

# Hebrews Chapter 10 v 11 - 18

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Date: 02 June 2019

Preacher: Barry Davies

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     to 18 I should say. So verse 11 of chapter 10. 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. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For 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. Sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. And you've got the railway bridge and I'm old enough to think that the railway bridge is the most important because if you've watched certain films about men running away from magicians who have got some code or other they end up going across the fourth railway bridge in a train. But if you go there these days you'll find the road bridge as well. And when you hear people say this phrase it's like painting the fourth bridge.

It has this sense about it that it's a task that actually never gets done. And certainly when they first built the bridge which of course you all know was in 1890 and immediately they built it they started painting it. And everybody who talked about it said they started painting at one end and moved all the way to the other side of the bridge and by the time they got there they had to go back to the beginning and start again. Now I'm told that's not entirely true. They did have a team of painters who worked continuously but they didn't do every single bit of it. They just did the bits that really needed but they were certainly on the task. How long would you think if you were a painter you'd like to be in a room painting it going around the walls and when you finished starting and painting again how long would you do that before it drove you mad? Well this went on for 121 years until 2011. In 2011 a paint company came up with a revolutionary new paint which they said would last for 25 years. And the good news was that as far as we know it has lasted that long. But the bad news is it took the 53,000 gallons of paint to do the whole bridge. It cost them 130 million pounds and it took 400 men 10 years to complete. Now if those men had been the painters that you and I usually have to pay for it probably would have taken them 25 years to paint it anyway. But whatever the truth of that story the fact is that however brilliant that paint was 25 years after they're going to have to paint it again.

And 25 years after that they have to paint it again. They may have delayed it a little bit but it's still got to be done. And of course this task that's unfinished that we read about in that hymn it says it drives us to our knees. And of course that task that it's talking about to make ourselves right with God. To find a place in heaven. And of course this passage tells us the way to do that. And we know from that simple illustration that some tasks can never ever be completed. Even when they're being attempted it just can't be done.

For one thing the cost is huge and that often prevents us from believing that we could possibly finish it. And we don't have the resources that's why we sang that hymn facing a task unfinished.

[ 4 : 3 0 ]     And I've got one further illustration. Because I was ill-advisedly as it turns out by the head teacher I was put in charge of the school for a day when I was his deputy.

He was going away on a course. I don't think he really trusted me but he said I'm going on this course and you can run the school for today. And on that day we had the heaviest snow we've ever had in Middlesbrough and the first decision I had to make because he said whatever you do make a decision. Don't just fudge it. Make a decision.

So the first one was will we open the school at all? Except that he told me we never close a school. Never. So I thought right the school's open. So I got the caretakers to clear the drive and then we came into school and everything was going relatively well. And then all the electricity went off.

All the heating, all the lights, all the computers all went down. They'd been a fuse. Because everybody being cold had put all the heating on full. All the computers had been switched on first thing in the morning and it fused all the electrics.

So this was my first big trial and I had to make sure I got it right. So I sent for the electricity. I said keep the children in school, in classes.

[ 5 : 53 ] They can wear the coats if they want to but they are not going home. Right? Point number one. So I sent for this man who turned out came from Sunderland.

So it took him a couple of hours to get down from Sunderland with this fuse and the fuse was this big. And he put it in, put the electric back on and it fused again.

And so I said we'll put another fuse in. He said I only brought one. And so we had to wait while I went all the way back to Sunderland and went back to the building in order to bring another fuse. Fortunately that one did work.

But by that time all the children were freezing anyway and it was the end of the school day. So it didn't really count for anything. But you would have paid anything to get somebody with a fuse or a solution that not only fixed the thing but would stay like that forever.

And you would never have to do it again. Because it costs so much in terms of time, mental stress, the cost and all those things. Because each of these fuses cost hundreds and hundreds of pounds.

[ 7 : 04 ] And they had threatened to take it out of my wages. But this particular hymn that we sang, Facing a Task Unfinished, reminds us that our task as yet in this world is unfinished.

