

Sermon Series - Jesus the Perfect: Gazing on His Glory in the Book of Hebrews

Sermon Title and Text - Jesus the Perfect Sacrifice for Sins: Hebrews 10:1-25

Sermon Points:

Introduction: God Draws Near at Christmas to Create a Family

1. The Shadow that Pointed to the Reality (vv.1-4)

2. The Submission of Christ's Coming (vv.5-10)

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- **It is Once-for-All (vv.11-13)**
- **It Makes Perfect by Covering All Sins (vv.14, 17)**
- **It Changes Hearts by Writing the Law on them (vv. 14, 16)**

Application: Draw Near to God as a Blood-Bought Family (vv.19-25)

Father, thank you for your plan to draw us near in Jesus. Jesus, thank for your perfect submission to your Father even to the point of death on a cross. We praise you for your once-for-all sacrifice that has saved us from our sins and changes us from the inside out by the Spirit. Spirit, help us draw near and hold fast to God as a blood-bought family.

Introduction: God Draws Near at Christmas to Create a Family

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us)". (Matthew 1:21-23)

These are the words spoken by the angel to Mary. This Christmas there are a million things that would break in to distract us.

But, let's be clear that the reason the whole world still stops to remember this holiday is because the words the angel spoke were true. God came into the world 2,000 years ago in a humble cradle. And then about 30 years later, God died on a humble cross. And after he died, there was power and sacrificial love seen in his followers that could not be denied and has not been done away with for 2,000 years.

Jesus was born to die. Jesus was born to be the Perfect Sacrifice for sin.

Christmas speaks to us of our distance from God. We were separated from God. This distance in relationship was created by sin. All have sinned against God. And a sin against an infinitely holy God requires an infinite payment that sinful, finite humans could never pay on our own.

So, God came into the world to die the death we deserved to die as our substitute sacrifice. And not only would he pay for our sins, but he would pay to create a blood-bought family that would continue spreading the news of his birth and his death for sins so that more people could hear the good news, believe, and be saved.

Baby Jesus came into the world to be slaughtered as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

The Shadow that Pointed to the Reality (vv.1-4)

Now, let me give you some background to this picture of Jesus as the sacrifice for sins.

The nation of Israel was the people rescued by God to be his people from the land of Egypt. But, Israel was still a sinful, stubborn people. And so that God could dwell with them and not destroy them, he had them build a tabernacle to for his glory to dwell in and then he gave them 27 chapters in the book of Leviticus of regulations to follow in that tabernacle.

These regulations told them how to make sacrifices for sin. The tabernacle was a bloody, violent place with perpetual, daily sacrifices to make temporary atonement for sins against the holy God. The amount of blood spilled and sins committed is overwhelming.

When you read about these laws in Leviticus several things become clear. People are very sinful. God is very holy. And therefore, sin is very serious. In other words, sin deserves death. And instead of people dying, lots of animals died to pay for sins. Look at verses 1-4 with me:

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. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But yin these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

So here, the author calls that whole, day after day system that went on for thousands of years a shadow. Just a shadow.

Now the thing about a shadow is that a shadow tells you that the reality exists, but it also comes nowhere close the actual beauty and wonder of the reality. If you see the shadow of a building or person you know that building or person exists but you only have a dim outline of it and it simply leads you to the fuller reality. And that's what the author is saying here.

There is something really good coming, an infinitely superior sacrifice, but these sacrifices are just a shadow. Why are they only a shadow? I mean the blood and work must have seemed pretty real. Because they don't work. They don't solve the problem of sin.

How do we know? Because these imperfect priests have to keep making sacrifices for themselves and the people continually day after day and year after year. The simple fact that people had to keep coming over and over again means sin was never completely taken care of. The stain was not gone. The shame was not gone. Their hearts were not changed.

Sin against a holy God could never be paid for by the blood of bulls and goats, no matter how many you slaughtered.

Instead, this broken system was meant to point to the need for a sacrifice that could completely pay for sins and change people from the inside out because the system they had simply reminded them of their sin, their unchanged hearts, and their separation from God.

And here is a lesson for us. We will never try as hard with our good deeds to earn our way to God as Israel did. And it didn't work. It couldn't work. No matter how long they did it or how much they sacrificed they could not be cleansed. They could not be made perfect. They could not have their sins taken away for good. They could only be reminded that they were sinners with a system that couldn't ultimately save them. And in the same way, we cannot save ourselves with our good deeds. Our sin against God is infinitely serious and we need an infinitely worthy payment for sin.

