

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-05-10b

Let's continue our study now in looking at the concept of animal sacrifice. Katie, can you tap that space bar? Thanks. Animal sacrifice as a shocking and abhorrent practice, making all of us abnormal and shocking people because we don't find it as off-putting as normal people do, reasonable people do.

It's pretty much no difference in the minds of these folks between the Aztecs cutting out the living beating heart of a virgin at the top of some ziggurat pyramid thing down in South America than it is for the Israelites to have performed these sacrifices at God's command, culminating in the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. So, how do we understand all of this? Well, let's begin at the beginning. We've looked in Genesis at, first of all, the whole reason there is sacrifice is that there is a need for satisfaction, for propitiation.

And even this has been called into question. So you sin. Why does some price have to be paid? Why can't you sin and there is no price? Why does God demand not just some penalty, but a grievous penalty? The wages of sin is a rap on the knuckles with a ruler.

The wages of sin is you get one less fig in your figgy pudding. You've got to sit in the corner and stare at the wall for 10 minutes. Why any rebuke at all for sin? Because really, the need for sacrifice is obviated if there is no requirement on God's part that when there is disobedience, something happens.

Why is there a consequence for disobedience? What do you think? Consequence for disobedience. Why should there be consequences? Well, if you want an orderly functioning environment, whether it's your household, your business, or whatever else, those who are setting the agenda and defining the purposes and establishing the missions and pointing the thing in a particular direction, when it is a cooperative effort and there are multiple people involved, you need to be able to say, would you please pay this bill, Mrs. Treasurer, Mrs. Accountant? We've been using electricity for a month and it needs to be paid. Please write this check and mail it off.

And they don't do it. And so your power gets shut off. And you say, why didn't you pay that bill? Well, I just didn't feel like it.

I didn't feel like paying it. In other words, we need some encouragement for following the plan, executing the instructions, making things happen that aren't necessarily a part of one's personal agenda. I don't feel like showing up for military formation at, oh, dark 30 in the morning, but I'm going to show up.

Why? If I don't, there will be consequences. Sorry, Sergeant. I was having such a great dream.

I vaguely heard bustle, but I just didn't want to wake up. So, oh, okay. Well, if you were having a good dream, why? A bunch of other guys showed up, so that's okay.

It becomes absurd. But we need a rationale for sacrifice, because sacrifice is only necessary as a consequence of disobedience, as a consequence of failure. So for people of the don'tbreakmyarm.com or whatever that was I was reading, the first thing, what was it? Whygoddoesnealamputees.com, you have to go back to basics, because these people are out teetering on a third-story balcony saying, I don't understand this.

So you've got to start at the basement and build the foundation, build the first floor, build the second floor, build the third floor. That's why you're on the balcony, and that's why you're seeing what you're seeing from your lofty perch. So let's begin at the beginning.

There is such a thing as a God who wants certain things to happen and wants other things not to happen. God doesn't want people killing each other. Therefore, there is a penalty for killing another person.

Every reasonable, rational person can understand this, right? We need some deterrent to prevent somebody from coming in because they just are having a bad day and killing other people. So if you do that, the consequences are so severe, even if you are tempted and even if you feel like it, this should be a deterrent. Now, that's one rationale.

However, it is not the only or even the primary rationale. I'm about to give you the primary rationale for penalty following transgression. The reason there is a need for propitiation, the reason there is a need for doing something in God's sight after a failure, a transgression, a disobedience on our part.

Why is that necessary? First and foremost, fundamentally, sin, disobedience, transgression, operating outside the will of God, immediately damages relationship with God and connection to God. And one of the archetypal, fundamental, you can't get below it, principles of our existence is that to continue in a productive existence requires direct connection to God. We as human beings are like cut flowers.

When we're born, we're conceived in iniquity, we're born in sin, and in the momentary existence that we have, we are going to wither and fade physically. It is inevitable. The reason for that is we dwell on this earth and we are separate from God.

This earth is not God's heaven. It is not God's kingdom. It is not the environment where the power of God and the light of God and the holiness of God pertain.

This is a fallen world. It is a corrupt world. The whole creation groans, Paul tells us in Romans, waiting for the redemption of the sons of God.

This is an environment that is ruled not by God, as we saw in Ephesians. It is ruled by the prince of the power of the air. It is ruled by principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this time, this space, this demonstration.

God has created a bubble in His realm where He has absented Himself. Now, yes, I understand

about omnipresence, but conceptually, in terms of God's holiness, remember when Jesus gave the model prayer and He said, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In God's realm, where God's holiness and righteousness pertain, there is no deviation.

Everything is in God's presence. Everything is connected to God. Everything conforms to God.

