

Rev. Seth D Bode + Sermon 291 + Saints Triumphant

"Lord God, You have appointed me as a bishop and pastor in Your Church, but You see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked Your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon Your Word. Use me as Your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all."

"Sir, we would see Jesus."

NO SACRIFICE BUT THAT OF JESUS

Sermon Text – Hebrews 10

¹¹In the one case, every priest stood ministering day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which are never able to remove sin. ¹²In the other case, this priest, after he offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³Since then he has been waiting until his enemies are made a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴By only one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies in Scripture to us, for first he said:

¹⁶"This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, says the Lord.

I will put my laws on their hearts and I will write them on their mind." [Jer. 31:33]

¹⁷Then he adds:

"And I will not remember their sins and their lawlessness any longer." [Jer. 31:34b]

¹⁸Now where these sins are forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

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Do we get an honest view of the dead in our society?

- How do people cope with their "loss"?
- God shows us today how to cope with our "loss" in the

Triumph Of The Saints

1. What kind of "triumph"?

This is a triumph of position and prestige.

- The work of Jesus is superior to any other sacrifices.
- God has reserved a position of powerlessness for all of His enemies.

This is a triumph that doesn't need repeating.

- One-by-one, God's people have had to face repetitive temptation as "saints militant."
- One sacrifice has made God's people perfect.
- One sacrifice has made God's triumph complete.

2. Who are the "saints"?

They are those "who are being sanctified."

- This word, "sanctified," is often a technical term for holy living.
- Here the saints do not make their own perfection.

They are those who are forgiven in Christ.

- The triumph of Jesus Christ brought in a New Covenant, also known as the New Testament.
- God puts the heart of the New Testament on display.
- The heart of sainthood is God's forgiveness in Christ.

See also: 1 Thess. 4:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Luke 23:43; Php. 1:23; Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 1:5.

When I taught high school, there was a pretty strong running culture. The place to run had wide circles of paved track, right next to our school, spacious, big fields, and ... oh yes, we ran around graves. The home track was a graveyard. Have you ever run around a graveyard before? It makes you think. Here you are growing stronger in your body, while you cannot escape the inevitable end. Like a metaphor for life, those outdoor runs were circling the bowl of death.

Do we get an honest view of the dead in society? So many people have been lost. And we hardly remember a handful, the rich and the powerful and the famous. The rest may as well have never been alive, as far as we're concerned.

This past week I learned my great-aunt Eunice, my grandpa's sister, the youngest of twelve and the last to go, died last Sunday. My dad's comment was, "It's the end of a generation to be emulated." It seems like such a loss. Who can possibly fathom the souls lost to this world, for time and eternity? Quite often, the reason they say this is to help themselves cope with the loss. Death and loss, loss and death.

- **How do people cope with their "loss"?**

Often the answer given to why their friends or family who have passed away are in heaven is because, "She was such a good person." People guess and hope for the best, saying, "rest in peace," but it's all grasping at straws. What's worse, people forget to give it some thought. Where will I rest? How can I find peace? Is life just circling the bowl of inescapable losses? There is no rest for the wicked.

For believers in Jesus, however, there is rest. There is peace. There is triumph. That is today and always for those who lean on their Lord of life and love, Jesus, and who find His peace not of this world. When we seem to lose someone in the faith, we don't need to grieve like the rest who have no hope.

- **God shows us today how to cope with our "loss" in the ...**

Triumph Of The Saints

1. *What kind of "triumph"?*
2. *Who are the "saints"?*

Now, we used this word "triumph," and saints TRIUMPHANT. What could that possibly mean to us?

1. **What kind of "triumph"?**

This is a triumph of position and prestige. After all, it belongs to Jesus.

- **The work of Jesus is superior to any other sacrifices.**

The writer to the Hebrews made this point for much of the book. We heard it last week and a few weeks ago in Hebrews chapter 5. The worship of the Old Testament was bloody and involved. Sacrifices were repeated, animals were offered. If I began our worship with a knife, you'd be a little surprised, maybe scared. Back then it was normal. But all of those offerings pointed ahead to the Son of God slain on the cross.

Verses 11 and 12 parallel up and match so evenly, it's beautiful: Verse 11, "In one case, every priest" ... Verse 12, "in the other case, this [Great High] Priest." Verse 11, every other priest "ministered day after day, same sacrifices" ... verse 12, this Great High Priest "offered one sacrifice." Verse 11, "again and again" ... verse 12, "for all time." Verse 11, "never able to remove sin" ... verse 12, "one sacrifice for sin for all time." See how complete and perfect and finished the work of Jesus is?

What I find interesting also is verse 11, the priests are standing. But in verse 12, Jesus the Great High Priest is seated at the right hand of God. What a triumph! He is positioned as one on His throne, with authority. His enemies are being subjugated as His foot stool, NOT so much to rest and relax, NOT as if Jesus is chilling in His mancave. Instead Jesus takes His throne and presses down His feet to indicate authority and to indicate triumph. Death could not stop Him. Sin could not win. So because of this triumph, **God has reserved a position of powerlessness for all of His enemies.**

But it gets better. The triumph cannot expire.

This is a triumph that doesn't need repeating.

- One-by-one, God's people have had to face repetitive temptation as "saints militant."

Every saint has had to battle again and again. Every saint has had to repetitively wrestle with the tempter's power. Every saint has had to plead with God against their very own sins. Every saint has faced this world's confusion and repetitively wondered where they stand with God. Yet one-by-one, God has brought them into His kingdom with His powerful, enduring Word. One-by-one, God has revealed them His triumph. One by one, the saints learned about Jesus and who He is: true man and true God, miraculously born of a virgin, Son of God wrapped in human flesh to take our place and be our sacrificial Substitute. He was offered on the torturous cross once, and ...

