

## The Cross of Christ Brought Us: Forgiveness of Sins

As we examine what the Cross of Christ brought us, bought us, means for us...I will look at 5 significant gifts that were secured by His death on Calvary. This week, it is about how Jesus accomplished the forgiveness of our sin.

Does anyone here sin? Of course, it seems almost impossible to not sin. Everywhere we go, almost everything we do involves temptation to choose self over God and ultimately to sin. Sin is about violating God's Law, God's standards, where we choose less than HIS best for us because we think we know better (we play god) or we "miss the mark" (Hamartia).

Sin separates us from the one we sin against. Sin is against God...Sin has separated us from Him. Sin not only separates us, it produces guilt, real guilt and produces a variety of other damaging results in our lives as well. Sin separates people from one another as well. Sin is best defined by its middle letter, "I".

Sin must be dealt with, if you are to have a relationship with the person you sinned against. God, who is absolutely holy and perfect, cannot live with sin. Sin must be punished. And so, the bible talks a lot about sin and its consequences as well as the ways in which God dealt with sin.

How would you like to have to deal with your sin the way they did in the Old Testament?

Lev. 4:28-31 "If anyone of the ordinary people among you sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done and incurs guilt, when the sin that you have committed is made known to you, you shall bring a female goat without blemish as your offering, for the sin that you have committed. You shall lay your hand on the head of the sin offering; and the sin offering shall be slaughtered at the place of the burnt offering. The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and he shall pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. He shall remove all its fat, as the fat is removed from the offering of well-being, and the priest shall turn it into smoke on the altar for a pleasing odor to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement on your behalf, and you shall be forgiven.

### 1. Get into the picture:

- a. You sin, and don't realize it but when it is made known to you, you have to bring a sacrifice to be forgiven of the sin.
- b. But what happens. Well, you have this goat, a pretty nice one actually, without blemish and you bring it to the priest. And as you lay your hand on its head (looking into its big blue eyes) and confess your sin (implied), the priest will kill it (with a slit to its neck, severing the jugular). As your hand is on its head you see the literally see the consequences and the effects of your sin, how the life is taken away from this animal. Some of the blood is applied to the altar and the fat of the animal is burned on the altar. Your sin is "covered" or atoned for. You are forgiven. How many of you would be willing to do that with your modern sensibilities?
- c. This is the pattern, that the daily Israelite had to perform, sin offerings, that included the death of an animal to take their place. Did you notice, that it wasn't for a bunch of sins...it was for a single sin that an animal had to die, so the offerer could be forgiven and the sin atoned for.
- d. It was EXPENSIVE and it was BLOODY. Sin is costly. Even though it hadn't required the life of a person, it was still, very costly.
- e. The bible also says that the "wages of sin is death." (Romans 3:23). (look it up with me). If the one who sinned didn't want to die, he needed a sinless, innocent substitute to take his place. But the problem is, no human beings were sinless. So in the Old Testament, an innocent animal gave its life to "atone" for the person's sin.

### 2. Bridge to New Testament

- a. Hebrews 9:22 *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (of sin).
- b. The entire Old Testament Law was built around the sacrificial system to ensure the forgiveness of sin.
  - i. **Forgiveness is what we need to restore a relationship.**
    - 1. If we don't own up to the wrong we do (to one another for example) we build a wall between people. That wall grows and before long, it feels like you never knew the person. Ever have that happen?

3. Here is the problem we struggle with:

- a. Is forgiveness really needed? After all, what if there is no right or wrong? Aren't we in a world of relativism that says that there is no right or wrong?
  - i. **People's hearts still attest to the moral law even though they deny it. It is why women (and men) who have been a part of abortion have strong guilt reactions many years later. One can say it isn't murder, but your heart, your soul testifies to something else.**
- b. **Relativism says that there is no right or wrong.**
  - i. The saddest thing about relativism is that it undermines the awesomeness of God's grace in forgiveness.
    - 1. It sounds really loving and sweet—to say that God has no law, no standards, no expectations, no commandments, no threats—that he is simply there to affirm me in whatever I happen to be.
      - a. That sounds like grace and freedom.
      - b. But there is one big problem with this idea. It destroys the possibility of experiencing forgiveness.
  - ii. Where there is no law, no just standard, no normative way of relating to God and man, there can be no forgiveness.
    - 1. Because forgiveness is the letting go of real offenses, real transgressions, real violations, real faults.
    - 2. It is the erasing or covering over of the offense.
    - 3. Notice that the word “atonement for your sins” is used in the Lev. Passage, just as it is in 13/17 verses in the O.T. where the word forgiven is used. Do you see it? (show slide again).
    - 4. Do you know what atone means? I am going to cover it in detail next week. But it means to cover over.

