

# The Sacrifice That Lasts Forever

November 17, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled The Sacrifice That Lasts Forever. Thank you to Earl, Ed, Don, Temi and Paul for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Hebrews 1, 1 to 4. Happy birthday this week to Charlotte and Mattias.

## Welcome, Prayer, Announcements

Good morning everybody. Welcome this morning to our service. I'm glad you're here. We have a few announcements that we'd like to begin with. I want to wish Jo happy birthday this coming week. So happy birthday to Jo and we will not, we'll clap but we won't ask you how old you are. (Applause) Coming up in a couple of weeks is the Waves Fall Luncheon. So women of the congregation are welcome to be part of that. If you are interested in going, please RSVP to Jessica Joy at Great Lakes and I can give you her contact information afterwards if you're interested in that.

We have some prayer requests. We are giving thanks to God for our new brothers and sisters. Katie was baptized on Friday evening and then Carmen and Aiden earlier in October. So that's very exciting to have expansion to our family there. Operation Christmas Child is ongoing. The boxes are in the foyer right now. They are due back before November 18th. So if you're filling one, please do that. But please bring it back here before November 18th and thank you to Tina for organizing that. In December, or I guess later into November into December, we're going to be preparing Christmas hampers for community care for some local families. So we'll have more details on that coming up.

And we are continuing as well to pray for Harold as he is recovering in hospital from a stroke. I have a note here from the broader Graham and Graham Relations family: To our friends at the Beamsville Church of Christ, thank you so much for honoring and celebrating our dad, Len, in so many ways. Your presence at his celebration of life, the beautiful bouquet of flowers, your cards, and most of all your love and prayers. We so appreciate your kindness. So thank you to everybody who was able to be involved in that. I'd ask you to stand as we pray together.

God, it is good to be in your presence this morning, to gather with people who are of like mind and like love for you. Thank you for our new brothers and sisters who have put you on in baptism in recent weeks. We pray that we can be of support to them, to encourage them, and to make them feel welcome in your kingdom. God, we think of those who are ailing right now, who are sick with physical or spiritual or emotional hurts, God. We ask that you would heal and comfort in those situations. We think particularly of Harold, a long way from home, that you would make a way for him to come home as quickly as possible to his family who are worried about him.

Lord, we thank you for your son Jesus, who is the one who made the way to you for us, for the great high priest who can go into your presence and who's death toward the veil so that we can come there too. We thank you for your Holy Spirit that lives inside of us, who guides us in your paths. We ask for that guidance as we go through our service today and through our week and through our whole lives, God. We can't do it by ourselves, but we know that you can do it. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

## Song Leader Comment

We are going to sing three songs. They're songs of praise. And I would like you to pay attention to the goodness of God and in the gifts that he has given us as we lead our way into communion today.

## Communion

Well, Don, Ed, Adam have one thing in common this morning, unlike me. Do you notice? Poppy. I'm not wearing one. I looked for one this morning. I thought I had one. I don't know. Must have cleaned the car. Who knows who was in the visor. I don't know where it is.

So I usually go and buy a poppy from a veteran. I make a point. And remember, at Walmart, there always used to be veterans selling or not selling, but handing out poppies. You make a donation. It's harder and harder to find a veteran these days. But my dad was a veteran, and I've spoken about Remembrance Day in the past. But you know, I really, the poppy symbolizes sacrifice, doesn't it? It symbolizes the price that was paid for our redemption from tyranny. And as we meet around the table, we remember the price that was paid for our redemption eternally.

Well, I looked up the word sacrifice. Of course, there are many meanings. But an animal or object offered in a sacrifice, while using the term sacrifice to describe the word sacrifice, might not be the best. But it's an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy.

So this month, as we think about veterans, we can certainly see that that is what they did. Maybe some of you Great Lakes students are studying history, 20th century world history. I used to teach that a while back. But the fact is, there is lots of sacrifice in many wars, as people look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of their countrymen and even of the world. Again, an analogy of what Christ did. Well, giving up something important or valued for the sake of other considerations.

Hebrews, believe it or not, has 40% of references to sacrifice that are found in the New Testament. So 40% of the time, the word sacrifice is used, it's used in Hebrews. And of course, Hebrews is all about the old way of doing things. You know, the high priest going into the Holy of Holies to offer sacrifices for the people. And only he could enter. And so the sacrifice of animals for the sins of the people. And yet Christ did away with the old law and ushered in a new covenant, a new relationship that we have the opportunity of being the beneficiaries of. And so this idea of sacrificing.

