

DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Message 9: Atonement: How Jesus Won Our Salvation

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The doctrine of **atonement**:

The Atonement refers to the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.

Atonement – Cause

What is the ultimate cause that led to Jesus coming to earth and dying for our sin?

Two inseparable causes:

God's _____

John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

God's _____

Romans 3:23-26 (ESV)

²³ *... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,* ²⁵ *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.* ²⁶ *It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Atonement – Necessity

Was there any other way for God to save us than by sending His Son to die in our place?

Consider first the essence of **mercy** ...

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

⁴ *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment ...*

Once God determined – in mercy – to save some ...

Romans 5:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

... Then, Scripture makes it plain that there was no other way to accomplish this salvation than through the death of Christ.

Matthew 26:39 (ESV)

³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

Luke 24:25-26 (ESV)

²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Hebrews 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 9:25-28 (ESV)

²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"

Atonement – Effect

What happened on the Cross?

Christ's death met **4 needs** we have as sinners:

- 1) We deserve to die as the _____ for sin.
- 2) We deserve to bear God's _____ against sin.
- 3) We are _____ from God by our sin.
- 4) We are in _____ to sin and to the kingdom of Satan.

How Christ met these needs:

- 1) _____

Hebrews 9:26 (ESV)

²⁶ ... he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Martin Luther

All the prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, etc. that ever was... for he being made a sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sins... Our most merciful Father... sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him the sins of all men, saying, "Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer..." Here now cometh the Law and saith: "I find him to be a sinner... therefore let him die upon the cross..."

2) _____

1 John 4:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

John Stott

We strongly reject, therefore, every explanation of the death of Christ which does not have at its center the principle of 'satisfaction through substitution.' The cross was not a commercial bargain with the devil, let alone one which tricked and trapped him; nor an exact equivalent, a quid pro quo to satisfy a code of honor or a technical point of law; nor a compulsory submission by God to some moral authority above him from which he could not otherwise escape; nor a punishment of a meek Christ by a harsh and punitive Father; nor a procurement of salvation by a loving Christ from a mean and reluctant Father; nor an action of the Father which bypassed Christ as Mediator. Instead, the righteous, loving Father humbled himself to become in and through his only Son flesh, sin and a curse for us, in order to redeem us without compromising his own character. The theological words 'satisfaction' and 'substitution' need to be carefully defined and safeguarded, but they cannot in any circumstances be given up. The biblical gospel of atonement is of God satisfying himself by substituting himself for us. The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.

3) _____

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;* ¹⁹ *that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

Matt Chandler

The cross of Christ is first and centrally God's means of reconciling sinful people to his sinless self. But it is bigger than that too. From the ground we see the cross as our bridge to God. From the air, the cross is our bridge to the restoration of all things. The cross of the battered Son of God is the battering ram through the blockade into Eden. It is our key into a better Eden, into the wonders of the new-covenant kingdom, of which the old was just a shadow. The cross is the linchpin in God's plan to restore all creation. Is it any wonder, then, that the empty tomb opened out into a garden? (142–143)

4) _____

Mark 10:45 (ESV)

⁴⁵ *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,* ¹⁵ *and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

Charles Spurgeon

There is yet this further consideration, that the purchase price of every child of God has been fully paid. I have seen lands which have belonged to men who were reputed to be rich, but there was a heavy mortgage upon them, so that though they called them theirs, they were scarcely so. But there is no mortgage on the saints.

5) _____

Romans 5:12-19 (ESV)

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Tim Keller

When we believe in him, we are in a special relationship to him — he is our “legal proxy,” our “federal head,” our “covenant representative” our “forensic substitute.” This means that whatever he achieves and loses we by definition also achieve or lose, as if we had done all he had done. In two major ways, there is a legal linkage between Christians and Christ.

1) Then, on the cross, our sins were imputed to him. He died and was punished for them, and now we are as free from them as if we had paid them, in fact — we are as free from them as if we had already spent eternity in hell, for he did!

2) And now, when we believe, he stands in heaven “on our behalf,” and his righteous life is what the Father sees when he sees us. So not only are our sins imputed to him, his righteousness is imputed to us. Thus we are as honored and loved by the Father as if we had done all the wonderful deeds of love and courage and had accomplished the perfect record of faithfulness that Jesus did.

*Theology is for **doxology** and **devotion**—that is, the praise of God and the practice of godliness.*

- J.I. Packer

NEXT WEEK:

Man – Why Created?