



## Willful Obedience

Hebrews 10:1-18

A few years ago, some friends of our came to Ventura – friends who are non-religious. They came with their two elementary aged children who had never sat foot in a church service before. The Sunday they came, the core of Christian teaching was expressed clearly. And, after the service, the wife was at my parent’s home, confused and maybe even bothered. She asked my mom, “Do you believe that?” What she was most bothered with was that we believe the Bible teaches that you can be moral and still be separated from God. You see, she’s a pretty moral person. I mean, she’s not perfect, but she’s a very nice, friendly, sacrificial, kind, pull-up-your-bootstraps-and-try-harder kind of person. So, she asked my mom, “Do you believe that?” My mom said “yes,” and then she said, “Did your grandparents believe that?” My mom said, “yes.” And she said something like, “I just don’t know what to think about that.” Then my mom said something that I hope I don’t forget. She said to our friend, **“God doesn’t want our works. He wants us.”**

This scenario reminds me of Martin Luther, the church reformer in the 1500’s. He used a Latin word to describe humanity. It was “incurvitas” (pronounced in-CUR-vee-tas). The spelling looks like a bad disease. And, from a spiritual perspective, it is. The word refers to being curved inward on oneself. In other words, we think of life as being all about us and our individual preferences, works, emotions and desires. When asked about a vacation or a job or a given day, we give our answers on the basis of our thoughts and desires – not based on how other people were affected or blessed and many times, we don’t even evaluate based on God’s thoughts. That’s “incurvitas.” We are the center of our universe.

I think Christians can be caught thinking this way, too. You read the Bible and its commands. You go through a day or a week following them very well. You pray and read your Bible with excitement. Then you read Jesus speaking to his disciples and he says, <sup>10</sup>“So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’ ” <sup>1</sup>

Jesus says that, when having done *everything* we’re supposed to do, we’re supposed to say that we are *unworthy* servants. Now, that phrase doesn’t mean God doesn’t care about us. Far from it. To some of you, you could be angered, but go ahead and read Luke 17:10. The point is that God doesn’t owe us *anything*. We are created for him, and God doesn’t merely want our works. He wants *us*.

But we so tie our works with ourselves that we struggle with a statement like what Jesus made. We want to prove our worth through our works. It seems many want a pat on the back and a “good job” from God more than they want God. Therefore, your relationship towards God is completely dependent

---

<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Lk 17:10.

on what you do. Your prayer life seems fine when you're obeying. Your Bible reading wanes when you feel you've failed. Your obedience becomes the basis of your sense of security with God.

Have you ever functioned that way? This is similar to how many people functioned in Old Testament Israel. Instead of seeing God as the gracious God that he is, they looked to the commands of the sacrificial system. When God said "obey," they looked inward for strength to obey instead of looking to God for mercy and grace. That's "incurvitas."

But "incurvitas" will never give you freedom. And this is what I think the author of Hebrews is highlighting. What you'll discover is that the author doesn't bring out much "new" information in these 18 verses in chapter 10. But in making his argumentation, one particular highlight emerges: **will you look to yourself or look outside of yourself for holiness?**

The Hebrew Christians are wavering. Should they go back to the old system? In going back, the author essentially states that they give up on everything. The author is coming to an end of his comparison and contrast between the old covenant and new covenant. Next week, he's going to get into very specific application points. But here, he's bringing his conclusion. Much of the application today is simply, "Let the beauty of Christ soak into your soul and transform you!" Let's get it through our thick skulls that Jesus and his promises are superior than Moses and his system. Before I say anymore, let's open to Hebrews 10, and pray before we read:

---

*10 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> 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.' " <sup>8</sup> 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), <sup>9</sup> then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. <sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, <sup>16</sup> "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"*

<sup>17</sup> then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

<sup>18</sup> Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. <sup>2</sup>

---

Now, as I read these verses, a certain main idea emerged. I began to pick up on words like "sacrifice," "sins," "deed" and "will." I saw action words. Then, I saw the author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 40 – a psalm emphasizing the obedience God desires. Putting this all together, I got the idea that God's desire is that there be internal, willful obedience. This is the big idea: **"God demands willful obedience."**

Now, when you hear this, what feelings come inside of you? How do you think? "Incurvitas" or do you look outside of you? Do you feel a tension? In verses 1-4, the author shows how inward-bent we are as we relate to the old covenant. And verses 5-18 compel us to look outside of ourselves to find freedom. The Hebrew Christians might be tempted to think the old covenant will save, but in reality, if they cling to the old covenant, they will lose everything. God's demands are perfection – and they will only find perfection through the new covenant. So, we see in verses 1-4:

### **1. Look inward and find condemnation (vv. 1-4).**

You read the Old Testament law and learn about the sacrificial system, then you read commands from psalms, and your first thought is, "Climb every mountain! I'll prove myself." But was that the point of the old covenant and even the purpose of God's law? While we might think that God will give freedom if we look inside, we actually discover that we will find condemnation. Look at verse 1 again: "For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near."

