

INI - SDG

2<sup>nd</sup> to Last Sunday in Trinity  
Saints Triumphant  
November 15, 2009  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
Hecla, SD

**Text: Hebrews 10:11-18 *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.***

**Theme: ONCE AND FOR ALL!**

Dear fellow sinners made saints through the blood of Christ Jesus, God's own Son,

I am not a fan of the dentist. Just the thought of someone sticking their hands and tools in my mouth makes me uncomfortable. Yet I know going to the dentists for regular check-ups is important for healthy teeth and gums. I just wish there was a way that I could go to the dentist once in my life, get it over with, and never have to go back again.

Are there things in life you feel the same way about? Maybe it's brushing your teeth. Don't you wish that there was a magic toothpaste you could use so that you only had brush your teeth once in your life and the benefits would last a lifetime? Or how about doing the dishes? It seems that no sooner do we get done with the dishes than there is a new pile of dirty ones. If only there some magic dish soap that you could use once to keep those dishes clean forever.

We realize that none of these things are possible. We need to brush our teeth every day because our teeth get dirty every day. We need to wash dishes every day, because we make those dishes dirty every day by eating off of them. We know we need to wash our hands every day, because we get germs and dirt on them every day. Whether it is our hands, our teeth, or our dishes, we know that daily cleansing is necessary because of the daily accumulation of dirt and grime.

If that is the case with our hands, teeth, and dishes what about our sins? Every day we are surrounded by the dirt and grime of sin. We see the stain of sin on people around us and the grime of sin in our own lives. Earlier in our service we all joined in telling God that we have sinned against Him with our thoughts, our words, and our actions. Is there any magic soap we can use to remove the daily grim and filth of sin? Is there anything we can use to wash away those unloving words we spoke yesterday? Is there anything that will take away those selfish thoughts we had? Oh, to be rid of the dirt and grime of sin once and for all!

The bad news I have for you this morning is there is absolutely nothing you nor I can do to remove the dirt and grime of sin from ourselves. We are sinners, steeped in and surrounded by

sin. The only help is to be found outside of ourselves. Let us join together in praising God as we hear that it is only Jesus who once and for all cleansed us from our sin! May the Holy Spirit comfort and strengthen our faith as we listen to His Word! Amen.

It always amazes me to hear how much time the average person spends doing something. For instance, if you get 8 hours of sleep everyday and live to be 90 years old, you will have spent approximately a third of your life, some 30 years, sleeping! Or if a person brushes their teeth for 2 minutes everyday and has those teeth for 75 years, it ends up being about 900 hours or 37 ½ days of their life spent brushing their teeth!

Well consider this number, 1,278,522. That's a pretty big number, right?! Well someone has estimated that this is the number of lambs that were killed for the daily sacrifices from the time God commanded it at Mount Sinai to the death of Jesus. In Numbers 28 God commanded that every day two male lambs were to be sacrificed by the priests as a regular burnt offering. That is a lot of lambs that were sacrificed!

And yet what do we hear in our text about those 1.3 million lambs? Verse 11, ***“Every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.”*** Every day at the Tabernacle or in the Temple, two year old lambs, without spot and without blemished were sacrificed on the altar to God. Every day for nearly 1500 years the priests were there doing their work. Yet the writer to the Hebrews says in our text that those lambs were not valuable enough to God to remove one sin.

What do we learn from this? If the daily activity of the priests, day-by-day carrying out the command of God to make sacrifices, if this could never take away sin - what is there that any of us can do to free us from our sin?

When Martin Luther was growing up he became more and more aware and concerned about his sins. It seemed there was nothing he could do to remove the filth of his sin and quiet his conscience. The church leaders at that time told him to do more good works and pray to the Virgin Mary. Luther went so far as to dedicate his life to God by becoming a monk. This meant he took a vow of celibacy (he would never get married) and he took a vow of poverty. He spent many hours in fasting and prayer. He even went so far as to whip himself to punish himself for his sins.

Yet none of these things brought Martin Luther any peace. His conscience still accused him of his sinfulness. Much like those Old Testament priests who stood ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which could never take away sin, none of the personal sacrifices which Luther made day after day could remove his sins.

