

Hebrews 10:1-25 AM

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 March 2024

Preacher: Rev. Chris Ley

[0 : 00] Well, good morning again, and a special welcome if you're watching us online, especially if you're not usually watching us online, maybe slept in this morning.

Certain irony, the text ends with a strong exhortation to not give up meeting together. We're happy you're watching. We look forward to seeing you next week.

In my professional opinion, and I know a thing or two about this, I feel today that there is a spiritual openness to faith that I have never experienced before in Vancouver in my lifetime.

I think people are searching for God. People are open to the Almighty. Maybe that's why you are here this morning, or you're listening online.

You're looking for God because you're searching for hope, or meaning, or truth, or change. The modern ideals and contemporary idols that people have been putting their trust in are collapsing all around us under the weight of human expectation and also human brokenness.

[1 : 13] These worldly sources of hope are failing us. Today, many people are dissatisfied, disconnected, depressed. I think many are looking for God because ultimately their lives feel hopeless.

And today, through God's Word, we see how the Holy God draws near to each of us. God comes to be with us.

That's the Christian hope. He enters our hopelessness. He comes into our messy lives. We're told if we seek Him, we will find Him.

If you knock, the door will be opened. And Hebrews 10 shows us how. Our text this morning reveals the way to God.

Now, it's a dense passage, and unless you've memorized it, I think you'd find it helpful to open the Bible in front of you. It's the black or blue book to page 1006 as we journey there together.

[2 : 19] Hebrews 10 tells us that historically there have been two ways to God. There's a first way, an old way, through animal sacrifices and priests and an altar and a closed, inaccessible holy space and rituals.

And these are all outlined in the book of Leviticus. We're all experts in Leviticus now. We all know this old way. Our text this morning tells us this old way of drawing near to God is obsolete and is ineffective.

Because there's a new way to draw near to God. A better way. A perfect, permanent, living way. To dwell with the living God forever, enjoying His presence and reflecting His holiness.

Hebrews 10 tells us the old, obsolete way to God and then a new, living way to dwell with God forever. And the passage ends with an invitation for all of us to take this new way, to draw near, to hold fast, and to stir one another to draw near as well.

So first we're going to look at the old way, which the author simply refers to as the law. So look at how Hebrews 10 begins in verse 1. For since the law, the old way, 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.

[3 : 55] The system of animal sacrifice in Leviticus is called a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form. Because the sacrifices of animals cannot make perfect the people who perform them.

God is holy. He is holy perfect, holy righteous, holy good, holy pure, and powerful. But we aren't. All humans have turned away from God. Away from His righteous commands. Away from His love. Away from His will. The Bible calls this sin.

And it infects all of us. And makes all of us unholy. Human sin and God's holiness cannot coexist. It's like how darkness ceases to exist in the presence of light.

Or how dry paper is instantly consumed when it's brought into contact with the flame. Our sin and God's holiness are not compatible.

[5 : 01] His righteousness and purity and power will destroy us if He draws near. Because of the sin that dwells within each of us. There's a chasm between God and His holiness and us and our sin.

The animal sacrifices of Leviticus are described as a covering for human sin. An atonement.

Whereby the sin of the people is placed upon an animal.

That is sacrificed to atone or to cover for the sins of the people. But this external ritual does nothing to fix the internal problem of sin that exists in every human heart.

It covers our sin. But it does not remove it. This is why verse 1 reminds us that the sacrifices need to be offered continually. Year after year.

The sacrifices outlined in Leviticus cover the sins of the people. But they don't stop the people from sinning again. The root of our problem. The sin in the human heart is left unchanged by external animal sacrifices.

[6 : 12] It's like if there's a water leak in your home. You see your wall has a wet stain. And a puddle is forming on the floor. And your solution is to just hang a picture over the water stain.

To grab your rug and pull it to cover up the puddle. You can't see the water leak anymore. It's been covered by the picture in the rug. But you've done nothing to fix the underlying problem.

There's something wrong inside your wall. And merely covering it is a temporary external fix. To an internal continual problem.

You have not made your wall perfect. You've just covered the problem. And so the problem will persist. And even grow worse. This is the point verse 2 brings up.

It says if the animal sacrifices in Leviticus were effective in removing our sin. And cleansing people. Then continual sacrifices wouldn't be needed. Verse 3 tells us that these animal sacrifices.

[7 : 16] Rather than removing sin. Are instead a continual reminder. That the sins of the people are still there. Still at work within them. Every time the Israelites saw a new sacrifice made.

It was a reminder that they were still sinners. If the animal sacrifice made them perfect and sinless. Then there wouldn't need to be any more sacrifices. The sacrifices cover the sins of the people. Like a picture frame over a leak in the wall. But they do not remove the sin that corrupts from within. Verse 4 summarizes all of this by saying that it's impossible.

