

Sermon Summary  
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### Truth-Based Religion

In the final section of the book of Hebrews, the author writes an encouragement for the Church to ponder upon Christ. As the Good Shepherd, Christ came into the world to lay down His life for His sheep. His primary purpose was to bring salvation and hope for sinners, and He fulfilled it with His death on the cross. His death shows us the true meaning of sacrifice, which is to offer up a life for the good of others. He took the cup of God's wrath so that God's will was done.

Now we Christians, should imitate Christ and live as a sacrifice to God. Though Christ is fully God, He is also full man, and in this truth we can be comforted in our trials and temptations. Being fully man, Christ faced many trials and temptations. Yet, He still submitted to and obeyed His Father's will to be an unblemished and complete sacrifice. He was able to do this (bear God's wrath and accomplish His Father's will) only with the power of the Holy Spirit and by his death - we too, are given that same Holy Spirit who empowers us to live as a sacrifice and fight against sin.

Christ's victorious triumph over sin should drive repentant hearts to worship and brotherly love within the church. These two sacrifices are an outcome of the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of believers. With the same Holy Spirit who empowered Christ to face and overcome temptations, we Christians have the ability to *not* sin but rather lift our hearts in acknowledgement of God in our lives. Moreover, living as a sacrifice also means not neglecting relationships with members of the Church but rather serving one another.

Finally, the writer brings the focus towards church leadership. Leaders are given the responsibility to watch over members of the church. 'To watch over' means to feed the sheep (the congregation) with good and consistent teachings. It is also to hunt for any wrong teachings that may have infiltrated the church. However, alongside these 'shepherd-like' responsibilities, church leaders are also to be held accountable in the way they live before the congregation, practice church discipline and provide counseling for members who are in need. It is with these practical means that church leaders can fulfill their duty 'to watch over' members of their church and that members can recognise their leaders' authority and thus obey, support and pray for them. And as we lift our church leaders in prayer, let us ask that God may grant them all a clear conscience to know and follow His will.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Worship, Authority, and Leaders