Hebrews 10:13-18 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds; “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

In our Bible Classes on Monday night and Wednesday morning we have been studying the book of Hebrews. It is a marvelous book, a book, really an epistle, that was written to Jews and Jewish Christians to help them grasp how the original Jewish faith was really the same faith as the Christians but now fulfilled in Christ Jesus. So you can well imagine that the images found in the book of Hebrews are really taken from the rituals found in Jewish worship life, the ones revealed in the Old Testament and then it is explained how Jesus fulfilled those shadows.

Take for instance the opening verse of our Epistle reading, verse 11: **“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.”** That line is referring to the numerous animal sacrifices that were made all the time at the Temple. The day started with a sacrifice. As people came to worship it was sacrifice after sacrifice that they brought to the Temple. Blood, the smell of burning meat and fat, that was what you found at the temple. But notice what this verse points out. The priests were doing their duty as God had commanded them, but evidently what they were doing was not sufficient for the cause. It was shown not sufficient because it had to be done again and again! The illustration is simple. Let’s put the lesson this way. If I have a leaky toilet and I go in and fix it…fix it every hour…every day…and it still leaks, then I have not fixed the toilet!

Although it is not said directly in this section of Hebrews, do be aware of the fact that it is clearly taught that the sacrifices were not the thing! The sacrifices were there to point to, to remind you of, to symbolize the thing that was important, namely, that one day the One Sacrifice that God had promised would come and when that sacrifice was made, all the other sacrifices could be stopped. In other words, it was not the sacrifice itself, but what the sacrifice pointed to: the Christ!

That truth is referenced in verse 12, **“But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”** That is a reference to Jesus, the Christ. Jesus is the great High Priest of all time who came and made the one sacrifice that truly counted. That sacrifice was himself. Jesus offered himself on the cross and with that one sacrifice all sin has been paid for. In other words, Jesus is the Savior, the Savior from sin, the promised Messiah of God who brings a message of wonder and joy for all of mankind. That’s what we will focus on for today. Our theme: **FORGIVEN IN JESUS!**

I pray that you do indeed recognize that it is Jesus our text is talking about. The fact that He offered himself and the fact that he now sits at the right hand of God should pretty well seal the deal on understanding this is about Jesus. And what I totally love about this section of Hebrews is that it very clearly and wonderfully tells us exactly what it is that Jesus has done. That is the point of verse 14 that says, **“Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”** Notice how this verse echoes something said beforehand, that it was one sacrifice that did it all. That one sacrifice was Jesus on the cross suffering and dying for us. The end result of that sacrificial death of Jesus is this: **“he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”**

Now I have to tell you that I really don’t like this translation. The Greek text says, **“He has made perfect those who are being sanctified.”** Note that is how the new EHV translates. Here is the wider meaning of this word. It is a word that can at its base mean “be made holy” but in this case it is a word telling us of God’s work. God has called us out of unbelief to faith, God is making us holy because we have been clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, you know, the perfect Jesus. This passage is a reference to those who have faith. Believers in Jesus are the ones who receive the benefits of Jesus, who get clothed with his righteousness, who are declared “holy and perfect” because Jesus was holy and perfect for us. It is a wonderful proclamation of God’s Word! It is the whole point of God’s Word!

Yet the author of the Book of Hebrews is not content to just let it be his word on the matter. The author appeals to the Old Testament, the true and inspired message of God given to and through the Jewish people. Please note the Old Testament is just as true, just as inspired and just as fully God’s Word as the New Testament. For that matter, it is Jesus who points out to us in John 5: **“These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”** That is exactly where Hebrews takes us, to hear what God’s Holy Spirit himself would proclaim of Jesus. Verse 15-16 say, **“The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”**

That passage is telling us that when Jesus comes, because of what Jesus will do things are going to be different. We are going to be different. God will change us, God will declare us His children and heirs of eternal life! And what is it that children are concerned with? It is pleasing their parents because of the love of their parents. The new covenant, which is the message of the New Testament is how in Jesus, because of Jesus things between God and man will be different!

