

I Have Come to Do Your Will

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to the book of Hebrews. This past week I was reading in the book of Hebrews, and I love the book of Hebrews.

I love Hebrews because God gives me such deep assurance of my salvation as I read in Hebrews. But yet, I also love it because somehow at the same time, He also gives me such powerful and penetrating warnings that my soul needs to turn away from sin and to keep following Christ faithfully.

Well, this week as I was reading in Hebrews, I came to chapter 10. In chapter 10, as the author comes to it, he's talking about the sacrifice that Jesus offered for us and how much better Christ and His sacrifice is than the Levitical high priests and the animal sacrifices offered long ago according to the law.

So, let's read some of these words together. I'm going to read Hebrews 10, from verse 1 down to 18. So, a little bit longer section. And let's reflect together on these words this morning as we prepare to take the Lord's table.

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.

[1 : 38] 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. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins.

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. With burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, Here I am. It is written about me in the scroll.

I have come to do your will, my God. 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.

Then He said, Here I am. I have come to do your will. He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

[2 : 55] 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.

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. And since that time, he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.

For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this.

First, He says, 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.

Then, He adds, Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more. And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

[4 : 03] There's so much in these words, we could spend days unpacking it all. But for this morning, as we come to the Lord's table, I want to just focus in on two things. The first is a question.

It's, What is the will of God that Jesus came to do? You see there in verse 7, Christ came into the world, and He said, I have come to do your will, my God.

What is that will? What is God's will that Christ came to do? And the second thing is, What does Jesus doing that mean for us? I was deeply moved as I reflected on these two questions this week.

Let's just start by having an overview, a little summary look at what the author of Hebrews is saying here in these verses which lead up to that. In verses 1 to 4, the author of Hebrews makes this wonderful statement that the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming. He talks about what the Old Testament law required. He talks about the priests and how they were required to offer sacrifices for the cleansing of the people who ever wanted to come near to worship God.

[5 : 22] He says that those sacrifices, they had to be offered again and again, year after year. Why? Because those animal sacrifices were not able to make the people perfect.

They were only able, as we read in chapter 9, to outwardly cleanse the people, to make them ceremonially clean of the past sins that they had committed.

Now God did say back in the law that when they brought an animal of their flock and offered it as a sacrifice that they would be forgiven. But there still remained a sense in which those sacrifices, those animal sacrifices, were like a temporary covering of sin.

Because as the author of Hebrews says in verse 4, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. And I think deep down inside we all know that, don't we?

It was costly for a man or woman to take one of their own animals out of the flock, a perfectly good animal, and bring it to the temple where it would be slaughtered as a sacrifice.

[6 : 38] It was costly. But deep down inside we all know that true justice requires more than that, don't we? We know that the appropriate cost for our sins is much more than just the life of an animal.

the cost for us, for our sins, is death. That's what the Lord said clearly to Adam in the Garden of Eden.

In the day that you eat of the fruit of that tree you will surely die. The consequence for defying the Lord of glory is death.

death. Yet still we often wonder, don't we, why God prescribed animal sacrifice, such a bloody and gruesome thing to make atonement for the sins of the people.

But the reason we wonder, I think, is because we don't properly feel the ugliness, the seriousness of our sin.

[7 : 48] we think it a small thing to do what is wicked, to do what is sinful, to do what is selfish. We think it a small thing to defy the living God, the righteous one, but it's not.

The bloody and gruesome animal sacrifices were meant to help us see just how bad our sins really are. in the sight of him who is good and righteous and just.

They were a shadow pointing to a greater reality. And even though God prescribed these animal sacrifices to be brought for a time, deep down inside God's heart, he did not desire these animal sacrifices.

Verse 5, when Christ came into the world, he said, sacrifice and offering you did not desire. And then again in verse 6, with burnt offering and sin offerings, you were not pleased.

There's a difference between requiring something to be done and desiring something to be done. this is not a perfect analogy, but it's like this with our children.

[9 : 14] When our children disobey, we give them consequences. We discipline them, not because we want to, but because we have to. For all you kids listening, if your mom or your dad are disciplining you in the way that God has said we should, then they discipline you because they love you.

Because they want you to learn to do what is right. They want to teach you that there are consequences to disobeying those in authority over you.

But as a parent myself, I can tell you that disciplining my children is something I'm required to do for the good of my children. It's not something I desire to do.

In fact, even when I do, I feel in my own heart the sting of the consequence that they receive. It's like that with God. He is good. He is just.

And so, yes, sacrifices are required. But God doesn't take pleasure in the slaughter of animals. He doesn't take pleasure in the sting of the cost that's felt by the person who had to select that animal and bring it from his own flock.

[10 : 34] God is not, as Richard Dawkins once said, vindictive or bloodthirsty. In fact, God cared for each of those animals even more than their owners did, even more than you or I might think that we care for them.

It was God who said, do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain. Let him eat while he is going along. It's God who in Proverbs 12.10 said, the righteous care for the needs of their animals. If the animal sacrifice is revolting to us, how much more is it revolting to the one who himself made that creature and called it good and cares for it?

So even though God required animal sacrifices for sins, he did not desire them. He took no pleasure in them. But I think as we read here, the biggest reason why he did not desire them, it's right here in the text, he did not desire them, because these sacrifices did not and could not accomplish what God most deeply desires for his people.

And nobody knew this better than Jesus, God's own son. Verse 5, therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said, sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.

[12:10] With burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, here I am. It is written about me in the scroll.