Well, it says here that in terms of Christ's sacrifice in Hebrews 9, verse 24, "For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 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. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many. And he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. That is us.

We are waiting for him. So you could argue that Christ's sacrifice on the cross is definitely not the end, but the fact is he left heaven. See he left, his sacrifice began when he left heaven, you could argue, because he came into this world with a mission to die for each of us on the cross. And so he sacrificed by leaving heaven. He sacrificed living on this earth dealing with human beings who were imperfect and trying to point us in a better direction, trying to teach us a better way, and then ultimately to go to the cross as the ultimate sacrifice, the once and for all sacrifice for mankind.

But yet the objective, as we read earlier in terms of the definition of sacrifice, an act of giving up something valued, heaven, his own life, for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy. That's us. That's mind blowing. And yet the job isn't done yet because he's coming back. Not to bear sin, not to sacrifice himself, that's done once and for all, but rather to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

And so as we participate this morning, we're in this waiting period. And perhaps we won't see the Lord come again while we're in the flesh. As many of you have passed on before us, our loved ones, they're gone, but they're not gone. They're waiting too. They've received the crown, but in terms of this world and how it shall end, well, that's up to him. But he is prepared a place for us. And so we're waiting. And as we participate with these emblems this morning, they're a reminder of, yes, the sacrifice, but even more so the promise that we can share in together. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you for your love that prompted you to send Jesus into this world. We thank you for his willingness to come, sacrificially, to come to this world and to live amongst mankind. And ultimately, Father, to pay the price on the cross for each of our sins and for our redemption. And so we pray, Father, that you will help us to discern these emblems as we partake of them and recognize the significance of that sacrifice in each of our lives. And we pray that you will be with us this morning as we further worship you. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Song Leader Comment

I don't know that if you've ever contemplated in your lifetime the power of ideas, where do these ideas come from? These ideas come from words. And these words as they're formulated into an idea can actually change the direction of your life. They can help you to build your life in a way that you're a better person. So we have to be careful what ideas that we allow to roar into our consciousness. This song that we're going to sing is about ideas. It's about words, holy words, ancient words. These ancient words that are written in the Bible help us to know how God wants us to behave and what he expects of us as people. Ideas can shape our lives and lead to the direction in our life that's going to please God.

## Scripture Reading

### Hebrews 1:1-4

Hebrews 1 versus 1 to 4. In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he also made the universe. The son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided the purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in

heaven, so he became as much superior to the angels as the name he inherited is superior to theirs. Thank you.

## Sermon

### The Sacrifice That Lasts Forever

Good morning everyone. Thank you so much for being with us today. There are a lot of tremendous scholars who know the scriptures very, very well. But there's still one book in the Bible that no one can settle on. No one really knows who wrote this book. And it's the book of Hebrews. In Los Angeles, Los Angeles is called the City of Angels. In Los Angeles there is this wonderful church called the City of Angels Cathedral. And inside they have representing all the different scriptures, Paul, Peter, and then a variety of other people along the way. And they're all focused on one thing. And that one thing is Jesus himself. The prophets circle the inside of this circular church. But all of the eyes of the prophets are focused on Jesus. The sacrifice for all of us.

In the book of Hebrews there's also something unique that no one knows who wrote this book. It was attributed to the Apostle Paul but most scholars today would say, "No, that's not the way Paul writes. We just don't know." And in some ways that makes me feel better. We don't know everything. But in this wonderful book it is the focus on the great sacrifice of all. So what happens in this book of Hebrews is he takes us way back into the Old Testament and they had sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice but their sins would never be forgiven. They would be looking forward to something. And we know what that something is. Jesus, of course. So in the book of Hebrews he wants to really focus on the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He's superior to the angels. He's superior to all things. Let me read to you from this chapter one. "For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my son? Today I have become your father." No. Angels are not God. Angels act for God in our world today. Angels don't ever think that angels don't exist. Angels are in this world helping us along the way. We never see them. We never hear about them. But wasn't that lucky isn't such a word. Angels are always around us. So we we don't worship angels. We worship God. In fact angels would be upset if we ever worship them.

So what I want to do today is just take a look at a couple of little sections in this wonderful book of Hebrews that still has this mystery to it. And it's almost like when I read this book over and over again all of a sudden we feel like we're part of this book. That that we're searching as well. Even though it was written thousands of years ago we're still searching for all of these meanings in this wonderful book. Takes us way back into the Old Testament. Takes us to the present time. And here we are.

