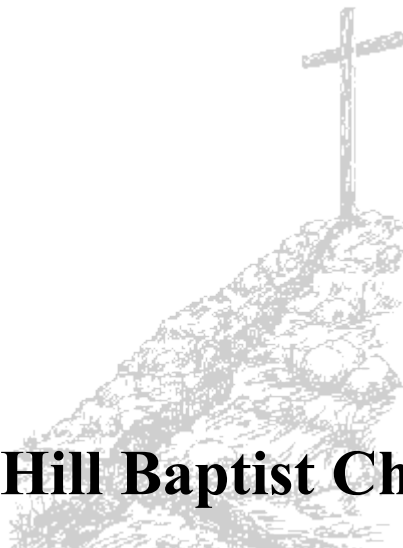


Introduction

Laying Down The Life

Hebrews 10:1-17



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I recently had the blessing of attending a Pastor's Retreat at Camp Linden. The purpose of the retreat was for the Pastor's of our local Association¹ to get together and share ideas for growth in our respective churches. Dr. Paul Barkley² gave us a series of lectures on *Conflict Management and the local Church*, an excellent course. I was thoroughly blessed! One of the more surprising things that I was presented with was a report from the Tennessee Baptist Convention on *areas of friction and disagreement* in the local Church. It didn't surprise me that there *are* areas of friction in the Church - after all, any organization that is made up of people will have friction. In fact, some friction is always expected - and it's natural! This last winter my car and I slid in the ditch off of Tom's Road when I tried to get to Church during the ice storm. Without friction between the wheels and the road, I can testify that a car isn't worth anything. Amen! Friction is expected in the local Church. But this report really surprised me when it listed the *highest* and *lowest* areas of friction in the Church. Here's a partial list of what was on that report:

Pastors Terminated	Point of Friction
24	Control issues: Who's in charge of the Church?
16	Poor people skills
17	Church resistance to change
12	Pastor's leadership style too strong

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Pastors Terminated	Point of Friction
10	Pastor's leadership style too weak
3	Sexual misconduct
2	Ethical misconduct
1	Disagreement over doctrine

What surprised me was that *doctrine* was the *least important* issue that most churches attached importance to - and control of the Church was the *most important* issue that led to friction in the flock. This is *very odd*, for the Church without its doctrine is truly no better than a clubhouse! Doctrine should be of *primary concern* for every believer, for doctrine is the rain of blessing from God that gives us strength to continue when times are the most trying. Doctrine is *God's instructional promises* that we hold onto when the going gets tough. As Moses told Israel:

Deuteronomy 32:1-4 (KJV) "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. {2} My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: {3} Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. {4} He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

Without a *right instruction from God's Word* then how can we know in our hearts that *God is sufficient* in the darkest of our hours? Is God more sufficient than my

feelings? **David F. Wells** writes in *No Place for Truth*:

"A religion based on mere feeling is the vaguest, most unreliable, most unstable of all things. It cannot be declared to others, cannot be taught to others, cannot be required of others. Christianity remains simply a cultural convenience that will be discarded every time its teaching threatens our way of life."³

Our faith *must be* based on Doctrine, on the teaching of God's Word and on the leading of God's Indwelling Spirit. It cannot be *merely intellectual assent* to what the Bible says, for knowledge *regardless of experience* is Gnosticism⁴. Feeling apart from knowledge is no more than base *carnality*, the same path that every unbeliever who is ever born follows.

Let's get into Hebrews chapter 10.

1. The Law's Shadow Is My Sin

FOCAL Hebrews 10:1 (KJV) **"For the law having a shadow⁵ of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."**

The Law is a *shadow* of the good things that were

³ No Place for Truth, ISBN 0-8028-0747-X

⁴ an ancient heresy in the Church that taught *knowledge was the whole of our faith*. The Gnostic, in the extreme, believed that his or her intellectual assent to the truths of Scripture was enough - that there was no need to put one's faith into action.

⁵ **skia** {pronounced skee'-ah}, a shade caused by the interception of light, an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object

coming. Think about a shadow for a minute - what causes a shadow, and what substance does a shadow have? A shadow is caused when something *real* gets in the way of light and *blocks the light*. A shadow is caused by blockage of the light. Did the Law itself block the Light of God? No, the text says **the Law *having a shadow***. The Law was not that which cast the shadow, but the *sin in our lives that the Law pointed out* is what caused the shadow in the Law.

