

The everlasting covenant

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[0 : 00] For my text this morning, I would like to turn to the epistles of the Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 13. And to verses 20 and 21.

Hebrews 13, 20 and 21. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of his feet, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, and to the Lord, blessing in you that which is well-pleasing in his Son, through Jesus Christ, to whom he will glory forever and ever.

Amen. The teaching contained in our text this morning is most comprehensive and most marvelous.

Here, the writer to the Hebrews is invoking the blessing of God upon those to whom he has addressed his letter. And in doing so, he makes reference to the covenant.

Our God is a covenant God. He has made a covenant. It is an everlasting covenant, an eternal covenant.

[1 : 33] It was not made in time. It precedes time. God has pledged himself. He has committed himself to the saving of a people.

To his own beloved Son, he has given a people to be his own. And my friends, there is nothing in all the universe. There is no one amongst the saving of men.

There is none amongst the demons of hell who shall overthrow God's purpose in his covenant. His people shall inherit into the covenant blessing that he has for them.

The God of peace. The God of the covenant is here called the God of peace. May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work.

The term peace means more, much more really, than we mean commonly by this term today when we use it. It is peace in the deepest and in the fullest sense.

[2 : 48] It is peace with God. Peace between God and man. An end of the alienation. An end of the hostility between God and man.

Reconciliation. It is that peace that transcends human understanding that God gives to his people. It is full salvation.

The people of God. Those who are embraced, who are included within his covenant. Receive from him salvation in all its fullness.

As we look then at our text. We notice that our attention is directed first of all to Christ's death. We notice this first of all. Our attention is here directed to Christ's death.

For the writer talks of the blood of the everlasting covenant. We have it at the end of verse 20. The blood of the everlasting covenant.

[3 : 54] The blood of the covenant is of course Christ's blood. The reference here is to the cross. To Christ's blood shedding. The stand at the heart of the Christian gospel.

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. His shedding of his blood. Take from our message the cross. And we have nothing left.

This is the core. This is the heart. This is the kernel of our gospel. Ours is unattainably a blood theology.

There are those who say to us that they dislike all this talk of the shedding of blood. Of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Talk to us instead they say about loving our neighbor.

About the sermon on the mount. Now of course these are undoubtedly great and vitally important themes. But it remains true that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

[5 : 03] We dare not my friend. We dare not soft-headle the Bible's teaching about forgiveness only through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord himself instituted two sacraments in his church. The elements in one of these are bread and wine.

Symbols that speak to us of a body that was broken. And of blood that was shed. Till I come again he said.

I want you to meet together. And to eat this bread. And to drink this wine. Keep on doing this until I come again.

Do this in remembrance of me. For you must never, never forget my blood shed. The blood of the covenant.

[6 : 05] We find as we read the Old Testament. That when covenants were made. Whether they be covenants between men or between gods and men.

That those associated with those covenants. Was always the ritual slaughter of an animal. There was this blood shedding.

That was associated with the making of those covenants. A covenant was ratified. It was sealed by the shedding of blood.

God's everlasting covenant of grace. In which he has undertaken to save those who believe in his son. Is ratified and sealed by the shedding of blood.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the mediator of the covenant. The shed blood of the incarnate son of God.

[7 : 08] Ratified and seals this great everlasting covenant. You see we are being pointed all the time. On to Calvary.

See our Lord Jesus Christ. As he sets his face steadfastly to go towards Jerusalem. Knowing all that awaits him there.

See him there in the garden of Gethsemane. He is sweating his great sweat drops. See an agony there. See him as he is betrayed by the traitor's kiss.

See him in a high priest's hut. Many bear false witness against him there. There are those who stick upon him and to smite him.

Who butt at him. See him before the full Jewish council. They hand him over to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor.

[8 : 09] Clamoring for his crucifixion. Pilate has him flogged. See him as those rough Roman soldiers.

Trip him of his clothes. And put upon him a purple robe. Purple because it's the sign of royalty. They're mocking him you see. They're clothing him as a king.

They put a crown on his head. It's a crown of thorns however. They put a scepter in his hands. That is just a wreath. And they bow the knee before him.

