

Benefits of the Cross of Christ

So we have the sermon text Hebrews 9:26-28. Much in Hebrews of course could be covered and gone over and preaching as it deals with some aspect of what Christ has done for us.

I want to take a broader view here with the benefits of the cross of Christ, Hebrews 9:26 to 28. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. He that would have had to suffer once since the foundation of the world but now once at the end of the ages he has appeared to put away sin the sacrifice of himself and as it is appointed for men to die once but after this is judgment. So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many to those who eagerly wait for him he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation.

Let us pray. In meditating upon the benefits of the cross of Christ God above may your spirit continue to guide us in the hearing of your word and the application to our lives. May it be a time of celebration and encouragement God for us to meditate on that truth for our unworthiness. May we not reside there only but cast our eyes up to Christ Jesus who is in heaven right now interceding for us and showering us with the great benefits of redemption our God and Savior. May this give us joy in our hearts we pray.

Amen. The Lord's Supper is a time of celebration as well as meditation. We meditate upon the awesomeness of the death of Christ and we celebrate his gift for us.

The many gifts himself being the greatest. Let us therefore celebrate and meditate upon the gifts from Christ for his people. So let me list a few that we may stand in awe of his love for our undeserving souls that are ensued and applied in this text.

Of course the highlight of the text here is that he has suffered for us and sacrificed himself and was appointed to die and to bear our sins. This is the idea of redemption. The first point.

The Cross Gives Us Redemption

The he cross gives us redemption. I'm using the idea more broadly here. Redemption is satisfaction of justice.

There is a need for justice. We see this of course in protests and declamations of concerns on our political situation and society and the like of police brutality or the crime of thievery and murder and scandals and citizens and the like. Concerned about bad people.

All kinds of bad people. Getting away with bad and evil activities and things and crimes themselves. You can run across the news all the time.

It could be quite depressing. Don't watch too much news if you can't go that route. But it's there.

We understand this in our hearts. People get away with criminal activity. They lie. They murder. It may be a small time puddle. It may be a big time politician. It doesn't matter. They seem to get away with a lot of things. More and more as the generation has gone by.

Evil thoughts and unloving attitudes as we know are there and being multiplied. We read about them as well. It seems like the internet and social media seems to amplify such hatred of the heart.

And so they throw their vitriol at people. Spew it. That too is evil and wicked.

And it seems like they get away with it. People's names are slandered. Christians are slandered.

Is there no justice? It's completely unfair especially as we know of the babies. But it's not just our understanding of justice. Even the unbeliever knows something's wrong.

These things should not be happening. Why do these criminals and the like get away with these things? And the innocent on the flip side don't get the justice they deserve. They may be declared guilty when they're not.

That's unfair. We have an innate understanding, a natural understanding that this is unfair or this is fair. We may twist it of course as unbelievers but it's still there.

Now with respect to politics you could be innocent or guilty. But with respect to God we are all guilty and we are all rebels before him. We are the enemies of God deserving just retribution from the judge just as much as the rebels and anyone else who rises up against the people, tries to kill your family, goes against the government, and tries to overthrow all that is good, just, and holy are rebels and evil.

And you expect nothing less than full justice, vindication, protection of the innocent and the guilty punished to the utmost. We understand this. I ran across this when I was on campus a number of years ago trying to witness to the students there.

And they have what they call a spring fling in which they have all the tables come out for the clubs, for businesses, they can get more students to work for the local store or whatever else, future engineers and whatnot. And I talked to a few of them and one of the first things I asked of course is do you know what Christianity is or is not? What do we believe in? What's the big deal about Christianity? Most of them couldn't give an answer and that was an opportunity for me to explain to them. And one approach I used was this.

You understand justice. You understand if people are trying to overthrow the government, they're rebels and something ought to be done about that. If they're trying to kill your family, they ought to be stopped and you want the innocent protected.

Yeah, exactly. It's the same thing except God is a judge and we are the rebels and we try to overthrow his rule in his kingdom and continue to fight against him and we deserve nothing less than full punishment. It's assumed of course all over the Bible beyond the call and it's behind, excuse me, the call to repent.

