

Christ And Calvary

by Cecil Andrews

This sermon delves into the importance of understanding Christ's sacrifice on the cross, emphasizing the need for a Savior to save us from God's anger and our guilt. It contrasts various false teachings about Christ and Calvary with the biblical truth of penal substitution, highlighting the significance of Christ's propitiation and expiation for our sins. The sermon concludes by affirming the assurance of salvation through faith in Christ's finished work on the cross.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24, John 14:1, Acts 8:35, Romans 4:25

Topics: "Christ's Sacrifice", "Assurance of Salvation"

Description

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Transcript

Well friends, it's a real joy for both Margaret and myself to be here with you tonight. As Keith said, we left Balna Hinch this morning just after 10 o'clock. We were able to stop at Annabelle Green on the way down.

We did take two slight detours, one of which I found myself heading back towards Balna Hinch at one stage, but thankfully after about seven miles I was able to get turned around and come back the right way. But there was a nice bit of scenery in that stretch that we went backwards and forwards on, so Margaret appreciated the scenery that we did see there. It's our joy to be with you, our joy to be with Brother Keith once more.

We're sorry of course that Sister Candace is not able to be here tonight. They have been much in our prayers over the last few years, since before even we came down to do the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses a couple of years ago. But we love them and the Lord dearly, and we have been able to meet up with them a few times.

They've bravely crossed the border up into the north, and we got a carry out I think from Newcastle or something like that. I enjoy it. John Max, I think it's called.

People know I like John MacArthur, and they said they didn't know he had an outreach by way of a chippy in Newcastle, John Max. John MacArthur was once asked, what's the greatest need of the church? And he came back with the answer, discernment. And you know it's true.

There are so many churches today that they just do not practice or exercise discernment. They take everything at face value because somebody claims to be a Christian, and if they've said it, it must be okay. But no matter who says it, we must test all things by the Scriptures.

And that's why Paul praised the Bereans. They were more noble than those in Thessalonica. And that when they listened to Paul, they didn't just say, well if he said it, it's okay.

They went and checked out what he said against the Scriptures to see if it was so. When I messaged Keith a lot of weeks ago and said, Mark and I were thinking of coming down for a wee break in Limerick, he said, great, what night will you preach? He didn't say do you want to preach? He just said, what night? So we settled on tonight. And he told me that the church is not calendar driven.

In other words, we don't just conform to what everybody else is doing. But at the same time, at this particular time of the year, a lot of the world, even the unbelieving world, for some reason or other, they have an awareness that this is so-called Holy Week. And they know that this week is leading up to a remembrance of events that happened 2,000 years ago at a place called Calvary.

And so I think it is right for us to be aware of what the other people out there are thinking, and that we should indeed look at the Scriptures to see what the Scriptures have to say about Christ and Calvary. And that's what I want to look at. When I was speaking a couple of years ago on the subject of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, if you remember, I said there are usually four features by which you can identify what constitutes a cult.

They have an earthly head or founder. They have an authority, which is in addition to or in place of the Bible. They have a wrong view of the person and work of Christ.

And they have a wrong view of salvation. And these are like links in a chain. One leads to the other.

And so they end up with a false view of salvation. And tonight, as I look at Christ and Calvary, I'm really going to be looking at point three, the person and work of Christ. They have a wrong view of it.

And of course, in consequence, they have a wrong view of salvation. I will be reading two portions of Scripture, one now and then one later in the presentation. I wanted this stage to turn our attention to Matthew chapter 16.

Jesus is with his disciples close to Caesarea Philippi. And we're going to pick up the narrative in verse 13. This is God's word.

When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Verse 21.

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go on to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Amen. And we pray that God's blessing would be upon it. So Christ, who was he? In that portion of Scripture that we have just read, the Lord Jesus Christ uses a title for himself, Son of Man, and he accepts a title given to him by Peter, the Son of the living God.

And those two titles, Son of Man and Son of the living God, they affirm that this is the unique God-Man, that he was both fully man and fully God. Now, if you're a believer here tonight, and you're a man, you're a son of God, if you're a woman, you are a daughter of God. In 1 John 3 and verse 2, the apostle John wrote, Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

Prior to our conversion, we were very different. We were children of disobedience. We were children of wrath.

In other words, the wrath of God was resting upon us. But because of Christ, because we have been converted to faith in Christ, a wonderful transaction has happened. We have been adopted into the family of God.

Paul wrote in Galatians 4, 4 and 5, When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. So no longer are we children of wrath and children of disobedience. We have been adopted into God's family.

Now, when a believer like you and like me claims that we're now a son or daughter of God, nobody takes out of that we are actually claiming to be God. Very different where Jesus is concerned. When Jesus claimed that God was his Father, that's exactly what he was claiming to be.

