

will power

hebrews 10

Hebrews 10 this morning. After a long discussion of the New Covenant, the author is transitioning from a focus on how the Old Covenant is gone because of what Jesus did to now some thoughts about how what Jesus did should activate us to live a passionate, deliberate, bold Christianity.

Let's look at our text and see what we see.

Hebrews 10.1-39 - For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

**“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.
In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
You had no pleasure.
Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’ ”**

Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies

washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

"For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.
Now the just shall live by faith;
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Even though it was the most watched event in television history, I must admit that I didn't watch the Super Bowl. However, from watching my friends *talk* about the Super Bowl on Twitter and seeing some of the stats and recaps, it seems as though the 49ers didn't really show up to play in the first half of the game. Lots of penalties, not much scoring. Their quest for 6 fell short, I'm sure for lots of reasons.

This letter we've been studying for 10 weeks now is all about getting our attention and reminding us to activate our Christianity. We keep being invited to show up and get in the game.

The author opens the chapter by talking about how sacrifices in the Temple were a constant reminder of a person's sin. Every Sabbath, every year, there was a nagging guilt under the Law.

But then, starting in verse 5, we're shown how this incredible and dramatic shift took place as Jesus Christ took up the cross and shed His blood in order to once and forever purge sin from the lives of those who believe. That's what God always wanted. He didn't want the slaughter of animals. He wanted redemption for mankind, and Jesus Christ made it happen.

He says in verse 9:

Hebrews 10.9 - ..."Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."

So now, when we think about the cross or think about God, or think about the Bible, we're not meant to think of our guilt, but instead we should realize what Christ has done and think about the monumental potential that today holds for us as Christians.

Verse 10 says that the will of God is that we would be sanctified. We're set aside in order to be a part of what He is doing on the earth. Using the analogy from Sunday, we've been drafted to play in the Super Bowl, spiritually speaking. We've been put on the field in the Big Game.

And I love how Jesus, who made all this possible, says, "I'm showing up to do Your will on God. I'm showing up to get this done." The 49ers were on a quest for six, Jesus Christ is on a quest for souls. And He's given each of us a spot on the team, not just on the bench, but out on the field.

As Christians, if we're following Christ and imitating Him, then there should be a drive to be a part of the will of God in our day to day activities. Because every day should be a reminder of the potential that God has installed into us. The potential for growth and for victory and for soul-saving.

That's what the author is getting at in this chapter. He moves into these next verses, starting in verse 10, and talks about how we're not just purified from sin, we're *sanctified* for God's will and His Kingdom. We are players on the field.

Then, after establishing all that, he gets to the directive of his thoughts. Since Christ has revolutionized the relationship between God and man, since there's a will that God is working out, since God wants *us* to be a part of that will, then we should boldly fulfill that purpose and boldly live out the Christian life. We should show up to play and to win.

There in verse 19 the text says, "Therefore brothers, *have boldness!*"

First, toward God. He says, "Man, boldly enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus." Be intimate with God. Talk with Him. Learn about Him. Listen to Him. Petition Him. God Himself says in the Bible, "Sometimes you have not because you ask not." He says, "If you knock, I'm going to answer. If you seek, you're going to find." So we shouldn't ever have a stand-offish approach to God. We should be bold toward Him.

We should also be bold toward the lost. In Hebrews there's a lot of talk about judgment. Even in this chapter we see the fate of those who reject Christ. So, like the apostles in the book of Acts, we should be praying for boldness in our interactions with people who aren't saved. It may be difficult or uncomfortable sometimes to preach, but the people around us are just moments from Hell, and that should stir up good works of evangelism in our lives.

We should be bold toward other believers. Verses 24 and 25 are some of the more famous verses from Hebrews. But, it's a good reminder that we should be bold to minister to other Christians. Bold to encourage each other. Again, not being timid, but getting out there and

doing the will of God by supporting each other and warning each other and relating with each other through Jesus Christ so that we can all be built up and stirred up.

And then we should be bold to get spiritual work done. There in verse 25 we're reminded that The Day is fast approaching. There's a clock that's ticking down. There's only so much time to score, so we should be bold to gain as much yardage as we can before it's all over.

