

The Book of Hebrews, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 10: One Sacrifice for Sins; Draw Near and Hold Fast

Hebrews 10:1–39

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This chapter is the climax of the doctrinal argument of Hebrews and the pivot into its closing exhortations. The first half completes the case for the once-for-all sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, reaching its summit in verse 14: by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The teacher should let this verse land with full force, for it gathers up the whole argument. The old sacrifices were repeated endlessly because they could never take away sin; Christ offered one sacrifice and sat down, His work finished. Notice the beautiful balance in the verse itself: those who are perfected for all time are also those who are being sanctified, the finished work of Christ securing a standing that grounds an ongoing growth in holiness. Hold both together.

The middle of the chapter turns doctrine into a door, with three ringing exhortations: draw near in full assurance, hold fast our confession without wavering, and stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together. These are the practical heart of the lesson, and they include a clear affirmation of the importance of the assembly of the saints, a fitting emphasis in a heritage that values faithful gathering and mutual encouragement. The access Christ opened is meant to be used, the confession is meant to be held, and the body is meant to gather and spur one another on.

The chapter then sounds the second great warning passage, and it carries the heaviest doctrinal weight of the lesson. Like the warning in chapter six, it addresses those who have been sanctified by the blood of the covenant and warns that deliberate, settled apostasy leaves no remaining sacrifice for sins. This stands against the teaching that a believer can never finally be lost. Handle it soberly and pastorally, identifying clearly who is warned, what the sin is, and how the warning coexists with the chapter's strong assurance. The writer himself ends not in despair but in confidence, and the teacher should too: we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Aim to send students home resting in Christ's finished sacrifice, actively drawing near and holding fast, soberly mindful of the danger of falling away, and confident in the faithfulness of the One who promised.

Question 1

Student Question:

In verses 1 through 4 the writer says the law was only a shadow and that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, as proven by their endless repetition. What does this teach about why the old sacrifices could never finally deal with sin?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Restate the writer's argument from repetition. If the old sacrifices could have truly cleansed the worshipers, they would have stopped, because the worshipers, once cleansed, would have no further consciousness of sin. But the sacrifices continued year after year, and in them there was a reminder of sins every year. The endless repetition proved their insufficiency.

State the blunt conclusion of verse 4: it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Animal blood could provide a ceremonial, outward, temporary covering, but it could never remove the guilt of sin or cleanse the conscience. The old system was a shadow, not the substance.

Help the class see the purpose in this. The repeated sacrifices were not pointless; they were a yearly reminder that sin is serious and that a true and final sacrifice was still needed. They kept the problem of sin before the people and pointed forward to the one sacrifice that would actually take it away. The shadow was preparing them for the substance.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The law as a shadow, not the substance, of the good things to come.
- The impossibility of animal blood taking away sins.
- Repetition as proof of the old sacrifices' insufficiency.
- The old sacrifices as a reminder pointing forward to Christ.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the endless repetition of the sacrifices prove their insufficiency?
- Why is it impossible for animal blood to take away sin?
- What good purpose did the yearly reminder of sins serve?

Question 2

Student Question:

The old sacrifices left a yearly reminder of sin, but Christ's sacrifice takes sin away completely. Do you live more like someone still haunted by a reminder of sin, or like someone whose sin has been taken away? What would it take to truly believe the latter?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the contrast into personal experience. The old system kept a reminder of sin before the worshiper; the new covenant declares that God remembers our sins no more. Yet many believers still live haunted by their past, as though their sin were perpetually before God and themselves.

Help students examine which reality they actually live in. Do they relate to God as those still under a reminder of sin, weighed down and uncertain, or as those whose sin has truly been taken away, free and assured? The doctrine is clear, but the heart often lags behind it.

Point toward what it takes to believe the better reality. It requires taking God at His word over our feelings, resting in the finished work of Christ rather than our sense of guilt, and often

confessing specific sin and then accepting that it is genuinely gone. Encourage students to identify one haunting reminder and to bring it under the truth that Christ has taken it away.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The contrast between a reminder of sin and sin taken away.
- Living in the assurance of the new covenant rather than old guilt.
- Letting God's word about forgiveness govern our feelings.