In mock worship. They stick upon him. The Lord Jesus Christ.

God's own son. The Lord of glory. Is being reviled. By the demons. And see him.

- [9 : 05] As they. Lead him away to be crucified. See him as he makes his way. Weary in his human body. Along the Via Dolorosa.
- So weary. That he is unable to. Carry the heavy cross. Bar of his cross. They have to compel one of the crowd. Simon. A man from Cyrene.
- To carry it for him. And see him. At the place. Called Calvary. There they nail his hand. And his feet.
- To that cross. And they put it. Upright in the ground. And leave him there to die. Over his head. They put the superscription. In Hebrew. And in Greek.
- And in Latin. This. Is the king. Of the Jews. And hear him. Or hear the people.
- [9 : 59] Hear the people. As they mock him. As they pass by. The crowds. As they pass by. Mock him. The chief priests. As they pass by. Mock him. Even one of the thieves. Crucified there.
- With him. Mock him. But notice. What happens at noon. A great darkness. Covers the whole land. It lasts for three hours.
- It lasts till three o'clock. He's there. In a terrible agony. He's enduring. Terrible. Spiritual anguish. For he's forsaken.
- Of God. In his agony. He cried out. In the words. Of the 22nd Psalm. My God. My God. Why hast thou. Forsaken me.
- And then. He. Mews up. His spirit. In death. But not. Before. He utters. His cry. Finished. It is finished.
- [10 : 59] The work. That his father. Had given him to do. The work. He had been given to do. As a mediator. Of a covenant. Was complete. His blood. Had been shed.
- He died. But why? Why did he die? The Bible. Leads us. In no doubt. Whatsoever. About this.
- He died. For our sins. According to the scripture. That is a consistent. Testimony. Of the whole Bible. He was wounded. For our transgressions.
- He was bruised. For our iniquity. The Lord. Laid upon him. The iniquity. Of us all. That was written. Some 800 years.
- Before he died. There upon the cross. Remember. What he said himself. He said. That he came. To give his life. A ransom.
- [11 : 55] Instead of a man. The apostle Paul. Tells us. That in him. We have redemption. Through his blood.
- The forgiveness. Of sins. Hear what the apostle Peter says. He his own self. Bore our sins. In his own body.
- On the tree. And hear him again. He died. The just. In the place. Of the unjust. The righteous. In the place. Of the unrighteous. That he might.
- Bring us. To God. He is called here. In our text. The great. Shepherd of the sheep. And the good. Shepherd.
- Lays down. His life. He gives his life. For the sheep. Those who are included. In his covenant. In God's covenant.
- [12 : 51] Are sinners. And as such. They deserve to die. To die eternally. The righteous law of God. Demands that they be punished.
- That they suffer. The punishment of death. But the mediator. Of the covenant. Has come. He has taken. Their place. He has taken.

Their sin. Upon himself. He has taken. The punishment. Due to them. Upon himself. He has died. In their room. And stayed. He has paid.

Their penalty. He has offered himself. A sacrifice. To God. On their behalf. And instead of them. He has died.

As their substitute. That's the explanation. Of his death. His. Is the blood. Of the ever. Everlasting covenant.

[13 : 47] Our attention. Is directed here. To his death. But certainly. We notice. That our attention. Is directed here. To Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection.

Now. The God of peace. That brought again. From the dead. Our Lord Jesus. Through the blood. Of the everlasting covenant. Of the everlasting covenant. Jesus died.

But Jesus. Was raised. From the dead. Our texts. Say. That he was brought again. From the dead. Through the blood. Of the everlasting covenant.

Through the death. The preposition. That is here. Rendered. Through. Through. Can be rendered. In various ways. Perhaps. The death. Rendering. In modern English. Would be.

By the word. By. The God. Raised him. From the dead. By the. By the blood. Of the everlasting covenant. Through the blood.

[14 : 45] Or by the blood. Or in the blood. Of the everlasting covenant. Or on the basis. Of the blood. Or. By virtue. Or. In virtue.