Listen Beloved: The Law gave a *method or remedy* for sin that was entirely useless in itself. The Scripture says: [the Law] **can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect**. The doctrine that the Law taught us was the *utter inability of the believer to wash away his or her own sins*. The Law emphasized that *mere ritual apart from a real relationship with God is absolutely useless*.

My great fear as your pastor is that you will leave this life, open your eyes in the next life, and see a Stranger Who will say to you "Depart from Me - I never knew you". Christianity is *very much a religion based on a real relationship with the Savior*. It is not ritual based, but it is relationship based! The ritual before God without the relationship with God has no ability to **make the comers thereunto perfect**.

One day our Lord Jesus was teaching on the necessity of knowing God through a relationship with Him. Those who heard Him speak asked Him, "Are there really only a few people going to be saved?" Jesus answered this

way:

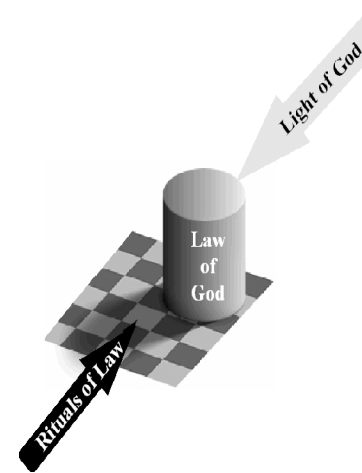
Luke 13:24-27 (KJV) "Strive⁶ to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. {25} When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: {26} Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. {27} But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Jesus said *struggle like a wrestler* to enter in the one door to God. There is one Gate to God the Father, one Door to God the Father, one Entry to God the Father.



That Gate, that Door, that Entry is *not the Law nor the rituals of the Law* - but the Door of the Sheep is Jesus! He said:

John 10:7 (KJV) "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."



6 Present Middle Imperative agonizomai {pronounced ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee}, struggle as if in a contest or in a wrestling match

You must be *perfect* to get to God the Father, but your perfection cannot come through mere ritual. Your perfection can only come through a trusting, believing, submitting *relationship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Does this *negate ritual entirely*? No, for where God commanded the ritual - such as He commanded the ritual of the Law to teach Israel of the coming Savior - then that ritual must be followed. But the ritual *apart from the surrendered relationship* has absolutely no effect whatsoever.

When I was a young boy I was in love with *Wonder Woman*. I'd sit there, I remember, with my nose pressed on the television screen, loving her from afar. When I was a young man in High School the love of my life was the Queen of the Prom "Wanda". I'd go home every day and dream about her every night. Boy, Wanda was something else! Yet I want each and every one of you to note that I didn't marry Wonder Woman, nor did I marry Wanda the Queen of the Prom. As a young boy these women were wonderful to dream about. But the Love of my Life is Sherry - that's the woman I met, loved, will always love, and married *forever*. In order to form this bond, this eternal bond of love, Sherry and I had to meet *personally* and form a *personal relationship*. I had to give up certain things in order to be in this bond of marriage with her. Certain freedoms had to be relinquished on both our parts. I had to give up certain things, she had to give up certain things, and we both decided to walk together *forever*.

There is no difference between the Christian way of life and the successful marriage. In fact, the Bible uses successful marriage to *describe the Christian way of life*.

We read:

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 (KJV) "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. {2} For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. {3} But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. {4} For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

Ephesians 5:23-24 (KJV) "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. {24} Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Jesus Christ is the *husband of the Church*, and we who are believers are *espoused* or married to Him. Our relationship is not based on shadows, nor on the Law, but on the *relationship we have with Him*. Just as both I and Sherry gave up certain freedoms to be married to one another, both the Christian and the Christ gave up certain freedoms to be with each other. Christ gave us *His very life* on that terrible Tree of Calvary:

John 15:13-15 (KJV) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

{14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. {15} Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

1 John 3:16 (KJV) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

and we who love Him are called to *lay down our lives for Him*. This is the reality - not the shadow - of Christianity.

2. God Does Not Want Mere Ritualism!

FOCAL Hebrews 10:3-6 (KJV) "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance⁷ again made of sins every year. {4} For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. {5} Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: {6} In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure."