Boldness is something we need. It's something we should ask the Lord to give us for ourselves and for each other. Because the life that's set before us, the battle we've been called into (using our football analogy) is the Super Bowl, it's not the Pro Bowl. The Pro Bowl is fun, but people don't really want to get hurt. The season's over. It's more about just having a good time.

But that's not what the Super Bowl is about. The Super Bowl is a quest. It's about victory and domination. And that's how the Christian life is portrayed to us. It's not a casual exhibition. It's the real deal.

In the next set of verses, starting at verse 26, the author talks about the expectation of judgement a person can have if they reject the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now, as a quick note since this is a topic that comes up, this is not saying that a person can lose their salvation. It's saying that if a person hears the Gospel and willfully chooses to reject the sacrifice of Christ, then there is no other sacrifice that can make them right before God. Therefore, at the end of their lives, they can expect judgement and fiery indignation since they made themselves adversaries of God. This is not talking about believers who commit an act of sin.

But I was thinking about how we could devotionally apply this to ourselves, and I was realizing that there are some expectations we can have if we're not living out the Christian life. If we're not interested in being a part of the will of God, there are some rough things we can look forward to even as believers.

There are plenty of examples in the Bible. Some of them are major, like Jonah, who willfully wanted to do the *opposite* of God's will. Or Lot, who wasn't interested in God's will as much as he was his own wealth.

Then there are some less outright examples we're given. When David sinned with Bathsheba, that was a result of him not being in the will of God, not making Godly decisions in his life. Or even Peter there walking on the water. That's a subtle but interesting example of what happens when we take our eyes off Christ and put our thinking down on the earthly level.

All of those examples and many more in the Scriptures demonstrate that if we aren't diligent about being in the will of God then we can expect some serious trouble in life.

We don't want to mess around like David or some of these other guys did at times. Instead we want to run the race to win the race. And the writer of Hebrews knew that. So he closes out the chapter from verse 32 to 39 encouraging us to burn brightly before the Lord.

I love verse 32. It says:

Hebrews 10.32 - But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings.

I love that. We became Christians and we were illuminated. Let's take that analogy and think about it for a minute.

Fluorescent bulbs are everywhere. Obviously there are benefits and detriments to any different technology. But more and more you're seeing CFLs instead of incandescent bulbs.

When you first turn those bulbs on, they're a little bit dim. Then they warm up and get brighter.

That's kind of what the spiritual life is like. We start in darkness. Then we're illuminated. We become baby Christians. Going from off to on is a big difference. But there's still a greater potential brightness for us as we move from milk to meat and become more mature and discover our calling and move forward with Christ. We shine brighter and brighter as we are more conformed into the Lord's image.

But over time, if we're not properly attending to our Christianity, we can start to dim out a little bit. I've got a fluorescent bulb in a back room that barely works. Takes forever to turn on. When it does, it flickers off and on. The edges of the bulb are all darkened.

That doesn't have to happen in our relationship with the Lord, but if we're not diligent it will. The connection between us and God gets debris. The edges of our lives get darkened by apathy or carnality. Sometimes we flash on and off, just being inconsistent in our walk with the Lord. Or sometimes there's something wrong with the ballast of our lives.

A light ballast is what activates and regulates a fluorescent bulb.

A few years ago Edison came and switched all our ballasts in the building. We were amazed at how much brighter the same bulbs were!

Sometimes in our spiritual lives we swap out the Lord as our ballast and replace Him with some earthly pursuit. That's what Lot did and it ended rather poorly for him.

But it's interesting to think about. The bulb is the bulb. It has potential for great brightness. Our spiritual lives have unlimited potential in the hands of God. But the danger is that we don't keep the connection between us clean and snug. Or we let the edges of our lives dim out and get blackened up by the world. Or, there's a danger of swapping out what activates and regulates our thinking and our activities, that ballast in our hearts.

We want to stay illuminated. Bringing God pleasure, being a part of His will, bringing light into the dark. That's what a good bulb does.

Or if we go back to the football analogy, we're on a quest. We want to play to win.

So, today, let's show up to live out our Christianity. Let it be said of us: "I have come to do Your will oh God," and let's put it all on the line so that we can gain ground and take hold of what we've been set apart for.