This is why the repentance makes sense and Mark chapter 1 we read in the opening work of Jesus Christ that he came to preach the kingdom of God and repentance, right, to bemoan their wretchedness and their violations of God's holy law. And it's expounded variously, the famous part there in Romans 3, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We are aware of that passage and how it describes the wickedness of mankind that in thought word and deed.

There's none who understand, none who seek out God, that is, for the right reason. They don't want anything to do with him. They understand he's a judge and they are guilty and thus they try to hide from him.

They have a guilty conscience, brothers and sisters, all of them do, because they know justice demands rebels against his rule to be judged and judged harshly. And how can rebels therefore to God's rule be reconciled? How can justice be met? That is the great question the gospel answers. God is just and has exercised that justice upon his only begotten Son.

Hebrews 9:26, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is important for men to die once, but after this the judgment. So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

This is how he brings reconciliation. He brings we who are separated from him and redeems them by the blood of Christ Jesus. He buys them back from the rebellion, from Satan's kingdom, and brings them here.

And that's through his death. He takes their place. Substitution, the vicarious substitution, that's how he satisfies on the one hand justice that somebody, the guilty party, must be punished.

And Jesus says, I will be that guilty party. I will represent them and I will die for them. And at the same time he gives them redemption.

They are no longer guilty. You are no longer guilty. You who have repented of your sins and trust in Jesus Christ to have lived and died for you.

Your records wiped clean. It's not just wiped clean. It is filled with the righteousness of Jesus Christ as though you had obeyed the law.

Of course it wasn't you. It was Christ who obeyed the law perfectly and thoughtward indeed. Upheld his kingdom rule when you try to tear it down.

And so the punishment of rebels, punishment of Jesus Christ, justice has been meted out upon him. And we have been declared innocent because of him. That's how the two meet at the cross, mercy and justice.

He does not throw it away. He would not be a just God if he just gave up on the law and said, well you know whatever. It was just a mistake.

It's okay. I'll just pretend none of this happened. Just go on your merry way.

He does not. He cannot and he will not because he's a just God. So that is resolved in the gospel.

Redemption as reconciliation as well. I use the word redemption again in the broader sense. There was a need for reconciliation which is not just justice because it's not enough to have Christ punished for the breaking of the law that he, what, bore the sins of many, verse 28.

God went further and brought you into the judge's family. Those who were at odds and loggerheads with one another are now in a new relationship through Christ Jesus and by his blood. You are now adopted.

He didn't leave you just on your own. Kids go off on your own as humans. I've covered your sin.

That's fine. No, he brings you into this new relationship. You're adopted.

That's one of the benefits there. Reconciliation here, a little more broadly than adoption. No more hatred of God's ways or of him.

You are learning a new life. Public worship as we are here today and the Lord's Supper is part of that new life. Part of this expression of the reconciliation we have through Christ Jesus that we have a new way of doing and thinking and living.

He is no longer a judge. As a judge he is satisfied because Christ Jesus has satisfied divine justice, taking our death and obeying the law for us, but also he has become now our father and we are his children. We all know that's a different kind of relationship.

It's a wonderful relationship. Criminals and rebels may be pardoned by the president, but their relationship is forever broken. They're not going to be best friends with him or whoever they committed the crime with ever again, but God has changed it as only he can because the power of the Holy Spirit within us means we can love God and that relationship has now been renewed by his grace and mercy.

Romans 5 10 4, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of a son, much more we would say all the more having been reconciled we shall be saved by his life and not only that we were also rejoiced in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Broken parties. Now on God's part as you know it's not his fault.

Typically today when we have a broken party we think of a little problem here on this side of the family, problem on this other side of the family and they're at loggerheads. No, this is just one side and one side and only. We broke that relationship in Adam and God said I will fix it.

I will make it better. Redemption is also intercession, not just reconciliation. Now that you are no longer a guilty enemy of God by the satisfaction of justice by Christ, now that you are

a child and a friend of God through reconciliation and adoption in particular and your adopted royalty, we still need intercession because even though we are adopted royalty we are still imperfect.

We still sin. We may slide back into our old ways of thinking and doing and so Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior who died on the cross once for us continues ever to live for us. Romans 8:34 we read.

