

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: EPISODE 6

JESUS; GOD'S FINAL WORD
THE ONCE-FOR-ALL SACRIFICE FOR SIN - PART 3
HEBREWS 10:1-25
10/22/2017



MAIN POINT

Jesus' once and for all sacrifice for our sin should be a source of joy and gratitude in our daily lives.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Think about the various sacrifices people have made for you in recent years. Does one stand out to you that makes you feel especially grateful?

Where on your gratitude list does Christ's provision of salvation sit? How often do you thank Him for what He did on the cross for you?

In Hebrews 10, the author returned to a theme that has become a thread to his book—the once and for all sacrifice for sin made by Jesus. At this point in his writing, the author reminded readers of the need for a better sacrifice, the effects of Jesus' sacrifice, and the proper way we should respond to His sacrifice. The better our understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, the more joy and gratitude we will feel toward Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:1-10.

What did the author of Hebrews mean when he wrote the Law was only a shadow of the good things to come? How were the covenants God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David only shadows of the New Covenant?

What did Christ do that the Old Covenant could never do (v. 4)?

If God did not delight in burnt offerings or sacrifices, then why did He require them? What is God really looking for in the sacrifices of the Old Covenant?

A shadow is a suggestion of the shape of an object standing in front of a light. It is an impression or a pointer to the real thing. The Law and the Old Covenant are shadows of Christ because they give an impression of what is to come, but we

see their better and fulfilled purpose in Christ. The Law and the sacrifices are unable to perfect or truly change the heart and conscience of the worshiper (Heb. 9:9), and God delights in changed hearts—not changed behavior. God requires sacrifices so His people feel the weight of their sin, but He is more interested in their hearts than in the sacrifices themselves. Our faith is the key.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:11-18.

What in your life seems to be a constant repetition? How does that repetition compare to the duties of the priest (v. 11)?

What did the posture of the priests and of Jesus signify about their work?

The sacrifices and burnt offerings described in Leviticus had to be repeated because they were insufficient to deal with the root of sin. Yet Jesus Christ stands as a perpetual, once and for all sacrifice for sin that has done what the blood of bulls and goats could never do. The covenant He has provided is true and better because it is lasting. There is no need to provide it again because He has decisively dealt with our sin and shame and repaired our relationship with God.

Verse 16 tells us that God writes the laws of His New Covenant on the hearts and minds of His people. What does this mean, and how does it impact the way we respond to Him?

To say that the Law is written on our hearts and minds means that through the power of the Holy Spirit, God fills our lives with His truth. With this placement at the center of our lives comes the power to obey those laws.

As a result of Jesus' sacrifice, we are forgiven when we trust Christ. How does God's forgetting your sins (v. 17) when you repent help you deal with guilt? How does it help you deal with sins committed against you?

To say that God has forgotten our sins means He will never again remember repentant people's repeated failures to achieve the goals He has for them. Under the New Covenant, believers experience God's mercy and grace. As a result of Jesus' willing sacrifice, people who trust Him for salvation are forgiven. God does not keep a tally of their sins; rather, He chooses not to remember their misdeeds. Because Jesus' sacrifice is all-sufficient and eternally effective, no further sacrifice is necessary or possible. The old, powerless, and inadequate sacrificial system has been replaced and surpassed. Christ has put the New Covenant into effect by His atoning death. What Christ provides is infinitely superior to what the Old Covenant offered.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:19-25.

According to verses 19-23, how should people bought by Jesus' sacrifice respond to His offering on our behalf? What words are used to describe our response?

What does it mean to hold fast to our confession? What does this look like practically? How has Christ freed us to do this?

Verse 19 begins with "therefore" because verses 19-23 outline the proper response to a life that has been cleansed by Christ's sacrifice, as described in verses 1-18. Because we have been made clean by Christ's sacrifice, we now have the ability to pursue God without the barrier of our sin. The language used by the author of Hebrews is confident and celebratory. Jesus is faithful to us, so we can look to Him with steady and unwavering confidence, knowing that He has secured our place before God. The response to such hope should be joy.

Throughout Hebrews, the writer reminded us that Jesus is our Great High Priest. Here, he gives us three commands that arise out of knowing that Jesus is our Great High Priest (vv. 22-24). What are they?

