

The Book of Hebrews

Lesson 10: One Sacrifice for Sins; Draw Near and Hold Fast -- Hebrews 10:1-39

There is a moment in every long journey when you can see the destination, and it changes how you walk. The hikers who have trudged for hours suddenly straighten up when the summit comes into view. The traveler who has driven through the night leans forward when the lights of home appear on the horizon. The writer of Hebrews has spent nine chapters building his case, climbing the great argument about the priesthood and the sacrifice of Christ, and now, in chapter ten, he reaches the summit. He states the conclusion of it all in one stunning sentence: by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The climb is over. We can see home.

He begins by driving the final nail into the old system. The law was only a shadow of the good things to come, he says, and the proof is in the repetition. If those sacrifices could have made the worshipers perfect, would they not have stopped being offered? But instead, in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. So Christ came to do what they never could. Sacrifices and offerings God did not desire, but a body He prepared for the Son, who said, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God. And by that will, the writer says, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Then comes the turn that the whole letter has been waiting for. Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Three great calls ring out: draw near, hold fast, stir up one another. The doctrine has become a door, and the door is open.

But the writer will not let us walk through that door carelessly, and so he sounds the second great warning of the letter, every bit as sobering as the first. 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 one who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace, deserves a far worse punishment than the one who set aside the law of Moses. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And yet the writer ends not in fear but in confidence: we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hold on. The summit is real, the door is open, and the One who promised is faithful.

Group Discussion: The writer follows the glorious truth of Christ's perfect sacrifice with three great commands: draw near, hold fast, and stir up one another. Why do you think the right

response to such good news is not only to rest in it but also to hold fast and to spur one another on?

Personal Reflection: The writer urges us not to neglect meeting together, but to encourage one another all the more as the Day draws near. How are you doing at both giving and receiving encouragement in the body of Christ, and where could you grow?

Read Hebrews 10:1–39

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Psalm 40:6–8, the obedience that delights in God's will, fulfilled in Christ; Hebrews 4:14–16, drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace; Galatians 5:4, falling away from grace by turning from Christ; 2 Peter 2:20–22, the danger of returning to what we once escaped; Hebrews 12:1–2, running with endurance, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith.