

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-11-15b

Let's pick up our study now looking at the five major Levitical offerings given in Leviticus 1-5. We had a good question on the break about the imperfection that was allowed in a peace offering and the passage for that, I don't remember if I gave you that before, but it's Leviticus 22-23 and it is only certain peace offerings and only under certain conditions and they are detailed there. However, the type of imperfection that was allowed is, the example given is if it's got a leg that's a little too short or too long, if it's from the herd or from the flock, but it ties into something I want to review having to do with the whole burnt offering.

Chapter 1 of the whole burnt offering, how much, if it's a whole burnt offering, how much of that offering is left after the offering is complete? We saw what happens with the blood, we saw what happens with the pieces that are cut up and placed on the altar, what's left when the smoke clears, so to speak? There are ashes, but of the animal itself, the skin, what happened to the skin? It's given to the priest. Why the skin? And when you look at the bullock, what do you see? Reminds me of when I was a little boy and opened up one of my Christmas presents one year and there was the visible man. Did you ever put one of those together? Little guy with clear skin and inside all his little plastic organs fit together and there's the large intestine and the small intestine and the stomach and the liver.

I learned most of what I still can recall about internal geography from that model. His little trachea went in there and they had a chart that told you how to paint it to put the red for arteries and the blue for veins and he had a skeleton. You could take his little skeleton out on Halloween, hang it on your, you know, put it back in.

He had a rib cage, his little ribs came off, his little thing came off, you could dissect him and resect him. And it was a great thing. They had others.

They had like the visible horse and the visible woman and of course, you know, back then the visible woman, no way we're going to have any of that in our house. But the visible man was pretty neat. But one of the things about it is the reason you could see his skeleton and his skull with his mandible and the little top came off his head and there was a brain in there.

But the reason you could do that is because his skin was transparent and also take a part of him. But you could see the arrangement of things through his skin because it's transparent. When you look at a bullock, we're talking amazingly enough about the skin of the bullock in the whole burnt offering and it goes to the priest.

Why? You have just exposed all of the internality of that animal. You have taken its life. The life is in the blood.

The blood has been poured out. The animal has been incinerated on the altar. Everything inside has been exposed and sent to God.

But the skin and the skin is that visible part that you saw before you ever started. And that was one of the major ways that you identified an animal when it says just like in the New Testament that he might present it to himself a glorious church without spot, without wrinkle, without blemish. Spots, wrinkles, and blemishes are all on what? The skin.

And it is a reminder of the perfection of the animal. It is a reminder of the visible aspect of that animal. And whose responsibility is it to be a custodian of that? The priest.

The priest has a visible, tangible reminder of the perfection of the sacrifice, its qualification, and the visible portion of it. And that is what the whole Levitical offering system was, was a visible reminder, a visible memorial. And it was the custodianship, it was the responsibility of the priest.

So I think that's why the priests got the skin. And when you go to Leviticus 22-23 talking about the allowed slight imperfection in a free will peace offering that is not related to a vow or not what they call a votive offering. Votive means related to a vow.

But in 22-23, what is the type of imperfection that is allowable in this free will offering? And this is specifically the peace offering. What kind of imperfection is allowed? It says that if the animal, I flipped too many pages, 22-23, either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short, you may offer as a free will offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. But look at the previous verse, if it's blind, broken, maimed, has ulcer, eczema, scabs, you shall not offer it to the Lord.

Verse 24, you shall not offer what is bruised, crushed, torn, or cut. All of these things are visible incursions, visible imperfections, and they're reflected in the skin. You can see it on the hide.

You can see it as you look at the animal from the outside. But a limb that is too long or too short or some other minor imperfection of that nature is allowable. And one of the reasons is it isn't reflected in that skin.

And when the sacrifice is complete, what went to God was the leg that was too long or too short, but when you have that skin, the perfection of it and the memorial of it remains. And the meat is just as good when it's a free will peace offering and it is partaken of. There's no indication of disease.

