

The Atoning Sufferings

by Welcome Detweiler

The atonement of Christ is the only way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to God, and it is sufficient to provide cleansing and forgiveness for all who accept it.

Duration: 13:16

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5-6, John 3:36, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Atonement", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior in order to be saved. He highlights that God has set the condition for salvation as believing in His Son. The preacher challenges the notion that one can be saved without relying on the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus. He shares a personal encounter with a man who struggled to believe in the atonement, but ultimately passed away without changing his mind. The preacher concludes by affirming the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, pointing to His resurrection as proof that God's righteous claims are satisfied.

Transcript

During the past few days, we have been thinking of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I dare hardly take for granted that everyone is clear as to the details of this greatest of all events. The sufferings of Christ must be divided into two distinct classes. During his brief years of faithful ministry, he suffered opposition, rejection, he suffered for righteousness sake, he suffered under the testings of Satan, he suffered by anticipation in the garden of sorrows, but in all of these sufferings, he was not forsaken of God.

He could still say, Abba Father. These human sufferings are shared by all of the human family to some degree. It's quite possible that he suffered in these to a greater degree than any of his followers, but all that he did and suffered during his life is never said to be for us.

These are not classed as major sufferings. I come now to the second class of sufferings, and these can be classed as atoning sufferings. In the darkness of the cross, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

He drank the cup of judgment. All God's waves and billows rolled over his holy soul. Only a divine person could endure atoning suffering.

The death of Christ was not something accidental for which anything else might have been substituted. He spoke of his sufferings and death as a definite necessity. In Matthew 16 we read, The Son of Man must suffer many things.

In John 3, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. His death was not a surprise nor an accident, but rather a necessity to produce the basis of salvation for the guilty helpless sinners of Adam's race. Besides the atonement being necessary, it was altogether voluntary.

If an innocent man should be forced to suffer and die for the guilty, that would be very unjust. But if the substitute is willing, God remains just. The Son of God was not sent by force as an unwilling victim.

His words were, No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. Let's remember this, that right up to the brink of the cross, he could have avoided it. He could have had more than twelve legion of angels to protect and deliver him.

But Christ came to suffer and die as a substitute for the guilty, and apart from his voluntary death, there would be no pardon nor forgiveness for any one of us. Christ came to remove the tremendous barrier that existed between a holy God and the defiled sinner. That uncrossable barrier was man's fallen and sinful condition.

Men may repent and apologize for sins committed, but this does not remove the past guilt. A man may amend his life, but present obedience will not remove the barrier that has blocked the way for forgiveness. God's righteousness demands that without the shedding of blood is no remission.

Since no man can make satisfaction for himself, he must look for an adequate substitute, and the God-man who died in the midst of two thieves on Golgotha's hill is the only one who could remove that uncrossable barrier between God and the sinner. When God placed my sins on the sinless substitute and accepted his payment for my sins, I may well ask, why did he do it? I find no answer except, he loved me. Again I ask, why did he love me? What have I done to deserve such love? And to these questions, I find no answer.

Christ's love extended to the undeserving baffles all reasoning. Strange but inadequate explanations are these in Romans 5 and 6, for when we were yet without strength in due time, Christ died for, or instead of, the ungodly. Verse 8. But God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4.10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation, or substitute, for our sins. The Bible makes very clear the fact that Christ suffered not for himself, but in the place of others. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. 1 Peter 3.18. These are wonderful portions of God's word, making clear the purpose and effect of the substitutionary death of Christ. Listen to a few more.

1 Peter 2.24. Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree. Isaiah 53.5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement with a view to our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Through these verses I learn how God can be just, and at the same time the justifier of all who rest in his Son for salvation. If God offered pardon on any other basis, he would cease to be the moral governor of the universe.

Some would try to tell us that God can offer pardon and salvation without Christ's substitutionary death, but that's just a wild guess and a very unscriptural statement. God's mercy and grace to guilty sinners flows only by way of Calvary. If you try to obtain salvation except through the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you have nothing more than an imaginary salvation.

