

# The Complete and Ultimate Sacrifice

a sermon in the series  
Hebrews: An Epistle of Encouragement

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by S. Michael Durham  
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## Hebrews 10:11-18

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

It is very frustrating to have made a purchase and once you get it home to discover all the pieces are not there. For example, purchase a man's or ladies suit and have the pants or the skirt missing. What good is the remaining garment without the other? It is of no value by itself. Recently Karen and I ordered an apparatus for our daughter Victoria called a "Touch Window." It's a screen you put on the front of your computer's monitor. The program that comes with it will interact with the child using it. Pictures and words appear on the screen and as Victoria touches it she is able to interact with the program. It is a valuable aid for learning language skills. When, the package finally arrived we opened it up with excitement and began to put the system together. As we progressed we discovered the cord leading from the touch screen, that is affixed to the front of the monitor, was not long enough to plug into the back of our computer. So off to Wal-Mart we went and I purchased an extension to fix the problem. When I got home I discovered that the plug ending on the cord would not fit any of my existing serial ports. So another trip of search and rescue was launched. Finally I found an adapter that would fit the cord end but none to fit the computer. So I came up with the bright idea that I would find an adapter for the adapter and then it would work. Thinking we had all the missing pieces necessary to make it work, we loaded the program only to learn that the program could not find the touch screen. Apparently the manufacture did not give us the necessary driver to make the program work. I hate it when that happens!

Well, some persons I fear have an incomplete gospel. They preach that Jesus is able to forgive but unable or unwilling to preserve the believer. They think the work of perseverance is dependent upon the Christian. It is as if something is missing from the redeeming work of Christ and we must supply the missing elements, as in my above story. To much of the same degree this was what Paul was addressing when he wrote this epistle. Some believed that Christ was not sufficient in His sacrificial work and was therefore defective. Thus Paul sets up a contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ. He contrasts the sacrifices of the Old Testament priests and the sacrifice of Christ. Let us examine the contrasts and we will find the work performed by Jesus was more than adequate. In fact, you will find it a “Complete and Ultimate Sacrifice.”

## **A FUTILE SYSTEM**

*And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins (Hebrews 10:11).*

What a sad verse. This verse describes wasteful futility, a sad commentary on a system that could avail nothing for the saving of the soul. Talk about all being vanity. Generation after generation of men laboring daily for nothing. This verse brings sorrow to my heart as I think of the uselessness of all their efforts. It was a worthless work! Yet, they who performed the sacrifices surely believed they were performing a service of immense wealth and value. They truly believed they were doing something that would merit God’s favor and His smile. They deemed themselves essential and important to the nation, for without them how could anyone hope for God’s pleasure? But with pen in hand and with this one verse Paul strikes their hollow system and scatters it to the four winds.

This verse painfully reminds me of some of you who stand daily laboring in the service of self-righteousness, thinking that you are doing what is required of you by God. To those of you who have a graceless religion this verse is your commentary. It is an epitaph to your goodness and works. The epitaph reads, “Can never take away sins.” How hard you labor and all for nothing. Being baptized, perfect attendance to church, contributions in the offering plate merit nothing concerning salvation. Like the priests who thought they were doing a valuable and necessary work you will be bitterly disappointed in the end.

Watch the priests as they go through the motions of doing their duty. It is so routine to them. Like robots they move in a mechanical manner without any passion. No sooner had the day ended and the last evening sacrifice was finished that it was morning and time for the routine to start all over again. Even God’s saints can suffer from this malady. Your devotion is not as fervent as when you first knew the Master. Dear friend, does your religion seem so little to you now? Are you able to go through the motions without having to think about them? Oh, how repulsive is a mindless Christianity! Worse still is a heartless faith! Do you find your obedience having no heart? The passion is gone from you. Score those words of our text and be warned, “and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices.”

And, for another reason, we ought to meditate on the words of our text. It was an abundant work. Perhaps the priest was like many unsaved church members today thinking that doing much is beneficial. The more you do the better. “Repeatedly the same sacrifices,” the words speak don’t they? Over and over in abundance they did the work of ministry.

