

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-12-06b

Let's resume our study now, we're in Leviticus chapter 4, and we're looking at the fourth offering of the Levitical offerings that we are studying, which is the sin offering. And as I mentioned previously, we find the burnt offering going way back in the Bible, we find it in Genesis. Genesis, we find the earliest individuals in the patriarchal times offering the burnt offering, Noah, Abel, Cain, not doing so, famously.

Sorry for the rustling noise as I organize myself here. But Genesis chapter 8, Genesis chapter 22, we find the Ola in view. So the first three, the peace offering and so on, these are not unknown in earlier times.

When we come to chapter 4, this offering has never appeared in the Bible until now. The earliest that you find a mention of the sin offering is Exodus chapter 29. Exodus chapter 29, verse 36, every day you are to prepare a bull for a purification offering for atonement, you are to purge the altar by making atonement for it, and you are to anoint it, to set it apart as holy.

That is the sin offering. So the offerings in the first three chapters, as we saw, the procedure varied based on the animal that was to be sacrificed on that occasion. Is it a bull? Is it a goat? Is it a turtle dove and so on? Is it this kind of grain, that kind of grain, or the other kind of grain? That is how they are organized.

Here in chapter 4, organized by who it is that is involved and what it is they have done. So where we frequently find the notion of a sweet smelling savor, a soothing aroma going up before God in the first three chapters, that is one of the prominent features. It is seldom mentioned in chapters 4 and 5. You find it, but it is not emphasized like it was in the first three.

On the other hand, atonement, which I think is mentioned only once in the first three chapters right there, I think right at the beginning of chapter 1, it will be accepted as an atonement for Him. It is not mentioned again. Atonement is a prominent feature here beginning in chapter 4. It is mentioned nine times here in the next two chapters.

So the emphasis greatly shifts as we cross from these opportunity offerings, these expressions of commitment and enjoyment of fellowship offerings, the positive offerings I would call them, to this remedial offering, the sin offering. It has been occasioned because of who I am and what I have done. So the idea of guilt obviously isn't mentioned in chapters 1 through 3. It doesn't say if he is guilty of this or if he wants to avoid being guilty of that, but guilt is prominent in the material we are now studying.

You have the process, the procedure, the details of how to offer the offering in chapters 1 through 3. Here in the upcoming material, the emphasis is on what the result of the sacrifice is. It will be forgiven him. It will be forgiven them.

So process is more in view. Procedure is more in view in the first three chapters that we've

covered. How to do it if you want to express these ideas of commitment and of enjoyment of relationship.

Here is how to achieve the goal of forgiveness. Here is how to accomplish or exploit or avail yourself of remediation for sin. And if you do this, it will be remediated.

It will be forgiven. So how to in the first three is more in view. In these, the how to is in the service of in order to.

In order to be restored. In order to be forgiven. In order to remediate this problem.

So big change here as we move into chapter 4. And as always, as we move into the idea of sin, this is a sin offering. There was no occasion of sin in the first three. But here, the occasion is all about sin.

Who committed the sin and what was the sin? That's what defines the occasion for the sacrifice. Well, this brings up how do you define sin? And so we talked about that toward the end of the last session. What is the definition for sin? And it is whatever God says it is.

You begin to think that this could illuminate Abraham going up on the mountain. And being prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. People do a lot of things and say, well, you know, God told me to do it.

And they're nuts. Abraham is a different case. Abraham knows God.

Abraham has had intimate personal contact and fellowship with God. Abraham knows when he's talking to God and when he's not. And when God says, Abraham, take your son and do the following on top of the mountain.

It is no longer sin if God is telling him to do it. Now, this isn't something I'm trying to make a point of application of. That you can suspend the normal ideas of what is moral and what is right and wrong.

Because, well, God said that was a special case. But you can understand Abraham reconciling himself to that awful requirement. Because it's God who says what is right and what is wrong.

