

# *“The Sufficiency of Christ”*

## **Fixing Our Eyes Upon Jesus, Our High Priest**

Hebrews 10:1-10

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**Jeff:** I would say “Let’s pray,” but that would require me to close my eyes with Sig behind me. I’m not sure I want to do that. (*Laughter*) Well, let’s pray now.

Heavenly Father, thank You for this day, for the time You’ve given, and most of all for who You are, for how You’ve revealed Yourself, and for the Lord Jesus Christ who executed You to us. And Father, we’re thankful for Him, for the Spirit who indwells us, who made us alive when we were dead sinners. Thank You for His continuing indwelling. Thank You for the work that He does in us, bringing us into conformity with Jesus Christ, the Son. Thank You for the many benefits of union with Him, among them being justification and our adoption, our sanctification and our impending glorification. Father, we thank You for these things and so much more.

But Father, as we gather together today, we are thankful for many people. And we have concerns for others. And Father, we thank You first of all for Bruce Bickel and for his love for Your word, for his love for You and for the way in which You’ve used him as an instrument in Your hand over the years in many different ways and in many different areas, but in this particular spot in particular. And we’re thankful for the Bible study here, for the labors that he invested all of these years, and for the labor that he still invests. Father, we’re thankful for him and for the work that You’ve done through him.

Father, we pray for Joe, as he is deployed. We ask that Your hand of protection would be upon him and that You would return him safely in February. Father, we pray for his family while he is away.

We also pray for Clara, and ask for her continued healing. But Father, we want to pause and give You thanks for the wonderful result of the surgery that You have produced in the doctors and in the lives of this little one. We thank You for that. Father, we’re thankful for Pete’s faithfulness to bring her to us in prayer. We pray that You will continue to bless her. We pray for Nate as well, and are thankful for the good news and continue to pray for his well-being. We’re thankful for the news that he’s now acting like an eight-year-old, which is his age. And we pray that he would continue to grow and develop.

Father, we also pray for Grant and lift him up to You, asking that You will be with him, and that You will help the doctors as he struggles through the difficulties he faces. Father, we are also thankful for the good outcome that You brought to Beau and Weston. But now we lift up Jessica to you and ask that You will continue to mend her. And Father, we certainly pray and give You thanks for Donna’s life. We pray for her family in their loss. And Father, we certainly lift Kevin up to you, as he has many ministry opportunities at this sad time.

Father, we pray for our study now, asking that You will bless us in Your word. Strengthen us by Your grace, and give us a large measure of Your Spirit as we look to Your word that we might grow thereby, for we ask it in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

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**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. Well, let’s turn in God’s word to Hebrews chapter 10. And let’s look at chapter 10, verses 1-10. Does anybody have a nice strong voice to read that?

**Participant:** Chapter 10?

**Jeff:** Chapter 10, verses 1-10.

**Participant:** *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they have not ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

*“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offering and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’*

*“Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law), then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

**Participant:** This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** All right. I want us to take a look at a couple of points today. And I want us to notice some introductory things. Then I want us to notice *the Preacher’s awareness of something in particular*. Then that will take us to think about and meditate on *the Person of Christ*. Then I want us to think about *Christ’s redemption* as it is applied to us.

Let me begin by telling you a little story. When I was young, I used to enjoy lifting weights, and I enjoyed power lifting. And let me show you a picture up there. *(Laughter)*

**Transcriber’s Note:** A picture of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**Participant:** Sure! *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Okay. *(Laughter)* So you know Arnold Schwarzenegger. He was my absolute favorite. When I was twelve years old I had *The Encyclopedia of Modern Body Building*. It took me forever for me forever to save up my grass money to buy it. *(Laughter)* At the time it was \$35, you know. I was twelve years old. I read it, I desired it, I loved it. And I spent six days a week downstairs in our basement two, two-and-a-half hours a night working out to no avail. *(Laughter)*

But anyway, that was his method. His method was invest, invest, invest, and eat and eat and eat. And boy, I wanted to look like that in the worst kind of way.

