

Hebrews 10:1-18: You've Been Given a New Life and the Resources to Live It

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I. Introduction

Jesus makes it easy for us to live this difficult life. He says to us, "You can stop trying to figure it all out on your own. You can stop worrying about all the mistakes you made in your past or all the mistakes that are yet to come. All I need you to do is follow where I lead you. And whenever you get stuck, I will help you. Do exactly what I tell you and all your worries will be over."

II. Hebrews 10:1-18: Jesus has Given You a New Life but This Time all You have to Do is Follow Him

The author of Hebrews has gone through great lengths to show his audience that Jesus is better than the angels (1-2), better than Moses (3), and way better than the Levitical system (4:14-9:28). His final comment on what Jesus' sacrifice has done for them leaves no doubt that they don't need the Levitical system at all because Jesus' sacrifice has given them a brand new life and the ability to live it successfully no matter the sin, no matter the obstacle.

10:1-4, the Mosaic Law was merely a shadow of the *good things to come*, i.e., the Old Testament Scriptures foreshadowed Jesus and the salvation and freedom He would bring mankind (Luke 24:13-27, 44-49). This is why the sacrifices mandated by the Law, which they had to offer year after year after year, could never make the worshipper perfect regarding sin because the blood of bulls and goats could only cover their sin not take it away. Thus, they would be reminded every year of their sinfulness, their guilty conscience would not go away. They were doomed to always live with fear, doubt, guilt and shame.

10:5-10, God is not looking for strict obedience; He wants our obedience but not from an overly religious heart. The scribes and Pharisees kept the Law religiously yet Jesus called them hypocrites and whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23). When God gave Saul the command to destroy the Amalekites, he thought he could cover up his disobedience with hundreds (if not thousands) of animal sacrifices. He thought that what he did was obedience. The Lord rebuked him saying, "To obey is better than sacrifice," (1 Samuel 15). God is not a Father who gives us a bunch of rules to keep as if that's the standard we must meet. He doesn't just want us to focus on the commands He gave us, He wants us to see the God behind the commands, the Father who loves us and wants our best. He wants us to be concerned first and foremost with our relationship with Him. Loving God comes first, obedience second (John 14:23).

When Messiah finally arrived, He came saying, *Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me -- To do Your will, O God.* God prepared a body for His Son so that He could come to do what none of us could: to obey from the heart, even if it meant His life.

Jesus knew and came to teach us that God wants our loving obedience. What's most important to God is that we do His will not our own or what we mistakenly think is His will, even if it means our death. And by His sacrificial obedience in giving up His body on our behalf, Jesus replaced the Old Covenant of rules and regulations with the New Covenant of love and relationship and thereby sanctified us once for all (cleansed us completely of sin's guilt).

10:11-18, the reality of the Old Covenant is that the priests had to keep offering sacrifices daily and yearly, which is why they had to keep on standing, but these sacrifices could never take away those sins. However, Jesus, after He offered Himself on the Cross once, His sacrifice took away our sins forever, which is why He sat down at the right hand of God: His sacrificial work was finished forever. And thus He sits until the day He will return to vanquish His enemies. And by this one sacrifice, He *perfected forever those who are being sanctified*. That is, every individual who has believed in Jesus' gift of salvation via His sacrificial death, not only has been thoroughly cleansed of their sins, they continue to be perfected throughout their lifetime. This means Jesus has given us a brand new life (2 Corinthians 5:17) and the ability to live it successfully. Every step of the way, He is there to guide us, to keep perfecting us, to help us get it right.

The Holy Spirit (approximately 650 years before the author of Hebrews wrote this), prophesied through Jeremiah that this is exactly what God would do for Israel and the rest of the world. One day, He would grant us the ability to succeed in this life, to obey Him fully and from the heart. But He also promised that one day, our sins would be done away with. The guilt, the shame, the heartache, the frustration, the disappointment, the regret would be removed forever. He would remember our sins and lawless deeds no more (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

What does all this mean for the audience of Hebrews who still thinks that they have to atone for their sins through the Levitical sacrificial system? They must realize that *where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin*. That is, Christ's one-time, once-for-all sacrifice has taken care of atoning for your sin FOREVER! You can no longer offer a sacrifice for your sins because it's all been paid for.

The key to a successful life is accepting and living by what Jesus has given you. It's sometimes hard to get it right. Something happens, someone says something to us and we get upset and our mind starts to race. We're trying to make sense of it and figure out a strategy to fix the problem or defend ourselves. If we forget that Jesus has given us a brand new life with no past—we're no longer the low self-esteem, unsure individual we used to be; we're now a child of the King with unlimited access to Him—then we will still react the way we used to before Jesus found us, easily hurt, confused about what to do, down on ourselves, doubtful, fearful, frustrated, etc. But if we cling to our new identity and the fact that Jesus is constantly there waiting to complete His job of perfecting us, then we will stand with confidence. And if we've done something wrong or made a mistake, then we'll own it and fix it. But if we haven't done something wrong, if we haven't made a mistake, then we'll realize that the problem is not with us, but with the situation or individual who criticized us. And instead of reacting with hurt feelings or feeling bad about ourselves, we'll stand strong and face the person or situation with confidence. And if we need wisdom to face it, to fix it, we'll immediately go to the One who promised us that He would provide help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

III. Conclusion

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.