The law was just a shadow of good things. Remember the idea of "shadow?" It doesn't have substance. Just like looking at my shadow on the ground, it gives a form, but you can't embrace it. Tracy and I like to go running together. Let's say you were to ask me *why* I like to run and I said, "Well, I like to run because then I get to see Tracy's shadow. And I love her shadow so much, I chase after it. I'm hoping to catch it someday. But until that day, I'll keep running after it."

You'd think I need to get professional help. And you'd be right because the substance of the shadow is right by my side! The shadow doesn't talk. Tracy talks. The shadow can't hug me. Tracy can hug me. I can't see all the beauty of the reality in the shadow. I can see the reality in the woman running next to me!

These Hebrew Christians are thinking of going back to the old covenant, and the author of Hebrews reminds them that the old covenant is a shadow. It cannot give you the substance and relationship? To go back to the old covenant is to try to chase after and hug a shadow. It gives you nothing that you were created for. The author goes on to emphasize this for us.

**Depending on repetitious sacrifices will not make anyone perfect.** The end of verse 1-2 say, "it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?"<sup>3</sup> The point is on the desire to be made

---

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:1–18.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:1–2.

perfect. Can the mosaic Law and sacrificial make us perfect? Many thought it could. Many today still think so. Even we as Christians can think our religious and moral observances can draw us closer to God. But the author says, “If it could make you perfect, then why were the same sacrifices taking place over and over and over again?”

The sacrifices were never intended to make you perfect. If they could make you perfect – there would be a ceasing of sacrifices. As it is, the repetitious sacrifices aren’t merely insufficient in bringing you to God, but the

**Repetitious sacrifices function as continual reminders of sin.** Continual sacrifices mean there’s continual sin. Now, the way the author is writing, he seems to be emphasizing the Day of Atonement again. Look at verses 3-4 again with me: “<sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”<sup>4</sup>

Impossible! This means there is *never* a time when the sacrifices ever actually took away sins. NEVER! I know that this causes questions because we can think, “Then what was the point of the sacrifices?” And when we think that, we show just how prone we are to look at our actions for approval before God. God never intended the Old Testament sacrificial system to forgive sins. As the author of Hebrews has already said, the sacrifices spoke to the sinfulness of sin, God’s perfection and our need for forgiveness. But it’s a shadow. It could never grant forgiveness.

I’ve said this before, but I think it’s a good reminder for us. We in America don’t struggle with going back to a sacrificial system, but there are certain ways that we can tend to look inward to ourselves for approval, can’t we? The Law itself can be turned to by us, and we can say, “I’m going to do this and then feel good about myself before God!” But if we understood the perfection of God’s Law, we would be devastated. The psalmist says that if God marked iniquities, who could stand? If we really listened to the Law and submitted ourselves completely to it, we’d be condemned because we’d see more and more sin! Our approval doesn’t come from our adherence to the Law.

Nor does it come through the sacrifices. Verse 3 says, “there is a reminder of sins every year.” This word “reminder” can potentially feel sterile to us in reading this, but it’s an important word for us to remember because the author is going to highlight something later in the text. Without giving away too much, let me simply quote on commentator on this word “reminder.” He wrote, “. . . **the yearly sacrifices not only reminded the people of their own sinfulness but also reminded them that God remembers sin.**” He goes on and says, “**Sins remembered by God are sins for which propitiation has not been made. Sins no longer remembered by God are sins for which full atonement has been freely provided and gratefully received**” (P.E. Hughes, p. 392).

The blood of animals cannot bring us to God and make us righteous before his holy presence. And God even told people this in the old covenant time period! In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel says to Saul, ““Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”<sup>5</sup> Hosea 6:6 says, “<sup>6</sup> For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”<sup>6</sup> Psalm 51:6-7, “<sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;

---

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:3–4.

<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Sa 15:22.

<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ho 6:6.

you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”<sup>7</sup>

You hear just a few of these verses and you think, “Ok, so God didn’t intend for the sacrifices to save. God wants obedience from the heart.” It’s at this point though, that we should ask, **How do we obey from the heart if the sacrifices continually remind us that we don’t obey from the heart?** Ahhh, that’s what the Law is intended to show us. Our continual bent to look inside ourselves is addressed by the Law. If we look at the intention of the Law and the sacrifices, we should be driven to look away from ourselves. To look *outward* to something or, I should say, someone else! And, that’s precisely where the author goes in the next verses. If you see the old covenant as you ought to, then you’ll be driven to Jesus!

