

Sermon Series: “Celebrating Life–Catch and Replace the Joy Stealers–Lord of Life, Westfield, IN – 5/31/09
Title: “Celebrating the Past: Catching Regret”
Text: Hebrews 10: 8-25
Intro.: *Illus.: Keeper of the Springs*
Theme: Celebrating our life begins in what Jesus has accomplished for it once for all at the cross and because of that we can leave behind the past, enjoy the present, and press forward to the God-blessed life awaiting us in the future.

Failing to leave behind our fallen past infects and destroys our present and future

- Jesus’ desire is that we would enjoy “*full life*” **John 10: 10**
- 1. No amount of money/pleasure can assuage my regret over the past or my guilt over past sins
 - a. **Illus. The Conscience fund**
- 2. Of all the gifts that you have received in your life the greatest is a life freed from regret
- 3. **Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18**
- Identifying those things which rob us of the joy of our salvation
- 1. *Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Psalm 51: 12*
- 2. **Burned up and burned out religion** – practicing a Christianity which is not Christ-centered
 - a. **Hebrews 10:8-14**
 - b. Do you find yourself always trying to appease an angry God? Do we make others earn our forgiveness?
 - c. What we can do will never satisfy him (**11**) so to celebrate life we had better let Jesus do it once for all (**14**)
- 3. **Selective remembering** – when we have a hard time remembering our password, we have total recall of past sins
 - a. **Illus.: Sometimes our absolution can be a reminder of sin**
 - b. But God says, “*what sin?*” — **Hebrews 10:15-18** (a quote from **Jeremiah 31**)
 - c. When the omniscient God tells us he has forgiven/forgotten our sins in the blood of Jesus, who are we to hold ourselves or others hostage?
 - d. *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Ps 103: 11-12*

Helping each other view the past through lenses of forgiveness (Hebrews 10:19-25)

- Notice four times in the verse we are admonished to do this together (“**Let us**”)
- 1. Because the lies and oppression of Satan are so strong and deluding we cannot fight him on our own
 - a. *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8-9*
- 2. Celebrating life as believers was meant to be done together, forever as a foretaste of heaven’s perfection (14)
 - a. *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9-10*
- Celebrating past and present together as God’s people
- 1. **Let us assure and be assured we are forgiven** – when it is so easy to criticize and critique, redeem your speech
 - a. *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29*
- 2. **Let us remind each other, in our fallenness, of our hope** – never tired of restating the center of our faith
 - a. It is not about our obedience but faith; it is not about getting right with God but being made right by God
 - b. **Illus.: US 24 sign – Get right with God** – for the 100's of times I saw that sign wished someone would tell it
- 3. **Let us get our minds off the past and onto the present** – helping each other to dwell on the present not the past
 - a. *Jesus said, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” John 7:38*
 - b. Every so often those springs of water get polluted by our regret and we need to entrust their clean up to another
- 4. **Let us not give up gathering together by the River**
 - a. There is a value of being together at worship with each other by the River of forgiveness in Jesus
 - b. **Illus: Point of Grace song “Gather at the River”**

Keeper of the Springs (see insert)

The Conscience Fund

Max Lucado, in his book *Six Hours One Friday*, tells how the U.S. government in 1811 began collecting and storing letters like the following note dated February 6, 1974: "I am sending ten dollars for blankets I stole while in World War II. My mind could not rest. Sorry I'm late." It was signed: an ex-GI. And there was this postscript: "I want to be ready to meet with God." The U.S. government not only collects and stores these letters, but the Treasury Department established a fund and labeled it the "Conscience Fund." Since its inception, the fund has grown to almost seven million dollars. **Max Lucado, *Six Hours One Friday* p. 79; submitted by Aaron Goerner, Utica, New York**

Sometimes our absolution can be a reminder of sin

A woman came to me one time who had done something maybe fifteen years before that was pretty bad. Her husband told her, "I want you to know I forgive you totally." She said, "I know he's forgiven me because every week of my life, he tells me he's forgiven me." That's what the writer of Hebrews is saying here about the sacrificial system. It was a reminder of the sin over and over again. **Steve Brown, "Forgiven and Forgotten," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 139.**

Hebrews 10:8-25

⁸First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). ⁹Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ¹⁶"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." ¹⁷Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." ¹⁸And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching. [NIV]