And it is an extraordinary place of productivity and forward movement, fruitfulness, holiness, light, benefit, learning, growing, advancing. Everything about it is positive. Then there came the fall of Lucifer, the shining one, who ended up being the son of darkness.

How thou art fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of darkness. Well, He says, Why should there be a consequence for my doing something outside your will, purpose, and plan? God says, I'll show you. The lake of fire was not prepared for unbelievers.

Hell wasn't invented so that we could scare people into faith in God. The lake of fire was prepared for Satan and his angels, those who followed him in a departing attitude from God. They didn't rub their hands together with glee and start perpetrating all kinds of heinous acts of violent, craven awfulness.

They just wanted to do something different. God says, as soon as you depart from me, from my presence, from connection with me, and the nature of God's creation is it only functions and lasts when it is connected to Him. It's kind of like your computer only works when it's connected to power.

If it's a PC, you've got to have it plugged into the wall. It can be the greatest PC in the world, but if you unplug it from the wall, it's got milliseconds before it's going to quit functioning. Your machine will actually work for a fraction of a second after you pull the plug.

There's capacitors, there's existing electricity in the circuit. It will work. If you've got a battery where you've stored some power, it will work for something measured in hours sometimes.

Now this laptop doesn't have hours left. Its battery is quite old. But sooner or later, in the absence of power, renewing, refreshing power, this machinery goes dark and useless.

It is no more useless than the piece of wood upon which it sits. It's a flat thing, and if you can use a flat thing, it's good for that. But it's not good as a computer.

God's creation is designed to function when it is connected to the power of God, the presence of God. And it will not function for long apart from it. Satan and the angels say, well, we think it ought to.

You ought to make us independent so that we can function indefinitely out of your presence, out of connection with you. We make up our own rules. We decide what's good and what's bad.

God says you can't do that. It will never work. And he says, yes, it will.

And God says, look, I'll show you. This universe was created. This is a place where God has absented himself.

You do not see the throne of the Father. You do not see the Lord Jesus. You do not see God, the Holy Spirit.

This is a realm, when you look out in space, when the Hubble scans the heavens, if you get outside the atmosphere, do you see a white background? You see a black background, right? If it weren't for stars, if it weren't for energy sources, all of the universe would be black and dark. Why is that? God is light and to Him is no darkness at all. Well, if you take the light away, you get blackness and darkness.

That's why the backdrop of the heavens is black, black. And the only relief are points of light that have been placed there as sources of energy, sources of light, sources of radiating power. That's what this universe is.

Connection with God is interrupted by disobedience. That is the principle of propitiation. That is the principle of sacrifice.

It isn't that my action has created a kind of damage that needs remedy. I ate the fruit of the tree and now the tree is missing a fruit and mathematically it needs to be replaced. I ate the fruit and I poisoned myself and I need to undo the poisoning.

The principle in disobedience is interruption of connection with God. God says, as soon as you depart from My perfect plan, My perfect will, My perfect power that enables and gives meaning and purpose to your very existence, as soon as you cut off from that, death follows. God doesn't have to cause the death.

The death will happen in the same way you don't have to tell your computer, okay, I've unplugged you, please turn off now. You unplug the power, it's going to die all by itself. You chop a flower off of its plant, it is going to wilt and disintegrate all by itself.

You don't have to put some death water in the flower pot to make the thing wilt. Severing the connection, it is inevitable that it is going to disappear. They've got plants, you know, some of the great sequoias and some of these other ancient trees that have lasted literally thousands of years.

There are living trees on this planet that were trees and alive when Jesus walked the earth. They can live a long time if they get nourishment, if they get energy from the sun, if they aren't cut down and destroyed or burned or whatever else, they can last a very long time. But you sever them from their source, they inevitably die.

The wages of sin is death. The result, the inevitable following consequence is death. So how do you communicate this to creatures that are very limited in intellect and understanding compared to the heavenly realms? Let's set up an analog, let's set up a demonstration.

God says, Adam and Eve, you have disobeyed, you ate of the fruit. Now isn't it interesting that the original sin was eating of fruit, but the consequence has nothing to do with fruit. Did you ever notice that in the whole Levitical system, the whole sacrifice system from Genesis to Revelation, none of it is fruit.

Nobody brings peaches to the altar. Oh Lord, I bring before thee these holy bananas, the firstlings of the tree. I bring you these figs.

Here are these olives. I'm bringing this giant barrel of olives and this is my sacrifice. Olives, I don't know that they're technically a fruit anyway.

I'm talking about fruit. I'm talking about the kind of stuff that grows on a tree and has the seed inside, apples and things of that nature. No fruit sacrifices and yet that was the nature of the original sin.