The Law served one purpose - it continually pointed to the failure of the believer - but the Law could never save nor make perfect. C.H. Spurgeon wrote in *Morning and Evening*:

"It is quite certain that those whom Christ has

⁷ anamnesis {pronounced an-am'-nay-sis}, a remembrancer, a thing to remember

washed in His precious Blood need not make a confession of sin *as culprits or criminals before God the Judge*, for Christ has forever taken away all their sins in a legal sense, so that they no longer stand where they can be condemned, but are once for all accepted in the Beloved; but having become children, and offending as children, ought they not every day to go before their Heavenly Father and confess their sin, and acknowledge their iniquity in that character? Nature teaches that it is the duty of erring children to make a confession to their earthly Father, and the Grace of God in the heart teaches us that we, as Christians, owe the same duty to our Heavenly Father. We daily offend, and we ought not to rest without daily pardon".

The mere sacrifice of animals never satisfied God our Father, for all it did was point out the truth that *God knew in the first place* - we fallen humans *cannot get to Him* in our own power. God has always known this, and always will know it. If were not for God's Grace - Oh Beloved, it's just as the song says:

**Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured -
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.**

**Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!⁸**

⁸ Julia H. Johnston, 1849 - 1919, *Grace Greater than our Sin*

People get *very confused* often in Churches, believing that the purpose of the Church is to *keep us saved* or to *work us into Heaven*. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Church is designed by God our Savior to be a *Body, a Living Entity that interacts with God our Savior*. The Church that does *not put its faith into action* is a Church that has forsaken its calling.

Christ surrendered His life for our salvation - is it a strange thing that He expects us to surrender our lives to Him? That which *sanctifies* or *sets us apart* for God's service is the Cross of Calvary. We read:

FOCAL Hebrews 10:7-10 (KJV) "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. {8} Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; {9} Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. {10} By the which will we are sanctified⁹ through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Jesus allowed Himself to be *set apart* as a sacrifice for sin for the believer. His Blood *superseded the blood of animals* that were offered under the Mosaic Law, the empty ritual that merely pointed out our inability to save ourselves. The Bible says **we are sanctified⁹ through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**. Let's look at this word *sanctification* and see what it

⁹ Perfect Passive Participle *hagiazō* {pronounced hag-ee-ad'-zō}, we have been set apart *once and for all*

means.

The Doctrine of Sanctification

1 The Bible says (Hebrews 10:10) "**we are sanctified⁹ through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**". I want you to notice this is *past tense* - we **are sanctified**. Actually the word **sanctified** is a *Perfect Passive Participle* in the Greek. My Lexicon states:

The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated¹⁰.

The body of Jesus Christ on Calvary was an offering that, once it was made, its ramifications *never ceased*. We are saved *once and for all times* because the offering was *a once and for all offering*. Our salvation, our setting apart, is not based on *how we feel* but on *what Christ did*. This is why the *relationship* between the believer and the Savior are so important. You have either claimed Him as Savior, believing on Him - or you are eternally damned! There is no in between point!

In our therapeutic, *do it yourself* society, the Cross of Christ shines on that foolish mentality and shouts in its ear *liar, liar, liar!* The self help methods of the Law never saved, and the self help methods of modern psychiatry, psychology, Oprah, Dr. Phil, and even *the Home Depot* will not save. Unless you are locked into the body of Christ by faith, you are damned for all

¹⁰ Online Bible lexicon, found at onlinebible.net

eternity! The Scripture says:

John 3:16-17 (KJV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

His Body on the Tree *sets the believer apart from the unbeliever*. But if you reject Him, what are the consequences? Read on Beloved:

John 3:18 (KJV) "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you believe not, you are *damned where you sit*. That's pure doctrine! **G. Campbell Morgan** stated in the sermon *Sanctification*:

"What, then, is sanctification? The root idea of the word so translated in the New Testament signifies something which is awful, that which fills the soul with awe, not necessarily with dread, for there is a vital difference between dread and awe. Dread is of the nature of slavish fear; awe is of the nature of reverence. There should be no dread in the soul of man when he draws near to God. No man ought to draw near to God save with a sense of awe. The thought of the word is that of something awful, filling the soul with awe. Its use in the New Testament is

always of separation to God, and therefore of holiness, The vessels of the sanctuary in the old economy were holy, they were sanctified; they were set apart to sacred uses, and, consequently, they were necessarily maintained in cleanliness by ceremonial ablutions, and that because they were dedicated and consecrated to the service of God alone. In the word "sanctification," then, both as to its root intention and its common use in the New Testament, we have these simple ideas.