And then I found another guy. I found a guy who said, “This guy is all wet.” And his name was Ellington Darden. Or Bruce Bickel. *(Laughter)* I just happened to notice the comparison. Now—

**Bruce:** Is that what I look like? *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** You’re better looking. *(Laughter)*

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**Jeff:** Ellington Darden had a Ph.D., and he was a researcher. He had won in the days of body building contests. He was a man to be reckoned with in terms of sports knowledge and actually applying it to himself. And he had this idea that you could do more with less. In fact, what he said was, he said that you need to do eight to twelve exercises. You need to do them to absolute failure. He would talk about that he even vomited at the end of every exercise and that sort of thing. *(Laughter)* Really inviting kind of stuff. And he said that if you do that, you’ll grow bigger faster.

Well, Arnold and Ellington Darden had a debate. And Ellington Darden got up there. And he gave all this statistical information. He went first. He gave all the statistical information. He talked about his high-intensity approach. He showed men that he had trained and the visible results and had all kinds of measurements outside of an MRI showing the muscle density growth. He showed what he could show through all of his testing.

And then it was time for him to rest his case and for Arnold to get up. And Arnold got up behind the podium and took off his shirt, flexed those muscles and said, “Who are you going to believe?” *(Laughter)* Oh, I love it! *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Is that a little apocryphal, or is that true?

**Jeff:** No, it’s really true. And you know, every time I think about that story, the Hebrews church comes to mind. The church of the Hebrews comes to mind, because I want you to think about the New Testament church. The New Testament church in our book, they have no vestments, they have no liturgies, they have no sacrifices, they have no temple. And Judaism has all of that.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Jeff:** And it almost gives you the impression that Judaism and those who are part of Judaism, because you know as well as I do that there weren’t simply people in the New Testament church who were thinking, “You know, maybe we ought to go back there,” and talking to people in the New Testament church and trying to decide what to do. There were also friends and family within Judaism saying, “Come back! Come back to us!”

And you can imagine them saying this. “Who are you going to believe? You guys are in a living room with nothing! But look at us! Who are you going to believe?” That’s really the question. The real temptation is for them to fix their eyes upon what is material instead of that which is spiritual and true.

And so the Preacher deals with this. He deals with this problem because he’s aware of the problem.

Now let me just pause for a minute. As a minister of the gospel I want you to know that I don’t think it’s a good idea for a pastor to get up behind the pulpit and deal with every problem that comes down the pike from the pulpit. That’s a terrible way to go. But in this instance he doesn’t seem to be there. And so he writes a letter that deals with a particular problem.

Now this is a particular problem that I think is worth dealing with from the pulpit. It had to do with what we call a one-time redemptive event that is unrepeatable in one sense. Think about it. We will never have a time when the Old Covenant is coming to a close and the New Covenant is emerging. We will never have a time when there are still

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people—I mean, we’ll have instances of that; we’ll have analogous ways of thinking about that. But we’ll never have a time when all of Judaism was coming to an end, having been fulfilled in Christ. And then the New Covenant begins. We’ll never have that time. We’ll never have a time where within thirty years the temple is going to be destroyed from the time of Jesus’ ascension to the end. We’ll never have that time.

So here was an opportunity for the Preacher to deal with something that was not just practical, but was redemptive/historical in nature. So he deals with the moment. He’s aware of it. And he deals with it with people.

Now the question is who are you going to believe? But in their case it was what’s truly real? Now this is something he’s going to be occupied with for quite a while. For instance, when we get into Hebrews 11, which is the hall of fame, one of the things that we have to think of is oh, this is just the example of faith. But what I want to show you when we get to that point is that he is actually using creation itself to set our eyes upon that which is true. And that which is true isn’t always visible. And we’re going to see that.

But that’s the point. That’s what’s underneath the situation here. And that’s what he’s driving at when he deals with the temptation that is plaguing these people who are tempted to go back to Judaism, what’s truly real.

As we look at these first two or three verses, I want to talk to you about three things that we have to notice if we’re going to know how it is that he responds to this temptation.

The first one is a Biblical/theological way of dealing with this. It’s a Biblical/theological response to this temptation. And what he does is he emphasizes by way of repetition the failure, or I should say the closure, of the Old Covenant.

Do you notice what he says? He says that these are the same sacrifices offered continually year by year. And they actually what? They reintroduce sin every year.

Now what is he saying? This is a Biblical/theological argument. He’s saying, look. If they are so great, that is the sacrificial system and the priesthood and all of that sort of thing connected with Judaism, if that is all so great, if that particular administration of the covenant of grace is so wonderful that you want to return to it, then what you want to return to is something that will never actually achieve its end. And the repetitions show you that.

