



“What’s Next...?”

Hebrews 10

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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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. 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. 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and [having] a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of [our] hope without wavering, for He who promised [is] faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as [is] the manner of some, but exhorting [one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, [And] He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if [anyone] draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

10:1-39

For several chapters now, the author of the letter to the Hebrews has repeated and reiterated these concepts and pictures concerning the “old way,” the old covenant agreement that God had established with His creation, and how the coming of Christ irrevocably changed everything forever.

In verse 19, the passage reminds us that “we **have**...” We currently **have** “access.” That's important in multiple respects, yet I want to emphasize this **current** state in which we stand. The cross rendered all those old covenant sacrifices and rituals defunct and abolished. Now, “*since we have confidence*” in all these facts, we can enter into the very presence of God, the “holy of holies,” with nothing between us and our Creator and no earthly priest having to intervene on our behalf. There's nothing we can bring Him...nothing He demands from us in the way of payment, entry fee, or prerequisite sacrifice in order to come before Him, in order to be loved by Him. If it's done—*past tense*—then nothing can be added to it all. Our good works and service to Him do not buy access or earn attention or favor. “We have” all of that position and access already.

Let us remember here that although it was all free for **us**, it was not “free.” It cost our God His only Son. He literally stepped aside to allow His Son to be beaten and crucified. A horrific death that He could have not only stopped at any point, but followed up by dropping every participant where they stood. But He gave of Himself, and He gave us what was immeasurably and unquestionably something unequivocally important to Him. But He came through on His promise of redemption...the breaking down of the barrier between Himself and mankind! Then His Son, in perfect reflection of His Father, spent HIS life giving to us, saying He came to be “a servant.”

Isa 1:11-15 “*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’ Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.’”*

Our text today... as well as this one from Isaiah, seem fairly loud and emphatic. It appears as if God is offended or angered because we are serving Him and sacrificing for Him. Certainly, some take this extreme position, one that is very unbiblical, and they adopt what is a gnostic position. One that goes beyond what is said here, essentially claiming that serving God and kingdom, living holy, living a disciplined life, doesn't matter at all and even is repugnant to God. However, one has to ignore vast segments of scripture to take such a position! After all, where do we get the term “disciple” if we reject discipline from our lives? It is the root of the word discipline!

It appears that the author of Hebrews is seeking rather to say that any attempt to earn **status or place** with God via our own works and sacrifices is more than worthless, it's indeed an offense to God. For attempting such essentially says, “The cross...*the sacrifice of your Son*... is not enough to save me, and I need to add a little!” This is essentially the message of the last few chapters and the beginning of this one. However stopping there would annul three quarters of the New Testament! For this premise does not suggest that the old sacrifices were wrong or that sincere worshipers received no benefit from obeying God's law. It only means that God had no delight in sacrifices apart from the obedient hearts of the worshipers. For no amount of sacrifice can substitute for obedience, for this is ultimately an issue of relationship. After rejecting the sacrifices that were empty and without passion, Isaiah reads on as follows:

Verses 16-20 say, *“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the*

land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword'; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Verse 7 of this chapter says, "*Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—**To do Your will**, O God."* Jesus came **to do the Father's will, as we are called to do** as children of the Kingdom.

However, verse 10 clarifies, "... we have been sanctified **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ** ...once for all." It is this fact that is being driven home over the last few chapters: I have you. You are mine. This is what scripture teaches as "positional sanctification," as is the case all through Hebrews.

Obviously from this text, we see that there is more to this issue than merely a judicial act on God's behalf to positionally affect our standing with Him. Because this positional stance is what we refer to as "imputed innocence." Meaning God *counts us as innocent*, but we all know that we're not really innocent at all! Positional sanctification is merely accomplished by the will of God and the sacrifice of Christ. We are then set apart by God, to God, and for God. But there is still the ***progressive*** work of God's Spirit working on in the believer through the Word.

