

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-12-13b

We saw in the first session the example of God's clear and concise word about the Canaanites and about the Moabites. And we saw how that was abrogated, was set aside in cases of faith, in cases of repentance and change of mind. And the Old Testament is replete with these.

We have seen kings who were under sentence of death, but even King Ahab on an occasion of repentance is granted a stay, is granted an extension to see if he will follow up on that opportunity. The Ninevites are a classic well-known example in the days of Jonah. Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed.

It's a word of the Lord. And you never hear the Lord remove that pronouncement of sentence. And ultimately the Ninevites are destroyed, but it is far down the road.

It isn't in the days of Jonah. It is in the prophecy of Nahum that we see the predicted fulfillment of that come to pass. But it's an amazing thing.

God sets standards of righteousness and sets penalties for transgressing those standards. But the operative deliverance comes through faith. We've seen that in our study of Habakkuk.

You get to chapter 2, verse 4. The just shall live by his faith, live by his faith. So those who were under sentence of death, isn't that what happens to us? All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death.

But the gift of God is eternal life. The gift to whom? We're under sentence of death. We're under penalty of death.

Yet God gives eternal life to some. To whom? Well, the most well-known verse in the Bible, certainly in the New Testament. John 3, 16.

God so loved the world, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. There is a condition.

There is a condition. So as we look now back at Leviticus chapter 4, what are we really talking about here? This is labeled the sin offering. But it says if someone sins inadvertently without current knowledge of sin, it is a sin.

It violates the standard of God. But it isn't immediately apparent. Why is it not immediately apparent? It doesn't go into great detail.

But we know first of all that whatever God says is sin, whatever God says is wrong, that's wrong. So someone has transgressed that. We also know that sometimes we choose to sin.

The people of Israel in the northern kingdom, the people of Judah in the southern kingdom

chose to construct high places, chose to install idols, chose to pursue and worship the false gods of the people that God had instructed them to drive out of the land and had told them that they would be led astray, that they would be ensnared and trapped if they did not eradicate and eliminate those things from the land. And sure enough, it came back and corrupted them and defiled them. And they did it by choice.

And when that choice was confirmed and was settled, they were destroyed. They were taken out of the land. The blessings of God were interdicted and removed.

The promises of God were no longer fulfilled that they would inhabit the land and have it as their dwelling and their inheritance. What we see here in chapter 4 of Leviticus is provision made for inadvertent sin, sin that was not intended to be sin when it was committed. It comes to the knowledge of the priest, of the people, of the ruler, of a common person at some subsequent point.

An example of this would be a quick example. Remember when the Apostle Paul was brought before the high priest and he answered a question and the high priest commanded that he be struck. And so they smacked the Apostle Paul.

And Paul said, May the Lord strike you, you whitewashed wall. And everyone went into shock and said, how dare you talk that way to the high priest? And Paul said, basically apologized and said, I did not know he is the high priest. Nobody told me this guy is the high priest.

If I had known that, I would not have sassed him essentially. Paul said a thing and it was a true thing and an accurate thing, but it was not appropriate to be done. But he did it in ignorance.

He did not know. So there is a component that we use in analysis of our sins. Is it intentional? Is it willful? Do we rake out an area and clear the stones and build it up and install an idol and then bow down and worship it? Do we make provision? Or is there malice of forethought? Is there intentionality and clear prior motivation to carry through? Or is it something that is done in the moment and perhaps without all the facts? Parents almost universally at some point in their life will come in, find something wrong, grab the nearest child and discipline that child for what appears to be their malfunction to find out in the aftermath that it was not as it appeared.

That wasn't the child that did it. It wasn't their fault and so on. And given the facts at hand, they thought they were doing a right thing.

Subsequent information, I was doing a wrong thing. You accuse someone of moving your stuff. You find out later it was you that moved it and you just forgot.

And so you thought you were righteously raining fire and brimstone down on someone for some imagined wrong. And it turns out it was you who was in the wrong. That's a frequent occurrence.

So what's the issue here? Intentionality. Now, how do you parse out how intentional it was?

You're driving. You change lanes.

You hit another car. You're driving. You glance away.

You look back up and you've just pancaked into the back end of the car in front of you. Intentional or unintentional? Does anybody willingly wrinkle their car? Generally not. It's usually inadvertence.

But are we accountable for our distraction? Are we accountable for our inattention? Are we accountable for our failure to be careful enough to avoid mishap? There's an indirect responsibility. Maybe we should have known and we didn't. The Bible doesn't get into all of that here, does it? It just says if someone sins inadvertently and it becomes known, it comes to light, it is recognized subsequent to its commission.

It's not known in the moment. You don't sit down and say, I am going to commit this sin. You do a thing and in retrospect you say or you find out I was wrong.

I have transgressed the standard that the Lord God in heaven set up. That's what this applies to. So now I ask you again the question I asked at the beginning of the last session.