And the Jews of his day, they knew that. The main leader of what's known as the prosperity gospel movement, the health and wealth gospel, is a man called Kenneth Copeland. He's been around for decades.

And he claims that in one of the many face-to-face encounters he claims to have had with the Lord Jesus Christ, he says that Jesus told him that when he was here on earth, he never claimed to be God. Well, that just demonstrates an abysmal ignorance of the scriptures on the part of Kenneth Copeland. In John chapter 5 and verse 17, Jesus said, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

And what do we read in the next verse? Therefore the Jews sought the Lord to kill him, because he said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. In John 10 and verse 30, Jesus said, I and my Father are one. And immediately it was evident that the crowd wanted to stone him to death.

And so the Lord said to them, what are you going to stone me to death for? Was it all of the good works that I've done? Is that what's riling you? And in verse 33 we read, the Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy. And because of thou being a man, makest thyself God. You see, the truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ was not crucified for what he did, but for who he claimed to be.

There's another example in John chapter 8 and verse 58. The Lord was in debate, as he often was with the Pharisees, and the subject of Abraham came up. And basically the Pharisees were thinking, what would you, a whippersnapper, if you like, of 30 plus years, what would you know about Abraham? And the Lord says in John 8 verse 58, Before Abraham was, I am.

He had just appropriated to himself the very name of God. Because you remember when Moses was confronted by God at the burning bush and he was told to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh, you have to let the people go. And Moses says, well, who shall I say? Sent me.

And the answer came back, I am that I am. God is the eternal self-existent I am. And when Jesus said before Abraham was, I am, and in fact, all of the I am's in John's gospel are a declaration of his divinity.

Not only did he claim divinity, he exhibited divinity. Remember in Mark chapter two, there was four men carried a friend who was sick of the palsy on like a stretcher and they couldn't get near Jesus. So they're up onto the roof and they cut a hole in it and they let the friend down.

And the first thing that Jesus said was, son, thy sins be forgiven thee. People often wonder why did he say that? Well, just imagine it. The man's up on the roof and his friends are digging a hole on it.

And Jesus is down below preaching. And I'm sure he was preaching the need for repentance from sin and faith in God. And this man is up here hearing this and God knows the intent of our heart.

And I believe that that man came under a great conviction that he needed his sins forgiven more than being able to get up and walk. And I believe that is why the Lord said, son, thy sins be forgiven. So he demonstrated divinity.

He forgave sins. He received worship. Thomas in a post resurrection appearance fell down, if you like, and said, my Lord and my God, literally the Lord of me, the God of me.

And that's an expression that Jehovah's Witnesses don't like to have to deal with. But he received the worship of Thomas. He didn't rebuke him for referring to him as my Lord and my God.

He raised the dead on several occasions, at least three occasions we know of. He stilled the storm. You remember the disciples were out on the boat in the Sea of Galilee and the master was asleep and the storm blew up and they began to panic.

And so they woke him and he stood up and he said, peace, be still. I mentioned Kenneth Copeland earlier and he wrote an article in his magazine some years ago and he said, the disciples didn't need to do that. They should have been able to stand up and they could have rebuked the wind and said, peace, be still.

He says, we have the ability to control the climate. And my thought is, well, he lives somewhere in the Texas area, which is close to Tornado Alley. So when there's a twister on the horizon, why doesn't he get into his car, drive out and get up onto the bonnet and say, peace, be still.

Well, we know what would happen. He would end up like Judy Garland and the Wizard of Oz somewhere over the rainbow. But the Lord Jesus Christ was able to still the storm.

But there was one thing in particular that marked out his divinity. And that is the fact that he was holy. As the hymn says, guilty, violent, helpless we, spotless lamb of God was he.

You see, the Lord Jesus Christ was not a son of Adam. I remember some years ago, I did a debate in Trinity College, Dublin with a Muslim spokesman, and there was a question and answer afterwards. And one young Muslim man said to me, you say Jesus Christ was sinless.

How could he have been? He was born of woman. And he quoted a verse from, I think it's somewhere in Job. And he said, how could it be? I said, well, you have to remember there was no mortal man involved in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was the Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary. And because of that, when Christ was born, he was not in Adam. He was not in the line of Adam.

Whereas you and I are born in such a state and as in Adam, all die because of that original sin back in the garden of Eden. So he was holy. Not only was Jesus called son of God, a title that bears witness to his divinity, but he was also called son of man.

He used himself in Matthew 16, who do men say that I, the son of man am? And that bears witness to his humanity. And the Bible clearly testifies to the humanity of Christ. He was born in the flesh, John chapter one, and the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us.

