

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-07-19a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to assemble together to experience the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as it is expressed through the souls of our fellow believers. We are going to move directly to our study this morning.

It's my opinion that when we have technical difficulties that's just telling you that there's a really, really good part of God's Word coming up and the principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age are throwing impediments in our way, but impediments are what we eat for breakfast, so we're ready to proceed. This is the 19th of July, 2015, and we continue our study of Christ in the sacrifices. We will be in the book of Genesis, spanning a distance of about 20 chapters from chapter three through chapter 22.

Let's take a moment as we begin our time of fellowship in God's Word to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing on us so that as we seek a better understanding to remember and to apply the truth of God's Word, these things are all accomplished exclusively in the power of God's Spirit. Without Him, we can neither understand it, interpret it, or apply it. Shall we pray? Father, what a blessing it is to recognize the manifold expressions of Your grace toward us, even when we are discouraged, to think about all of the things that You do for us, the things that are seen and the things that are unseen.

It is a constant source of reminder and of uplift that we are here temporarily, we are here for training, we are here for specific purposes that are of relatively short duration, all anticipating the eternal future that we will spend in Your presence. We thank You for all of the gracious things that You do for us to help us prepare for that time, to sanctify ourselves, to dedicate ourselves and to commit ourselves to becoming those people who reflect Your glory and are useful in Your service. And we pray that as we spend time this morning in some of the earliest parts of Your Word, chronologically, that God the Holy Spirit will bless it to every heart, that each one will find it memorable and meaningful in the hours and days to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Our study began many weeks ago with the title and with the theme of Jesus Christ as the Christ anticipated in, reflected in, and actually greatly explained through the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament.

In that regard, we began at the beginning with the first sacrifices that are recorded for us in God's Word. And our introduction was actually, why do we have these rather shocking, seemingly brutal, bloody expressions to begin with? Why would God ask us to slay animals, some people would say our fellow animals, and have them essentially bleed out? Couldn't we smother them with a pillow and then offer them? Why does it have to be gory? Why does it have to be shocking? You think of the various ways they could have – you know, God could have put a little nerve center near the outside of some portion of an animal's skull and you would just tap them lightly with a rock and they would just fall over. It would be instantaneous, it

would be merciful, it would be humane, as we like to say.

It's so funny to me when they talk about the humane society, meaning, well, we're animals, it's humane. There's nothing more inhumane than humanity. There's nothing more cruel than our humanity.

They say, oh, that's just inhuman, look at these horrible, brutal people, they're just inhuman. No, they're human. That's what humanity is.

We are the blight, we are the curse, we brought this all about. And that's one of the points of animal sacrifice. Why did God introduce this mode of recognition? Why couldn't we do just pick up a rock and wave it in the air and say, oh, Lord, I recognize that I am from the dust of the earth, here is this rock that is hopeless, helpless, and useless without you, I dedicate it to thee, this is my sacrifice, and God says, great.

Doesn't work that way, does it? It's animal sacrifice from the very beginning and it is designed to be shocking. Letting the blood out of the circulatory system of a mammal is shocking. I don't care who you are and I don't care how many times you see it happen.

Arterial bleeding from the neck is startling. It gives one pause. And this is the ritual that God prescribed.

Why? He's just a bloody God, He loves to see these things take place? No, it is more painful for Him than it is for us. He designed these wonderful animals. He created them in perfection.

He harmonized them in a wonderful balanced system and it is we who have corrupted and brutalized nature by our presence and by our decisions. If God had never put man on the earth, if creation had stopped after the fifth day, it would be a wonderful, harmonious, blessed planet, everything in balance, everything in order, all of the animals, happy vegetarians, it would have all been great. Could God not have just stopped and said, hey, look at this planet earth, this emerald marble in the solar system there around Sol, the sun, and what a wonderful little gem I have created.

And it could have just sparkled in its beauty forever more. But God continued through the sixth day and made man knowing that we would, having been made in His image, make choices. And sometimes those choices would be bad and that some of us would be forever rebellious and forever negative.

And that introduces corruption. Just as Lucifer introduced it in the heavens, we introduced it on the earth with His cooperation. And it is tragic.

