

## Hebrews – teaching #9

### It's Time for a Change

#### Opening thoughts

Let me introduce to you a great item coming soon to our bookstore – it's a 2006 personal calendar that should be here just in time for the holidays:

#### ***BIBLE VERSES FOR DEPRESSED & FRUSTRATED PEOPLE***

Check out January's depressing verse:

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard change his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.” Jer. 13:23

Or here's another good one:

“What a heavy burden God has laid on men! What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.” Eccl 1:13, 14

Or who could forget this favorite:

“Wretched man that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death?”  
Rom 7:24

And finally, my personal favorite on all those days I am just too depressed to even roll out of bed:

“We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there was only terror...The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.” Jer 8:15, 20

#### ***The Reality People Live with***

The sad fact is that this *does* reflect the reality that many live with – and I'm talking about believers, people who would step up here and proclaim that they are born again, dyed in the wool, hard core believers in Jesus – but who, truth be told, have this inner testimony rattling around their soul:

“I'm only human – and a messed up human at that. I just don't get it! I write out my New Year's resolution and it lasts about a week – max. The stuff I want to *give up* keeps kicking in and the stuff I want to *start up* just stalls on me. But just 'cos I can't keep the Rules doesn't mean I slag off the Rules. No. They're not the problem: I am. Well, not me, but the

“old me,” my “dark side” with all its mess is still running the show. Cos I’m not under any illusions – in the “old me” there’s nothing worth keeping. Look, I plan good stuff, but my dark side slams the brakes on. The good I plan gets left undone, but the dark stuff I swear I won’t do, happens every time. So in a way, it’s not really me who does all this stupid stuff; it’s my dark side, the old me, who’s doing it. And it’s not just on a bad day; it’s every time. Who said there’s no absolutes?! The second I think I’ll do something good, my dark side pulls the shutters down and I grope around trying to remember what I planned. Stupid thing is, I think God’s Rules are brilliant. I love every word. But something else kicks in at gut level and it doesn’t seem to matter what I *think*; the software that’s running the show messes me up. What a state! What a saddo! What a loser! Question: Who’s going to get me over the border and out of this civil war with myself? Who’s going to take over the driving and stop me flying over the cliff?”

Rob Lacey, *Word on the Street*, Romans 7:14-24

This is Paul’s testimony from Romans 7, modernized a bit so we can get the picture...

## Question: Who here can identify with this?

(I just want to be sure I’m talking to the right crowd...if you *can’t* relate to it, please step outside – Jesus will be sweeping by momentarily in the Enoch Express to rapture you straight to heaven!)

The human heart cries out for change, for true transformation – like David after he, the man after God’s own heart, committed adultery and murder:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God!”

“God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life. Don’t throw me out with the trash or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!”

**The Message** Psalm 51:10-12

## Is it time for a change? Are you ready for a change?

Then hear the text the Hebrews...we’re up to chapter nine, and we’re fully entering into the point of the whole book. Hear it...get it...

“Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In the first room was the lampstand, the table, and the sacred bread. Behind the second curtain was another room called the Most Holy Place. This room contained the golden altar of incense, and the stone tablets of the covenant. This ark contained the golden jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

Above the ark where the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercyseat – but we can't speak about these things in detail now.

When everything had been arranged like this the priests regularly entered the outer room, carrying on their divine service – but only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins committed by the people in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the most holy place had not yet been revealed while the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration – a visual parable – indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper. They're only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations until the time of the new order.

When Christ came as High Priest of the good things now here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made – that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves – he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling on those who are unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean; how much more will the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works so that we may serve the Living God!

For this reason Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Now, when we're talking covenant, we're talking death. Biblically speaking, a covenant is only in force upon death – it is never put into effect while the covenanting sacrifice lives. And this is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves along with water, and with scarlet wool and hyssop branches he sprinkled the law and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep.' In the same way he sprinkled with blood the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

It was necessary then for the copies of the heavenly things to be cleansed with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that's only a copy of the true one – he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in the presence of God. And he didn't enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the most holy place every year with blood that's not his own – if that were the case Christ would have to have suffered many times since the creation of the world. But now, once, at the end of the ages, Christ has appeared to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as each of us is destined once to die, and after this to face the judgment – so Christ also was sacrificed once to bear the sins of many people, and he will appear a second time –

not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

The Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves. For this reason, it can never, with the same sacrifices repeated endlessly, year after year, make perfect those who come near to worship. If they could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers having been cleaned up once for all would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins – for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Therefore, when Christ comes into the world, he says:

“Sacrifices and offerings you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me. With burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am! – it’s written about me in the scroll! – I have come to do your will, O God!’”