But not only that. He says that this is ineffective. Let me put it like this. I like this. Who’s this little guy? Do you know how to ride a bike yet? What’s his name again?

**Participant:** Noah.

**Jeff:** Noah, do you know how to ride a bike? Not yet. My guess is, Noah, that when your dad teaches you how to ride a bike, he’s going to put those things on the side of your wheels. Do you know what those are?

**Noah:** Training wheels.

**Jeff:** Now if he doesn’t put those on your bike when he hands you that bike, here’s what I want you to do. I want you to look at him. *(Laughter)* Where are the training wheels?

Now Noah, I’ve got a question to ask you. What if you saw your dad with training wheels on his bike? *(Laughter)* You see the training wheels right there? What would you

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think if you had your training wheels on and he had his training wheels on? What would you think about that? *(Laughter)* Yes. That’s what I would think about that, right? *(Laughter)* Absolutely.

**Participant:** He’s old. I mean, he’s going on the other side. He’s so old that he needs training wheels.

**Jeff:** That’s right. *(Laughter)* The point is that when you think about the Old Covenant, remember what we said. We said that there’s the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace has five different unfolding to it. It’s one covenant with five different unfoldings, five different petals. One of those petals is the Mosaic administration which is the law administration, which is what we’ve been talking about, set over against the New Covenant, bringing all of the previous covenants to climax, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

And what we are supposed to understand is this. Can we put it this way? Those covenants were like training wheels until fullness came. And when fullness came, we don’t need the training wheels anymore.

This is why this man was writing to this group of people. He says to them, “By now you should know many of the things that I’m telling you, but you don’t. And you need to go back to the training wheels.” That’s what he’s telling them.

And so there’s a Biblical/theological aspect to this that’s really important. And there’s a pastoral aspect. And he asks the question, and I’m not going to spend a whole lot of time here because we’ve been here, and you know this. He basically asks the question. Can the Old bring you near to God?

And remember what we noticed when we looked at those previous verses. The Holy Spirit told us that there was a lesson to be learned from the temple and the tabernacle themselves. And that was that all the people could gather outside of the temple. And then only the Levitical priests could go in and offer incense. And then in the Holy of Holies only one priest one time a year could enter. And the Holy Spirit was teaching us that access to God was limited.

And so he asks a pastoral question. Can the Old bring you near to God? And that’s an important question.

But the next question is really the question that I want us to think about and take our time with because it’s actually going to lead to the second point. But before I get there, is anybody clear on this stuff so far? Noah, do you think that your dad is all right? Does he have this training wheels thing figured out? *(Laughter)* That’s good. Will you do him a favor and explain it to him when you get home? *(Laughter)* All right, okay. So is everybody good? All right.

Okay. So there is a Christological response to this. We’ve talked about the Biblical/theological and the pastoral response. There’s a Christological response that brings Christ into the picture. I want you to see this here in our text. “*For since the law is but a shadow*”, a *skia* “*of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities*”, (the icon), (and I’ll skip a few words), “*it can never make perfect those who draw near.*”

Now I want you to notice the contrast between the law which has but a shadow of the good things, over against the true form of these realities. So what we have here is *skia*

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over against icon, the *skia* being the shadow and the icon being a true form of these realities.

Now I want you to think about this. Shadows are easy. We’re going to come back to that. Shadows are easy to understand in one sense. But what about icons? *Icon* is that word from which we get the word icon. And it means *something similar*, or something that is a likeness of something else. So it’s the *skia*, the shadow, over against the icon, something that is similar or in the likeness of something.

Now that means that the icon is not the thing itself. Now we already saw this. But let me say this to you before we get there. Do you want to know what most people have a tendency to do when they came to this passage? Most people have a tendency to compare shadows to the reality, the shadow of the Old versus the reality of the New. But if you’re hearing what I’m saying, that’s not the comparison to make, at least not technically. Why? Because icon is not reality, but likeness.

Isn’t that interesting? All of a sudden we have the shadows and the reality? No, wait a minute. We get the likeness of something else, but not the reality, at least strictly speaking. Does everybody understand that?