Of. The blood. Of the everlasting covenant. His death. His blood shedding. And his resurrection. Are so. Intimately connected.

What is this. Telling us here. This is telling us. That the two. The death of Christ. His blood shedding. And his resurrection.

Cannot be separated. They stand or fall together. We could not be saved. Apart from Christ's death. He is a mediator.

His is the blood of the covenant. It was necessary. That that blood be shed. For our salvation. But how can we know. That that sacrifice.

[15 : 40] Has been effective. How can we know. That God has accepted. The sacrifice. That has been offered. How can we know. That he has set. The seal of his acceptance.

And his approval upon it. This is how we know. God raised him. God raised him. From the dead. Think of what happened.

On the Friday evening. Jesus' body was laid there. In his rock-fueen tomb. In the garden of Joseph. A rich man from Adam and Eve.

By Sunday morning. The tomb was empty. The stone had been rolled away. Exposing an empty tomb.

The one whose body had been laid there. The one who had died. Awoke as it were from sleep. And rose. He showed himself to Mary there.

[16 : 44] In the garden. He thought at first it was the gardener. You remember. He showed himself to the disciples. Gathered in the upper room. He showed himself.

To those two. With whom he walked along the road. To Emmaus. He was recognized by them. Only there. In the village itself. In the house of the village. In the breaking of bread.

He showed himself to Thomas. And he invited that doubter. To put his hand. Into the nail print.

In his. The saviour's hand and seat. One occasion. Over a period of forty days. He showed himself to so many. He arose.

But wait. Wait a minute. Will he return to the honour that he had known before. To the position of great honour that he had known before.

[17 : 39] He has a little company out there on the Mount of Olives. Watch them. He is there with them. The Lord Jesus himself is there. And a cloud comes.

And it receives them out of their sight. In the cloud he goes back to heaven. He is received. He is welcomed into heaven.

He is given there the place of signal honour. He sits down on the right hand of the majesty on high. God gives to him the name that is above everything.

God gives to him the name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Oh my friends isn't it clear. Clear. A clear condition.

That his sacrifice has been accepted. The father has accepted. The work of his son. The covenant has been ratified.

[18 : 37] It has been ratified by the blood of the covenant. By the shed blood of the covenant mediator. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The covenant people are saved. Saved for all eternity. Don't you see there. The importance of a resurrection.

If Christ has not risen. Then his sacrifice is of no avail. It's just another sacrifice. In a long line of sacrifices.

The sacrifices of bulls and of goats and of lambs. That cannot take away sin. We are still in our sin. We are of all men most miserable. We are without hope.

That is not so. Christ has risen. Death is not the victor. Christ has risen. Sin has been atoned for.

[19 : 35] Death has been vanquished. He does live. Oh death where is thy sin? Oh grace where is thy victory?

The day of the resurrection. This day the Lord's day. Is a day of great victory and of great joy.

This is a day which the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. But notice again who it is that was raised from the dead.

He is called here our. Our Lord Jesus. For you see when he died and when he rose again. It was not just a private person that he died and rose.

He died and he was raised as our representative. As our covenant head. He is the head.

[20 : 38] We his people are the body. When he died there on the cross his people died with him. They died with him to sin. When he was raised his people were raised with him.

He has entered into heaven. And as he has entered into heaven. And his people enter into heaven too. The souls of believers immediately. Immediately they leave the body and enter heaven.

And their very body shall one day enter into glory. As his body has entered into glory. For as he rose from the grave.

So one day shall his people rise too. They shall rise with clothed with resurrection bodies of glory. Like him.

When he rose. He rose the first fruits of his people. His resurrection guarantees your resurrection and mine. If you are a believer.

[21 : 39] And I am a believer in him. How important then. Is the doctrine of a resurrection. And how thrilling it is.

It is absolutely basic. If Christ has not risen. Then we have no hope whatever. As we look ahead. There is nothing but bleak despair. But it is not so.

For Jesus has risen. And because he has risen. Everlasting glory. Awake his people. Because I live.

He says. You. Shall live also. Our attention is directed then. First of all. Here to Christ's death. It is directed.

