

Atonement

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[0 : 00] Can we turn together now for a short time as the Lord will enable us to consider words which we find in Romans chapter 5. Romans 5 and we'll read at verse 10.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of the Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Now, I promise that in the three Sabbaths leading up to our communion season, I would preach in the mornings on the person and on the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what we've endeavored to do, because last Sabbath we preached on the theme of redemption. On the previous Sabbath, we tried to explain something of the glorious person of Christ, as it is contained in that statement, Great is the mystery of godliness.

[1 : 45] And this morning, it's my intention, by God's help, to introduce to you something of the theme of reconciliation in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps one of the ways, one of the most effective ways of coming to the atonement, coming to the work of our Lord, is to examine the different themes that are involved in the work of atonement.

And one such theme is the theme of reconciliation. Now, the theme of reconciliation is all about status and standing.

It's about the status that men and women have in the presence of a holy God. And this status which men have by nature is brought before us in the beginning of verse 10 here, where it says, If, then, we were enemies.

And I want us to consider that statement in the, as our first poem today, The status of men for whom Christ died, we were enemies.

[3 : 15] And then secondly, I want us to look at the status to which the death of Christ brings men.

If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of a son. And then thirdly, we're going to look at the status which will yet be ours.

Because there's a, as the theologians call it, there's a necchatological inference in the verse here.

If we have been reconciled by the death of a son, much more, we shall be saved by his life.

And we're going to look at this prospect that the people of God have, who are now reconciled. The prospect of salvation by the exalted life of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 33] Firstly, we're going to look at the experience which fills and follows this new status. And that's contained for us in verse 11, where we see, Not only so, but we also join in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then finally, the summing up of the whole of this new status, By whom we have received the atonement. First of all, then we're going to look at the status which belongs to men and women, Without God, and without hope in the world, without Christ, without peace, without forgiveness.

We're going to look at their status. If, when, we, were enemies. Now, there are two ways in which we can look at this theme of enmity, In the experience of men and women in a state of nature.

We can look at it actively, and we can look at it passively. And I think you'll find that both ways you look at this state of enmity, You'll find that there's a reference in the world of God to enmity in both places.

There is an active enmity in the heart of the Godless man. There's an active enmity in the heart of men and women without God. But I don't think that that's the enmity that's referred to in our text here.

[6 : 19] Because you see, there is, in the experience of men in a state of nature, A true-fold enmity. Not only is men an enmity of God, That God's wrath and curse lies on men, So that God is, if we can put it this way, God is, is, is, is angry with the sinner.

God is an enmity with the sinner, if you wish to put it like that. Now, let me surround that statement with some caveats. Because, you see, we must always be careful as to how we speak about God's wrath, God's enmity.

There is no sin in the, in the, in the relationship that God holds to those who are under His wrath and curse.

When you think of the word enmity, As referred to yourself, or referred to anyone who's an enemy, You're always having to deal with the result of sin being in that enmity.

But you know, my friend, God is opposed to sin with a holy hatred, with a holy displeasure.

[7 : 42] And that's what we have here, as far as the status of those that in Christ's life is concerned. They were enemies.

But God stood in a relationship of holy hatred to their sin. God stood in a position of holy wrath towards the sin of man.

In other words, what the Bible is saying to us here is this, That all men, kind by the fall, are under the wrath and the curse of God.

That's what the Bible is telling us in this statement that we have here, When we're their enemies. We're under the wrath and the curse of God.

But you're saying to me this morning, I don't realize that, I don't feel anything of that in my own life. You don't. You don't. My friend knows the pity because it just shows me that you're dead and trespasses and in sin.

[8 : 51] If you don't know anything of the relationship in which you stand before a holy God, Who cannot be placated by anything that you do for your sinfulness.

A holy God who stands in holy opposition to the sin of man. That's the position in which we stand in a state of nature.

God is wholly undething opposed to our sin. God is undething opposed to our sin. God is undething opposed to our sin. God is undething opposed to our sin. God is undething opposed to our sin.

But you see the text doesn't end with that old status. The text goes on to describe our new status in the experience of mankind.

If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Oh, the grace of God.

[9 : 59] What lies behind the death of Christ? Was the death of Christ what gained the favor of God for men? No.

The death of Christ was prompted by the favor of God towards men. The grace of God working in the gospel. Out of sheer grace God moved into the experience of those to him who was opposed because of their sin.