One of the things you know about a short or long leg is that wasn't an accident. It wasn't an attack. It wasn't the result of a disease.

It was born that way, right? And it is something that really can't be helped. There is a sense in which it is of God rather than a wild beast or coming in contact with something of a corrupting nature that would lead to a scab or a sore, an accident that results in a bruise, crushing, being torn or cut, blind, broken or maimed. This normally blind would be blinded if it got, you know, things happen to their eyes and so on.

So anyway, it's an interesting qualification that there is a case where when you are bringing a free will offering, it doesn't have to be absolutely perfect the way the Holburn offering did. And you remember that this is on each side of the minkah, the grain offering, which doesn't involve an animal directly. You have the Holburn offering, absolute perfection.

You have the peace offering and under certain circumstances, it doesn't have to be perfect. There's many disqualifications for an animal, but it doesn't necessarily have to be perfect. So it's a good point, good thing to remember.

And it also is a reminder to us of that ongoing memorial aspect. There is a tangible remnant of the Holburn offering in the skin. The priest maintains that.

There is a remembrance and it is the part of the animal that is preservable. Very difficult to preserve meat for very long, especially in those days. But you can preserve a hide and, you know, we've got these that are hundreds and even thousands of years old, hides of animals.

Those can be preserved. Let's move on now to chapter 4 and take a look at the non-sweet savor offerings. And right away we notice something as we look at these.

In Leviticus chapter 4, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel. In this pattern we've looked at before, God speaks to His messenger, His messenger speaks to the people. And somebody could say, well, Moses, you're talking, but how do I know this is actually the word of the Lord? Right? Moses could be making it all up.

Well, it is no different a problem than today when God speaks in His word and then His word speaks to us. We're not hearing the voice of God. We're looking at the pages of scripture.

This is our Moses. This is our messenger. And the same question can be asked, well, how do I know that this isn't just a bunch of campfire stories that, you know, your ancient agricultural people made up to give themselves a history, to inflate their origins, and to give them a religion that priests could take control.

This is the favorite thing. You know, atheists are always saying, oh, religion is just a tool of power. People make it up and then control people with it.

All I can say is, if religion is a tool of control, Christianity in particular, and that's always who they're actually talking about, is us. If the Christian faith is a tool of control, it is the most dismal failure of all history because how many people actually live according to the Bible? You have to go off into an actual manipulative form of control. You know, you get into your Catholic church and you get into your confiscatory policies and your punishments for wrongdoing and so on.

Biblical Christianity isn't a form of control at all. It is a form of encouragement and motivation, but it's not control. John says, you know, they went out from us because they didn't want to be among us and it turned out they weren't of us to begin with.

John didn't go grab them and put them on the rack and inquisit them and torture them into compliance. He says they left. The Lord Jesus had followers and when He started talking about, eat my flesh and drink my blood, they all vanished.

Jesus didn't go send the apostles after them to torture them into compliance and try to control them. He said, hey, the rest of you guys are going to leave also. Genuine Christianity is not a form of control.

And by the way, any time somebody makes it that, even, you know, we've had people try to justify modern day slavery on the basis of the Bible, which is wrong. People have tried to justify wife abuse on the basis of the Bible, well, you're supposed to submit. Any time people start using Christianity as a form of control, they have left Christianity.

Biblical Christianity is not control, even and especially when people talk about being controlled by the Spirit of God, they're off the mark. The Bible never uses that phraseology, never implies that. It is not control.

The Holy Spirit is available and to the extent that we avail ourselves of His presence, it is our will that is at the center of God's plan. It is what we choose. To coerce and to pressure is absolutely contradictory to everything in God's plan.

These offerings, nobody said in the law of Moses, it doesn't say if someone fails to bring their whole burnt offering, bring them before the congregation. And if they don't say that they're going to bring one, stone them with stones. Anybody that doesn't bring the peace offering, you know, take them outside the camp and beat them silly.

