



Greater Than Your Guilt

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Today I'm going to do what I've done here the last several times. I used to prep a message for weeks other places before would do it on the road, but we're family and so what I do here is give birth to a message. Usually, they are not breach. So, I'm working a message out with you that I'm actually going to preach in Tulsa in my church next week.

If you have your bibles, open to Hebrews 9. The title today is *Greater than your Guilt*. I want you to think about this phrase right here – Guilty Pleasure. When you hear that phrase, *guilty pleasure*, where does your mind go? Food. We heard it. And like most of us in the south, initially our minds go to something we eat that we shouldn't eat. If you're like my wife, it's something at Andy's, with a couple of three mix ins. I'll just confess to you my pallet is more mature than my wife's, so Andy's is not my choice. Kilwins is my choice. The toasted coconut there I promise you is going to be in heaven. It is going with us.

But for many Christian women today in the culture, the guilty pleasure is this show on television – *The Bachelor*. For the Branson demographic, they've added *The Golden Bachelor*. In fact, my two daughters, a few weeks ago, were having this conversation in the car. I have a daughter who is 23 and is married and moved on, and then a 17-year-old, and we all went to visit her. So, in the car, my older daughter is describing this new show to the younger one and the younger one says, "That's gross!" It's an old guy... And the women... Is it 30 old women or is he hitting on children?" She said, "No, I said 30 old women, not 30-year-old women. They are old women, 30 of them, and he is trying to figure this whole thing out.

If this show is part of your life, there is only one Bible word for you – repent. What about this phrase – *guilty conscience*. That's when you've done something wrong and whether anyone else knows about it or not, you feel bad about it. You can't sleep, maybe you can't eat. It gnaws on you and gets at your very soul because you know you've messed up and you're scared. You're scared of what's going to happen if somebody finds out. That's a guilty conscience. And if I were to ask for a show of hands as I listed off a list of different sins... I'm not going to do this, but if I listed this list of sins and said, "Hey put your hand up on it," I could go not very long and eventually we'd have everybody. For you it may be a while, but for others of you, you'd feel like you were at an auction, raising your hand after a lot of them. It'd be like you're collecting the sins in the list.

Maybe it's sexual sin. Maybe it's relational sin. Maybe it's a little sin or a big sin. Maybe it's pride or greed or lust or anger or gluttony, or envy, or sloth. Maybe you cheated on your taxes a little bit. Maybe you have a hidden addiction to pornography or pain killers or shopping, and you've covered it up, but you feel guilty about it. And it brings you pleasure, sure. That's why you do it, but it it's also hurt

your conscience to the degree that you feel it and it's almost like you have a headache all the time, and you walk around with it and you have to face it every morning, and you don't want to feel that way, but you do. Maybe at times you've tried to resolve it and you've repented to God, or you've asked forgiveness of other people, but still, it feels like it's always hanging over your head. And maybe it's because the damage feels permanent, like a broken marriage or a lost job or a recurring health problem all because you've messed up. And now your paying for it with guilt.

Here's what I want you to know, church. That' sense of guilt can drive us. Sometimes more than we know. You have these feelings, and you don't know why. To help you discern that, I put together a little guilt quiz. You can check off the ones that apply to you.

Maybe for you, close relationships don't last. There's such a such a deep wound, a deep sense of dissatisfaction that people can't get close to you because if you let them get close to you, eventually they'll touch that wound.

Or maybe you're chronically tired and you always feel tired or you're easily distracted because you carry this big burden around all the time and it's exhausting.

Maybe you laugh at other people's expense. You find humor in other people being hurt and it's almost like seeing them at their worst, makes you feel better about you at your worst.

Maybe you respond negatively to any criticism. Anybody relate to that one? You can't handle it because it just eats at you. Again, it's touching that wound that you have.

Maybe you're paranoid about what others think about you because you project the negative things you think about onto what you think they think about you.

Maybe you sabotage your own efforts all of the time – at work, in relationships with your family because deep down, you feel like you don't deserve to succeed.

Maybe you said yes to several of these, but even if you only said yes to one of them, you have a guilty conscience, and you want to deal with it, but maybe you don't know how. In our church over the last few months, we've been reading through the Book of Hebrews. We've been studying this amazing book called Hebrews. The writer has been telling us, in the first seven or eight chapters, about a better way, about a greater way, and how that better way and that greater way is found in and through Jesus Christ. And because of what Jesus did, we have so much more.

Today, as we'll see, one of the things that we have is erasing our guilt. That's something we have in Jesus Christ. Not covering, not alleviating it for a moment, but actually removing it forever. And because I've been in a series for months now, I just want to summarize for you in a minute the first seven chapters of the Book of Hebrews. It talks about Jesus being our great High Priest. He points out the fact that the Old Testament priest, even the High Priest, is a foreshadowing. It's a shadow of the real priest, Jesus Christ, the substance behind the shadow.