And in grace he moved into their lives. And he did so in reconciling favor.

Oh, what a new status this is. The status of reconciliation. Reconciliation. What is reconciliation? What does reconciliation mean?

Well, reconciliation means that two parties who are opposed to one another, two parties who are at enmity with one another, should be brought to be at one with one another.

[11 : 17] And do you know my friends, the death of Christ on the cross is what prompts this reconciliation, this at-one-ment.

Because that's really what the atonement is. It's at one-ment. At one-ment. It brings these two parties. Between them there is a gulf which cannot be bridged by man.

It brings these two parties together. All the wondrous grace of God in the gospel. Bringing these parties who are implacably at enmity with one another.

Bringing them together. And let me ask you now, what must happen before this, these two parties can be brought to one?

Well, let's put it like this. The face of God is turned against those that sin. The face of man is turned away from God.

[12 : 28] And the face of God turned away from man in a state of nature. And what must happen is that God's face must turn toward man first.

You see friends, the gospel is a gospel in which God always takes the initiative. Always. It's never man that goes seeking for God first and foremostly.

It's always God that moves in sovereign grace to find man. And how did God move in sovereign grace to find man?

By sending the son of his love, Jesus Christ, to the cross of shame at Calvary. That's how it happens. By sending his son to die, the just in the room of the unjust, to bring us to God.

In order that God himself might be reconciled, God took the initiative. God moved in sovereign grace into the experience of man.

[13 : 44] In order that God and man might be brought to one. The wonder of God. The wonder of grace, isn't it? It's all of grace, my friends.

The gospel of Christ, it's all of grace. It's nothing that you'll be worthy of ever. It's nothing that you'll ever win God's favor for yourself.

No, no. It's all a matter of God meaning in sovereign grace and love towards man who are opposed to him and then to his sin he is opposed.

How can you do that? How can the face of God turn towards man? How can the smile of God become the experience of man? Against whom is his throne?

And against whom is his wrath and curse? How can God turn towards man? Well, he does so by the death of his son.

[14 : 56] By the death of his son. By the death of his son. You've got to go to the cross of Calvary to find the atonement.

To find the reconciliation between God and man. Where do you find it? We find it at the cross on Nehru. At the cross.

My dear friend this morning. I wish today to bring you to the cross. To that point in the history of mankind.

Where God and man were reconciled by the death of his son. What stood between God and man being reconciled?

Well, surely it was this. The barrier of sin. Sin stood between God and man. And that barrier of sin must be remained.

[16 : 00] That barrier of sin must be deathless. And it's going to be deathless in the sovereign work of God. As the redeemer of God's elect.

As the reconciling. A party between God and man. It's going to be removed in the cross. And there you see Jesus Christ coming.

As the great champion of God's people. And he goes to do battle. One of the medieval Scots poets speaks about the great work of Christ on the cross.

Something like this. Done is the battle with the dragon blood. Done is the battle. And my friends, that's the story that I've got to tell you today.

That the great champion came. And he came to do battle on behalf of God the planet. And on behalf of the people of God.

[17 : 09] He came to do a way of sin. To do a way of sin. To do a way of sin. To do a way of sin. You notice the words that are written in Daniel chapter 9.

About Messiah the Prince. Great prophetic words. That he came to do a way of sin. To do a way of sin.

And all glorious reconciliation is the reconciliation where Jesus Christ went to the cross. To do a way of sin.

What is it? What is this sin? Well, it's represented to us in the Bible in many ways. But one of the ways in which the barrier that stands between God and man as far as reconciliation is concerned.

Is described for us in the world of God like this. The handwriting of ordinances that were against us. The handwriting of ordinances that were against us.

[18 : 15] Sinner, I want to tell you something of the enmity that stands between you and God today. It's the handwriting of ordinances that are against us. Handwriting of ordinances that say concerning you, guilty, guilty, guilty.

Every one of these ordinances, every bit of the handwriting says the same thing. It says, guilty, guilty, guilty.

Guilty. What is all that art human lives with this great burden of guilty? And how can that guilt be revealed?

Let me tell you how. By the Son of God going to the cross in my room and in my stead. As my substitute in a vicarious act of atonement.

In my room and in my stead. He stands taking away that sin that stands between me and God. My friend, what's your hope of reconciliation today?

[19 : 28] What's your hope of reconciliation? While I'm hearing someone in the congregation say, I've done my best. My friend, your best is not good enough for God.

