

**Prayer of the Day:**

Lord God Almighty, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may always look forward to the end of this present evil age and the day of Your righteous judgment. Keep us steadfast in true and living faith, and present us at last holy and blameless before You; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day: Revelation 2:10**

Alleluia. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the life as your victor's crown. Alleluia.

**Hebrews 9:24–28**

<sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. <sup>25</sup> Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup> Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup> Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. – NIV84

**Sermon Text:**

I wonder how often the scene played out in the Old Testament world. A young Jewish boy accompanying his father to temple to present the various offerings grains, wines, and of course the most well-known of them all the sacrificial. “Abba, Abba,” “Yes, my son, what is it?” “Why must the animals die?” “Ah, well this is the just wages for sin, my son. From Eden until now death reigns over us for all sin and all die.” “Yes, but why the animals?” “Because it is better than us dear boy. God in His grace has allowed these sacrifices to substitute for us. These creatures die for us in our place.” “But father, will these sacrifices ever stop? We sin so much. Will we not run out of animals?”

It might make us giggle or even smile as we think about the little conversation. A little boy so full of questions. A loving father, patiently answering. It might even be a bit heart-warming as you recall similar scenes from your youth or from time parenting kids of your own.

But what isn't so heart-warming is the realities of the conversation. Sin, death, the slaughter of countless sacrifices and the blood which flowed for innumerable sins. Growing up in Old Testament Israel, I sincerely doubt one would miss the significance of it all. God was not pleased by our sinfulness. These were not little mistakes which could be ignored or explained away. Sin brings with it real punishment. One we deserve.

Could you hear that in the other lessons this morning? Jesus speaks to the disciples of the realities of Judgment Day but perhaps the last two verses shook you, “<sup>28</sup> *Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice* <sup>29</sup> *and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.* (John 5:28-29)” Daniel prophesied, “*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.* <sup>2</sup> *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.* <sup>3</sup> *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those*

*who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:1–3)*” Do you begin to wonder? Am I among those who have done good? Is my name in the book? Am I wise? I sincerely doubt I’m righteous let alone able to lead people there. We may not have the image of hundreds, even thousands of sacrifices seared into our mind's eye to reinforce our sinfulness but the point is there as we come to the realization of our brevity here. Our lesson announced, *man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*. Perhaps it gets the questions freely flowing. What of me and my sin? When I stand before God on this great and final day, what will he say to me?

“Oh little one, you are beginning to understand the weight of sin.” The Father replies. “Isaiah promises that one day Messiah will come and He will take away the guilt of sin forever. He will atone for us all. His blood for ours. His life for ours. He will be the lamb, the bull, the goat, the dove. All of these sacrifices point us to Him, to everything He will do to atone for sin. He will be our substitute. He will save us.”

Now the words of our Epistle Lesson spring into life do they not? For the Messiah has come! He has not come as just another picture, just another copy of the realities which await. No, Jesus is the real deal. Sacrifice and Priest all rolled into one He is unlike all others. He transcends all things.

Reconsider those words on Hebrews (24-26), <sup>24</sup> *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.* <sup>25</sup> *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.* <sup>26</sup> *Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

There is simply so much here that to cover all of it would far exceed the time allotted this morning. But Jesus, our High Priest, is utterly unlike any other. He is holy and righteous, the very Son of God, no sacrifice for Himself is needed. He need not tremble as He enters the Holy of Holies, the little square room in the temple where God’s presence resided. Separated from the temple proper, the holy place, by that thick curtain. In fact, he need not enter it at all, for He already resided within it, already as God was in the very presence of perfection, even as He possessed it. No, He transcended the sinful priests with their imperfect sacrifices which needed to be offered again and again and in Him the perfect payment for sin could then be made.

Our Hebrew father alluded to it in our story. The cross of Christ, would be the altar to end all altars, the sacrifice to end all sacrifices, the sin offering which would finally and completely pay for sin and quit its guilt. All sin paid for, no sin left unpunished, righteousness bestowed upon all, these are the gifts which are purchased in the holy precious blood of Jesus. As He cries “it is finished” it is. All the sacrificing, all the guilt, all the fear of what it means to stand before God on that last and fateful day, it is done! I need do no more, for He has done it all.

<sup>27</sup> *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,* <sup>28</sup> *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

Dear friends, I have no idea if our little story between father and son ever happened on the dusty streets of Jerusalem. I’d like to believe it happened a lot but I have absolutely no proof. What there is proof of is that God’s Son came to earth for us. Righteousness made its way to the cross, the perfect sacrifice and priest. Jesus is the real deal and because He has come, we know He will come again. When He does, You need not fear judgment. No, Jesus was the sacrifice to end all sacrifices, nothing else needs be done. In Him you are righteous, far more than simply good. In Him you, you are saved. Amen! So shall it be!