4. **Sin is something we do on purpose, it is not a “mistake”**

- a. I know we don't like using that word “SIN” because it means God is judging my actions and my heart.
  - i. After all, when we get a ticket for breaking the law, it is called speeding, but not sinning.
  - ii. My kids disobey me, I don't tell them they sinned, I tell them they did wrong. Sin is a hard word to use.
- b. But there's a big, big difference between sin and mistake.
  - i. A mistake, I don't really have to ask you to forgive me. I can just say, "I'm sorry, okay? Can't we just move on?" Oops, I spilled my drink on the floor. That's a mistake.
  - ii. Gossiping about another person, that's sin. Refusing to love someone, that is a sin.
  - iii. Committing adultery, that isn't a mistake or an affair, it is a sin.
  - iv. Sin is a powerfully indicting word – it not only implies guilt, it admits it.
    - 1. If everything I do wrong can kind of be dumbed down to where it's just a mistake, then that makes me a mistaker, which means I don't have sin.
    - 2. If I don't have sin, I'm not a sinner. If I'm not a sinner, I don't have any need for a Savior. (Andy Stanley)
  - v. You see, if you're just a mistaker, then all you have to do is do better.
    - 1. Mistakers just have to try harder.

2. Mistakers just have to break little, nasty habits.
  3. Mistakers just have to be more consistent.
  4. Mistakers just have to try harder next time. But if I'm a sinner, then that seems to be more fundamental to who I am.
  5. If I'm a sinner, then simply trying harder isn't going to get it done, because if I'm a sinner, then I probably owe somebody something. I
  6. I also probably deserve some kind of consequence.
  7. If I'm a sinner, trying harder isn't going to help me.
  8. If I'm a sinner, I need a Savior. (Andy Stanley)
- vi. Do you need a Savior? If you aren't right with God, if you are leading your life on your own, the answer is YES. Jesus came as that perfect, sinless person and He died upon the cross to pay the penalty of your sin.
  - vii. And if you already have a Savior, you've given your life to Jesus, stop calling your sin a mistake. Confess it to God and confess it to the person(s) you have sinned against!
5. Confessing your sin is the act of admitting it, owning up to what you have done, owning up to the fact that you aren't god, you aren't perfect, and that you need a Savior, and you need forgiveness!.
    - a. But confessing sin isn't easy. It requires us to humble ourselves.
    - b. It requires us to admit we are broken.
    - c. I love the AA admission: "Hi, I am John, I am an alcoholic." That is an honest, humble confession.
    - d. Can you say, "Hi, I am Bob, and I have sinned?" Instead of trying to look so good to others, can we acknowledge the fact that we are all broken and in process of being fixed?
- 6. Is there a consequence to failing to confess our sin(s)?**
- a. Psalm 32:1-5 *Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. (Selah) Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Selah)*
    - i. The psalmist laments how when he kept silent, not acknowledging his sin, that his body was wasting away.
    - ii. I would venture to say that there are many diseases and afflictions that are the result of unconfessed/unforgiven sin.
      1. We know the results of anger toward someone else (heart, and digestive system). High blood pressure, which is known as "The Silent Killer", can be caused by elevated stress and anger levels. It is a well known fact that anger can lead to all sorts of health risks including high blood pressure, heart diseases, ulcers, stomach problems, cancer, fatigue, and other issues. When you cure your anger, you will also improve your health.
      2. Anger is sin. Anger can often be about the pain we perceive someone has caused us, and our own unforgiveness or failure to deal with it can lead to physical challenges.
      3. We know the results of anger turned inward (depression)
      4. Sin is not only alienating to our relationship with God, but also to ourselves and others.
7. Jesus condemned sin and yet showed the love of God...He upheld the absolute standard of holiness without compromising the absolute value of the love of God.
    - a. People are thinking, "Wait a minute. Which is it? Either I'm terrible or God loves me."
      - i. Jesus said, "It's both. You're terrible and God loves you. You're worse than you thought and God loves you more than you imagined."

- ii. That is what Jesus did at Calvary. He died so that HIS blood could be the instrument to wash away the guilt of our sin.
- b. Acts 10:43, "*To Jesus all prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.*"
  - c. Acts 13:38 "*Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.*"
  - d. Eph. 1:7 "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*"
    - i. Redemption = forgiveness
  - e. Luke 5:24 "*But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*"
  - f. Col 2:13 – "*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,*"
  - g.
8. The sooner you embrace the fact that you have sinned, the sooner you will be enabled to enjoy God's grace toward you.
    - a. The sooner you're able to experience his forgiveness, his pardon for sin, the sooner you're able to engage in a personal relationship with a Savior.
    - b. Because at the cross, Jesus took your shame, and Jesus took your guilt, and Jesus took your obligation to God.
    - c. If you haven't taken Jesus as your Savior, won't you do it now? Let's all close our eyes and bow our heads. If you haven't trusted Jesus as your savior, and want to, I invite you to pray this prayer...God I have sinned against YOU. I have rejected You. I am sorry. I need your forgiveness. I need a Savior! I choose by faith to trust and receive what Jesus did at the cross for me. Thank you for dying for my sin. Thank you for forgiving me. I am forgiven In Jesus Name.
  9. If you are a believer, I want you to thank God for His forgiveness. I want you to say, "Thank you for shedding your precious blood on the cross to pay for my sins. Thank you that because you saved me from the wrath of God, I don't have to walk around feeling guilty about what I did 5 years ago. I don't have to carry around a heavy burden of guilt. I don't have to listen to the voice of Satan screaming in my ear. Thank you for setting me free from all that stuff!"