Have we yet seen in Scripture an occasion for sacrifice of known sin? Somebody sins and says, well, I've got to go offer a sacrifice. Abraham lies to Pharaoh, lies to Abimelech about Sarah. She's my sister.

Finds out he's his wife. Oh, excuse me. I've got to go offer a sacrifice to the Lord to atone for my lie, to atone for my sin, to atone for my lack of faith.

Any occasions like that? How about we get all the way up here to the sin offering? It says right here in my Bible under chapter four in the New King James, the sin offering. But this says it applies to an inadvertent sin. One I didn't know I was doing at the time.

Right? Well, this is interesting. What is the nature of this sacrifice? We have seen who commits it. We've looked at the occasion for it.

We know the nature of it. A transgression of what God says is wrong. Not what my neighbor says is wrong.

Not what my community says is wrong. Not what I think is wrong. It's what God says is wrong.

Who does it? What is its nature? It's inadvertent. What is the occasion? It is a sin that we didn't know at the time that it was a sin. We didn't say it's a sin, but I'm going to do it anyway.

Now let's look at the content of the sacrifice. The procedure. We're going to look at the first two cases.

We know these are organized by who does it. That was the fourth thing. Who does it? So it's the

anointed priest, and it's virtually identical for the whole congregation.

So this is corporate responsibility. Everybody is under the gun because the representative of the people did it, the high priest, or the people themselves, represented by the elders. In either case, we'll take the first instance here in verse 3. Notice, it isn't that he didn't put his robes on right or he screwed up the procedure on the Day of Atonement.

He brings guilt on all of the people by what he does. The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord in front of the veil of the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. The priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense before the Lord, which is in the Tabernacle of Meeting, and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the Tabernacle of Meeting.

So, first, what is the emphasis here in this particular sacrifice for sin? It is done by someone who represents all the people. It is an inadvertent sin. It brings guilt on all the people.

So he takes a bull, slays it, and it's all about the blood. In chapter 1, the Olah, it was all about the body, the flesh, the parts, the pieces that are laid on the altar and sent to the Lord. In chapter 2, it was all about the grain, and is it parched? Is it baked? Is it ground? Is there honey or leaven? Is it anointed with frankincense? It's all about the substance of that work.

In chapter 3, it was the fellowship meal offering, where it's brought before the Lord and it is partaken of. It is shared. It is a fellowship occasion.

And the sacrifice is partaken of. Here, what is the emphasis? It's all about the blood. It's all about the blood.

Now look, so far. And he takes the blood three places. It's corporate guilt.

The dwelling place of God with His people is the tabernacle. So he goes into the tabernacle and he puts the blood three places. Takes his finger.

His finger. This is what you do. He sprinkles it in front of the veil.

Doesn't go in. He's outside the veil. Sprinkles the blood in front of the veil.

Then he smears some on the horns of the altar of incense. What does the altar of incense represent? You get the idea that if the priest does not sprinkle that blood in front of the veil, he will not be allowed to go in there on the day of atonement. He's got to reestablish that privilege and the functionality of that office.

What does the veil signify in terms of the high priest? He's the only guy that's allowed to go through there. And having incurred guilt, he's got to sprinkle blood in front of that veil, looking forward to the tenth day, the day of atonement, when he's going to come back and represent the people and go on in. He's got to sanctify that way.

He's got to acknowledge and remember that he has just disqualified himself. And without the shedding of blood, he can't be requalified to enter through that veil and perform his job. It's his job.

One of the most unique features of being high priest was entering into the Holy of Holies. So he stands outside and sprinkles blood right there. Then he puts some on the horns of the altar of incense.

Altar of incense. Incense represents the prayers of the saints, that which is constantly ascending to God as a sweet-smelling savor. Well, prayer is going to be hindered.

Communication with God is going to be inhibited by the action of the high priest if he doesn't reapply and recognize and symbolize the foundation of sacrifice on which that rests. Without the foundation of sacrifice, there's not going to be a day of atonement. There's not going to be that once-a-year recognition that people have been made acceptable and that there is the presence of God in their midst, the mercy seat, the cherubim, the Ark of the Covenant, right? It's the presence of God.

So that recognition has to be reestablished. Prayer, being able to make appeal and intercession and request to God, has to be re-sanctified. And notice it begins.

You would think it would start at the altar of burnt offering and it would go to the altar of incense and then it would go to the veil. No, it's the other way around. You've got to begin as close to the presence of God as possible, sanctify that, then back up to the altar of incense, then go outside and re-consecrate, as it were, re-mark the altar of burnt offering with that blood.

So it's concentric circles, as it were. But you've got to go to God first because without the presence of God, the other two are meaningless. And without the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering is meaningless.