For the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. And so the ritual sacrifices must go on and on. As the sins of the people continue and spread. And they did go on and on for centuries.

Verse 11 gives the picture of the priests. Needing to stand daily to do their service at the altar. Offering repeatedly the same sacrifices over and over for themselves and for the people.

[8 : 18] Sacrifices which can never take away their sin. The old way of Leviticus does nothing to make God's people holy on the inside. Rather it just covers their sin with the blood of unknowing animals.

But God's desire is not merely to cover our sin. But to remove it. To recreate us from within. So that we don't sin anymore. To make a way whereby our sin is forgiven. And we are then transformed. So that we might be holy as God is holy.

And sin no more. And so a new infinitely better way to God is revealed. And it starts in verse 5. Verse 4 says it's impossible for the blood of animals to take away our sins.

Therefore for this reason Jesus came into the world. Because the old way was imperfect and ineffective at making God's people holy. Jesus came.

[9 : 20] Jesus came to make us like God. To take our hearts that are contaminated and infected with sin. And to transform them into pure hearts.

That desire to do God's will. Jesus uniquely can do this. Because he is already holy. There is no sin in him.

Because his desire was never for himself or his will. But instead to do the will of God. Look at verse 5. Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired. But a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. And then in verse 7 Jesus says. Behold I have come to do your will oh God. As it is written of me in the scroll of the book.

Jesus is the model for us of what it looks like to be holy. He's our example. The perfect human. The new Adam. The new Adam. He is both the image of the invisible God.

[10 : 24] And also simultaneously the image of the perfect righteous person. And so Jesus paves a new way for us to draw near to God.

Verse 9 says that he does away with the old first way of drawing near to God through animal sacrifice. In order to establish this far superior second way. And then here it is in verse 10. And by that will. By Christ's desire to do God's will. We have been sanctified. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Once for all. The new way of drawing near to God transforms us. Sanctifies us. It makes us holy. It makes us like God. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Once for all.

Notice the new way to God involves sacrifice as well. But the sacrifice offered was Jesus Christ. He gave up his perfect sinless body.

[11 : 26] Not only to atone for our sin. But to make a way whereby our sin is removed from us. Forgiven. Forgotten. Extracted.

So that we can now be truly sanctified. Made perfect. Made holy. This isn't just hanging a photo over the water leak inside your wall.

It's removing all the corrupted pipes. And replacing them. And renovating your entire house. To be perfect. So that it will never leak again. And this bill for all this work of remediation and renovation. Is paid for. Not by you. But by Jesus. When Christ is offered for all time. A single sacrifice for sins. Verse 12 tells us.

He sat down. At the right hand of God. Jesus gave himself unto death. For all our sin. To forgive our sin.

[12 : 25] And to sanctify us. And then after his death. He sits down at the right hand of God. A dead man can't sit on God's throne. A corpse cannot be the king of kings.

And the Lord over all. This verse shows us Jesus lives after his death. He dies. But now behold he's alive forever.

His work is complete. And so now he sits alive again. Having defeated death by his resurrection. Proving God has accepted his sacrifice. And glorified him. And now Jesus takes the posture of a victorious reigning king.

Whose work is complete. Jesus sits on the throne of heaven. Next to his father. And waits for the great day. When all his enemies will be subjugated. And judged.

And destroyed. Under his feet. And then verse 14. For by a single offering. He has perfected for all time. Those who are being sanctified.

[13 : 31] If you are in Christ Jesus. You are a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. In Christ you are being sanctified.

God's work in you is perfected. It is completed. Through his offering. This is the work of God. And it's the new way to God. Through his son. By his Holy Spirit. Jesus saves us. He has sacrificed himself for us.

He forgives us. And he perfects us. He's sanctifying us. Putting his law in our hearts. And writing it on our minds. He remembers our sin no more.

It's all grace. It's all God's initiative. We do nothing to earn it. It is God's gracious gift.

[14 : 31] Offered to all of us. Today. And now the greatest truth. In verse 18. Where there is forgiveness of these. There is no longer.

Any offering. For sin. Because in Christ. Our sin has been taken. And forgiven. It is now forgotten. And because our sin.

Is no longer counted against us. Because our debt. Has been paid. By the offering. Of Christ's own body. There is no longer. Any need. For future sacrifice. It.

Is. Finished. If we. Had to conduct. Any subsequent. Sacrifices. For our sins. Then we are saying. That Christ's sacrifice.

Was insufficient. Christ has made a way. For us. To be with God. Forever. By offering himself. As a sacrifice. He has paved the way.

