

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-09-13b

Let's pick up our study now, we're in Leviticus chapter 1 and we are looking at the whole burnt offering. And one of the things that becomes evident is that it is separate and distinct from the sin offering that we quickly glanced at over in chapter 4. Fundamentally, primarily, it is offered in a different place in terms of where the animal is incinerated, is burned. We mentioned the idea here in chapter 1 of holocaust, I was reviewing during the break the etymology of that word, holo meaning all, like hologram or holistic approach to healing or whatever it might be.

Holo meaning all, and caust meaning to burn, something caustic burns, acid is a caustic substance, people can make caustic comments that are hurtful and inflict pain. So holocaust, all burnt is the idea, everything is burnt. Well, if his offering is a burnt sacrifice, verse 3, of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish, he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.

As an Israelite, recognizing the promise made in Genesis further amplified to Abraham that there is a coming Redeemer, this to the alert and spiritually sensitive Israelite would tell them something about that coming Messiah. The Messiah is going to be male, and he is going to be without blemish. And there is an aspect of his presence, of his person that is reflected as a herd animal.

Herd animals are domestic, they are of service. They exist for the benefit of those who own them. Oxen had multiple uses, not only were they good in terms of providing sustenance, but they were the tractor of the ancient world.

You could plow with them, you could pull carts with them. They provided the heavy strength required for moving rocks, pulling stumps, whatever it might be. And they are compliant, they are not a rebellious animal.

I was very interested in looking at cultural developments across the centuries and across the continents. One of the arguments about why civilization did not develop in other continents the way that it did in Europe and later in America has to do with the availability of animals that can be domesticated. Horses can be domesticated, zebras cannot, oxen can be domesticated, sheep and goats can be domesticated, deer, ibexes, gazelles cannot.

One of the reasons you have the development of advanced agriculture in Europe is the availability of these domesticable animals. Where you look at Africa, what can you domesticate out of the African animals? What have they managed to domesticate in Africa? What's the tractor in Africa? Elephants. With some difficulty and a lot of guys, you can domesticate an elephant.

But they're not practical in terms of building fences and let me ride the range, don't fence me in. Because they are such a big tractor, fencing them in is a problem. Here's a question for you.

Why didn't they domesticate gazelles and ibexes and other wild animals that are like deer and become prey for lions and leopards and pumas and such like? Why didn't they domesticate those? Any idea? You can't. For the same reason you can't domesticate zebras, they do not domesticate. People have tried it.

Europeans went down to Africa and went to some of these other continents and said, you know what, we have flock and herd animals, let's do it here. And so they managed to capture some of these animals. They would, you know, herd them and get them in a corner and then close the gate and fence them in.

You know what they do? They will hurl, you have to build a really tall fence because they can leap. So you've got to build like 16 foot fences, which isn't easy, you know, that's a lot of wood, that's a lot of, and it's got to be solid. But even then they cannot keep them in.

They will hurl themselves at the fence until they die. They have no domestic personality. Zebras, they have tried with great effort to use zebras like horses, they can't.

Zebras do not domesticate. Just like people that, you know, try to keep a lion as a pet when they grow up, there is something in their nature that is intrinsically non-domesticable. You can fool them for a while, but you can be those two Las Vegas guys and one of these days one of them is going to bite you and put you in the hospital.

Remember those two guys that had the white carnivorous, who were they? Yeah, they were magicians, I've forgotten their names now, mercifully so, don't remind me. Anyway, they had white ones, I just remember that, and they'd been doing this act for years and one of the oldest friends they had bit the guy and put him, somebody clapped or, you know, somebody dropped a purse and the thing went off and put the guy and nearly killed him, or maybe it did kill him. Anyway, say all of that to say this, there is a quality about the herd and flock animals that is noticeably different than other animals.

And it is their compliance, it is their willingness to be domesticated, to be fenced in, to obey the humans who make them into a herd or who supervise them as a flock. They are compliant in the way that wild animals are not. And interestingly, God put those domesticable animals in the same place as the people who are domesticable in the sense that they are willing to submit themselves under the mighty hand of God so that they may be exalted in due time, that's us ultimately.