So he says this. "We must pay most careful attention therefore to what we have heard so that we don't drift away." Have you ever felt your Christianity has been slipping? Have you ever felt like what happened to this great joy that I had in Jesus Christ? It's a simple remedy. Talk to him. Just talk to him. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I'm always with you. I wonder how many times even this morning God has said talk to me. Just talk to me. I'm with you. So it says pay attention. We must be careful therefore to what we have heard so that we won't drift away. And in this wonderful book of Hebrews he talks about the sacrifices. He talks about God living in our lives.

And he says, "Here I am and the children of God has given us to me. Since the children have flesh and blood he too shared in their humanity so that his death Jesus might break the power of Satan who holds the power of death." That is the devil. And for those all of our lives that were held in slavery we have been set free in Christ Jesus. And because Jesus himself was tempted he suffered. Sometimes we suffer with things that we've said that weren't right. Things that we've done that weren't right. Things that we thought that probably weren't right. But we remember the great sacrifice where our sins are forgiven. So in this book he says just stop for a while. Just think about these things. Pay attention to what God has said. And to me it's just a marvelous thinking that 2,000 years ago is now 2,000 years here. And we're reading the same words and they mean the same. Have you ever backed away? And yet you just knew I've got to come back to Jesus himself.

So he says, "Since the children have flesh and blood he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he may break the power of Satan himself." Jesus himself suffered when he was tempted. And sometimes we're tempted as well. So he again repeats going back into this circular church where the saints are all around and wherever you look you see all of these saints. But in the middle there is the sacrifice of sacrifices. Jesus himself who says, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am with you always." That means right now he is with us. He escapes time. He knows who we are. Maybe we just need to know him a little better. And this wonderful book as we said talks about just stop for a while and rest and think.

Listen to what he says. "For if Joshua had given them rest God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For those who enter God's rest to enter that rest so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience." And then these powerful words. "For the word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing the soul and the spirit." What's the difference? "The soul and the spirit joints and marrow. It judges the very thoughts and attitudes of our heart. There is more to us than us."

Jesus is the great high priest. Jesus is our great high priest. He says, "Therefore since we have a great high priest who ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses." No, no. Let's approach God, the throne of grace, with confidence. Why? So that we may, we may, this sounds good, we may give us the rest he pours out to us with confidence. Sometimes in Christianity we maybe just back away a little bit, but God never backs away on us. There's this confidence in us that he gives us if we're willing.

And so sometimes there's a reprimand in scripture reminding us. And just before chapter six begins there's a little, little comment in my Bible. It says this, "Warning against falling away." There's a warning. Don't fall away. If God created us, if God knows us, if God's with us, why would we ever fall away? But there's a warning to that. He said, "Let's go beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, but understand the resurrection that we all will receive." And so when we go through this book, this wonderful book, it's taking us back to the Old Testament. It's shooting us forward, but it's also bringing us to where we are today.

And it's interesting how there are people, even in the Old Testament, that no one knows anything about them. There's a man in the Old Testament. His name was Melchizedek. He was a priest of

God's people, but nobody knew where he came from. And nobody knew where he went. He was always there without mother, without father. There's a mystery, even to Christianity today. We just don't know everything. And I'm glad we don't. That's too much of a burden. So the priests came in to help offering sacrifices to people. So today we've had our communion, a sacrifice. We're very fortunate in our church that we take communion every Sunday. There are some churches that take it once a month or maybe a couple of times a year. We just believe that it's very helpful for us to do this every week on the first day of the week, because we are remembering that Jesus is our guarantor of a better covenant, of a better of life.

He says this, "Now there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in the office. But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him." This wonderful high priest. And then unlike all the other high priests, they sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, but nothing ever really happened. But this sacrifice, changes everything. Christ living in us, the great sacrifice of all. You see, the new covenant isn't just words. The new covenant is Jesus. Our faith isn't necessarily what we do, but it's who we believe in, who he is. And so he says, "Don't shrink back."

There are many things that can get in our way, but the next generation depends on our faithfulness. The next generation depends on our faithfulness, showing them the way. Just as some of our parents showed us the way, or other people have showed us the way. Understanding Christ living in us. He knew us before we were born. He knows us now. He will always be with us. And the sacrifice, the great sacrifice is all about the blood of Christ.

