

Turn to Leviticus 16:20

Review

1. Last time we saw the power of being linked to the death of Christ.

- A. How the truth of his shed blood solved the threefold problem brought on by sin.
 - 1). Sin created a problem with God towards man.
 - a). Being holy he had to separate himself from sinful man
 - b). The shed blood of Christ satisfied his justice and allowed him to draw near
 - 2). Sin creates a problem with man towards God.
 - a). Our conscience uses our sin to condemn us and make us feel guilty.
 - b). Therefore, as believers even though we can draw near to God many times we don't.
 - 1a). Our guilt keeps us away.
 - c). The truth of the shed blood of Christ when applied cleanses our conscience, allowing us to go into God's presence.
 - 3). Sin creates a problem with the devil. He is called the "accuser of the brethren."
 - a). He uses our sin to convince us that we can't draw near to God.
 - b). Even suggesting we've out sinned God's patience and he no longer loves us.
 - c). The shed blood of Christ equips us with the truth we need to silence his accusations.
- B. We saw that God is satisfied when he looks at the blood of Christ shed for us.
 - 1). Therefore, we must start seeing the blood in the same way that he does.
 - 2). If we can do that, we will be able to answer the condemnation of our conscience and silence the accusations of the devil.
 - a). It is this truth, when understood and applied that will set us free.

Transition: This week we move on to see what happened to our sin.

- A. Last week - We saw when God looks at the shed blood of Christ, his justice is satisfied.
 - 1). But what does he do with that sin that he no longer counts against us.
- B. These are important truths that strengthen us as believers. That tell us who we are in Christ
 - 1). The devil is clever – the more truths we can bring to the battle – the stronger we'll be
- C. So, Last week we saw, we are clean in Christ because of his blood.
 - 1). This week we will see what God does with our sin, because of that blood.
 - 2). To do this we must return to the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

I. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

1. To understand what happened on that day, we need to know a bit of background.

- A. God had designated that one day of the year was to be set aside to deal with the national sins of Israel.
 - 1). This was to take care of any sin that was left over.
 - Those transgressions that no offering had been made for.
 - a). One writer likened this to a kind of "Spiritual spring cleaning."

Question: Why was this necessary?

- A. Because any sin not dealt with - would cause a separation between God and His people.
 - 1). So God in his grace set aside this one day
 - Where the necessary sacrifices would be made, to keep that from happening.
 - 2). This allowed a holy God and his sinful people to remain in fellowship.

Transition: Many things happened on that day, I want to focus on the main cast of characters.

The High Priest and two goats.

2. On that day the High Priest would choose two goats and cast lots over them.

- A. The unlucky goat would be selected to be sacrificed for the sins of the people.
The more fortunate goat, (the scapegoat) would be driven into the wilderness, never to be seen again.
 - B. The **first goat** would be sacrificed, the High Priest would take its blood into the Most Holy Place.
 - 1). That place in the temple, where God's presence symbolically dwelt.
 - 2). He would sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat
 - a). That slab of pure gold that sat on top of the ark of the covenant.
 - 3). The sprinkled blood was offered as a plea for forgiveness for the sins of the nation.
- Transition:** Once that ritual was completed the priest would come out and deal with the second goat.
- C. The **second goat** was the scapegoat.
 - 1). As all the people watched, the High Priest would lay his hands on that goats head and confess the sins of the people of Israel.
 - a). This symbolically transferred the sins of the nation of Israel onto the goat.
 - 2). They would then lead the goat into the wilderness to be released, never to be seen again.

TURN: Le 16:20–22 (ESV) “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. ⁽²¹⁾ And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. ⁽²²⁾ The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

Thought: We don't want to miss the rich symbolism that these two goats were portraying.

- A. The first goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people.
 - 1). This is the idea of substitution - an innocent victim taking the place of an offending sinner to bear the penalty their sins deserve.
- B. The second goat shows what happens to those sins that are transferred to that substitute.
 - 1). They are carried away from God and the people – never to be seen again

Question: How does that link back to what we saw last week – the shed blood of Christ?

- A. The first goat symbolizes Christ work on the cross.
 - 1). That innocent victim shedding his blood for the sins of another.
- B. The second goat represents how God looks at those sins that Christ paid for.
 - 1). The sin he paid for is completely removed from the presence of God and the saved sinner.
 - 2). In other words, there is a complete cleansing. Those sins are gone!