[15 : 26] Whereby our sins. Are forgiven. We're sanctified. And we can finally. And forever. Draw near to God. So in summary. So far. The old. Obsolete way.

Of drawing near to God. Through Leviticus. And animal sacrifices. Has been fulfilled. And replaced. By a new way. Through Christ. By his sacrifice. And in light.

Of this truth. The passage. Now ends. With an invitation. For all of us. Look at verse 19. Therefore. Sisters. And brothers.

Since we. Now. Have confidence. To enter the holy places. By the blood of Jesus. By the new. And living way. That he has opened. For us. Through the curtain. That is. Through his flesh.

And since we have. A great high priest. Over the house. Of God. Let's pause there. For a minute. The blood of Jesus. Has made a way. For all. Who trust in him.

[16:23] To receive. The authority. To enter the holy places. The holiest. Of holies. Doesn't matter who you are. Or how you look.

Or what you've done. In your life. Before today. You are invited. Right now. To enter the presence. Of the Lord. The holiest.

Of the holy places. By the blood of Jesus. In this verse. The author paints. An incredible picture. He invites. All of us. To walk.

Into God's. Eternal. Heavenly. Temple. Through the various. Courtyards. And rooms. Of escalating importance. Until we come. To the curtain. That separates us.

From God. The barrier. Between us. And the holy of holies. But when we get there. We see the curtain. Has been opened. For us to walk. Right up.

[17:16] To the father. This way. To God. We are told. The world is new. And it's living. Because Jesus is alive. He is the way. To God.

The curtain. That was intended. To separate us from God. To divide unholy. From holy. Is drawn. It's been opened.

For it's the flesh of Jesus. What was once. The barrier. Between God. And us. Is now the bridge. No one gets to the father.

Except through him. In Hebrews 10. Jesus is the new. And living way. To God. He is the perfect. Sacrifice. Made once. For all.

Jesus is the king. He's the Christ. Who sits on God's own throne. He's the curtain. That opens. For us. Life with God. And Jesus is the great. High priest. Over the house of God.

[18:12] It's a pretty high view. Of Jesus. If you believe. In Jesus. You will dwell. With God. Forever. By his blood. And his body. Your sins. Are taken away.

And forgiven. By his spirit. You are sanctified. And made holy. Through him. God's law. Is written. On your heart. And you're transformed. Into his image.

I think Christians. Sometimes make the mistake. Of believing our faith. Is just about having our sin. Forgiven. That all Jesus. Offers. Is to cover. Our sin.

By his sacrifice. And punch our ticket. To get into heaven. When we die. Hebrews 10. Tells us. That not only. Does Jesus. Forgive our sins. By his sacrifice.

But by his spirit. He sanctifies us. He transforms us. Into his image. As we put our faith. In him. The gospel.

[19:09] Of Jesus Christ. Is about more. Than avoiding hell. It's about entering heaven. It's about entering. The house of God. With full authority. And confidence.

To dwell with God. Forever. It's about being made holy. As God is holy. Having your sinful heart. Replaced by a heart of holiness. And righteousness.

Our hope as Christians. Is not just in our forgiveness. Our hope is in our holiness. God not only saves us. He sanctifies us. In Christ.

We're transformed. Into his image. We become holy. As he is holy. In Christ. And through his spirit. We become like God. Righteous. Just. And holy.

Through him. The seeds of the gospel. Grow in us. And flower. To form a bountiful harvest. The fruit of the spirit. Ripens in us. Our sin.

[20:07] And its effects. Is replaced. By love. And joy. And peace. And patience. And kindness. And goodness. And gentleness. And self-control.

God draws near to us. He forgives us of our sins. And he begins this work. Of sanctifying us. To be holy. As he is holy. So that we might dwell with him. Forever. And all of this.

Is available to all of humanity. If we just put our faith in Jesus. And recognize him. As the Christ. And as the son of God. God. This perfect. Permanent way.

To be with God forever. Is open to you. Right now. It's been opened by Jesus himself. And you are invited. To draw near to God.

Through the blood of Jesus. And all this. Is yours. In him. And if you are ready. And wondering how you ought to respond. Our passage ends.

[21 : 04] Helpfully. With three things. All of us. Should now do. God. Christian author. Dallas Willard. Once quipped. That God's grace. Is not opposed to effort. It's opposed to earning.

Following Jesus. Takes effort. You don't earn your salvation. But that doesn't mean. You don't have to try. And walk. And follow him. So here are three things.

To do today. To start your journey. Along the way. Of Jesus. The first. Is in verse 22. Let us draw near. To God. God has drawn near.

To us. In his son. Jesus Christ. In order. To bring us. To God. So draw near. Respond. To this amazing grace. With faith.

Draw near. With a true heart. In full assurance. Of faith. Knowing your heart. Has been sprinkled. Clean. From an evil conscience. And our bodies. Washed. With pure water.