Hear these words in chapter nine. "That when Christ came as high priest of the good things," there are now already here, he went to the great and more perfect tabernacle. Meaning he died, he was buried, and he rose again. And that Christ is the mediator of all those who've come to him. An internal inheritance. Good things that are coming. And then he talks about, "Did we think this really was a good idea? That they would sacrifice bowls and goats and blood everywhere, but still sins were not forgiven." Until that day, when Jesus gave his life a sacrifice for us, even today. We must always focus on Jesus himself.

Because it says, "Day after day, the priest stands and performs his religious duties again and again. He offers the same sacrifices which cannot take away sins. But when this priest, Jesus, had offered for himself the sacrifice of sins, he sat down at the right hand of God." See the sacrifices in the Old Testament, priests, pardon me if this is too crude, but it was the reality, priests were drenched in blood because all the sacrifices they had to take, all for the forgiveness of sins, but they never really were forgiven. It was the idea that was coming across. We are so fortunate that we live on this side, that we didn't have to go back into that Old Testament, but that we can really understand Jesus better and better because of his sacrifice for our sins. So it's a call to persevere in faith.

Listen to what the Hebrew writer says, "Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, open for us through the curtain that is his body, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God. With a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold

unswervingly to the hope we profess." How many of us have seen a baptism? That's just about everybody. And that baptism signifies what? A swim? No. It is the washing of this great sacrifice, standing in the water, burying in the water, coming out of the water. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again.

This is a picture of this mysterious book. Whoever wrote it was profound, and it's a call to persevere. Like we said before, the priests were flowing in blood. All the sacrifices of bulls and goats, but it never really could do anything. But now we live through their sacrifice. We persevere with our faith. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And then it talks about how it's not just individual. Let us consider, listen to this now, how we may spur one another toward good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some have done. Therefore, we look forward to the day that we'll be approaching. Remember the earlier days after you received the light when you endured great conflict and suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult, persecutions. Other times you stood side by side for those who were mistreated. But remember, you will be richly rewarded. As the scripture says, "By my righteous one, we'll be lived by faith. Don't shrink back."

So faith is sure what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see. And then he talks about some of these Old Testament people, and how powerful they were. But they never could see what we now see. He says this, "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting they were foreigners and strangers on the earth. And people who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country, and if they had been thinking of the country, the heavenly one, God is not ashamed to be called their God." So just think of some of the prophets, Isaac, some of the prophets, some of the teachers, Jacob, Joseph, and so forth.

Wonderful friend of mine who is a preacher in New Brunswick wrote me a letter a while ago, and he was talking about the book of Hebrews. And this is part of what he said. "The congregation is exhausted. They're tired. They're tired of serving in the world. They're tired of worship. They're tired of education, Christian education. They're tired of being peculiar, whispered about in society. They're tired of the struggle, of trying to keep their prayer life going. Sometimes they're even tired of Jesus. Their hands droop, the knees are weak, attendance is down. They're losing confidence. Some don't have enough energy to go anywhere. The threat is here, worn down, worn out, drifting away, talking about walking away.

And then, and then, we turn back to scripture. We remember these prophets, what they had gone through. We remember their sacrifices. We remember how so many of them were jailed and imprisoned and put to death. Therefore, we are surrounded by such a cloud of great witnesses. Let's throw off everything that hinders in the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race that's marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and never let that sight go.

And so there's encouragement. Make every effort in peace, to live in peace with everyone, to be holy. Without holiness, no one can see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God.

And then in conclusion, these words, and these are precious, but you have come to Mount Zion. You have come to the city of the living God. What was it? Wait a minute. I'm not there yet. God says, yeah, you are. Keep on keeping on. What was God's promise? I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I'm always with you. So you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. Did you know that our names are written in heaven because of the new covenant, because of his sacrifice, because of his blood.

And besides all that, in conclusion, he says, keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers. For by doing so, some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Continue in all these things with the promise, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What can human beings do to me? Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And don't forget to do good and to share with others. I don't know. I don't know who wrote this book, but I'm sure glad he or she did.

And to conclude, and I'll conclude, not my words, this wonderful person who writes it with these words. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant, brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of sheep, equip you with everything for good, doing his will, and may work in us what is pleasing to him. Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact, I have written to you quite briefly. And then he says, and I repeat these words to all of us, grace be with you today and forevermore. Amen.

## Closing

Thank you for being with us today. I would like to end today with reading. We started in Hebrews 1, beginning of the book. I'd like to end with the benediction and final greetings in Hebrews 13. So may this be a blessing to you.

Now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep equip you with everything good for doing his will. And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. [Amen.]

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