And in Luke chapter two, verses eight to 20, you have the story of the angel appearing to the shepherds in Bethlehem, and they had to go and see this newborn babe. He was born in the flesh. He grew and he developed physically.

A little baby that was in the manger. Later on, he became the boy in the temple. And eventually he became the body in the tomb.

He hungered. He thirsted. He became tired.

He slept, he wept, and he died. He had to become obedient unto death, because death had no claims upon them, whereas death has a claim on you and I, as in Adam, all die. But Christ had to become obedient unto death.

Jesus was not only truly God, son of God, he was also truly human, son of man. And I want us to see tonight how only one who was both human and divine was fitted and equipped to be our savior. We've looked at Christ, who he was.

I want to look now at what he did. In the reading from Matthew 16, Jesus told of how he must go unto Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and be raised again the third day. Jesus is known as the savior.

And you know, words like saved and salvation, they kind of trip off the lips of believers like you and me. But I sometimes wonder what unbelievers make of all of this. When they hear these terms, do you need to be saved? Do you need a savior? Have you been saved? Do you possess salvation? I wonder what their understanding is of that terminology.

Do they really grasp what saved and salvation are all about? If you were asked, how would you explain salvation? In fact, if you're asked, what did Jesus save you from? I wonder how you would respond. Well, I think probably the most common answer is that people would say he saved me from my sins. That's perfectly biblical and scriptural.

In Matthew 1, 21, Joseph was told, thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. But again, does that answer actually mean anything to those who are not yet Christians, who are still unbelievers, or even to members of other faiths like the Muslims for that leaflet that there is? Well, I feel to use a well-worn phrase that was used up in Northern Ireland some years ago, I think clarification is needed. And there was another well-worn political phrase that was used many years ago, I think by John Major, and it didn't really do him much good.

It was that we need to get back to basics. Saved me from my sins. Well, I think to understand that we need to understand what happens when somebody sins.

Well, first of all, what is sin? Well, sin is the transgression of God's law. That's what the Bible teaches. In other words, when somebody breaks one of God's laws, whether it's the Ten Commandments or something like that, then they have sinned.

And when someone commits a sin, there are two things that happen. Firstly, God is angry. Now, that's not a very popular concept in the world of Christendom that you and I are currently inhabiting, if I could put it that way.

People don't like to think of God's anger. All the seeker-sensitive churches that emerged over recent years and so-called progressive Christianity, which is really on the march around the world, they don't like to think of an angry God. Their singular mantra is, God is love, full stop.

Well, yes, the Bible does say that God is love, but it also said He's a consuming fire. And when you portray a half-truth as the whole truth, it actually becomes a lie. You have to declare the whole counsel of God, and Paul at Ephesus didn't shun to declare all the counsel of God.

But these people who basically think God is love, full stop, well, in their mind's eye, they must think that He's going to turn a blind eye to our sins. He's not going to get angry. Well, what does the Bible have to say? Well, in 2 Kings chapter 21 and verse 6, there was a young man called Manasseh who came to the throne in Israel.

He was 12 years of age, and he led the people into all sorts of occultic wickedness, things that are abominated by God in Deuteronomy chapter 18. He got the people involved in all of these things. And it says in verse 6, so much so that he provoked God to anger.

Psalms 7 verse 11 says, God is angry with the wicked every day. And in John 3, 36, there's great news for those who believe they have eternal life. But if you don't believe, the wrath of God abideth on you.

When we're born into this world, because of original sin, we are actually born into death row, and God's wrath is hovering over us. But when we are born again and converted to Christ, that wrath is gone. The Lord Jesus Christ got quite angry at times.

When he went out of the temple and he saw that the outer court had been turned into a marketplace, and all these people were selling animal sacrifices and all the rest of it at exorbitant prices, and you only were able to use a particular currency and so on. He beat a whip and he chased the animals out. He overturned the money tables.

I think that was a demonstration of righteous anger by the Lord Jesus Christ. And in Matthew chapter 23, he pronounced at least six, maybe more, woes upon the Pharisees. And a woe as he was calling down the

curse of God upon these people.

So the Lord certainly demonstrated righteous anger. So the first ramification of sin is that God gets angry. But the second thing is this, man is guilty.

Every time a sinner commits a sin, it is, if you like, charged up to their sin account. And friends, some of us ran up very big overdrafts of sin, if I could put it that way. And why is that? Because there is none righteous.

No, not one. There are some people who sin more than others, less than others, but all have a sin account in the sight of a holy God. That's why it says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

So if a Savior is going to be able to save people from their sins, then whatever he does has got to deal with these two problems, God's anger and man's guilt. I have many books in my office back in Balna Hinch, and one is a theological dictionary of theological terms by a dear brother in the Lord who died a year or two ago, Alan Kearns. And in it, there is a particular word that is defined like this, the appeasement or turning away of God's wrath against sinners.

