

Jesus is Better – Hebrews

Hebrews 9:1-14

“A Clean Conscience” – April 22, 2018



Introduction

It hurts having an outsider point their finger at us. But they don't know all the facts and we can walk away from them and find a respite. But when your own conscience condemns you, it can be unbearable. Guilt and shame can be like a stain that no matter how hard you scrub you can't get it out. Without a way to get out from under the weight of it all, a condemning conscience can leave you lonely, angry, exhausted, or wallowing in self-hatred. So, what do you do when your conscience condemns you? Is a truly clean conscience possible?

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Be careful how you approach a holy God (9:1-10)
- II. Come boldly to God through Jesus (9:11-14)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Hebrews 9:1-10](#)

Chapter 9 begins with a history lesson in the Tabernacle (also called the 'tent,' sanctuary, and later the Temple). The author walks us through the two sections of the tent – the Holy Place (9:2) and the Most Holy Place (9:3). Each section had specific furniture, and once everything was set up as God instructed ([Exodus 25-28](#)), then the priests could carry out their ministry. In the first section, they went 'regularly' but in the Most Holy Place, *only* the high priest went, once a year, and not without taking blood. These details not only show us how people were to approach God in the old covenant, they emphasize the awesome holiness of God. The holiness of God refers to His perfect moral purity, His uniqueness (being set apart, transcendent...the God-ness of God), and infinite value. Just as the cherubim were set outside the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned to say 'off limits' ([Gen. 3:24](#)), so the cherubim in the Most Holy Place, the curtain, the tent *itself* all said off limits, stay away, to a sinful people.

How is the tent God's mercy to His people, and not a harsh cruelty? Why is it easy for us to lose sight of the holiness of God, especially when we're hurting? How can seeing the holiness of God help us to grow in confidence?

Additional reading: 1 John 1:5, Isaiah 40:25, Proverbs 14:26

2) Read [Hebrews 9:11-14](#)

The tent, the priesthood, and the sacrifices in the old covenant were good, but they were symbols, shadows, and sign-posts pointing forward to Jesus. They had no power to cleanse the conscience of the worshiper (9:9) but were *reminders* of sin (10:3)! Jesus' arrival and ministry changed everything though. His blood purifies our defiled conscience and silences its condemnation. Hebrews doesn't mean Jesus' blood has magical powers. Blood is symbolic of life ([Lev. 17:11](#)) and it points to Jesus death on the cross as our substitute. 1 Peter 2:24 tells us, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross."

What do we do when our conscience condemns us? We look to Christ! As we sing in the hymn:

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see him there
Who made an end of all my sin
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me¹.

Are their things you need to take to God, to open up and trust Him with? What are relying on *other* than Jesus to remove the stain of guilt and shame? Only Christ can purify our conscience. Take some time to go to Him now...

Additional Reading: Matthew 27:51, Hebrews 4:14-16

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistchurchuppermarlboro-preview.cloversites.com/sermons>

¹ "Before the Throne of God Above" by Charitie Lees Bancroft