

# He is the Real Thing

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Preacher: Derek Lamont

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now, we're going to return back to Hebrews chapter 10 for a little while because we're looking in our evening, assume calls, at Flesh and Blood Jesus and the title of tonight's message is, Here's the Real Thing. So we've been looking at the humanity of Christ while recognizing obviously His divinity as well and I think it's very important to remind ourselves of that. And this chapter, Hebrews chapter 10 is focusing on the central event of Christ's ministry and mission, which is death on the cross, the sacrifice on the cross. And we all know that the death and the resurrection of Jesus is absolutely core to our faith and it's core to our life as Christians. And I guess what I want to think about for a little while tonight is to think about that and to think about in the light of this chapter, but also to think about how we explain that in sharing the gospel with other people. You know, the death, it's the most important thing that we recognize and know and we focus on as believers. It's the very heart of the gospel. So obviously, it's very important that we're able to share that. But how do we explain the death of a Jewish man 2,000 years ago on a cross? That's having any relevance to people today. How do we close the credibility gap that there is between what we believe and what people experience in their own lives? How can we make that gospel relevant? How can we provoke people to think about it?

Well, I haven't got the answers to all these questions, but I think what we need to do is at least pray that this truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus is absolutely relevant and vital to us. If it's relevant to us in our day-to-day living, then it will become something that we find we're able to share with others more clearly. So we pray for that and we're going to look at that in the passage. Also, we pray, we must keep praying that people will open people, that God will open people's hearts. That is a vital prayer. It's vital that we keep doing that.

It's vital because we need God to open people's hearts to see this. We know there's, we have to explain it well. We know we need to be relevant. We need to make it something that they can understand, but we also need them to have the Holy Spirit open their eyes. And I think we also need to live in a way that will open up opportunities to share that gospel. We need to be consistent, unashamed, authentic and wise. And as we do so, that will help us to know how to respond when people ask us for the reason for the hope and that it will focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is so significant. So, I'm going to look at this for a few minutes this evening.

It's a fantastic passage and it links, actually links very beautifully with the theme that we're doing in the morning as well as the story of the Old Testament. Because fundamentally what we recognise in the death of Jesus is justice being met. So, justice is at the core of the cross.

And we, I think we all recognise that justice carries a cost to it. I think everyone understands that if we question and discuss with them. You know, whatever someone's morality is, whatever basis they have for their morality, fairness and equity and justice are important concepts to people, you know. And people know that there's a cost involved in committing adultery and breaking the vows of fidelity. People know that, they instinctively know that. They know there's a cost to lying, to breaking any law, you know, no matter what basis that law is made on. We all recognise the need for justice and we're all judges in many ways in our own lives. We make judgment and we cry out about injustice at a very personal level, but also maybe a more social level as well. We are in many ways a people, a universe of little gods. Everyone is their own judge and many have their own ideas of justice and fairness. And if God is taken out of that picture, it usually ends up either anarchic or dictatorial. But there's always this kind of recognition that justice must prevail and there is a cost to that. And in many ways that whole idea of justice takes us to the very root of sin because sin is very beginning. What we've looked at in the last couple of weeks in the morning is at one level it's an envy of God and it's an envy of God's position as the judge of all the earth. And it's that wanting within us to be what we're not. We want that place. We want to decide what's right and wrong. We want to be the judges and we see that so much in our lives and at the root of sin. And the Old Testament is the story very much of these beginnings and of the shadows of both sin and also of God's working towards his solution. We see that all through the Old

[ 6 : 07 ] Testament this cost to grabbing what was God's right in justice, the spiritual death and the physical death that came as a result of it. And I think it's important then when we are interacting with people who aren't Christians to try and provoke discussion on that area, to ask questions about them, about their source of justice or their model of justice, question them about being spiritual beings, question them about guilt or about their moral choices, ask them about death and all these things that will provoke, begin to provoke some kind of sense of their being more than what they just think about day to day. That there is justice and where is the source of that justice and how can we have justice without an independent source of truth on which to base it and the cost, all the cost that's involved in that. So justice carries a cost and the Bible makes that very clear and obviously the Bible points to the solution to our sin and our envy and our rebellion against God which introduced death. And as we're seeing in the morning the

Old Testament is a shadow towards that answer and it points towards the answer and the interesting thing verse 1 it says the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming. The Old Testament is a shadow and a shadow only makes sense when we look at it where there's something real of which it is a shadow and therefore the Old Testament, I think this is important because some people want to look and make sense of the Old Testament on its own but I don't think you can make sense of the Old Testament unless you see it as a shadow of the reality that is in Jesus Christ.