And so that's one way of remembering. It is God who defines what is right and what is wrong for us. People who don't believe in God, they're on their own.

And good luck with that. Because social mores change. You think about some of the aborigines and their practices.

And it's right, yeah, you know, to become a man I've got to go to the neighboring village, kill a guy, chop off his head, crack his skull and drink out of the top of his cranium. That makes me a man. That's socially acceptable.

That's right, it's necessary. I've got to burn little holes in my skin. I've got to create a series of scars and fill them with ash so that I'll have bumps all over my body.

And that's what makes me a man. It's right to do that. It's right to do that to my kids.

Chinese thought it was right to bind the feet of little girls. And societies have thought, well, girl babies aren't of much use. We've got plenty of girls.

They have multiple children. So we need more boys than girls. So we'll expose the girls.

We'll just lay them out on the garbage heap and let them die of natural causes. We didn't kill them. Nature killed them.

It's okay if nature kills them. We didn't strangle them. We didn't boil them and eat them.

We just put them outside and leave them until they die. Perfectly socially acceptable. Well, but we're enlightened.

We have science. We have education. So we can decide what is right and wrong.

Nonsense. And I would use a much stronger word. That's complete nonsense.

Society is just as susceptible to corruption now as it ever was and just as incapable of accessing genuine standards of right and wrong. Right and wrong now is whatever people claim it is. Good music is whatever people say it is.

Beck and I watched the American Music Awards from beginning to end a couple weeks ago. And it was fascinating. I really enjoyed it.

I enjoyed doing something with my daughter, as always. But it was fascinating to me because I don't ordinarily expose myself to the latest in music and the artists who perform it. And I'm not trying to be excessively judgmental here.

It was just really interesting because it's a social expression. It's a cultural phenomenon. And it's much different now than it was when I was young.

I don't think that on an objective standard I could say, based on the Bible, that the Eagles are better than, you know, Lil' Jeff or whoever it was I was looking at there. It looked like he had a cooked, burnt chicken on his head. And it was his hair.

Who was that guy? Oh, no, I remember his name. His name is Weekend, but with only two E's. W-E-E-K-N-D.

Look at a picture of the guy. Part of his shtick, his uniqueness, is the hair that he wears. And he's got this.

You just have to look at it. It reminded me of the helping hand guy, you know, the little helping

hands. Only it was made out of hair, and it was on top of his head.

And it just kind of stuck there. You look at it, you'll see what I'm talking about. Anyway, the guy Weekend, W-E-E-K-N-D, that was one of the artists.

And he's got a huge following. He's exceedingly popular and apparently talented in the particular form of alleged music that he produces. And I'm being a little bit unkind there.

Look, if you like that, great. It's preference. It isn't morality.

But it is an example of a large group of people getting together and saying, This is of quality. This is worthwhile. This is meaningful.

This has value. Well, it changes with time. They didn't have any of the Eagles up there.

They didn't have Frank Sinatra up there. They didn't have Paul Whitman and his orchestra playing, what's the name of that? Whispering. Why is that significant? First gold record ever.

The first gold record in history was Paul Whitman and his orchestra on a 78. I've got it. Paul Whiteman.

Whiteman, Whitman. Slim Whitman is who I'm thinking of, the yodeler. Yeah, Paul Whiteman, Slim Whitman.

But I've got the record. It's the first gold record ever, Whispering. That beautiful little tune, first one to sell a million.

But these things change with the passing of time. And you can't claim, well, it's right because everybody says it's right. Right and wrong for us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and as children of God is defined by God.

And what he says goes. If you don't like it, submit yourself under the mighty hand, and you'll find out why later on. We don't think discipline is a good idea when it comes to us being the target.

No discipline is fun at the time, Scripture says. But it yields afterward the peaceable fruit of righteousness. It yields afterward.

We can't see the end from the beginning. God can. Joseph didn't think it was very much fun being sold into slavery and spending years in prison and in the household of Potiphar and so on.