It is shocking. And to communicate that adequately, you can't just wave a sheaf of grain. You can't just hold up a rock before God.

You take a quote-unquote innocent animal, you lay it on the altar, you slit its throat and watch it

bleed out. Many of the sacrifices, the sacrifice involves a symbolic transference of guilt, where the offending party lays his hand on the head of the animal. And there is this transference.

But this is where we began our study, and then we started looking at those sacrifices. As I said, what was the first one we looked at? Back in Genesis 3, verse 21, once man had fallen, once God said, behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. Now lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever.

The Lord God sent man out of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. But in verse 21, before He says this and before He sends man out into the world, He first provides a covering, an article of clothing, protection. Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them.

We don't see the animal, we don't see the act of God in taking the animal's life, in skinning the animal, in tanning that skin, in preparing it by whatever means were necessary to create garments. I would guess that there were probably at least two animals involved in this, if they were made of skin. It's unlikely that you could clothe two people from the skin of a single animal, so there were probably two or more animals who suffered death in order that provision might be made for the man.

And it's because we're here and it's because we're fallen. There is no escape from this. No matter what you do, you are responsible for the death of living things.

We are responsible for the death of animals. It is inescapable, no matter what you do. God designed it this way.

It is intended this way because it is good for our humility to recognize the wretchedness of our corruption, the wretchedness of our inability to make a perfect world. All we can do is take a perfect world and make it imperfect. We corrupt it by our movement through it.

Notice in verse 21 of Genesis chapter 3, who made the garments? God did. God didn't say, go slay an animal and make garments. God did it this first time.

Do you think that God began a garment industry and every time one of these wore out, God came down and made another one? So many times we've seen in Scripture that it is the first time that a thing takes place that is imbued with significance, that has symbolic relevance for the future. God delivered the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, one of which is, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is a day of rest. You will do no ordinary work on the Sabbath.

The first time that someone broke that command, do you remember it? How was it broken? A man went out and gathered sticks, probably to make a fire. What happened to that man? He was tried, he was judged, and he was executed by the congregation. He was stoned to death with stones.

Now, has everyone in Israel that ever broke the Sabbath been tried, convicted, and stoned to death with stones? It's the first time that is imbued with significance, that is given this relevance. This is God's attitude. This is God's requirement.

In a perfect world, it would happen every time. Of course, in a perfect world, no one would sin. But this is God's provision.

So God made them tunics, and God clothed them. There are two verbs in verse 21. God made, God clothed.

So what do we learn from this? We're looking for Christ in the sacrifices. What does this very first animal sacrifice on man's behalf tell us? That we cannot fix the problems that we create ourselves. We think we can.

We try it. But our solutions are like the medicines you see advertised on TV. Side effects may include.

We fix one problem, and we create two more. God is the one who can rescue us and save us. We cannot save ourselves.

We cannot remediate the problems that are now inherent in creation just because we live. We are conceived in iniquity. We're born in sin, and just by existing, we spread corruption.

We are walking malignant cancer cells, and we can't cure ourselves. It is God who makes provision. God made a way.

In His grace, in His omnipotence, in His omniscience, God's solution is the only true solution, and there is no other. So we see this here. God made tunics.

God clothed them. And notice, in God's timing, this clothing is provided before they leave the garden. Maybe they say, well, but here in the garden, you know, we can just make a fig leaf apron every couple of days, and we'll be fine.

God makes provision proveniently, in advance, in anticipation, because He knows that He is about to send them out into a much harsher environment. So it is God who is the author of deliverance. It is God who defines the means of deliverance.

And it is God who does that providing in anticipation of before we actually need it. We learn this all from Genesis 3, 21, the first sacrifice. We also see some things about sin.

God, through this animal sacrifice and creating these tunics of skin, fixes a situation. What is the essential problem? Adam and Eve initially were naked and unashamed, right? God could come. They had fellowship with God.

They had fellowship with one another, and they were not ashamed. They were acceptable in God's sight, and they were acceptable in each other's sight, right? Once sin enters the equation,

that changes. Are Adam and Eve acceptable in God's sight after the fall, after they disobey and eat the fruit? Are they acceptable? No, they are not.