3. I love the assurance God provides in the Bible.

- A. We see from the day of atonement that our sins are paid for and removed.
 - 1). We know that is a picture of the work of Christ on our behalf.
 - 2). But, God doesn't stop there, again and again in the Scriptures he provides pictures and analogies to drive those points home.
 - 3). He wants us to know with certainty those sins have been removed to such an extent they will never come back to haunt us.

Transition: I could use many scriptures, but for time's sake, I'll choose just a few to prove my point.

- A. The first one is found in Psalm 103:12 (Turn there)
 - 1). It is a wonderful Psalm where we find David rousing himself to worship God.
 - 2). One of the truths he reminds himself of, is how God handles sin.

II. OUR SINS ARE REMOVED AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST

Ps 103:12 (ESV) as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

1. Have you ever asked yourself why it says “as far as the East is from the West?”

- A. Why not “As far as the North is from South?”
 - 1). Because the East is an infinite distance from the West.
 - a). You can travel East forever, you will just keep circling the globe.
 - 2). But, you can only go North for so long, eventually get to top of globe, then you’re heading South
- B. The Spirit was very careful in what words he chose to use.
 - 1). He wanted to show how far our sins are removed

Therefore he chose words that would mean as far as possible. The distance is infinite.

Point: In other words, the believer will never meet up with their sins again.

- A. Listen to the great words of Charles Spurgeon in referring to this verse.

O glorious verse, no word even upon the inspired page can excel it! Sin is removed from us by a miracle of love! What a load to move, and yet is it removed so far that the distance is incalculable. Fly as far as the wing of imagination can bear you, and if you journey through space eastward, you are further from the west at every beat of your wing. *If sin be removed so far, then we may be sure that the scent, the trace, the very memory of it must be entirely gone.*

Come, my soul, awaken thyself thoroughly and glorify the Lord for this richest of blessings. Hallelujah. The Lord alone could remove sin at all, *and he has done it in a godlike fashion, making a final sweep of all our transgressions.*

- 1). Amen! He has done it in a godlike fashion! Oh what rest this brings.
- B. Now we see why the verses in Hebrews make so much sense.

Heb 4:16 (ESV) *Let us then with confidence draw near* to the throne of grace...

Heb 10:19 (ESV) *...we have confidence* to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,

 - 1). I can run to God confidently, boldly, because I know my sin isn’t waiting for me there.
 - a). It is gone! Completely removed from God’s presence.
 - b). We run to a throne of grace, based on Christ’s merit, every sin cleansed by his shed blood,
 - 2). So we are encouraged to run to him. Let nothing hold you back.

Transition: So, God has cast our sins away. He is not holding them against us.

- A. But, because we are so slow to believe this, let’s bring another sword to swing at that sin of doubt.

Turn to Isaiah 43:25

III. OUR SINS ARE BLOTTED OUT AND REMEMBERED NO MORE

Is 43:25 (ESV) “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Intro: In this verse, God comforts us with two promises that assure us of the complete removal of our sins.

- A. He blots out our transgression.
- B. He will not remember our sins.

He Blots Out Our Transgressions

Is 43:25 (ESV) “I, I am he who *blots out your transgressions...*

1. Original word means to completely remove that transgression from our record

- A. Not like erasing something written in pencil - if you look carefully, can still make out what was written.
 - 1). This is like highlighting a sentence on your computer and hitting the delete key.
 - 2). You can stare at that monitor as long as you like, but those words are gone.

There is no trace of them *ever* being there.

Point: When God looks at your legal records in heaven, he sees nothing but blank pages.

- A. He doesn't see "Forgiven" stamped over a list of sins, there are no sins listed to see.
- 1). Legally, it is as if you had never sinned.

Transition: God adds the next promise in this verse to assure you of your safety when you stand before him.

- A. God not only promises to blot out your sin, but he also says he won't remember them. That is important.

I will not remember your sins

Is 43:25 (ESV) "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, *and I will not remember your sins.*"

1. Before we dig into the comfort of this promise, notice what God didn't say

- A. He didn't say that he would "forget" our sins.
- 1). God's not like us, we forget things all the time. - car keys, wallet, names of people.
- B. God doesn't share our mental weaknesses - *An all-knowing God doesn't forget anything.*
- 1). I find great comfort in that. I don't want him forgetting he chose me and called me to himself

Question: If he can't forget anything, then what does this mean?

- A. It means he *chooses not to remember* the believers sin.
- 1). This is a promise to us that he will never bring those sins into his mind to use against us.

