, we must not turn away from such a great redemption nor from such a great Redeemer.

As we partake of the cup this morning, let us reflect together on this. Here is the symbol of a life outpoured. Has our faith in His work freed us from dead religious works to serve the living God?

<Pray over the cup and serve>

Conclusion Maybe this morning you have gathered with us because of the special events surrounding the honoring of mothers and the dedicating of families and their newborn children to God. What we have done in sharing in the bread and cup hopefully has preached to you the gospel. Here we are sinners. We are separated from God. We have been given a Savior who took our sins and then was punished instead of us. This is the only way of salvation, of being delivered from my sin and being pure and clean before God, without the stain of sin and the scourge of guilt.

You must not only believe, not only trust in Him to provide this and only this way of salvation, but you must bow to Him. He will save you now if your will surrender to Him, own Him as Lord and Master, as Sovereign over you life. All who call on the Name of the Lord will be saved. So this is our invitation, our plea to you. Believe these words. Submit to this great God. Call on Him to save you. And do it now.

If any of you need spiritual help, there will be able people down front who would love to pray with you, answer your questions, and take you to the Bible.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. - Hebrews 9:20-21 [ESV]



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Requests for tapes or questions about this message may
be directed to the church office at (937) 885-2143 or e-mail.

Russ Kennedy uses the *English Standard Version* in his preaching and teaching.

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Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
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