So really we can only make sense of the Old Testament when we look through the prism of Christ and interestingly if you call Christ the light then it's the light of Christ that makes sense of the shadow that we see in the Old Testament and the Old Testament speaks of God's justice quite a lot and his love indeed and he makes clear that his standard for justice is what he's made clear from the beginning that where there's sin, sin needs to be atoned for, it needs to be paid for and it can only come by the shedding of blood because when we sinned we lost the right to live and in order to regain the right to live there must be the shedding of the life of another, the blood of the life of another. In Leviticus 17 I'm just going to look up there's a couple of verses I want to look up one in Leviticus 17 and verse 11 where Jesus says where God says rather for the life of a creature is in the blood and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar it is the blood or the life that makes atonement for one's life and then in Hebrews the chapter before we read in Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 22 it says in fact the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness and that's God's standard of justice there is no forgiving of sins without the shedding of blood and a life for a life in other words when we have wrenched innocent life from its source that is from God we end up dying don't we and therefore the price of God's justice the atonement is that someone else must die if we are to live something else must die and so to live forever we need to be innocent not sinners or someone innocent needs to die in our place to offer their life to God now we can't do that because we are no longer innocent it needs to come from another source so the Old Testament right through the Old Testament we make clear that it is providing the shadows of what is to come and that is in the animal sacrifices which are spoken about here in

Hebrews chapter 10 and he says it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins but they were pointing towards a real substitute a real shadow they're not the real thing they're repeated every year if they if they worked they would work once for all but they don't the animals are an inadequate sacrifice they're temporary and God knows that and he provided them only in preparation of something better which we know is Jesus I mean even in the Old Testament God taught that the sacrifices of animals were inadequate and they point but they did point towards the need for a change of heart towards him and to a more permanent solution a more permanent sacrifice for sin but they were used because as the blood was poured out it was a recognition that it was a life for a life and again I think if we ever get into discussions with people who maybe rubbish the Old Testament or think it's irrelevant or unimportant we can tell them that the Old Testament bears closer examination it consistently reveals one message and it's preparing for something to come and it does so very clearly and in great detail as Thomas mentioned this morning and as John mentioned last week there are some great images and pictures and shadows that are pointing towards Jesus but what we see here is that Jesus is the real thing verses 5 to 7 which is a quote from Psalm 40 interestingly it's just attributed to Jesus sacrifice in offerings you did not desire but a body you prepared for me with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased then I said here I am it's written about me in the scroll I have come to do at your will my God so Christ is the object as we know of the Old Testament shadows so the shadows of the Old Testament are all Christ shaped okay just like this my shadow is my shape so Christ's shadow or the shadows of the Old Testament are Christ shaped he is God's beloved

Son we recognize and we know that and he was only ever going to be the answer to our sin and our need so there was never going to be a do it yourself salvation it was always going to be from God you know we're told here that sacrifices and offerings you didn't desire in other words God recognized that that wasn't the final solution but when he sent his son and as he Holy Spirit descended on him he said this is my beloved Son in whom I am well I'm well pleased with him I'm well pleased with him because he knew that Christ was the ultimate answer and he is the Christ who we've been looking at over these last number of weeks is a flesh and blood savior this is God in the flesh but a body you prepare for me I'll say a little bit more about that in a minute that particular sentence but he took a body took flesh and blood because that was the only way that God's justice and love could be satisfied we needed a substitute a substitute that would work in our place who would die in our place see if people sometimes say well could God not just have created that innocent human being who would then go on to die for humanity if he created that innocent human being