Anybody that doesn't bring the minkah, bury them in roasted grains until they smother, you know, bury them in a cave. I don't know what punishment they might dream up. But do you notice that there's no compulsory punishment for failing to do the sacrifices because they are free will.

The priests have scheduled sacrifices that they are instructed to offer. But there are hundreds of years of history in Israel where the priests did all kinds of crazy things other than offer the offerings. And the basis of the condemnation is never, you know, you skip the daily sacrifice today, you must die.

Even as a nation, it is their desire and their willingness and their compliance with what God asks them to do that determines their fate. But it is much more, what is your attitude toward God than did you dot this I and cross this T in terms of sacrifice? So let me point out emphatically the criticism that religion is a tool of control. That may be true for man-made religion and, you know, bogus forms of worship, but genuine Christian faith is never a form of control.

And don't ever be guilty of trying to use it as such. Not on your wife, not on your husband, not on your kids, not on your neighbors, not on your coworkers. Christian faith is not a tool of control.

God did not design it that way. It is voluntary on the part of the individual, just like giving. As each one purposes in his own heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, not under pressure.

God loves an internally motivated, cheerful giver. Churches that lean on their people, by the way, I was just reviewing the translations and so on, you know, in these where it says, he shall lay his hand on the head of the animal. The word in Hebrew that says lay his hand actually means to lean on.

It implies some pressure. You don't just gently caress the animal's head. You don't pet its little brown ear right before it dies.

They were to emphatically lean upon the animal's head with their hand. There is the idea of close and emphasized contact there. He will lean his hand upon the head of the animal.

Well, there is no leaning on others in Christian faith. Jesus didn't say, if I be lifted up, I will pressure all men into faith, did he? What is it? If I be lifted up, I will draw, I will invite, I will make a potential available to which those who love light will come to the light. Men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil aren't going to come.

They will, who is it that applies pressure? Look at Romans chapter 1. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness. They push against the truth. And those are the ones that come under the condemnation of that whole last half of the chapter.

So just so you know, anybody that starts trying to use the Bible or Christian faith or any of the legitimate truths of God's word as a lever, as a crowbar, as a baseball bat has left the narrow road and they're not heading toward the straight gate. It is never, ever pressure. It is an invitation.

It is an opportunity. It is a potential. And it is incumbent on us, if we're going to put pressure on anybody, we put pressure on ourselves.

Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. It never says, let each man attempt to fully convince his neighbor, in his neighbor's mind. Look through scripture.

I defy you to find any place where our Christian faith is to be used as a tool for manipulation, control or pushing and pressuring, herding people into the kingdom. I know, go into the highways and byways and compel them to come in. I can explain that later.

Chapter four, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel saying, this is spoken to God's messenger who will then speak to the people in the same way that God has inspired His word and His word speaks to us. If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done and does any of them, if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer, and we'll look at those details, and it gives the priestly procedure. Verse 13, we pick up after the specific instructions for the priest.

Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly and they have done any of the commandments of the Lord which should not be done and are guilty, leave out your italics, that's what it says, i.e. they have transgressed any of the commandments and are guilty, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin. And you have the laying on of hands by the elders and so on going on down. Verse 22, and we'll look at these details, when a ruler has sinned and done unintentionally any of the commandments of the Lord his God which should not be done and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering, and then you have the procedure.

And verse 27, if any one of the common people sins unintentionally by doing any of the commandments of the Lord which ought not to be done and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring. And you have the instructions. So we have four cases, four representative cases given, don't we? Let's go back to the first one because it begins with the anointed priest.

This is Leviticus chapter 4 verse 3. The anointed priest brings guilt on the people. Notice the priest errs and the people are guilty. He brings guilt on the people.

This is a qualification by the way of the type of transgression that is in view here. It's not just if he yells and smacks somebody that he shouldn't. This is something that brings guilt on the people.