So we are in Leviticus chapter 1 and the offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd. It is a male without blemish, so we know that the coming Messiah, if we are a spiritually sensitive Israelite and recognize that this is a shadow system, we know and they knew that it is not the blood of goats and bulls that takes away sin. Remember Cain and Abel? God accepted Abel and his sacrifice.

God did not accept Cain or his sacrifice. It is the attitude with which the sacrifice is brought that

is recognized. It's not the materialities, it's not the details of the ritual per se, it is in the doing and performing of the ritual that one expresses an attitude.

What is inside is reflected by what is outside. Now look at these details. He shall offer it in the last half of verse 3 of his own free will.

It is not prescribed by date, it is not prescribed by occasion. Patty pointed out from the notes from when we did this 10 years ago that the verb that means to offer here is in the causative stem in Hebrew. The hyphel is the causative, cause to offer.

There is some motivation that the person has in bringing this offering. Maybe they, well it could be any one of a variety of things and it will become more clear when we see the purpose and the significance of the offering why somebody would decide to bring it. But they bring it of their own free will and they are caused to bring it by something.

There is a motivation of their own free will. Now you think about the Lord Jesus and we are going to jump to the fulfillment here just briefly. Let's just take one aspect, the work of the Lord Jesus is so complicated you could spend weeks on it.

We are just going to take one aspect. I want to just use one figure. One of the ways that Jesus refers to His work on the cross is using the figure of a cup.

Remember that in the Garden of Gethsemane when He went off by Himself and prayed to His Father, what did He pray? Father, if it be Thy will, what? Let this cup pass from Me. Now what did Jesus say the cup means earlier that night in the upper room with His disciples? This cup is what? This cup represents the New Covenant in My blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood so it is a symbol of giving up His life, drinking the cup.

Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not My will but Thine. Now here we have a free will offering of the animal. What else did Jesus say about the cup? In the garden earlier that same night Jesus mentioned the cup.

Do you remember it? John chapter 18 verse 11. When they come to take Jesus and arrest Him, Peter draws the sword and Jesus says, put your sword away, shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me? John 18 verse 11. You have the cup mentioned in the upper room, you have the cup mentioned at the point that Peter chops off Malchus' ear, put your sword away, shall I not drink the cup? And you see there that He has decided that He is going to drink the cup and He doesn't want Peter or anybody else gumming up the works to where He can't.

Now in between those two mentions of the cup, what do we have? Jesus talking to His Father, talks to the disciples about the cup, talks to Peter about the cup, but in between you have His time of prayer, not My will but Thine be done. So Jesus in and of Himself evidently would have preferred to not drink the cup, if it be Thy will let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless. So what caused Jesus to decide that He would drink the cup of His own free will? Knowing the will of the Father.

This is a powerful truth and it's something to think about. There are things that we should do, it's not necessarily our first choice. What would compel us? What would constrain us? What would motivate us to go ahead and do these necessary things? Pragmatism, modern secular materialism says, if it's not good for me, I'm not doing it.

I want what's best for me, I've got to look out for number one, every man for himself. Even altruism is inherently selfish because people have to let you know about their altruism or it's pretty useless. What would be a hyphenated stem, what would cause us to do something? Would somebody spontaneously say, I'm going to take the very best male in my herd and kill him? Eh, just for the heck of it.

Why would somebody take the best male animal in their herd and slay it? They are caused to do so because they know the will of God. They recognize the will of God. Now is it the will of God that people just murder animals? What is the will of God? It is the reason for which the sacrifice is brought.

Did God just want His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die? I'm just, you know, we've been around for eternity, you just need to die. There was a purpose, right? Is it God the Father's first choice that His Son die? Was it Abraham's first choice that Isaac be slain on Mount Moriah? But why was Abraham willing to raise the knife? Why was Abraham willing to raise the knife? It wasn't his first choice. He was compelled, he was motivated by knowledge of the will of God.

