

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-11-01a

This is Sunday, the 1st of November, 2015. In our study of Christ and the sacrifices, we find ourselves currently in the very heart of the Old Testament witness to the Lord Jesus. The most detailed and procedurally complex part of perhaps the entire Bible is here.

And one of the reasons that these sacrifices are so detailed and require so much diligence, you think about how much concentration it takes for us to understand it, think how much concentration it took to do it and do it in the way that God intended, to actually get things set up on a daily basis so that the observance of God's requirement was fulfilled by the offerers, by the priests, by the Levites, by the people of God who in obedience and in the practice of these rituals were teaching themselves and everyone in future generations about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. I doubt that many of them appreciated how important it was. And you see this in the sort of downward glide of history among God's people beginning even at the point of the Exodus and coming out of the land, collecting the bones of Joseph, getting across the Red Sea by mighty deliverance.

And they're not three days out before there's complaint, there's grumbling, there's a party that wants to go back, yeah we were slaves but there were leeks and garlicks, you know, made sort of an Old Testament version of the spoonful of sugar making the medicine go down, a few leeks and garlicks make the slavery go down. So you know we had security, we didn't wonder where we were going to be and so on. Well it's a wonderful paradigm for us and we're going to pick up and continue our study in just a moment, but we'll pause here and go to the Lord in prayer, remembering that it is God's Holy Spirit that makes this truth something other than a bunch of dusty old words on an ancient page.

It is that to many people, it is that to many believers. There has never been to my knowledge at any time in the history of this country the level of brute ignorance of the Old Testament that prevails. If they had an equivalent of the Tonight Show guy that goes out and asks people on the street questions about history, you know, who's on the dollar bill and that sort of thing and they get all these funny answers because people are so uneducated in this country about what we used to take for granted, it would be sadly the case to do the same thing, do a Christian on the street interrogation and ask questions about the Old Testament in particular.

It's really tragic. We are not of that number and one of the reasons is that we realize that it isn't just knowledge, it is wisdom from God enabled and empowered by His Holy Spirit. I cannot emphasize too strongly that God the Holy Spirit is a person, He is real, He is here in this room, He is present in your heart and soul at this moment and whether or not the time that we spend together this morning is meaningful and helpful and makes a difference in our lives in coming hours and coming days depends entirely on whether or not we recognize Him and seek His teaching and revealing and empowering and enabling ministry.

Without Him, we can't do anything. He is the Lord Jesus Christ with us. He makes the Lord Jesus

real and the Lord Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing.

Nothing meaningful, nothing that redeems the time. So this moment that we take to recognize God's Holy Spirit is one of the most important parts of any gathering that we have. So we'll go now to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are grateful for the provision that You have made for us. We are dust, we are clay and we will return to it if history continues and You do not send the Lord Jesus back in our lifetime as individuals. We will return to the soil from which we have been constructed.

We know that as mortal and as limited and fallible creatures, it is impossible for us to enter into Your purposes, to understand Your designs, to accomplish Your will and to be possessed of Your righteousness. And yet You have made all of those things happen through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and the continuing presence and ministry of Your Spirit. We know that the voice of Your Holy Spirit is Your Word, which we have before us this morning and we pray that as we study it together and reflect on its truths, that God the Holy Spirit will lead us into the light, that we will see the path that is defined by righteousness and that as we find it in Your truth, it will do its supernatural work of enabling and empowering us to live a life that is out of the ordinary, that takes the time that You have allotted to us and converts it into eternal treasure, eternal inheritance and eternal opportunities for service and function in the time and the age that is to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen. Having surveyed the pre-Mosaic offerings all the way from the beginning of Genesis and the fall of Adam and Eve down through the book to the days when the Passover was instituted and now at Sinai, the delivery of the law and the institution of these rituals, they are just practices. They are habitual things that God says He wants His people to do.

Why is that? It's a lot of blood. I would give a lot to just see a snapshot. If you could send, you know, it's dangerous for people to go back in time because, and by the way, this is just a little aside on my part, but any time travel movie you see where people go back, you know, the Star Trek guys go back and save the whales or whatever it might be, it is so absurdly impossible because, you know, they get in a car and drive somewhere.

If you are in traffic, you have offset everybody behind you by one car length. Somebody that would have made a light doesn't. I mean just being there, breathing air, you've changed the air.

Now there's some oxygen that's not there. There could never be an intrusion of any material entity into history. This is why angels are invisible.

Did you ever wonder why can't you see angels? Why can't you see the fallen forces of darkness? Why doesn't Beelzebub poke his little ugly face through and actually his shiny beautiful face through and wow us all? They're not allowed to. In this age, I mean with the exceptions that God ordained, visits to Abraham and Samson's parents and things like that, Gabriel coming to

Daniel and to Mary and so on, but it is rare and exceptional because angelic appearances would throw history completely awry. It's enough of a tangle just with us running around with our free will.