Secondly. To Christ's resurrection. And thirdly. I want us to notice here. The blessings of the covenant. The blessings of the covenant. What are they?

[22 : 39] They are of course. The blessings of salvation. Forgiveness. Peace with God. Eternal life. And doubtless. These are the great blessings of the covenant.

But there are other blessings. And. The writer. Makes reference to them here. In this. Superb prayer. I want us to notice.

Three points. As we think of this. And the. First of them is this. He. Makes. The Christian. Perfect.

In every. Good. Work. Verse 21. He. Makes him. Perfect. In every. Good. Work. Now of course.

The reference here. Is not. To sinless. Perfection. That. Will be ours. One day. If we are. In the covenant. Where. None of us.

[23 : 36] Will attain it. Here. In this world. But. That is. Our destiny. Rather. What the. Writer. Is praying for. Here. Is that those.

Hebrew. Christians. To whom. He has addressed. His letter. May. Know. This. Blessings. In this world. He is praying for them. As they seek to lead.

The Christian life. Here. In this world. The word. That is. Translated. Make. Perfect. Really. Means. Make.

Complete. Complete. He is praying. That God. May. Make. Them. Complete. That he may. Give to them. All that they need.

For a Christian. Living to the glory. Of God. Here. In the world. And. This is. What our God. Does. No. Good.

[24 : 30] Thing. Does he withhold. From those. Who are. His people. Do you remember. How the apostle. Peter. Put it. He said. According to his divine power.

He has given to us. All things. That pertain to life. And godliness. Everything that his believer. Needs. For godly.

Holy living. Here in this world. It's available to him. God. Gives it to him. At the beginning. Of his marvelous letter. To the Ephesians.

The apostle Paul. Gives a great. Outburst of praise. Blessed be. The God. And father. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. In whom.

Our all. Spiritual blessings. Was given to us. All. Spiritual blessings. In heavenly places. In Christ. In Christ. God.

[25 : 23] Has given to his people. Every. Spiritual blessing. What. The writer. Is praying for here. Is that.

Those. Hebrew Christians. Would. Know. The procession. And the enjoyment. Of that. Fullness of blessing. That is available.

To them. As a covenant. People of God. Are you aware. Christian friends. Of some. Deficiency. In your life. Is it that you're aware.

Of a need. Of greater. Power to live. For the Lord. Is it that you're aware. Of. A need. For greater joy. A greater measure. Of love. Or of peace.

And aware. Of the need. For an increase. In faith. Whatever it is. You're aware. Of the need for. It's available. For you. Ask for it.

[26 : 18] Ask. And it shall. Be given you. Make complete. But then. This. This word. Make perfect. The word. That is translated. Make perfect. Can also. Be rendered. Repair. It means that too. It's the actual word. That is used. In the gospel.

Of the disciples. Of the fishermen. Mending their necks. God. Supplies us. As Christian believers.

With all that we need. And he repairs. What is broken. Some of those. Hebrew Christians. To whom this writer.

Addressed his letter. Had compromised. With Judaism. In face of the. Fierce persecution. From their fellow Jews. They had compromised. Perhaps now.

[27 : 12] They were wondering. Can I ever regain. Can we ever regain. Our former devotion. Yes. You can. The writer is saying. And he.

Praise God. That they will. Are there any. Christians. Here this morning. And. You feel.

That you've. Compromised. There's been a period. Of backsliding. In your life. Something has gone wrong. And you wonder. Can it ever be put right. Yes. My friend.

It can be put right. Pray God. That it will. He can. Equip your. He will equip you. With all that you need. To live for him. And he will repair. A broken life.

That's the first thing. We notice then. As we think of the blessings. Of the covenants. God. The God. Who brought again. From the dead. His son. That great shepherd.

[28 : 07] Of the sheep. Makes the Christians. Perfect. In every good thing. He makes them complete. In every good thing. And the second thing.

We notice in this connection. Is. That he. Does this. With a view. To. The Christians. Doing. Of his will. He does this.

For you. With a view. To your. Doing. His will. That is what the text says. Verse 21. Makes you complete. In every good thing.

