



Bethel Sunrise Sermon Notes – “*Stop Trying to Earn What Jesus Already Finished*”

Speaker: Ps Preston Dobbins

Series: Jesus Is Better

Scripture: Hebrews 9:28; Hebrews 10

Main Idea

Jesus didn't come to start another religious system built on performance. He came to finish the work we never could. Because of His finished work, we no longer have to earn God's acceptance—we are invited to confidently live in His presence.

A Better Covenant

As Hebrews continues, we're reminded that Jesus is better in every way.

The Old Covenant revolved around repeated sacrifices that could never fully remove sin. Year after year, people returned to offer sacrifices, yet their consciences remained burdened.

But Jesus offered Himself once and for all.

Hebrews 9 ends with an incredible promise:

"Christ... will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for Him."

When Jesus returns, He isn't coming back to deal with your sin again.

He already dealt with it.

The cross was enough.

Stop Living Performance-Based Christianity

Many believers unknowingly live under the old system.

Instead of resting in what Jesus accomplished, we constantly evaluate ourselves by:

- **How well we've been doing**
- **How often we've failed**
- **Whether we've prayed enough**
- **Whether we've been "good enough"**

Our relationship with God becomes centered on our performance instead of Christ's finished work.

When our focus is always on ourselves, we're constantly reminded of our shortcomings.

But the Gospel shifts our focus.

Christianity isn't built on the strength of our love for God.

It's built on the certainty of His love for us.

As we continue walking with Him, we learn to know and trust His love more deeply.

Even when we fail, His voice doesn't push us away.

He lovingly calls us to get back up and keep walking with Him.

You Already Have Perfect Standing

Hebrews tells us that through one sacrifice...

Jesus has perfected us forever while continuing to sanctify us.

That means two things are happening at the same time:

- **Your position before God is already secure.**
- **God is continually transforming your life to become more like Jesus.**

You don't become more of God's son or daughter by performing better.

You already belong to Him.

Because of Jesus:

- **You are fully accepted.**
- **You are fully loved.**
- **You are fully His.**

Your identity isn't something you earn.

It's something you receive.

The Real Danger Isn't Your Struggle

Many of us become discouraged by our ongoing battles with temptation, weakness, or failure.

But Ps Preston reminded us that the greatest danger isn't struggling.

The greatest danger is shrinking back from God's presence because we believe our struggle disqualifies us.

Shame whispers:

- **"Don't pray today."**
- **"You've messed up too much."**
- **"God is disappointed in you."**
- **"Get yourself together first."**

Jesus says the exact opposite.

Come near.

Bring your mess.

Bring your weakness.

Bring your failures.

Don't clean yourself up before coming to God.

Come to Him so He can do the cleansing.

Draw Near with Confidence

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, Hebrews says we can enter the Most Holy Place with confidence.

Not because we've earned it.

Not because we've had a perfect week.

But because Jesus opened the way.

Religion says:

Clean yourself up, then come to God.

Jesus says:

Come to Me exactly as you are.

His mercy is greater than your mistakes.

His grace is greater than your shame.

His love is stronger than your failures.

Stop standing outside the door that Jesus has already opened.

Walk boldly into His presence.

A Call to Pray for Others

As the church family, we were also encouraged to pray for Cynthia, a faithful member of the congregation who is facing deportation.

Let's continue believing for God's mercy, protection, favor, and provision over her life and family, while also looking for practical ways to support her during this difficult season.

Final Challenge

Stop trying to earn what Jesus has already finished.

Stop measuring your worth by your performance.

Stop letting guilt keep you at a distance.

Instead...

Draw near.

Talk honestly with God.

Bring every burden, every failure, every fear, and every question into His presence.

You don't have to earn your place there.

Jesus already made the way.

Discussion Questions

1. Ps Preston said many Christians live in a performance-based relationship with God. What are some ways we can unknowingly fall into trying to earn God's approval instead of resting in His grace?
2. Hebrews teaches that Jesus has "perfected us forever while being sanctified." How does understanding the difference between your position before God and your ongoing spiritual growth change the way you view yourself?
3. Shame often causes us to pull away from God's presence rather than run toward Him. Why do you think that is, and what truths from this message help combat those lies?
4. Religion says, "Get clean before you come to God," while Jesus invites us to come as we are. How have you personally experienced the difference between those two mindsets?
5. What is one area where you've been trying to earn what Jesus has already accomplished? What would it look like this week to stop striving and instead draw near to God with confidence?