I put this title on the internet, Facing a Task Unfinished, to click up the words on the computer. And the Gettys have put a new chorus to it.

It's the same tune, exactly the one we sang, but at the end of each line they've got a new bit for the chorus. So maybe one day we'll learn this. This is what the chorus says, the refrain.

Having Facing a Task Unfinished and all the rest of it, it says this. We go to all the world with kingdom hope unfurled. No other name has power to save but Jesus Christ our Lord.

And that's what this passage in Hebrews is all about. It's about this name, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, who's made it possible for us to go on and tell people all across the world about the hope that we have.

[ 8 : 14 ] This particular letter, it's not absolutely clear who wrote it. Some people feel it was Paul, but others say, well, it doesn't look like his style.

But whoever wrote it, in this particular book, in the New Testament, he's got 38 references to the Old Testament writers from 12 different books.

And he's using these to support the message that he's about to proclaim. The only book that gets anywhere near that in terms of references is Romans, which is why we read from Romans.

It's another great book referring again to the Old Testament. And what all of those passages show is that this isn't chance. All of this that we're going to be thinking about tonight from this passage, it was all planned from when we had the time of Genesis right the way through the Old Testament.

And we looked tonight at other passages as well as we went on from the prophets. And right to the New Testament, it was all planned. And all these things point to what was going to happen.

[ 9 : 23 ] So it shouldn't come to a surprise to anybody when it does. And I've just got three simple points tonight that arise from this particular passage.

And I've got three things, three questions, and we'll try and answer them if we can. In the light of what this passage and others are telling us, what are we to do?

There must be something to do. The second thing that we have to think about is, if we're going to do something, how do we set about that task? And the third question is, how can we complete that task?

So three questions. What are we to do? How are we to go about it? And how can we complete the task? Well, the one thing that we know is that we don't have to follow some religious rites and festivals because that's not what this is all about.

It tells us this in verse 11 of this same chapter. 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.

[ 10 : 37 ] And there's another reference in one of the other verses, which talks about offerings of bulls and goats. And it says that that's no use either. And if there is anybody who's vaguely not either read the Bible or is completely unaware of what the Bible says, and this applies to many people in the world, then they need to be told that there is absolutely no way that anybody, anywhere, at any time, no matter how hard they try or whatever they do, they are never going to complete this particular task.

Never. There's nothing in this world that can achieve that. There's no one in this world who can achieve that. And just like those men, whether it be painting the bridge or some other task, like getting the weeds out of your lawn, because every year you've got to go back and get more weeds out of the lawn, and they seem to get more and more every year, and it's never finished.

You're always going back. And if anybody ever did invent some weed killer that killed them once and for all, then I'm sure they'd make an absolute fortune.

So if that's what we've not got to do or doesn't do any good whatsoever, what does this passage tell us and other passages in the Scripture? Well, we know that someone else asked that very question, don't we?

The Philippian jailer, when he was faced with the Lord Jesus Christ and his claims, he said, what must I do to be saved? And that thing that he asked, that question, the answer was, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

[ 12 : 25 ] So the only thing that we have to do is believe and trust in the Lord Jesus. Because if it's just duty, then just as those people painting that bridge will have found, if it's a duty, you've got to do it, and it destroys the joy, and it destroys everything about that particular job.

Because our duties, if we could call them that, are not duties, they're things that we want to do because we love God and we love Jesus.

We want to do them because we've realised that he's done everything for us and therefore, we'll do these things which need to be done, not as a duty, but out of love for him.

When Jesus came to this world, he did tell us many things that we should be doing. I've got a list of a few of them, others.

The first one we've already mentioned, that we have to believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Second one I've got is, we've got to love God. We find that mentioned in most of the Gospels, certainly in Matthew, Luke and Mark.

[ 13 : 44 ] But it's also, perhaps we could look at this one just to show that this isn't a new thing. If we go back to Deuteronomy chapter 6, right at the beginning of the Bible, then we'll find that we have the first occurrence of these things.