2. Let's put these two promises together to wring out every bit of comfort we can

- A. This tells me that God doesn't have a list he is constantly adding to.
- 1). A growing record against me that is causing him to grow more and more disgusted.
 - 2). Listen! There is no list! He blotted it out. He is not writing any more.
 - a). He put that pen down when Christ paid for it all.
 - 3). There is a growing list for the unbeliever.

Ro 2:5 (ESV) But because of your hard and impenitent heart *you are storing up wrath for yourself* on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

- 4). But for the believer that list is gone. God highlighted everything against us and hit delete

Question: But why is the second promise in Isaiah 43:25 so important?

- A. This gives us great assurance when we think of that day of judgment in Revelation 20.
- 1). That day when God opens the books and judges people according to the sins recorded there.
 - a). Every sin for those who have rejected Christ is recorded and will be read.
- B. But what about the believer? God, the judge is still one who cannot forget anything.
- 1). What is going to stop him from saying, "I know your books are clean, but I still know what you did. You don't think you're going to get away with that do you?"
 - 2). He promises us in this verse he will never do that!
 - a). The sins are gone from the books and he promises he will never bring them up against you
 - b). He will never hit control-z and bring them back

Transition: Notice why God says he will do this.

For My Own Sake

Is 43:25 (ESV) "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions *for my own sake...*"

Intro: This kind of forgiveness does three great things.

1. It glorifies God

- A. When we think of who we were, sinners and rebels.
When we think of who he is, holy and righteous

- 1). It amazes us that a God like him could be so kind to people like us.
 - B. All we can do is praise him now and for all of eternity for this kind of forgiveness.
- 2. This kind of forgiveness honors his son.**
- A. It shows how much the Father values the sacrifice of his son.
 - 1). Through these actions God says to his son, “Your sacrifice was so perfect...”
“That I’m going to completely blot out of the records that sin you died for”
 - 2). Then adds, “I am going to honor the sufficiency of that sacrifice
by never even bringing those sins to mind again.
 - B. One writer said: *This is the Father’s “Amen” to the son’s cry “It is finished.”*

3. This kind of forgiveness puts the enemy in his place.

Listen to these words of Raymond Ortlund Jr: God locates his very identity in blotting out our sins and remembering them no more. Satan, the accuser, comes before God and says, “Look at that Christian down there. Why do you still love him? Don’t you remember what he did to you last week, and again on Tuesday, and then again yesterday?” And God says, if you’ll allow me to put it this way, “No, I don’t remember. - Gabriel, where does that believer stand with us? Check the database.” Gabriel logs on, but the only information that comes up on the screen is the righteousness of Christ freely credited to that sinner, *because that’s how God honors himself as God. “I blot out your transgressions, I splice your bad plays out of my game film, for my own sake.”* So God says back to Satan, “I’m not saying your facts are wrong, but you’re not telling the whole story about that Christian. What matters most to me, for my own sake, is not that person’s record but Christ’s record for him.” That is grace. That is God.

- A. Or as Spurgeon would say. “That is Godlike forgiveness.”

Transition: Let’s look at one more scripture just to drive home this thought of God casting our sins away.

IV. YOU WILL CAST ALL OUR SINS INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA

Mic 7:19 (ESV) ... You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

1. God is eager to cast all of our sins as far away as possible.

- A. This is not something he does reluctantly, it is something he does with great joy. Why?
 - 1). His wrath was exhausted against us through the death of his son. He has no anger left.
 - 2). There is no bitterness that makes him desire to cling to our sin.
- B. So, he joyfully honors his son’s sacrifice and assures his children our sin has been cast away.
 - 1). Where? As far as East is from West. It couldn’t be any further.
 - 2). Now here, he adds another bit of comfort – if you didn’t care for the East West analogy
 - a). What about casting our records into the deepest part of the sea
 - 3). Not shallow waters where those records might be found again
He cast them into the depths where they could never be found or retrieved

Corrie ten Boom: "God has taken our sin. He has thrown it into the sea of forgetfulness, and he has posted a sign that says, 'No fishing allowed.' "

- A. God has forgotten those sins, he’s not going to go fishing for them, but sometimes we do.
 - 1). We tend to drag up those failings from that past and allow them to drag us down
- B. Instead of living in the comfort of these great truths God has worked so hard to assure us of
We tend to live under a sense of guilt.
 - 1). The solution to that is preaching to ourselves what God has said – AND believing it
 - 2). It is illogical to beat ourselves up over what God has promised he has forgotten

Point: Brothers and sisters, you must stop doubting the clear promises of God.

