

Good Friday
March 25, 2016
Hebrews 9:17
A Will Takes Effect Only at Death
Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

God established the covenant of the Law through Moses on Mt. Sinai. God's first covenant was not put into effect without blood. Moses took the blood of goats and calves and sprinkled it on the people, the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. These copies of the heavenly things had to be purified with blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

This is the context of our Good Friday passage from the letter to the Hebrews. Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. That covenant of grace cleanses our guilty consciences. That covenant enables us to receive our promised eternal inheritance in heaven through the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus is the better sacrifice for these heavenly things. Jesus offered his holy blood once for all to take away the sins of all people. Jesus is the ransom that sets us free from the sins committed under the first covenant of the Law.

The new covenant that is God's forgiveness is our Savior's last will and testament. In order for a will to go into effect the one who made it must have died. Jesus had to die to put into effect our forgiveness of sins and eternal inheritance in heaven.

What material goods did our Lord leave us in his will that his death put into effect? Absolutely none. The soldiers took away Jesus' cloths through games of chance. There was no deed to any land, no front door key to any mansion. Jesus had no bank accounts or safety deposit banks full of silver and gold. Our Savior borrowed a donkey to ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

The New Covenant, the gospel of forgiveness of all our sins in Christ, was not written in terms of temporal goods. It is the better covenant written Christ's holy blood. He put that will into effect when he gave up his life into his Father's hands. Ours are heavenly eternal treasures more valuable than any man made legal instrument could ever bestow.

Moses entered the man made tabernacle with the blood of beasts. This blood of the sacrifices put into effect the old covenant and made him and the people outwardly clean. It did not make them inwardly clean. That purity would come in the new covenant the Messiah would put into effect by the shedding of his blood on the cross.

The people had the benefit of that blood; it was for them already in effect, by virtue of God's promise. When they saw Moses enter the man made tabernacle with blood, their eyes of faith were to see their coming Savior enter the heavenly sanctuary above to lead them there by his blood.

Through repentance and faith in Christ, we follow our Savior carrying our inheritance as we enter that same glorious sanctuary of heaven. Jesus' last will and testament, "It is finished," has been put into effect because the one who made it has paid the wages of our sin on our cross. Amen. <SDG>