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Sermon Notes

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Made Holy Forever By One Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:11-18

The “Perfect” Man or Woman? How does the world conceive it? How do you think about it?

What is more to the point... how could YOU become the “perfect you”?

What is “human perfection”? How could we attain it?

This magnificent text is the FINAL STEP in the doctrinal presentation of the Letter to the Hebrews

This is the last time the Author will make his point about the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice

Here we come one final time to the power of Christ’s statement

“It is finished”

Which could be translated,

“It is PERFECT”

And it could be added...

“And now, by faith in me, SO ARE YOU!!!”

Hebrews 10:14 by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Context:

- In some ways the high point and centerpiece of the entire Epistle!!
- The author is writing to Jews who had made some outward profession of faith in Christ but who were under immense pressure—persecution—to forsake Christ and return to Old Covenant Judaism
- The Holy Spirit uses their immediate and temporary plight to teach a succeeding generations of Christians VITAL LESSONS about the salvation Christ came to work

- More generally, the Holy Spirit is also using their plight to teach us all how the Old Covenant has been completely fulfilled and superseded by the New Covenant Christ came to establish
- In this way, we have both an explanation of the Old Covenant, and the clear command to move beyond it
- It explains both why the Lord established the Old Covenant, with its animal sacrifices, and why those sacrifices are no longer acceptable or needed today
- Without Hebrews, we might be wondering what all that was about in the Old Testament... the Bible itself might seem like a disjointed book with no real cohesion
- Instead, because of this vital lynchpin—this magnificent Book of Hebrews—everything fits together and makes sense
- The author has been tracing out the superiority of Christ throughout the Letter... Christ is superior to:
 - The Old Testament prophets who spoke at many times and in various ways, when Christ is God's final word to the human race
 - The angels who mediated the Old Covenant, but who were merely servants serving God's people
 - Moses who was merely a servant in God's house establishing the Old Covenant which could never save a single sinner from sin
 - Joshua who merely brought Israel temporarily into Palestine under the legal strictures of the Old Covenant
 - Aaron who was merely a sinful priest offering symbolic sacrifices that had no real power to remove sin
 - Even to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, who paid a tithe to Melchizedek and thus acknowledged the superiority of Christ
- Now the author is settling into the centerpiece of his argument: Jesus is the superior HIGH PRIEST, and His once-for-all sacrifice, offered in the heavenly tabernacle is perfect and achieves the actual redemption of which all those Old Covenant sacrifices were merely pictures
- The endless repetition of the animal sacrifices proves one thing plainly:

Hebrews 10:4 it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

- By contrast, in Hebrews 10:5-10, we have Christ taking on a human body so He can die on the cross for us all:

Hebrews 10:5-10 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, O God.'" ⁸ First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 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.

- The perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross means the end of the animal sacrificial system
- It means more than that... it means YOU ARE PERFECT in God's sight

I. The Superiority of Christ's Priestly Ministry (vs.11-12)

A. One Last Time: Hebrews 10:11-18 a Final Summary of the Doctrinal Section

1. Nothing new or shocking here
2. Many of these same points have been made repeatedly
3. BUT this is the last time the Author will make them
4. The issue: the total (infinite) superiority of Christ to the Levitical Priesthood

B. Five Points of Superiority

1. "Day after day"/"Again and again" vs. "Once for all time"
2. "Every priest" vs. "One priest"
3. "Stands" vs. "Sat down at the right hand of God"
4. "The same sacrifices" vs. "One sacrifice for sins"
5. "Which can never take away sins" vs. Perfectly effective to make us holy

C. The Total Ineffectiveness of Human Devices

1. We can do NOTHING to appease God
2. We can do NOTHING to quiet the conscience

3. The Old Covenant regulations were established by Almighty God and they were completely INFEFFECTIVE in accomplishing forgiveness with God and cleansing the conscience
4. How much more all purely HUMAN efforts
 - a. False religions are ineffective
 - i) Medieval Catholicism (and its modern counterpart) is a futile system of man-made works of religion: the sacramental system, confession to a priest, ritual washings, indulgences from the Pope, penances distributed by priests, the saying of the rosary—ten Hail Marys, and an “Our father...”—to appease God and calm the conscience
 - ii) I have seen Tibetan Buddhism first hand... some spiritually hungry pilgrims travel from all over the world in quest of some spiritual enlightenment, some answer to the deepest questions of the soul; when they arrive in Kathmandu, they are greeted by the most vain system of idolatry; a large *stupa*—a Buddhist shrine, round, covered with white plaster, with stairs going up, with a lofty pillar in the center, with weird human eyes painted on it; with ropes going up to the top of the pillar and prayer flags flapping in the stiff breeze; the pilgrims walk around this structure, and with every circuit they think to reduce their karma—there are Buddhist prayer wheels which they spin as they walk past
 - iii) NEITHER OF THESE HUMAN RELIGIONS CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING in the way of appeasing the wrath of God and cleansing a guilty conscience
 - b. Human moral effort is ineffective
 - i) “turning over a new leaf”; resolving to stop drinking, to stop sinning sexually, to be a better person from now on
 - ii) All of this done through human will, human determination, for the glory of human pride in self-betterment
 - iii) Completely ineffective in appeasing God and cleansing conscience... as a matter of fact, God HATES the pride of such efforts
5. Friends... if the very system that Almighty God Himself established in the Old Covenant—animal sacrifices offered by the Sons of Aaron at the prescribed tabernacle/temple in the prescribed pattern—if that system itself is deemed “useless” and “unable to take away sins,” HOW MUCH MORE a human system that God never commanded us to do???

D. By Contrast: The PERFECT EFFECTIVENESS of Christ’s Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:14 by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

II. Christ Seated at the Right Hand of God... and Waiting (vs. 12-13)

Hebrews 10:12-13 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool

A. Christ's Perfected Achievement

1. After Jesus had offered FOR ALL TIME His ONE SACRIFICE for sins
2. This one for all offering shows the superiority and perfection of His death on the cross
3. The blood of Jesus is the treasure box from which the cost of our entire salvation is paid

Illus. Imagine a young boy in the colonial era, left by a rich uncle to fend for himself at an inn; he has left him a single coin, and this poor farmboy has no knowledge of the value of the coin; but it is a gold sovereign, worth enough to pay for room and board for months; imagine he gave in that coin to the innkeeper and that innkeeper was a scrupulously honest man: the boy asks, "Will this be enough for me?" The innkeeper takes the coin, looks at it in amazement and says, "This is more than enough... everything you need will be amply provided for." From that one incredibly valuable coin, the boy's food and shelter is provided for for as long as he needed to stay there.

So it is with the blood of Christ... it is an infinitely valuable treasure box from which the Father can draw ample merit to pay for all the grace you need for the rest of your salvation...

From the merit of Christ's one offering flows ample grace to pay for your entire salvation

B. The Significance of Christ's SITTING DOWN at the Right Hand of God

1. AFTER Christ had presented His one offering He sat down
2. This seating of Christ is a major theme in the Book of Hebrews
3. It is mentioned FOUR TIMES, but each time slightly differently
 - a. Hebrews 1:3... a SEAT OF DIVINE GLORY as the eternal Son of God

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

- b. Hebrews 8:1... a SEAT OF PRIESTLY GLORY as the superior and final High Priest

Hebrews 8:1-2 We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

- c. Hebrews 10:12 (here)... a SEAT OF PERFECT SACRIFICIAL ACHIEVEMENT, signifying that His sacrifice has been accepted by God

Hebrews 10:12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

- d. Hebrews 12:2... the SEAT OF THE VICTOR, the CHAMPION who ran His race to the end and receives the victor's position of honor

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- 4. At the right hand of God, Christ is exalted and in a position of power
 - a. His power is used FOR US, to BENEFIT US
 - b. From that position, He intercedes to the Father on our behalf, representing us in heaven

Illus. Charles Spurgeon in that sense likened Christ to our AMBASSADOR... sent from earth to a foreign country (heaven) to speak to the King there and to keep the peace between the two countries (heaven and earth); whenever the Ambassador is welcome in the foreign court of power, that signifies a healthy peace between the two countries; Christ is CONSTANTLY WELCOME in heaven for us

- c. From that position, Christ rules the universe to benefit His church

Ephesians 1:20-23 [God the Father] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way

- d. And from that position, Christ waits for His enemies to be destroyed

C. Christ Waiting for His Enemies to be Made a Footstool

- 1. The seventh and final quotation of Psalm 110 in the New Testament

2. Here the focus is on the future of Christ's enemies... those who hate Him, who oppose Him, who are fighting against the establishment of His Kingdom... or even those who are indifferent to Him—who reject Him and will not worship Him

3. God the Father speaks quite plainly to the Son:

Hebrews 1:13 "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

4. God's zeal is to exalt the Son and ensure His glory

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 8:48-50 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" ⁴⁹ "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

5. Part of that zeal is to crush any who will oppose Him

Psalms 2:4-6 e One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ⁶ "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

6. The absolute terror of having Christ as your enemy

D. Christ Waiting Patiently

1. The text presents Christ as waiting patiently for His enemies to be destroyed

2. The patience of God toward His enemies is astonishing

Romans 9:22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction?

