

# Jesus, the Greatest Gift: Can You Make a Sacrifice?

Hebrews 10:5–6

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We were asked to join a gift exchange. I didn't want to. I want to give people gifts. I enjoy watching the expression on their faces when they open the gift. Sometimes the expression says this is just what I wanted. Then there are the moments that say, "what is this and why did they give it to me?" Have you ever received a gift and you knew the person felt obligated to get you something. They didn't put any effort into the gift other than the pure relief that it's over.

You've probably seen the Amazon ad with the boyfriend at her family Christmas gift exchange. A grumpy looking guy is sitting in a chair, with all the attention focused on him. A handsome young man sitting beside an attractive young woman hands a large box to Mr. Grumpy. He takes off the bow with the look of disappointment. He opens the gift and pulls out a contraption looking at with disappointment. He looks around the room, his eyes catch the eyes of the boyfriend. Then he has a slightly crooked smile on his face. The boyfriend is relieved. The family is relieved. Mr. Grumpy is relieved. It wasn't the gift that was expected, but it was gift that was important.

God wants to give us gifts to bless us. God has provided us with a gift. His gift is the greatest gift. As we approach Christmas may we worship Jesus in everything we do. May we give up our own desires. May we God's gift to us give us purpose.

***That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. Hebrews 10:5–6 (NLT)***

**In case you are wondering what this passage has to do with Christmas, it only fits Jesus.**

From the ancient times of the Old Testament God's plan was for Jesus to offer His body as our sacrifice. Daily sacrifices were made in the temple for the forgiveness of sins. On the high holidays the number of sacrifices grew to incredible numbers. God did not desire that an animal be sacrificed. God's desire was for changed hearts. God wanted people to confess their sins and repent. God's desire was for changed lives.

God has been giving people the gift of choosing to trust Him. No number of animal sacrifices could forgive sins. Every person is incapable of changing their lives, their hearts, their spirit without God's love and power. God did not desire empty sacrifices. The sacrifice of an animal was meaningless to God unless the person was choosing to place their sins in God's hands, seeking forgiveness and a changed life by trusting God.

The animal died as a sign of a promise to allow God to change their lives. But when people made sacrifices without repentance, without a desire for God to transform them, the sacrifice was merely the death of an animal.

However, these sacrifices have everything to do with Christmas. We are no longer making animal sacrifices. This is because God came in a body and became our sacrifice. Jesus is the greatest gift. Christmas brings our focus upon Jesus our Savior.

This passage in Hebrews is a quote from Psalm forty. It is a prophecy that can only point to God's Messiah, Jesus. No one could ever live a life without sin. No one could ever turn from their sins. We all need God's power and God's grace to overcome sin. Regardless of how hard we try, or what intend to do, we will sin against God.

Jesus came into our world as one of us. He faced the temptations of the devil. He trusted God in every situation, not merely to overcome the temptation. That is not enough. Jesus trusted God to fulfill all of God's promises, God's plans, and God's purposes. Jesus trusted God by sacrificing His human desires and plans.

Jesus, was born a person like you and me. Just as Jesus was a person He was still God. He is the perfect representation of God on the earth He created. He is the Creator who became like His Creation. Jesus made this choice because His desire has always been to set us free from our sins. His desire is for us to be empowered with God's power and grace. Jesus' desire in becoming a person was to be our sacrifice. Jesus made it possible for you and me to live fulfilling God's plans and purposes.

***Hebrews 10:5 you have given me a body to offer.***

**At Christmas, the birth of Jesus, must remind us that our faith in Jesus is life-changing.** Most people go from the month of December to the month of January without being changed. Most people go throughout their lives without being changed. We like to think we can change. We like to make promises about changing. We like to keep doing and being what we've always been.

So, around comes the month of December and Christmas. The holiday filled with joy and happiness. Christmas is celebrated as the holiday of love and gifting giving. There is the spirit of Christmas in the air and on the lips of wishful thinkers. Trees are decorated with ornaments and lights. Houses and lawns are covered with blow up images and thousands of lights. All of these things are intended to make us think about being changed; being more loving; being more compassionate; more giving.

But, we're stressed about what gift to give. We're overwhelmed by all the activities and events. We're burdened by the commercialism, selfishness, and greed. Christmas has become something that has nothing to do with compassion, joy, hope or love. We feel like we're caught in a trap that we can't escape. We go through the motions, doing the same thing year after year. We can't change our world so we go along for the ride. We want Christmas to be different, but it's not within our power. December 26 comes and we're relieved that it's over. Another year of survival until we have to go through all of it again. For another 365 days we can distract ourselves by going back to what we were doing. We have another day that passes without being changed.

There are many life changing events, but Jesus entering your life is the most important. The moment you let Jesus enter your life you saw yourself and God in a new way. Your heart and spirit and mind and body were changed. You were forgiven of your sins. You were made new, born again. The moment you let Jesus enter your life You understand how much you love Jesus, that you want to love Him more.