Then you get to Chapter 8, and the writer turns the corner a little bit and begins to talk about the temple. He says the temple is a shadow, an earthly building that represents this heavenly realm. In chapter 8: 2, he says, **2 There he (Jesus) ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.**

And now we turn the corner into Chapter 9. And in Chapter 9, the writer of Hebrews gives us this fly-through of temple theology. We're going to look at part of it here in just a second, but again, let me just summarize the first five verses for you. He shows us a couple of intersections of the tabernacle or the temple. I've taught on this many, many times before, but the first section is the Holy place and the first piece of furniture – there are three major pieces of furniture in there – is the lampstand that was burning day and night, night and day, it was always burning as a symbol of the fact that God's presence is always with his children.

Then you have the Table of Show Bread, which had twelve loaves of fresh bread on it all of the time. It's called The Bread of The Presence. It served as a continual reminder of the continual presence and provision of God. And then the third piece of furniture is the Altar of Incense which served a couple of purposes. The first is that it's a barrier between them and God, going into the Holy of Holies. The second is that it reminded them, like that incense, their prayers are always rising up to God. That's the first section.

The second section, the Holy of Holies. That's where the presence of God was, where the Ark was. But there is this curtain that is separating the first chamber from the second chamber, and it is a really thick curtain, four inches thick. And it's woven of 72 cords each, 24 strands of blue and red and purple, symbolizing the majesty of God, the royalty of God, and the blood of Jesus Christ. And when that curtain was closed, which it was always, the Holy of Holies was in unapproachable darkness.

Now, we are at Verse 6 where I want to start reading today. So, if you have your Bible, look at Hebrews 9:6 – **6 When these things were all in place, the priests regularly entered the first room as they performed their religious duties. 7 But only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.** So, once a year, on a day we call the Day of Atonement. The Jews call it Yom Kippur. That should be on your radar because we just celebrated this a couple of weeks ago. And it is zero coincidence that this war that is happening there is on the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur war. But Yom Kippur means Day of Atonement. And on that one day, only the high priest would go in and sprinkle blood on the Ark for all of their sins to be covered for one year.

Now the week of Atonement, one week before the Day of Atonement, leading up to it, it was a very intense week. For a whole week before hand, the high priest would go into seclusion. But because if he did anything that would cause him to be unclean, he would be unable to go to go into the Holy of Holies. So, he had to make sure that they didn't go to Andy's, right? And he had to be sure that he didn't stop by Kilwins. He had to be sure that he didn't touch a dead body or eat something unclean like a cheeseburger or a shrimp cocktail. But the night before the Day of Atonement, he didn't go to bed. He stayed up all night praying and reading God's word to purify his soul that on the day of Yom Kippur, from head to toe, he would dress in these royal, unstained, white linen, royal robes. And he would go into the

Holy of Holies. But before he would go in to offer up a sacrifice for Israel, he had to offer up a sacrifice for himself. Why? The writer of Hebrews points out he was imperfect. He was sinful himself. He was an imperfect person in an imperfect system looking for perfection. And all of that rigmarole and parade that he did lasted for one year only. All of that to cover it up for one year.

8 By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was not freely open as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use.

9 This is an illustration pointing to the present time. That word *illustration* in this translation is the Greek word that really is the word in English for parable. And what's a parable. A parable is one thing that points to something else. And that something else in this case, is better or greater. **For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them.** In other words, this is not arm's length theology. This is actually very practical to our lives, those of us with a guilty conscience.

There is a huge difference between what that high priest did and what High Priest, Jesus Christ did for us. But I want you to see something. That old system is a shadow. It's a shadow of the new system. In the shadow, we actually get a glimpse of what Jesus would do one day when he would go to Calvary and he would die and shed his own blood and then he would rise from the dead, again, to enter the glories of heaven. **10 For that old system deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—physical regulations that were in effect only until a better system could be established.** Let's look at Verse 11.

11 So Christ has now become (our) the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He (Jesus) has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world.

Now, if you study the last week of the life of Jesus, we call it the Passion Week, and one of these days, I'm going to do a trip to Israel and we're going to do just the Passion Week. We are going to start in Bethany, and we are going to walk over the Mount of Olives, through the Garden of Gethsemane. And walk that path that Jesus walked in the last week of his life. But I have to get in shape first because it's a lot of walking.

But when you study the Passion Week of Jesus' life, you'll see just like that high priest went through the preparation, Jesus himself went through preparation. In fact, when you read the story, it's as if Jesus knew the story. And it's as if he is preparing for himself his own personal day of Atonement. And just like the high priest walked through a week of preparation and then entered the Holy of Holies as a sacrifice, you're going to watch Jesus do something very similar. In fact, I've created a chart to compare and contrast the high priest and Jesus.