But time travel, I promise you if there is any such thing, if some of the unseen observers are us in the future coming back and looking at history, God forbid. I don't want to see all of my mistakes. It's kind of like a quarterback that throws an interception.

How many times are they going to rerun that thing? Okay, he threw a bad pass, it was poor judgment, but rerunning it, rerunning it, do you really want to see failures and sins and shortcomings rewound? No. And I pray that the blood of Christ just obscures the whole screen so those can't be seen. But to the extent that there would be any interference, it would hopelessly change the course of history.

So no time travel. Anybody smart enough to do time travel from a secular point of view, 2,000 years into the future they perfect time travel, they would never come back and make an appearance. They would necessarily have to be invisible or they would alter time.

You can't be here at all without, you will make a change. It's not like, well, just don't step off the path or don't talk to anybody or make sure you're not seen, no. You being here creates ripples all through your lifetime.

You matter. Your presence matters. What you say and what you do matters.

You have an effect all the time, all the time. And that's why it is so important for us to realize the difference that our actions and our words make. It is significant beyond our wildest imaginations.

That's what God is teaching through these sacrifices to Israel. What you do matters. And specifically, when you sin, when you act out of the fallen nature, it incurs a cost.

It's not a freebie. There's no do-over. You can't fix it.

Every sin, mental, verbal, overt, an action, something visible to the rest of the world, but even a mental sin, we think, well, mental sins, nobody knows. It's between my ears and behind my eyes and as long as I say nothing, nobody knows, nobody cares. I can have flights of fancy.

I can travel and do all kinds of heinous things in my mind. No, you can't. We reviewed this morning in our scripture reading the link between light, truth, and righteousness and the link between darkness, falsehood, the lie, and sin and evil.

They're linked, inextricably so, divinely so. And any sin, any sin incurs a cost and it is a many-headed hydra cost. It is a cost to us.

Let's say that I, let me pick something sort of what we would say is innocuous. Let's say I covet something. I really just have a sinful wish to have a guitar, a Martin D 45 or something.

I'm going to pick something that you just think is harmless. I just have an insane desire to have a Martin D 45, it's like a, I don't know, \$6,000, \$8,000 guitar. Must have, I just think about, wake up in the middle of the night in cold sweat, wouldn't it be great if I had that guitar? But I don't say anything to anybody.

I just, I just really crave that thing in my mind. You think, well if you didn't say anything and if you didn't go spend any money and you didn't, what's the harm? But, let's just define this as a sinful desire for this thing. Why is that such a bad thing? Why can't I just have flights of fancy about imagining myself on a, on a beach somewhere with a Mai Tai strumming my Martin D, oh, Mai Tai is a sinful, I mean, sipping a Kool-Aid, you know, on a beach somewhere playing a Martin D 45, of course, you know, the artificial sweetener in Kool-Aid, that's probably, you know.

So, I'm not sipping anything, I'm just on the beach, of course, I should probably be at work. Let's just imagine that I'm in a vacuum somewhere playing the guitar and why, why is that such a bad thing? How can that, how does that partake of sin? Why would that invoke sacrifices? There is always a cost for sin, always. There is a cost to me.

You remember my, you may wonder, you know, why did he bring up this weird time travel thing? If you, some future person were to come back and occupy a space, that changes things, right? One extra car in traffic, somebody doesn't make a light that would have, now they have a fatal car wreck because they are 15 seconds behind where they would have been. Conversation is different. Something they see is different than what they would have seen.

Somebody comes out of a store that they wouldn't have seen coming out of the store. They go to the gas station and there's a pump available that wasn't there, there's not a pump available that was there. The tiniest little intrusion changes things.

Here's my point. A sin in your thoughts does the very same thing. To the extent that I entertain sin in my heart, to the extent that I spend mental clock cycles on that sin, it's taking up space.

It's a car length, it's a space taker, it's a time taker, it's a thought taker that wouldn't be there. And things that should have been there aren't. Sin is never without a cost.

Why do you think God instituted the sacrificial system? From the beginning, the wages of sin is death. You sin, an animal loses its life. There's blood everywhere.

The thing has to be sliced up. It is going to be burned. Think about the time involved in a sacrifice.

You say, well, let's ignore the fact that the animal has lost its life, that I have lost an animal out of the herd or out of the flock or out of the money that I had to spend to get one from the bird category or whatever it might be. Ignore all of that. The time, if I were not sinful and I were fully dedicated to God all the time, why would I ever need to go offer a whole burnt offering? You would do it once for all.

It's like signing a dotted line and joining the military. I only had to do that once. But year by year, the book of Hebrews emphasizes, year by year, sacrifices had to be brought.

The day of atonement had to take place. The sacrificial system is huge. And you think about the cost.

