



**Hebrews 9:16-10:18**  
**Jesus, The Better Sacrifice**

Summary: The entire system of worship represented by the Jewish tabernacle pointed toward the ultimate sacrifice of Christ making a way to restore our relationship with God.

If I were to ask, "What's the biggest problem in your life?" We would have a variety of responses – maybe it's a relationship you're in, or some issue at work, maybe it's some illness or injury, or a societal problem. I don't know. But what I do know is: that's the wrong answer.

The greatest problem of all is that there is a good, gracious, merciful, just, holy God reaching out to us and we regularly rebel against and resist Him.

Every other issue you face, every other problem you have, is downstream from this one. Every other problem in your life is a result of, or symptom of, this first and greatest problem.

But, praise God, the greatest problem in life also has the greatest solution. [God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life](#) (John 3:16).

So, we're here to do three things this morning:

1. Admit we've got a problem
2. Celebrate the solution
3. Tell others that they can get in on this too.

We have been studying the book of Hebrews lately and if you have been with us you have noticed how the past several weeks have revolved around a specific theme – Jesus is better, specifically when compared to the style of worship that was found among the people of ancient Israel.

We learn that Jesus is a better priest because He's of the order of Melchizedek, not Aaron. He serves on the basis of a better covenant written on the minds and hearts of those who serve Him, instead of on tablets of stone. He serves in a better sanctuary in the presence of God in heaven, instead of the small back room of a little tent or temple here on earth. And this morning we see that it's all because He offers a better sacrifice.

I'm going to remind you, this is the letter written *to the Hebrews*, so it's going to talk about some things that might not immediately click for you – most of you don't come from a Jewish or a Hebrew background. Some of you don't have much familiarity with the content of the Old Testament, but stick with me, because there are things here that apply to all

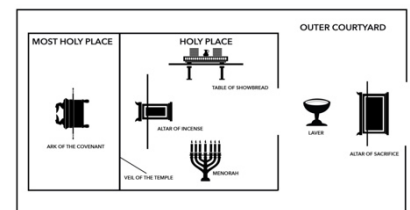
people, in all places, at all times, and you will see that the strange or confusing things we read about here were all actually meant to point us to Jesus anyway.

So read with me as we continue to see why Jesus is better:

**Hebrews 9:16** For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Here’s what this is saying – the Jewish people had a religious system that required sacrifices and offerings which happened originally in a tent called the tabernacle –you remember from last week, it had an outer courtyard and the first thing you saw when you walked in was the altar where sacrifices were made – this is how you came into the place of God – by making a sacrifice or bringing an offering. If we were coming to worship, you came with something in your hands and you left empty handed having given something to God.



Inside the tent was the Holy Place where people, again, did things *for* God – twice a day they offered incense, day and night they trimmed the wicks on the lampstand and filled it with oil, once a week they made new bread.

Behind that was the Most Holy Place, where the presence of God dwelt. But out of the entire world, there was only one man who could go in there, on one day each year – the High Priest on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

This is the system Moses built because it's what God had shown him. What's important to know though, is that it was a mock-up, a model, a re-enactment on earth of the reality in heaven. That's what our text is saying this morning. *All that stuff with the rules and robes and rituals here on earth was meant to teach us something about heaven:* it was meant to help us see and understand what Jesus did and why He was a better priest, offering a better sacrifice, in a better place.

It was the difference between a model car you put together out of plastic with glue and decals and the real thing made of carbon fiber, luxurious leather, and aircraft grade aluminum. Which would you rather own?



Of course, with real car coming in right around \$300,000 and the model kit coming it at \$50, which can you probably afford? And that's why more people will wind up with the model in their bedroom or office than the car in their garage. But they're not the same thing, are they? And even though the model may look like the real thing, even down to the most incredible details, it's just never, ever, going to function like the real thing – which is the point our text makes, read with me:



**Hebrews 10:1** For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

It's just not possible for a plastic model car to produce over 700 horsepower and it's just not possible for the rules, robes, and rituals on earth to actually take away your sins.