Discussion Prompts

- Do you live more haunted by sin or assured that it is taken away?
- What keeps you from fully believing your sin is gone?
- What would change if you truly rested in Christ's complete cleansing?

Question 3

Student Question:

Verses 5 through 10 present Christ saying, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, and conclude that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. What does this teach about how Christ accomplished our salvation and the place of His obedience to the Father's will?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Explain the quotation from Psalm 40 that the writer puts on Christ's lips. God did not ultimately desire animal sacrifices and offerings; instead, a body was prepared for the Son, who came saying, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God. The old sacrifices are set aside, and the obedient self-offering of Christ is established in their place.

Highlight the place of Christ's obedience. Our salvation was accomplished not merely by a death but by an obedient death, the Son willingly doing the Father's will to the end. The writer says it is by that will, the Father's will joyfully embraced by the Son, that we have been sanctified. Obedience and sacrifice are joined in Christ.

Draw out the phrase once for all again. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The single, obedient self-offering of Christ has set us apart as God's own. This is the means of our salvation: not repeated ritual, but the one obedient sacrifice of the willing Son.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's obedient self-offering replacing the old sacrifices.
- The Father's will embraced by the Son as the means of salvation.
- Sanctification through the once-for-all offering of Christ's body.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God set aside the old sacrifices in favor of Christ's obedience?
- How are obedience and sacrifice joined in the work of Christ?

- What does it mean that we are sanctified by the will of God done in Christ?

Question 4

Student Question:

Christ came saying, I have come to do your will, O God, and that obedience saved us. Where is God asking you to say the same words this week, to do His will even when it is costly, and what is holding you back?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the obedience of Christ into a pattern for the believer. The Son's words, I have come to do your will, are the posture that saved us and the posture He now forms in us. Following Christ means learning to say the same words in our own circumstances.

Help students locate the specific place of costly obedience. Perhaps it is a relationship that requires forgiveness, a habit that must be surrendered, a step of service or generosity, or a hard truth to speak or to accept. God's will is often clear; what is lacking is our willingness.

Name honestly what holds us back: fear, comfort, pride, or the desire to control our own lives. Encourage students to bring that resistance to God and to take one concrete step of saying, your will be done, in a costly area this week, drawing strength from the One who said it first for us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The obedience of Christ as the pattern for the believer.
- Costly obedience to the will of God in daily life.
- Naming and surrendering what holds us back from obedience.

Discussion Prompts

- Where is God asking you to do His will even when it is costly?
- What is holding you back from saying, your will be done?
- How does the obedience of Christ give you strength to obey?

Question 5

Student Question:

Verses 11 through 14 contrast the priests who stand daily offering repeated sacrifices with Christ, who offered a single sacrifice for sins and sat down, having perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. What does this contrast teach about the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw the vivid contrast the writer paints. The old priests stand daily at their service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. There is no chair, no finishing, no rest. Christ, by contrast, offered a single sacrifice for sins and then sat down at the right hand of God. The standing priests and the seated Christ tell the whole story.

Explain the meaning of the seated posture. Christ sat down because His work was finished. He waits now until His enemies are made a footstool, reigning while the full effects of His victory unfold. The seated Christ is the picture of a completed sacrifice and an established reign.

Unfold the climactic statement of verse 14: by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. One offering, perfect and final, has secured a complete and permanent standing for God's people. Note the balance: those perfected for all time are also being sanctified, growing in holiness. The finished work grounds the ongoing growth. Help the class rest in the finality of the sacrifice while pursuing the sanctification it secures.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The contrast between the standing priests and the seated Christ.
- The finality and sufficiency of Christ's single sacrifice.
- The balance of being perfected for all time and being sanctified.
- The finished work as the ground of ongoing growth in holiness.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the seated posture of Christ tell us about His work?
- How can believers be both perfected for all time and being sanctified?
- How does the finished sacrifice ground your growth in holiness?