But he told his brothers, even though you meant it for evil, God meant it for good. And without that experience, many things would not have taken place. Joseph could not have been the deliverer of his family and his people.

He could not have been the beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ that he is without that which

he would have probably never chosen for himself. He liked the end result that was in his dreams, the sheaves bowing and the sun and the moon and the stars bowing. Hey, that's good.

The process to get there, not so good. He didn't have a dream of languishing in prison and talking to the butcher and the baker and so on, the baker and the cupbearer. That wasn't in the dream.

The end result was in the dream. This is the objective. And if he held on to that and believed it to be a revelation from God, then he patiently waited for the outworking of the plan and purpose of God.

And you have a need of patience so that after you have suffered a while, you inherit the promises. We can't see what God sees. We can't know what God knows.

We are the troops down in the fighting hole trying to hold a position we've been told to hold. It's the general who has all of the intel on the battlefield, who sees the big picture, who's got the aerial photographs, who knows the great movements and the great essential points that have to be held. And he asks us to hold them, kind of the charge of the light brigade thing.

Ours is not to reason why sometimes. So that's what's going on in these offerings. It is much more the definition of what is sinful and what is necessary for that sin to be remediated.

People just become very plussed by the requirement for animal sacrifice. What kind of a cruel God kills his own son so the people can be forgiven of sin? The whole thing is heinous. Well, says you.

That's your standard that you've cooked up. Who's to say your standard is better than God's? What does your standard teach? How does your standard fortify and produce sanctification and holiness in people? How does yours transform and confer eternal life and eternal opportunity outside the realms of physical reality? Your self-important declaration that it's barbaric for God to demand blood atonement. Exactly what does that accomplish? You can feel good about yourself that you've claimed it's barbaric.

I had somebody say that I said, well, you know, how does science distinguish between abortion and infanticide? Killing inside the womb is okay, some people think. Killing outside the womb, you know, strangling a baby in his crib is just heinous. And I said, so which is it? What does science tell you is better? Or that which one is right and wrong? How does science tell you that one is right and one is wrong? Or that either is right or that either is wrong? He said, you know, basically, how dare you present me with only two barbaric choices? My reply was, well, this is somebody saying science tells you everything.

On what basis does science tell you that infanticide is barbaric? What if the infant, what if you somehow knew he was going to grow up to be Hitler? What if he's got some horrible genetic thing that's going to infect the race and extinguish the species? How do you, on what basis do you claim that infanticide is barbaric? Well, it just is. Science tell you that? Baby seals get eaten

by whales all the time. There's film of it.

Barbaric? Oh, nature, cycle of life. So it's okay in nature, but it's not okay in our nature. I thought we were products of nature.

I thought we were inherently part of, we're just a higher expression. We're just other mammals. So why is it bad for our babies to be eaten by predators? Oh, left the baby in the crib and a dog ate it.

Well, you know, that's life, cycle of life. You know, hey, okay for the seals, okay for the people. No, it's heinous and barbaric and it makes the news and people are shocked and horrified.

We've got to pass laws. No more dogs. The dogs kill babies.

No more dogs. You know, the nonsensical. This is the corruption.

This is the inherent flaw in human thinking. We are fallen. We're corrupt.

We're temporary. We are ephemeral. We are relative and we're arrogant.

Man can't fix that problem. God fixes it. This is how.

This is a picture. The blood of goats and bulls does not take away sin. And yet here we have the blood of goats and bulls prescribed for sin.

What's the point? God is lifting His people up beyond the material, the immediate and the mundane to grasp the concepts. What is the ultimate concept expressed in blood atonement? What did Jesus say about shedding blood on behalf of someone else? If a man lays down his life for his friend, what did he express? What did Jesus say? There's no greater expression of when you lay down your life on behalf of another. What does it express? Love.

