God Perfects His Beloved Children

**Hebrews 10:1-18**

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**Introduction:** Imagine that you have never done anything wrong and your conscience is absolutely clear. You never have to take your foot off the gas when you see a police officer. You never worry about your boss dropping in unexpectedly. You never worry that you will be rejected or unloved because of your faults. What would your life be like if we were more perfect.

Men try to do this a few ways. One is by ignoring the problem. They are never in the wrong and path of turmoil they walk is someone else’s fault. Some convince themselves that they are good… or at least good enough. I’ve lost track of how many people have said to me…”I’m a good person!” Some do religion. Mass every day! Some by keeping religious laws, dietary rules and observing days! There are those who prefer knowledge. They acquire vast amounts of Bible knowledge in the hope it will perfect them. I could go on but the truth is that God rejects all these remedies and others too.

**Ephesians 2:8**  8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

**Romans 3:20**  20 …..by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Okay…we believe in salvation by faith, but surely we are supposed to change our lifestyle, habits and desires when we become saved…right? God calls that perfecting or sanctifying us. The only problem is that we cannot perfect ourselves because we are using manmade ideas to do what only God can do. It is as impossible for men to perfect themselves as it was to save themselves. Here is the truth;

**Ephesians 2:10**  10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We are God’s project and He is not ours. Workmanship means a Creation. Only God can recreate our life in union with Jesus Christ. Our salvation was not, as we sometimes imagine, something we did. We did not sneak into salvation without a ticket. Instead God sought us and brought us to faith, remember, it was “not of yourselves, it is the gift of God!”

So God created a spiritual life in you although you were dead. Let’s be realistic here. Men do not create life. They certainly don’t give themselves life and “The Dead” are able to do absolutely nothing.

**Ephesians 2:4-5**  4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

You need to embrace God’s critique of you. He created you! He wanted you! He created you for good works! Ah ha! What if we don’t know what they are or cannot discover them/ Don’t we need to go on a quest to do good so that God will be pleased with us? NO! We do not! God is already pleased with us because He created our saved life in perfect union with His Perfect Son “with whom He is well pleased.”

**Ephesians 2:10**  10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

God not only created you to do good works that please Him, but created actually created the works that please Him for you to do. But, there is more: He ordained or predestined you to do them. Yes! It’s all here in one verse. But I am preaching from Hebrews this morning so let’s get to that. Our verses talk about how God carries out His plan to perfect you. This morning we will learn how the redeemed are to be perfected. The Word reveals this with three truths.

* God is not pleased with insufficient sacrifices
* God is pleased by Christ’s sufficient sacrifice
* God is pleased to transform His own children

**For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near [1]:** Shadows are not real. They are cast by real things, but they themselves are powerless to do anything. We all know this. Good deeds, righteous behavior, religion and ritual were all shadows cast by Jesus. The only man who would ever really do them.

**Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins [2]:** The fact that they were continual proves this point. Men had to do them over and over again because they continually sinned.

**But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. [3-4]:** So the things that men came to believe would save them were only given by God to remind them that then needed someone else to save them. That they would never stop sinning so God would have to save sinners.

**1 Timothy 1:15**  15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

Let’s begin by defining our terms.

The **Sanctified** are“set apart.” We belong to God for His purposes and not to the world for their purposes. In truth all believers were sanctified in Christ at the moment of salvation, but once set apart God works to perfect us. Make us like Jesus Christ!

When God **Perfects** us He“makes us complete.” God wants to transform us and make us mature in Christ. Little children lack much of what they need to live a full life. They eat the wrong things, watch the wrong things, they do dangerous things. They are in need of maturity. This is what perfecting means in Hebrews.

Let me ask you; “Do you sense the need to be “perfected” in your Christian life?” Do you wish for more peace, less worry, more love, less hostility, more joy, less despondency, more hunger for the Scripture, less hunger for the things of this world? If you say yes to any of these then you are wishing to be “perfected” as a believer.

Now, what is the typical way that we deal with these desires? Yes…WE TRY HARDER! We tell ourselves and one another things like this; “You should not worry.” You should not be depressed.” “You should not get angry.” “You should want to read your Bible more.” And on and one it goes. Now I need to ask you at this point if any of this sounds familiar? Yes…and it falls into the category of things we have heard our entire Christian life. And why have we heard them our entire Christian life? Because they have never worked so far. This is the context and the purpose of verses 5-9. God wants us to know again that Christ will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

**God is not pleased with insufficient sacrifices**

**Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; 6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. [5-6]:** These next verses are from Psalm 40. They are words of God the Son written down centuries before He came into the world. The Father and the Son planned to save men in Eternity past. But when the time came to implement it Jesus said this…..**"SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME”**

Jesus knew that The Prophets were always warning the people of the dangers of substituting their works for God. The Jews knew that the sacrificial system was not to be used as a substitute for loving God Himself. Listen to Isaiah.