The Submission of Christ's Coming (vv.5-10)

So, the old system of law and sacrifice did not work. It couldn't permanently remove the stain or the guilt of sin against God. But, in verses 5-10, Jesus comes on the scene, he comes into the world and he is going to replace the old system. Listen first to verses 5-7:

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 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.'"

These are radical words. The author here says that Jesus speaks to his Father and says that the ultimate desire of the Father is not that people would ritualistically follow the sacrificial system. God takes no pleasure in sacrifices completed when people don't have hearts that gladly desire to do his will. You see, **God was never after sacrifices alone, he was after the hearts of people.**

And, that tells us another problem with the old system. Not only could the blood of bulls and goats not pay for sin against a holy God, but it also could not change hearts to truly want to worship God. So most of Israel, simply was going through the motions. This is why we see Israel grumble so often and follow idols so often, and abandon the living God so often, because they are going through the motions of sacrifice but are not true worshippers of God.

And so Jesus comes, and first he points out that God does not want sacrifices from him ultimately, but instead has given him a body. This body Jesus is given is the body laying in a manger on Christmas and is the vehicle that will be used by Jesus to perfectly and gladly follow God's will like no human ever could.

Jesus is saying, "I know what my job is. My job is not to keep this system going. My job is to perfectly do your will from a glad heart. My job is to gladly submit to your will Father with this body you've given me. I will give what you really want, Father, perfect, glad obedience from the heart."

And then verses 8-10 explain exactly what's happening here.

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), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus has done away with the first sacrificial system that couldn't save from sins or change hearts. God has a new way that will make his people perfect and change their hearts. It is the sacrifice of Jesus himself. Jesus gladly obeys perfectly where we cannot obey and he obeys his Father all the way to the cross to pay for our disobedience and to pay for our changed hearts. Jesus is not the shadow, he is the substance.

The old system is out. It couldn't ultimately pay for sin against a holy God. It couldn't remove the guilt. And it couldn't change hearts.

If you are here today and your method with God has been to numb your guilty conscience by acting like sin is no big deal, hear clearly that Jesus had to die for our sins, our sins are serious and deserve punishment that only Jesus can pay for. And if you are here today and your method has been to hope that you can do more good than bad and earn you way to God, hear clearly that there is nothing you can bring to the altar of your life that will make you perfect before God like you have to be, only the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf will pay to set us apart as belonging to God.

Jesus is the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. His body was broken. His blood was shed. And through faith in his perfect sacrifice we can be set apart as the people of God.

The Sufficiency of Christ's Perfect Sacrifice (vv.11-18)

So, the author of Hebrews has shown that Jesus has replaced the old system, and now he is going to take a few verses to simply show the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. In other words, he's going to show us in three ways how much better this sacrifice is than the old system.

First, It is Once-for-All (vv.11-13)

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

I sometimes joke with my mom that she never sits down. She's always busy. Always doing something. She always has more to do. And that's the picture in the tabernacle with the old system. The priests are standing, every day, all day, repeatedly offering the same sacrifices over and over and over. And when the priest got off their shift, they better go to bed because they'd have to wake up soon to purify themselves from sin so that they could get back and make more sacrifices.

But, that's not how the sacrifice of Jesus works. He was the perfect, unblemished, pure priest that offered a single, perfect sacrifice for sins, his own body. Because Jesus perfectly submitted to his Father as fully human and fully God, he was the ***perfect priest and the perfect sacrifice***. Therefore, the sacrifice only had to be made once. Think of that compared to the old system! All those sacrifices couldn't take care of sin. The sacrifice of the body of Jesus one time does it for all those who believe! How precious is the blood of Jesus!

And then Jesus sat down. His sitting down at the right hand of God shows that his Father is pleased with his work and his work is finished.

And so now, right now, Jesus sits at the right hand of God, just waiting for the day when all of his enemies will be under his feet. His sacrifice was the decisive blow against Satan. There is a time of mercy now, where people can trust in this sacrifice and be saved from eternal punishment. But, all enemies of Jesus will be punished one day soon.

O Christian, find great joy that you don't need to go over and over again to try to earn your way to God. And if you haven't trusted him yet, trust him now. Trust Jesus. Trust his sacrifice for your sins.

Stop trying to numb your conscience or make a list of good deeds. Just trust the sacrifice of Jesus once-for-all. It is finished. There are no more payments to be made!