What is the most famous verse in the Bible for believers and unbelievers alike? What's the one verse practically everybody knows other than Psalm 23? John 3, 16. God so loved that He gave. The sacrifice, highest sacrifice is life.

Life of the flesh is in the blood. Why is it a blood sacrifice? Because it is a sacrifice of life. It is the highest and grandest expression of love.

What is God trying to get across? Love. I love you enough to give the life of my son for you. Why did Abraham go to the top of the mountain with Isaac? I love you enough, Abraham says to God, to sacrifice my only son.

And God says, exactly. That's what I am going to do for you, but on a far grander scale. It doesn't have to do with, is it right or is it wrong or is it barbaric or is it heinous and here you are, you know, committing murder of your own child.

Come on. Wise up. Think big.

It's not in view. And by the way, it didn't happen. God didn't say, well, sure glad you killed Isaac and now I'll raise him from the dead or something.

That wasn't the point. The point is, sacrifice. The selflessness on behalf of another is an expression of love.

Why would someone bring the Ola? Why would they bring the Minka? Why would they bring the peace offering? Why would they recognize that they have offended and transgressed against God and be willing to remediate? It doesn't say, if someone has sinned and he doesn't bring the sin offering, take him outside the camp and stone him. It says, if your aim and your goal is forgiveness and reconciliation, here's how to get it. If he does this, it will be forgiven him.

Look at Leviticus chapter 4. It will be forgiven him. Look at verse 21. You should carry the bull outside the camp, burn it as he burned the first bull.

It is a sin offering for the assembly. He will do these things. Verse 26.

Burn the fat on the altar. The priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. That was the purpose.

That was the goal. If you want forgiveness, it is available. If you want restoration, it is available.

If you don't, go your merry way, but you will end in the dust. God doesn't force eternal life on anyone. God doesn't force forgiveness on anyone.

As many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, to those that believe in his name. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse. It's optional.

The issue is choice. God chooses in love to make salvation available to us. Do we choose in faith to receive it? It's really that simple, but there is no more vivid representation of those truths than the animal sacrifice system.

Does God enjoy seeing his highest forms of creation slaughtered, bleeding, burnt? Not for its own sake, but in the service of our salvation and our understanding, God will go to great lengths. In the service of our salvation, God will sacrifice his own son. The Lord Jesus will leave the throne of glory as we celebrate at this Christmas season.

He will come down and divest himself of all of his divine privileges and live among us and be subject to our frailties and our pressures and our temptations. He will do all of that, sacrificially so, and die even the death of the cross on our behalf. Is that God's first choice? Does God think that's a great idea? Do I like the fact that chickens suffer in cages so that I can have a drumstick? Do I like the fact that cattle are shot up with 16 different kinds of antibiotics and don't graze in free open pastures like the Borden dairy cow? Chickens don't go out and peck and do what they did when I raised them as a teenager.

I don't like that. It's not my favorite thing. But we have so preserved our species with modern medicine and modern nutrition and all the other things that we have overgrown our ability to produce food.

And the only way to feed everyone now is to overgrow genetically modified crops, to overgrow caged and penned animals. It's the only way for everybody to have enough food. You can't go back to natural farming.

You can't go back. I saw a picture yesterday of what wheat used to look like 100 years ago. It was shoulder high and was made out of completely different, largely different, not completely different, but largely different proteins than it is now.

The gluten content in the old wheat was a fraction of what it is now. I think modern wheat has got like 18 times the gluten that wheat from 100 years ago had. But they have bred and modified wheat, and now it's about knee high.

And they get many more grains of wheat per acre than they used to. Well, you can't say no more. And by the way, it's full of toxic proteins, gluten being only one.

But wheat is practically poisonous now because of the way it has been bred in the interest of sheer multiplication. Thank you, science, for another great advance. The reason we have so many problems now, so many multiplied health issues, obesity being only one of them, is because man in his wisdom has learned how to overproduce foods that are chock full of stuff that kills us and diseases us and breaks us down and makes us dumb.