Are they acceptable to each other? No, they are not. They made the fig aprons before they ever were worried about God coming into the garden. They made the fig aprons to be acceptable in each other's sight.

I can't look at you this way for whatever reason. So they created these aprons. If they thought the aprons were good enough to be acceptable in God's sight, why did they hide when he came in the garden? Hey, Lord, I know I'm naked, but I got this great fig apron, so we figured we'd come strolling out here and have a talk with you anyway.

The aprons are for each other. Hiding is for God, right? So the acceptability and the unbroken nature of perfect fellowship, all of that is lost through sin. So from the first sacrifice, here are a couple of points that we can review by way of summary.

Sin disrupts fellowship. You say, well, that's kind of an abstraction. It interrupts a good relationship.

How does it do it? It changes acceptability. If you get mad at someone, their behavior is not acceptable, right? And if that goes on long enough, if they persist in unacceptable behavior, pretty soon the person themselves is unacceptable. If it becomes a pattern, sin progresses into evil.

Sin, we typically talk about occasions. We talk about incidents. We talk about specific breaches.

Evil is when those things are part of a pattern, when it is an ongoing pursuit. Sin versus evil. But number one, it disrupts relationships.

How does it disrupt them? Unacceptable. Sin disrupts our relationship with God because while we are in a state of unforgiven sin, we are not acceptable in His sight. We cannot come before Him.

We cannot communicate with Him. We cannot enjoy His blessings. He cannot confer His love and presence on us in a beneficiary way when we are in an unacceptable state.

If your dog goes out at night and comes back having been sprayed by a skunk, you may love your dog, but he is unacceptable. Unacceptable. I don't care how much you love him, you can't tolerate his presence.

There's nothing like a freshly sprayed dog from a skunk. I can't get near you, you know. Nice and clean.

Nice Italian meal, garlic breath. I love you, but I can't get closer than six to ten feet from you. Unacceptable.

That's what sin does, number one. Secondly, sin causes personal loss. They cannot remain in the garden.

That environment of perfection, of ease, of access to sustenance, all they had to do was put out their hand and pluck a piece of fruit. That's lost. Don't have that anymore.

Number three, sin not only affects us, it inevitably, inevitably affects the world around us and the people around us. Sin, unremediated by God, has consequences to our environment and to others, the environment of the world and the environment of other people. Sin will inevitably spread corruption.

This is pictured later in the law of Moses, where death, something dead, if it touches you, you're corrupted. If a dead mouse falls out of a rafter and hits an Israelite, he is unclean. Did he intend to become unclean? No, he did not.

Somebody dies and falls over and you catch them, you know, you're walking along with grandma and she says, oh glory, and falls over and you catch her, you're unclean. Contact with death is a picture in that ritual uncleanness, it's a picture of what sin does. It spreads.

It is not confined, oh, this is just a little mental sin, it's a little mental fantasy that I entertain, it doesn't hurt anybody, it's just me and I'll confess it to God at some point, but I have these little sins that I perpetrate in the privacy of my own internal domain here and it isn't going to spread, it isn't going to hurt. Don't kid yourself. Look at what the Word of God says.

Sin inevitably, almost by definition, it is a cancerous, malignant thing and you cannot contain it. It is like an outbreak of a virus and no matter what steps you take, it jumps the fences, it crosses the fire breaks, it will corrupt, it will pollute, it will spread. What happens when Adam and Eve sin? God says, well, here's some clothing of skins.

Okay, we're good to go. You're acceptable in my sight, you're acceptable in each other's sight. There is loss and it is pictured by God saying, behold, the man has become like one of us to know good and evil.

Which one of us came to know good and evil? Lucifer, the one who just got through big dealing Eve through rationalization, through logical argument into sinning. Now they have become like that one of us who knows good and evil. That's Lucifer.

Your new King James has a capital US there. I think they're misguided. One of us, meaning one of the heavenly hosts, that's Satan.

Satan fell through making decisions disobedient and contrary to God. So have Adam and Eve. They have become like that one of us, knowing good and evil.