The high priest prepared a week in Jerusalem. Jesus also, when you read the story, prepared a week in Jerusalem. The high priest stayed up all night praying. Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, also stayed up all night praying. The high priest wore a robe of royalty. Jesus wore a robe of royal purple. Remember the soldiers bartered over his clothing. Now the first three in my list of seven are total

comparison. The next four actually contrasted a bit to show you how what Jesus did is even greater and more complete than what the high priest did.

The high priest offered a sacrifice for his own sin. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for all sin. The high priest entered the Holy of holies. Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in the heavenly, the real one, not the picture or the shadow. The high priest sprinkled blood on the Ark. Jesus shed his own blood on the cross. The high priest covered up the guilt of the people. Jesus removed the guilt from all of the people. Listen church, Jesus is able to do something far greater than that high priest could do. He did something amazing. He took away our guilt and the writer keeps going to explain how Jesus did that.

12 With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

Listen, blood is required because it was the only way to remove guilt. But blood alone, the blood of animals of goats and heifers and bulls was never enough to take care of that forever. It was only temporary and at that, it was limited. Now, don't believe for a second that the whole show of the Old Testament meant nothing. It meant a lot. In fact, what it meant was to show and to foreshadow and to be a picture of what was really to come. But it left those people in that system with this gnawing sense of how temporary it all was... wondering if one day God would send a lamb that would take care of this once and for all. Look at what he goes on to say.

13 Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity Ceremonial impurity meant that you couldn't go into the temple. And it might have been something as simple as stepping into the house of a gentile. It might have been something as big as sleeping with a prostitute. But that thing, that event, that moment, would keep you out of God's presence, which was the point. You're on the outside looking in. And to get in, you had to bring something with you to sacrifice and to give God to get back in his good graces until you were unclean again. And over and over and over again it went. It had to be exhausting.

14 Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Now remember, this book, Hebrews, is written to a group of people who are Hebrew. They came out of the old Jewish system. They knew the Jewish system and they had converted to Christianity, found the completion of the system that they had been studying. And now, they're attending these New Testament gatherings, these New Testament worship gatherings.

I'm confident that at different points in their journey, they would walk into those New Testament gatherings and kind of be tempted to think or maybe even say, "This all feels so one dimensional. In our old system, there were all these smells and bells and sights and sounds and we don't have any of that. This just feels a bit flat." But the writer is indicating to go clamoring for the smells and bells and sights and sounds is to totally misunderstand altogether what Jesus has done for us. It's to totally miss what Christ has done for you. Notice that that verse doesn't say that our guilt is covered up. It doesn't say that our guilt is excused. It was that God made us pure. That's very different. Forgiveness means that you are released from all the negative consequences of your guilt.

Purity means you are given an exalted position of righteousness. You are not just called righteous, you are righteous. You're not just called clean, you are clean. If Jesus is the Lord of your Life, then all has been taken care of. The old is gone and only the new lies before you. He says it's a perfect sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice. Perfect means that it did what the old couldn't do, which was imperfect. The old system covered your guilt, the new system removes it. The old system excused you, the new system justifies you just as if you've never sinned. And the Bible says it was once and for all. Remember in Verse 12, it was once and for all, secured for all time.

The great old preacher Charles Spurgeon said it would be unjust for God in the life of believers to now punish them for their sins because that would be requiring two sacrifices for the very same sin. Because Jesus entered heaven himself, he offered himself, and he wasn't just the priest, the king, and the prophet, he was the priest, the king and the prophet, and the sacrifice. He was also the sacrifice. John Calvin said, "The shedding of blood is not a sign of power, particularly in execution or in sacrifice, it's actually a sign of weakness." But listen, Jesus didn't shed someone else's blood. He shed his own blood. The whole point of being a king is that somebody else would bleed for you, in your place. Jesus was the king who shed his own blood and bled himself.

So, let me try to tie a bow on all of what we've read today with three points that have come out of these scriptures we spent the last 15 to 20 minutes reading. I want you to write these down because you'll need these later in your life as you're trying to understand how Jesus completed this system.

1. In these verses we've read, the with the old system, access was restricted. Remember the regular priest couldn't even go in at all. And the high priest could only go in once a year. But in Christ, you and I can walk right in and sit down and have an audience with the King of Kings.
2. The cleansing was partial. The access was restricted but the cleansing was partial. The washings could only do so much. That barrier was not really the curtain. The curtain was a picture of the real barrier which is the sin in our heart. So, the access was restricted, the cleaning was partial.
3. The pardon was limited. The provisions... We read it a moment ago. The provisions were for sins that were committed in ignorance, that the people did by accident. All of that rigmarole was to cover sins that we did by accident. How guilty would that leave the people who did sin on purpose, who knew what was right and didn't do it, who knew what was wrong and did it anyway.