Try us away. Your best is not good enough for God. But let me tell you of Messiah the Prince. He stood as the mediator of God's elect.

And he died the just in the room of the unjust. That he might bring them to God. That's your hope today.

That's my hope. I know of no other hope. I have no other argument to plead the presence of Almighty God.

But this. That I'm reconciled to God by the death of his Son. The barrier removed. My friend, has the barrier been removed for you?

[20 : 34] Between you and God. With whom you were at enmity. Is he now your friend? Do you stand today as one of whom it could be said, the friend of God?

That's reconciliation by the death of Christ. By the sacrifice of Christ. What was depicted in the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament?

Surely it was this. Our way of access to our God against whom none have sinned. And today, that's what you need and what I need.

We need our way of access to the God against whom we have sinned. Where can you find it?

You find it in the death of the Son on Calvary. Now the great thrust of the argument here is, how can I be saved from the wrath of God eternally?

[21 : 54] That's the great thrust of Romans chapter 5. It's this great question of being saved from wrath. The wrath of God. And the picture that we've given in the Bible of the wrath of God is that it hangs over man.

He's under the wrath and the curse of Almighty God. This wrath and curse is hanging over him. And it's waiting to be unleashed in the last time.

That's the picture that you have in the Bible of the wrath of God. It's hanging over man. Waiting to be unleashed in the last time. Oh, what an awful state man is in thy nature.

He's an enemy of God. God is opposed to him, implacably opposed to him in his sin. God is opposed to sin and he can be no other.

He would cease to be the righteous God if he were anything else. And here is this man by the sovereign decree, the sovereign decree of God in sending his son to the cross.

[23 : 19] God has found a way by which God and sinners can be reconciled. And the question is asked now, how can this reconciled sinner be saved from wrath?

And the argument is this. If God did the greatest thing, can you not trust him to do the lesser? The greatest thing of all was to remove the barrier that stands between God and man in his sin.

That's the greatest act that God has ever done. You're here today and you're fearful as to the future and you're fearful as to what lies before you.

My dear friend, remember this. God did the greatest thing of all when he reconciled you to himself by the death of his son.

He did the greatest act, the greatest act of grace that could ever be dreamed of. When he reconciled you to himself by the death of his son, can you not trust him to do the lesser things?

[24 : 34] Can you not trust him to do the lesser things? If he sent his son all the way to the cross to die for you? Do you not believe that you can be saved in the end from this?

And you see, the picture that we have here of salvation is salvation not yet. Salvation not yet. Salvation not yet. We often speak about salvation and we say, we look at it in this way and we say, I've been saved.

Well my friend, if you go to the New Testament, I think you'll find that the consensus here of the New Testament on the salvation of God is that you've been saved.

You haven't been saved yet in the greatest sense. Because for you to be saved from it, a wrath that is awaiting the world at the end of time.

A wrath that is awaiting a sinful world when Jesus comes. And in this argument, the Apostle Paul is saying, if you've been reconciled to God, much more.

[26 : 00] And he uses that word again and again in the Epism to the Romans, much more. Being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Do you know what he's saying to us here? He's saying to us that we are the high priest who acted for us in sacrificing himself from the cross of Calvary for us.

And we are the high priest in heaven who goes on acting for us. Here we are at the very heart of the priestly activity of Jesus Christ in the doctrine of reconciliation.

And there are two things that the Apostle would remind us about the priestly work of Christ, the high priestly work of Christ. It reminds us that there was an aspect of the high priestly work of Christ that was finished at Calvary.

Sacrifice. A sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, to reconcile us to God. But he would remind us also in this text that there's another aspect of the priestly work of Christ that goes on and on and on.

[27 : 27] And I believe that in the old church, in the old days of the pre-church in the Highlands, it was very common to use an illustration to note the distinction between these two aspects of the priestly work of Christ.

And I'm sure there are very few here today who remember going to a new mill to grind your oats or your corn or your garlic.

And you remember the principle of the new mill. There was one stone, there was the nether stone and the upper stone. And the nether stone, the real stone, was always silent. It was always stopped.

It didn't move. That was part of the principle of grinding. The lower stone was had ceased. My son, that's what we've been reminded of here.

That there are two aspects to the atoning work of Jesus, to the work of Christ. To the work of Christ.

[28 : 49] There is that through which we have atoned with, the death of the Son. That stone is no longer turning. That stone is silent. No longer turning. No longer turning.