Then. To do. And in the original. The way it rendered. Really says. With a view. To doing. With a view. To doing.

His will. He makes complete. That we may do. His will. Being. Is with a view.

[29 : 02] To doing. The emphasis. Here. Is on the. Outward action. The carrying out. Of the will of God. We are called. To obedience. We are called.

To conform. To the commandments. Of God. And to serve him. To engage. In his service. We are called. To go. Wherever he divers. And there.

To work. For him. The blessings. Of the covenant. First of all. Being made. Complete.

In every good thing. Secondly. This being done. With a view. To our doing. His will. And sadly. This. He works. In his people.

He works. In. His people. Working. In you. That which is. Well pleasing. In. His sight.

[29 : 57] One of the. Blessings. Of the covenant. Is that those. Included within. Receive. The spirit of God. They are indwelt. By the holy spirit.

That that is. One of the. Main. One of the chief. Blessings. Of the covenant. Is so plain. From. Paul's word. To the Galatians. Galatians. Chapter 3. And verse 14.

He tells us there. That Christ. Has been made. A curse. For us. Why? That the blessing. Of Abraham. Might come upon. The Gentiles. The blessing. Of Abraham. What's that?

It's the blessing. Of the covenant. For the covenant. Of Abraham. Was the covenant. Of grace. It was an expression. Of God's everlasting. Covenant. Of grace. That the blessing. Of Abraham.

Might come upon. The Gentiles. And what is. That blessing. Paul goes on. In Galatians. To tell us. That we might receive. The promised. Holy Spirit.

[30 : 53] Without any question. The gift of the Spirit. Is. One of the chief. Blessings. Of the covenant. If you are the Lord.

God's Holy Spirit. Lives in you. And he lives in you. To make you willing. To do God's will. And to empower you. To do God's will.

He is in you. To give you the will. And the power to do. Paul says it again. In his letter to the Philippians. He says.

There. Work out your own salvation. With fear and trembling. Why? For it is God. Do it at work. Within you. To will. And to do. Of his good pleasure.

To make you willing. And to empower you. To do. God puts his law. In our inward heart. He writes it. On our heart. So that we love it.

[31 : 51] And by his Spirit. He empowers us. To obey. And that's in increasing measure. In that way. The righteousness of the law.

Is fulfilled in us. Fulfilled in us. In increasing measure. As we walk. Not according to the flesh. But. According to the Spirit. What marvelous blessings.

Then. Are ours. If we're in the covenant. And they're all ours. Through Jesus Christ. We're told here. In verse 21.

May he make you. Complete in every good thing. With a view. To the doing of his will. Working in you. That which is well. Pleasing in his sight.

Through Jesus Christ. Those blessings. Are ours. In him. Christ's death. Our attention is directly to it.

[32 : 48] It's at the heart of the gospel. He died for us. Christ's resurrection. It guarantees life to us. To believe in his sight.

And then he mentions some of his covenant. So blessed. His making us complete. His repairing what is broken. His doing it with a view to our doing his will.

His washing in us. By his spirit. And those great and marvelous bliss. They all come to us.

In Christ. It's little wonder then. It's little wonder then. Isn't it. That this writer. concludes with this great doxology of praise.

To the Lord Jesus Christ. To whom be glory. Forever and ever. He says. Amen. And this morning. My Christian friends.

[33 : 45] Don't you. Also. As you think of your crucified. But. risen Redeemer. Don't you want to add to that. Your.

Amen. Let us pray. O Lord our God. We come before thee now. And give thee thanks for Jesus Christ.

To thank thee that he died for us. To thank thee for the blood of the everlasting covenant. To thank thee thou did raise from the dead. And that he lived forevermore.

May our hearts just leap with joy this day. As we. Think of the blessings that are ours. As believers in him. Because of his death.

And his glorious victorious resurrection. For all the blessings of the covenant we thank thee. And we pray that thou wilt indeed be at work in us.

[34 : 44] Making us all thou would have as be. That we might do thy will. We desire now to offer to Christ himself.

All praise and honor and glory. World without end. Amen.