Perhaps the idea was, surely the more I do the more God is impressed. You have met such people. I know I have. I used to be that way. We are the kind of people that if one aspirin is good then two has to be better. I thought the more I prayed or the more I witnessed about Christ the better my rating with God. Jesus warned us of this mind set. He plainly said it would avail nothing with God. Jesus said,

*But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen [do]: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking (Matthew 6:7).*

There are no scales in heaven, no weights to measure your performance. It does not matter how often you’ve performed acts of charity towards others or attended Sunday school. Truckloads of repeated sacrifices of human labor will not gain you entry into the gates of that fair city. The saints will be rewarded for their works and faithfulness to the Lord but it is not these works that gets them to heaven. It is the work of only one Man, Christ Jesus the Lord that gets any one to heaven.

The religious system of the Old Testament could not save and neither will the system you have established. Christ came and established the only way to God and eternal life. It can be no clearer than in the text of Hebrews 10:9, “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

## **A FINISHED SACRIFICE**

*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12).*

“But this Man,” states the contrast from the previous verse. And oh what a holy contrast it is! What 1500 years of priests could not do, Christ has done! I love the contrasts of the Bible and its use of conjunctions. The Bible first gives the bad news and while reading it you wonder if there is any hope. You conclude all is useless and then comes those glorious conjunctions like the one in our text, “but.” The scenario has been established in verse 11. All man could do to secure right standing with God was ineffectual, futile and hopeless. All the ministering of priests and all the blood of sacrifices could not save anyone. All the prayers of the holy men of the tabernacle could not assuage the anger of God against sin and sinners. Man is doomed in his sins, but, but, but this Man! That is why this Man is called Savior. “But this Man.” Dear child of God aren’t those words beautiful? Oh it should be music to our hearts. What a divine and blessed conjunction!

Note the first contrast after the blessed conjunction. First Christ, unlike all the Levitical priests, offered only one sacrifice. There is no repeating of sacrifices with Jesus. There is no “daily . . . offering

oftentimes the same sacrifices.” With Him there is just one offering, one sacrifice. Christ was able to do with one sacrifice what all the generations of sacrifices could not do, take away sins. But how, with one sacrifice, was this possible?

How might we be sure that Christ is able to completely vanquish our sins and remove them from us? We know that He was able to perform miracles such as turning water into wine and rebuking wind and wave. But removing the sin debt from His people does not involve reversing some natural law. This is sin and it is a transgression of spiritual law. Such laws cannot be circumvented nor temporarily suspended. To do so would in effect cause God to cease to be holy. How then can we trust this Man? We know he even raised the dead from their sleep of death but how shall He remove the prospects of eternal death from us? Here’s how, by a better sacrifice. By the giving up of His own life and tasting death for everyone that believes in Him. He is truly the Lamb of God given not to ceremonially but in reality suffer for our sins.

Doesn’t this tell us something about the value of the sacrifice of our High Priest? Why it is infinite. It is infinite in nature and infinite in worth. As our Sacrifice hung on two rough-hewn and splinter riddled planks of wood He paid an infinite price for those who would trust and treasure Him. It requires an eternity to pay for the sins of one man. And yet in one Man on a cross the eternities of an innumerable host of people were paid for. The Sacrifice had to be infinite in value.

A few weeks ago a minister and I were conversing on this very subject. He was disputing my assertion that the atonement of Christ is infinite in value and worth. He said if this were true then all men must be saved. I replied quite to the contrary. I reminded him that under the old Levitical priesthood and covenant, God prescribed the number and kind of sacrifices to be offered on the Day of Atonement. It mattered not how many Israelites there were the sacrifice was sufficient to make them all ceremonially clean before God. If one year there were one million Jews and the following year there were two million the same sacrifices that covered the sins of one million covered the sins of two million. The same is true of our Christ and a whole lot more. If God had intended to save ten million more than He has decreed, the blood of the Sacrifice would be sufficient. He would not have had to suffer one degree more nor would have undergone any severer agony. When the sacrifice is infinite in value it matters little how much it can purchase.

I appreciate the doctrine of particular redemption. I do believe that Christ died for only the elect but the intention of Christ’s death has nothing to do with the value of His sacrifice. In other words, it does not matter how many God intended to save, the value of Christ and His sacrifice is still infinite. I agree with Spurgeon when he said,

I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merits of the blood of Jesus: If my theological system needs such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds. I cannot, I dare not, allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind, it SEEMS SO NEAR AKIN TO BLASPHEMY. In Christ’s finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all in the world, but all in ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed their

maker's law. Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question. Having a divine person for an offering, IT IS NOT CONSISTENT TO CONCEIVE OF LIMITED VALUE; bound and measure are terms INAPPLICABLE to the Divine sacrifice." (Autobiography, Vol. I, p. 174).