But we've been reminded here that there is the power of an endless life. That's the power of the exalted life of Christ.

And today, that stone, the utter stone, is turning. And how is it turning? Well, remember what makes up the ministry of the High Priest.

What was the ministry of a High Priest in the Old Testament? Well, it was made up of three things. First of all, it was made up of the offering of sacrifices.

Sacrificial work. That work is ended. That work is silent. That work is still. The nether stone has ceased.

[29 : 52] No more sacrifices needed for sin. But there are another two aspects to the work of Christ. And thank God that's an ongoing work and it will be ongoing forever.

And it's this. Intercession and benediction. There were three aspects to the work of the High Priest. There was sacrifice, there was intercession, and there was benediction.

And that's another sin of sacrifice has ceased to move. It's violent, it's finished. That's the cry on the cross, it is finished.

The upper sin is still going. Intercession and benediction. Now, what is included in the intercession of Christ this morning and for all time?

What is included in the intercession of Christ? Well, I'm sure you can see this in it anyway. Simon, Simon, Satan has decided to sift you as wheat.

[31 : 14] But I have prayed for you, for you personally. And what was the Savior interceding for Simon?

What was he praying for Simon? That your faith fail not. And the glory of this finished work of Christ and this ongoing intercession of Christ is surely this.

That the Son of God at the right hand of the Manchester on High is interceding for believers that are vulnerable with all the vulnerability of men in the world.

And he's interceding for them and he's saying, I pray for you that your faith fail not. That's your vulnerability. The possibility of your faith fail in the world.

That's the great fear you have day by day. That you're going to fail, that your faith is going to fail you. That you're going to let the Lord down. That you're going to fail the Lord. That's your vulnerable point.

[32 : 24] But there is the Savior on High saying, I have prayed for you that your faith fail not. And then one other thing. You got into the heart of the High Priestly intercession of Christ in John 17 where he says this, Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me for I am, that they might behold the glory that I had with thee before the world was.

And the ongoing work of intercession is going on and going on and going on. And it's going on to the point where he says, Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me.

Where I am. That's it. Saved by His life. Reconciled by His death. Saved by His life.

Saved eventually because a Savior interceded. And a Savior blessed you with blessings, spiritual blessings, in the heavenly places.

In Christ Jesus. By His exalted life at the right hand of the majesty of God in the heavens. God in the heavens. You will be saved.

[33 : 47] You will be saved because you've got a Savior there at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Whose heart is throbbing for you. Whose heartbeat goes out for you.

Turn to verse 11 now. And see the experience which follows on this new status. And it's truly this. We also joy in God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joy. Joy. I remember hearing about a minister reading a section of scripture.

He read Isaiah chapter 53. And he went on to read verse 1 of chapter 54. And it says, Sing, O barren.

And there he had in chapter 53, He had read the account of the atoning work of Christ. He had read the account of the suffering Savior. And then he said, Sing, O barren.

[34 : 56] And he said, Sing, he said. No wonder you can sing. No wonder you can sing. And today I believe that there's something in the heart of the child of God that says, How can I keep from singing?

Because there's a new song in your heart this morning. Because Jesus died and because Jesus intercedes and because Jesus blesses.

Because the mother's stem has ceased and the upper stem is still going round. There's a song in your heart. There's a song in your heart.

It's a song of joy that no man could give you. And no man can take away. Isn't that true? No man could give you the song that's in your heart.

No man could take it away. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Is there joy in your heart this morning? Are there joy that is ringing in your soul today?

[36 : 09] Because of all that Jesus did and is doing and will yet do for you. As a child of his, reconciled to him by his death, we will be saved by his life.

And how can we sum it all up? We can sum it all up in this. Through whom we have received the atonement.

Atonement. One. He marched into God through the death of his Son. He is your joy.

He is your peace. He is your glory. He is your shield. He is the uplifter of your head. He is your everything.

Let us pray. We bless thy great name. That the promises of God are way and amey in Christ Jesus.

[37 : 16] We bless thee that thy ways are ways of pleasantness. And all thy paths are peace. And we pray that we might know the work of Jesus Christ.

Brought us to his finished work on the cross. And to his ongoing activity in the power of an endless life. And all for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Our closing song, Psalm 68, verse 18 of Psalm 68.

And all haste Lord most glorious. Love is upon high. Cannot Thank you.

Thank you.

[39 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and ever. Amen.