And not just the short-term consequence, this person, this animal dies, but the attitude of heart. Now look at the details of this offering. Of his own free will, verse 3, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.

Why doesn't it just have a period after tabernacle of meeting? This is with a view toward, this is in the presence of, this is with conscious awareness of God. That's why you're doing it. You are there at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, meeting whom? You're before the Lord.

This is conscious obedience, conscious expression of something we are reluctant to do, perhaps, but we recognize that it is the will of God. And because it is the will of God, we know it is best. And despite any misgivings we may have, you think the Lord Jesus had any misgivings at all about going to the cross? Was he just happy-go-lucky? Well, you know, three days I'll be back.

Did he have any serious reluctance? Yes, he did, and rightfully so. And by the way, misgivings and reluctance are not a sin. Look at the Lord Jesus.

To be aware, soberly aware, that this is big, this is serious, this is difficult, this is hard, but I can do it, and I will do it, because I know it is the will of God. It's not my will, but it's God's will, therefore, that's what I'm going to do. I will drink the cup.

Shall I not drink the cup? The Father has given me. He doesn't say, shall I not drink the cup the Romans are going to hand to me. In John 18.11, Jesus doesn't say, shall I not drink the cup the

Pharisees have filled full of poison hemlock for me? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? These are circumstances brought about by the animosity and the ill will and the bitterness and the acrimony of people, jealousy, vindictiveness, evil on the part of the religious leadership in Israel.

But Jesus doesn't look at it that way, does he? He says, this is the cup the Father has given me. Shall I not drink it? In the sense that I am going to drink it. Of his own free will, what is the application for you and me? Many times our road is difficult.

We may question, Father, is this really your will? Why is the road so rocky? Why is the journey so fraught with impediments and with friction and with sorrow and heartache in some cases? Not my will, but thine be done. This is the cup the Father has handed me. If it's from the Father, shall I not drink it? Now, how did Jesus know that this was a cup from the Father and not that he had made some sort of mistake and it ticked off the Pharisees when he shouldn't have? If he had taken a different approach, if he had been more gentle, if he had been more tactful, if he had kind of met them in the middle, if he had compromised, if he had drawn them in, if he had been more diplomatic, if he hadn't done that whole fashion of whip of cords and drive a bunch of people out of the tent, if he had just... Do you think the Lord Jesus was sitting there questioning himself and maybe he had just brought this all on himself? If only.

If I had said something different, done something different, couldn't have been a different outcome. The one great thing about living your life by the word of God, in prayer, asking and seeking and knocking so that your questions are answered and what you look for is found and the doors where you knock are opened, the advantage of that is when things get tough, you don't have to second guess. You don't go back and say, what if? Well, if I had only played that hand a little differently, if I had laid down my two of clubs instead of my three of spades, it could have all been different.

No questions. Why could the Lord Jesus be confident that this cup was the cup from the Father? Because he had lived his life in the will of the Father. He was in communion with his Father.

How long did he spend in the garden praying? Over two hours. Remember, he comes back, could you not watch with me one hour? Pray lest you enter into temptation. And he went back and prayed and came back and found them asleep.

It was hours in prayer. Do we spend hours in prayer or do we spend minutes in prayer and hours second guessing ourselves and wondering if things are right or if there's something else we could do? Of his own free will, he identified the cup, asked his father questions about the cup. When he was assured that this is the Father's will, he drank the cup.

That is an essential understanding for this first chapter of Leviticus and this particular offering. Of his own free will, at the door of the Tabernacle of Meeting, before the Lord, aware of, cognizant of, impressed by the presence of God in that place. That was as close as you could get on this earth to God.

It is the Tabernacle of Meeting. And you come to the door and you bring this animal. Now, he shall kill the bull before the Lord and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood.

Who kills the bull? Okay, Mr. Priest, here's my cow, here's my bull. I'm going to stand back, you do it. I can't look.