**Isaiah 1:11-13**  11 "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. 12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

It really reached its height in the Northern Kingdom where all love for God was replaced by “worship” (so called).

**Amos 5:21-24**  21 "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*; And I will not *even* look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. 23 "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. 24 "But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

**"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" [7]:** A quick observation here. The word “desire” as in …..**"**SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED”is from the same root as “YOUR WILL” in this verse. So let me give you some perspective on what Jesus is saying.

Dear Father, You have not desired the sacrifices of men who do not love you or obey you, but I have come to do what you DO DESIRE! I will love you and I will obey you Father just as the Scriptures have always said I would. This is what the Father desires and what He takes pleasure in. Not your religion, but your love for Him expressed in an obedient heart.

**God is pleased by Christ’s sufficient sacrifice**

**After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second [8-9]:** Jesus declares outright that He came to do the “Will” or “Desire” of the Father. Isaiah recorded what pleased the Father. It is stunning in its impact.

**Isaiah 53:10-11**  10 But the LORD was **pleased** to crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

God, in Christ, came to find you and to perfect you as well. No man has a child that he does not seek to raise and teach. In Christ you will never be unloved or spurned.

**Romans 5:5** … the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Jesus validated this truth when he answered the most famous question in the Bible:

**Mark 12:28-30**  28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

Israel had been told, but she had forgotten. God was never pleased with the sacrifices of animals. He took no pleasure in the endless offerings that could never take away sin. What pleased Him was His Spotless Son. A sinless human offering that would be crushed when all the filth and sin of men was laid upon His precious back.

If all the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament never pleased God. And if the only thing that ever pleased Him was the perfect love and obedience of Jesus, do you think that we can do something to perfect ourselves?

What pleases God is not what we do. It is what Christ does and that we are “IN CHRIST.” When we come to Christ, God is pleased. The perfecting of our lives is really just the ongoing work of the Cross. Self-perfection is a fools errand! Our Redemption, sanctification and perfection were all done in the same way. By the love and power of God helping us. Oh, the love of Christ. If you are looking for something to please God then… **Love the Savior**, because He loves you.

**God is pleased to transform His own children**

**By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all [10]:** Christians today easily slip into the same snare of our Old Testament counterparts. All the things men use to make themselves acceptable can never succeed. Children do not raise or teach themselves. Transforming God’s children is His to do just as surely as the redeeming of them. God started the process and it is God who finishes it.

Again this word “will” is the same as “desire” in verse 5. I is the desire of God to secure your sanctification (transformation)

* God desired and was pleased Christ’s offering for you.
* Christ’s Offering not only saved us but it begins our transformation as well. The Greek verb says, “you were sanctified in the past and the results of that are still reality today.” In other words, This might be a process, but in the mind of God it is also a “done deal!”

**Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET [11-13]:** The Old Covenant priest could never do anything that could take away sins. But, Jesus (our Great High Priest) could and did accomplish it so totally that He sat down and waited for all the rest of Scripture to come to pass.

**For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified [14]:** Your sanctification (perfecting transformation) has been secured at the same time that your redemption was and in exactly the same way. Christ did it at the cross. All human striving leaves us feeling a failure. We need to cease striving and look to Christ to perfect us.

God has already set you apart and perfected you at the cross. He is in the process of conforming you to Christ image, but it is His process. Our response is to worship and love Jesus, who so loved us by securing even our Perfecting.

**Philippians 1:6** *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

How does God do this? How we enter into this life changing blessing?

**And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," [15-16]:** God promised this to Israel in Jeremiah 31, but they have yet to take possession of it. In the meantime God supernaturally begins to write His desires on the heart and mind of His sons and daughters. This is why religion and ritual are so universally rejected by God. They are external. God works internally in the lives of His dear children. He makes us want to obey from the heat. He makes us want to love…again…from the heart. This is what the Holy Spirit says and it is what He does.

**John 16:13-14**  13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

**"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." [17]:** Not only this but the Holy Spirit testifies to our hearts that God knows our sins and they are forgiven and forgotten. If you are hearing otherwise it is “The accuser of the brethren” Satan who is a whisperer of false accusations.

**Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin [18]:** The blood of Christ does not be reoffered every day in the Mass! Rituals are fake and valueless. Because it is all external. We are forgiven by Christ’s one sacrifice on the cross. All our sins were fully known to Him on the cross. Our names, faces and lives were equally known. When He dies He took all your sin and there is nothing more you or anyone else could ever do. In God’s covenant there is no “end of the bargain” for you to uphold. God simply acts to put His laws upon your heart and mind.

**Romans 8:14-21**  14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.