Your desire as become to honor Him with your thoughts, words, and actions. You have the desire to be like Him and not like your old self. You are ready to give up your sins. You think of others instead of yourself. When Jesus enters your life you have peace that can't be explained with words. There is hope for the future in your soul. There is joy overflowing from your spirit. There is power in your heart to believe and to take action.

Allowing Jesus to enter your life is the greatest change in your life because Jesus is the greatest gift in your life. Christmas with Jesus means you are set free to love God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and body. When Jesus is in your life Christmas becomes an opportunity to love your neighbor. Christmas looks different, feels different, it is different. Jesus is at the center of Christmas. Jesus is giving you a new attitude about things. Jesus is providing you with a new life to live.

***Hebrews 10:5 you have given me a body to offer.***

**At Christmas, the birth of Jesus, must remind us that we were born for a purpose that brings Glory to God.** Everyone was born with a purpose in life. Jesus was born with the purpose of trusting God, dying for our sin, and rising from the dead. Today's passage points only to Jesus. Hundreds of years passed between the time those words were spoken by the psalm writer and the birth of Jesus. In that time period no one but Jesus could fulfill the words, "you gave me a body". For in these words Jesus is proclaiming that only His body would be the acceptable sacrifice to God.

We've pounded the sacrifice already this morning. The purpose for Jesus' life was to die and rise again. At the celebration of His birth, Christmas, we begin to see our purpose. In the midst of all the hoopla, chaos, greed, and selfishness of Christmas comes Jesus.

December 25<sup>th</sup> used to be just another day. Then came Jesus. His followers in the early church knew that with Jesus' birth He could die and rise again. Without His death and resurrection life is just one day after another without purpose.

Now December 25<sup>th</sup> means something for you and me. It is the celebration of our new life because God, the creator, become one of us. Jesus entered the world He created with a purpose. Jesus was born to be our sacrifice. He took on a body so that God's plan for saving us would be completed.

The angels sang to the shepherds, "Glory to God". Jesus was born for the glory of God. Jesus lived for the glory of God. He lived trusting God. He lived following God's perfect plan for saving the world. Jesus died and rose from the dead for God's glory. God is glorified when we trust Him with our lives. God is glorified as speak His truth. God is glorified every time we share His grace. God is glorified each time we embrace His power. This is our purpose in life. Glorifying God is our purpose at Christmas and everyday. Glorifying God is our purpose wherever we go and whatever we do.

Every life can bring glory to God. My life, your life, brings glory to God when trust Jesus. I'm talking about trusting Jesus to forgive your sins. I'm also talking about trusting Jesus in the crisis. I'm talking about trusting Jesus to speak His name. So glorifying God happens at Christmas. We also glorify God with each new day. We bring glory to God by living out our purpose all year long.

My purpose is to trust Jesus. I find my purpose in getting out of bed each morning asking Jesus to speak to me and through me. Your purpose is to trust Jesus. Your purpose is to go where He sends you.

***Hebrews 10:5 you have given me a body to offer.***

**At Christmas, the birth of Jesus, must remind us that we will need to give up our desires to fulfill God's purpose.** Break life down to the simplest thing: me and my desires are first. It has always been this way. One of the challenges of Christmas is for people to look beyond themselves and to see others.

Three hundred sixty-four days of the year we are told that life is about us, what makes us feel good, what gives us pleasure. Then suddenly everyone is supposed to be excited about meeting the needs of others. To make that switch, to put others first means we have put Jesus first. Jesus is the only one who can make that kind of change in our lives.

Jesus put us first, by His power and grace we are capable of putting others first. Putting others needs ahead of your own desires means giving up our desires. Nobody is ready to do that without Jesus. He makes it possible to see ourselves second and to see Him first. When Jesus becomes first in our lives we start to see the needs of others.

Giving up my desires is a daily battle. It's a struggle for all of us, right? Food, clothing, shelter are always at the top of our lists. Pleasure and fulfillment are powerful driving forces within us. This is true for everyone. So, there are needs all around us. There are lonely people, hungry people, people who are fearful. There are people who are confused, those who are without purpose, and those who are overworked.

The change brought on by celebrating the birth of Jesus is that Jesus and His desires come first. We want to be like Jesus. We want to do what wants. We want to fulfill His purpose for us. God doesn't want another empty sacrifice or promise. God wants us to give Him our body, our mind, and spirit.

Christmas is either December 25<sup>th</sup> or it's the celebration of Jesus' birth and your new life. You can go to one big family event, one party after another, one feast upon another. You can hand out one gift after another. You can share some eggnog and cookies. Or you can put Jesus first. You can worship and celebrate the birth of your Savior. You can rejoice in the new life He has given to you. You can share His grace and power with others.

Your new life in Jesus can begin today. Christmas 2025 can be the year Jesus became first in your life. This can be the day that you are born again. Come to Jesus by admitting to Him that He has not been in first place in your life. Tell Jesus that above every desire in your body and mind, you want Him to save you from your sins. Ask Jesus to enter your life, to take first place, to change you.