Now I promised you last week that we would talk about sacrifices and why they were central to this form of worship, so let's do that now. Because I'm sure this seems strange to some people, it seems so foreign, so backwards, primal and uneducated.

Why would God have told people to kill animals as part of worship? The answer is: *because of our greatest problem*. Do you remember what that is? It's the fact that all of us resist and rebel against God at times.

He created us, made the world and gave it to us to enjoy, and He gave some *very simple* rules to live by, *but we struggle to keep them*. God gave Adam and Eve only *one* rule to obey – don't eat from this one tree in the garden, and they decided they didn't need someone telling them what to do.

Later, God gave the people of Israel the Ten Commandments, which are like Morality 101, things like don't lie, don't steal, don't murder – they're basic, basic rules to live by. They're not even controversial, they're basic moral principles. They are simple, not complex.

And yet, *we break them all the time* because it turns out, they're not just about the things we actually do and say, they're really about the things happening with our desires, the things in our minds and hearts whether we actually do them with our bodies or not. Remember, we've talking about the example of a guy or gal who goes for a week without having a drink, but can't get through the day without wishing they had one – they're not truly free from alcohol – they may not have a cup in their hand, but it's still got a grip on their heart.

You say I've never murdered anyone, but Jesus asks have ever been so mad you *wanted* to hurt someone? You've already gone there in your heart and mind you just lacked the opportunity to do it and get away with it. Ever told a lie? Ever looked at someone or something that was not yours and fantasized inappropriately? Ever trusted or hoped more in someone or something than God?

Friends, these are sins, violations of God's holy commands, His rules for how we must live.

And they're good rules. Really good rules. The God who made you and made the world is telling you how to live and how to get the most out of life without hurting yourself or others, *but we choose not to listen*. We think we have a better idea or we want that other way, that other thing, that other person so much, we go ahead and do what we want

The problem is, people who break rules are punished. And truth is, you like that, you want that.

Here's something very interesting to me. We're going to talk about politics for a minute, but it's not meant to be political. Here's what I want to say: you can talk to anyone, from any political perspective, and you will find something they agree people should be punished for. You can take someone from the right or the left of the political spectrum and they have rules, laws that they want to see passed, or upheld, *and they want there to be consequences for those who don't*.

This is very easy to see on the right, especially among those who take a stand for law and order. But the ironic thing is, if you go to the more progressive side of the left, you will see that they want policies with penalties too.

Ultra-progressives will say things like we want all these good, nice things, for people, for the environment, for society, but if you oppose them, or don't comply, there will be penalties. Even the most extreme voices calling to defund the police still want a way to control people who don't see the world their way.

Again, I'm not taking a political stance here, but I'm pointing out, whether you come across as soft, gentle, and inclusive or strong, firm, and disciplined *everyone still wants to use some form of threat and punishment for those who break or don't keep their rules*.

Here's another example – both Russia and China are encroaching on their neighbors, destabilizing their regions and the question is, what should be done about it? Well, whether

you're a hawk or a dove in terms of international policy, your answer is still basically the same – make them hurt. You might advocate for it to happen physically with weapons and military strength or financially with sanctions or soft power, but the bottom line is: norms have been violated or are being threatened, so punish them and make it hurt.

Whether we're talking about domestic law and policy or international treaties and norms, at some point everyone wants to be able to use power against the people who don't do what their group wants.

And if all of that is too adult for you – think about this – when you play sports and someone commits a foul, you call for a penalty. They should lose their turn. They should give up the ball. They should send a player off. They did something wrong; punish them.

My point is, the whole world is built on a system that uses punishments of varying forms in response to broken rules. And if even a librarian can fine you for breaking the rules, why shouldn't God?

The problem is, God is holy, pure, and just. And not only have we broken His laws, consciously and unconsciously, intentionally and by accident, with awareness and ignorance, *we continue to do it*. Even on our very best day, none of us is perfect.

Sacrifices were meant to help us see that. God gave His people rules to live by, and when they broke them, He gave them a system to make things right, but the system was churning 24/7, 365. It could never stop *because we could never stop sinning*. One sacrifice for one sin was not going to work, it would never make things right. It needed to be one for all.

