

Good Friday  
April 2, 2010  
\*CW-S – “In Silent Pain the Eternal Son”

Hebrews 7:26, 27  
713\*-129-114-319

May Christ the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us and grant us His peace. Amen.

We Preach Christ Crucified – “He Meets Our Needs”

- I. He meets our need for a perfect Priest.
- II. He meets our need for a perfect sacrifice.

Dear Christian friends,

Our Lenten journey has been leading us here **ever since** we first set out. We're at that hill just outside the city walls of Jerusalem - the hill called “**Golgotha**” – “**Calvary**” in Latin – “**the place of the skull.**” We see three crude crosses – **each** with a condemned man hanging on it. But it's the Man on the **center cross** who is THE CENTER of attention. The sign above His head reads, “**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**”

We've been here MANY TIMES before. The sights – the sounds – are **so familiar**. But today we GO BACK and take another good look. Yes, look closely and TAKE IT ALL IN. Those nails pounded through His hands and feet. His back bloody and raw from a **vicious scourging**. His body bruised and **battered**. The “**crown of thorns.**” The blood. There is SO MUCH blood – blood everywhere. Blood from His hands – His **feet** – His **back** – His **head**. Blood still trickling from His side. Blood staining His cross – blood soaking into the ground beneath Him. Jesus is now dead - His body hangs LIMP and **lifeless** on His cross. Do YOU SEE all this – **see** HIM on His cross?

“**Christ crucified**” is not a PRETTY sight – yet we need to see this. We need EXACTLY this – “**Christ crucified.**” That's the point of these verses. “**We preach Christ crucified**” because **Christ crucified** MEETS OUR NEED 1)for a **perfect priest** and 2)for a **perfect sacrifice**.

**I. He meets our need for a perfect priest.**

This **letter to the Hebrews** was written to **Jewish** Christians who were being persecuted for their faith. They we're weakening in their faith. Was it really WORTH IT to be a Christian? Was it **worth** the ridicule – people thinking you were ODD – **strange**? Was it **worth losing their jobs** – losing their homes – **maybe even** losing their LIVES? **Maybe** it's NOT SO GREAT being a Christian. **Maybe** they should just give up on Jesus and go back to their **old Jewish** way of life. That would certainly make life a LOT EASIER for them.

This letter was written to counter **such thinking**. It's not a BUMMER being a Christian – it's the GREATEST THING in the world despite all the **hassles** and **hardships** that might come with it. Being a Christian MEANS YOU HAVE Jesus – and there's nothing better than that. Nothing in all the world CAN TOP having Jesus as your Savior. Jesus meets our needs – including our need for a PERFECT PRIEST.

These Hebrew Christians were very familiar with the ROLE of the priest. So much of OT worship centered around the **priest offering** sacrifices. **So much** of OT worship was worship using PICTURE LANGUAGE. I like to compare it to **our having** stained-glass windows. Those windows aren't just meant to be PRETTY. They're there to TEACH and REMIND us of important biblical truths. SO IT WAS with the priests in the OT.

In the OT ONLY the descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother, were allowed to be priests. ONLY the priests were allowed to offer the sacrifices at the temple. In the temple proper there were TWO SPECIAL rooms called the "**Holy Place**" and the "**Most Holy Place.**" The "**Most Holy Place**" pictured God dwelling among His people. That "**Most Holy Place**" was strictly OFF LIMITS to everybody including the priests. ONLY the **high priest** was allowed in there and ONLY ON the great "**Day of Atonement**" and ONLY IF he came with blood from a sacrifice.

Now what was all that PICTURING? What was **God trying to teach** His people with that? There are several BIG LESSONS. **One** is that God sets the TERMS for our relationship with Him. He's God – we're not. **Two**, there were MAJOR PROBLEMS in our relationship with our Creator. God is "holy." God will accept NOTHING LESS than holy and we are ANYTHING BUT holy. We were born sinners. We have hearts corrupted through and through. We have a sinful nature that CAN'T STAND God – that sees God as our ENEMY – God **only makes our lives** miserable. **According** to our sinful nature we're better off WITHOUT GOD in our lives.

**Lesson three** – for us sinners to **have** a GOOD RELATIONSHIP with God we need a MEDIATOR – **someone** to go between – to make peace between God and us – **someone** to STRAIGHTEN things out between God and us. That was the job of the priest.

None of those **OT priests** was not the PERFECT priest. **All** of them were sinners themselves. BEFORE they could offer sacrifices "**for the sins of the people**" they "**first needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins.**" NOT ONLY THAT they could never bring the PERFECT sacrifice. "**Day after day**" they kept sacrificing "**for their own sins and for the sins of the people.**" All those OT priests PICTURED for the people and reminded them of GOD'S PROMISE to one day send the PERFECT priest who would bring the PERFECT sacrifice.

