

The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

The Atonement – Applied to Our Daily Life

Atonement Applied

Dear Friends consider the magnificent things that Christ has done! We have in fact been redeemed from our sins and reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We can therefore walk in the assurance, confidence and freedom in our relationship with God, based on the power of Christ's saving work for us. We can now rest in His work and appreciate the great things He has done. This appreciation and worship of Christ, should therefore drive us to apply what He has done in our daily living so that we live the free and powerful life that God has intended for us by His Spirit. These doctrinal truths should have a very practical affect upon our thinking and living. Let us consider a few ways how we should view these truths in our daily life and practice.

- **Substitutionary** – in the place of, "*Christ died in our place.*"

Because Jesus died in my place, I should consider that it should have been ME that had to die and not HIM. Instead He was willing to be the atoning victim and bear the very penalty which is reserved for ME. He is the sacrificial lamb which died, in my place, for my sin! What amazing love is this?

1 John 2:2 - 2 and **He Himself is the propitiation for our sins**; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. NASB

Consider then, how this should motivate us with thankfulness in our hearts toward God. More than this, how it should create in us a hatred for the sin which caused God's wrath to fall upon Him, instead of me. Motivated now by gratitude for what He has done, I should despise my sin for it was the reason that Jesus died for me! Oh Blessed Mercy!

- **Vicarious** – in our place, for us, substitution implied personally, "*Christ died for us.*"

As the hymn writer sings.....

*"And can it be that I should gain, An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain, For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"*

As we consider in amazement that Jesus died for us **personally**, we should consider His goal and purpose in this matter as Paul states in Titus...

Titus 2:11-14 - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 **instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age**, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 **who gave Himself for us**, that He might **redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people** for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. NASB

Oh believer, think about this. Did Jesus die for nothing? No indeed, He died for **your sin and for mine!** Therefore we should be eager to "*deny ungodliness and worldly desire and to live sensible, righteously and godly in this present age!*" Our Lord has sought to "*purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds,*" therefore we should be exactly that, zealous for good deeds. Christ's death for us personally should motivate us to put away sin and to walk in Christ's love and in His godly character. This is brought to pass in us as we trust in and rely upon the power of the indwelling Spirit to produce in us His godly character.

- **Propitiatory** – appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath toward sin, "*Christ satisfied God's divine justice and paid the actual debt of our sin.*"

Jesus death on the cross satisfies the wrath of God toward each one of us sinners who has trusted in Him. This is the ultimate display of God's love toward those who trust in Christ! In fact this satisfaction is so complete, it is said to "*justify us by His blood,*" and to "*save us from the wrath*

of God!” More than this, it completely “*reconciles*” us back to God, and the perfect life of Jesus now “*saves us*” from sin and death!

Romans 5:8-10 - 8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died **for us**. 9 Much more then, having now **been justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him. 10 For if while **we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. NASB

Because this is true, consider that how we should rejoice that the furious wrath of the Holy God has been spent on Him and none remains for us, who are infinitely deserving of it! Even more how this should motivate us with a holy fear to keep our life pure from sin! Further, it should create in us a gratitude that strengthens us to honor Him for what He has done, with lives of purity rather than dishonor Him by continued sin, which brings disgrace to His name.

- **Expiatory** – the remove of guilt, “*Christ cancelled out or released us from the debt of sin.*”

Free at last! We have been set free from the guilt of our sins! No longer do my past sins rule over me with guilt and condemnation, rather I am free to love and enjoy God freely!

Romans 8:1-3 – 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death**. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, **God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin**, He condemned sin in the flesh, NASB

Because Christ has cancelled the debt of our sin and guilt, we should look forward to our days in how we may glorify God with our lives, rather than be depressed with hopeless despair wondering if God can really forgive us. There is “*no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” Therefore, since we have been “*set free from the law of sin and death,*” we can live to the glory of God with hearts of thanksgiving and gratitude!

- **Justification** – a legal declaration of righteousness, “*Christ justified us before God’s court on the basis of His own merit.*”

Though the devil may accuse us, we have an advocate with the Father who has dealt with our sins completely.

1 John 2:1 - 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**; NASB

Because God has justified us in Christ Jesus our Lord, we should appreciate and glorify God for this great thing that He has done. This is because we could have in no way brought about this justification on our own, but it is in fact come to us by GRACE alone, through FAITH alone, in CHRIST alone! We have been justified on the basis of Christ’s work, and this should cause us to worship and thank God for His amazing grace!

- **Sacrifice** – the personal cost to Christ was death in our place, “*Christ was the actual victim of divine justice, he was the sacrifice that died for us.*”

Consider that God so loved us that He sent Jesus to die for you and for me!

1 John 4:10 - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

This love of God should then motivate us to want to be like Him. This is practically played out in our lives as we live a life of sacrifice to love others in many practical ways. If we truly glorify God for His love, we should show it by making sacrifices of our time, talent and money to display His love now through our very lives! These sacrifices glorify God and are part of our priestly ministry to Him.

1 Peter 2:4-10 – 4 and coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, **are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**.....9 but you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you** out of darkness into His marvelous light; NASB

- **Reconciliation** – the restoration of relationship of mankind to God, *“Christ reconciled us to God and repaired the alienation we once had with Him.”*

Now through our Lord Jesus we have had our relationship with God restored! Not only this but we stand in God’s favor because of Him. We now stand in Christ’s perfect righteousness, holy blameless and beyond any reproach!

Colossians 1:22 -22 yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death**, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach NASB

Consider then, that since God has loved us with such an amazing love, how we should embrace His love and return it to Him! Since God has reached out to us and embraced us, shall we not embrace Him back? Indeed we should! Let us consider how profound God’s grace is in forgiving and reconciling us to Himself and cherish His love with a devoted life or worship and thanksgiving!

His Grace is greater than all of our sin

Dear reader, consider that if in fact you are a Christian having trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, then the reality of God’s forgiveness for your sins is true, objective and eternal. This means that the FACT is your sin IS forgiven by God, and you are free from it completely. Consider that no matter how great your sin may have been in the past, or how great it is now in the present, if you believe in the Lord Jesus and His atoning death, and this with a repentant heart, God’s grace is much greater to forgive you than His Law is to condemn you! This is because Jesus’ atonement for your sin is absolutely perfect and complete!

Romans 5:19-21 - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. 20 And **the Law came in that the transgression might increase**; but where sin increased, **grace abounded all the more**, 21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so **grace might reign** through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. NASB

“Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” The mountain of God’s grace **“abounds all the more”** over the mole hill of our sin! Sin is serious. More than that it is dangerously deadly, but God’s provision for our sin in Jesus is more powerful to forgive than His Law is to condemn. This is because Jesus has met both the penal sanctions and the perceptive requirements of the Law. It is fulfilled in Christ and we are in Him! The Gospel tells us that there is **“no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1). So the question becomes will we believe our feelings and emotions or will we believe Christ Jesus and His Gospel? CJ Mahaney in his book, *“The Cross Centered Life”* gives a word about how to beat condemnation.... *“Here’s how to beat condemnation. **Confess your sin to God. Then believe in Him.** Exercise the gift of faith that God has given you to believe that Jesus died for the very sins you’re being condemned for. The punishment He received was for you. His resurrection is proof that God accepted Jesus’ sacrifice. The sins of your past and the sin you just committed were all atoned for; you need carry their weight no more. You can’t do it. That’s why Jesus did it for you. Being freed from condemnation doesn’t require that we forget or deny the depth and depravity of our sins, whether they are sins committed prior to our conversion or sins committed since our conversion. In fact, if we want to know the joy and gratitude that the woman at Jesus’ feet experienced, we must start by acknowledging and owning up to our many sins. Paul called himself the worst of sinners (1 Tim 1:16). He wasn’t paralyzed by condemnation. He was exalting God’s grace by recognizing his own unworthiness and sin as he marveled at the mercy of God.”* Now friends, this is where we should be in our struggle against sin. We should be marveling at the grace of God. Our sin is real, and it is deplorable. But God’s grace in Christ is greater than all of it! Therefore let us come clean and acknowledge our sins, and then let us remind ourselves of the glorious truth of the Gospel, **“sin increased, grace abounded.”**

Preaching the Gospel to yourself daily

Dear friends, if the Cross and Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central event in all of human history, and it is, then shouldn't it also be the central theme of our daily lives? Yes indeed! As we seek to glorify and enjoy God all the days of our life, we will never see and appreciate the glory of God as clearly as we do when we reflect on Calvary's Cross. There is the blazing center of the glory of God! There we see the attributes of God with piercing clarity! There is cause for worship and adoration toward God and His Son, our blessed Savior Jesus Christ! Consider how Paul saw his life as defined by the very Gospel itself.

Galatians 2:20 - 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.** NASB

To Paul, the cross was very personal, and it should be to us. ***"I have been crucified with Christ,"*** exclaims Paul, and ***"I no longer live!"*** These are powerful words indeed, but he goes on, ***"the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."*** Paul's life is defined by the Gospel. The ***"life I live"***, he says, is defined by what Jesus did for me! Oh dear reader, how we need to be reminded of this everyday! Each and everyday we need to come to God through the cross, and see all of His beauty and the design of our lives as fulfilled in and through our Lord Jesus and what He has done for us! CJ Mahaney outlines in his book, five ways that we can keep the cross central in our daily lives. Here they are with a few comments both from him and myself.

1. **Memorize the Gospel** – Memorizing Scripture about God's grace and forgiveness in Christ is a powerful way to be always and continually reminded of what he has done! (Gal 2:20-21, Isa 53:3-6, Rom 3:21-26, 5:6-11, 8:32-39, 1 Cor 15:3-4, 2 Cor 5:21)
2. **Pray the Gospel** – As we approach God in prayer, let us be reminded just how heinous our sin is and how glorious is the life and death of Christ to overcome it. This will surely enrich our prayer life like no other thing can.
3. **Sing the Gospel** – Each day is another opportunity to celebrate and relish in the goodness of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus! Dear Christian, has God given you a voice? Then employ it for that which it was created, to sing the high praises of God and His Christ! Make sure your songs are centered on the cross and the atonement.
4. **Review how the Gospel has changed you** – Consider that you are not the same person you used to be! You have come a long way in Christ! It is a very helpful and encouraging thing to remember all that Christ has done to change us and how far we have come! It is important for us to consider what pitiful sinners we were, and how deplorable our sin was. More than this, we glorify God for His grace when we see how the power of the cross has literally changed our life! Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!
5. **Study the Gospel** – Oh so much to learn about our glorious God and all that He has done for us in Christ. Surely the deeper our knowledge and understanding of the cross, the deeper and more profound our worship and appreciation to God for what He has done. Below is a list of good books which will help you in your understanding of the Bible concerning the cross and the Gospel. There is also a web link to some great material.

John Stott – *The Cross of Christ*

Leon Morris – *The Atonement*

Jerry Bridges – *The Discipline of Grace*

The Power of the Cross – *CH Spurgeon*

The Cross and Christian Ministry – *DA Carson*

Living the Cross Centered Life – *CJ Mahaney*

The Cross and Salvation – *Bruce Demarest*

<http://firstimportance.org/the-heart-of-the-gospel/>