**Participant:** yes.

**Jeff:** All right. Now let’s think about shadows for a minute. What are the shadows that he is talking about? The shadows that he’s talking about are the things related to the Old Covenant, the things like the Judaic priesthood, the Judaic sacrifices, the incense—all of the things that pertain to Old Testament Judaism which were part of the ceremonial law. All of those things were shadows and types of the Old that forecast or shadowed Jesus Christ in the New Covenant. Okay, that’s pretty simple.

What are the good things to come that these things foreshadowed or are shadows of? Well I would argue that these things are access to God. The good things are access to God. That’s what we’ve been talking about, because that’s what we’ve been trying to achieve, access to God. At least that’s what the Preacher has been trying to help us to see as we make our way through these passages. So the good things are access to God.

Now access to God is had in Christ. Now I want you to think about Hebrews 1:3 for a minute. Go back to Hebrews 1:3. Remember, I made a big deal of this when I started. *“He is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint”* (or icon) *“of His nature.”*

Now I said to you at the time that Hebrews 1:3 is telling us something vital about Christ. It’s first of all telling us that *He is of the same substance as the Father.*” How do I get that? *“He is the radiance”*—not a derived radiance, but an original radiance of God. He’s the same substance, equal to the Father in that regard.

But He is not the same Person as the Father. He is a different Person. And so therefore He is an icon, right? Do you see it? So what we have here is a passage that’s teaching us that He is the radiance of the glory of God—not a derived radiance but an original radiance. So therefore He is God, sharing the radiance of the glory of God. But He is not the Person of the Father, and therefore He is an exact imprint of His nature. He is a second Person.

And so here you get this idea that the Trinity is being taught, although the Spirit at this point is not included. And so what you begin to understand, though, is that Jesus as the

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icon or the exact imprint of the image of God and the very nature of God, He is the One who provides access to God. And so what you have is access to God in Christ, who is the icon or the exact imprint of His very nature. He provides access to God.

And so all of a sudden focus shifts in the next set of verses to the Person of Christ. And I think that’s why he does that. He’s drawing us to think about what he said about Christ that is the icon. And now, having brought us through this argument with regard to access to God, he’s bringing us back and setting our minds on the Person of God in Jesus Christ. Does that make sense?

**Participant:** Yes. Amen.

**Jeff:** If it doesn’t make sense, now is the time to wrestle through this. No, not you, Ted. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** Do you want Bill McCoy?

**Jeff:** No. *(Laughter)* Ted, go ahead.

**Ted:** For those of us who come from a religious faith that thinks about icons, and that’s me, I’ve always understood them as a window.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** They’re seen as a window.

**Jeff:** Yes, and that’s a good way to think about it in relation to John 1 verse 18, where Jesus is the One who exegetes or reads out of God who God is to us.

**Transcriber’s Note:** John 1:18. *“No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.”*

**Jeff:** That’s kind of a different way of thinking about it than purely a window. But it does provide in that sense a window for us to see God.

**Ted:** The window.

**Jeff:** The window; that’s right.

**Ted:** Because everything else,--what is the word to use?—is cloudy.

**Jeff:** And shadowy.

**Ted:** Shadowy, yes. So it’s like looking through a mirror darkly. But with Christ you’re actually looking through the window at God.

**Jeff:** You know, think about it like this, too. B. B. Warfield talked about the Trinity. And he said, with regard to the Trinity, that the Old Testament was like a darkly furnished room. All the pieces are there. But when Christ comes, light is cast upon that already furnished room. And we see what was already and always there. But we see it now through Christ.

**Participant:** So Jeff, in today’s culture I hear people being referred to as icons way too often. And it sounds to me that what you’re teaching is that they’re really not in the grand scale like our culture might look at them. They say, “Oh, he’s an icon.”

**Jeff:** Right.

**Participant:** Because of what you’re saying, he really isn’t the real thing. He’s reflecting or pointing to something that’s greater than him. But I think the culture looks at the icon as oh my gosh, he’s an icon in pop music, or an icon of fashion, or—

**Jeff:** Yes. I think *icon* is used in our popular culture more like *idol*.

**Participant:** Well said.

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**Jeff:** And so here in this sense I think that *icon* is being used in more of its etymological sense, the way it was meant or intended to be used. And yet I think there’s also the additive when you think back to 1:3 that this is not simply an exact representation, and so a perfect model. But this One who is the exact reprint shares the same substance of the very nature in His imprint from Him. That’s the idea. Does that make sense?