Sanctification is entire separation of the life to God; consequently, it is the cleansing of the life to the condition of holiness or spiritual health. Every new born soul is sanctified. Every believer is a Saint. Christian people will often say, the sincerest of them, those who are most truly and really attempting to follow their Lord: We do not profess to be Saints. That saying is born of that fear of the doctrine of sanctification to which I have made reference. Let me repeat, therefore, that which I have already said, but in another form. If you are a Christian man you are a Saint. If you are a believer in Christ Jesus you are already sanctified. Perhaps the speediest way in which to emphasize the truth is to remember that Paul, writing to the Corinthian church, commenced his first letter - almost wholly a letter of correction - by describing those to whom he wrote as "Saints," and yet, within a few paragraphs, after having so described them, he said, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." Yet they were Saints, they were sanctified. ..."

If you have accepted Christ as Savior you are a saint - set apart - sanctified - enabled by the Blood to do the work of God. Saints bond together in a unified Body we call *the Church*, and this local Church is called to do the bidding of it's One and only Head, Jesus Christ our Savior. Who is in charge of the Church? Jesus! It was His Body on the Tree that set us apart, and He alone is in charge of us all.

By the way, this first *sanctification* that we are discussing is called - theologically speaking - *Positional Sanctification*. Don't let that term throw you, but remember it. We'll talk about it again.

2 Once you have accepted Christ as Savior you are *set apart* - past tense - for God's use. You actually *enter the family of God*. Now I want you to think about family. When a little baby is born it has no ability to walk, nor talk, nor interact with others *but in the basest of senses*. I recently was delighted to hear that the Maners family are expecting a grand-baby. How wonderful! What a joy that God brings to a family when new life comes.

When a baby is born the parents clothe it, feed it, and change its diapers. But no parent expects to do this the *rest of the child's life!* We start working with that baby, right after its born, and start trying to help it to grow. We push the child, try to teach it how to say "momma" or "pappy". We change the child's diapers but, we try to get the child to walk so that one day it can get to the toilet on its own.

Because the child is a member of the family we *work*

with that child, helping it to grow. I never go to someone else's house and try to teach their baby to walk. That's none of my business! But my baby - now that's a different story. And so it is with the Christian.

Once you come into the family of God *by the Blood of Christ* God the Holy Spirit enters your life - the core of your being. Dr. Louis Berkhof said of *progressive sanctification*, that is, the work that God your Father does in your life *following positional sanctification*:

"Sanctification takes place partly in the subconscious life, and as such is an immediate operation of the Holy Spirit; but also partly in the conscious life, and then depends on the use of certain means, such as the constant exercise of faith, the study of God's Word, prayer, and association with other believers. Sanctification is usually a lengthy process and never reaches perfection in this life."

Once the believer is *once and for all* set apart for God's use, he or she becomes the *work of God* just like that little baby is the work of its earthly parent. The Bible says that our Father is the Potter and we are the clay:

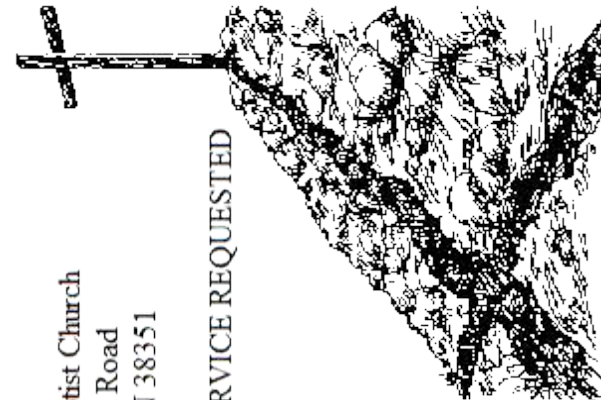
Isaiah 64:8 (KJV) "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

The Potter has decreed that we *walk like His children*. Just as the parent spends time teaching the child to speak, God the Spirit spends time teaching His children to *act like believers ought to act*. We are, as the Scripture says:

Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) "... His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

This portion of the believer's life is called *progressive Sanctification*, and it is a work in progress. But Beloved, never get the cart before the horse. Do not *try and work your way* to God and expect to get to Heaven. All you'll get is condemnation, and eternal punishment as your reward.

3 If you want to be **without fault before the Throne of God** (Revelation 14:5), then you can only enter this state by the once for all offered Blood of Jesus Christ. One day we who believe will all stand around His Throne, perfectly sanctified without sin or blemish. We will not have worked our way into this sanctification - it is a state that you can only enter by faith in Christ. My prayer is that you all know Him as Lord and Savior. As the Church sign says, "You are as close to God as you want to be". I pray you want to be close to Him. I pray that you realize you can only be close to Him by believing on the Son. May God use these words to convict your hearts.



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