[ 14 : 55 ] I still lots of other issues about it but if he created just one innocent human being to die then that innocent human being his death would only be sufficient for one guilty human being so it would be a life for a life it would it wouldn't be an adequate substitute for humanity and God needed to provide a substitute that was good enough not just to pay for one sin wracked body that was dying but for every single person who calls on him by faith and not only that but to destroy the very source of that evil in hell and to have the power to redeem the universe that was cursed by sin that no human being could do that but it needed to be someone who was an adequate substitute who was one who could be a substitute for humanity and he had to be there for human both God and the image of God both uncreated but who became flesh human relying on infinite strength of God the spirit but also experiencing weakness tiredness as we've seen over the last number of weeks grief joy food work play temptation questions about life questions life who lived a life of faith who had aches and pains and who bleeds who bleeds that his own blood the blood of his life is drained from him as the incarnate son of God whose body whose body can die I said that's why the incarnation is so important because God in heaven couldn't do that God is a spirit God can't die and he had to take on a reasonable body had to take on that human identity but he needed also to be God we needed God to save us because we can't redeem ourselves but he needed also to be human in order to die and and he needed to be human in order to be separated from his father in judgment in the mystery of that forsakenness on the cross where he experienced the full wrath of God for our sin and all the mystery that goes with that but it had to be he had to be someone who was adequate representative of humanity he had to be the second Adam he had to be human in order to die and he had to be God in order to be a sufficient savior for us he is all that makes us not animals ourselves which is why an animal could never be an adequate substitute for us he is an image bearer he's the creative self-conscious moral being knowing good and evil resisting temptation with reason and with choice the perfect substitute in verse five it says a body you prepared for me and it's interesting that word is the same word that's used for fixing and mending a net in other words it's like make something fit for purpose this is if God made molded Christ to be fit for purpose to be a redeemer nobody else could do it nothing else could be our savior and his humanity his flesh and blood what he experienced and the pain and the suffering and the grief and the loss it's all because he's doing it in our place and interestingly

he is the one who does so the other aspect of Christ being the real thing is he he does so willingly really willingly it's great it says with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased then I said here I am it's written of me in the book in the scroll I have come to do your will my god he's a willing savior now interestingly verse the same verse half a verse five says a body you prepared for me now when you look back at Sam 40 which is taken from and which I'll hopefully try and sing at the end if you look up if you were you know a good scholar of scripture and you're reading your new testament and you see a reference to the old testament and they go that's from the Psalms I'll go back I know that Sam well and you go to that Sam and you look at that Sam and it says sacrifice and offerings you did not desire but my ears you've opened burnt offerings sufferings you do not require then I said here I am I've come but that's a very different translation my ears you've opened or a body you've prepared for me well what is it what's it to be is is this inaccurate is what's wrong here well this new testament quotation here is taken from the citugin which is the the Greek translation of the old testament Hebrew and they translated it a body now we regard that as I've been a good translation and it's interesting because you know if someone's got an ear they need to be a body they need to be flesh and blood and that's significant but I think there's an imagery here that is involved in the

Hebrew interestingly the commentators think differently sometimes when they talk about my ears you've opened they mean simply that this was a human in David's case or in Christ's a human who was listening to God who was willing to obey God and serve God and that's very much the idea that we have here that a human who was trusting and obedient in God but in the in the Metrical Sam version 1650 version it says my ears now has bored which is also a very interesting translation and which takes us back to Exodus chapter 21 and I'm going to read that because it's I think it's also significant for the image that is given here of Jesus Exodus 21 verses 5 and 6 it's talking about Hebrew servants and it says but if a servant declares I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free then this master must take him before the judges he shall take him to the door of the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl then he will be his servant for life and there's that whole picture of Christ I believe being a really willing servant saying look I am willing to commit to this work I'm willing to empty myself of my divinity and I'm willing to be a servant and to obey Christ and to do your will the very one thing that humanity wasn't willing to do was to do the will of God Jesus is willing to do and he says you know it's written about me in the scroll and that's really just either referring to the five books of

