

GROWING TOGETHER AT CRISTA THROUGH GOD'S WORD

Made Perfect (Read [Hebrews 10](#))

Reflection on the passage:

Certain personality types are known for being perfectionists. Yet, I propose that each of us have areas of perfectionism. Often it's our area of training or interest or simply what seems most important to us. For example, I can be quite perfectionistic about writing and grammar but am far from a perfectionist when it comes to keeping our linen closet tidy with everything folded perfectly. But even in those areas where we really care about something being just right in every detail, it's difficult to achieve 100% perfection. What does it mean, then, when the writer of Hebrews in this week's chapter says that we are made perfect forever through Christ's sacrifice? (10:14). I don't know about you, but I feel far from perfect.

First, Hebrew's author makes it clear that we cannot make ourselves perfect. No matter how many sacrifices and offerings the priests made in accordance with the Old Testament law to cleanse the people from sin, the people had to keep coming back (10:1,8). Not only did they keep falling into sin, but the sacrifices themselves were only a temporary cleansing from sin – not something done once for all (10:2). The annual sacrifices were a reminder of sin and the need of cleansing, but they were incomplete (10:3-4, 11). In fact, "make complete" is part of the meaning of *τελειόω* which is translated as "make perfect." Only in Christ, who gave Himself up as our perfect sacrifice, could this cleansing be complete.

Second, whether we "feel" perfect or not, we are made perfect in God's eyes by the blood of Christ: "...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10). In God's amazing grace, our sins have been forgiven and He chooses to remember our sins no more (10:17-18). And for this reason, we can come into the Most Holy Place with confidence, standing in Christ's blood, in *His* righteousness and perfection (10:19).

Finally, at the same time that we are already fully perfect in Christ, we are also in the process of living into that holiness (10:14). Our being perfect through Christ does not mean that we can live however we want. Quite the contrary. The writer of Hebrews strongly warns us that if "we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God" (10:26-27). He exhorts us instead to draw near to God, hold unswervingly to our gospel hope, spur one another on to love and good deeds, meet together and encourage one another, and persevere amid suffering (10:22-25, 34-36).

The call is not to a spiritual perfectionism, but to receive Christ's perfection as a gift and then to continue to walk with Jesus in our new identity in Him. We won't always feel perfect, and we will still stumble and fall, but He will be there, covering us in His righteousness, calling us near, transforming us by the Holy Spirit, and building us up together as His Body as we live in Him by faith (10:36-39).

Focus verse for prayerful reflection:

"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:22)

Are you aware of anything that is blocking you from drawing near to God today? Where does sin and guilt get in the way? Sit for a while with the reality that you are perfect in Christ by His blood that has cleansed you head to toe.

What might Jesus be inviting you into today as you sit with Him?

Grace & peace,