This is something in his official capacity, in other words, a work-related transgression or something that has an impact on the people. Now the first thing we really need to look at here is unintentional. Is any sin really unintentional? What if I just have a rash moment? What if I lose my temper? What if? How do you sin unintentionally? I'm driving along and I run over my neighbor's dog.

I didn't mean to. Is that what it's talking about? Was that a sin? Isn't one of the sort of fundamental ideas of sin that you intended to do a thing? Isn't part of the accountability that you made this decision? Well, I didn't know that by painting this fence I was actually putting some chemical into the ground that would go into my neighbor's garden and he would eat a carrot and die. I've killed my neighbor unintentionally.

What exactly does this mean? Because I don't think that's it. It seems to, I mean anybody could say it would be a lot of rationalization going on. The Hebrew word here is s-g-a-g-a-h, s-g-a-g-a.

And this word, or sh-g-a-g-a actually, and it is translated in various languages. So it is translated in various ways. It is translated as unawares.

It is translated in ignorance. It is translated unwitting or inadvertent. But let's go to the source, the verb from which this adverb might come.

Shagag means to go astray. That's fundamentally what it means, to stray. There is a lot of

interpretive baggage associated with this word that doesn't seem to come from its root.

It is translated as deceived in one case. The theological word book of the Old Testament has a long article on this word. But fundamentally this, I don't think unintentional, I don't think intention is really at the heart of this, and I'm probably swimming against the popular interpretive stream here.

But it has the idea of to go astray. To go astray. And this is distinguished from the next type of sin, which is willful and rebellious disobedience, by two things.

One, it is not a part of a pattern. If you're continually going astray, it's not just astray, your compass is broken. You're in the weeds all the time.

To go astray implies that you're on the right path, but every once in a while you take an exit that you shouldn't and you've got to get back on your road. So I think the fundamental definition here isn't unintentional. The problem with unintentional is how do you apply that? How many of my sins are unintentional? I intend pretty much everything I do.

The reason Scripture is a critic or a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart is because from the heart spring my actions. And there is intentionality in pretty much everything we do. If you back over somebody's dog, that was unintentional.

But are you culpable for anything other than perhaps negligence that you didn't walk all the way around your car and look for a sleeping deaf dog or something? Unintentionality, we tend to minimize responsibility. That is not what I intended. And this sacrifice is for an act of going astray.

And this is a lapse in judgment. This is an impulse. This is giving in to a temptation that almost instantly produces regret.

And this is another component of a shotgun. This is another component of a gag type of commission or omission is that there is regret. The other kind of sin, the rebellious sin, sin of the high hand, people aren't sorry.

And given the same opportunity, they'd do it again. When you go astray, I mean, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

If you go astray and stay astray, that's a pattern. And you're not sorry. You're happy being astray.

You like being where you are. You think that was a good idea. That's part of your policy.

This is not that. This is why did I say that? Why did I do that? If I could do that over again, I wouldn't do it. There is an element of regret.

There is an element of genuine godly sorrow that it happened. There's a recognition that it

produced harm and hurt, that it grieves God, that it grieves your neighbor, that it grieves your own heart. David says, I will be sorry for my sin.

And that puts it in this category rather than the rebellious sin of the high hand category where, A, who are you to tell me I did wrong? So I think it is more true to the meaning of the word to not read into it ignorance or inadvertence. The other uses of this word don't really suggest that. So rather than saying if a person sins unintentionally against any of these commands, any of these things which ought not to be done, and in this case the priest brings guilt on the people, let him bring this offering.

This is a, I'm not quite sure how to phrase it, it is a sin one regrets. And not because it got you in trouble, but you regret it at a fundamental sorrow level. This isn't I wish I hadn't gotten caught, I wish this hadn't had bad consequences to me.

This is against thee and thee only have I sinned, as David says. It is recognition of fault. I malfunctioned, I messed up, I made a bad decision, I let my emotions run away with me, I let my temper run away with me, I failed my responsibility, I was selfish, I was short sighted, I let my spiritual life lapse to the point that my judgment is unsound, I was willful, I was arrogant, I was petty.