- A. You must start honoring the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice just like the Father does.

Transition: In the last two studies we’ve talked a lot about how God looks at our sin.

- A. That can bring up some questions we need to deal with.

- 1). Such as: If every sin is paid for, if they are all blotted out, what do I do with them?
 - a). Do I just act like nothing has happened when I sin?
 - b). Do I treat them as no big deal because my sin, past, present and future is already forgiven?

V. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY SIN?

1. When I sin, I must deal with it. I must confess it.

1 Jn 1:9 (ESV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A. Confession means to “agree with God.”

- 1). So I own up to my sin, humbly agreeing with God that what I’ve done is wrong
“I agree with you God that was sin, and I ask you to forgive me.”

Question: Why would God want me to do this? If the books are clear, if the penalty is paid, why bother?

A. One reason: because God is a loving Father and wants us to grow

- 1). He wants us to recognize sin is wrong. That it is always the wrong choice.
- 2). He wants us to humble ourselves through confession so we won’t sin so easily the next time.

B. When my son Taylor was growing up, if he did something wrong

I had him sit in his room and think about it.

- 1). Eventually he would come out, admit he was wrong and say he was sorry.
- 2). I didn’t make him do that because I was angry or thinking about kicking him out of the family
 - a). I wanted him to admit what he did was wrong so he would think before doing it again
 - 1a). It was all a part of him growing up

Transition: But don’t stop there – don’t stay down - defeated

A. Don’t go into a month-long pity party to prove to God that your sincerely sorry

2. Stand back up – apply the truth of what Christ has done

A. The exchanged life – He has taken your sin – and gained access to God for you

“Father I have sinned. I admit that. I take responsibility. But thank you that you accept me on the basis of Christ’s perfection and not on the basis of my faulty performance. I thank you that Jesus has paid for my sins and completely exhausted your wrath against me, therefore that sin can’t even be found in your books right now. I thank you, that you have promised that it will never be remembered again. I thank you that my record in heaven is as white as snow and in Christ that will never change.”

B. This begins to lift you back up again – because you’re not focusing on you but on Christ

- 1). The devil wants you to set your eyes on your sin – on your failure
 - a). Admit the sin – confess it - then look to Christ and what he has done

C. As you do this it has an interesting effect

Milton Vincent - Gospel Primer: “The deeper I go into the gospel, the more I comprehend and confess aloud the depth of my sinfulness. A gruesome death like the one that Christ endured for me would only be required for one who is exceedingly sinful and unable to appease a holy God. Consequently, whenever I consider the necessity and manner of His death, along with the love and selflessness behind it, I am laid bare and utterly exposed for the sinner I am.

Such an awareness of my sinfulness does not drag me down, but actually serves to lift me up by magnifying my appreciation of God’s forgiving grace in my life. And the more I appreciate the magnitude of God’s forgiveness of my sins, the more I love Him and delight to show Him love through heart-felt expressions of worship.”

- 1). Rather than staying down in self-pity – self-condemnation – I stand back up
- 2). Condemnation is turned into worship – God’s mercy is glorified – my heart is captured even more

Point: This keeps that failure from destroying us – making us feel like we can’t go to God

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- A. And that is how God is able to use even sin for our good in the end
 - 3. So - We don't sin easily – we are to fight sin – contend with it - put it to death**
 - A. But when we lose that battle for personal holiness – we rest in the finished work of Christ
 - 1). We confess it humbly – honestly – this stings
 - 2). But we don't stay there – we get our eyes back on the work of Christ – to rest in that!
 - B. This turns sorrow into worship – we rise to our feet again and get back in the battle
- Point:** This is simply acting like who you are in Christ
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CONCLUSION

- 1. We added some more weapons to our arsenal of who we are**
- A. Last week we saw we are cleansed by the blood of Christ
 - 1). This week we see the effectiveness of that – those sins are really gone
 - a). Blotted out – removed as far as east is from the west = infinite distance
Cast into the deepest sea
 - b). And God says – I'll never find them – I promise I won't go looking for them again
My guarantee to you is I won't ever bring them to mind to use against you
- 2. Then we saw what we do with our sins**
- A. Confess them – agree with God – “Lord this was wrong. I'm sorry. Forgive me.”
- B. Then stand back up – applying the truths you are learning in this series