[22 : 02] In Christ. Your sin is gone. So draw near. Easter. Is almost. Upon us. It's in 21 days. This is the perfect time.

To draw near to God. Lent. Is the season of growth. Of new life. Of light. Pushing back. The darkness. So take this time. To grow.

In Christ. To draw near. To God. If you read. One chapter. Of the gospel. Of John. Starting today. You will finish.

On Easter Sunday. Why don't you do that. If you've never read. A Bible before. Better yet. If you're here. At church. With a friend. Next to you. Get them. To read John. With you. We've all been learning.

About this great resource. Called the word. One to one. That walks through. The gospel of John. Why don't we do that? The holy God. Draws near to us. Let us respond.

[22 : 56] By drawing near. To him. In full confidence. That in Christ. We have the authority. To enter his presence. The second way. We're invited to respond. Is in verse 23.

It says. Let us hold fast. The confession. Of our hope. Without wavering. For he who promised. Is faithful. I think it's relatively easy.

To accept the message. Of the Christian faith. Faith. I mean. It's such good news. How could you not want. To receive it? Who doesn't. Want this gospel.

To be true? Look at all. That God has done. For you in Christ. Look at all. That he offers you. And all you need to do. Is receive his grace. Which is freely given.

It's relatively easy. To accept the Christian faith. The challenge. Is to keep the faith. When trials come. When the good news.

[23 : 53] Of Jesus Christ. Grates against your lifestyle. Or your desires. Or your relationships. That's when we lose faith. When the going gets tough.

Frankly. In a place like Vancouver. Many Christians. Don't hold fast. Many of us let go. A Canadian study. In 2013. Found only one third.

Of children. Raised going to church. Will remain in the church. By the time. They're young adults. And of the two thirds. That leave. Most leave. The Christian faith.

Altogether. I grew up. In a fantastic church. The full Sunday school. Of at least. A hundred kids. Every week. But statistically. Most of those kids.

Are probably not following. The Lord today. This should upset us. We must help each other. Especially our young people.

[24 : 47] Hold fast. To our faith. We must remind each other. How wonderful Jesus is. We need to check in. And see how others are doing. In their faith.

When the clouds come in. And the sea billows roll. We should be praying for each other.

Encouraging one another. Checking in. Maybe volunteering to lead. Or serve our young people.

In whatever way you can. So that we can encourage them. To hold fast. So that we can be a model. Of faithfulness. Let us first draw near. Let us secondly hold fast.

And now thirdly. Verse 24. And let us consider. How to stir up one another. To love. And good works. Not neglecting to meet together. As is in the habit of some.

But encouraging one another. And all the more. As you see the day drawing near. Consider how to stir one another up. Our faith in Jesus. Is not exclusively private.

[25 : 44] And personal. It's a shared faith. It's a common faith. That unites all of us. As a family in Christ. Our fellowship with Christ. Includes an imperative.

To be in fellowship. With his people. That's why we're invited. To stir one another up. Don't let others. Stagnate. In their faith.

Stir them up. Spur one another on. To love. And good works. We had our annual vestry. Or AGM. On Monday night.

And it was the best one. I've ever been to. At any church. It was recorded. If you weren't there. And you should watch it. On YouTube. I suggested to my Bible study. While they did their dishes. My wife thought that was very rude.

At vestry. We heard all these stories. Of how God is at work. Spurring people in our community. To love. And good works. We heard how God has used us.

[26 : 42] As a community. To sponsor and support. 31 refugees. Who have come to Canada. In 2023. How King's Cross. A church we planted last May. Is attracting non-Christians.

Every week. To experience and welcome. The love of Christian community. And the joy of the gospel. And we have heard how God. Is using our community groups. To become missional. As well as formational. And relational. There are lots of good works. And initiatives. Motivated by love. That are happening. In our community. Right now. So join one.

If you are stagnating. In your faith. Look at what God is doing. Amongst us. And join in his work. The practical application. Hebrews 10 gives.

To spurring one another on. Is to encourage one another. Not to give up. Meeting together. I think we need to be a community. That notices. When people are missing. And follows up with them.

[27 : 39] To see what's going on. Absence from church. Can be a bellwether. For spiritual stagnation. Or struggle. Especially for young people. If someone is missing.

Who you know. Check in. See how they're doing. Encourage them. In their faith. And spur them on. To draw near. And to hold fast. The holy God.

Draws near to us. By a new. And living way. By the blood of Jesus. Our great high priest. The once for all. Sacrifice. That forgives our sin. And sanctifies our hearts.

So that we might. With full authority. Draw near to God. So let us draw near. Hold fast. And stir one another up. Amen.