Are there things we think we are doing to take away sin? Do we think if we live a better life, that may be able to overcome our past sins? Do we think that because we make the sacrifice of giving up our Sunday mornings and go to church, that this service will take away our sins? Or do we think that the simple act of confessing our sins will take away our sins? Like Luther and like the priests, these acts which we do can never take away sins. There is never enough we can do to take away sins.

So if these sacrifices could not remove one sin, why did God command that two be killed every day? Couldn't those lambs have been spared and put to better use? Think of the garments that could have been knit from the wool of 1.3 million lambs! Think of the mouths that could have been fed with the meat from 1.3 million lambs! Think of the money that could have been

earned from selling a lamb without a spot and without a blemish! So if these lambs could never remove sin, why would God command that every day they be killed?

Those daily sacrifices were a daily reminder of sin. While they could never take away sins, they were a shadow of a better offering yet to come. The writer says of Jesus, ***“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”*** What a statement! Think of what that word “forever” means here! We know because of daily germs and dirt that we daily will have to wash our hands. One time is simply not enough. We know also that one sacrifice of a lamb on the altar was not enough. They were offered daily. But Jesus, after Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins - that one sacrifice was good for all time! One sacrifice for sins forever!!! No more sacrifices need to be made!

Remember what was said of the priests as they served in the Temple? ***“Every priest stands ministering daily...”*** The priest’s work was never done, because sin was never removed. And so the priest was standing daily to do his work of service. But what is said of Jesus our great High Priest? He offered one sacrifice for sins forever and then He ***sat down at the right hand of God***. He sat down because His work of sacrificing was over! No more sacrifices need to be made!

Again in verse 14 we find the word “forever” in connection with the one offering Jesus made. In verse 12 we heard that Jesus ***“had offered one sacrifice for sins forever.”*** Now we hear, ***“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”*** The one offering Jesus made is standing in stark contrast to those daily sacrifices in the temple. Those lambs could never take away sins. Those lambs being sacrificed could perfect no one. Evidence of that is seen in their daily repetition.

But the offering of Jesus is much, much different. The one offering of Jesus was made for sin forever and that one offering perfects forever. The offering spoken of was His death on the cross. Those lambs being sacrificed in the temple every day were a picture of the Lamb of God who would be sacrificed to take away the sin of the world. Only the death of the Son of God would be sufficient to pay for the sins of all people of all time. Only His perfect life and innocent death could perfect the believer. And only Jesus’ one sacrifice could be sufficient forever!

The writer to the Hebrews then goes on to point out how the Holy Spirit spoke of this very thing in Jeremiah 31. ***“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’”*** One of the reasons we struggle with a guilty conscience is because we try to cleanse it ourselves. Like Luther we think if we do enough good, it should be able to overcome our evil. Yet it doesn’t. When we focus on ourselves all we see is more and more sin.

But hear this word from the Holy Spirit. Who is the active agent? Who is doing things? Is it us? Are we putting God’s law in our hearts and writing it on our minds? Is it we who are to forget about our sins? No it is Almighty God Himself who does this. God puts His Holy Spirit in our hearts. God brings us to faith and instills His Gospel message in us. And it is God who no longer remembers our sins and lawless deeds! GOD is doing this!

This is how powerful that one offering of Jesus was. Jesus ***“loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”*** (Eph 5:2) His sacrifice on the cross was so precious to God that it actually made the omniscient, all-knowing God forget something! He no longer remembers our sin. He no longer remembers our lawless deeds. They

no longer exist in God's memory because Jesus paid for them once and for all. God sees them no more! They are gone forever!!!

Thus the writer says in the last verse of our text, "***Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.***" Because of Jesus one offering for sins forever, which perfects forever, which caused God to remember our sins and lawless deeds no more, there is now no longer an offering for sin. Nothing more needs to be done! When Jesus said, "It is finished!" from the cross, He meant it is finished! Our sins which had separated us from God have been removed forever! We have been reconciled to God. The peace that Martin Luther sought and the peace which each one of us seeks is found in Jesus Christ and the one offering He made for sin. Nothing can add to it and nothing needs to be added to it! Jesus did it once and for all!

So we will need to wash our hands, brush our teeth, and do the dishes many more times before we die. But we will never need to do anything to earn God's forgiveness. Jesus did it once and for all when He offered His life on the cross. Praise be to Jesus for the offering He made to remove our sin forever! Amen!