**Participant:** Look at their faces.

**Jeff:** Any questions? I mean, this is a good time to ask questions if you have them. But if not and you want to go back to something that strikes you, if you want to go back to it, then let’s go back to it. But the idea is that, remember, he has been contrasting the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace with the New Covenant. He’s not doing anything different now. He’s still contrasting the shadows of the Mosaic covenant with Jesus. But he’s now talking about Jesus as the icon or the exact imprint of His nature, which is the way he talked about Him at the very beginning of Hebrews. So he’s still talking about the Mosaic administration contrasted with the New, or the Mosaic and the laws and the ceremonies and the sacrifices contrasted with Christ. And so now, having done that, setting up this contrast, he’s going to move on to the Person of Christ. So he’s going to talk to us about Christ. And let me just tell you how he’s going to do this.

He’s going to take Psalm 40 and he’s going to say to us that this Psalm is Christological. In other words, it speaks to us about Christ. It speaks prophetically about Christ. It speaks about His bodily coming. And it speaks about why He needed to come in a body, those three things. So let me explain them to you.

First of all, *the prophecy of Christ’s bodily coming*. Don’t you love the way that he uses this in Hebrews chapter 10? Look at verse 5. Well, I need to turn to chapter 10. *(Laughter)* “*Consequently, when He*”, or as the ESV says, “*when Christ came into the world, He said.*” Now don’t you love this? “*When Christ came into the world, He said.*” And then he quotes from Psalm 40.

This Psalm is about Christ. This is what Christ said. But then look at verse 7. It’s almost saying that the word of Psalm 40 is an eternal Word. And so when Christ came into the world, He spoke this living word as if it were fulfilled in the moment. “Then I said.” This is Christ saying this when He came into the world. “*Behold, I have come to do Your will, God,*” as it is written in the book, right?

So there’s a prophetic element to this. Don, go ahead.

**Don:** This is going to sound like a stupid question. But surely we’re not to understand that in the cradle when He was born that Christ said those words. Does “coming into the world” mean the Incarnation? Does it mean that we have the Baby saying, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire?” How are we to understand “when He came into the world?” What does that mean?

**Jeff:** Yes. So here’s how I’d frame that. I would frame that by saying this. I’m going to give you a couple of different categories to think about this and try to pull the threads together.

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So if the Psalms are the words of Christ, like Colossians says they are, then the Psalms either speak about Christ or the Psalms are Christ’s words. They’re Messianic in that they tell us something about Christ and His earthly existence.

So for instance, in Psalm 2 we find the kingly reign of Christ the Messiah. In Psalm 16 we find Peter using that to speak of the resurrection of Christ. Well, here we find Psalm 40 speaking of the incarnation of Christ.

Now who speaks these words? The Spirit speaks these words through inspiration. And what we find in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 is that Christ and the Spirit are almost equated one with another, not in terms of Person but in terms of work. And so when the Spirit utters these words He’s speaking to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And so, in other words, these words spoken long ago prophetically announced the birth of Christ. But at the coming of Christ these words on the page inspired by the Spirit, and so a living word, actually proclaim the advent of Christ, the moment He was born. Does that make sense?

**Participant:** Yes.

**Jeff:** And so it attributes a vitality to this. What I’m saying is that Christ doesn’t necessarily have to utter these words out of His own mouth for that to be the case. The very utterance of these words by the Spirit, and so inscripturated on the page, now speak. Okay?

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** All right. Thanks for that, Don. (*Unclear*) Secondly, *the bodily appearing of Christ*. I want you to notice this. *“But a body You have prepared for Me.”*

The interesting thing is that this is from the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It was done in about the second century B.C. And it was the Bible that Paul used when he went to Greek speaking people. Greek was their language. They couldn’t read Hebrew. They needed a translation like we need an English translation. So the Greek was their translation. And this is what it said in that translation. It said, *“But a body You have prepared for Me.”*

But if you go back and you look at your Hebrew Old Testament, or if you look at your English Old Testament and compare it with Psalm 40, one of the things that you’ll find is that you’ll find that it says in Psalm 40, where it reads in our text *“a body You have prepared for Me”*, it says, *“my ears You have opened.”*

Now one of the things that we need to understand then is that *“a body You have prepared for Me”* is an idiom for *“My ears You have opened.”*

Now I want you to think about that. Idiomatically it makes sense. *“My ears You have opened”* kind of brings to mind the image of a sculptor who is sort of carving out the head and carving out the ears. And that would be *“a body You have prepared for Me.”* And so idiomatically bringing the Old Testament into the Greek understanding we have a faithful rendition, a faithful translation of what’s there in the text brought to them in the way that they would understand it. So there is a difference here in the translation, and that’s why.