Moses are indeed the whole Old Testament is that everything in the Old Testament points towards this Christ who is willing absolutely willing to do this amazing thing and out envy of God we wanted to do to be gods and we wanted our will to be done in heaven but Jesus wants God's will to be done on earth and he is the innocent one who gives his life for the guilty and destroys the power of your death and my death and the grave and was raised to offer us life and to redeem this physical universe as our new home only God can give us that hope there's no way that humanity any one person even the very best of people could do that either for themselves and not even for themselves and definitely not for other people so there's got this amazing picture of a Christ who was to come the Old Testament is relentlessly pointing towards and give these lovely pictures and his prophetic voice is even heard in the Psalm 40 therefore how then as we close how should we live in the light of this great truth about one savior for all of humanity you know what does it mean for me and for you to live a Christian life that will provoke other people to ask about our faith and somehow to bring the relevance of a crucified savior from 2000 years ago into significance and relevance into their lives it can only come as we as it can only happen when we come and live in the shadow of Jesus ourselves so it's a sense Jesus is in the middle of everything the Old Testament his shadow is cast over all the Old Testament in its Christ shape but his shadow also is cast over everything since himself and we are to live if you excuse the paradoxical statement we are to live in the light of his shadow and all the time that's how we're to live that that's why we want to be patient and because it requires patience to do that and I'm sure it requires more patience than ever just now but as we do so I believe we'll have a renewed perspective you know that my salvation my life my Christianity my faith reaches into the very heart of God we were rescued by God it's his idea it's his commitment he broke in some mysterious way the the glory of the Trinity and faced and the Son faced the the horror of of his his father's back been turned for my salvation and for years and the author of love and of life did this it's no sidebar onto our lives it and its its reality should really seek from every core of of who we are it is who I am and I think I certainly often need to refocus that and I would encourage you to go and read this chapter again on your own just on your own and think about its relevance for you as a believer and if you're not a believer tonight I don't know if there's any who are not believers tonight but if you're not then you should really think hard about these words and this message which is unchanging and it's the only rescue there is a renewed perspective also let's be reminded of our renewed innocence that we have as Christians you know I'm not I'm

not guilty anymore verse 17 and another lovely quote from Jeremiah from the Old Testament God says their lawless their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more and the price has been paid don't go around living as if you're a guilty sinner you're not and I'm not we're free we're at peace with God we were singing about the peace of God you know the dread the meaninglessness has gone because we're right with God through Christ and that means that we're going to see sin in a different light as well makes us different it makes us think differently it makes us think about the deceitfulness of sin differently and it reminds us when we're tempted to go back into the darkness that it's deceit and it's folly and because we're innocent and we're covered with the innocence of Jesus and we are free and we need to stop going around like we're useless miserable wretched hopeless sinners because we we're saved by grace and we're loved by God and with innocent and that renewed perspective and renewed innocence hopefully should also give us a renewed heart verse 16 then again from Jeremiah this is a covenant I will make with them after that time says the Lord I will put my law in their hearts I will write it on their minds so that we can say the same as Jesus said look you know here I am Lord here I am I mean when

[ 28 : 11 ] Adam first sinned in the garden and God said where are you where are you because he was hiding we've got to stop hiding because we don't need to anymore we rather we can say Lord here am I here am I saying me you've given me your law in my heart and there's a willingness that reflects the willingness of Jesus to die in our place and we've got a new motivation so we are willing and we become willing and we love God and we love other people we want to do his will not for legalistic reasons not because it's some kind of restrictive medicine that we need to take but because he is renewing our heart now I know that isn't always the case because it's still a battle isn't it we still deal with sin and we still want my will to be done in heaven rather than God's will to be done in our lives but let's battle against that and the only way we can do that is by going back again and again to Jesus and I think as we go back to Jesus then and rely on him and have a constant awareness of who we are in Christ and how we can share that with other people then I believe he will give us the opportunities to do so so that our lives impact the lost and I hope that's our motivation because when we know what we were and know what we are then we want that for everyone else and if Jesus on the cross of God the Son on the cross shedding his blood his flesh being ripped apart and his soul being just condemned to hell in our place if that doesn't motivate us nothing nothing will so we pray for that to be the case I mean oh pray briefly Father God we ask and pray that you would teach us your way and that you would help us to understand more and more the beauty of the gospel and the power of the the word of God the living word and the beautiful symmetry of it old and New Testament together and how it just so clearly points to this once for all sacrifice that really should transform our lives probably far more than it does forgive us for not seeing clearly forgive us for sidetracking side barring this truth forgive us for still wrestling with our will being done in heaven rather than yours on earth and we pray that we would just be willing and it would come from a generous heart because we've been given a generous heart from a generous heart of God and may it transform all we are or be near to us today be near to us tonight be near to those we love be near to those who are struggling and battling especially be near to those who are unbelieving that you would touch their hearts and that you would give us that place of usefulness in their lives to transform them and to bring them to know Jesus as their own savior we ask it in Jesus name amen