We see the Hebrew Christians were thinking maybe they should go back to the Old Covenant because if they did, they would be relieved from physical persecution. But think about that for a moment. You may be relieved from physical persecution, but you wouldn’t be *right* with God and if you reject Jesus, you spend eternity away from the Lord. You’ll never experience what you were created for. In turning away from the Author of Life, you will receive eternal death. Is it worth rejecting Jesus? Why not have Life, experience persecution, and still have Life here and for all eternity? The same application is for us. We can go through difficulties and we become angered with God. We deny the substance and turn to shadows. We are content with appearing relatively godly and doing the right things, but we drift away from Jesus. Then we become more dry spiritually all the while, we tend to self-justify by looking at our works. But even that mindset just reminds us that there is continual sin in our lives.

Why did we turn to the shadow? The only sustaining sustenance is found in looking outward. And that’s what we see in the next several verses.

## **2. Look to Christ and find God’s demands fulfilled (vv. 5-18).**

Look outside of yourself! This is so contrary to our nature. In our culture, we have so many phrases that run contrary to this message: “Believe in yourself,” “Trust your instincts.” Yet, the biblical message is to believe on Jesus and trust in the Lord with all your heart. Did you know that the phrase “believe in” and “believe on” is a unique phrase to the Bible. It seems as though the biblical writers made up this word, and the word means to get your trust outside of you and place your whole self in, or on, Jesus himself. Stop looking to you! The idea is brought up in verse 5: <sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world. . .”<sup>8</sup> I love that word “Consequently,” in this verse. For the very reason that we remain in our sins, Jesus came into the world!

**Jesus obeys on our behalf.** What an amazing truth that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. People who are resolute to curve inward. Yet, Jesus did come to save. And, he actually saved real people. The author quotes from Psalm 40 and writes: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> 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.’”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ps 51:16–17.

<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:5.

<sup>9</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:5–7.

The context of Psalm 40 is David admitting that God desires willful obedience from the heart. This is what God requires of humanity. And so David says that God doesn't ultimately desire sacrifices and offerings. Now, in the Hebrew Old Testament, it doesn't say "a body you have prepared for me." That's what it says in the Greek translation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew says "you have given me an open ear"<sup>10</sup> or "ears you have dug for me." So, why is the Greek translation of the Old Testament different? Well, while it's different, it's actually communicating a similar thing. It's a figure of speech, called synecdoche. That's a figure of speech that uses a part to describe the whole. It's like if I were on a boat and someone said, "Let's set sail!" It may be a sail boat, but the phrase "set sail," is referencing the boat and everything in it going out on the water. Or, if an employer were to say, "I have a lot of hired hands," he's not simply saying that he hired hands to do work. That would be quite freaky. "Hired hands" are referring to the whole person involved in working for the employer. In a similar sense, here in Psalm 40, the ears are for the purpose of hearing and embracing truth so that it will be lived out with the body.

Now, the author of Hebrews sees this as ultimately being fulfilled in Jesus. While David could say he obeyed, he certainly didn't obey perfectly. There was One to come who would, though. He was given a body to obey perfectly. Oh, amazing grace! Bulls and goats couldn't bring forgiveness because 1) they aren't human, and 2) they aren't perfect. But Jesus is Immanuel, God with us – and he took on human flesh!

I hope you get what the author is doing here. When some read Psalm 40 and David saying that he will obey – they, as Christians, will immediately apply that to themselves and look inward. But the author of Hebrews says, "You skipped a step!" You see, our obedience is faulty, and if God requires perfect, inward obedience, then we cannot look inward to ourselves first. Yet, this is what we often do. We go to the application without applying Christ *first!* That's like sealing an infected wound without applying the healing salve first!

Practically speaking, parents, don't forget this step. Counselors, don't forget this step! If you study Church history, when Christians started to assume the gospel and go immediately to commands, you find that the next generation then forgot the gospel. Assuming leads to forgetting. Then, the following generation would deny. Oh, Ventura, we rejoice that the gospel is explicit here. And we are responsible to never assume Jesus! He is the anchor for our souls. So, in our conversations, writings, interactions with one another – keep Christ explicit! You cannot live out godliness without focusing on Jesus!