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Now when you think about this, why is there an emphasis on the prophetic aspect of Christ’s coming bodily, and now having a body that was prepared for Him?—a real body, a genuine body, not a make-believe body or an apparent body or a seeming body, but a real body prepared for Him. tell, he importance of that body was that it was in that body that He offered perfect obedience to God. And that’s what the text says.

And this is one of those things (and I’ve said it to you before and I’ll say it again because it’s important to say.) I’ve said to you before that oftentimes we hear about a truncated gospel. In other words, we ask the question. What did Christ do for me? And the answer that we often give to that is that He died for me. And that’s a truncated or a partial gospel. The fullness of the gospel is all of Christ’s obedience, not just a passive obedience, that He died for me,--

**Transcriber’s Note:** At this point the power goes out for five seconds.

**Sig:** We’re still recording, Jeff.

**Jeff:** No, we’re not.

**Sig:** Here we are; we’re recording.

**Jeff:** Okay. It’s not just a passive obedience, that He died for me. But it is an active obedience—

**Transcriber’s Note:** The power comes back on.

**Jeff:** Hey! Let there be light! (*Laughter*) There is His active obedience. And the active obedience causes Him to be a sacrifice without blemish. So it’s an important aspect of the work of Christ.

Well, what I want you to understand then is that sacrifices existed. This is what the writer says. Sacrifices existed because obedience did not exist among Israel. And it did not exist in the posterity of Adam. And so Jesus comes to offer perfect obedience for those who belong to Him, that the sacrifices that they once needed would be brought to fruition in Him, and so no longer needed.

And so you see now how the shadows of the Old are now brought into contrast with the Icon who came to bring an end to the shadows in the fullness of Himself. Okay? So the sacrifices existed, the obedience did not. But Jesus came in the body to make sacrifices obsolete. Does that make sense.

**Participant:** I think.

**Jeff:** All right. Well then, let’s jump to *redemption applied*. And I’ll just take a couple minutes to talk about redemption applied.

Verse 10 is really an important verse. “*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” Just a few things about this, and you can ask questions if you’d like. But let me just say a few things really quickly.

First of all, *our redemption is tied to His obedience, His willful obedience*. And there’s so much that we can say about this. I simply want to say that at this time of the year and in our world Jesus is always under attack. Not only is the Word under attack, but Jesus is under attack. And what we have a tendency to do in response to the attack is to say things like “Jesus is God.” And then in our explanation of that we overstate it. And we understate the Humanity. And yet Jesus is truly God and truly man in the one Person of Jesus Christ. And so that means that He had a human will and a divine will. And that

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means that His human will submitted to His divine will in the one Person, Jesus Christ. And it was in the submission that we find at least perfect obedience offered and our redemption accomplished.

Secondly, I want you to notice the difference here, two different words but the same idea—well, the same idea for all of us, except maybe for Bill. *(Laughter)* I’m just making that caveat, Bill.

I want you guys to know that this seems one-sided, okay? It really does seem like I’m really getting on Bill. But after these things are over Bill is just merciless to me.

*(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Bill deserves it, everything he’s getting.

**Jeff:** All right. So in verse 2 you find sacrifices that can never cleanse. But in verse 10 you find Jesus Christ who sanctifies, who absolutely definitely cleanses us. And then there’s the progressive aspect of sanctification. The progressive aspect is that which—Bill Obaker raised his hand. He’s right beside Bill. And you know, out of the quick corner of my eye I thought it was notoriously—I mean, I thought it was—*(Laughter)*

So anyway, you get the picture. I think he’s drawing a contrast between the cleansing that the sacrifices could not make and the sanctification or the cleansing that Christ did make.