Second, It Makes Perfect by Covering All Sins (vv.14, 17)

Look at verse 14 with me quickly:

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

The first thing this verse teaches is that because the sacrifice of Jesus is finished, all those that trust him have been perfected. In other words, we stand before God perfect in his sight because Jesus has paid for our sins. Look at verse 17:

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

If you will trust the sacrifice of Christ, you don't need to wonder if God will hold your sins over your head later. They are paid for. They are not remembered by God. He looks at you and your tab for sins has been paid in full by Jesus. He will not come back like a divine collections agency later to get one more payment from you.

You are free. Your sins are paid for. You are perfect in the eyes of God if you trust Jesus. They have been cast as far as the east is from the west. Though they were like scarlet stains, Jesus has made them white as snow. So, let go of your shame over sin. Let go of your guilt. Give it to Jesus. He's paid for it. Stop living Monday-Friday to try to be good enough to earn your way to come to church cleaned up on Sunday. Instead, live knowing that you've been cleansed by the blood of Jesus once-for-all and God doesn't remember your sins or hold them against you. Yes, it seems impossible, but it's true.

Third, It Changes Hearts by Writing the Law on them (vv. 14, 16)

Now, notice one more miracle. We said one problem with the old system is that it couldn't change hearts. Well God wants our hearts and the sacrifice of Christ changes our hearts. Look at verse 14.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

The word for "perfected" and "sanctified" are actually the same word. So, Jesus perfected us once-for-all from our sins and he also is in the process of making us more holy now. He perfects us once-for-all by his sacrifice and he changes our hearts by his sacrifice. Do you see that in verse 16?

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds."

When you trust the sacrifice of Jesus, you are not only perfect in the eyes of God, but by the Holy Spirit he puts his laws on our hearts and minds. In other words, we can actually begin to obey from the heart like Jesus did. We don't obey because we're trying to appease God for our sins, we obey because God has transformed our hearts and we want to obey like Jesus did.

Application: Draw Near to God as a Blood-Bought Family (vv.19-25)

In verses 19-25 the author of Hebrews tells us how to respond to this perfect sacrifice of Jesus that cleanses us once-for-all from sin and changes us from the inside out. The event of Jesus coming into the world in a cradle to die on a cross is relevant for us today if we trust his sacrifice for our sins and every day as we seek to live lives that point to his sacrifice. So, how do we do that?

The first command is that we are to "draw near" to God. This is amazing. In the Old Testament, you couldn't go near God because he was too holy and you'd be destroyed. Now, because of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus we can draw near to God! We don't need to fear. In fact, in Hebrews 4 it says that because of the blood of Jesus when we draw near to the throne of God all we find now is grace, mercy, and help for those that have trusted Jesus. So, if you've felt far away from God or distant, draw near now. You don't have to clean yourself up first. The blood of Christ has paid for your sins. If you've never drawn near to God, trust the sacrifice of Christ right now and draw near to God for the first time. He is what you've been looking for. He is the only place you will find true, deep joy that cannot be shaken by circumstances. Draw near to him in his word. Draw near to him in prayer. We, right now, can enter into the presence of God because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

The second command is to "hold fast" to our confession. What have you been holding on to? If you draw near to God through his word, you will be reminded of his Son. And then you simply hold fast to that hope in Jesus. You hold fast to Jesus and his sacrifice more than sports, or money, or promotions, or friends, or power, or prestige, or relationships, or sex, or anything else the world has to offer. You hold on to Jesus in suffering. You hold on to Jesus because he is better than anything else this world has to offer and you know he has paid for your sins and is changing your heart.

The third command is to do this together. Don't just do this on your own. Gather together with other believers. Approach God together. Hold fast together. Consider how you can help others be

stirred up to great love and more good works that show that we are people that has been purchased by the blood of Jesus and has his laws written on our hearts. So, be with the body of Christ. Be with the people he has purchased. God doesn't mean for us to do this alone. Jesus came to create a blood-bought family that would love each other in ways that pointed to his love for us on the cross. A family that didn't need to sacrifice anything anymore to earn our way to God, but loved to live lives of sacrifice for one another to show the love of Christ.

So, whether this is your first time hearing this good news of the sacrifice of Jesus to pay for sins and to create a family, or you've been a Christian for a long time, today is the day to draw near to God, hold fast to the sacrifice of Christ, and to do it together with the blood-bought family of God. God drew near to us at Christmas in Christ so that the blood of Jesus could pay for a blood-bought family of people who have trusted Jesus, whose sins have been paid for, and who are always being transformed more and more to gladly obey Jesus.