If you can find one degree of satisfaction in such an imaginary nothing, it proves that you have given no true consideration to the full blending of the attributes of God's character. It's astonishing what unreasonable conclusions men can draw when they ignore the statements of God's infallible word. Do you really believe that you can be saved apart from resting in the value of Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection? If so, you are in line for the biggest letdown that has ever crossed your pathway.

You'll be let down so far that you'll never come up again. In my visit to the Bahamas a few years ago, I had the occasion in Nassau of speaking to a man about 50 years of age who said, I can't believe in the atonement. It doesn't make sense.

I can't believe that God would lay my sins on Christ and on that basis offer forgiveness if I accepted his son as my savior or substitute. My reply was, explain to me why you can't believe it. He started, he stalled for a few minutes and then he said, I can't tell you why, but I just can't believe it.

That was a clear admission that he could give no reasonable answer. His reasoning had run aground and became unreasonable. I continued the conversation by saying, Jack, when I meet a man who says I can't believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ as a basis of salvation, I am face to face with an untruthful man.

He should more correctly say, I don't want to believe it. It's the most sensible, the most reasonable thing in the Bible. It makes sense from every angle and test.

And the only reason why some so-called intelligent men don't want to believe in the atoning death of Christ is because it suggests that all men are sinners and can't save themselves. The stubborn heart of the natural man is too proud to admit this proven fact. Seven days after that, Jack, the bluffer of Nassau, dropped dead.

And unless he changed his mind in those seven days, he's in hell right now, pondering his unreasonable conclusion. I learned from others that Jack was a notorious sinner, if such there be, and that explained why he didn't want to believe in the most reasonable doctrine in the Bible. Now, let's think a moment of the sufficiency of the atonement.

The proof that Christ's atonement was sufficient is the resurrection on the third day. Otherwise, he must have remained under God's judgment. The resurrection proves that God's righteous claims are satisfied.

Another proof that the atonement of Christ is sufficient is it can never be repeated. In the letter to the Hebrews, we read such expressions as these. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

By his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. Again, now, once in the end of the age, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The slightest

suggestion that the sacrifice of Calvary needs to be repeated is an insult to the sufficiency of Christ's vicarious death and resurrection.

Through Christ's atoning sacrifice, the Old Testament saints were forgiven on credit or on deposit. Since the death of Christ, believers are forgiven on the ground of the price already paid at Calvary. Many who lived during the Old Testament days were not saved.

They perished in their sins because they refused the offer of salvation. In like manner, many who are living today will never enter into the good of Christ's payment for sin, and because of their refusal or even sheer neglect to receive him as Lord and Savior, they will perish in their sins. The reason I proclaim the gospel by radio and by other means is to arrest the attention of every unsaved person to this important fact, that you can be saved, but you won't be saved unless you personally will accept this Savior as your very own.

You must ever remember that God is sovereign. He has the right to lay down the conditions upon which men may be saved. God's condition is he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and contrarywise he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.

Have you believed on the Son? That is, are you resting entirely on his sacrificial death for your salvation? If not, you are lost, and you must perish in your sins. The sacrifice is not lacking in its value, but it must be personally received by individuals. If the individual will not receive Christ, he must perish due to his neglect or stubbornness.

I have brought to your attention the most amazing offer that has ever been extended, Christ and his atoning sacrifice. Heaven will be your eternal abode if you receive him. Hell will be your eternal abode if you reject him.

Don't be foolish. Don't argue with plain Bible facts. You can't win by fighting.

You can only win by a complete surrender. Do I have one listener who can, at this moment, honestly and sincerely say, I am ready to accept Christ as my personal savior and substitute? I believe his sacrifice on Calvary is sufficient to provide my cleansing and forgiveness. God will bless you with his salvation this very moment, if you will do it.

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