Well, isn't that just what we need to deal with the first problem of sin? God's anger. And the word that is defined as the appeasement or turning away of God's wrath against sinners is the word propitiation. So the work of a Savior, if it is to be effective, to be of true value, it must involve propitiation.

It must deal with God's anger. So we need God's anger to be propitiated. And then in the same dictionary, there's another word that is defined like this, it is the removal of guilt.

Well, isn't that just what we need to deal with the second problem, man's guilt? And the word that is defined as the removal of guilt is the word expiation. So the work of a Savior, if it is to be effective and of value, it must involve expiation of man's guilt and it must involve propitiation of God's wrath. That's the dual problem that a Savior needs to deal with.

And the reality is that only someone who was both truly God and truly man could effectively do that. Paul wrote, there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. A mediator has to be able to, if you like, understand both parties who have fallen out and there is nobody better placed to understand that problem between sinful humanity and a holy God than the perfect God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I said, the Word of God teaches that only one thing appeases or turns away God's wrath against sinners and is an acceptable propitiation. We were singing about it, and the blood will never lose its power because the one thing that propitiates the wrath of God is sacrificial shed blood. And we learn that right from the beginning of time in the Garden of Eden where sin made its entrance into the world.

We learn in Genesis 3 verse 21, remember Adam and Eve have sinned and they're hiding from God. They've become aware that they're naked, and so nakedness and sin are inextricably linked. I'll bury that in mind because I'm going to say something shortly.

But it says first of all, unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. That which was the evidence, if you like, of their sinfulness, their nakedness, it had to be covered up. And for that to happen, an innocent animal had to die, its blood had to be shed, and the clothing, the coat that it had was used to make a covering for them.

The Bible doesn't tell us which animal it was that God used. I sometimes wonder, was it a lamb, the most innocent of creatures? Because you remember what John the Baptist said when he saw the Lord coming to the River Jordan, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. I said about how nakedness and sin are inextricably linked.

You've maybe seen oil paintings that have been done by the masters over the centuries of Calvary, and Christ is there on a cross. And for the sake of modesty, he's wearing a loincloth, if you like, on the cross. That's not how it happened.

He would have been absolutely naked to the onlooking crowd, because as it says in 2 Corinthians 5, 21, God made him to be sin for us. And in the nakedness on the cross, he was fully identifying with sin ever since Adam brought it into the world. The blood of an innocent animal had to be shed to propitiate God's wrath.

We saw that in the first Passover in Egypt. The whole temple sacrificial system that was set up demonstrates the power of sacrificial shed blood. Going back to Egypt, God had sent a whole series of plagues because Pharaoh was so stubborn, he wasn't going to let the people go.

And eventually a plague was foreordained, the firstborn will die. But the children of Israel were told, you take a lamb without spot and without blemish, and you kill it, and you take the blood and you put it on the doorpost and the lintel of the house. And when the angel of death passes through the land of Egypt, God says, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

Those sheltering behind the shed blood were absolutely safe from the wrath of God that was being poured out. It can't just be any blood. It has to be absolutely acceptable blood.

That's why the lamb had to be without spot and without blemish. And when it comes to dealing with sin and the whole temple sacrificial system, all the blood that was shed there on the Passover ceremony, there must have been rivers of blood if I could put it that way. But it was necessary because God says, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

The shed blood was evidence that a life had been forfeited as a substitute for another. And only the blood of a perfect, flawless, sinless sacrifice would satisfy God. And the Word of God testifies to the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

Heaven testified to it on two occasions, at his baptism and at the transfiguration, the voice from heaven declared, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Not only heaven testified to it, but hell testified to it. There was a demon possessed man in a synagogue at Capernaum, and he said to the Lord Jesus, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

So heaven testified to it, hell testified to it, humanity testified to it. At his trial, Pontius Pilate declared, I find no fault in this man. And in contrast to all the rest of humanity, Jesus Christ knew no sin.

That was penned by Paul, the great philosopher and deep thinker. Jesus Christ did no sin. That was penned by Peter, the man of action.

And in him is no sin. That was penned by John, the constant companion, the beloved disciple. So Jesus Christ, a Son of God, one who was truly holy, is God's representative to man.

He's an anointed prophet, and only his blood could satisfy God's anger. So that's the remedy for God's anger. But what about man's guilt? How can that problem be resolved? As I said, people when they sin, they are accumulating a huge mountain of debt.

Every sin is charged to their account. It's like a charge sheet. You know, if you were in court, the charge sheet was read out.

Just think of the charge sheet of all the sins that you've committed and that I have committed. We'd be here for a lot of years whilst they're read out. Every violation of God's law plunges you and I and sinners deeper into the red, or perhaps I should say the scarlet, if we go by Isaiah 1 verse 18.