It's the holy of holies, then the holy place, then the courtyard. And you start with the most important and move backward. Remember how the king used to always demand that everybody face him, nobody could turn his back on the king, and so you see these people sweeping and bowing, backing out of the throne room? Well, there is a similar principle in that the sin is against God, against Thee and Thee only have I sinned.

So it is the personal presence of God that has to be acknowledged and repaired, as it were, with the blood of the sacrifice first. Now you can speak. Now incense can return to the throne of God from His throne on earth, His heavenly throne, from His earthly throne, as it were.

Then you can consecrate the altar where you are going to bring the whole burnt offering commitment of self, the meal offering commitment of work, the fellowship offering recognition of relationship with God through mediation. None of those are possible until the first two are done. Make sense? That's what we've covered so far.

Now you look at verse 8. He shall take from the sacrifice all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The offering is not the bull. The offering is the fat of the bull.

He shall take the fat of the bull as the sin offering, the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat which is on the entrails. The two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks and the fatty lobe attached to the liver he shall remove. As it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering, and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering.

This is the essential portion. It is an inward portion. It is a special portion.

It's hidden from outside view. You can't even determine how much of it there is until you get inside. The bull has to be skinned and he has to be flayed before you can get to these fatty portions.

It is a mystery to outside view. Unless the bull is just particularly gaunt, you don't know exactly how much fat is in there. The skin has to be removed.

The animal has to be flayed. You have to get into the very interior of the animal to find this fat and remove it and bring it before the Lord. The bull's hide and all of its flesh with its head and legs, its entrails, everything else except the fat.

The whole bull is carried outside the camp to a clean place. Remember in the whole burnt offering the priest got to keep the skin? Remember in the other offerings the priest could eat a portion of the meat? In the fellowship offering the offerer could partake of a portion of it. The grain offerings, the menka, the priest got a portion of that.

Here the priest don't get any of it. It is of no benefit to anyone except God. The blood counts.

The blood sanctifies the pathway into the Holy of Holies. The blood sanctifies the altar of incense. The blood sanctifies the altar of burnt offering.

And the fat is going to go on that altar having been sanctified, that reverse path, the fat is going to go to the Lord. Everything else is discarded. It is not in view.

And it's so interesting because here is this animal and so much of him is useful, so much of him is beneficial. Why not keep the meat? Why not keep the hide? What is God up to here? This sin that is a clear transgression of God's standard, the atonement for it is in the blood. Why is the fat even offered? It's offered after the blood is applied to those three places, right? And this is a notification to God.

This is the equivalent of an acknowledgement. Lord, I have sinned and I have applied the blood in the three places you specified. I have sinned, I have turned, I have complied with your righteous standard.

And the smoke of the fat ascending from the altar of burnt offering is telling God. An inadvertent sin has been committed. I have already applied the blood of the offering.

This is me telling you, O Lord, I have completed the offering. That's what it is. Because the rest of the animal is of no benefit to anyone.

And it is taken outside. The whole bull, verse 12, he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place where the ashes are poured out. This is where, when they clean the altar, as they have to do, and they take these grease-soaked ashes, just whatever is left from the performance of these many sacrifices, it's all taken out to an undefiled place.

It's outside the camp. It's not the garbage dump. It doesn't get mixed with other things.

Even this place of discard is clean. And burn it on wood with fire. Where the ashes are poured out, it shall be burned.

So the body of the animal is on the wood, but it's not at the altar. It's outside the camp. This offering is best understood by contrasting it with the others.

The whole burnt offering of commitment and dedication of self, that's in the camp. There's no sin directly in view. There is sinfulness.

We know that there would be no shedding of blood unless there was a need for remission of sin. But this sacrifice is on the basis of that completed work. I am expressing commitment of myself.

Chapter 2, I express commitment of my work. Chapter 3, I express appreciation for the fellowship and the presence of God in our midst. Chapter 4, I have sinned.

It wasn't avertant. It wasn't a rebellion on my part. I'm not trying to make this a policy in my life, but it happened.

I see that it happened. It has come to my knowledge. So the high priest and or those who represent the entire congregation, the elders, it's a very similar procedure.

Nothing but the blood is used in the holy place, two places in the holy place, one place in the courtyard and the rest of the animal after having notified God by the burning of the fat, the essential inward portion. You couldn't have gotten there unless you had already processed the animal according to God's instructions. Sending him the fat, which is the special portion, says, I have done to the animal what was required by this sacrifice.

Couldn't have gotten there without it. Here is the notification. The rest of the animal is taken outside the camp to a clean place where the greasy ashes are taken and a wood fire with no altar is constructed.

What separates the animal's body from the ground? Wood. It's ashes and dust. Dust and ashes.

There's wood. The sacrifice outside the camp is then sent to God. Where was Jesus nailed to the wood? Outside the camp.