Let me know when it's over. Who kills the bull? The offeror kills the bull. You have been caused to bring it of your own free will.

When you bring it, you kill it. You take the animal by the head. You take the knife.

You cut its neck. Blood begins to flow. There are priests nearby, but you are the one with the knife.

You are the one with your hand on the animal's head when it dies. Dies by bleeding. Do you think this was memorable? Do you think it was profound? Do you think it was something to think about before you do it and something to think about after you do it? Of course.

Is God in favor of cruelty to animals? Is He? No. But God made the animals. They belong to Him, and what He says to do with them, we do.

And I leave it up to God. Is there a mercy for the animal? Are they spared in some way? That's in the province of God. If it is the will of God, it is the will of God.

Thankfully, we don't have the animal sacrifice system. We have a new and better system. This is what they were to do.

Kill the bull before the Lord. Didn't He just say at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the Lord? You bring it before the Lord. You kill it before the Lord.

This is unto the Lord. It is aware of the presence of God. The priests, Aaron's sons, by the way, these guys aren't even mentioned when we get over to chapter 4. The priests, Aaron's sons are not mentioned in the sin offering, but they're mentioned here.

The priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, so as you are there with this dying animal, the priests, capture the blood in a bowl. They take that blood and they sprinkle it all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. They sprinkle the blood around the altar.

Why not on the altar? It's around the altar. If you go all the way around the altar with the blood, that's applied to the altar, right? If blood is a sanctifying thing, if it is a hallowing and a holiness-making thing, what is this doing for the altar? Specifically for that offeror, it is sanctifying the altar. The altar is identified with the offeror who has identified himself by laying his hand on the bull.

The altar is made personal to the offeror by this blood. Do you see the link? You put your hand on the head of the animal. The animal's blood is around the altar.

It is applied around the altar. You are identified through the animal who is the mediator with the altar. Couldn't do it before? Now you can.

The animal has made it possible for that altar to be beneficial and related to you. You are linked to the altar through the death of this animal, specifically through its blood. You have a new relationship to the altar, so to speak, that you didn't have before.

Make sense? Something else about the Messiah that an ancient Israelite, Old Testament Israelite, could have understood. Somehow I'm going to be drawn closer to God and to that which pleases God and makes one acceptable in His sight through this voluntary offering that I have decided to bring of my own free will. I choose to come.

God didn't send a priest out into the camp of Israel and say, Tobias, come thou. We're going to slay you in front of the door of the tabernacle of meeting so that God will be happy. This is a system whereby one could approach.

He shall kill the bull before the Lord. The priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around. Why? The priests have to do this.

The priests have already been sanctified and been sprinkled. This is a part of their job. They are mediating just as the animal is mediating.

The animal in service is a form of mediation. The priests in service are a form of mediation. The offerer didn't take the blood and sprinkle it on the altar.

All of these details are important. There is a mediator by which the altar is made real and accessible and applicable to you. There is a sacrifice by which the altar is made real and applicable and related to you.

Then he, the offerer, shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. You're going to flay it. Why? If it wasn't gruesome enough to kill the animal, now you are going to skin it.

You're going to skin the animal. Why? What does skinning do? If you remove the skin, what do you see? If you cut it into its pieces, what do you see? Not just its outward lack of blemish, but you see everything that is inside. Man looks on the outward appearance.

The Lord looks on the heart. The offerer skins the burnt offering and cuts it into its pieces. If the animal represents service to God, then it isn't just the outward form of the service that counts, is it? What is the motivation? What is the intent? What is on the inside? A lot of people busy serving God.

A lot of people writing checks and dropping them in offering plates. A lot of people sitting through long sermons today. A lot of people feel like, well, if I do this thing, if I perform this action, that'll check off a block and God won't judge me or discipline me.

I'm righteous. Look at what I've done. Look at this offering.

The service is laid bare and open, and it has to be as without blemish on the inside, as visible and known to God. You're before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle. You have slain this animal before the Lord.