Now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. It's so interesting here. It isn't, well, lest he trash the garden, lest he and Eve come close and one of

them kills the other in a confined space.

What is the consequence? God says, lest he continue to enjoy the same unrestricted access to free food and food that by its very nature sustains life indefinitely. It is food of life. It is food of life.

But if he does not eat and live forever, that's not possible anymore because he is corrupt and fallen. Therefore the Lord God, and God doesn't even finish the sentence, the Lord God sent him out of the garden to do what? To suffer punishment for his sins. What does it specifically say? What is the issue between verse 22 and 23? tree.

Lest he stay in the garden and eat fruit and live forever, God sent him out in order to have him till the ground from which he was taken." What an interesting turn of phrase. Of all of the ways this could be expressed, why does God send him out of the garden for this specific purpose? It's all about what he eats. Lest he stay in the garden and eat the fruit of the tree of life and live forever, God sent him out of the garden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Our existence in the fallen world, the imperfect world, as we here metaphorically scratch the ground from which we are taken, that's where our sustenance now comes from, till the soil. By implication, this involves all of our food because you really can't raise livestock without growing grain to feed them. You've got to winter them, you have to sustain them, fatten them, and you typically have to at least have access to pastures and try to protect those pastures so that your sheep can eat, so that your animals can eat.

By extension, tilling the ground, managing the ground, finding fertile ground is necessary whether you are eating plants or animals. But at this point, of course, a man is still on a vegetarian diet. "...till the ground from which he was taken, so he drove out the man." Notice the verb here, drove out the man.

It would be interesting to have a closer view of this. Did God say, y'all need to leave? Oh Lord, I don't think so. Well, you really need to go.

There's a gate on the east side of the garden. God apparently had to drive out the man. I imagine Eve was very upset, but I love this home.

I just have it decorated. Driving them out means that they were very unwilling to go. You drive animals when they don't want to go the way you need them to go.

He drove out the man and he placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden. This wasn't the honor system. Adam and Eve, please leave and don't come back.

Okay, Lord. Out they marched and they respected the gate. He drove them out and he had to post an angel to keep them from going back in.

This is the difference between the perfection of the garden that God created and the cold,

harsh reality of the world outside. Adam and Eve did not have the willpower. They were addicted to the garden and they had to be forcibly driven from it.

They had to be forcibly prevented from coming back into it because this fallen world is so far removed from what God offers, from what God creates. It's our fault that we don't enjoy the former and we are stuck for this time in the latter. So again, looking at that Genesis chapter 3 verse 21, God made them tunics of skin.

Sin disrupts fellowship. It takes away our acceptability to each other and to God most importantly. Secondly, it causes personal loss.

Thirdly, it affects people and the world around us, spreading the curse. Sin is a curse and it spreads. You can't stop it.

You don't have the power. Fourthly, God mediates the consequences of sin. God suppresses those consequences.

He manages them. He contains them. They are not eliminated but they are manageable.

The skins are not the same as the glorious existence that Adam and Eve observed but they will do. Adam and Eve can continue to live and they are going to live for hundreds of years and have hundreds of offspring. The skins are a mediation.

The skins make them acceptable enough that they can have a relationship with God. They are acceptable enough that humanity in its clothing can operate and be around each other. God makes a provision and it is provisional provision.

It creates a workable situation. It's not ideal. It isn't perfect but it is satisfactory.

Adam and Eve are once again acceptable in God's sight. They are once again acceptable in each other's sight but it is at a greatly reduced level. There has been personal loss.

There has been consequences to those around them, to their descendants, and to the outside world. That is unchanged. God doesn't reverse the curse.

God doesn't take away the fallenness that has descended on creation through no fault of its own. God doesn't take away the death of animals. Once Adam and Eve get their first set of clothes, well these are durable clothes.

They'll last like the sandals of the Israelites and this is all you'll ever need. Now you can't go back to where you were before. But God mediates it.

He manages it. And through promise, there is the promise that He gives in the garden. The seed of the woman will ultimately crush the adversary's head.

This provisional time, this imperfect time has a duration that will eventually come to an end.