Question 6

Student Question:

Verse 14 says that by a single offering Christ has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. How does it free you to grow in holiness when you know that your standing before God rests on Christ's finished work and not on your own progress?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question addresses one of the most freeing truths in the Christian life. Many believers pursue holiness anxiously, as though their acceptance by God depended on their progress. Verse 14 cuts that anxiety at the root: their standing before God rests on Christ's single, finished offering, not on how far they have come.

Help students see the paradox that secure standing fuels real growth. When we know we are already accepted in Christ, we are freed to pursue holiness out of love and gratitude rather than fear. We grow not to earn God's acceptance but because we already have it. The finished work is the engine of sanctification, not its rival.

Apply it pastorally. Those who struggle with recurring sin or slow progress especially need this truth. Their standing is not in jeopardy with every stumble, because it rests on Christ. From that security, they can keep growing. Encourage students to pursue one area of holiness this week from the freedom of being already perfected in Christ.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Standing before God grounded in Christ's finished work.
- The freedom that secure acceptance brings to the pursuit of holiness.
- Growth motivated by gratitude rather than fear.

Discussion Prompts

- How does resting in Christ's finished work free you to grow?
- Why does anxious striving often hinder rather than help holiness?
- How would pursuing holiness from security look different for you?

Question 7

Student Question:

Verses 19 through 22 say that we now have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus and should draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. What does this teach about the access to God that Christ has opened, and how we are invited to approach Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Mark the stunning reversal from chapter nine. There, the way into the holy places was closed, open only to the high priest once a year. Here, every believer has confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. The veil that kept worshipers out has been opened by the body of Christ, a new and living way.

Describe the access Christ opened. It is by His blood, through the curtain of His flesh, a new and living way. We do not approach God on the basis of our own worthiness or through repeated sacrifices, but through the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ and His ongoing priesthood over the house of God.

Unfold the invitation to draw near. We are to come with a true heart, sincere and undivided; in full assurance of faith, confident rather than hesitant; with hearts sprinkled clean and bodies washed, cleansed within and consecrated to God. This is the great practical conclusion of the whole argument: the way is open, so draw near. Encourage the class to take this invitation personally and seriously.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The opened access to God through the blood and flesh of Christ.
- The new and living way that replaces the closed veil.
- The invitation to draw near with sincerity and full assurance.
- Cleansed hearts as the basis for confident approach.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the opened veil change the way we approach God?
- What does it mean to draw near with a true heart and full assurance?
- What would it look like for you to take this invitation more seriously?

Question 8

Student Question:

The writer urges us to draw near, hold fast, and stir up one another, including by not neglecting to meet together. Which of these three is hardest for you right now, and what is one step you could take to grow in it this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Lay out the three exhortations clearly. Draw near speaks of our personal communion with God in worship and prayer. Hold fast speaks of perseverance in our confession of hope without wavering. Stir up one another speaks of our active role in the body, encouraging others to love and good works and not neglecting to meet together. These three cover our walk with God, our endurance, and our life in the church.

Note especially the call not to neglect meeting together. The writer treats the gathering of the saints as essential, not optional, and all the more important as the Day draws near. Faithful assembly and mutual encouragement are how believers help one another draw near and hold fast. This is a fitting place to affirm the importance of committed participation in the life of the local church.

Invite honest self-assessment. Ask which of the three is hardest for each person now. Some struggle to draw near, having grown distant in prayer; some struggle to hold fast amid trials; some have drifted from consistent fellowship. Encourage one concrete step in the hardest area this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The three exhortations: draw near, hold fast, stir up one another.
- The importance of faithfully meeting together with the saints.
- Mutual encouragement as essential to perseverance.
- Honest self-assessment of where we most need to grow.

Discussion Prompts

- Which of the three is hardest for you right now, and why?
- Why does the writer treat meeting together as so important?
- What is one concrete step you will take to grow in that area this week?

Question 9**Student Question:**

Verses 26 through 31 warn that if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, and speak of trampling the Son of God and profaning the blood of the covenant by which a person was sanctified. Some teach that a believer can never finally be lost. Using this passage, how would you explain the seriousness of deliberate, settled apostasy, who is being warned, and how this fits with the confidence and assurance the chapter also offers?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal high point of the lesson, so handle it with great care, clarity, and a pastoral spirit. Begin by reading the warning at full strength. If we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment. The phrase go on sinning deliberately describes not an isolated stumble but a settled, willful pattern of rejecting Christ after having known the truth. This is deliberate apostasy, a turning away from the Savior one has known.