It says, Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet. That debt must be discharged. God will not allow it to go unpaid.

The Word of God states plainly that nothing can stop judgment falling when a sin is committed. A debt can only be removed when it has been paid in full. In Jewish culture, if someone was deeply in debt and they couldn't pay it, it was quite legal for another member of the family, if he was willing and able, it was legal for them to pay off the debt.

And such a person was known as a kinsman redeemer. We find an example of that in the book of Ruth, when you read the story of Boaz and Naomi and Ruth. A kinsman, one of the same family, a redeemer, one who would pay off a debt.

And Jesus Christ, as son of man in his humanity, is man's representative to God. He's an anointed priest, and he identified with the rest of humanity. He was our kinsman, and he was willing not just to be our kinsman, but to be our kinsman redeemer.

He was willing to expiate our sins, do away with the guilt, remove the guilt. On Calvary's cross, Jesus Christ sacrificed himself to save his people from their sins. Now, if Jesus Christ is truly a savior who can save people from their sins, we must ask and answer one important question.

Was his death propitiation for God, and was it expiation for man? In other words, was it all sufficient? To answer that, I want us to consider what was known as the Day of Atonement. We read about it in Leviticus chapter 16. I'm going to read some selected verses from Leviticus chapter 16, if you want to turn to it.

Some people think the Old Testament really isn't of any great relevance. There's a preacher in America called Andy Stanley, and I don't know why he bothered, I don't know if he has the Old Testament in his Bible, but that's another thing. But anyhow, Leviticus chapter 16 verse 5, the Day of Atonement, this is when God was going to deal annually with the sins of the nation of Israel.

And there's instructions being given as to how Aaron the high priest, what he has to do. And we read in verse 5, And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin offering. Verse 7, And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to make an atonement with him and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

Verse 15, Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil. And at the end of the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. Verse 21, And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions and all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.

And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. Now in verses 9 and verses 15 we read of the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and that goat died physically and his blood was sprinkled in the presence of God. It was taken into the holy of holies, sprinkled upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.

The blood was evidence that a life had been forfeited. On Calvary's cross in full view of the crowd during the three hours when the sun was still shining, Christ shed his precious blood. That's what the wine at the communion table speaks symbolically of.

And in Romans chapter 3 verses 24 and 25, Paul wrote of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. Christ's blood alone was acceptable as of a lamb without spot and without blemish. The work of propitiation which was pictured by the slain goat on the day of atonement was fully accomplished by Christ on the cross and it was visible to all looking on.

And then in verses 21 and 22 of Leviticus 16 we read of the fate of the scapegoat, how the priest had come out from the holy of holies and he laid his hands on the head and it wouldn't have just laid, he was pressing down heavily upon it and that was symbolizing the transfer of the guilt for sins committed by the nation of Israel onto the head of that innocent substitute. And then it was taken out into the wilderness onto a land not inhabited. And that pictures how that innocent substitute was separated, isolated and totally forsaken.

It's interesting that the path that would have been taken for the scapegoat would have taken him over the Kidron Brook and that is the path that the Lord took from the upper room to go to Gethsemane. He would have passed over the Kidron Brook. I've talked about the hours of daylight on the cross and then there was a supernatural darkness enveloped the whole world and in those hours of darkness on the cross God made him, that is Christ, to be sin for us.

The guilt for sins committed by the ungodly was transferred onto Christ, the innocent substitute. In the hours of darkness Christ was separated, he was isolated and he was totally forsaken. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And for you and for me Christ went into the wilderness onto a land not inhabited.

What does that mean? It means he endured your hell and my hell. He was in utter darkness. He was outside the city of Jerusalem in utter darkness.

He thirsted. He was beaten with many stripes and friends we learn from the parable or the story of the rich man and Lazarus of how the man who was suffering torments thirsted and he was being beaten. The Lord says in other parts of the scriptures about those who will be beaten with few stripes or many stripes, but stripes are symbolic of the punishment of those who go to hell.

And who was doing all this on Christ? Oh, you hear so many things about who was responsible for the agonies they went through. It was his heavenly Father. It says Isaiah 53, 6, the Lord led on him the iniquity

of us all.

That punishment, that hellish punishment was being inflicted upon the sinless Christ by his heavenly Father. Not long after I was converted, I met a man. He's in glory now.

He preached around many Baptist churches. He was called Leslie Armstrong. And as well as preaching, he liked to write Bible-based poetry.

And he wrote a poem called The Altogether Lovely One, which is how Christ is referred to. And here are two lines from that poem. In his sacrifice for us, he became all that God must judge, so that in him we become all that God cannot judge.

