

## “Eternal” Hebrews 9:11-15

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SERMON 1903

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The sermon text is from Hebrews 9:15, “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

All people are born with the sin of origin. Though physically alive, they are born spiritually “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). This sin of origin includes concupiscence, which is the desires of a sinful mind. Using these sinful desires we “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience...” (Eph 2:2). If we look to man, himself, we find he is a slave to sin. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The Scriptures could have used other diseased or sick terms to describe sinful man, but they didn’t. God wanted the term death! God wanted us to know that the hopelessness of our condition was not going to improve by means of any of man’s actions. Dead people don’t improve. Romans 8:6-8 says, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

In verse 14 of today’s reading, **it speaks of dead works**. What are dead works? They are the works which dead people do! Wait, what? I thought you said that dead people don’t do anything. If we are talking about good works or God-pleasing acts then that is right.

**However, dead people truly do produce “dead works.”** You might think that dead works are heinous acts of disobedience including murder and immoral behavior. Although some dead people do those things, the book of Hebrews is speaking about the dead works which outwardly seem to be good, but are actually done without faith. It is not hard to see that the outwardly immoral are dead sinners. The book of Hebrews is pointing out the more difficult truth. Those unbelievers who externally seem to keep the law by their behavior, are not doing the works of the spiritually-alive believers, but the dead works of the dead unbelievers.

**We don’t judge the person by the work. We judge the work by the person.** Someone who comes to church in order to get business contacts or to please his wife or to try to earn salvation is doing a dead work. We don’t say “going to church” is good, therefore the person is good. Instead, we see that the greed business man attending church to get business contacts is doing the work of a spiritual dead man. The man who loves his wife more than God, Himself, is an idolater. The man who wishes to earn

his salvation by doing “good” things is despising the work of God’s Son who suffered and shed His blood for our eternal redemption.

Romans 8:5-8 says, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” A believer already knows his salvation was accomplished by the Christ. Through faith in Jesus the believer is declared to be good—more than that a saint! A believer comes to church to give thanks for his salvation. Sure he will work hard in his vocation and be true to his wife by serving her, but a believer has no other gods.

So now let’s look at verse 14 which speaks of “dead works.” It says, “...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Jesus’ sacrifice, which involved His death or the shedding of His blood is put forth by God to “cleanse your conscience from dead works.” Before coming to Christ our entire life was one of dead works. And even now, as a believer, the Word of God’s law reveals the intentions of our heart. When we see that we have engaged in dead works—external piety all the while hiding a sinful heart—we need cleansing of the conscience. Only a spiritually dead person would disregard God’s law and the guilt it produces. When a believer’s conscience is pricked by the law, we come to our high priest, Jesus Christ.

The text says, “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come.... With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” For the believer, the coming of Jesus Christ is everything! Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant! **The result of Christ’s work received by faith is an eternal inheritance.**

The old covenant delivered by Moses on Mt. Sinai promised life but on the condition that one would keep the law perfectly. Knowing that natural man could not do it, God made provisions for a priesthood to make sacrifices and shed the blood of goats, calves, and bulls. The whole burnt offering of the ashes of a heifer was sprinkled over the people. Through these external rites, there was a civil external righteousness for the Israelite nation, or as the text says a sanctifying “for the purifying of the flesh.” But these provisions didn’t fully satisfy the conscience.

First, the priest had to continue to make one sacrifice and then another for people. The priest was never finished. And when the priest offered their sacrifice, he first had to offer one for himself, and then for them. Even the entry of the high priest into the holy place on the day of atonement, was repeated yearly. The Israelite nation was satisfied, but the believer’s conscience was not.

This first covenant was not eternal. It was temporary, ineffective, and ultimately unsatisfying. We misunderstand, if we think the first covenant was God’s final word. This covenant was to create a thirst for the eternal redemption. It was designed to show us our sins. This covenant was enacted so that we would seek an eternal inheritance.

The law, the priesthood, and the sacrifices were all designed to point us to Christ. “Through the eternal Spirit, {He} offered Himself without spot to God.” Jesus fulfilled the law, perfectly! Christ came as the true High Priest. He came not to make not to cleanse only the flesh, but to change the heart. He took our dead heart and gave us a living faith in a new fleshy heart. Jesus used “not the blood of goats and calves” on an earthly tabernacle, but once and for all shed His own Blood to bring us to the more perfect tabernacle, the Most Holy Place of God’s eternal glory in heaven.

My dear believers, with the coming of Christ, who shed His own blood for us, the

new covenant has been inaugurated. The transgressions of the first covenant have been eternally redeemed. The foundation for the promise of the eternal inheritance has been completed.

Psalm 43 begins by asking for God's deliverance and asking why God has turned away? The Psalmist's conscience is not at peace. He asks his own soul, "Why are you disquieted within me?" The answer is "Hope in God" (v.5). Our Jesus Christ is God's Hope. He is God's final, even eternal answer. With the coming of Christ, the Father has sent out His light and His truth (v.3). By the shedding of His blood, He has brought us to God's holy hill of heaven. He has brought us to the Most Holy Place of an eternal inheritance. With the new covenant, comes a removal of the dead works. He has made us alive and placed new living desires within us. The Psalmist says, "Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God" (v.4).

Ephesians 2:4-6 says it this way, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...." Our soul is satisfied. Our conscience is cleansed. We, the living, desire to serve the living God. Our eyes look beyond the boundaries of this world to the sure and confident hope "of the good things to come, the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands" (v.11). For the believer, the coming of Jesus Christ, our High Priest and the shedding of His blood is everything!