E. Christ Waiting in Expectation

1. The text speaks of Christ waiting IN EXPECTATION for His enemies to be subjugated under His feet

2. The Greek word implies that Christ is looking forward to it in expectation, eagerly awaiting it

3. These are the rebels who have, along with the devil and His angels, defiled His universe with sin and sought to crush His bride the church

F. Christ Waiting in Submission and Dependence

1. Christ is ALWAYS in perfect submission to the plans and will of His Father
2. And His Father is calling for Christ's enemies to be made a footstool gradually
3. At ANY MOMENT, the sovereign power of Almighty God could be unleashed and all of His enemies destroyed instantly... BUT GOD DOES NOT WILL TO DO IT THIS WAY

Exodus 9:15-16 For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. ¹⁶ But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

4. The perfect plan of God the Father allows the enemies of Christ seemingly to flourish and to wax strong in opposition to Christ and to His people
5. Christ does not need immediate vindication, knowing that the plan and will of the Father is perfect
6. Christ meekly and gladly awaits the day the Father has APPOINTED by His own wisdom... there is a SET TIME the Father has ordained for the final destruction of Christ's enemies

Acts 17:31 For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

7. So also the church must learn to wait patiently for the enemies of Christ to be made His footstool
 - a. Some of those enemies are violently persecuting the church even today... governmental leaders who are using their authority to kill or imprison Christians
 - b. But the Scripture speaks plainly of the necessary patience that is part of the Kingdom

Revelation 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 6:9-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to

wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

G. The End of Christ's Enemies: Either Converted or Condemned

1. Christ has power to convert His enemies and make them His beloved

Acts 9:1-6 **Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."**

Colossians 1:21-22 **Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation**

2. If not, Christ will crush all who oppose Him... especially seen in the terror of His Second Coming

Hebrews 10:27 **a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.**

Revelation 19:19-21 **Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.**

III. By One Sacrifice We Are Made Holy Forever (vs. 14)

Hebrews 10:14 **because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**

A. The Once-for-All Achievement of Christ's Sacrifice is Celebrated Again

B. The Logical Link

1. "For" or "Because" means this is the REASON why He sits

2. Christ sits because His atoning work is finished and so are His enemies (ultimately)
3. The Battle is WON... and His sitting on the throne is a sign of His peaceful status as victor
4. The real battle was at the cross... and BECAUSE THAT BATTLE was won, Christ can sit forever at the right hand of God

C. Perfect

1. The word is a powerful one in Hebrews... we see it again and again

Hebrews 7:11 *If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come-- one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?*

Hebrews 7:18-19 *The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

2. God is absolutely perfect in His person and in all His ways

Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

3. This is especially true when it comes to sin and evil... there is no evil in Him at all

1 John 1:5 *God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

4. Total perfection is NECESSARY for heaven... moral spiritual perfection

Matthew 5:48 *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

5. Without it, we cannot DRAW NEAR TO GOD... God's perfect holiness must lash out against us and destroy us
6. But the beautiful teaching of this verse is that, by ONE SACRIFICE CHRIST HAS MADE US PERFECT
7. We see the effect of it mentioned in Hebrews 12, concerning those who are already in heaven

Hebrews 12:23 *You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,*

8. We have every right to stand before a holy God BLAMELESS and UNAFRAID

D. Forever

1. The perfection this ONE SACRIFICE achieves is ETERNAL... we are made perfect FOREVER!!!
2. The Old Covenant sacrifices could only make the people temporarily sanctified, temporarily ceremonially clean... they had no power to make the people permanently clean
3. That is why they had to be offered again and again
4. But the perfection that is ours in Christ is FOREVER