Now you are skinning it and cutting it in pieces before the Lord. And it is exposed. All things are naked and visible to him with whom we have to do.

And it isn't enough to do lip service and parade righteousness before men. God looks on the heart. The sons of Aaron, the priests, verse 7, shall put fire on the altar and lay the wood in order on the fire.

The sons of Aaron, the priests, it is their job to tend the altar. They are the ones who are involved in the operation, if you will, of the altar. Offerers don't come up to the altar.

You're not that familiar. There is somebody who tends the altar, ensures its sanctity. And these are the priests, the sons of Aaron.

They put fire on the altar. They lay the wood in order on the fire. Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar.

But he, the priest, shall wash its entrails and its legs. I'm sorry, he, the offerer, shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. Why? Why would you wash the entrails with water? Washing makes clean.

Washing removes defilement, right? And the entrails, the innermost parts, have to be washed. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

It is the thoughts and intents of the heart. We examine ourselves. Are we in the faith? If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us.

But this is something that we initiate by acknowledgement. We initiate the offering. We wash the entrails.

And the legs. Why the legs? How did the sacrifice get there? It didn't say, and behold, you shall carry the bullock on your shoulders for, you know, from outside the camp. It walked there, right? Any incidental defilement, any incidental dust that got on its feet, this thing is perfect, not just perfect, as perfect as it can be made.

And even journeying across the expanse of the camp to the door of the tabernacle, it would have picked up some dirt. And before this thing is presented to God, that is washed off. Nothing of the earth, nothing of the clay, nothing of the dust of which we are made and the dust to which we return.

This animal represents something beyond that in its perfection. The innermost parts, the outermost parts that contact the earth are washed. And the priest burns all, holocaust, burns all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Even the word here for offering is a different word. There are two different ways that you can burn something, not the word offering, but the word burn. There are two different words used for burn throughout this context.

And this word for burn means to burn as incense. It means to burn for the savor, for the smell. And it is consistently used this way throughout the law and into the prophets, into Jeremiah.

This word for burn means to burn as an aroma, burn for the purpose of sending that savor to God. This offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the Lord. Now, burning flesh by most people's sensibilities isn't pleasant.

Cooking beef is a wonderful smell. Burning beef, not so much. This isn't just cooked to medium rare.

This is incinerated to ashes. But to God, it is a sweet smell. Why? God just likes watching animals be killed and destroyed and incinerated? No.

It is the offerer before Him of His own free will, recognizing the spiritual truths, the invisible essence of this. And to drag it down to the simply material is to miss the point. And you can't explain these details at a material level.

It would be arbitrary. It would be contradictory. It wouldn't have any links to the past or to the future.

But when you understand it in a spiritual context, every single detail makes complete and perfect sense. Going into the past, going into the future, every single detail is significant, every single detail. And it is consistent.

These things never vary and they never change. What the offerer does, what the priest does, how he does it, why he does it, where he does it, with what, which parts of the animal. Same thing if his offering is of the flock, of the sheep or the goats as a burnt sacrifice.

It is a male without blemish. Consistent. But there's going to be a different aspect involved in the flock animals than there is in the herd animals.

And we can go through those details. But here's the point. As a reflection and as an anticipation of the Lord Jesus Christ, this recognizes that approach to God has to be done.

And by the way, when you get down to the end of verse four, he puts his hand on the head of the burnt offering and it will be accepted on his behalf to do what? To make atonement for him. Now if this is not the sin offering, and it is not, and it isn't the trespass offering, in what sense is it an atonement? Now this is the punchline. So everything we've said up to this point, here's the main idea.

Whole burnt offering, complete dedication, represented in a domesticated animal being offered. But what's the point? To make atonement. It will be accepted on his behalf to make

atonement.

We say, well, but I thought atonement, that was not the whole sacrifice for sin. What does atonement do? What is kafar? What did we say in the first session? To cover, to make up a deficit and a lack, right? It covers over. It makes something right that is not right.

