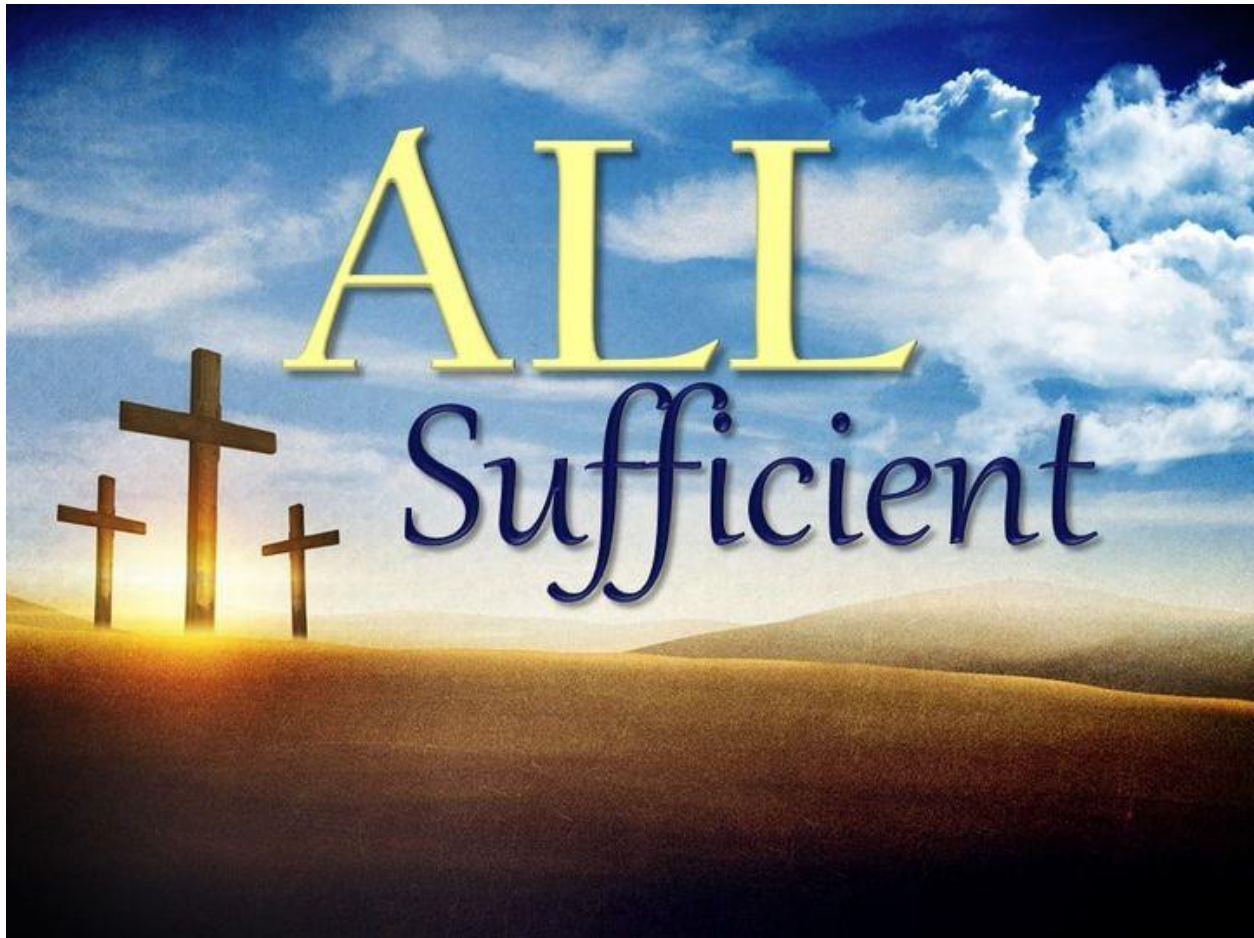


**Sermon, November 7, 2021**

*Hebrews 9:24-28*

**“All Sufficient”**

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Richard and Ray were best friends their entire lives. They did everything together. They went to school together, bought their first car together, double-dated together, and then enlisted in Army, went to boot camp, and fought on frontlines together. One night as they sat in a foxhole, Richard reminisced of their days together in high school; Ray listened and ate chocolate bar. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a live grenade fell into their foxhole. Ray looked at Richard, dropped his chocolate bar, and threw himself on the grenade. Ray sacrificed his life so his friend could live. Later when Richard became a priest, he was instructed to take on the name of a saint. He thought of his friend, Ray Brennan, who gave his life for him, and took the name Brennan Manning. Years later when he visited Ray's mother, he asked, "Do you think Ray loved me?" She shook her finger at him and shouted, "What more could he have done for you?"

Brennan Manning (author of *The Ragamuffin Gospel*) had an epiphany. He imagined himself standing before Jesus on the cross and wondering, “Does God really love me? Does he care?” He imagined Jesus’ mother, Mary, pointing to her son [on cross] and saying, “What more could he have done for you?”