Why is that? Wake up, it's not about the fruit. It's not about the material of the sin. It's about its invisible consequence.

All sin separates from God. Why do you still have to confess your sins? Why do you have 1 John 1.7 and 1.9 after being a believer? I thought I was saved. I thought the blood of Jesus on the cross and I accepted Him as my Savior, so why is sin even an issue? It's an issue because it still interrupts connection to God.

This is what we call being, quote, out of fellowship. Some people use that phrase quite frequently. Well, you've severed the connection.

You can be married to someone and if you give offense, it can pretty much interrupt that relationship. You can be somebody's child and if you disobey your parent, that parent can be wroth, can be unhappy, and your normal beneficial, loving, nurturing, come here, let me give you a hug relationship is kind of tabled for the moment. You're still a child, you're still a spouse, but communication, consort, fellowship, mutual encouragement and uplifting and upbuilding are all kind of off to the side and right now it's a matter of what are we going to do about this thing you just did or you just failed to do.

We understand that deviation from the expectation and from responsibility and from what is right and proper and dutiful interrupts relationship. That's what this is all about. If you understand that sacrifice is an analogy, it is a representation of the consequence of disobedience, the consequence of failure, the consequence of sin, known or unknown, it cuts the connection to God and that is pictured.

Now, where does it begin? Adam and Eve eat the fruit. God shows up later in the day after their eyes have been opened and they knew they were naked, they sowed... Why are they naked where they weren't naked before? Adam and Eve prior to eating the fruit had a living and apparently visible connection to God and when that connection was severed, it's like unplugging the lamp, the bulb went out. Some people have actually said that they must have

had clothing of light.

Whatever it was that glorified them, that gave them essentially a robe of righteousness, disappeared and they knew that they were unclothed and it was a physical appearance. This is why they grabbed leaves off the trees and tried to make aprons, tried to make skirts to hide their nakedness. There was a visible change and it is because the connection to God was broken.

Why did God have to come into the garden and say, where are you, where are you? The connection is broken. Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat? As a result, to repair this deficiency of adequacy to stand in each other's presence and in the presence of God, the fig leaves don't cut it. They don't suffice.

What does suffice? Verse 21 of chapter 3, For Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them. Tunics of skin. Where do you get skin? Animals.

The animal had to die. Its skin was taken as a covering. What used to cover the animal now covers Adam and Eve.

It is not necessary from a practical point of view. It is necessary from a symbolic point of view. This death, this separation has to be assigned to another.

Somebody else has to suffer this consequence so that the relationship can be restored. It has two functions. It illustrates and as an analogy, it discourages future transgression.

It is motivation to not let this happen again. I have an effect beyond myself. Because Adam and Eve sinned, it wasn't just their nakedness.

Animals had to die because of what they did. So it communicates in two ways. I've interrupted connection with God and I have caused problems in the horizontal realm in which I live.

My sin inevitably not only separates me from God. What's our memory verse? Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.

Breaks the connection. Iniquity, sin. It also reverberates in the horizontal.

How can you picture that for Adam and Eve? See these animals over here? They're dead. Now, is animal sacrifice shocking? Yes. Should it be shocking? Yes.

The death of animals, whether to sustain us or to provide symbolic propitiation for us, ought to be off-putting. It ought to be shocking. This is a good thing.

It is horrible that an animal in its prime... Remember when they would say this animal needs to be so old? And it doesn't say find a ten-year-old bullock and sacrifice that. It's a bullock of the

first year or of the third year. It's early in its life.

The firstlings of the flock, they're newborn. They're the first fruits. Bring of the firstlings of your flock.

They're the yearlings. The newest, healthiest, best. Got their whole future ahead of them.

And you slaughter them. It doesn't say bring the old and the infirm. They were about to die anyway.

Bring those. Let them sacrifice their life. That would be the human practical turn of mind.

In fact, that's what the Israelites were doing in Malachi. You're bringing these old, diseased, blinded, nasty, fly-swatting sacrifices here because that makes sense to you. And you're missing the point.

The point is not let's weed out animals or let's just kill an animal for the sake of killing. You're losing the representative, analogical truth. Killing an animal separates the animal from you and separates it from this life.

It is a consequence, right? That's what's going on. It's supposed to be shocking. You don't get shocked chopping down some wheat, rubbing the grains out, putting it on the altar, and, you know, well, I could have had it for cereal or I could have made it into a sacrifice, but, you know, I didn't hear any screams coming from the wheat field as I chopped down the stalks.