Any of these things fall in this category. It's not unintentional, it is what we hope would be uncharacteristic of our genuine goals and priorities and values. And so it's not a perfect translation, it's not a perfect expression, but the closest I can get to this in a single word is if a person sins uncharacteristically, if a person sins in a non-pattern way.

It is a lapse, and a lapse would be uncharacteristic from the normal pattern. Unintentional, I'm sorry, you do the research on this word, it doesn't get there. If a person sins uncharacteristically against the commandment of the Lord, something which ought not to be done and does it.

And by the way, ought not is a recognition as a part of knowing that this is a sin. I ought not to have done that in a genuine heartfelt recognition of error. That was a tactical blunder, I'm at a disadvantage now in my circumstances, this is I ought not to have done that before the Lord.

So I would put the emphasis here on that which ought not to be done, and you know that, and you recognize that, and that's why you're bringing the sacrifice. I ought not to, I should not have, that was an error and a lapse. And brings guilt on the people, and notice that immediately the consequence, the wider consequence of this lapse for a priest is in view.

Because of this personal lapse, others are guilty, others suffer, others, you look at the classic example is the sin of Achan. He goes and is selfish, he takes stuff that was forbidden, and now people die in combat because God's blessing has been removed because there's sin in the camp. You bring sin in the camp.

If you lapse, if you commit the kind of sin that corrupts the environment for your family, that corrupts the environment for your church, that corrupts the environment for your friends, your

associates, your co-workers, you can do a thing that brings disgrace or discredit or causes credibility problems as widely as to God Himself. And Scripture has examples of that. This is what it's talking about.

It is time for the offering. And we have those details. Now before we get into the details again, skip down to verse 13.

If the whole congregation of Israel sins in a shagag kind of way, it is a lapse, it is an error. And the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done against the commandments of the Lord, which should not be done, and are guilty. It made sense at the time.

I'll give you an example. Remember the Jebusites? And they entered into a treaty with the Jebusites, when the Jebusites were a people that God had specifically said, eliminate them. I'm sorry, the Gibeonites.

Jebusites were the occupants of Jerusalem. The Gibeonites. Remember the Gibeonites with the moldy bread and the old sandals? And God had told, these are part of the people.

They said, we're from a far country, because they knew the law and they knew the instructions to Israel. And God had said, wipe out everybody that's near at hand, the ones that are far away you can make a treaty with. Well, the Gibeonites deceived them, and they didn't do their homework.

They didn't do their due diligence, and they didn't take the decision before the Lord. They acted rashly. They were taken in, kind of like Eve, taken in.

There's still culpability, because you could have avoided this sin. If you had been minding your P's and Q's, if you had taken, you know, if you're going to enter into a treaty, you need to take that before the Lord. Lord, here are these Gibeonites.

All they had to do was go to the priest, cast the lots. Does God say thumbs up or thumbs down on the Gibeonites? And they would have quickly found out that this was a ruse. But they didn't.

It was hasty. It was presumptuous to make a treaty with these people without due diligence. Well, they didn't know it at the time.

They found out later. If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done against the commandments of the Lord something which should not be done, and they're guilty, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. Now, when it says the assembly, obviously everybody can't bring the animal.

So who actually does it? It's the elders, verse 15, of the congregation, shall lean their hands on

the head of the bull before the Lord. Responsibility. Notice, leaning your hand on the head means this wasn't an accident.

Leaning the hand on is a picture of transfer of, I'm responsible. I'm accountable. And this animal is going to pay the price for my intention, which was flawed.

Skip down to verse 22. When a ruler has sinned and done, Shagag has strayed against the commandments which the Lord has given. That which should not be done and is guilty.

And if the sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, male without blemish. He shall lean his hand on the head of the goat. The priest leans his hand.