And there is coming a time when God is going to fully resolve the consequences of sin, fully re-perfect His creation. There will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells and in which the righteous dwell.

So why doesn't He just do that to begin with? Why do we have this interim of fallenness and of cruelty endured by animals, by creation, by humanity's humanity to other humans? Why this interim? There is a huge distance between telling somebody how bad a thing is and having the person experience it for themselves. All parents know this. You try to tell your child, look, I've had the benefit of several decades of living that you haven't had.

Let me just tell you, you don't want to do that. At the academic and abstract level, the child may understand that, but until they disregard that and go find out the hard way, as we like to say, now it is real. I see what you were talking about.

It's the old Mark Twain quote. When I was 16, I thought my dad was a complete fool, but it was amazing how much he learned in the next four or five years. By the time I was in my early 20s, my dad was a genius because I learned by experience that what he'd been trying to tell me was true.

The interim period, this is for the instruction of the angels, the civilization that antedates our own and for us. It isn't enough for God to say you really don't want to sin, you don't want to disobey. Let me tell you, it's really awful.

This is a demonstration. We live it. We are mired in it.

We see the awfulness of it. Every time an Israelite had to take his knife, whether it was flint or bronze or iron, and kill the best of his flock, take it down and take its life, take its potential, take its future benefit to his flocks and herds, whatever it might be, it was an opportunity to recognize this is what it's like to live in a world that is largely separated from its creator. This is what happens.

It's unavoidable. It's inevitable. And yet, through this, God is teaching me that he has got a solution coming.

And this animal, by its sacrifice, is making me acceptable in God's sight. I am acceptable to the community of Israel. I'm not unclean.

I'm not outside the camp. I've been washed. I've been sanctified.

I've been purified. And I can continue to enjoy the reduced but effective fellowship and provision that reflects loss, that reflects consequence of sin, but has that future promise, that anticipation that there is coming a day when these temporary measures will be fully implemented and that the consequences and presence of sin will be fully remediated. But I live in this intermediate state to inoculate me, to impress upon me how much I don't ever want to be here again.

This is why the angels observe us so closely. This is why we live this life after salvation, instead of just going to the beatific, visionary glory of heaven. We stay here after we accept Christ as our Savior, and this is our set of shots.

We are never going to want to be entered into this corrupt, fallen, painful, cursed condition. And even though it is mediated, even though it is remediated to an extent, this is so far short. If we could see back through the gate into the Garden of Eden, it would take an angel with a whirling sword to keep us out.

If we could ever get in, it would take God Himself to drive us out. That's how desirable and how wonderful the unfiltered, unmitigated blessing and glory of God is. So God has mediated, He has suppressed the consequences, and through promise He will eventually resolve them.

The animal sacrifices are going to be fulfilled in Christ. They looked forward to Him, we look back to Him, but when He returns the second time, when the Millennial Kingdom runs its brief course, there will be an ultimate settling of accounts at the Great White Throne. There will be an ultimate, complete elimination of sin and its sources.

Those who choose it, those who refuse to leave it, ultimate, total destruction in the Lake of Fire. Satan, the beast, the false prophet, all those who follow his path of decision, and we will return forever convinced that there is only one way, and that is God's way in the Kingdom of the Father. Well, that's all from the first sacrifice.

As I said, the first incidence of a thing is often the most important, symbolically meaningful, metaphorically valuable, and that's what we see here. And it is so, almost miss it, there's only one word that even tells you that sacrifice took place, and that's skins. Clothing, tunic of skin.

If it wasn't for that one word, and yet it is the consequences, it is the aftermath that is detailed in chapter after chapter throughout the rest of God's Word. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to review the next four sacrifices that we've seen in the first half of Genesis, because what we're looking for is not just the concept of sacrifice that we have established, or the nature of those earliest and archetypal sacrifices that we have covered, but it is Christ in the sacrifices.

What do we see in this first one? It is substitutionary. It is essential for one thing, acceptability. Acceptability.

It's a great New Testament verse, we have been made acceptable in the Beloved. Outside the Beloved, there is no way to be accepted. No way to be acceptable.

Let's pause here and take our break.