Why is there a big rise in Alzheimer's? It is largely due to what we eat. And you can stave it off, provenly so, by abstaining from certain things that are commonplaces in our society and in our culture. But you've got to really work hard to do it because it's all around us and it's a product of man's ingenuity.

Well, as usual, we shoot ourselves in the foot every time we try to improve on what God has provided, and we're doing it now in droves. And this, of course, isn't... There's not strong motivation to change it because look at the industry that surrounds remediating all of the problems that are brought about by crummy food. And the mental problems, well, now there's a whole huge mental health industry that didn't even exist.

Why do the mental health problems exist? It is substantially due to environmental causes and also due to the decline. You can watch the graph. Mental health issues, spiritual commitment, they're a mirror.

Influence of Judeo-Christian culture and Christianity in particular, like this, rise of depression, drug dependence, suicides, mass shootings, all of the other signs of mental instability throughout our country, directly and inversely proportional. Say all that to say this. When God speaks, we should listen.

He's speaking in Leviticus chapter 4, and He says, Do you want forgiveness? This is the path. It's a physical implementation that reflects a spiritual reality in the Levitical offerings. We understand this.

God doesn't expect us to go find a goat and perform a sin offering. What does He expect us to do? Recognize two things, the two things that are easily observed in chapter 4 and chapter 5. I come to the knowledge that I have sinned. Do you notice how that is repeated in each of the iterations in Leviticus chapter 4? He says, Speak to the children of Israel.

If a person sins unawares is really the idea. It doesn't have to do so much with intentionality as with it's not immediately. I didn't set out to sin.

I was doing something and a sin happened. It isn't only if it's unintentional, but in the heat of the moment, you don't stop and think, well, you know what you're doing is a sin. If you stopped and thought, you might identify it, but it's more of an unthinking sin.

It's not premeditated. Well, tomorrow, I'm going to go out and rob someone. Tomorrow, I'm going to go and deflower some young maiden.

Or I'm going to, by doing what I'm doing today, I'm going to embezzle a bunch of money tomorrow. I'm doing it with malice and forethought. I know it's wrong, but I'm intentionally doing it anyway.

So there's an element of intentionality, but this is more the idea that you're going along and stuff happens and you're caught up in the moment and in the cold light of dawn, oh, I have sinned. And you come to the awareness. Now, the awareness might happen 10 seconds after you do it.

It might happen 2 seconds after you do it, or it might be 2 days afterward. But the point here is you sin in an unthinking way against the commandments and does things that ought not to be done. This he shall bring, the priest shall bring.

And you come all the way down to the ruler that does the same thing. And when it becomes his awareness, look at verse 14 for the congregation. When the sin which they have committed becomes known, when it is identified, when it becomes clear that was a transgression for whatever reason, it becomes known.

The ruler in verse 23, the sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge. He's done something that shouldn't be done and it comes to his knowledge. This is acknowledgment.

I look at what I've done and I identify it as a violation of God's standard. It's very clear the commandments of the Lord his God have been transgressed. So it comes to knowledge.

Then the offering is brought. So those are the rows. You are the anointed priest.

You are the congregation. You are the ruler. You are anyone of the common people in verse 27.

Verse 28, if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, this is assent, affirmation, recognition, acknowledgment of sin. If we confess our sins, then this is what he will do. And in verse 31, the priest shall burn this on the altar for sweet aroma to the Lord.

That's one of those rare sweet aroma recognitions. The priest shall make atonement for him and it shall be forgiven him. You want forgiveness? Here's how to do it.

If he brings a lamb, he shall bring a female. The priest will take the blood, do the following, remove the fat. The priest shall make atonement at the end of the chapter and it shall be forgiven him.

The issue here is not an expression of commitment, an expression of enjoyment, an expression of sanctification, as in the first three chapters. It is recognition of a need for forgiveness. If sin comes to his knowledge, what else comes to his knowledge? A need for forgiveness.