Jesus prayed in John 17:17-19, "*Sanctify them (present tense!) by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*"

And Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5:19-23, calling us to action and obedience saying, "*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*"

He goes on then to what follows, verse 23 which says, "*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you (present tense) completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Now that we "have access", one must actually cross that bridge and ask that inevitable question: **Now what?** For many of us, it remains the "elephant in the room." Can we just stop at the ***positional*** sanctification and not move on to the ***practical*** sanctification? Does not the very nature and attributes of Christianity mandate that such is impossible? That the power that creates rebirth ...and now resides within us *after* rebirth... now and forever will in fact go on to effect passions, desires, and behavior? If not, then the cross...the "final sacrifice" was indeed not enough! It's imperative for us to experience both because it will not honestly be enough for you to just *understand* that you're forgiven! We need to experience that forgiveness! You show me someone who loves Christ, and I'll show you someone who understands living for Christ. You show me someone who's excited about the things of God, and I'll show you somebody who understands the necessity of practical sanctification as well as the positional.

What this all means is that since I have been saved and sanctified, when God looks at me, He sees me as spotless and blameless in His sight. That is ***positional***. That is solely because of Him. It is not because of anything I have done. I am actually far from truly holy, but the Lord ***declares*** me holy in my position as His son, justified by the blood Jesus gave dying on the cross for me.

But now God wants more for me than just positional holiness and positional sanctification. He actually wants to transform my life. He actually wants to free me from the bondage of sin and decay. He's not just wanting positional holiness. He's actually after a manifested holiness, a transformation of our lives, where our lives get more and more lined up with how He designed things to work, and we begin to look and live more and more

like Jesus! Positional holiness is spectacular. It's hard to get the mind around. But God isn't stopping there. His plan is to actually remake our lives. Verse 22 calls upon us to "*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*" Draw near, Believer! But how do we do that in a real and practical way? Verse 23 says "*Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*"

From the moment of our conversion until heaven, we are *being sanctified*. You are *being transformed* from one degree of glory to the next by the Holy Spirit of God, making you more and more like Jesus. Positional sanctification is simply a God thing (you did nothing to receive it or get it), but practical and living sanctification is the Holy Spirit of God working in you and through your obedience to the pull of the Spirit to transform your life. Once again, just as in positional sanctification, the Holy Spirit makes it all possible, but will the Holy Spirit baptize and act through a life that rejects obedience and scriptural adherence? If I reject scriptural obedience, fail to do and to be a faithful person, will not the Holy Spirit's power essentially "leave the temple" as He did in the Old Testament? The Bible emphatically says yes to that question.

Verses 29-31 say, "*...how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

Without the manifest power of the Holy Spirit working in me, how can I ever even dream of actually channeling practical sanctification in my life? Sanctification requires a "grace-driven effort" on our part.

Note Colossians 3...beginning with verse 1: "*If then you were raised with Christ...*" Firstly, we must realize that sanctification is only for the sons and daughters of God. If you are not a true redeemed convert you are not being sanctified. If you are just trying to get your act together through your own works, you are simply running full speed to nowhere. Sanctification belongs to the children of God alone. And if that is true, then one must take the next step and realize that if you are not being sanctified, if you continue to spend your life running around and around with the same sin battles, then it would greatly behoove you to consider that perhaps you are not truly reborn and not really surrendered to God at all.

This does not mean that because you stumble that you are not really a Christian. I am talking about the circular lifestyle where, as the years pass, you cannot see advancement. That you cannot look over your shoulder and see road behind you. To reject this premise is to effectually deny the power of the cross of Christ. To believe you can be reborn and not experience the presence and the change that innately is a part of such is blasphemy. It's something we call Gnosticism and it's as old as Christianity itself.

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Col 3:1

Did you catch that? This speaks of the positional sanctification that comes with true rebirth.

Verse 4 continues, "*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*"

Now many folks who wish to fight this teaching will counter by saying that their hearts and motives are not right on those matters (living out for Jesus), so they should not attempt to do them at all. That such would therefore be “fake.” So they don't.

I don't argue that we can do a lot of things with the wrong heart. But the answer isn't to *stop doing them*, but rather to repent and actually change our hearts. The answer cannot be to just not do them. God doesn't think that way. In fact, he goes on to say "*Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience...*" Therefore according to that reading, we aren't given a lot of latitude on the issue of obedience!

Verse 8 says, "*But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*"

"*You yourselves. Put off...put on...*" Hmm... that sounds a lot like we have a very active, individual, and personal part to play in our practical sanctification! What we see in this text (and there are several others we could go to) is a guideline for how the Holy Spirit is going to sanctify us. Not make us positionally holy (because we're already there) but actually transform our lives so we live manifested, visibly holy lives.

There is a big word that we need to learn. It is the word "vivification." Vivification is simply the energized pursuit of the Lord. The first part of sanctification calls for grace driven effort: "Seek the things from above...Set your mind on things that are above..." You "put to death" these things". You yourselves are to “put off” these things.

