

## Read - Pray

### Intro - Open to Hebrews 10:1-10

The clear focus on Good Friday is the cross. The weirdness of this day is something I love in a non-morbid kind of way. It is a celebration of death. It is death of someone who should not die. God dies but that seems impossible. Yet here it is. It is a worship service but a funeral. It lifts you up and cuts you down.

In all of that confusion, I want to offer some clarity. Your job tonight at this funeral celebration, is to look at the cause of death. I want you to approach the cross and consider why did he die. An autopsy of God's sacrifice.

The book of Hebrews helps us understand the death of Christ Jesus. God who came in the flesh. To do that, Hebrews shows that Jesus is fulfilling the Old Testament but what he brings is better! Chapter 1 shows Jesus as superior to all creation, all created beings even the angels which carry God's glory in their wings. As the chapters go on, Jesus is compared to Moses the law-giver, he is compared to Aaron the high-priest and greater than that, Melchizedek, the priest in Genesis. Jesus' priestly ministry is better than his. Next, his blood sacrifice (what concerns us tonight) is compared to the sacrifices of the law. This shows God's will for us in Jesus' death.

#### **God's will for Jesus' death is to make us holy by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ for our sins.**

And that's where we find ourselves this evening, chapter 10, looking at the sacrifices. The first in verses 1-4, Ongoing Sacrifices of the law and the second in verses 5-10 is a Once-For-All Sacrifice of Christ. First, Ongoing Sacrifices.

#### **One – Ongoing Sacrifices**

Read Hebrews 10:1-4 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Really these 4 verses serve as a summary of chapters 8 and 9. Trying to show 3 reasons that the old priesthood is inferior to Christ's priesthood.

First, the repetitive nature of the sacrifices prove they were ineffective. It says in verse 1 that the law, which required the sacrificial system to make people clean after they would break the law, is but a shadow. A blurry temporary shadow at that. It looks like things to come but it is not the true form. It's not the original. It's hazy on purpose to make those in the shadow look for the original because the shadow is made by someone real. The author writes, **it can never**, do what? **It can never...** (end of verse 1) **make us perfect** (to finish their holiness). **It never... make perfect those who draw near.** How do we know that? Here's the second reason:

Second, the sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin you could never put behind you. They were continually offered. Every year the day of atonement would come, and with that final animal killed and final scapegoat sent off, they would be done, but not for long. It says in verse one that the sacrifices that are **continually offered**, meaning offered without end. It's like trying to keep a pig clean when it lives in a sty. Sure, you can clean it, but it loves the mud. Verse 2 says that if the sacrifices really purified, if they really finished the job, having once been cleansed, you would no longer have any consciousness of sins. But, verse 3, by the annual need, by the weekly need your sins are ever before you.

This is the sentiment King David had when he realized his condition. Psalm 51 verse 3 says, **my sin is ever before me.** I have no doubt that each person in this room has regrets. You regret your divorce, or your marriage that was unwise to begin with. You regret your drunkenness. You regret what you did when your mother told you not to. You regret unkind words you left a friendship or relationship as the last words you have spoken to them. You regret that secret that if your boss or your parent found out, you would be ruined. To offer sacrifices was God's provision to be clean for a time, but it was the act of obedience that God was after. It was never about the blood.

Third, in verse 4, animal blood cannot remove sin. It is estimated that the nation of Israel would slay 300,000 lambs at Passover within a week. The blood would run out of the temple and into the brook nearby which then ran with blood. It was a picture of God's holiness, but again it was a shadow, not the real thing.

At my house we have a lot of toys. And many of the toys are just toy versions of things unsafe for kids. Toy oven in a toy kitchen. A bubble lawnmower. A hammer and pliers made of plastic and Mickey Mouse dimensions.

Try as he might, Mickey will never drive a nail with that plastic glove-hand-shaped hammer. You can run that bubble lawnmower over the grass 100 times and it will be matted but never cut. You DO NOT choose the toy to accomplish the task, you grab the tool made for the job. There was a day for toy tools, to prepare your mind in play for the hard work that would be your joy. There was a day for bubble mowers to enjoy being like your father, when the blade and the motor are too dangerous.

The law and its purpose was necessary. It points to the work that is to come. The toy shows us that time must be set aside for the maintenance of the house. But when you grow up, when the time was full, you put the toys away and you break out the real deal. In the fullness of time, Christ came, the ongoing sacrifices would cease. The Once-For-All Sacrifice had come.