Scripture points that out for us. The purpose of this, we know Hebrews 9.22, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. The Lord Jesus in Hebrews 9.11-14, Christ has come as the high priest of good things to come.

Why is the high priest mentioned first in Leviticus 4? This is a high priest who had malfunctioned and has to engage in a restorative sacrifice. The Lord Jesus came as the high priest of good things to come, Hebrews 9.11. He passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with hands, passing through from the veil to the altar of incense, outside to the altar of burnt offering. He entered once for all into the holy place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood.

So He Himself secured eternal redemption. If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow sprinkled on those who are defiled, consecrated them and provided ritual purity, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our consciences from dead works to worship the living God? And you remember that Peter affirms the same thing in 1 Peter 1. Prepare your minds, be fully sober, set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy in your conduct.

It is written, you shall be holy because I am holy. If you call upon the Father as the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, live out the time of your residence here, your sojourn here in fear, in awe, in reverence. You know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life that you received from your fathers.

You've been ransomed from it, not with perishable things like silver and gold, but the precious blood of the unblemished and spotless Lamb, namely Christ. He was foreknown, manifest in these last times. Through Him you now trust in God who raised Him from the dead.

Your faith and hope are in God. It is the blood of this sacrifice that is central. Without the shedding of blood, it doesn't say without the offering of meat, there is no remission of sin, does it? It says without the shedding of blood.

This is the offering that is taken outside the camp and is burned. The meat is not in view. The body of the bullock is not in view, as it was in chapter one.

The partaking of that is not in view. It isn't allowed as it was in chapter three. It was made central.

Here the issue is death and it is a sacrificial fire that burns outside the camp. It's in a clean place, but it's not on the altar. It's an unorthodox sacrifice.

Sacrifices were placed on altars. This particular one is sent to God on the ground, separated only by the wood, just as the Lord Jesus will be crucified outside the camp, to focus on the need for that payment, that restoration through the blood. Chapter four is interesting in that way

and in that typology.

It is distinct. You learn a lot about it by comparing it to the previous sacrifices. So what does it tell us? Sin, as in our reviewed memory verse this morning, Isaiah 59, 1 and 2, your iniquities, verse 2, have separated between you and your God and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.

The blood has to be put back on the altar of incense. Your iniquities are separated. You look at the veil that separates the presence of God and here even the high priest is separate and the most he can do is sprinkle blood in front of it.

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. But it is the sacrifice of the fat.

It is the sacrifice outside the camp, acknowledging that this is what happens with sin. The defilement of sin puts us outside the camp. The animal is identified with that separation and being taken out and being burned.

It's a clean place but it's a lowly place. Isn't it interesting that Jesus began His life, as Matthew read for us this morning, supported by wood on the earth. The manger was a wooden structure that held up the body of the baby Lord Jesus.

The cross was a wooden structure that held up the sacrificial body of the Lord Jesus. At the beginning of His life and the end of His life He is like this animal that is taken outside the camp. Why does it say there was no room for them? In whatever it was it says the inn but we know that in the usual accommodations there was no place.

It's that idea of separation outside the fellowship, outside the common area. It's no accident that the manger is separate. From the dwelling place of the rest of the people.

The cross is erected outside the dwelling place of the rest of the common people. It is a clean place but it is a separated place. It is so because of sin, because of defilement.

In taking that upon Himself the Lord Jesus makes us acceptable. The blood is applied and we can come to the altar of burnt offering. We can come to the golden altar of incense and we through the veil it says in Hebrews can enter boldly before the very throne of God.

It's just shocking to the Israelite ear to hear that a common person, a Gentile to boot would be able to walk into the very presence of God. And you and I take it for granted as a routine thing. And praise God for it that it is a privilege that we can exercise frequently and often.

But as we meditate on the Christmas season you think about that manger, you think about that cross and you think about that animal's body taken outside the camp and burned on the ground, on the wood. Because of our inherent sinfulness. We sin whether we want to or not.

And it is an irremediable situation. It is unaddressable. There is no solution except that which

comes from God Himself.

God made a way in Leviticus chapter 4 so that even when the leadership fails, even when the entirety of the people are at fault and are defiled there is a way. It's a costly way but it is an effective way and it accomplishes God's purpose. Well, so much more to be seen and to be said as we look at Leviticus chapter 4 but we're at the conclusion of our time for today so we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ for His willingness to be that atoning sacrifice to be taken outside the camp and to accomplish the work of mediation and reconciliation that brings us into Your very presence and gives us the privilege even as we do this moment of addressing You as our Father, of anticipating Your blessings rather than Your judgment, of anticipating life with You instead of eternal separation from You. We thank You for those privileges and as we think about the Lord Jesus, Your Son and our Savior in this time of celebration and of fellowship we are grateful for the pictures that You have set before us in these early chapters of Leviticus and we pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to each heart in an effective and meaningful way and draw us closer to Yourself. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.