E. Those who are Sanctified

Hebrews 10:14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

1. My initial understanding of the verse... still possible, but not likely...
 - a. the sanctification of this verse is that PROGRESSIVE GROWTH in Christ that comes gradually, little by little, as we more and more obey God's commands as Christians
 - b. the Greek supports this in terms of the verb tense
 - c. the one sacrifice MADE US PERFECT FOREVER (past tense)
 - d. but we are BEING MADE HOLY (sanctified) NOW (present tense)
 - e. thus we have in one verse a combination of justification and sanctification
 - f. this is very attractive, because we must understand our perfect position in Christ as the ground for our ongoing growth in obedience to Christ's commands
 - g. the fact that the Author immediately goes on to talk about BOTH the forgiveness of sins AND the writing of God's laws in our hearts and minds also lends weight to this interpretation
2. BUT the word "sanctified" in the NT generally and in the Book of Hebrews in particular usually refers to a SETTING APART UNTO GOD as holy... a single action of dedication to God of something or someone as sacred unto Him for His private holy use

John 17:19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

1 Timothy 4:4-5 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

3. In that case, the verse is simply saying that the children of God (the SAINTS) are set apart unto God, made perfect instantly by the ONE SACRIFICE of Christ

IV. The Holy Spirit Also Testifies to Us (vs. 15-18)

Hebrews 10:15-17 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."

A. The Holy Spirit's Testimony

1. The topic: the complete and perfect achievement of Christ's sacrifice
2. The Spirit DELIGHTS to testify to this... it is the centerpiece of His work in the world

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

3. Notice the word "also"
 - a. The Spirit ADDS His testimony
 - b. The Son has testified about the perfect effectiveness of His work... both in His words on earth and in His sitting at the right hand of God

Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

John 6:54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 12:32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

- c. The Father testified to Christ plainly in the days of Christ's incarnation

Matthew 17:5 a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

4. Now the Spirit testifies ALSO

B. The Audience: US

1. The Author says that the Spirit is speaking to US, testifying to US about Christ's work on the cross
2. The Author includes HIMSELF and the First Generation Hebrews as He speaks the ancient words of Jeremiah 31 which he quoted earlier
3. The Spirit is PRESENTLY SPEAKING the words of the New Covenant all over the world to God's elect

C. How the Spirit Testifies:

1. First: by the Scripture

- a. The author goes again to the words of Jeremiah 31:31-34... the terms of the New Covenant
- b. He has already spoken these words in Hebrews 8

Hebrews 8:10-12 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

- c. Now he gives a brief summary of them again
- d. Notice that here the Spirit is speaking it to US
- e. And that the words are no longer spoken just to the HOUSE OF ISRAEL or the HOUSE OF JUDAH... but to all people
- f. So the Spirit testifies powerfully by means of Scripture

2. Second: by our Changed Lives

V. Our Sanctified Lives the Most Convincing Testimony

- A. The Spirit Testifies Directly to Our Hearts of the Perfect Power of Christ's Work By Changing Us From Within
- B. This is the Essence of the New Covenant

Hebrews 10:15-17 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."

C. Notice the Order: “First He Says... Then He Adds”

1. The human heart is transformed first...
 - a. We understand God’s laws and...
 - b. We LOVE God’s laws
 - c. We yearn to be holy; we hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and love it and believe it
 - d. Then we begin to live out a whole new pattern of life by the power of the Spirit
2. Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more”
 - a. Our assurance of our full forgiveness of sins is based on the Spirit’s testimony with our spirits that we are God’s children
 - b. The Spirit will speak more and more peace to our hearts as we more and more walk in His ways and follow His laws

D. The Transformed Heart Resulting in a Transformed Life is the Greatest Testimony of the Spirit to Us

1. Incline my heart to delight in your laws
2. Open my eyes to see your laws
3. Unite my heart to follow your laws
4. Strengthen my heart to obey your laws

E. Note: In this Way We Are Increasingly Conformed to Christ

Hebrews 10:7 Then I said, 'Here I am-- it is written about me in the scroll-- I have come to do your will, O God.'"

F. Final Point of Application:

Hebrews 10:18 And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

1. Why go back to Old Covenant sacrifices that are finished forever???
2. Once Christ has offered for all time the perfect sacrifice for sins, no further sacrifice is NECESSARY or CAN EVER BE ACCEPTED
3. In fact, any other sacrifice for sins would be sinful itself!!!

VI. Applications

- A. Come to Christ
- B. Celebrate the Perfect Achievement of the Cross
- C. Understand Your Perfect Position in Christ
- D. Work Out Your Salvation in the Pattern of God's Laws by the Power of the Spirit
- E. Seek Assurance from the Spirit