And that's exactly what happened with Jesus. Everything on earth, all the stuff happening in the courtyard and the Holy Place was meant to help us see and understand what Jesus did in Heaven. Jesus mercifully paid for our penalties and instead of offering an animal, He offered Himself as one tremendous sacrifice for everything we have done, are doing, or ever will do to break God's rules. Read with me:

**Hebrews 10:5** Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,  
But a body You have prepared for Me.  
6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin  
You had no pleasure.  
7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—  
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—  
To do Your will, O God.’ ”

8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first

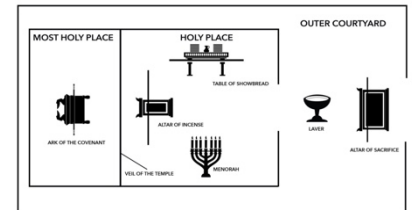
that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16 “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,” 17 then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Now, there are a lot of things happening there, so let me summarize it for you like this: everything that was happening on earth was meant to be a picture of what Jesus has done for us in heaven - it wasn't just a plastic model, it wasn't the real thing.

Instead of offering a lamb on the altar in the courtyard, He offered Himself as the spotless lamb of God on the hill of Calvary. Instead of presenting the blood of a sacrifice before the Ark of Covenant, He presented His blood before the throne in Heaven. Instead of replacing the bread on the table, He said I am the bread of life. Instead of trimming the wicks on the lamp He said, I am the light of the world.



And then, since everything had been done the right way, “for the first time in forever” – to borrow a phrase from Anna – Jesus tore down the veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the tabernacle and gave all who would come to worship through Him instant, immediate access to the presence of God.

And now there is no more altar. Quiet literally actually. If you remember, Jesus died in the first century, around 32 AD. Less than 40 years later, Roman forces laid siege to Jerusalem and tore down the Temple – it has never been rebuilt. No one has been able to worship the way we see described here in Hebrews for almost 2000 years. You can visit the foundation of the Temple in Jerusalem today – you can visit the Western or Wailing Wall. But there's no altar, no priests, no way for you to make a sacrifice.



We're not meant to worship that way anymore – and that is meant to be good news! Look with me at 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

God is not accepting sacrifices any more. No one brought a goat or a lamb or a bull with them this morning to church. There's not a single livestock trailer in the parking lot. Why? Because Jesus has made one sacrifice, for us all, forever.

When you come to Him, He forgives every sin you've ever committed, are committing, and will commit. Every one. Every single one. Even that one. And that one. And, oh yeah, that thing too. That thing you beat yourself up about? It's forgiven. That thing you wish you could forget? Forgiven. That thing they won't let you forget or keep bringing up? Forgiven. Forgiven, forgiven, forgiven, in Christ.

There is no longer an offering for sin, and, as those of you who are doing the study in Romans 8 know as well – [there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus](#). You are forgiven. You are cleansed. You are free. Forever. In Christ.

Listen to me church – Christianity is not at all about where you were born, or the color of your skin, or the language your grandma speaks. It is not primarily about who you vote for, or whether you're pro-life and pro-family. It's not about what church you attend or radio station you listen to or how and where you educate your kids. *Christianity is about your relationship with God.*

It's about having intimate fellowship with Him, being comfortable in His presence, not fearful, rejoicing that a sacrifice was made and that it was made *for* you but not *by* you, accepting the invitation to come into the presence of God in the Most Holy Place instead of just acting busy in the Courtyard.

It's about accepting this glorious paradox, that the eternal King has become an eternal servant and priest and sacrifice who has rescued and redeemed you. It's about accepting the fact that God has told us how to live, and that we don't do the best job of listening to Him, but He has also covered all our failures, all our ignorance, all our outright defiance and even our sneaky little plots. Justice has been done – we've been exposed for the sinners we are. We're judged and found guilty. But mercy is shown, because instead of paying for it all ourselves, Christ paid it for us.

We no longer come to God with stuff in our hands. We're no longer known by our failures. We're known by our status as adopted sons and daughters and we are welcomed in.