The elders lean their hands. The ruler here leans his hand on the head of the animal and kills it. The offerers not only lean their hands on it, they slay the animal, don't they? The ruler shall slay it before the Lord.

It is a sin offering. Then the priest takes the blood and so on. Verse 27, if any of the common people sins, Shagag, doing something against the commandments of the Lord which ought not to be done and is guilty, does something which ought not to be done, did it anyway.

If the sin comes to his knowledge, he shall bring a kid of the goats, female without blemish, shall lay his hand, lean his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. Once again, he takes the animal's life himself. Then the priest does the things he does with the blood.

And at the end of the chapter, the last three lines there, the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed and it shall be forgiven him. It shall be forgiven him. What is the picture for us? When we realize and many times at the moment we're not thinking in terms of, is what I'm about to do a sin and I'm going to do it anyway? There have been those, I've told you before, I've come in contact with people who as teens and early twenties people said, well, I go to a church that teaches all about confession of sin in 1 John 1.9, so my girlfriend and I are going to sleep together and then we'll confess it.

We'll do 1 John 1.9 and we'll be back in fellowship and it'll be as though nothing happened. That is not a shagag sin. That is willful rationalization and disregard of God's, you're not trying to please God, you're trying to please yourself and find a loophole and an accommodation.

Kind of like that accommodation, well, we've taken away the altars and the idols out of the temple precincts, but we're still up on the high places and we're worshiping the God of Israel up on the high places. That's our compromise. We're not going to worship the way God wants.

We're still going to go to the high places, but we'll just say we're worshiping God up there in the later days of Manasseh. So we want to watch for this in ourselves and it is important that when we recognize sin and it's usually after the fact, we smack ourselves in the head, why did I say

that? Why did I think that? Why did I do that? This is our picture of 1 John 1.9 and the leaning the hand on the head, that is the acknowledgement. This ought not to have been done.

So chapter four truly is applicable to those decisions we make that are faulty and we recognize it usually pretty quickly. As soon as the cold light of dawn shines on us, we are sorrowful and regretful because that's not who we are. That isn't why we're here and we know better and we messed up.

And we go to the Lord and claim His grace, claim His forgiveness and notice this one ends with, it shall be forgiven him. If you come and make that acknowledgment and note the transference, He is the propitiation for our sins. That is our commitment.

That is the basis for forgiveness and it should be an encouragement to reduce and eliminate that kind of sin, that particular sin in our lives. If we keep committing it and become casual about claiming the sacrifice and claiming the forgiveness, guess what? It's no longer shagag. It goes into a different category.

If we are complacent, if we're indifferent, if we're apathetic about the effect and the cost and the sacrifice required for our sins of an occasional astray nature, guess what? They're not in this category anymore. They're in the Hebrews chapter 10 category. If we sin willfully after we receive a knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment.

This is not that. This is God's provision for our imperfection and our lapses and our shortcomings. All sin comes short, but this is the means of reconciliation.

This is the means of sanctification. This is the means of claiming forgiveness on the basis of the sacrifice, but it is not to be taken lightly. Can you imagine what would happen if you had to actually kill a goat every time you commit a sin? How careful would we be? Would we spend a little more time in our quiet time, in our reflection, our devotion, our cycling the Word of God through our souls? Would we spend a little more time reviewing Bible class? Because if I sin and I fail, I'm going to have to kill a goat.

Seriously? You care more about a goat than you do the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Think about it. Sin should not be casual, and claiming God's forgiveness ought to be a solemn occasion for us, and it ought to motivate us to not go astray, to be more diligent and more careful about those things that keep us in the light and on the path. So that's the memorial aspect of chapter 4, what we should remember and what we should apply.

Well, we'll close here in a word of prayer, and we'll finish up the details of the chapter 4 sacrifice and move into chapter 5 next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the insight and the illumination that it shines on our hearts and on our lives. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will motivate us and clarify our view of reality through the things

that we have seen here from Your Word. We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.