There are people who actually think that, you know, vegetation has consciousness. You know, there's these silent tree screams when you, you know, pull off a leaf or pluck a fruit. You know, they put them in the hothouse, in the greenhouse, and they hook up electrodes, these heart monitors and things to them, and they say, you know, I hooked up the electrode to this one plant, and then I went to the next plant, and I just hacked it all up with a machete, and the first plant got all upset.

They've got allegedly, you know, documented science for this. Well, look, animals have been equipped with human-like attributes. They have eyes.

They have ears. They make noise when they are in pain. They are like us, and it's for a reason.

Wouldn't it be nice if God had a species of tofu that just, it was just like blocks of tofu that just kind of sprung out of the ground, and God said, when you commit a sin, when you fail, grab this block of cheesy substance and bring it and place it on the altar and light it. It's flammable. You don't even need wood.

It's like a heat tab they used to give us in the Marine Corps. You just put it on there and get a little fire on it, and it will just go up all on its own. And it's got a wonderful perfuming aroma that will come up.

Animals are the sacrifices because they remind us of us. God could have made the animals. Did you ever think about it? God could have made animals any old way He wanted.

They could have been mechanical. They could have been made out of steel. They could have been erector set animals.

They could have been tinker toy animals. They could have all been made out of wood. They could pop out of the side of trees.

They could fall out of the branches, and they'd be little tinker toy animals. And wouldn't that be easy? They're already made out of wood. Put them on the altar.

Up they go. That's convenient. Why animal sacrifice? Because animals remind us of us.

Why not insects? Why don't we gather a bag of grasshoppers and put them on? How about earthworms? How about crickets or dung beetles or something? Let's collect a bunch of those and put them on the altar. What does it say in Hebrews 9, 22? Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. In the night of the original Passover, God says, When I see the blood, I will pass by.

All things are purified with blood. The setting up of the tabernacle, everything was sprinkled with blood. Read Hebrews 9 especially, that whole section of Hebrews.

Why blood? The life of the flesh is in the blood. It is supposed to communicate to us a higher principle. It is the principle of separation.

It is the principle of damage. There is only one plan. There is only one purpose.

There is only one way to live and way to function that doesn't do damage. We think something is good, but it's not. How many examples can you think of where somebody thought this would be a good idea, but little did they know, it isn't.

Look at all your lawyer-sponsored commercials on television now. Did you take thus and so? Have you suffered stroke, bleeding from the eyes, ears falling off, injury or death? Contact the law firm of this, that and the other because you're due compensation. Somebody thought this was going to be a good medicine, marketed it as good, but it had terrible side effects.

The one I saw most recently was they had some medicine they were giving, and it caused boys to grow breasts. So now everybody is in a lawsuit over that. Mastocytosis or some such, I don't know what it is, but it has something to do with generating female breast tissue in boys who took this medicine.

An unintended side effect. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We're limited.

We're short-sighted. We're fallible. We are self-interested.

We call evil good and good evil. There's only one course. There's only one path of existence that is entirely productive, beneficial, and all things work together for good, and that's God's way.

To depart from that is to create separation and to create death. You think, this will make a nice bouquet, I will pick it. And you kill it.

Oh, it's our anniversary. Let me kill 24 flowers on our 24th anniversary. Let me take these and cut them from their source, so that instead of doing their natural thing and bees pollinating and doing all of their reproductive thing for the plant, no, I'm going to chop them off because they look good to me, and they're going to wither and die, and I'm going to throw them in the trash two days from now.

We think things are a good idea, and there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are what? The ways of death. Death. We don't know enough.

We're not smart enough. My dog should never be put in charge of running my household. Major is a wonderful dog, but if I put him in charge of the house, all we would do is eat dog food and go on walks and chase squirrels and bark at passing trucks.

That's his paradigm. That's what makes him happy. Well, nothing useful in the human realm would ever get done.

He's not smart enough to run my world. He's not smart enough to accomplish my purposes. We're not smart enough to run our world and accomplish God's purposes.

And every time we depart, we create death. That's what the sacrifices are designed to depict. It is a wrapping of the knuckles on our thick head saying, do you realize that when you think you're smarter than God, and you think you've got the priorities figured out, and you think you know what is best, and you think you know what is good, you are creating disconnection.

You are creating death. It's hubris. It is arrogant.

What do we universally ascribe as the original sin in heaven by Lucifer? What is his sin in one word? Pride. Thought he knew better than God. And we say, well, that's the sin of pride.

Your heart was lifted up. Well, it has ever been thus. And any time we depart from God's plan and purpose, it's because we think we've got a better idea in the moment.

We give rain to our emotions. We give rain to our cravings. Today, people don't want consequences.