One of the things we've said several times in our study of Hebrews is that history is full of examples of trying different things to show that they don't work. God showed us this system of rules, robes, and rituals doesn't work.

Scripture is also very clear about something else, from front to back, beginning to end, you find a constant testimony: [to obey is better than sacrifice](#).

What God wants more than anything *from* you is relationship *with* you. [To obey is better than sacrifice](#). And it has always been that way, it's better to maintain the relationship with love and obedience than to try to make up for the mess you've made.

The prophet Micah, who lived at a time when you could go to the Temple and make a sacrifice said:



**Micah 6:6** With what shall I come before the LORD,  
And bow myself before the High God?  
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,  
With calves a year old?  
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
Ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He has shown you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justly,  
To love mercy,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

What is the greatest problem in life? The fact that we rebel against and resist God. What is the greatest thing you could do with your life? To walk humbly with Him and reflect His nature to others through justice and mercy and love – this is what God requires of you. It sounds an awful lot like Jesus saying the Greatest Commandment is that *we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.*

And it's all made possible by Jesus' sacrifice for us. We're going to remember that sacrifice now as we celebrate communion and I hope you're excited for it. But let me point out one last thing to make it super obvious – you're going to come up here *empty handed*, you're going to receive reminders of the sacrifice that was made for you then you're going to go back to your seat with your *hands full*.

Christian, because this is only for Christians, that's the complete opposite of the way you would have worshipped at the tabernacle and Temple. There you would have walked *in* with your hands full and walked *out* with your hands empty. They brought a sacrifice looking forward, in hope, to what God would do one day. We come to receive reminders of a sacrifice, looking back with hope and faith in what God has already done. Think about that!

I began this morning by saying we're here to do three things

1. Admit we've got a problem
2. Celebrate the solution
3. Tell others that they can get in on this too.

It may be for some of you that God has been helping you see your problem – you're kind of messed up like the rest of us. But now, He's also helping you to see the solution – to stop living life by your own ideas and come to God instead. And to recognize there's *nothing you can bring to God* to make up for what you've done or what you've ignored, *you need Jesus*. Well, praise God. We've been praying He would help you see it too!



The Bible says [if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness](#). Becoming a Christian is not about what you bring to God, or saying a certain prayer in a certain way – at its core, it's all about this one thing: recognizing that a relationship with God has not been at the center of your life and that following Jesus is the only entirely sufficient way to change that.

If that is your desire, take a minute and tell Him that, right there in your chair, and then come up and receive, for the first time, or perhaps for the first time with real understanding, these symbolic representations of the sacrifice that God has made in order for you to be near.

Let's pray.

Jesus says to do this in remembrance of Me, not in remembrance of your sin – it's forgiven, He is exalted.



## Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

### Hebrews 9:16-10:18 Jesus, The Better Sacrifice

Summary: The entire system of worship represented by the Jewish tabernacle pointed toward the ultimate sacrifice of Christ making a way to restore our relationship with God.

- Think about some of the big problems in your life or this world, how are they actually related to humanity's separation from God?
- Have you ever tried to bring a sacrifice to God to gain His attention or show Him you were serious? Ever tried to make a deal with God? What did you try and why?
- Jesus is a better priest, serving under a better covenant, in a better sanctuary, offering a better sacrifice. All of these things are important, but which one means the most to you?
- Read Hebrews 9:24. Where is Jesus right now, and what is He doing? How does knowing this impact you?
- Review Hebrews 9:24-28. References is made to Jesus' appearance in the past, present, and future. Why is each significant?
- Is there anything attractive to you about the rules, robes, and rituals of the tabernacle on earth? Why might some people like going to a place like this instead of trusting in Jesus' once for all sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary?
- Why are punishments and fines such important tools? Why do even 'nice' people like rules to have penalties? What are some rules you would like to see enforced more often? What rules are you grateful aren't enforced as much, lest you be penalized?
  - Why do we tend be more permissive with our own rule breaking and more strict about others?
- What does God want more than sacrifices of bulls and goats?
- If Hebrews 10:14 is true, and it is, what does it mean for you?
- How are you experiencing God writing His law on your mind and heart?