Getting back to the text, the author tells us that Jesus came to do God's will, as it was prophesied in God's book. And what was God's will? Verses 8-14 answer that question. Start with verses 8-9: <sup>8</sup>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), <sup>9</sup>then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>11</sup>

First point: Look away from you and look to Jesus! This is the heart of what repentance means. Repentance is first an inward change of looking away from yourself and your own ways and turning to Jesus as your hope for reconciliation with God and satisfying life with him. The author says that "When Jesus said these things," meaning that while David did say this, ultimately Jesus said this when he came to the earth. And when he said that God didn't take pleasure in the sacrificial system according to the Law, he said "Behold, I have come to do your will," and he did away with the first order!

---

<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Ps 40:6.

<sup>11</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:8–9.

This is so exciting. **The first order**, as I said in previous weeks, was **“Do this and you will live,”** but **Jesus’ order is “I did so you can live.”** Jesus did away with the first order! By the way, the phrase “does away” actually isn’t strong enough. In the Greek, this phrase more often was used for killing someone. It refers to abolition and death of the old system. Jesus’ crucifixion crucified the old system! Praise God for this freedom. Our works don’t acquit us or make us more lovable in God’s sight! Why? Because Jesus lived on behalf of those who turn to him!

Now, the author moves further. **Jesus’ one sacrifice is on our behalf for all time.** Verses 11-13 say:  
<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.<sup>12</sup>

Do you see the comparison with the old covenant and new covenant. In the sacrificial system, the priests always stood. There was no chair for them. Why? Because sin continued on and sacrifices had to continue on. The sacrifices were continually repeated (which could never take away sins). But then Christ! Oh, sometimes that interjection is so beautiful, Ventura. Here humanity is blind in their sins, stuck in the mire of their own ways. Even we as Christians can be bogged down by our imperfections and sins – and we focus inward. We live for our glory and we are burdened by trying to keep up and look good. . . . But Christ! Do you hear the cleansing offered? When Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins. . . . Jesus’ sacrifice in the past forgave past and future sins. It was an offering for all time. How do we know? Because it’s a single sacrifice. It’s not repetitious. Because it’s singular, that means it was effective. When Jesus died on the cross, he took every last drop of God’s wrath for those who trust Jesus, and there is no need for us to try to atone for our sins. Because of Jesus, God’s justice is satisfied. There is no need for another sacrifice! There’s no need for our sacrifices.

Therefore, he sat down at the right hand of God. I spoke of this a few weeks ago, but this sitting down doesn’t mean that Jesus literally *only* sits forever, but it’s speaking to Jesus’ ascension and accomplishment of bringing people to God and giving forgiveness of sins. Jesus doesn’t need to make more sacrifices! Therefore, it is said, that he sat down. And he sat down next to God, meaning that he is our Mediator. This goes back to Psalm 110 – the most often referred to Psalm in this book – where Jesus is both Conquering King and Atoning Priest.

Then, the author makes clear he’s referring to Psalm 110 again by paraphrasing it in verse 13: waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.<sup>13</sup> This phrase is essentially a passing phrase, but pastorally, this is very helpful because it highlights that while Jesus ascended and we are forgiven, there is still something we wait for. The world isn’t perfect yet. And, to the Hebrews, this is an important phrase to remember. They’re hearing this author say, “Look to Jesus. He gives you reconciliation and forgiveness with God. He gives you victory,” and these Christians can say, “Yeah, but look at the suffering! How loving is God if he allows me to go through this?!” The author doesn’t negate the pain. But he does guarantee that there is an end to it. Nothing can make that promise!

So, even when we should remember that outside of Jesus trials and pain won’t end. There’s only judgment and death forever. But in Jesus, there’s guarantee that it will all end – and not only that, there’s the promise that all that happens in this life will submit to God’s good will for us! All things work

---

<sup>12</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:11–13.

<sup>13</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:13.

together for good. We can believe this because Jesus accomplished all. His sacrifice was once for all! It is all-encompassingly effective for all who come to him – past, present and future! We are reconciled with God!

Therefore, look at verses 10 and 14 with me. Verse 10 says, <sup>10</sup>“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Verse 14 says, <sup>14</sup>“For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”<sup>15</sup>

If God requires perfect obedience, and Jesus fulfills this, what does that mean for us? We have been sanctified. The word “sanctified” refers to being made holy and also being set apart unto God. In verse 10, the author says we have been sanctified. He puts it in past tense. We have been made holy and set apart to God when Jesus offered himself on the cross. Christian, you and I were sanctified 2,000 years ago! The victory at the cross purchased our redemption once for all, and it was realized when you trusted Jesus the first time.