This is why the writer of Hebrews said, "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." His one sacrifice is of infinite value; therefore it need not to be repeated. Our infinite guilt is swallowed up in His infinite agonies. Our shame that reaches to heaven itself is now buried in God's infinite sea of mercy. The sword of our rebellion has been melted by the boundless love of the Sacrifice. Stack your sins one on top of the other and they will not reach infinity, no matter how greatly you have broken God's law and hated His cause. Had I sinned enough for a thousand lives the Sacrifice's infinite worth would still be far greater than all my sin. Forever justified oh how sublime! "One sacrifice for sins for ever."

The second contrast after the blessed conjunction, "But this Man," is that unlike the Levitical priests who were still daily standing in the temple ministering the sacrifices and offerings, Christ is seen seated at the right hand of God. This signifies that the work is completed and needs nothing in addition. You cannot add anything to perfection for it lacks nothing. Why then do some of you still try to finish what has been finished lo these two thousand years? A full glass cannot receive one drop more and the full measure of Christ's redeeming work cannot receive any of your additions. It saddens me to watch men and women try to help God save them rather than surrender. What a pathetic thing it is to watch a corrupt creature strut around as if he or she can do something God can't. Their proud hearts say, "God can't save me unless I pray the right prayer; or unless I am remorseful of my sin to this certain degree." Others think that a change in conduct is all that is needed. Dare you add to a finished work anything? Would you be so bold to add something to a painting like the Mona Lisa or Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper? No you wouldn't because these are masterpieces needing nothing. Do you say to Christ, "Get up, this thing is not done. Let me help you?"

Dear friend, your repentance and your faith are works of the Spirit of God. God does not say that you should believe to the degree a seasoned veteran of the cross believes. He simply said that faith the size of a mustard seed is sufficient. And it is He who supplies that and not you. Go to Christ Jesus right now and see His sufficiency. Look at Him! Do you see Him worried as to whether or not He can save you? Is He wringing His hands? Does He get up and pace? No and a thousand times no! He is seated calm and collected at the Father's right hand. Bow down and cast your pride to hell where it belongs and trust Jesus. If you have any faith at all exercise it.

Some worry about whether or not they feel guilty and sorry enough. Repentance is no different than faith; it too is a gift from God. That is why week after week I plead with the unbeliever to seek Christ and appeal for mercy. They can add nothing to what He has already finished.

But no doubt one of you would say to me, "But we are to believe and repent in order to be saved." Oh yes this is true. The sinner receives salvation upon these two conditions being exercised. And it is the sinner that must exercise them. But these two, faith and repentance are not works that

save the sinner. Salvation is wholly of the Lord and thus it is He who is the sacrifice for sins forever, that when He died He purchased these for you. Where do you think they come from? Surely not you or I. These are given to you by the Holy Spirit and are the products of the new birth. They are never to be understood as additions to the work of Christ. They are a part of His redeeming work.

*From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool (Hebrews 10:13).*

Let us look at the victory of the sacrifice. The conquer has taken His seat. The conflict is over. The sounds of battle are hushed. The war that had raged is now a recorded fact in history. The war zone is desolate. The Lord Jesus has defeated sin, satan and death.

*It is finished, the battle is over.  
It is finished, there will be no more war.  
It is finished, the end of the conflict.  
It is finished, and Jesus is Lord.*

If this is so, why is the condition of the world the way it is? If the victory is finished and Christ is the victor why all the mess? The answer is not all of the enemies have been gathered under His feet. They are defeated but they have not yet been brought to bow at His feet. Do not mistake the brief delay between His triumphal resurrection and this present moment as a sign of weakness. Just the opposite is true. It is a time for the benefits of His finished sacrifice and victory to reach a number, which cannot be totaled. It is this gesture of mercy by which He takes the power of His victory to the depraved hearts of men and women and transforms them. Oh no, this brief interlude is hardly a sign of weakness or an inability to finish the conquest. It is the loving-kindness of the conquering King releasing all that He wills from the enemy's captivity. Would you be claimed as His prize? Lay down your weapons, surrender and be saved. This is a day of salvation. Believe in our Lord's finished sacrifice and victory over sin.