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us and never ends because of his love for us never ends. And as we are still sinners, yes saved by grace, but sinners who still struggle, who still fall. David fell.

Peter fell a few times and the Lord Jesus restored him as he restores us and intercedes for them as he intercedes for us. In fact he prays for us. That's Christ's great high priestly prayer in John chapter 17.

You can look that up if you want to be edified in a different way at times. There are multiple prayers in the Bible and that's one of the great prayers because the prayer of the great high priest Jesus Christ for his sheep, for you brothers and sisters. And this is why we can still pray to the Father by the blood of Christ because he intercedes for us.

He ever lives to intercede for us. Hebrews 7:25. Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them. He is not weary brothers and sisters.

He does not give up. They did it again. What is up with my children? But he loves you enough.

He cares for you that he ever lives to intercede for you. Intercession of course is the go-between. In this case between ourselves, our sins and our Heavenly Father.

Christ intercedes with his blood to cover our sins even right now. It wasn't just on the cross that's the basis of it but he continues to apply that work he did 2,000 years ago for us. These are wonderful and glorious benefits given to you when you were first saved and continued upon you of course. Redemption is justified as justice sanctified.

Relationships reconciled and the continual intercession of our high priest Jesus Christ. And this is what the supper represents. Christ's work and redemption on the cross by satisfying justice and reconciling us for us even as he continues to intercede.

That alone is enough for us to ever praise him, to come to him on worship on his day, to think about him throughout the week so that we take time and our private prayers and family devotions to think about him because so many problems around us even within us. Remember he ever lives to intercede for you. The cross gives us the fruit of the Spirit.

The Cross Gives Us the Fruit of the Spirit

Second point, the cross gives us the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of obedience. I have here my first sub point. Maybe you never thought of it that way.

Pastor, I thought Christ took my punishment. I deserve death. He died on my stead and I also had the obligation to obey him perfectly forever and I can't do that.

Well you can't, that's true. You can't ever satisfy that great demand. Christ did it for us.

He's the warrant for heaven but in doing that he has gifted us his Holy Spirit so that we can have the first fruits of obedience now in this life. It's the goal. You haven't achieved it yet.

In the law courts you have achieved it through Christ Jesus. In life we achieved it in our personal activities by Christ Jesus and the power of the Spirit within us until we get to heaven where we will have perfection, moral perfection, and thought, word, and deed. No more temptation within us.

No more sliding and distractions of our flesh. When God adopted you into his royal family, he gave you the spotless clothing of Christ's righteousness that you are to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey in the lusts and do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but present yourself to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Reckon or consider yourself indeed dead to sin. You have the first works of the Holy Spirit within you and you can say no to sin. And you have because one of the first act of faith although it is not a good work insofar as it brings you to God and God says oh you have faith that brings you to heaven rather you have Christ Jesus whom faith apprehends it is he who brings you to heaven.

Faith itself is a gift of the Holy Spirit and it's a good thing. It's not a bad thing. Repentance is a good thing, not a bad thing.

That was you yielding your members to God in what? Righteousness and a good thing. I'm saying it's not impossible brothers and sisters, in this life to be more godly, to be more holy, to be more obedient to him. I know it seems to take forever.

Some things seem to stick in your craw as we say but it doesn't change the fact that you began your life by the power of the Spirit within you moving you to believe and after believing to continue to believe and to love him and to repent of your sin to hate your sin and to be baptized. You said I want to be baptized if you're an adult. I want to do these good works because God tells me to.

Those are good things however much they may have a little sin here and there within them you can and you have yielded your members as instruments of righteousness. Fruit of the Spirit what we typically think of that phrase because it's right out of the Bible. Obedience to God's law at least outwardly is not all.

It's also the inward part of obedience. In Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit emphasizes that inward reality with respect to God of course above all because God is the Spirit we must worship him in spirit and in truth with our heart, our thoughts. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ have crucified the flesh with his passions and desires. And so you see the contrast here between what the Spirit gives us as he works within us and those who are Christ have crucified the flesh that is the sinful inclinations with us that is the passions and desires of wickedness and lusts.