But, hold on a second, you could say, “So, if I’m holy, then there’s no need to be moral now!” That’s where verse 14 comes in. We read that Jesus’ sacrifice perfected us, which, remember that *perfected* according to the author of Hebrews refers not to a morality as much as being brought to God and restored in a gracious relationship with him. Jesus brought us to God. We’ve received perfection because we now have God! And he’s done that for all time. Meaning, we can never lose this intimacy.

Oh, Christian, I hope you know this. Your works don’t change your status before God. Perfected for all time. You are graciously bound to God forever. You are his for all time. But notice the next phrase. Who are his for all time? Those who are being sanctified. Wait. How can that be? I thought we were sanctified. How can we be sanctified while also experience growing sanctification? This is what theologians refer to as the “already-not-yet.” In the words of the author here, he heightens our freedom in God’s acceptance in love of us while also causing us to see the reality of the fallenness that still exists. But in seeing both, we should be encouraged. Yes, we are holy, Christians. But we are also not yet holy. Just like we can say that Jesus won the victory, but there are also enemies.

Get our minds in the reality around us. We are holy and not yet holy. But because we are holy in our status, we should live out holiness in our experience! In a similar way that because the enemies of Christ are defeated, they are and will be defeated when he comes again.

Until the day Jesus comes, we have a Savior who has ascended and promised to grow us. The author goes on in verses 15-18 and writes, <sup>15</sup>“And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, <sup>16</sup>“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” <sup>17</sup> then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” <sup>18</sup>Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.”<sup>16</sup>

By the way, when he says the Holy Spirit bears witness, he confesses the Holy Spirit is deity, too. He quotes from Jeremiah and says the Holy Spirit said these covenantal words. The Holy Spirit is Yahweh! And he bears witness. There’s two specific points the author wants us to get from this Jeremiah quote. First, because of Jesus, those who trust him now have inward change to sincerely want to willfully obey.

---

<sup>14</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:10.

<sup>15</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:14.

<sup>16</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Heb 10:15–18.

Second, because of Jesus, there is complete forgiveness of sins. And, as I said last week, it's forgiveness of past, present and future sins.

The reason I say that is because if Jesus' death only forgave past, then he'd have to die again and again. But Jesus forgives all. Now, some of you might wonder with me, "Then why does 1 John 1:9 say that we are to confess sin as believers if we're eternally forgiven?" Well, if you read the context of 1 John, it's referring to relational forgiveness. In other words, "fellowship." John even says that those who walk in the light see the sin in their life! There's sin in those who walk in the light! But those who walk in the security of the light, confess.

Think of it this way, the author of Hebrews here is talking about judicial forgiveness and acquittal. The Judge and Creator declares not guilty and you are his forever. Now you have a gracious relationship with him. In this relationship, the Judge is also your Father. And, as in any relationship, we grow. First John is talking about our fellowship. And, our sin can hinder our fellowship. Therefore, confession is increasingly learning about how sinful sin is and confessing it as such. And, as a loving Father, our forgiveness is always guaranteed because he has given us ultimate forgiveness – acquittal and reconciliation with him. The once-for-allness of Jesus' sacrifice means that our forgiveness was granted at the cross. Our confession isn't a new sacrifice or new work to attain approval.

Ventura, this changes how we confess. Sometimes I think we confess in such ways that we feel as though we have to grovel into the presence of God. We believe that we, as God's children, are the scum of the earth. I think that's a worldly sorrow. We're trying to earn acquittal by inflicting a mental crucifixion on ourselves. That's not godly confession. Oh yes, I believe we must admit our spiritual adultery and sins against God. If we walk in the light, we will learn to grow in hating sin and confessing it, too. But, there's always an underlying, superior truth that Jesus has made us secure with God! We are eternally loved because Jesus took on the body prepared for him, obeyed and became the once-for-all sacrifice! Therefore, the author says that God "remember" our sins no more. He remembered the sins under the old covenant, but he doesn't "remember" under the new covenant! The word "remember" means that he will never shove the sin in our face to shame us! It speaks to atonement – forgiveness!

**Now, Christian, who do you want to trust in making you right with God? Yourself, your sacrifices or Jesus and his sacrifice? God demands willful obedience and he provided what he demanded: Jesus Christ! Don't turn inward to maintain your sanctification. Jesus obeyed perfectly and was the perfect sacrifice. Continue to look to Jesus! You have all you could ever need, want or desire. Praise Jesus and live in the freedom he's given to you.**

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Hughes, R. Kent. *Preaching the Word: Hebrews, An Anchor for the Soul*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
2. Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
3. Lane, William. *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 1-8*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.
4. Longman III, Tremper. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews, Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.