First he said, “Sacrifice and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them (although the Law required them to be made); then he said, “I have come to do your will, O God!” He takes away the first, that he may establish the second. By which divine will and eternal intention, we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all!

Day after day every priest stands performing his religious duties and offering the same sacrifices again and again that can never take away sins. But when this High Priest had for all time offered one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, from that time on waiting until his enemies would be made his footstool. Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after that time, declares the Lord – I’ll put my laws in their hearts and tattoo them on their brains...” Then he adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds – all their mess of sin – I will remember no more!”

And with aggressive, comprehensive forgiveness like that, there’s nothing else to be done. Nothing to add. No additional sacrifice for sins required. We can all sit down now.”

Do you *get it*?

## **Some quick observations**

We see presented here two covenants, but only one viable way to real life change.

The Old Covenant – the **System**...

The Law – with its earthly tabernacle, regulations, rules, and repetitive, unending, please-can-we-go-home-now rituals.

Basic approach to change: let's call it the "sin model." It has three essential points (are you ready?)

1. **God is good.**
2. **You are bad**
3. **STOP IT!!!**

Why doesn't that work? Why won't we learn that the System will never, ever heal us?!

We keep asking new covenant questions and supplying old covenant "solutions" which are no solutions. "The Law made no one perfect!" No forgiveness, no transformation, no change. Just an ongoing reminder that *God* is good and *you* are *not*...and so something or someone is going to die.

So what then is the purpose of the Law? Paul asks that very question in Galatians 3:19. Answer: **"It was added because of transgressions."** Translation: The Law was sent to expose our sin, not to fix it; to fully reveal the "dark side" not to heal us.

Hear Paul again, this time to Timothy:

"Some have wandered from [truth] and turned aside to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the Law – even though they don't know what they are talking about, or what they so confidently affirm. We know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully. We also know that the Law was not made for the righteous, but for lawbreakers and rebels, for the unholy and unreligious, for those who kill their fathers and their mothers, for murderers, for adulterers, for homosexuals, for slave traders, liars and perjurers – and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."

1 Timothy 1:6-11

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you, the Law (hold up dog leash with collar). Why would we put a leash on a dog?

**To provide external control for an untamed nature (heart).**

[Relate the story of Reggie the "hound from hell"]

The leash – the Law – the external controls – are "holy, righteous, and good..." They just can't make us good. We can't just "hear the word and do it"!

Paul's evaluation of the "leash" to believers (why do we keep insisting on wearing this and putting it on one another???) – this time to the Colossians:

“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world (the leash), why, as though you were still living in it do you submit yourself to its rules? “Don’t handle!” “Don’t taste!” “Don’t touch!” These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based upon human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their severity to the body – but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”

Colossians 2:20-23

And so the System agents (the priests) stand performing their religious duties offering the same sacrifices endlessly year after year after year after year that can never take away sins...waiting, waiting, waiting for the change...

The New Covenant – the **Savior**.

Approach to change – let’s call it the Jesus model – involves **two key elements**:

### **One Event**

Not a spectacular revival meeting, not some self-induced nirvana during the ultimate worship set, not the most inspired, provocative sermon ever heard on the planet...

“By **one** sacrifice he has **made perfect forever** those who are being made holy.” (Hebrews 10:14)

The event is Golgotha – Calvary – the Skull; it’s his perfect doing and dying. The blood that flowed down that hill reaches us all; he has sprinkled us all – “our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a filthy conscience so that we can serve the Living God”! No one is beyond it’s reach...ready or not, the change has come! Hear the rest of Paul’s words to Timothy we started quoting earlier:

“I thank Christ Jesus, who has given me strength, for considering me faithful and appointing me to his service. Even though I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man. Yet I was shown mercy because I was just being a blooming idiot (roughly translated). And the grace of our Lord was poured out upon me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into world, sinners to save, of whom I am the worst! But for that very reason I was shown mercy, so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King – eternal, immortal, invisible – to the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!”

1 Timothy 1:12-17

One event that initiates....

### ***An Ongoing Process***

“By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are **being made holy**.”

He was made like his brothers in every way, no works by His Spirit to make his brothers like him in every way. The process of holiness, of sanctification, of discipleship.

Hear Peter's beautiful description of the process:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 1:3-11

Lose the leash! Partake in the divine nature!

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you and watch over you.  
Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.  
Many are the woes of the wicked,  
but the LORD'S unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.”

Psalms 32:8-10

The symbol of the “Jesus Model” – the New Covenant? A passport. A divine passport written in your heart, opening you to adventures in the kingdom untold and indescribable – and the gates of hell won't prevail against it!

Lose the leash – accept the passport stamped with his blood – stamped once for all at Golgotha with no expiration date.

*It's time for a change! Are you ready?*