What is that thing? It is not sin. This is not a sin offering. This is not a trespass offering.

This is a dedication of the entire self offering. This is recognition of the desire and the need and the opportunity to serve God, to drink whatever cup He hands us. But because we are fallen, because we are corrupt, because we are temporary and sinful, even in our service, we are often inadequate.

We are incomplete. We are many times incapable. Paul says in Romans, that which I want to do, I don't do, and what I don't want to do, I do.

Who will deliver me from the body of this death? As long as I'm in this body, I can't do what I want to do. The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, right? This is an offering that recognizes, before the Father, before the Lord, I desire to serve. I desire to be pleasing in your sight, but I know that in my flesh, I cannot please God.

In my flesh, I cannot please God. It is not only the work of Christ in atoning for our sins, but it is the work of Christ in atoning for the shortcomings and shortfalls in our well-intentioned service that is in view here. We would love to be perfectly pleasing in God's sight.

We would love to do everything perfectly right, to always say the right thing, always think the right thing, always do the right thing. It's not a matter of sin. It isn't a matter of rebellion.

It isn't a matter of transgression or shortfall or letting our nature get away from us. It is the simple inability to be perfectly pleasing in God's sight so long as we are in this flesh. The whole burnt offering is a recognition and an expression of desire to serve, knowing that that service can never be perfect in this life.

We have this treasure, Paul says, in earthen vessels. We're trying to carry God's treasure. We're trying to convey the gold and silver and precious stones, but we're just not ever going to be great at it.

We err and fall short again and again. But this offering recognizes that not only are we saved by the death of Christ, but we are saved by His life. Remember the verse? Much more, then, shall we be saved by His life.

It is a recognition that we appropriate to ourselves not only the perfection of the Lord Jesus in solving the sin problem, we appropriate to ourselves the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ in service and in positive function. And that's the first sacrifice that Leviticus leads off with. We recognize that it is the adequacy of Christ that meets our inadequacy, not concentrating on sin,

not looking at trespass, looking at the love for God expressing itself in service.

And just as we look to the Lord Jesus as the redemption, as the payment, as the cleansing grace of God from sin, He is also the answer, and He is the power, and He is the mediator on the positive side. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we do fade as a leaf. Our iniquities, like the wind, take us away, but not His.

And it is in Christ, as we saw in Ephesians, that we find perfection of service, perfection of Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present yourselves a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. In the Old Testament, you had to bring a sacrifice that wasn't you, looking forward to Christ. In Christ, we share His willingness to drink the cup, and we are complete in Him.

We are perfect in Him. We are acceptable in God's sight, not just by elimination of sin and defilement, but in the positive things that we do, in our prayers, in our faith, in our service, in our functions of ministry, in our function of ambassadorship. How many times have you tried to share the truth with someone, and you kick yourself later and say, Oh, I should have thought of this, I should have said that, I was imperfect, I was incomplete.

You bring that offering, that whole burnt offering before the Lord, and in our weakness, God's strength will be made manifest. We are complete in Him. The Lord Jesus is our Ola.

He is the perfect sacrifice before the Lord, pleasing in His sight. It's a wonderful aspect of the Lord Jesus' work for us that doesn't often get concentrated upon. We recognize He's the payment for sin on the cross.

We don't often recognize that He fills up the inadequacy of our positive efforts, of our goodness. Our goodness isn't good enough, but His is. Well, we'll resume our study of these Levitical offerings next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the tremendous privilege of being in Him, being completed and made useful, made qualified, made acceptable in Your sight, not only by the eradication of our sins, but by the sanctification and the inspiration of our service and our lives before You. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will encourage each heart, help us to see the practical implications of this as we live from day to day.

We look forward to the day when the Lord Jesus collects us and brings us to Himself, and brings us before You, where we will enter into new and vastly greater realms of opportunity and service. We thank You for the training and the instruction that we receive. In the meantime, we pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister to each heart.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.