## **A FULL SANCTIFICATION**

*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).*

Now we come to the heart of the message of this text. We come to the fulcrum of our faith. Is Christ's sacrifice as complete as we say it is? There are some who would say it is sufficient to forgive the sinner his sins but not sufficient to guarantee the completion of any believer. In other words, it was designed to save from the guilt of sin but not secure a full sanctification. Sanctification can be defined differently. In this verse it does not mean to dedicate but to cleanse. Sanctification is the process of taking the new convert and over his lifetime transforming them into the image of Christ. Simply, it is the grace of God working holiness into the life of the believer.

There are those who accuse us of preaching a doctrine that, instead of encouraging holiness, encourages sin. They say that any who would preach the perseverance of the saint, better known as the security of the believer, is preaching dangerous heresy. But how can I preach otherwise? How



could I dare to make my lips utter anything less than a sufficient sacrifice for sin and sanctification? To say any thing less than this is, to me, the act of swearing obscenities. It is obscene to think that Christ's sacrifice is no more sufficient than the blood of bulls and goats. If our Lord's death did no more than grant acceptance with God then it does no more than what the Old Testament sacrifices did. Our Lord's death purchased more than the removal of sin and guilt. It also secured our growth in grace. It secures all whom it saves. Listen again to the text, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever."

Let us make these observations. First, the word perfected means, as we said last week, justified or acceptable to God. God declares us not guilty. Therefore we are in His favor. This perfection is not our own but it is the imputed righteousness of Christ. This is our state of being as believers. We are always in a state of acceptance with God. This is the grand teaching of justification.

Second, notice the duration of this accepted state of justification. It is forever. Strip just one day from the word "forever" and it is no longer forever. This is exactly what those who claim that a true believer can lose his salvation do. They reduce to nothing the word forever. Our salvation is an eternal salvation. If I am not eternally saved then I do not have eternal life. Some argue and say the words "eternal life" has nothing to do with duration but quality of life. Oh, dear friend, is this the strength of your argument? And what shall we expect of heaven? Is it not life eternally with God? Does the word "forever" also mean quality and not duration? You cannot so easily squeeze this word "forever" into your theological mold. It is both quality and quantity. Do not strip from Christ's finished work one blessed promise. Don't take from it one iota, for to do so is to leave something less than perfect that cannot guarantee anything.

My friends across the isle on this subject want to remind us of our responsibility to continue in faith and obedience to Christ. If this is your concern, I will address it in just a moment. But first, if His death atoned, which means paid for all our sins, I ask, did He not pay for all our unbelief and all our acts of disobedience? If not, then tell me which sins are not atoned for and how can this Paul give us the hope of believing that all our sins, past, present and future are taken away? Which sin of yours do you not want atonement for? Friend we both know all of the sins of believers have been nailed to the tree of offense when they nailed our precious Redeemer to it. Colossians 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Oh, how quick we can run amuck when we try to lessen the meaning or change the definition of God's words. It must be forever and it must include all of our sins. Yes, even the sins of unbelief and disobedience that we as Christians often commit.

Having said all this, I must confess I do sympathize with my brothers and sisters who disagree with me on the matter of eternal security. I understand their concern which is a very grave concern. They are deeply opposed to a doctrine that would say a Christian can live in perpetual unbelief and disobedience and still be considered a child of God. Well, ladies and gentleman, I am as deeply opposed to such a teaching as they are. I find it repugnant and a travesty to the powerful grace of God to think that one can be saved and, because of grace, continue to live like an unconverted sinner. The Scriptures cannot be used to support such a teaching. The Bible thunders just the opposite. Christ said,

*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 15:10).*

**On another occasion He said,**

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed (John 8:31).*

Surely we cannot and should not contest the truth that continuing in obedience is a requirement of being a disciple of Jesus. There is no room in God's army for traitors or deserters. Faithful perseverance is a necessity if we are to claim heaven as our future address. Even in the book of our study, Hebrews, the apostle is constantly reminding us that continuing, persevering and remaining in a state of faith is imperative for the duration of the Christian life. Let us not forget the warning he gives us in Hebrews 3:12-14:

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

Therefore, any teaching that would suggest that one can live contrary to these warnings and still be saved is the real heresy. The grand and assuring doctrine of the perseverance of the saint, known as eternal security, does not teach but opposes such heresy. Any who claims that eternal security means otherwise is in terrible error.