Think of the cost in animals. Think of the cost in time. Think of the cost in resources.

There is a cost, sin costs, all sin costs, every sin costs. Even if it's a thought, it takes up a space where something else should have been and it changes the flow of your thinking. You are sensitized to righteousness when you are thinking about truth.

When God the Holy Spirit is active, when our standards and our viewpoint and our observation is informed by God's truth, there is clarity. Nothing makes us appreciate clarity like losing our eyesight. Some people lose it young.

Some people lose it older. But you go somewhere and you don't have your glasses and you got to read a recipe or you got to read the instructions on a bottle or you got to read a sign or somebody hands you a form. The last time I went to get my driver's license, which I think it comes up for renewal maybe this year.

So how long are they? Eight years now? Whenever it was. The last time I went to get my license, I didn't have my glasses and I've never had any trouble. No corrective stuff required.

But it was one of those times where they say, okay, look into the thing and read it. And there's such a long interval between driver's licenses, I didn't even give it a thought. I went up there and looked at it and I thought, well, there's like something gummy in my eyes or something.

I can't seem to sharpen this up. And I was squinting and straining and blinking and backing, forwarding. And I finally, one eye is slightly better than the other.

And that one gave me the information I needed when I shut the weak one. And I passed the thing. And so I get another eight years with no glasses driving.

This time, yeah, well, I do drive with them just for my own sanity and peace of mind. But I just don't want it on my, I didn't want it on my license. But it's a lack of clarity.

And you appreciate that clarity. There's times when you need it. I often would be working with my father on something up to and including the present.

And we're up under a lawnmower or something trying to tighten a screw. And he'll hand me the wrench and say, I can't see that thing. Can you do it? And I get under there and do it.

Well, now I'm that guy. And I get under in a tight place. And I can't sharpen up.

I can't see which way the slot is facing for the screwdriver. You all don't know what this is like.

I'm just telling you something that's unique to myself.

And it just, I never used to be that. And without that clarity, I can't get done what I want to get done. Light, it's a long winded introduction, but hear me now.

Light exposes reality. And when the reality is sharp and clear, that's the truth. And truth is good.

We want to live in the world of reality. If you partake of darkness, you have turned out the light. You know, my little power screwdriver now has a light on it.

And it's really helpful because my vision goes in dim light. Any kind of dim light, everything's blurry. Those two guys are sitting back there in semi light.

I can't really sharpen them up from here. Turn on more light and I can see more. Light, truth, righteousness.

Clarity is required for righteousness. I need to know whether or not to give money to this guy with the cardboard sign. Should I or should I not? Here's a charity that sends me something in the mail.

Should I support them or should I not? Here's a missions organization. Here's a ministry. Here's somebody related to me who is in the ministry or is doing missions.

And they say that they need some support. Should I send them money or not? And if so, how much? You know, should I empty my savings and send them everything I've got? Should I send them a token amount because we're friends or we're related or I want to feel good and, you know, show them some support or what? Well, where's the clarity? How do I know if I should and if so, how much I should? And that pertains to a wide variety of decisions that we make. Light, truth, righteousness.

They all go together. Sin partakes of darkness, which partakes of falsehood. And when you tolerate it, it is a place taker.

Remember in our memory verse it says God is light and in him is no darkness at all because the two don't coexist in the same place. You either have light or you have darkness. It's binary.

It's a one or a zero. The light that you have a switch on there, there is no dimmer switch in sin. It's on or it's off.

The light bulb is burning or it is not burning. One or the other. To the extent that there is sin, there is a cost.

And it's a hydra-headed cost. It's a multi-directional cost. Not only does it cost us because it is taking up space where righteousness and truth and light should have been, but it has a cost in terms of sacrifice.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. Why did God institute the sacrificial system? Because he shows not only does it cost you, you know, they could have just had a money system. If priests were making this up, as later generations of self-proclaimed priests have done, you bring them money and you get absolution.

You bring them a donation and you get a get-out-of-hell-free card. Right? That's the man-made solution. Pay me, you're absolved.

Come talk to me, buy some of my candles and light them, you know, and you're good to go. That's just a cost to you and a benefit to somebody else. Where is the sacrifice? Where is a third party that loses its life? That's a cost of sin.

Sin costs us. Sin costs the Lord Jesus Christ. And one of the true things that you might have learned in Sunday school as I did years ago is every sin that we commit is poured out on Christ.

I said is, not was. Is. The sins that I have not yet committed, the Lord Jesus hasn't yet died for.

This is an outside-of-time thing. We don't think in this case chronologically. You think categorically.

Sins that I commit go onto Christ on the cross. It's a cost. It's a sacrifice.

The fact that the sacrifice for us is historically in the past doesn't change the fact that every time I sin, I add to what was placed on Christ on the cross. It's present tense. I am costing the Lord Jesus by my mental sin that I think is victimless, that I think is harmless.