At some point in our lives, most (if not all) of us wonder, “Does Jesus really love me?” Jesus’ mother would stand at the foot of the cross and ask, “What more could he have done for you?” God spent all eternity doing everything he can to show his love to us and all and to restore our relationships with him. We see this clearly in Hebrews, but story actually began in Genesis.

God created Adam and Eve and all of us to be in a relationship with him. However, because Adam and Eve thought they know better than God; they choose own way over God’s. (Don’t we do the same?) Our sin becomes like a wall and separates from God, and there’s nothing we can do to restore our relationship with God. Because God is perfect and holy and nothing imperfect or unholy can come into his presence, God couldn’t bear thought of spending one day, let alone all eternity without us and all his people. Therefore, God instituted what we call the old covenant. Under the old covenant, animals were sacrificed to remind the people of the severity of their sin, and to call them to repent (turn back to God) and ask forgiveness.

The imagery we see in Hebrews is of the Day of Atonement. What is “atonement”? I’m not sure who came up with this, but someone once said that atonement is “at-one-ment”—God restoring our relationship with him and making us “at one” with him. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High priest entered the Holy of Holies. However, before the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies (the place where God’s presence dwelt), he had to offer an animal sacrifice for his sins and the sins of people. Why? The Bible tells us that “life is in the blood.” We cannot survive without blood, so it becomes a powerful symbol of life. The shedding of blood of the animals reminded people of the seriousness of their sins and called them to repent, to turn back to God.

Despite God instituting the old covenant, it was insufficient. Animal sacrifices didn’t take away sin or restore relationships with God. Animal sacrifices didn’t change lives so people would suddenly love God and obey him and his Law. They were insufficient. God grew tired of people just going through the motions of worship and offering sacrifices. He eventually told Israel, “I don’t want your empty sacrifices!” I can imagine God telling them and us, “I don’t want your bull!... I want you, as a living sacrifice—living your life for me!” But, God knew we could never do it on our own. We could never be good enough—because no one is good but God alone. We could never follow God’s laws perfectly—because no one is perfect but God. That is why Jesus came as the perfect sacrifice. Brennan Manning said, “The gospel declares that no matter how dutiful or prayerful we are, we can’t save ourselves. What Jesus did was sufficient.” Thus, we’re indebted to Jesus for giving his life for us.

Many in the United States are living in debt and beyond their means. As a result, some receive notifications of “insufficient funds.” We need to realize our attempts to be good or perfect are insufficient. We need to declare bankruptcy—realizing that our lives are bankrupt without God. When we do, God will help us start over and give us new life. However, this can’t happen through the old covenant, but it can through the new covenant, through Jesus.

Look at how the old covenant and new covenant compare...

<b>Old covenant</b>	<b>vs.</b>	<b>New covenant</b>
Human high priest		God-Man high priest

	<i>(Jesus)</i>
Human-made sanctuary	Heavenly sanctuary <i>(God's presence)</i>
Once every year <i>(High priest made sacrifice)</i>	Once for all time <i>(Jesus did once for all time)</i>
Animal sacrifice	Sacrificed own life <i>(Jesus gave his own life)</i>
For sins each year	For all sins of all time
Sprinkle blood on people <i>(High priest sprinkled blood of animal sacrifice on the people)</i>	Drink "blood" (wine) <i>(The night he was betrayed, Jesus shared wine with his disciples and said, "This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for sins...")</i>
Outwardly clean <i>(The blood sprinkled on them symbolized God washed them clean on the outside)</i>	Inwardly clean (heart) <i>(When people drink the wine of the new covenant/Communion, it symbolizes God washing them clean on the inside—and giving them a new heart)</i>
Reminder of sin	Removes sin and restores relationship with God
Still sinful <i>(Do own will)</i>	Sanctified (made holy) <i>(Do God's will; not perfect, Christ living inside to guide/help)</i>
Die in this world	New/Eternal life
<b>INSUFFICIENT</b>	<b>ALL SUFFICIENT</b>

Though the old covenant served its purpose, it was insufficient, but Jesus Christ is all sufficient for all time!

At some point, most of us wonder, "Does God really love me?" I imagine God asking, "What more could I have done for you?" Like the young soldier, Ray, who loved and gave his life so his friend could live, Jesus loves you, wants to be your friend, and wants to do everything with you. He gave life for you and for all! He died on the cross and rose from dead so we may have new life—in this world (where we are loved, forgiven, and set free of our sins), and in the next (where we forever live with God and all the saints in heaven).

Therefore, we rejoice! Even though we grieve the loss of our loved ones, we don't grieve as those who have no hope, but as those who have hope—Hope that this world is not all there is; hope that when we and our loved ones put our faith and trust in Jesus, God will raise us from dead. Therefore, we rejoice that we will see each other again and spend the rest of eternity with them. We rejoice that this is not "Goodbye" but

“See you later.” We rejoice that Jesus loves us and gave life for us. We rejoice that though we aren’t enough on our own, Jesus is. Jesus is all sufficient!

Jesus gave his life for you, and he invites and wants you to live your life for him—and to share his love with others. The only question that remains is, “Will you?”