

5th SUNDAY IN LENT

HEBREWS 10:5-14 A WILLING SACRIFICE

⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ⁷ Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.’”

⁸ First he said, *“Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”* (although the law required them to be made). ⁹ Then he said, *“Here I am, I have come to do your will.”* He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Driving through the farm land of Virginia, I often see odd structures in the middle of cattle pastures. They are remarkably consistent in construction and plan from farm to farm. There is a small fenced area, what would be called a “corral” in the old westerns, with the addition of an inclined fenced plank that ends abruptly about 3 or 4 feet off the ground. The purpose of these structures is to transition the cattle from the pasture into the truck. The reason they are needed is that cattle don’t voluntarily go to the slaughter house. Nor were bulls, goats, lambs and doves willing victims for religious sacrifices.

Just as a teacher’s goal is not to make a student a perpetual student, but rather prepare the student to become a productive citizen, God’s ultimate desire was not that humankind would become perfect in performing *Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings*. The purpose of those rites was to teach us what was needed for reconciliation. Jesus came and showed us the way; willing obedience. *“Here I am, I have come to do your will.”* The prep school is over, that for which we have been being prepared has occurred. The patient is in cardiac arrest. It is time to leave the CPR practice dummy behind and go resuscitate the patient. God does not desire that we remain in the classroom. It is time for us to “go out and do likewise,” for that is the mandate for the disciple. Believer, God is calling you and Jesus has shown you how to answer; *“Here I am, I have come to do your will.”* That is the sacrifice that pleases God.

Lord Jesus, as you did not stay in heaven apart from the brokenness of this world, but rather came among us to do the will of the Father, empower me through your Spirit to answer that call as God has articulated it to me. Give me the faith and strength to answer, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” Amen.