God kept that promise when He sent His own **eternal Son** Jesus to us. Jesus meets our need for a PERFECT priest because He ACTUALLY IS perfect. "**Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners.**" Notice how the writer PILES ON the words – "**holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners.**" "Conceived by the Holy Spirit and **born** of the Virgin Mary" God's Son was born a true man but without a sinful nature. FROM WHATEVER ANGLE you look at Jesus' life it's perfect. Jesus lived among sinners **every day** but He never followed their sinful ways. Jesus never used THEIR SINS as an excuse for Him to **go ahead** and sin. In every area of His life – for every minute of His life – Jesus gave His heavenly Father PERFECT OBEDIENCE coupled with a **perfect** LOVE for and a **perfect** TRUST in His Father. Jesus – our perfect priest – our MEDIATOR with God – lived that perfect life FOR US and IN our place.

**Now it was time** for our PERFECT PRIEST to bring...

## II. He meets our need for a perfect sacrifice.

Go back to those **imperfect** OT priests with their **imperfect sacrifices**. God was VERY PICKY about those sacrifices. **Again**, God wanted to teach His people some VERY IMPORTANT lessons.

God insisted that ONLY PERFECT animals could be sacrificed – no bumps, bruises, broken bones were allowed. You didn't dare offer God a **half-dead** animal – one that wouldn't bring you anything at the market. God demanding the BEST. That was another reminder that WE OWED God a **perfect** life. But instead of being perfect people we've sinned – and sin has its CONSEQUENCES.

You brought your **perfect animal** to the priest and then what happened? You put your hands on the animal's head and the priest then took it from you and SLIT its throat **wide open**. The NOW

DEAD animal was sacrificed on the altar – its still warm blood poured at the base of the altar. Sacrificing those animals **“day after day”** at the temple was a DIRTY – MESSY – DEADLY business.

Do you see what God was TRYING TO TEACH His people? We like to shrug off our sins with a **“no big deal.”** We have all kinds of EXCUSES for our sins. “So I don’t always HAVE TIME for God – so I sometimes PUSH God off to the side in my life – I know I shouldn’t DRINK so much – shouldn’t check those porn sites on the internet – I know I should be nice to my sister – I should do a BETTER JOB at school/work – BUT...” With all those dead, bloody animals God was making clear that He’s not looking for EXCUSES. He wants PERFECT **obedience** and anything less has CONSEQUENCES. **“The soul that sins, it shall die. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**

Do you see how all those IMPERFECT **priests** with their IMPERFECT **sacrifices** were in fact the perfect picture of today – the **perfect picture** of **“Christ crucified”** - our perfect priest – our **perfect sacrifice**?

**All** those animals sacrificed in the OT were INNOCENT. They had done nothing wrong. They didn’t deserve to die. Yet what happened? Those **innocent** animals died IN THE PLACE of the **guilty** people. The innocent animal PAID for the people’s sin. The animal died – the people lived – they were FORGIVEN.

Isn’t that what today is **all about**? BEHOLD our perfect priest bringing the **perfect sacrifice** – HIMSELF! Jesus – **“who knew no sin”** – took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished in our place. Today we hear Jesus cry out, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** That’s what we deserved because of our sins – God TURNING HIS BACK on us for all time and for eternity. God pouring out on us His HOLY anger at our UNHOLY **defiance**. Yet it’s the INNOCENT Jesus **“forsaken”** on the cross – dead on the cross. **“He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brings us peace was on Him.”** All that blood at the cross – that’s **“the blood of God’s Son that cleanses us from all sin!”**

**“Such a high priest meets our need. He sacrificed for (our) sins ONCE FOR ALL when He offered Himself.”** Don’t overlook that **“once for all.”** Jesus’ perfect sacrifice means a PERFECT FORGIVENESS of all sins for all people. That INCLUDES you and me with all our sin and guilt. All our sins were all paid IN FULL – were all forgiven – that VERY FIRST Good Friday when Jesus died. **“Once for all”** – **“once”** FOR YOU Jesus says to you and me today in Holy Communion. **“Take, eat; take, drink,”** Jesus again invites us. **“This is My body given FOR YOU – My blood shed FOR YOU.”**

With that perfect sacrifice comes a PERFECT SALVATION. **“Today you will be with Me in Paradise,”** Jesus promised that **repentant** criminal. That man would die a MOST MISERABLE death – a death hastened when a soldier smashed his legs with **some sort** of a sledgehammer. It was not a PRETTY WAY to die! But he had Jesus’ promise – **“Today – with Me – in Paradise.”** His last hours on earth would be **so wretched** – but in just a FEW MORE HOURS he would join his Jesus in heaven’s eternal glory. WHAT COMFORT! What GRACE!

We also have Jesus’ promise that when we die TRUSTING in Him we will immediately join Him in His heavenly glory. ONLY Jesus can make and keep that promise. Jesus DID make that promise and He DOES keep it!

***“We preach Christ crucified”*** – our perfect priest – our perfect sacrifice. There is ONE FINAL difference between Jesus and those **imperfect** OT priests with their **imperfect** sacrifices. EVERY ONE of those priests died and stayed dead. **Every one** of those animals died and stayed dead. **Today** Jesus DIED – but we have His promise, ***“On the third day I will be raised to life.”*** See you on Sunday! Amen.

LUTHER'S EXPLANATION TO THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ARTICLE