How are we to understand a salvation solely by God's grace and a salvation conditioned upon our obedience? Our text is probably one of the best teachers. It supplies the answer. This one verse makes it clear that the child of God will not continue in a lifestyle of wickedness. Because of the finished sacrifice of Christ there is for the believer a full sanctification. Only those whom Christ has saved will continue in the pursuit and will attain holiness. Salvation is not for those who do not progress in righteousness. It belongs only to those who, as our text says, "are being sanctified." That is why I say under this heading that thirdly, this process of sanctification will be complete.

*Hebrews 10:1 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

The Authorized Version states "are sanctified." Does this mean that all believers are sanctified and cannot grow or progress further in this grace? Could we interpret these words to mean we have arrived to a state of entire perfection? No we cannot. It does not mean any of this. In the Greek text, from which our English version is translated, the words are in the present and continual tense. This means the text is literally saying, "them that are presently and continually being sanctified." (author's translation) This is significant and sheds much light on the question of how to understand a salvation that is by grace and a salvation conditioned upon obedience. Why, the light of the sun cannot be any brighter than the clarity of this verse! Jesus' sacrificial offering of Himself has for-



ever made acceptable and justified those who are being sanctified by that same sacrifice. In other words only the one's who are growing in grace have truly been saved. You cannot have justification without sanctification. Christ's offering attained for us both of these blessed gifts. Verses 15-18 tell us of these benefits we have discussed; a finished sacrifice and a full sanctification is the fulfillment of the New Covenant.

You see there is no such person as a believer who, with time, is not making some progress in holy living. It is nonsense and downright blasphemous to say that Christ's sacrifice can forgive the guilt of sin but cannot ensure any growth thereafter. I do not want a kind of salvation that cannot help me conquer my own inner corruption. I have no time for a gospel that can only make me a temporary citizen of the kingdom but cannot guarantee me permanent residency. What kind of good news is it to save me and then abandon me to my own might to overcome my flesh? Such is not good news but is a bad news of bondage, for all who believe such are in bondage to their flesh to conquer their flesh. Nonsense!

Those who disagree will quickly say that we must submit to the Spirit of God and seek God's grace to overcome the flesh instead of relying on the flesh. Exactly, and this is what this verse says and, more importantly, guarantees. It guarantees this for every true believer. This is what I call a full sanctification. God has promised to supply me the grace of sanctification until the very end. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6) The grip of grace is enduring!

Now let me turn the spotlight of this verse upon our hearts and ask, are you progressing in sanctification? Are you with time growing in grace? If there is no fruit of the Spirit growing on your branch then you can know you are void of His sanctifying Spirit. You are not a branch abiding in Christ. He will cast you forth into the fire of His burning justice. There the flames of His righteous anger against sin will consume you, like a withered branch.

To those of us who can see God's work in our life, although it may be more of the chastening kind than any other, we can rejoice that our Lord's offering is sufficient to get us home with joy. I, like many of you, often grieve over the fact that I do not progress as much as my heart desires. But the truth of the matter is not how much I grow but that I am growing. Be encouraged dear pilgrim. There maybe many setbacks. We are often we are made to know our weakness but He is our Captain, the Author and Finisher of our faith. His death is perfect and it is finished. Therefore we have confidence of a full sanctification culminating one glorious day at the throne of God. Don't focus on your weaknesses but look upon His strengths. Don't preoccupy yourself with your besetting sins but meditate upon His redeeming and sanctifying death. Quite analyzing your insufficiency and rest in our Lord's sufficiency. This is the walk of faith, and its object should be Christ and not ourselves.

Even as we sang today the Christian should sing at all times the marvelous blessing of God's mercy toward us. What a blessed gift is our High Priest's offering.

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood,  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Guilty vile and helpless we,  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
Full atonement can it be,  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Lifted up was He to die,  
"It is finished!" was His cry;  
Now in heaven, exalted high,  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

Oh yes, we who are saved ought to cry to the top of our lungs, "Hallelujah! What a Savior!" He is the only one who can justify and sanctify. He is the only one who can get us started on a journey of grace and see us through to the end of the journey. This is the gospel. The futile systems of men's labor save none. Christ through one sacrifice finished our salvation, which is comprised of both justification and sanctification. Take it into your heart and then take it into your home and tell it to your loved ones. Take it to work and tell your fellow employees. Take it to school and tell it to your friends. But first, if you haven't already, please take it into your heart right here right now. Amen.