

Sunday June 18th sermon: "Christ's Redemption of Our Transgressions -
- The God of All Comforts (Pt 20)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Hebrews 9:15; Matthew 1:18-25

God comforts us by the oath He made to Christ, appointing Him our
high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews describes the New Covenant as being a special type, as Christ's
last will and testament.

The reason the New Covenant operates as a will and testament is that, in
order for its promises to be carried out, Christ had first to sacrifice
Himself in the place of His poor, sinful people.

By His sacrifice, Jesus stepped into our place under the old covenant
law, and bore that judgment for us. He kept all the law for us, and by
death paid all the promised judgment for our sins on our behalf.

He stood between God and us, being God Himself as well as a man, and
brokered the exchange, of the New Covenant blessings and salvation, for
old covenant disobedience and wrath, by dying for us at Calvary.

Hebrews tells us that by Christ's death, there is redemption of the
transgressions that were under the old covenant.

The Greek word "redemption" means "liberation procured by the
payment of a ransom." The price of justice for our crimes was paid by
Jesus' death, whereby He redeemed us from our sins.

The same Greek word is used in Ephesians 1:7 – "in Whom [Christ] we
have redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of sin."

Thus, it is by Christ's bloody death, that the New Covenant promise of forgiveness of our sin is brought to pass!

This is the same promise Christ declared at His Supper -- His blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sin.

A key point next raised is that this redemption even applies to the transgressions under the old covenant, those sins of olden times that doomed the Lord's people to judgment and wrath.

How could God pass over those sins, and not carry out the wrath He promised upon all sin? How could He save His people from their sin?

The answer is, that Christ's atoning death on the cross redeems from ALL the sins of all of God's people, from beginning to end!

In Romans 3, Paul makes the same argument: God has provided the Lord Jesus as our redemption from our unrighteousness, His shed blood makes propitiation of God's just punishment and wrath due to us for our crimes.

When we lay hold of Christ by faith, we are justified freely, declared to be without fault or guilt at all! Perfect righteousness is imputed to us, a righteousness that is not based upon our works, but rather accounted to us by God's grace.

Christ Himself in His dying, is the appeasement of God's wrath for our sins, and therefore took away the curse that lay upon us. Thus, the old covenant promises of judgment and wrath against our sin have been satisfied by Jesus in our place.

Paul next makes it clear, the same as Hebrews, that this forgiveness even applies to the sins that were committed before Christ died.

God waited on Jesus to pay the price for His people, and withheld His wrath until it could be poured out on Christ on the cross for us!

By doing this, God demonstrates His righteousness, His justice being fully satisfied by the blood of Jesus shed for us.

Thus, Paul concludes, God is just in all things, even when He justifies poor sinners who trust in Jesus!

Hebrews makes clear that this Gospel promise of the New Covenant comes to all those who are called by God. These are the beneficiaries of Christ's last will and testament.

Scriptures explain that God calls those He loves and knows: "whom He foreknew, them He also predestinated to be conformed to Christ, and whom He predestinated, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified!"

From our perspective, we find out that we are among the called when we flee to Jesus, and He receives us, when we trust in His promises and His sacrifice as God's Lamb to take away our sins.

Those who are called to receive the eternal inheritance are those who rest all their hope for salvation and life in the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

The angel told Mary's husband Joseph this particular truth, when he announced that Mary's child was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that He must be named Jesus, for He will save His people from their sin.

The name "Jesus" is Jehovah Saves. Since it is Christ Who will save His people, His deity is thereby proved.

But not only that: the promise of the New Covenant -- that our sins would be forgiven -- is laid upon Jesus. As both God and man, He will carry out that great, long awaited salvation of God's people from their sins. This is what the angel told Joseph.

Finally, note this well: in normal circumstances, the person who writes the will and signs it – the testator -- has no power to carry it out, for it cannot be carried out until after the testator is dead.

It is the executor that is supposed to carry out the promises of inheritance made by the testator in his will.

There is no end of dissatisfaction and fighting amongst the heirs provoked by this procedure. People are always making claims that the executor isn't complying with the terms of the will, and bitterness and litigation often ensues.

But Christ's New Testament is the only example of a will in the history of the world, where the testator is the same person as the will's executor!

Christ died to put His will into force, but He rose again to see to it that its promises are fulfilled!

This is His duty as our great high priest – He both sacrificed Himself for our sins, and He lives to make intercession for us, and to present His sacrifice as a full atonement to redeem us from our sins.

We can have no doubt that, having paid so great a price to carry out the promise of the forgiveness of our sins, our Lord Jesus will not fail to ensure that that promise is perfectly applied to us as the heirs. His last will and testament is fully carried out and enforced to the end of time!

No wonder we are greatly comforted by God's solemn oath to Christ, that He will be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek!

Jesus is sitting there even now for us, in His human body at the right hand of glory, interceding, pleading, and superintending to make sure His New Covenant promises are carried out perfectly for our everlasting benefit, and God's overwhelming and eternal praise and glory!