

Week 18: FORMED Series

Jesus' Finished Work

Hebrews 10:1-18

¹ *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.* ² *Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.* ³ *But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins.* ⁴ *It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

⁵ *Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:*

*"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;*

⁶ *with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.*

⁷ *Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my God.'*"

⁸ *First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law.* ⁹ *Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second.* ¹⁰ *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

¹¹ *Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.* ¹² *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,* ¹³ *and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.* ¹⁴ *For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

¹⁵ *The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:*

¹⁶ *"This is the covenant I will make with them
after that time, says the Lord.*

*I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds."*

¹⁷ *Then he adds:*

*"Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no more."*

¹⁸ *And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.*

From this week's sermon:

In the message this week, Brian unpacked three ideas from the text.

1. Salvation is a trinitarian act. The Father, Son and Spirit are all referred to in this passage.
2. That we are in a time of waiting – Jesus has defeated the enemy – but we are waiting for Him to return.
3. Jesus' atoning work makes us holy before God (positionally), but we are still being made holy by as we follow Jesus each day.

Scholarly Insight:

Cockerill's Summary:¹

Each part of this concluding sacrifice section (9:25–10:14) plays an important role in finalizing the pastor's argument. Heb 9:25–10:4 establishes the finality of Christ's sacrifice. Heb 10:5–10 is the crucial explanation of why Christ's sacrifice was effective. Heb 10:11–14 is the climactic description of what Christ has done and become through this sacrifice so that he can empower the faithful for present perseverance.¹ These concluding verses reveal the full significance of the divine invitation (given in Ps 110:1; cf. Heb 1:3, 13) to "sit at my right hand." They are no mere summary or recapitulation but a conclusion that brings the impact of all that has been said home to the hearers.² The pastor makes one final contrast between the old priests and the new: according to 10:11, the ineffectiveness of the old is exposed by their perpetual standing throughout their ministry. On the other hand, according to 10:12–14, in his preeminent position as High Priest permanently seated at God's right hand the Son possesses all authority necessary to assist the faithful.

Guthrie's Explanation:²

Most religions involve some form of human "doing" for God—"sacrificing" something to win favor with the Almighty. At the heart of Christianity stands the core truth that God has done something for us, through the sacrifice of his Son, that we could never do for ourselves. He has taken our sins out of the way, forgiven us completely, and relates to us, intimately and eternally. An analogy to how we should respond to God's graciousness is set in Brazil. A woman named Dona Nusa lay in her casket, killed in a car accident the day before. Her son Cesar, her daughter, other relatives, and a young woman named Carmelita stood near by. Tall and dark, Carmelita was dressed this day in simple clothing. The young woman, from the interior of Brazil, had been adopted into Dona Nusa's family more than two decades earlier. At that time she was seven years old and an orphan, the product of a prostitute and an unnamed father. Moved by compassion, Dona Nusa intervened, taking little Carmelita into her family. When almost everyone else had left the funeral chapel, Carmelita stayed behind, weeping quietly at the side of the casket. Earnestly, tenderly, she leaned over the coffin of her adopted mother, caressing it gently. She voiced her good bye with "Obrigada, obrigada" ("Thank you, thank you"). Dona Nusa had reached out and given Carmelita a life that the little orphan had no ability to craft for herself.²² Pure graciousness. We should weep; for God has given us the freedom, the forgiveness, the life, which we could not win for ourselves. Our tears are not tears of separation but tears of homecoming; not tears of death but tears of life; not tears of a past but tears falling on a bedrock of hope for the future. Our sins have been taken away and we, through the accomplishment of another, have been brought to the Father and incorporated into his family forever. This is the gospel.

For Reflection:

Two questions to sit with before God and allow the Spirit to encourage and direct you personally:

- Are you intentionally pursuing holiness in your life?
- Are you welcoming the internal work of the Spirit?

¹ Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Eerdmans, 2012), p. 446.

² George Guthrie, *Hebrews*, (Zondervan Academic, 2009), p. 337.

For Discussion:

1. Read Hebrews 10:1-18 aloud together. Based on the series so far, what is one word, phrase or image that stands out to you as you read, and why?
2. The sermon describes the old sacrificial system as "a shadow, not the reality itself." What did the repeated sacrifices teach God's people about sin, even though they couldn't deal with it totally?
3. Cockerill points out that the contrast in verses 11-14 isn't just old vs. new sacrifice, it's posture: the old priests stood, endlessly, because their work was never done; Jesus sits, because his is. Why does a seated priest tell us something a standing priest never could?
4. Verse 14 uses two different tenses for "made perfect" and "being made holy", one completed, one ongoing. Why does the author hold both together instead of choosing one?
5. Guthrie contrasts Christianity with religions built around human "doing" to win God's favour, and illustrates it with the story of Carmelita, an orphan adopted by a family, who years later wept at her adoptive mother's casket. Guthrie says her tears were "not tears of separation but tears of homecoming." What's the difference between relating to God out of gratitude for a gift already given, versus relating to him out of pressure to earn or repay it?
6. This passage names two opposite errors: treating grace as license to keep sinning ("cheap grace"), and doubting that Jesus' sacrifice was really enough for you. Do you ever find yourself drifting toward either? If yes, when does this happen?
7. If your standing before God is already secure - "made holy" once for all - what should actually motivate you to resist sin day to day, if not fear or earning favour?
8. Verses 12-13 picture Jesus seated, resting from his finished work, while waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool. How does living in this "already/not yet" (victory won but not yet fully seen) shape your perspective on ongoing struggles with sin and/or suffering?

Pray for each other:

Father, thank You that through Jesus, our sin has been dealt with once for all. Help us to take sin seriously and trust fully in the grace you have given us. By Your Holy Spirit, continue to make us holy, may we welcome the Spirit's transforming work in us to become more like Jesus each day. Amen.

Formation Practice:

As we explore being Formed by Jesus this series; we want to encourage you to do this simple exercise every day for the next 2 months. It can take 5 minutes or more, whatever you are able to achieve (and as you do it more and more, you'll likely find it easier to spend longer listening and reflecting).

"Draw Near Daily" Rhythm (5-10 minutes)

- **Come:** Quiet yourself before God.
- **Confess:** Be honest about sin/struggle.
- **Receive:** Remember what Christ has done.
- **Respond:** Take one step of obedience.