So Deuteronomy chapter 6 and it's verses 4 to 6. So let's just have a look at that. It's on page 185.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

So loving the Lord our God is something that we have to do and those references in the New Testament are harking back to that Old Testament passage. And that's the primary thing that we need to keep in mind.

That's the one thing that we need to do to love God. The second thing that I've got down here after that is we've got to tell others.

[ 14 : 59 ] And perhaps you needn't turn these up but if you want to it's in Matthew chapter 28 verses 18 to 20. And again I'll give you the page number if you want to turn it up.

Matthew chapter 28 and that is on page 1000 just going on to the page actually.

So it's Matthew is 28 and verses 18 to 20 I'll just read them. Then Jesus came to them and said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

So the task that was given to the disciples and the task that's given to us is to tell other people about what we believe. And the last point I've got down here this comes from passages in John's Gospel it also comes in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 8 which we didn't read them but all of them say the same thing.

[ 16 : 21 ] we are to love one another. So we're to love God first and foremost but because we love God if we all love God then naturally we will love one another.

So some very simple guidelines for things that we should be doing but remember these aren't duties it's not my duty to love somebody else. It's not because I have to do it it's not that I'm going to tell other people because in some way we'll get some points for the more people you tell we'll tell people because we don't want them to go to an eternal punishment.

We want them to be saved we want them to be joyful in heaven with Christians who love the Lord and that's why we do it. We do it out of love for God and because we want to save these people and therefore we are to love one another.

Hebrews throughout including the passages that we've read tell us that everything that's necessary has been done because having answered that question what must I do to be saved the answer is nothing other than believe in Christ and that's absolutely clear you can pick out lots and lots of references in Hebrews and find them there are some in this chapter I'll just pick two we go back to chapter 7 and look at verse 25 there it says talking about Jesus therefore he's able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them let's just take the enormity of that for a minute he's able to save completely completely it's not that there's a bit of healing as it were and then they'll go back and find that they've got the same problems but it says that he's able to save completely those who come to

God through him why because he always lives to intercede for them the Lord Jesus is the one who's eternal he's the one who's always going to be there and therefore we don't have to worry about a time might come when that promise won't hold and there's another one which I've picked out from this list of things and that's in chapter 9 verse 28 which is just a bit further on says this so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many and he will appear a second time not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him and in fact I've got down six or seven verses here in Hebrews all say the same thing that these things are going to happen through Christ through his sacrifice and all of them say the same sentiment if not in exactly the same words that this is a once and for all thing

[ 19 : 41 ] I was talking to some people who belong to a religious group the other day but I don't believe they're a Christian group and they were talking about how you get saved and they said well we're not certain we will get saved I said well that's odd because the Bible says if we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ we will be saved we are saved and it happens only once so imagine being in that situation you think perhaps if somebody sits here and thinks well perhaps if I'm a bit better perhaps if I go to church more perhaps if I do this and that and I give more to charity then you know I'll be saved but this passage is the absolute opposite of that that we're reading because it says none of that is any good whatever you do it's going to be of no effect as it were it might be a good thing to do but it's not going to earn the salvation that's being mentioned in this passage in those passages it tells us that

Jesus has already done all that was necessary so if we don't have to do anything how can we go about the task of doing something of course we've been given back guidelines by the Lord in how we're to go about it in this life but just remember that all of these things that are tasks are because we love him and I've given some illustrations I've got three things which are clearly evident from the scriptures the first one says right one of the things that we need to do is to read the Bible constantly okay so the question we should ask ourselves is do we read the word regularly I've already said when the writer of this book was writing it he referred 38 times to the scriptures I wonder how many of us could recite 38 passages from the

Old Testament that was applying to a particular thing in the New Testament giving us the background for it I put it like this and all of these illustrations they're very similar that I've picked I'm looking around most of you of an age that are well less said the better and maybe when you were younger you were in love right with someone and perhaps if you were separated you might have got letters or messages you just send a text these days which isn't quite the same is it but if you got a letter I actually met somebody once who I was talking to and I can't remember why it came up like this but he said oh I've got a letter from my wife that she wrote to me 50 years ago when I was in the army and I was you know wherever he was abroad and he took out of his wallet this piece of paper at least

