

Heb. 10:1-18 – When the Battle’s Been Won – Lesson Summary

The Super Bowl is upon us. In a few short days the world will tune in to watch the Kansas City Chiefs play the San Francisco 49ers. It’s an interesting match-up because there is no significant history between the two teams. This game will be different than those in the past. Without a longstanding rivalry some say that the game will be less exciting. There’s just something unique about a rivalry. There’s a familiarity between opponents yet an uncertainty of the outcome. In Heb. 10 you could say that the author introduces rivaling realities within or own hearts. These rivalries, or battles, take place in all of our hearts. However, it is evident in the author’s writing that the outcome has already been decided, the battle’s have been won in Christ.

The first 18 verses of Hebrews 10 are a conclusion to the authors long standing argument that Jesus is the Greater High Priest, and that His life, death, and resurrection have established a new covenant that’s greater than the old. He reminds us that the old covenant was insufficient to deliver God’s people from their sin. The old covenant was simply a shadow of what was to come. It pointed to a greater covenant and was never going to be able to accomplish the forgiveness that was necessary to reestablish our relationship with God. Only the blood of Christ was sufficient to cover our sin. The new covenant promise of Christ has completed the work necessary for us to stand before God without fear of His wrath and judgment.

Because Christ’s work on the cross was sufficient, a new battle takes place. We are freed from the duty to follow God’s Law and have the opportunity to desire to follow God instead. The author quotes Psalm 40 as he reminds us that Christ understood that God did not want offerings and sacrifices, but instead, a heart which reflected a desire to God’s will. Jesus’ eternal desire was to do the will of God. He did not come to fulfill a duty, but instead to walk in the will of His Father. Despite His desire for God to provide a way other than the cross, He willingly suffered in our place because He loved the will of God. We should ask ourselves, do we follow Christ out of duty, or do we follow Him out of a desire to do His will?

Another rivalry that rages in our hearts is one of ritual verses rest. I love the picture the author paints for us while making this point. He refers to the priest who daily stands to repeatedly make sacrifices that are simply temporary. He works tirelessly to keep God’s wrath at bay. However, Jesus is described as One who sits at the right hand of God because the final sacrifice for sins has been made. The battle is over. He rests so we can rest too. The truth of the Gospel is that it really is Jesus plus nothing. There is nothing more that needs to be added to the work of Christ. We don’t need to pray more, worship more, sin less, go to church multiple times a week, pay penance, etc. Nothing more needs to be done. Yet, we often find ourselves trying to earn God’s favor. Like a priest who stands daily making sacrifices, we fail to rest in the finished work of Christ. Satan wants nothing more than to have your Christian walk be one of approaching Christ ritualistically rather than relationally.

As the author concludes His point he addresses the greatest rivalry within our hearts. It’s really a battle for our hearts. Our hearts are either hardened or healed. The Bible is clear that not everyone will surrender their heart to Christ. Many hearts will remain hardened toward God. But for those of us whose hearts have been healed by the blood of Christ, we will be transformed. We will be transformed by the Holy Spirit. Our affections will be turned toward God and His call on our lives. The Holy Spirit will take God’s law and make it freedom for our souls. With transformed hearts we will desire God rather than dutifully serve Him. We will rest in His finished work rather than ritualistically pursue Him. And, daily, we will allow our hearts to be healed by Christ’s Spirit. For those in Christ, the rivalry is over, the battle’s been won.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some of the ways you are living a life of duty to God rather than a desire for Him?
- 2) What are some of the rituals that you might run to? How are you “adding” to the Gospel through your own works rather than resting in His work on the cross?
- 3) Have you seen the Lord change your heart? In what ways have you seen His Holy Spirit challenge your desires, change your behaviors, or redirect your affections toward Him?