Hold on just for a minute, Bill. And then the last thing I would say is that *Christ was sacrificed once for all*. The thing I’d say to you is that “once for all” is not universalism. The *all* are the *many* of Hebrews 9:28. So he talks about them here as *all*. And so I think that if the Preacher could stand up to his congregation after having this explanation, and then say, “Who are you going to believe?” Bill—I mean Don?

**Don:** Freudian slip.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Don:** Verse 10 says, “*We have been sanctified.*”

**Jeff:** Right.

**Don:** Verse 14 says, “*We are being sanctified.*” So one verse is definitive sanctification and the other is progressive sanctification.

**Jeff:** That’s right. Over here. Go ahead.

**Participant:** I’m just kind of hoping to put this debate between you and Bill McCoy to bed.

**Jeff:** Don’t do that. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** I think that the fact of the matter is that we are not only justified completely, but we’re sanctified completely. But we don’t experience that completely. And I think it’s a matter of experience, the human experience of sanctification, because we are completely sanctified. But we haven’t experienced it. Would you buy that?

**Second Participant:** No.

**Third Participant:** No, because what about verse 14? We’re being sanctified.

**First Participant:** I would say that’s the experience of it.

**Jeff:** So I guess here is what I’d say to that.

**Participant:** It doesn’t bother me to think of it that way.

## *“The Sufficiency of Christ”*

**Jeff:** So in Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology* Berkhof talks about a justification that is very similar to a way of talking about sanctification, because one of the things that Berkhof is trying to do is come to grips with justification, I think in a way that’s very similar. And he has his reasons for doing that. He talks about an objective justification and a subjective justification. And what he means by that is that the objective justification takes place from God’s perspective. But the subjective aspect of sanctification means that we are justified by faith.

**Participant:** amen.

**Jeff:** And therefore there’s a subjective aspect to it. And it is that subjective aspect that we are coming to grips with in light of the objective.

**Participant:** That’s right, absolutely. It has to be that way.

**Jeff:** Well, there are some problems with that way of thinking about it. And if you’re not really careful, you could trend it into an eternal justification because of that objective aspect of justification. I don’t think Berkhof goes there, but I don’t think Berkhof fully extricates himself from some of the dangers of advancing that. But in my mind I think that what he’s doing is something that Lutheran theology has a tendency to do. I think Lutheran theology tends this way. I am justified and my sanctification is just getting used to my justification. *(Laughter)* Really, I think Luther might even talk like that. I’m not sure Luther would, but post-Lutheran theologians would talk like that.

But then there’s the idea of what about sanctification, and how do they differ? If there’s the objective justification, the subjective justification, and the definitive and progressive sanctification, how then do they differ? And I think the Westminster Confession talks about how they do differ. And I think that we need to keep that difference in mind. I’m not sure that in talking about objective and subjective justification that they always maintain the difference. Therefore the difference isn’t always maintained. I think it can be. But I think that there’s a danger.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Here’s what I think. There’s a danger in not letting some of the theological categories explain some things with some mysteries attached to them and rest. There’s a danger in always trying to explain that mystery.

**Participant:** Bishop Rodgers is a Luther scholar.

**Jeff:** Oh man, I should have never said anything! *(Laughter)* Tell me where I—

**Bishop Rodgers:** I never realized that. *(Laughter)* What is wrong with the old thing about positional sanctification and progressive sanctification?

**Participant:** Here, here.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Both are speaking about us in relation to Christ. One is complete and perfect, and the other—

**Jeff:** Yes, I understand that. Maybe people who talk positionally versus progressively might have a difference with definitive versus progressive in some way. But I think it’s kind of the same thing. Anybody else? Yes, bill? There’s that microphone. *(Laughter)*

**Bill:** I don’t like to see my name used in vain. *(Laughter)* As far as progressive sanctification is concerned, the only discussion is who is doing the work?

**Jeff:** Yes. I think that monergistically God is at the root of it.

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**Participant:** Amen. Of course.

**Jeff:** And synergistically we have to exercise faith. (*Laughter*) God doesn't exercise my faith.

**Participant:** But to me this is a pastoral issue that I struggle with. If I don't have some sense that my sanctification has been completed, and that I've been made to sit with Him in the heavenlies, I don't know how I can sit with Him in the heavenlies without being justified and sanctified. If I don't have that assurance, I'm going to despair, because my experience of sanctification in this life is so—I mean, you talked about obedience here earlier. I wish I could pull that note up. But I mean my obedience is so inadequate.