I have come to do your will, my God. God. I love these verses. It's as though the author of Hebrews is peeling back the skin and opening up so that we can see the very heart of Christ as he speaks to his father.

As Jesus speaks these words to his father, it's as though Jesus is saying, I know, Father, that you do not desire these animal sacrifices.

I know that they don't please you. And so here I am. I am here to do what you really truly desire and long for your people.

I am here to do your will. And so we come to that question. What is Jesus come to do that God wills, that God wants?

[13:20] What is the will of God? what is it that God most deeply desires for his people, that Jesus came to do? The answer is this.

What God wants, what God wills and desires, is what those animal sacrifices could never do for his people. He desires for his people to be cleansed clean of their sin, not just outwardly, but inwardly. he desires for his people to be covered, to be atoned for, not just temporarily, but permanently, lastingly, once and for all.

He desires for their guilt to be truly and fully taken away, as the animal sacrifices could not do. He desires and wills for his worshipers, as we read in verse one, to be made perfect.

And as we read in verse 10, to be made holy. That's the will of God. That's the will of the Father.

[14:35] Sometimes we come to that place, though, I think, where we think, or where we're tempted to think, that God the Father is not for us. That he doesn't really love us.

that he's mostly angry with us because of our sins. We might think that in his heart of hearts, he's really just waiting for us to finally cross that line again so that he can pour out his judgment on us and strike us down.

And maybe we love Jesus much more because we see him as the one who has come to stand in the gap between us and this angry God. We might think that Jesus loves me.

This I know. But the Father, deep down inside, wants to see me suffer for my sins. But nothing could be further from the truth.

What did Jesus say when he came into the world? It's right there in verse 9. Here I am, he says to his Father. I have come to do your will.

[15:50] I've come to do what you want, what you desire. And what is that will, that heart, that desire of the Father?

It's for you to be and have what the sacrifices of animals could not do for you. It's for you to be cleansed inside, clean, and out as well for your guilt to be taken away once and for all, for your legal indebtedness to God to be taken care of.

What the law requires, paid in full, forever. He desires for you to be made perfect, to be holy, to be made holy, and that forever.

Verse 10, and by that will, he says, we have been made holy. How? Through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ.

Once and for all. Animal sacrifices couldn't do what God in His heart of hearts wanted to do for you. A much, much costlier sacrifice was required.

[17:18] The sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once and for all. this is what happened at the cross 2,000 years ago. Jesus, the perfect Son of God, He came as the ultimate High Priest and He offered on our behalf Himself as the ultimate sacrifice, the one sacrifice which could accomplish the

will of God and put an end to all sacrifice forever.

And all of this, the author of Hebrews tells us is part of a new covenant, a new arrangement that God was coming to with His people. As the author of Hebrews said earlier on, the old sacrifices, they had to be made again and again, endlessly.

The people kept sinning and so they had to come and bring another sacrifice and offer it to cover their sins. But this new covenant deal with Christ, is infinitely better.

This new covenant deal secured by the blood of Jesus leads us to verse 17. It leads us to God the Father saying their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.

Gone. Forever. Verse 18, and where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

[19 : 03] What Jesus did at the cross brought a forgiveness so full, so all encompassing, so deep, so true, that there will never ever be a need for another sacrifice to be offered.

Lord, you know, what really got to my heart here is this. It's one thing in a moment to forgive someone for all the wrong that they've done to you in the past, but it's another thing in one moment to forgive them for all the wrong they will ever do in their entire life, even before they've done it. what does this mean for us? It means that when we sin against our God, every time we do it, we do not have need of another sacrifice to be offered because what Jesus suffered at the cross, he suffered for yesterday's sins, he suffered for today's sins, and he suffered, yes, even for the sins of tomorrow.

There's no perfect analogy for this, but let me try a couple. It's one thing to pay the bill for someone else for a restaurant meal that's already been eaten, but it's a whole other thing to pay the bill for someone else at the restaurant, not just for the meal they ate, but for every meal they will ever eat at that restaurant ever again.

And it's not a good analogy, because sinning against God is not like a restaurant meal. It's wrong. It's evil. It's more like crime.

[20 : 50] It's one thing to pay the fine of someone else after they've committed a crime. It's another thing to pay enough so that every infraction, every crime they will ever commit for the rest of their life is paid in full, and justice is done.

it almost sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? That God would love us with a love like that and forgive us with a forgiveness like that, but it's not, because God is not like us.

If someone sins against us again and again and again, eventually there comes a time where we are ready to say to them, enough is enough, I will not forgive you again.

It hurts too much, or I just don't care about you anymore after all you've done to me. But God loved us so deeply that what he wanted to do was to give us full and free forgiveness for every sin that we would ever commit, past, present, and future our entire lives, so that nothing could separate us from him ever again.

And so Jesus came to do, to accomplish that desire of God, that will of God for all who repent and believe in him.

[22 : 26] The suffering, the agony, the pain, the shame that we deserve, even for the sins that we will commit tomorrow, Jesus took that upon himself at the cross 2,000 years ago.

In God's books, what God wanted, it is finished. Let's take a few minutes to reflect on this and to pray quietly.

David's going to put on some music break. And Rod is going to, after a couple minutes, come around with the bread and the cup. These things, of course, are a reminder of the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, which was broken and shed for us.

If you believe that because of what Jesus did on the cross for you, there is no need for any more sacrifices, then I invite you to partake with us, to eat and drink with us.

Just ask that you hold on to the bread and the cup, both, until everybody has been served and then we will partake together.