I don't think there ought to be a consequence for sleeping with my girlfriend, or cheating on my test, or whatever else it may be. Why should there be consequences? Well, the reason we have historically had consequences is that our laws, remember Genesis after the flood? God says, if a man sheds blood, then by man shall his blood be shed. Capital punishment for premeditated murder is as old as Noah.

Why? You have to show that these things have consequences. And blood is a memorable, lasting depiction of death as the consequence of sin. Well, this is the rationale.

This is why. And anyone who glosses over this and says, well, no rational person could ever condone animal sacrifice, is completely missing the point. This is like saying, no rational person could ever justify sticking needles into two-year-olds.

Do you condone sticking needles into two-year-olds at any time for any reason? I'm looking for an answer. Do you believe in sticking needles into two-year-olds at any time for any reason? I've got a sewing needle here, two-year-old, I'm going to poke him. No.

But do we sometimes condone the poking of needles into two-year-olds? Absolutely. Why? Do they think it's a good idea? No. Do we think it's a good idea? Yes.

Inoculation. This is going to save you from the horrific effects of several diseases. You think about what we do to protect our children from polio, from whooping cough, from measles, from typhus, from various things.

And yes, it requires something that is ugly and painful. I'm sure doctors and nurses get tired of torturing little kids, inflicting pain on them, but they do it knowing that there is an essential greater good behind it. There is an essential greater good in the human race understanding that to go your own way apart from God is death.

There is death in the pot. There is death in the act. There is death and consequence both vertically and horizontally.

And people who think there isn't are the ones who ought to look at themselves and say, Is this rational? Is this reasonable? Can I think of cases where we've let people just run amok and do whatever they want and there was no consequence? We let people have profligate sex with multiple partners as much and as often and anywhere that they want and there isn't a picture of consequence? You know, people have gotten all upset because people labeled AIDS as a judgment of God on homosexuality. It's not that per se. The principle of STDs in general is a reminder from God.

It's not a specific judgment, Well, you got this STD because you failed. The principle that there is infection, the principle that there is disease that follows bad practice is a part of God's analogical instruction to us. If you would follow God's way, did you know that over time all sexually transmitted diseases would disappear if everybody followed God's model of virginity until marriage and then marriage until death to a single partner? How would you ever get a disease? Of course, now people can be born with it because their mothers and whoever else infected themselves.

But basically, the prevalence would vanish. The reason we have these things is because of undisciplined behavior, of immoral behavior. People say, well, I don't want to call it immoral.

I don't think it is immoral. According to my morals, it's moral. Well, that's fine, but you're not the God of the universe and connection with you doesn't determine whether things live or whether things die.

Connection with God does determine life and death. And in His standard, it's a sin and it is going to have consequences. Whether they are visible and material as an instructive episode or whether they are the invisible ones that will inevitably show up at the judgment.

The secrets of men will be revealed. And even if you think you got away with it, even if you think there was no consequence here, it did interrupt relationship with God and it did damage in the horizontal all sin does this. So, I think our main objective in this first foray into our study is to establish that animal sacrifice as detailed in the Bible is valid, it is rational, and it is necessary.

It is God's communication to man about the wages of sin, the consequences of disobedience. This is an invisible truth. Just saying it won't communicate it.

It has to be demonstrated. It has to be experienced. That's why we come into this world and we live a while and then we die and we watch others around us die.

Why is there all of this death? Because there has been disobedience. Disconnection from God makes death inevitable. It's the way things are.

So, next time we are going to look at the details. Why was God so unhappy with Cain for bringing a vegetable offering where Abel brought not just from the flock, but from the firstlings of the flock? Read over that passage, look at the details. Abel brings of the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof.

Why? Why is God pleased with that and not with the other? We have no previous instruction about sacrifice. Why is God displeased with Cain and pleased with Abel? Well, we'll see the details of that. Then we're going to move, we're going to do all of this next time.

That will be one session. The other session is going to be Abraham and God walking between the pieces. Why those animals? Why in pieces? Very detailed description of what happens when God establishes His covenant with Abraham with those animals.

And we'll look at that in our second session next time. But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the graphic and meaningful way that You communicate the ineffable and high invisible truths that pertain to Your existence and Your realm and Your thoughts and purposes to us in forms that make them understandable and make them clear to us.

We thank You for the privilege of access into these truths and the powerful effect that they have on us in renewing us and rehabilitating us and making us better than our flesh. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will motivate us and encourage us to live the life to which we have been called, a transcendent life, a life that is above the mundane and above the short-term and the temporary, that we can live in a way that pleases You, that bears eternal fruit, that secures for

us eternal inheritance and that prepares us for life and service in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.