So the first aspect of growing ...not in positional holiness but actual tangible, visible holiness ...is vivification: a setting our minds on the things that are above and getting our minds off the things that are below. It is a change in mindset. But how does that work in reality?

Romans 12:2 says, "*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*"

"*Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed...*" That's us moving toward functional holiness. How do you do that? By the renewal of your mind. That takes effort, and that takes work on your part. That is not going to happen by rejecting self-effort or accountability or service unto God. That does not come by running away from all of this. It comes through humility and a contrite heart. It comes through the actual practice of righteousness. The "doing" of God and kingdom.

The renewing of our minds brings vivification. This is why the Bible is so important to us, gang. It is the Word of God that keeps us straight ahead when distractions aim to turn us aside. It reminds us what we are now—new creatures—and where we should be and what we should be doing. And never does it give us a "pass" because we don't feel like it or our hearts aren't really in it. We are called to put ourselves into the scriptures. Allow them to be alive in us, and they then fuel our passions and our desires, which in turn affects our living.

Through all of this, we put to death these aspects of the "old man." I can't do that without vivification, without a real passion for Christ. I have to love Him and His ways more than I love me and my old life ways. Without the practice of love for Him, I will never depart from my old life practices. Without a change in life practice, I will never fall in love with a faith-driven life. Anyone who is married understands this premise. If I only did what I

wanted to do, my marriage would be a wreck and generally short-lived. In my practice of godly marriage, I simultaneously grow in love with this new life with my wife and depart from my old selfish and self-centered lifestyle that encompassed my days of singlehood. If I waited around to feel like doing what I should be doing, I would never make it and my marriage would never grow. I may be positionally married when I say "I do," but I become functionally married over the years that follow as I do and be and live and practice my marriage vows. Those that reject this idea are those who claim, "I love my wife," but the real practice of such words never finds the light of day. It's a feeling, an ideal, but never a practice, and thus never a real truth.

Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..."

Sanctification is about pressing into the Lord, having our minds renewed, and being very serious about putting anything and everything to death that might hinder my love for the Lord and my delight in the Lord. People tend to bristle at this idea. They often take a super-spiritual stance that reacts to this with, "Well, I don't feel that way," or, "My heart is not right on that so I should just wait to face that battle."

Do you want to know what's actually going on in your heart? Hang out with people and be truly known. Allow others to speak into your life. Allow yourself to truly be surrounded by a modern day "great cloud of witnesses." Have relationships with people who are more spiritually mature than yourself and ask them to be honest with you. What happens then is you become aware of where you really are. See, the reason community becomes so important is it's in the fire of community that things about you that you want to avoid and ignore can actually be revealed. Or you can avoid such contact and run and hide.

So many of us will avoid looking into that mirror. It's easier to just cut those relationships loose and go find new ones without ever really digging into the heart to see what God might be doing. "I'm not going to deal with me, with what's going on in my heart. I'm simply going to be an expert in their weaknesses, and I'm going to go find friends who appreciate me." Is it not true that symptoms reveal the disease? If you're always in conflict, if you're always being betrayed, if you always feel underappreciated, that's a heart issue you need to check out. It's not just, "I need friends who understand me. I need a community that sees things the way I do. I need to go where there is not all this drama." Because you never stop to realize that drama is following you wherever you go. And wherever you go only has one common denominator, right? And that is just **you**.

Psalms 32:3-4 says, "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer."

See, here's what happens when we hide ourselves from others. First, you fail to know and experience what the Bible calls body life, and second, once you do that, you have cut yourself off from experiencing the manifested tangible grace of God. Until we can be honest as to who and what we are, we aren't going anywhere. When we reject the position of student and cling to the mantle of teacher, we only lose all the richness and love that God manifests through His children in a horizontal way. God seeks so often to manifest His love and grace through the community in which He has planted us.

Verse 24-25 say, "...let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

Positional sanctification is God saying, "You're My son. You're My daughter." Practical sanctification is God saying, "Son, daughter, I have more for you than this. Don't do this. That reoccurring bondage sin, those

repeated illicit relationships, that pull toward sexual immorality, and that anger and bitterness are saying something about your heart."

Listen, the bottom line in all of this is that God wants more for you and He wants more for me. We're not done yet. We're not done yet.