Back in Verse 14, it says just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds, so that we can worship the living God.

We all want to be cleansed, that's obvious, but don't forget the "so that" What's it all for? So that we can worship him truly with freedom, unhindered, abandoned.

Think about the thief on the cross that died next to Jesus. The one who converted. His own blood shed that dripped all over his cross did nothing for him. But the blood on the cross next to him from the fellow that was dying on that cross did everything for him. Can you imagine what the thief experienced when he got to heaven?

I love how the Scottish Precher, Alistair Begg imagines this whole story playing out. What a great imagination. That that thief is walking around heaven, and he's never been to a Bible study. He's never been baptized, he doesn't know one thing about church membership, and he's walking around heaven. He made it. How did he make it.

Alistair says, "Surely an angel walked up to him and said, 'Sir, what are you doing here?'"

He replied, "I don't know."

The angel says, "What do you mean you don't know?"

He says, I mean, I don't know."

The angel says, "Wait right there, let me get my supervisor." He brings the supervising angel back who wants to ask this fellow some questions.

"Sir, I've got a list of questions for you. Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?"

He says, "I've never heard of it in my whole life."

"But you do know about the doctrine of scripture." The guy is just staring back blankly. Eventually, after a whole host of questions and frustration, the angel says, "By what basis are you here? And listen as that thief said, "The man on the middle cross said I could come. That's all I know."

"The man on the middle cross said I could come." And it's the only answer. I love what Alistair says because if you try to answer that question in any other way, you try to put that answer in first person – Because I... Because I believe... Because I have faith... Because I am this... Because I am continuing. The only proper answer is in the third person. Because He. Because he what? Because he granted the access that was restricted. Because he completed the cleansing that was only partial. Because he widened the pardon that was limited. That's what we have in the person of Jesus Christ.

Would you bow your head and close your eyes and open your heart. No doubt, in a crowd this size, and all of the venues represented that are full of people today and those watching online as well. No doubt, there are men and women and boys and girls who have come today, and you don't have a relationship with Jesus. The blood has never been applied to your life. You don't know him as Lord and Savior. You have a guilty conscience. We're so glad you're here to offer you the completed truth that comes in the person of Jesus Christ. I want to help you apply the blood, not of a sacrificial lamb, but of the Lamb of God to your life. I want to lead you in a prayer helping you do just that.

Some of you say I'm new, I don't even know how to pray. Okay, I'll pray it one phrase at a time for you so that you can simply repeat it after me. But I want you to pray it to a God in heaven. If that's you today, you want to trust Jesus to be your Lord and Savior... In fact, I'm going to ask you to pray it out loud with me. The Bible says if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth. The believing in

your heart is on you. The confessing with your mouth, I want to help you with. In fact, as an encouragement to those of you who are going to pray this for the first time in your life today, I'm going to ask all the men and women around you who have already prayed this to pray it out loud as an encouragement to you so that you will not pray it alone today. But if you want to trust Christ right where you're seated, would you just pray with me and say, Dear God, I know I'm a sinner. Today I ask you to come into my life to be my Lord, my Savior, my forgiver. In the best way that I know how, I turn my back on my sin, and I trust you alone, Jesus to save me. Thank you for saving me.

Now, if you just prayed that prayer for the first time in your life, you meant business, you're trusting Jesus as your Lord and Savior, with nobody looking except for me, would you just raise your hand in this room and say Pastor, "That's me. I prayed that prayer and I meant it with all of my heart." Raise your hand high so that I can see it.

I see hands going up all over the room, and I'm sure in the other venues as well. Could I ask you to do this quietly and without looking? Would you just stand to your feet all across the room. I want to finish the prayer with us standing.

I'm going to ask the prayer team to come and stand across the front of the room and at all of the venues, would the prayer team come now and just stand across the front of the room. And for those of you who just prayed that prayer and you meant it with all your heart, you're trusting Jesus, I want you to tell one person today before you leave. And these men and women are here standing at the front of all these venues this morning. All you have to say is "I prayed that prayer." They want to encourage you, they want to help you in your new walk with Christ. They want to make sure you have a Bible, they want to get your name so they can put you on a prayer list. I just encourage you to do that before you leave today.

Father, over this church, I pray your continued anointing and blessing. Father, I pray for Ted and his family, for the staff and their families, for all those who serve to make this thing come alive week after week. I pray for anointing and favor and purity. And I pray, Father, that the cause of Christ and the gospel of Jesus would advance forcefully in Branson in the days and the years to come.

We thank you for what you're doing in our midst. We thank you for saving men and women and boys and girls to day. In Jesus' name we pray, and together we all say Amen.