How does knowing that Jesus is our Great High Priest make us able to obey these commands?

When we recognize Jesus as our Great High Priest, we will draw near to God (v. 21), “hold fast the confession of our hope” (v. 23), and “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” (v. 24). Trusting in Christ as our Great High Priest allows us to draw near to God because Christ’s sacrifice has cleansed us of our sin. It allows us to remain firm in our commitment to God because Christ’s sacrifice was the ultimate act of faithfulness. And finally, Christ’s role as our Great High Priest demonstrates the manner in which we are to encourage and serve one another as Jesus set aside the glory due to Him in order to meet our deepest need (see Phil. 2:5-11).

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What feelings arise when you reflect on the magnitude of the price Jesus paid to free you from sin’s death grip?

What difference has Jesus’ sacrifice made in your life this week?

Brainstorm ways to show gratitude for the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice for you. What is one thing you can do this week? What is one thing we can do together as a group?

PRAY

Thank God for giving us eternal hope through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ask Him to help our church grow in our love for Him and gratitude for His sacrificial work on our behalf.

COMMENTARY

HEBREWS 10:1-25

10:1-18. Bringing his comparison of the new and old priesthoods to an end, the author in these verses focused on the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ. The old sacrifices were only a shadow of the actual form of the blessed realities that come from the personal sacrifice of the Messiah. Citing Ps 40:6-8, the author demonstrated that God was no longer interested in the whole burnt offerings and sin offerings of the old covenant. The old sacrifices had to be offered continually, and they did not accomplish anything beyond ritual purification because they could not take away sins. This is why it was prophesied that the Messiah would come to do God’s will. Jesus the Messiah offered one sacrifice for sins forever by offering Himself. Afterwards, He sat down at the throne of God. By His blood atonement, He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. The old sacrifices are no longer necessary because He offered the perfect sacrifice that perfects believers.

10:19. We experience Christ’s power by drawing near to God, maintaining our faith, and loving other believers. Therefore emphasizes that in view of what Jesus has done, believers can approach God with confidence. Confidence describes a boldness believers have because of our new relationship to God. The Most Holy Place was that part of the sanctuary which symbolized the presence of God. This verse uses the term not for the tabernacle but for the presence of God. All believers can come to God’s presence. This privilege is no longer limited to the priesthood. Believers can approach God because of the blood of Jesus. Not animal sacrifice but Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself has opened the door.

10:20-21 We have the boldness to enter into the holiest place because Jesus has opened for us a new and living way. He serves as our great priest to encourage us to enter God’s presence. Christ’s way to the Father is new because he opened it by his death. The resurrection of the sacrificed One has made the way living, or effective and enduring. Curtain refers to the veil that stood between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In Hebrews it becomes a symbol of Jesus’ human life. As a human being, Jesus opened up a new way to God. Jesus presented his human life to God to bring us to him. Jesus’ human life and sacrificial death have made the Most Holy Place wide open so believers can enter directly into God’s presence. This was part of Jesus’ high priestly service.

10:22. We can now approach God and have the mercy and grace of our High Priest standing over us. How? First, we are to come with a sincere heart. This calls for genuine devotion rather than hypocrisy. Second, we are to come in full assurance of faith. This demands a bold confidence that God has provided full access to his presence through Christ alone. Third, we are to have our hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience. This demands constant confession of our sins and openness to God. Finally we are to have our bodies washed with pure water. This may be a reference to baptism as an outward commitment to Christ, or it might be symbolic as is the previous reference to hearts sprinkled with blood. If it is symbolic, the hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience would picture our salvation, and our bodies washed would symbolize a righteous lifestyle.

10:23. This exhortation appeals to us to maintain spiritual consistency. We are urged to hold firmly to the hope we profess. This hope offers glory which beamed more brightly than the glories of the old order. Unswervingly denotes an object which stands absolutely straight, not departing from the perpendicular. We are to lay hold of Christ and never let go, even in the slightest. No persecution, real or feared, was to lessen the ardor of these believers for Christ.

10:24-25. This exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works. Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures.

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

Hebrews 11:1-40