

Pursuing Perfection

Hebrews 10:1-18

The writer has been saying how much greater Jesus is than anything Judaism has to offer. But it's not just Judaism that Jesus is greater than.

All religions are concerned with how we can connect with the divine. Even modern secular consumerism is concerned with the pursuit of ultimate happiness. And what the writer says here is that inner sense of completeness and happiness can only be found in intimate relationship with God, which is only possible through Jesus.

Approaching the unapproachable.

The writer talks of drawing near to God. The Old Covenant rituals were designed to show that only the perfect can do that. But we are not perfect. And religion does not help us become perfect, it only shows us how far away from perfect we really are.

But what religion cannot do for us, and what we cannot do for ourselves, Christ has done for us.

Complete in Christ

The Old Testament tells us that God is interested in the heart, not religious ritual. God is looking for obedience. The writer says (by quoting Psalm 40) that Christ came and lived the perfect, obedient life, and died in our place. Rather than us living the perfect life, he has lived it for us, and we are counted holy because of what he has done.

He has done everything we need to draw close to God – we can be complete, and know a deep inner sense of wellbeing and acceptance before God, in Him. What is true for Jesus, is counted true for all those who put their faith in him.

Religion can never offer you that inner sense of the job being finished – just as the Jewish priests could never stop working. But Jesus has done all that was necessary, and has sat down at God's right hand – the job done.

But this is more than how God sees us. When we realize the measure of God's love for us it transforms us.

Works in Progress

The writer says in v14 that we are being sanctified. We are counted perfect in Jesus, but he continues to transform us, and make us more like who we are. The writer quotes from Jeremiah, saying that God will write his law on our hearts. He gives us the desire to live according to his will.

But it is a process: others will let us down, so we must show them grace as we have been shown grace. And we will fail, and when we do we must not withdraw, or try to atone for our own sin, but confess our sin, and look to Jesus, and trust what he has done for us. And as it sinks in what he has done for us, it will result in a sacrifice of praise – the only sacrifice we get to offer.