Notice carefully who is being warned. The writer says this person has been sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and he includes himself and his readers in the word we. The one in danger is described as having received the knowledge of the truth and having been set apart by the very blood of Christ. This is covenant language for a believer, not an outsider. The warning, like the one in chapter six, is addressed to those who have genuinely belonged to God's people, which is precisely why it stands against the teaching that a believer can never finally be lost.

Spell out the gravity of the sin in the writer's own images. The apostate has trampled the Son of God underfoot, treating the Lord of glory with contempt; has profaned the blood of the covenant, counting as common and worthless the very blood that sanctified him; and has outraged the Spirit of grace, insulting the One who applied that grace. To turn away from Christ after knowing Him is not a small drifting but a deliberate trampling of the only sacrifice that can save. That is why there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins: not because God's mercy is exhausted, but because the person has rejected the only remedy God has given.

Address the teaching of eternal security or once saved, always saved directly but kindly. This passage cannot be reconciled with the idea that a believer can never be lost. A warning addressed to the sanctified, about a sin that removes any remaining sacrifice and leaves only a fearful expectation of judgment, assumes that those warned can indeed fall. Scripture elsewhere agrees, as when Paul says some have fallen from grace, and Peter describes those who, having escaped the world's corruption through knowing Christ, become entangled again so that their last state is worse than the first. Salvation is preserved through ongoing faith and faithfulness, and it can be cast away by deliberate, settled apostasy.

Then bring the pastoral balance the writer himself models, so the class is sober but not crushed. This warning does not describe the believer who sins, doubts, or stumbles and grieves over it; for such there is always cleansing at the throne of grace. It describes a hardened, deliberate rejection of Christ. The very fact that a person fears having committed this sin, and longs to return, is evidence that their heart is not hardened against grace. And the writer does not end in terror. He immediately recalls his readers to their earlier endurance and closes with confidence: we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. The warning and the assurance belong together. We take the warning with full seriousness precisely so that we will keep drawing near and holding fast to the faithful One who promised, and so never come near the danger it describes.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Deliberate, settled apostasy as a willful rejection of Christ, not a mere stumble.
- The warning addressed to those sanctified by the blood of the covenant, that is, to believers.

- The gravity of trampling the Son, profaning His blood, and outraging the Spirit.
- A clear, scriptural answer to the teaching that a believer can never finally be lost.
- Salvation preserved through ongoing faith and faithfulness, not an automatic guarantee.
- The pastoral balance: sober warning joined to genuine assurance for those who hold fast.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to go on sinning deliberately, and how is that different from a stumble?
- How does the description of being sanctified by the blood show who is warned?
- How would you comfort a tender-hearted believer terrified by this passage while still honoring its warning?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole chapter. The writer moves from the perfect sacrifice of Christ to the call to draw near and hold fast, ending with confidence that we are those who have faith and preserve their souls. Name one specific way you will draw near to God and one specific way you will hold fast this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the chapter's movement from doctrine to response. The perfect sacrifice of Christ opens a door, and the proper response is to draw near, hold fast, and spur one another on. Resist letting the answers remain general.

Help students name one concrete way to draw near, perhaps renewing personal prayer, approaching God with confidence rather than hiding, or coming to worship with a true heart. Then help them name one concrete way to hold fast, perhaps persevering in a trial, recommitting to faithful fellowship, or refusing to let go of their confession in a season of doubt.

Close by returning to the writer's final confidence. We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Send students home resting in the finished sacrifice, actively drawing near and holding fast, sobered by the warning yet confident in the faithfulness of the One who promised.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The movement from Christ's finished sacrifice to active response.
- Drawing near and holding fast as the twin responses to the gospel.
- Persevering faith that preserves the soul.

Discussion Prompts

- What is one specific way you will draw near to God this week?
- What is one specific way you will hold fast?
- How does the writer's closing confidence encourage you to keep going?