Let me just share some passage that point out the truth of this. When the Apostles were arrested and put in prison for the message of Jesus here is what happened and what they were told: Acts 5:19-20 **But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."**  In one of the beautiful passages that shows the connection between Jesus and us we are told: Romans 6:3-6 **Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.** In another epistle this simple message was shared: 2 Corinthians 5:17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** Again, the lesson of the prophecy is proclaimed loudly in Ephesians 4:22-24 **You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.** Finally, one of my favorites: 1 John 3:1 **How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!**

You might wonder why I quoted so many passages. It is done to simply show you that what was prophesied in Jeremiah about the work of the Christ, the work of Jesus has been and is fulfilled. But there is another reason to do this. Unfortunately it is because many modern day Christians ignore the fact that they are to be new creatures, creatures who desire, strive and love to do their best in following Jesus. In truth, we are lousy at it. We stumble and fall. We sin in thought, word and deed on a regular basis. But that’s because of the toll sin has taken on us. Yet all the while, as we are lost in sin, we struggle and battle, we strive for good and right! Our attitude in Jesus is that we hate sin and desire to do what is good, even though we struggle so hard! When that attitude, when that newness of life and drive of Jesus is missing from your life, then I fear that perhaps the call of faith, the belief in Jesus is either weakened or non-existent. That is when we are to turn again to the wonder and joy of Jesus.

What is awesome is that our passage shows us exactly why we are new creatures, why we have a different attitude than the world. Listen to verses 17-18 **“Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’ And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.”** The whole key to this is to grasp and understand the forgiveness of sins. It is the gift of Jesus. It is the declaration that we have been **“made perfect forever.”** We are counted as perfect before God because Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit has called us to faith. In that faith we grasp the forgiveness of sins that is ours in Jesus and it is that message, that wonderful, sweet, eternal message of our Savior that melts our hearts and leads us to lives of service to Him, not because we have to but because we can’t help ourselves as children of God and new creatures of heaven!

Do you get that! Jesus, the work of Jesus is about our forgiveness and eternal life. This forgiveness is true whether you believe it or not. It is true because it is an act and declaration of God. God, in Jesus has declared to us: “All sins are forgiven!” If you refuse to believe that message, refuse to believe the wonder of Jesus then there will be a problem. Because this forgiveness is ours only in faith. That is the limitation that God has put on it. Faith in Jesus is required. Yet if you disown Jesus, if you reject Jesus, then this forgiveness is something that you also reject. Now you will have to stand before God on your own. Face him alone and try to explain to him why you are not completely and perfectly holy!

When you have Jesus, faith in Jesus, that message of God: “All sins are forgiven!” becomes ours. In Jesus, because of faith in Jesus we hear God proclaim: “Terry, your sins are forgiven!” And every one of you who believes in Jesus can insert your name into that sentence and understand truly: “My sins are forgiven in Jesus!” That is the very point and power of our Jesus and the faith He has called us to!

Now, do you grasp the point of that last part? **“And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.”** It is a sentence to remind you of the all sufficient nature of what Jesus has done. His sacrifice was complete. His atonement, his paying for our sins was so thorough and perfect that no other sacrifice for sins needs to be made. It is a reminder to find in Jesus complete atonement and salvation. To rely on Jesus and His work alone. You and I aren’t responsible for somehow earning this salvation. I tell you that because there are those churches out there that will tell you that you MUST do this or that in order to be saved. For instance, “You must witness. You must give 10%! You must be baptized to show your love. You must surrender yourself to Christ. You must obey Christ. You must…sometimes these “musts” just go on and on.

In Jesus there are no “musts”! In Jesus there is forgiveness and eternal life. In Jesus because of his call to faith, there is new life but it is not a “must” thing. It is something that just is. I illustrate to saying: We were dead sticks lying on the ground. God picks us up in Jesus, plants us, gives us life and turns us into fruit trees that just bear fruit to his glory!” Yes, God has done it all for us in Jesus.

There it is! The wonder of Jesus. The wonder of His forgiveness and His gift of eternal life. May you simply hear and believe. May you be sure and secure in the power of Jesus, the power and completeness of his forgiveness! Amen.