**Second Participant:** Yes, oh yes.

**First Participant:** And my faith is so little. Unless I have a strong sense that in a sense I've already arrived sanctification wise, and that indeed that sanctification is being worked out in me through Christ, I'm going to either despair or I'm going to start to make stuff up.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** I'm going to start to pretend that I'm holier than I am. I'm going to begin to say, “Oh, those sins are really not as bad as these sins.” So I think it's a real pastoral issue for me.

**Jeff:** You know, speaking about the pastoral issue, I intended to say something to you about that cleansing of the conscience. I was re-reading *Pilgrim's Progress* and a particular section of it. And an illustration came home to me that I thought might be helpful.

So when Pilgrim leaves the house called Beautiful, which is the church, and he is led down into the valley, (there are two valleys.) The first valley is the Valley of Humiliation, and then the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And in between there is a brief reprieve. He rests. And you remember that in the Valley of Humiliation he battles Apollyon. And it's really interesting.

But after the battle it says that a hand brought leaves from the tree of life to him to heal his wounds. And he was healed immediately. And I got to thinking about that. And I thought to myself that it's interesting the way that Bunyan phrases that. “*A hand appeared and brought leaves of the tree of life to him, and he was healed immediately.*”

And I thought that what Bunyan was saying is that we don't need to get up and run to the tree of life.

**Participant:** Right.

**Jeff:** In other words, we need to receive the healing that is there for us in Jesus Christ. And here is where I was thinking about some of our discussions. I was thinking that sometimes we resist receiving what is held out to us even as Christian people.

For instance, we sometimes struggle with guilt because we don't think that we deserve all of the grace of Christ.

**Participant:** That's right.

**Jeff:** And so we receive, but only so far, right? And I think that this is part of that subjective element, coming to grips with what it is that the gospel has actually done for

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me. It has actually healed me. And it has the ability to cleanse my conscience. But there is a need to receive what is for me. And that’s a subjective thing.

In other words, if you ask Christ about Christian down there, has he been fully forgiven? God says, “Of course he has.”

Well then, why is he resisting? Why does he only go so far? Well, because he’s in the body. And there’s a progressive element to this.

**Participant:** I was just thinking of the whole thing about walking in the New Testament. Good works He prepared for us that we should walk in them.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** Not to sit, but to walk. A person walks. But walking is something one does. It is true that one only walks in the power of the Holy Spirit. But when one is walking it’s not just the Holy Spirit. It’s us enabled by the Holy Spirit. You can’t get away from the subjective active dimension.

**Jeff:** That’s right.

**Participant:** But that’s true for all of life. Forget the Christian life. I mean, the only way we experience anything—marriage, work, whatever we’re doing, family—is existential. I mean, we have to be walking in that. And if the leaves of healing are given to us and we reject them, the Lord is going to come back until we see the necessity of taking them. It becomes in a sense eternally compulsive for us. I have to get it.

**Jeff:** To what you’re saying, Ted, I think that when you look at that, when you look at the battle with Apollyon, part of this is that Apollyon says to him, “You’ve been unfaithful to your new Master already.”

And he says, “Well, how so?”

And he says, “Well, all the way back in the Slough of Despond you were ready to give up.” And so that clues you in as an interpretive key to remind you that from the very moment that he leaves the City of Destruction that he belongs to the Lord of the hill, right? And so the idea of receiving what is his, and yet the idea of walking the narrow way go hand in hand in Bunyan’s mind. Who has not read *Pilgrim’s Progress*? *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** At least we’re honest.

**Jeff:** You’re a teacher in Israel and you do not know these things? *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** Have you read through *The Book of Common Prayer*? *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** I think it’s time to close. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** I’ve heard that they’re coming out with a movie.

**Jeff:** What’s that?

**Participant:** *Pilgrim’s Progress* is going to be coming out in a movie.

**Jeff:** Okay. I’ll wait till *The Book of Common Prayer* comes out in a movie. *(Laughter and applause)* Why don’t we pray? I think we need it. *(Laughter)*

Father in heaven, thanks so much for this day and for our time together. Lord, we pray that You’ll bless us as we go forth into the world. Lord, we pray that You’ll encourage our hearts because we often need it. We pray that You’ll make us light, for the world needs it. And we pray that we will recognize how much we all need the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*