I have transgressed. I need remediation. I cannot remain in this condition.

It will be forgiven him. Not it will be forgiven. It will be forgiven him.

The attachment, the influence, the consequence, the change in status, the view of God toward that person will change when they bring this offering. So these are higher concepts. It's not really about the animal.

It's about sin and forgiveness. The standards that God has defined in whatever way He defines them, He is the definer, capital D. If He defines it as a sin, it is sin. Some things that used to be sin aren't sin.

Look at some of the finer points of the law of Moses. Did you have a BLT lately? That would have been a sin in Israel. It's not a sin now.

Did you have ham? I was talking to a lady from India in the past week and I said, she asked me what I did for Thanksgiving and I explained that my brother smoked turkey and we had a wonderful time. I said, what did you all do? She said, I prepared hum. And I thought, hummus, I've been to Lebanon, these far off countries, they have these strange foods.

And I thought, wow, Thanksgiving, that's kind of a melding of the foreign influence with the pilgrims. And she said, I made hum. So as the conversation progressed, and it was actually about ten minutes later it dawned on me that even though she has a beautiful command of English, she was saying ham.

She made ham. And knowing that there are people in India who have similar sensitivity about pork as the Jews and others, pork's off the menu. And so we talked a little bit about the fact that her family has been largely Americanized and the old people, some of them still have objections to eating pork, but most of the young people think it's great.

So she did the whole honey-baked hum for Thanksgiving. But it was really funny, she said, is it

my accent? And I said, you have a beautiful accent. But I said, if you want people to understand you the first time you say it, you need to say it like they say it in Texas and say, ham.

And she did it perfectly. She mimicked it perfectly. She said, with her beautiful Indian accent, she said, yes, for Thanksgiving, I made ham.

I said, yeah, that's it. But these things, you know, God defines what is sin. God says, shellfish for you Old Testament people, off the menu.

Shellfish now? Knock yourself out. You want some oyster soup? What God has sanctified, let no man call common. Peter, with the animals let down in the sheet.

But we have to understand that because when it comes time for us to come before God and ask for forgiveness, what is the point and the purpose of forgiveness to get back to Leviticus chapter one through three? This is remediation. It is ketchup. It is coming back to the place where we can dedicate and commit ourselves, dedicate and commit and sanctify our work and enjoy fellowship and relationship with God.

We will inevitably mess that up, but God has made a way. It is a sacrificial way, but it is his way. He defined it.

I am not in a position to tell him he did that wrong and it is too cruel and it is too barbaric. He is the one that defines sin. He is the one with whom I want relationship.

If that is his requirement, praise God that there is a way and that new and living way is the Lord Jesus Christ. I claim him. I am in him and I enter into those immaterial, eternal realms through him.

He came down and partook of the material so that I could partake of the immaterial. He came down and bore sin that I could be free of sin. He came down and expressed God's love for me so that I could love him.

We love because he first loved us. That is what these chapters are really all about. It is fun to parse the details and figure out the symbolism and see the work of Christ anticipated, but that is the substance.

That is what we should bring away and remember day by day, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the remembrance we have in this Christmas season of the coming to earth of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regardless of when it actually took place, it is a convenient time for us to reflect and to remember that the fullest expression of your love toward us was not only sending your Son into the world, but in taking him from the world in death as the payment for our sins, accepting his atonement on our behalf, raising him from the dead, and even as he has ascended into your presence, giving us the hope and the opportunity of similarly rising above and beyond the

mundane and the temporary of this life into the realms where you yourself dwell. You came to earth and made a dwelling place among the people of Israel in the tabernacle. The Lord Jesus now prepares a dwelling place for us where we can come and dwell with him and with you.

We pray that as we reflect on these wonderful truths this season that God the Holy Spirit will impress the things we see in this passage on our hearts and help us to be more dedicated, more committed, and more fully aware and motivated by these wonderful truths from your word. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.