## Two – Once-For-All Sacrifice

Read Hebrews 10:5-10

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

When Christ comes into the world, verse 5, it is not about the sacrifices, it is about his body prepared to be sacrificed. It is not about burnt offerings and sin offerings, verse 6, it is about Jesus coming to do the will of God.

**Becoming obedient to the point of death** Philippians 2:8

In the Old Testament, God wasn't blood thirsty. He was thirsty for his people to be righteous and obedient. He takes pleasure in obedience. He takes greatest pleasure in Christ's obedience.

As the author explains in verse 8 and 9, Jesus has made it clear that sacrifices and offerings are done. To do the will of God is now possible through Christ's obedience.

The will of God... A phrase that carries a lot of weight. If you have been around Christians a lot, you have heard this phrase. “I just wish I knew the will of God for my life.” “I am just waiting for his will to be revealed.”

Now I am not about rushing decisions or about doing the opposite of the will of God, wouldn't thank be a scandal for the pastor to advocate ignoring the will of God. No, my point is to say that the will of God is not a mystery.

It is the will of God for us to be obedient and therefore be holy. That's it. He has laid out his character and his law for us to be holy. Yet we are completely unable to keep the law.

Now you may be here tonight and you think, of course I keep the law. I may not be the best person but I am certainly not the worst. Yet James says in his letter, Chapter 2 verse 10, **For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.** This is not about setting a ridiculous standard. It is about seeing the standard that is fitting for God. To be innocent before God when he judges you, you must keep the whole law. THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.

So this is where verse 10 is most important for us to understand the death of Christ. It is **by that will**, the will of God, for Christ to come to die as a sin offering, that **we have been sanctified.** The perfection of verse 1 that is desired in the sacrifices is now found in the sanctification of Christ.

All the offerings, all the animals, all the effort year after year and it proved to not only be ineffective to make the people perfect, but our sin becomes more apparent to us. There-in lies the point, our strivings to become clean. Our strivings to prove to ourselves our righteousness will never work. It will just deepen our understanding that we are not enough.

This is why we look at the cross and say THANK YOU! This is why we must look to the cross in all its horror, but in its depth of beauty that in Christ we not only have forgiveness of sins but we can stand confident that where we have failed, Christ succeeds. What our sacrifices cover temporarily, Christ truly cleanses. We have been sanctified and Jesus declares “It Is Finished!”

## Conclusion

If you have grown up in another religion, or even a legalistic or false Christian church, you may still be offering sacrifices to God thinking that will earn your salvation. Your works, your law keeping, are your offerings.

Muslims must become purified by good deeds. By prayer almsgiving, fasting and living according to the Quran. You cannot be sure of your eternal destiny and Muhammad himself wrote in the Quran that he was unsure of his salvation.

Mormonism, a cult of Christianity, says to be saved you must believe in Jesus (a good start), be baptized, and have a laying on of hands by a priest. Then you must prove yourself worthy of the third heaven by obeying all the laws and ordinances of the church.

Our culture's most common religion today is atheistic paganism. It denies God's existence and heaven and hell but their system requires sacrifices. You must sacrifice your children through abortion on the altar of your autonomy. You must sacrifice your body on the altar of your mind. It requires penance for your whiteness or divestment from your privilege. You must sacrifice your time and social media posts to the correct political causes or you have sinned. It is religion without transcendence. Its morality without truth.

Tonight, Christ offers you himself. To do away with the first, to do away with the old, to do away with your life trying to earn or obey or perform enough or for some just ignore reality enough. Rest in the second way, the only way, the way that Jesus finished the penalty of sin for you and for me!

John 19:28: <sup>28</sup> After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." <sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**God's will for Jesus' death was to make you holy by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ for your sins.**

It is God's will for his son to willingly go to the cross to die as the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world.

To say that you must add sacrifices to Christ's is to deny Christ's sacrifice. To say that you must do more to earn your salvation is to deny that Jesus's death was needed.

Do you want to stand before God one day and claim that his son did not have to die because you were holy enough on your own? Or that you thought you could add your righteous deeds to Christ's?

Friends, you must stop striving and start tonight trusting in Christ. Your sins held him on the cross. Your sins were paid for there. Trust in the better sacrifice, the better savior. The Once-For-All Sacrifice, the Once-For All Savior.