I think that's what it was it was crumbling it was so old and he said you know whenever I look at that letter it just reminds me of how much we were in love now men I'm sure you've got a stack of letters at home that you've got in a rubber band somewhere that from time to time you look at and just remind yourself well that's why we need to read the scriptures regularly because as with the Lord's Supper that we're remembering tonight every time we remember what Christ did for us on the cross doesn't it cause us to love him more that's why we do it it's a demonstration of our love for him the other thing that we need to do continually is to ask God for his help so do we bring all our cares and concerns and questions to God well it's the same thing isn't it that person that you love if you know that someone loves you and cares for you aren't they the first person you go to if you're struggling with something and you talk to them about it and they'll give you help they'll support you and you know share your concerns and maybe answer some of your questions but again it's out of love so we need to pray continually because

God wants to know what our issues are he wants to know what our concerns are and the last one is not to rely on our own strength that we got to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us because the Lord said when he left this earth to go to heaven that he would send the comforter the Holy Spirit to help us and to teach us about the things that we need to know and this is a quite hard question and you can answer it yourselves perhaps and think about it when you go home but do we just ignore God and do what we think is best because there's nothing calculated to lead you into danger than that and history is full of people including the Bible of men who ignored God and subsequently suffered and some really Christians who we would hold up as examples Abraham

[ 25 : 32 ] Joshua David Samson virtually every man or woman in the Bible is mentioned as being a leader or doing something for God they all failed and they all on some occasions did what they thought was the best and it actually turned out to be the wrong thing and again when somebody who loves you says I think you should do this or I think you should consider this and if we know that then that is not really a good thing and all these things come out of love and if in reading this passage we find that we love the Lord more that's a good thing I remember somebody preaching on this once and it's one of the reasons why I picked this particular passage when we read it let's see what it says again in verse 11 of chapter 10 of Hebrews day after day every priest stands and performs religious duties again and again he offers the same sacrifices which can never take away sins but when this priest talking about Jesus had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his foot still if you've ever been challenged to do a task

I'm thinking again of those painters on the fourth bridge at the end of the day painting whatever section of the bridge that they painted walking along the girders hundreds and hundreds of feet above the river in danger every moment of the day when they'd finished their shift and they got down they could sit down and say I've done that I've done that bit I don't have to go back there because it's done now it's done for 25 years but then it's done until next year but he says Jesus when he had paid the sacrifice on the cross for our sins he said he sat down at the right hand of God and it doesn't that give a tremendous encouragement and a tremendous exhilaration when you think that just as he was dying what did he say it is finished not I've got to do this again because

I've got to pay for the sins of all these other people no it was once for all he paid the penalty for our sins on the cross and salvation became not doing anything but trusting in him because he knew God knew the Holy Spirit knows the Lord Jesus knows that there's actually nothing that men of themselves can do to pay the penalty for sin it tells us that the priests who went there to take these burnt offerings and so on that couldn't do anything and yet Christ did that once and for all so how can we complete the task if there's nothing we can do how can we complete our task and the answer of course is we can't because the task has already been completed

Christ has done it it's been done once and for all John Flavel the reformer said this forgive the old English this is exactly as he wrote it the oblation made to God by Jesus Christ is of unspeakable value and everlasting efficacy to perfect all them that are or shall be sanctified to the end of the world that's quite a statement do you realize that the Bible says if you're a Christian tonight you're perfect except your perfection isn't in you it's in Christ and the penalty is paid but it's as if when God looks on us he only sees the perfection of Christ he doesn't see our sinfulness and it says there it's of unspeakable value and it's everlasting and it's effective and it's not just for those who are sanctified it's for those who shall be to the end of the world the message from the time when

Christ died on the cross to today however that message might be delivered it now might be an electronic message it might be a visual message it could be any sort of message but at the basis of it it's exactly the same isn't it and that is Christ has paid the penalty for your sin and all you have to do is trust in him full stop nothing else everything else follows but it all follows out of love for Christ Paul realised that this was the case I'm just going to read you another bit from Romans this time from chapter 8 just the first world verses there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death for God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit and of course the conclusion to this is that