- One sacrifice has made God's people perfect.

Jesus has perfected them; brought them to the goal. The writer of this book of Hebrews used this word "perfected" often. It has the same *telic* root of the word Jesus Christ used on the cross for, "It is finished," or, "It is accomplished." In this book until this point, the word *teleio* was used for Christ and His work. It has been finished, it has been accomplished. He was the Author and Finisher of this faith; not just the Alpha, but also the Omega.

But now, this is the first time this verb of completion and finishing is used of God's people. "By only one sacrifice He has **made perfect** forever those who are being sanctified." What God did in the triumph of Jesus Christ is perfect His own people. Whoever believes in Jesus enjoy His triumph already now (*fruitio*), but a day is coming for each believer when this triumph will be manifest. Souls with faith already dwell in eternal life, but a day is coming when the bodies of believers will be in everlasting triumph.

- One sacrifice has made God's triumph complete.

And this is that triumph: Those who die in the Lord enter an eternal rest. There is no intermediate place between heaven and hell where some leftover lawless acts need to be burned away or paid off. The triumph is perfected in Jesus Christ! For those who are in the Lord's hands there is nothing but a fast track to heaven. The triumph is complete!

Now who are these saints? Are we talking about untouchables? Are we talking about people who are too perfect, too great, too lofty for us to imagine? Or is it possible—just maybe—there is attainable status for lowly you and me among the saints?

2. Who are the "saints"?

They are those "who are being sanctified."

- This word, "sanctified," is often a technical term for holy living.

We talk about how sanctified some people are, meaning how self-controlled and well-behaved they are. They are consistent in their faith. But in our reading this morning, a "sanctified" person or a "saint" is a little more than that. There is a broader sense of the word here, "saints." It can mean those who, one-by-one, are entering into the kingdom of God.

- Here the saints do not make their own perfection.

Saints aren't boy scouts. They are not the great, the godly, and the pretty good. Instead Jesus makes saints perfect. He gives sainthood for free, by faith alone. Saints cannot add to His sacrifice. The triumph is complete. They don't need to add to His work. In fact, it's offensive to suggest that very idea! To suggest that a saint can add to the work of Jesus on the cross is a suggestion that Jesus' work is imperfect! Churches have truly done this. They have said Jesus was a propitiation only for original sin and mortal sin but not for their actual sins or venial sins. What an offense to the cross of Christ!

We may also personally offend the work of Jesus, too. We may start to talk like people are in heaven because, 'Well, she was just a great friend.' 'He was such a great guy.' 'She was a wonderful wife and mother.' 'He was a fantastic salesman and a strong giver.' 'He had quite the bowling arm.' 'She had such a strong faith.' No, that is not why God brings people to heaven. God didn't need fantastic salesmen or wonderful mothers. He didn't even need our strong faith in order to save us. He

needed satisfaction for all of our sins when all of our righteous acts were like filthy rags. He brings His saints to heaven because of this: "By one sacrifice [Jesus] has made perfect His own people." Not your sacrifice or your sacrifice or your sacrifice. We loved because He first loved us; we did not love in order to win God's love. What a relief! What a triumph! What a blessing that victory did not depend on us, but on our Savior Jesus!

'But,' you may say, 'That person I said was so good—I loved that person!' Yes, and our Savior Jesus loved that person too. He loved that person more. He loved that person enough to go to His death and He still loves that person. He died and rose again for not only that person, but the whole world, fully knowing that many would reject Him and trample His love underfoot.

One more thing we must add to what sainthood means and who saints are:

They are those who are forgiven in Christ.

- **The triumph of Jesus Christ brought in a New Covenant, also known as the New Testament.**

Sometimes people think that the apostles came in just to finesse the Old Testament and give it a twist called "the New Testament." But in fact Jeremiah, in the passages quoted here in Hebrews, predicted that there would be the New Testament. "This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws on their hearts and I will write them on their mind." This was all part of God's master plan. But the major point is where the book of Hebrews skips a little part of Jeremiah to get to the goods—to **put the heart of the New Testament on display.**

"I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more." With these words God tells us there are no levels of believer. There aren't some who are more saved than others or more saintly than others, for God has completely forgotten the sins of those who are forgiven in Jesus.

Now, you may have thought that it was a complicated task and incredible chore for God to remember everything. Today, we are asked to wrap our minds around this—that God could forget something. Not only did God forget something but it was your offensive crimes against Him. How could He? But He does. He remembers our sins no more. All those times we thought we could add to His sacrifice, God has buried them in the depths of the ocean and distanced them as far away as east is from west.

- **The heart of sainthood is God's forgiveness in Christ.**

There is nothing to add to what Jesus Christ has done for them, and no sainthood can be achieved other than that of Jesus Christ's perfect work. He has already paid the price for the sainthood of each one of us. Therefore repenting of our sins and putting trust in God not only takes away our sins but elevates a believer to sainthood. Who? Me? Yes! Anyone. Jesus told the Pharisees that the prostitutes and tax collectors were entering His kingdom ahead of them.

Could the news be any better? Could the reward be any richer? Could the hope be any more certain? Could the faith rest on a stronger Rock? I think not. Have you lost a friend who loved and believed in Jesus? Have you lost a grandpa or a grandma? a mother? a companion? a husband? a father? a wife? a child? How will you cope? Do you know? I know. You will cope by knowing that loss wasn't actually a loss. You will cope by knowing salvation by grace alone through faith alone means sainthood. Any old woman or old man on their weary deathbed is a saint. Any small child with baptism's promises is a saint. Any old criminal on a cross who trusts his Savior is a saint. And anyone who dies in the Lord dies in full and complete triumph.

To God alone be the glory. Amen.