Christ died the just for the unjust. He soaked up all the judgment of God that should rightly have fallen upon us. Peter speaks of how Christ bear our sins in his own body on the tree.

And Isaiah wrote, surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Christ totally removed the guilt of our sins. Hebrews 1 verse 3 says, when he had by himself purged our sins.

The work of expiation pictured by the scapegoat on the day of atonement and symbolized by the bread at the communion table, was fully accomplished by Christ on the cross. But it was all unseen. It was in that supernatural darkness.

In the daylight, the shedding of Christ's blood was propitiation to turn away God's righteous anger. And in the darkness, Christ's substitutionary suffering, fully expiated, removed the sinner's guilt. Well, I could ask now, was Christ's sacrifice sufficient? Did it fully solve the dual sin problem? Because there's so many groups claiming to be Christian, but what do they believe about Christ and Calvary? Well, I did speak about Mormonism a couple of years ago, but let me remind you what they say.

The heading is Christ's atonement and resurrection brings resurrection to all. On the third day after his crucifixion, Christ took up his body again and became the first person to be resurrected. Christ thus overcame physical death.

Because of his atonement, all persons born on this earth will be resurrected. This condition is called immortality. All men who have ever lived will be resurrected.

So that's what the Mormons think was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ. They go on to say this then about the problem of sins. Christ's atonement makes it possible for us to overcome spiritual death.

We accept Christ's atonement by repenting of our sins, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will be by the laying on of hands by Mormon elders, and obeying all of the commandments. In this way, we are cleansed from sin and we become worthy to return and live forever with our heavenly Father. In other words, Christ did his bit.

He's guaranteed immortality for you. But if you want the record of your sins wiped out, blah, blah, blah, this is what you have to do. Christian Science, founded by a lady called Mary Baker Eddy.

I always think of Buns when I mention her name. I don't know whether you're old enough to remember there was Mary Baker Buns or something like that. But anyhow, that's another story.

But she wrote in her book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his father's business. The blood had no power as far as Mary Baker Eddy was concerned. Of course, they don't believe that Jesus died.

They believe that he kind of swooned and was led in a tomb, but he wasn't dead. I remember years ago in Belfast, going to hear a man speaking at a meeting organized by Christian Science. He'd been a fighter pilot, an American fighter pilot in the Korean War.

And he spoke for, I don't know, about two hours. He lost me well along the way, but he was quoting from her book and also from the Bible. So on the way out, I said, could I ask you a question or two? He said, yeah, sure.

I said, do you believe everything that Mary Baker Eddy wrote? Oh, he says, yes. I said, so you don't believe that Jesus died? He said, no, that's right. I said, well, tell me this, how do you handle Revelation chapter one, verse 18? So he says, well, you better run that past me.

I said, well, the Lord Jesus Christ said this, I am he that liveth and was dead. Behold, I am alive forevermore. And he looked at me and you know what he said? He said, did Jesus say that? I said, he did.

And you need to go away and think about that. So that was Christian Science. Around the time I was converted, which was a few years ago, there was a man called Robert Schuller was very popular.

He's dead now, but he used to broadcast on satellite TV, *The Hour of Power*. I think his son has a similar program with a similar title, but Robert Schuller had a big influence on Rick Warren, the purpose-driven man, although Rick Warren doesn't really acknowledge that fact, but that's the truth. But in a book that Robert Schuller wrote, he said this, self-love is a crowning sense of self-worth.

It is an enabling emotion of self-respect and abiding faith in yourself. It is sincere belief in yourself. It comes through self-discovery, self-discipline, self-forgiveness and self- acceptance.

It produces self-reliance, self-confidence and inner security, calm as the night. Paul, writing in 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 2, he spoke of perilous times that would come. He says, men will be lovers of themselves.

That is exactly what Robert Schuller was dealing with. He really believed that if you tried to make somebody feel they were a sinful person, they would never get saved. He went to the extent where when they sang *Amazing Grace* in the Crystal Cathedral that he founded, the words should go *Amazing Grace*, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, but they changed to *Amazing Grace*, how sweet the sound that saved a soul like me.

He didn't want to offend people by calling them wretches. So Robert Schuller had no idea what the cross was all about. Kenneth Copeland, I've mentioned him already, and he's in a similar place.

Years ago he wrote a letter and in it he said, when the blood was shed, it did not atone for sin. He doesn't believe that when Christ cried finished on the cross that the work of redemption was finished. He teaches that Christ had to go into hell for three days and three nights and be tortured by Satan.

And then Christ was supposedly born again and came forth victorious. Well, that's blasphemy because the only people who need to be born again are those who are born dead in trespasses and sins, sinful people like you and me. And I know that when Christ cried finished, the work of redemption was finished.