They should be filled instead they should be replaced with joy, peace, love, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and the like. And that too is a gift of God. Christ's obedience to the law was external.

Externally he imputed to us a judicial declaration. But the work of Christ also is given to us by the Spirit which is internal within us purifying our hearts and that's the emphasis therefore of the fruits of the Spirit. The judge of your soul finding you a guilty enemy redeems you by Christ's cross and blood and gives you the fruit of the Spirit and promises you heaven.

The Cross Gives Us Heaven

The third point. The cross gives us heaven. Verse 28.

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many to those who eagerly wait for him. He will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation. I thought we already had salvation.

Clearly in this text he means by salvation the final culmination of a new heaven and a new earth in which the righteousness of God dwells therein and all the remnants of the flesh of the world and the devil are completely eradicated. There's no more struggle. Romans 7 will now be a thing of the past.

That great passage that tells us that we read there. I keep doing the things I don't want to do and I keep doing the things I don't do the things I should do. The flip sides.

It's always the flip side. You have been saved. It's another way of looking at it.

You have been saved. You are being saved and you will be saved. As you use the word saved just very broadly.

Philippians 1.6. Being confident, Paul writes, of this very thing that he who has begun a good work in you. You have been saved. We'll complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

You will be saved. That's what we should look for. That should be our hope as we walk this veil of tears.

This is the cross giving us a picture of heaven and the things to come. You're being here right now and taking the Lord's Supper as one of many evidences that God loves you in Christ Jesus. And Christ will finish his work in you.

He's begun a good work. The Lord's Supper is a time of meditation and contemplation but also celebration. Rejoice that you are redeemed.

Rejoice that you have the fruit of the Spirit. Rejoice that you are going to heaven. You will be fully equipped to enjoy heaven.

In John 14.2 we read, In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Of course Christ is not a liar. I've told you this he says. I've prepared these things for you.

So let your heart not be troubled by the discord within and without. Look to the future hope. Look to the future of heaven where we have a great place of many mansions.

It's so beautiful. It seems to have no end to the beauty therein and the structure that is a structure of righteousness and holiness wherein Jesus Christ dwells. We are being formed in fashion to fit this new place called heaven.

The struggle we have in our walk as Christians in our sanctification should not be used as an excuse to give up but reminder it hurts to kill the old man so that I can become a new man in Jesus Christ. So I can be equipped and fit for heaven. Christ is coming and bringing heaven with him.

Brothers and sisters, the supper reminds us that Christ will return. He says, I will not drink with thee until I come back with the new kingdom of God. As we partake of the Lord's Supper, brothers and sisters, remember that it is here to strengthen our weak faith.

It is here for our benefit, not for his. You are not more holy and better because you take the Lord's Supper in that sense. But he has gifted us this means and this action to draw us to Christ.

It is a means of grace to grow therein, a tool of the Spirit to strengthen you, to purify you, brothers and sisters, and that by faith. It is not simply by taking the act as a carnal act as some people teach, as though it was a magical food. It's not magical food.

You cannot grow from the means of grace, whether from preaching, praising God, praying before him, or participating in the Lord's Supper unless you believe, unless you have faith. Contemplate, therefore, the benefits given to you by the cross of Christ to therefore strengthen that faith, to give that faith something to bite into, that is, the body and blood of Jesus Christ and his work for us. Celebrate together, brothers and sisters, the glorious gifts of salvation, your redemption from sin and misery, your fruit of the Spirit of joy and love, and the heaven that you will have with God forevermore.

Let us pray. Indeed, glorious God and Savior, may the Supper remind us in this outward act, tangible, invisible act, that you broke your body for us, you shed your blood, that you would bear the sins of many. And therefore, you will return a second time, apart from sin, having anything more to do with sin, because you will completely eradicate it with a new heaven and a new earth for the fullness of our salvation.

May this strengthen our weak faith. May this draw us to you. May this encourage us, God, and that we would not give up in despair, but rather to have, we pray, a silent joy, even a loud joy at times in our lives.

For what Jesus has done, is doing, and will continue to do for us. By his blood and his love for us, we pray. Amen.