I cost myself. I cost the Lord Jesus. And thirdly, I cost my fellow believers.

I am not as qualified to minister. I am not as able and prepared and fitted to be used by God to be a blessing to others. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

And if I'm not communicating vertically, I can't communicate effectively horizontally either. And by communicate, I mean function in my second and central ministry, which is ministry. There is priesthood between us and God.

There is ministry to our fellow believers. And there is ambassadorship to the world. Our threefold reason to be.

If there is sin, it interrupts the communication in both directions. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.

What is life worth when God is not listening to me and I'm not listening to God? It's a waste. It is a literal waste of time. It's a waste of breath.

It's a waste of molecules. It's a waste of provision. It is a waste of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in saving us and redeeming us and sanctifying us and fitting us for service.

When we are a defiled vessel and we have to be set aside and not used. And it costs other people. You're not ready to speak the truth to someone in love because love is not the defining motivation in your heart.

You're defined by something else. So any sin. And that's really the overarching message of this entire study of Christ in the sacrifices.

Every sin has a cost. It costs God in having to pour that sin out on His son. It costs others in the sense that we are not able to be a blessing.

We are not able to be used by God as a sanctified holy vessel. As someone who uplifts. As someone who upholds.

As someone who can perform the one another commands. To love one another. Pray for one another.

Share the joys and sorrows of one another. Be sensitive to the needs. Not only of ourselves but others.

Having the mind in us that was in Christ Jesus. You can't have the mind that was in Christ Jesus if you regard iniquity in your heart. If you're committing mental sins.

You don't have the mind of Christ. How can you let this mind be in you when your mind has got some other place taker that prevents it. When you're doing construction things as I currently am.

And you're trying to let's say put something on top of something else so that it's plumb and square and level and does everything it's supposed to do. If you've been doing deconstruction first. If you're replacing something else and there's still bits and chips.

If there's old glue or old things. There's no way you're ever going to get it straight. You have to have a perfectly clean platform on which to put whatever it is that you're installing.

Or it won't go. If I regard iniquity in my heart. The mind of Christ won't go.

It won't fit. It will not function. It will not happen.

It is a cost. It is so costly. And that's why the blood of Jesus Christ is so precious.

Because we were redeemed with a very expensive price. Why did it take such a precious price? Because sin is costly and there's a lot of it. And it is our endeavor and it is our goal to eliminate it.

How does that happen? We have to stop being casual about sin. The sacrificial system forced Israelites, when they observed it, to cease being casual about sin. Because they saw its effect.

God made the cost visible. Our cost is invisible. What if you had to pick one of your pets and kill

it every time you sinned? What if somebody in your family died every time you sinned? We would be much more conscious and careful about sin, wouldn't we? Well, why are we so casual about it? Because we don't count the cost.

We don't think about the cost. We don't stop and reflect on what would happen if time travel were possible. And somebody came back and took up space where they shouldn't be.

It's exactly what happens in our souls. When sin is present, it takes up space and it creates havoc. It creates chaos.

It costs the Lord Jesus, it costs us, and it costs others always. Every single sin. And if there's one message to take away from the Christ in the Sacrifices study, it is the cost.

God made the cost visible. When He handed Adam and Eve those garments to cover their nakedness and they took a look at that, the last time they saw that, they had never seen a death in the garden. It was perfection.

And here are the skins of these animals. And God hands them the skins and says, Cover your nakedness that you inflicted on yourself with these. It cost them fellowship with God.

It cost them relationship with God. It cost them the garden. It cost God because now God is having to put in place the seed of the woman who is ultimately going to come and die.

God's only son will die and suffer in horribly unimaginable ways. And it cost them. And it cost the human race.

Everybody descended from them. If Eve could have seen visibly what would happen when she bit into that fruit, one wonders. We want this study to make visible to us the cost.

So in Leviticus chapter 1, the whole burnt offering, this giant healthy bullock in his prime is slain. His blood is poured out. He is skinned.

He is chopped up. And he is incinerated. When we get to the trespass offerings, there is a cost.

Always. We hope that God the Holy Spirit will make us aware and sensitive to this truth. So that when the Bible says, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

And the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, keeps on cleansing us from sin. In the light, cleansing from sin. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to look at, in summary, the first three sacrifices that we have covered in Leviticus. Leviticus 1-3. These are the sweet smell sacrifices.

The acrid smoke of incinerating an animal and incinerating grain is a sweet savor, ironically enough, to God. And Leviticus chapters 1-3 are the sweet savor offerings. And we'll review their

purpose, their direction, their reflection of the Lord Jesus.

And then we'll be moving into the second of the five that we're focusing on in Leviticus 4-5. And see the distinction in those sacrifices. But let's pause here and take our break.