

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

**THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY**

Hebrews 9:16-28

November 8, 2020

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There are two points to my message:

- With sin, there is no exception to policy
- With Christ, there is no exception to policy

**First, WITH SIN, THERE IS NO EXCEPTION TO POLICY**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:15-22

*"For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." <sup>16</sup> In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, <sup>17</sup> because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. <sup>18</sup> This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. <sup>19</sup> When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. <sup>20</sup> He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." <sup>21</sup> In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. <sup>22</sup> In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

**EXPLANATION:** According to the scripture, sin must be dealt with. We cannot pay our way around it. We cannot bargain our way out of it. It is the law. This law I am talking about is the most basic of all laws. It is a law which was not made by man. God made it and here it is: *Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

We can rationalize all we want. We can discuss until we lose our voices from discussing so long, but there is no getting around this most basic, foundational, and first law of God.

When Moses took the blood of the animals and sprinkled it on everything, it was a reminder that the sins of the people had a penalty, and that penalty had been paid for sin. Now you might think this was terribly harsh but look at the mercy involved. People did not have to die for their sin. Animals died in their place.

So, the first covenant between God and people was put into effect with blood, even though as we know from the earlier messages from Hebrews, the first covenant was inadequate. This is because it was only a shadow of what was to come.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When I worked for Air Force recruiting, I learned what it took for people to qualify to be a chaplain in the Air Force. The standards are cut and dry. Then, there were waivers. At that time, in the department I was in, we allowed for only one waiver. One day a man called me from the Washington DC area. He told me his age, and he was too old. I told him, and he did not like it. But our training was to get people off the phone if they did not qualify. A few weeks later, I got a letter in the mail from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a request from the White House that this man be considered for the Air Force. I called the highest-ranking person I knew and asked him what to do. He said, well there's your exception to policy letter. If the president wants him in, then none of the other policies matter. That's when I learned about ETP – exception to policy. We contacted the man, and he never followed up. He could have gotten in if he wanted.

It's not uncommon to find exceptions to policy all around us. There is a rule. The rule is inconvenient, so we have a way to go around the rule. Under Roberts Rules of Order, there is clear-cut parliamentary procedure, but there is an exception to the procedure and that's when a group votes to suspend the rules. Think about that.

In a world of exceptions to policy, we must face the reality that there is no exception to policy when it comes to sin. All sin debt must be paid. We may rationalize sin all we want but the scripture provides no exception to policy.

**EXPLANATION:** With the scripture, the first policy was the old covenant, or as some call it, the first covenant. It was good because it provided a way for people to be forgiven of sin. And it came through animal sacrifices as you know. There was

no exception to policy. Not one single person was given a pass. From the poorest to the richest, from the lowest in social status to the most noble, no one was given an exception. Verse 22 -- *for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

This first covenant was good, but it only foreshadowed something much better. The first and second covenant, or the old and new covenants as they are called, both dealt with the same issue: sin. *For without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.* The difference was whose blood was shed.

The bottom line is that no one is granted an exception to policy when it comes to sin. No one. All are guilty. All fall short of the glory of God. I heard probably the most famous person in the world right now say that he does not regret never asking for God for forgiveness because he doesn't have much to apologize for. I'll withhold the man's name because he said that several years ago, and I don't know where he stands today.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Years ago, there was a teenage boy in my youth group who prayed for his grandmother. He wanted her to be saved. He wanted to witness to her but his mother told him not to because it would upset his grandmother. One day, she became very ill and was in the hospital. I went to visit her, and she could not speak, nor open her eyes. I told her how to be saved. I told her she needed to repent and trust Jesus right then. For some reason, the woman's daughter seemed to think her mother had some exception to policy. At the burial, I told the grandson what I had told his grandmother. He was relieved that someone had told her about Jesus.

Does everyone understand that no one has an exception here? Everyone's sin must be dealt with and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

## **Second, WITH CHRIST, THERE IS NO EXCEPTION TO POLICY**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:23-28

*It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

<sup>24</sup> *For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.* <sup>25</sup> *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.*

<sup>26</sup> *Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the*

*world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.* <sup>27</sup> *Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,* <sup>28</sup> *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

**EXPLANATION:** In these verses, we see that the things in the tabernacle were copies of heavenly things. According to these scriptures, it was okay for these copies to be purified by the animal sacrifices. But things in heaven must have a better sacrifice.

Foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah, Moses entered the tabernacle and cleansed it all. Moses entered the sanctuary made with human hands that was a copy of heaven with sacrifices on behalf of the sins of people that were adequate for the time, but ultimately inadequate for eternity. And, then priests took over and did these rituals over and over.

Now listen to this. Jesus entered heaven, not a *copy* of heaven and not made with human hands, to appear on our behalf. He only appeared once because the sacrifice of his blood was adequate to pay for all the sins of mankind. Verse 28 says, “*The sins of many.*” It does not say, “*the sins of all.*” Why not? Because people who do not repent of sin and do not accept Jesus as the substitutionary atonement for their sins are not forgiven. There is no exception to policy – Christ came to his earth for all. He died for all. He rose again for all. He ascended into heaven for all. He will return again someday for all...but not all will be rescued. Not all will be saved because God does not force anyone to follow Jesus.

What about those who have not heard? Jesus said no one comes to the father but through him. For those who have not heard I can say the same thing about everyone: Whoever is in heaven, it’s because Jesus let them in. So leave those who have not heard to Jesus and focus on those who have heard.

Verse 28 also tells us that Jesus is coming again, not to bear sin, but as a bearer of salvation.

**APPLICATION:** Do you think the people of the old covenant ever doubted there would be a Messiah? They were confident a Messiah would come someday. Now,

as people of the new covenant, we should be even more confident Jesus will return someday, and then our salvation will be fully realized!

- The first, or old, covenant - good; second, or new, covenant - better!
- Moses - good; Jesus - better!
- Many animal sacrifices - good; Jesus' one-time sacrifice - better!

Think about it today. We are children of the new covenant. We are living in new covenant times. When we get up every morning, we should rejoice for the day in which we live.

Listen to this scripture—

**SCRIPTURE:** I Peter 1:18-20

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, [in other words it could not be bought] <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup> He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. [Look at this: He was chosen before the creation of the world.]*

**SCRIPTURE:** For sake of those who were not here last week, let me repeat Revelation 13:8 - *the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world.*

There are other scriptures which talk about what was decided and done before the foundation of the world.

**EXPLANATION:** The best way I can explain it is like this: Before the world was created, everything was all said and done. Jesus was already crucified, and God's grace prevailed throughout all of eternity, even though nothing had yet been created. But, then God, being the creative God he is, created something huge and beautiful. It was called earth. And he put this interesting thing called time into motion. Then he created many things. Then he created people, the capstone of his creation.

And he gave people a choice, but they made a bad choice...and God created a way for them to be forgiven because he loved them so much.

And then after thousands of years passed, something happened in a way I cannot fully describe because I cannot fully understand it. This Jesus was slain before the earth entered this dimension in which we live. He entered human time and human space, and he died on a manmade cross in human time and in human space, even though the Bible tells us the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the earth.

Just think what it would be like if God had not taken on human flesh? We would have instruction telling us that before the world was created, the Lamb of God was slain for our sins and that's all we would have. We would be required to believe in something which happened before anything was created. And I guess we could believe that, but God went a step further.

God, because he first loved us, brought it all down to earth. This did not happen in a galaxy far away. It happened right here. God allowed men and women to see Jesus—God himself—on the human level. He allowed men and women to see a Savior born in human flesh. He allowed men and women to watch the suffering Jesus and experience human pain.

He took men and women on a tour to face their ultimate fear: death. People watched with human eyes as his dead body was taken off the cross and put in a tomb. And then God, because he first loved us, allowed men and women to see that death is nothing to fear...because of the Resurrection.

Now do you see why God took something which happened before the foundation of the earth and allowed it to happen inside human history? He did it so people could experience the crucifixion with their own eyes and their human emotions. He did it so it would be deeply personal to each one of us. He did it so we can relate to the supernatural in human terms because that's all we know.

Again, I am not asked to believe only in the Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the earth, but to believe in the Jesus Christ who was both fully God and fully man. Jesus, who endured the pain and agony of the cross, rose again, appeared to many, ascended to heaven, and promises to return again to take us to be with him forever.

Why would I ever doubt such a Savior? I could not—because I, in my limited human way, have had a firsthand experience with this supernatural Savior.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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