[ 31 : 47 ] Christ has been working out God's plan from the creation of the world until now and is still at God's side interceding it says on our behalf but when it says he had paid that sacrifice this is what it says in verse 12 when he offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God and that if you like was the final statement of all that had been achieved he sat down his work of salvation had been done so just to recap what we said earlier and I'm going to finish with reading a passage from Ephesians which put all these things together and I'm going to go back to the love letters and the people that we love because it seemed to make sense to me if we do everything out of love what happens when you fall in love with someone again

I've got down four things and they're linked to the things I've already mentioned first if you fall in love you want to know everything you can about the person you've fallen in love with yes yeah so if we love the Lord Jesus if we love God then we want to find out as much as we can about him and it's all in there so we need to read it if we fall in love with someone we want to talk to that person all the time I know you're old but do you remember that time when you fell in love and you just were dying to see the person you fell in love with and talked to them about anything it didn't matter what it was you just wanted to talk to them and that's prayer if we love God we need to pray we want to talk to him we want him to answer us when you fall in love you want to do things to please the person that you love and the

Bible says that's why we witness to others because that pleases God and finally when you fall in love you want to love people that they love I know some families find themselves with in-laws that don't quite get on with exactly but you really do want to love them don't you because they belong to the one that you love and as I'm looking at you now I can honestly say that because if you're a Christian you love God I love all of you and I hope you all love each other because that's what the Bible says Christians should do I'm just going to close by reading Ephesians chapter 2 the first 13 verses if you've got a Bible you want to turn to it that would be useful and with this we'll close so Ephesians chapter 2 the first 13 verses it's on page 1173 to start with this takes all of the things we've been talking about puts them together and puts them as

Paul does in a way which is at once beautiful it's powerful it's challenging but it's joyful here's what he says as for you you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you should live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient all of us also lived among them at one time gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts like the rest we were by nature deserving of wrath that's the position we were in but because of his great love for us God his rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions it's by grace you've been saved and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming age he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ

Jesus for it is by grace you've been saved through faith and this not from yourselves is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast for we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do what a wonderful passage that is and it puts us in the position of great confidence of joyfulness because we're following a Lord who's already achieved everything that is necessary for our salvation and he gives us the ability to go on in the Christian way loving him loving each other and joyfully looking forward to that time when we'll be with him forever I don't know how sometimes people can read verses like that and stay unmoved because it's so wonderful and all this because as that passage in

[ 37 : 15 ] Hebrews tells us Christ did it once and for all once and for all nothing else is necessary because the penalty has been paid you know as well as I do that every Christian sins every day we all sin we all fall short of the glory of God the Bible tells us but the great news is that provided we come to Christ and confess to him not only has he already forgiven us he's already paid the penalty that we deserve so we can be joyful we can be sad about our sin we can repent of it but he is with us and it says he will be with us to the very end of the age isn't it great that when you go out in this building tonight and we all go to our different homes Christ will go with us and he'll be there forever for the Christian isn't that fantastic did you ever

I said it was the end I'll just give you one last thing I just remembered when I was I think 12 I might have been 11 my mum and dad went out for the night I was left here on my own first time they left me on my own don't think they trusted me before that and they went out and they went to my aunties I knew where they were going and they went and I don't know what I was expecting but I was expecting back at a certain time and they didn't come you know they'd stayed a bit longer than they thought and I kept looking at my watch and perhaps you I'm sure you've experienced this I was thinking they've died they've been in a crash what if they don't come back you know I'll be here on my own what am I going to do you know what will happen if my mum and dad don't come back and I remember standing behind the door waiting hoping I would hear their steps coming to the door because I was so worried it wouldn't come back the Lord Jesus says one day he's going to come back he's prepared a place for us and he'll go and take us there and he'll be with us to the very end of the age if you've ever felt what I just described you know exactly what I mean what a tremendous thing that is