And how do I know that? Because the veil of the temple, this big thick veil that prevented sinful man from entering into the holy of holies, it was ramped from the top to the bottom. It was opened up a new and living way so that believers in the finished work of Christ could come to the throne of grace and seek help when they needed it. Copeland says that in another discussion he had with God, he was told that it was a born again man who defeated Satan.

And then God added, Kenneth, you're a born again man. And Kenneth says, you don't mean that? Yes, you could have done what Christ did. I would not like to be Kenneth Copeland on the day of judgment because the Bible says we will give an account of every idle word.

Copeland also taught that on the cross, Christ assumed a demonic satanic nature. That's his understanding of God made him to be sin. Christ's nature didn't turn into that of a sinner because the sacrifice for sin had to be without spot and without blemish.

When God made him to be sin for us, he treated Christ as if he were the sinner, but he wasn't of course, but he was the substitute dying for sinners. What about Roman Catholicism? The Council of Trent, which some people say, oh, it doesn't apply now. Well, where did they get that from? Because Vatican Council II in the 1960s reaffirmed everything that was stated in the Council of Trent.

And speaking of the sacrifice of the mass, it says the sacrifice of the mass is propitiatory both for the living and the dead. In this divine sacrifice, which is celebrated in the mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated, that means killed, in an unbloody manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross. The Holy Synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.

First of all, the work of Christ was finished on Calvary. It cannot and does not need to be perpetuated. When you and I come to the Lord's table, we come to a table.

We do not come to an altar because an altar is a place of sacrifice. And that's why there are altars in Roman Catholic chapels. And it's a non-bloody sacrifice.

They admit that themselves. And without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins. So it's false to claim that it propitiates.

What about expiation? Vatican II, Volume 1, under a heading of sin must be expiated, says this, the truth has been divinely revealed that sins are followed by punishments. God's holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated.

This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life. Otherwise, the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments. And that, of course, is referring to purgatory.

On the forgiveness of sins, paragraph 1473 of the Catholic Catechism says this, the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of communion with God entails the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. What they believe is that the death of Christ has dealt with the eternal consequences of your sin. But even though they're forgiven as to guilt, you're still going to get zapped by

God with some temporal punishment that you have to try and pay off in this life.

And it's highly unlikely you'll do enough. So therefore you have to go into purgatory and you have to pay that off. What does that actually mean? Well, say you're a school class and reverently speaking, I am God, and you only get into my class because you were baptized as a young person, etc.

Now you've all been behaving very well except for one. This chap Keith in the front row. He has been giving me a really hard time.

So eventually I say, Keith, will you go outside and when you get out there, will you write out a hundred times, I must behave in class. And so he goes to the back door and he's just about to go out and he turns around and he says, teacher, I'm really, really sorry. Will you forgive me? And I say, of course I'll forgive you.

But you still have to go outside and write out 100 times, I must behave in class. And only when that punishment is discharged, will you then get back into my presence. And that is what forgiveness is like for our dear Roman Catholic neighbors.

They are never assured of full forgiveness of sins. And if they claim they have been fully forgiven, I know when I die, I'm going straight to heaven. If they tell it to a priest, he has to be honest and say to them, I've got bad news for you.

You're guilty of the mortal sin of presumption. And that means that when you die, you'll go straight to hell. Rome will never allow its people to believe they're fully forgiven.

You see, that's what it means to be justified. That was what the Reformation was all about. The matter of justification.

In Deuteronomy 25, verse 1, we read of two men who go to court. They present their case and the judges consider it. And it says they will justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.

And when we are born again, God justifies us. And we are like that man in court. In that court case, the court was saying, the law has no claim against you.

There's no penalty for you to pay. But to the man who was condemned, they were saying, the law has a claim against you. There's a penalty for you to pay.

But when you and I are justified by God, he says to us, my law has no claim against you. There is no penalty for you to pay. He has not bypassed his justice.

He's not turned a blind eye to the sins that we have committed. But he is acknowledging that Christ suffered the just for the unjust. He bore our punishment in his own body upon the tree.

And so God can be just. In other words, he can honor what his justice demands. And at the same time, he can justify us from all that we should have deserved.

These teachings that I've given to you show just the false understanding of Christ and Calvary by so many. Leviticus 16 speaks of two goats for a sin offering. They were one offering.

The Seventh-day Adventists, they say this, the scapegoat ritual on the day of atonement pointed beyond Calvary. The full accountability for sin will be rolled back upon Satan, its originator and instigator. Satan and his followers and all the effects of sin will be banished from the universe by destruction.

So they think the scapegoat pictured Satan. That's a false, false gospel that can save nobody. The truth is that both of the goats constituted one sin offering pointing to the work of Calvary.

That's why the writer of the Hebrew said, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. And when that says sat down, it indicates the work was finished.

