

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

The portion of scripture before us today is found in the letter written to the Hebrews the ninth chapter beginning at the eleventh verse:

***But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. <sup>12</sup> Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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.***

Heavenly Father these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

Every year on the day of atonement the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies. This was the only day of the year in which anyone was allowed to enter into this place and the High Priest who was the only one allowed in there. Should someone else go in there... well the end of that person was not good. In addition to going into the Holy of

Holies, the High Priest had to bring blood with him. He brought blood so as to sprinkle the Ark of the Covenant which sat beneath the wings of the cherubim.

I can imagine this had to be a rather awe inspiring sight and occasion. Once a year, one 'special' person got to go into this room and perform a task that God demanded. Just imagine if I told you that from now on only one of you per year got to stand up here in the nave... and at that time you had to come and you were performing the works of God. You can imagine that there would be a little fear and trepidation and a lot of awe happening within that one person.

However, we know that though the High Priest was going into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood on the Ark, and eventually the altar, he would have to repeat this action every year. While he would go there and

perform this ritual and sprinkle the blood... it was a never ending cycle.

And yet, when Jesus Christ entered once for all into the Holy of Holies in the greater tabernacle to sprinkle His blood... He never had to do it again. For Christ's blood was able to free us from all sin and therefore ***through Jesus' blood, we have redemption.***

As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, "***But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.***" Christ indeed came as High Priest for us, for we know in this same letter to the Hebrews the author tells us that Christ is the priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Thus we know that Jesus is indeed the High Priest who was foretold back in Genesis, at the time of Abraham... and the one foretold in the Psalms. Christ is the High Priest who came

for us to perform the duties of the High Priest.

Jesus came so that He could enter into the Holy of Holies and place His blood to make atonement for the sins of people. Yes, Jesus came into this world to be our priest... because the blood of bulls and goats could not atone for all of our sins. Christ came to redeem us from all of our transgressions against the first covenant.

Have no other Gods... well we fail at that constantly. For like sheep we have all gone astray, following the devices and desires of our hearts. We do not turn to God for all that we need in this life because we can do a better job than He can.

Honor your father and your mother... we fail at this commandment also. We do not honor our parents nor have we since infancy. We do not honor and respect and love all those

in authority, in fact we think it is okay to talk slander behind their backs and to despise them openly.

Do not bear false witness... nope. We lie like there is no problem with it. We like to call them "little white lies" because it makes us feel better that it is little and thus inconsequential. We like to not put the best construction on everything our neighbor does or says; rather, we seek to bring him harm and injury though he did not mean it.

The old covenant was the one given on Mount Sinai which we fail at completely. This is the covenant that brought law into the world and thus condemned everyone. Yes, there was condemnation before this law was given, but now it is solidified. Now we have the law on our hearts and on the tablets...and still we transgress it.

And the High Priest would go into the tabernacle or temple and he would sprinkle the blood of goats and bulls on the ark and attempt to appease the consciences of men. However as the author tells us later in Hebrews, “***and every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.***” The High Priests who would enter the tabernacle and offer the blood were obeying God, but they were not taking away sin.

However, when Jesus Christ, our High Priest, entered into the tabernacle He was able to make atonement and He was able to redeem us from all of our sins.

Jesus Christ, our High Priest, offered the most perfect sacrifice to God the heavenly Father, He offered Himself. Jesus led a perfect life in perfect adherence to God’s holy law, perfectly fulfilling the Old

Covenant for each and every one of us. He did everything that God commanded and He did it for us. And for this perfect obedience, Jesus offered up Himself. He allowed Himself to be offered on the cross for the sins of all mankind. As Luther says, “***He offered Himself once for all, so that He is Himself both Priest and Sacrifice, and the Altar is the Cross. No more precious sacrifice could He offer to God than that He gave Himself to be slain and consumed in the fire of love. That is the true sacrifice.***”

And this He did for us; Jesus lived the perfect life and died the innocent death for each and every one of us. He was both the High Priest and He was the sacrifice. He took His own blood, as the sacrifice, and offered it to God, as our Priest, on the altar of the cross so that we have the forgiveness of our sins through faith in all that He has done.

It was not with the blood of goats or bulls, but with His blood, which the writer to the Hebrews tells us, ***“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”***<sup>13</sup> ***For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,***<sup>14</sup> ***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?”***

And this blood of Jesus Christ which has been sprinkled on each and every one of us through faith, when we remember our baptisms in which we were baptized into His death, but also into His resurrection. This same blood which was offered for us on the altar of the cross, we receive in the Lord’s

Supper for the forgiveness of our sins. This same blood is the blood which is on the doorposts and lintels of our hearts... the blood of the lamb, who was perfect, to keep at bay the wrath of God. This same blood Christ has used to pay for your redemption; Christ has purchased you with His blood. As Peter tells us, ***“knowing that You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”***

And it is for this reason that Jesus Christ is the mediator of a new covenant. No longer the covenant of the law and of accusing; rather, He is the mediator of the covenant of grace. Through His blood and His sacrifice, Christ is our redeemer, our mediator, our Savior who has done everything for us and He has done this so that, ***“those who are***

*called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*

Dear friends in Christ, I would like to leave you with the words of Luther pertaining to this text, *“Through His Kingdom and reign He protects us from all evil in all things, but through His priesthood He protects us from all sins and from the wrath of God. He steps into our place, offering Himself in order that He may reconcile God to us, so that through Him we can put our trust in God, and our consciences need not fear His wrath nor stand in dread of His judgments... It is a mighty defiance that a man can set this High Priest over against his sin, over against his bad conscience, over against God’s terrible wrath and judgment, and in sure faith can confess, ‘Thou art a High Priest for ever.’”*

Thanks be to God that He has sent His Son to be our High Priest. Thanks be to God that

He has given us the forgiveness of our sins through faith in His Son. And thanks be to God that through the blood of Jesus Christ, we have redemption.

Thanks be to God. Amen.