For by one offering, he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. At the very heart of the true gospel is what's known as penal substitution, a substitute suffering the penalty for sin. But in recent decades, more and more so-called Christians have been denying that truth.

And in fact, they have been reacting very forcefully to that truth. Steve Chalk, who was well known on TV some years ago, he's still going around spreading his poison. He wrote a book called The Lost Message of Jesus.

And he described the idea of the father punishing the son as a substitute for sinners as cosmic child abuse. He's got an American friend called Brian McLaren, who wrote a book called The Secret Message of Jesus. And he described it as divine child abuse.

Chalk believed that this was showing God the father wreaking vengeance on his son. It wasn't vengeance. It was justice being satisfied.

Sin deserves punishment. And Christ willingly offered himself as the substitute. Many years ago, a gay leader in the Anglican church, a man called Geoffrey John, he said, even at the age of 10, I thought this explanation was pretty repulsive as well as nonsensical.

It made God sound like a psychopath. If any human behaved like this, we would say they were a monster. The cross is not about Jesus reconciling an angry God.

Well, I don't know what Bible, again, that these people read. But in 2 Corinthians 5, in verse 19, it says to it that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The cross was all about reconciliation between God and sinful humanity.

A man called William Paul Young wrote a book called The Shack. It was very popular amongst young people some years ago. And in an interview he gave, I came across this, it says, in the interview, Young specifically rejects penal substitutionary atonement.

At the end of the interview, he recommends a book that includes some of the most prominent gospel-rejecting scholars of our day. And there's others I could quote. There was a man, Giles Fraser, who worked in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

And then there was a village set up outside. And he was really in sympathy with all these social activists and so on that he resigned. And he became a darling of the BBC because he denies penal substitution.

And he's all for same-sex so-called marriage, et cetera. So that's why he does well with the BBC. Friends, the wrath of God rests on unregenerate sinners.

And only faith alone in Christ alone can remove it. Spurgeon wrote about the unsaved like this. He says, they have an angry God above them.

They have a guilty conscience within them. They have a yawning hell below them. And they have a savior set before them.

So why do we need a savior to save us from our sins? He needs to save us from God's anger and from our guilt. And those who know Christ as their savior, and I'm sure there are many here tonight, can say what it says in the Bible. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

There's no anger resting upon us. And also as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. There's no guilt still charged up to our account.

When Christ said finished, there's many instances in which the word that he used was used as well. And one of them was when somebody was put in jail in those days, on the door was nailed the charge sheet of what they were guilty of. And when they'd served their sentence and came out, tetelestial was written across that charge sheet.

And it meant paid in full. The person in prison had served his time. And when Christ cried out, it is finished.

He had paid for all of our sins. Psalm 103 verse 10 says, he hath not dealt with us after our sins. It doesn't say he hath not dealt with our sins.

He has dealt with them by punishing Christ. So the question tonight is, is Christ your savior? I can look back to August of 1984, and that's when the Lord graciously saved me. And I'm sure there's many here tonight can point back to a time when he saved them.

Isaiah 53 is a wonderful chapter. And I was going to read some verses for the sake of time a lot, but it points prophetically to Calvary. An Ethiopian eunuch was making his way home from Jerusalem in Acts chapter eight, and he was reading a scroll that he had bought in Jerusalem.

And it wasn't making a lot of sense to him. And Philip came alongside and the Ethiopian eunuch said, is this man writing about himself or somebody else? And we read in verse 35, then Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him, Jesus. And Isaiah 53 is laced through with penal substitution.

Two downcast disciples were making their way home to a mess after Christ had been crucified. And they hadn't realized that he'd risen from the dead. And a stranger, as they thought, came alongside and they were bemoaning that all their hopes had failed and all the rest.

And this stranger said, oh, slow of heart to believe. And in verse 27, it says, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expanded onto them and all the scriptures, the things concerning himself. One final thought.

Is there any evidence that Christ's sacrifice of himself for sinners on the cross accomplished its purpose? Well, the answer is yes. For Paul wrote in Romans 4 verse 25, speaking of Jesus, who was delivered. In other words, he was delivered up to the cross for our offenses and was raised again.

In other words, he was resurrected for our justification. And remember justification is to be perfectly pardoned. The resurrection didn't obtain our justification, but it validated the basis for it.

It affirmed that the substitutionary sacrifice for sin had been accepted by God, the father. And so he could quite justly justify those trusting in the finished work of Christ alone. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that he might be just.

In other words, that God would be able to honor the demands of his broken law by punishing Christ, and he would be the justifier, the partner of him who believeth in Jesus Christ alone. There's a lovely hymn. One of the verses goes like this.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah.

What a savior. Christ uncarved.

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