

Review:

Start of the sacrificial system is related to the curse of death (and will ultimately reflect the decay and fall of all creation – the result of poor reign and rule by Adam - so the notion of dominion and kingship is always in the backdrop as well). Firstfruits, dedication of firstborn – recognition of God’s sovereignty

- Reflects what we violated: first commandments are to care of the first fruits of the garden, and to be fruitful and multiply
- Reflects what is owed to God for this violation
- Reflects what God will eventually redeem in Christ – the first fruits of the resurrection, new heaven and new earth.
- So the issue of sacrificial first fruits is essentially one of *trust*, even as it points to what will be redeemed.
 - Gen 22:1-18
 - Messianic promise of sacrifice for redemption
 - Clothed by animal sacrifice in garden, lamb provided for Abraham with Isaac to keep his child – clothed by Christ the sacrificial lamb to preserve the children of God

KEY: Sacrificial system is to keep us from the sin of self-sovereignty (obstacles to our idol)

- *You gave these rights up (fruit of the tree, fruitful and multiply, and ultimately tree of life that righteousness requires) to have self-sovereignty, will you now give their first fruits back to me as a sign of My sovereignty (and trust me for the second, third and fourth fruits)*
- *Idolatry is ultimately the sin of self-sovereignty over God’s sovereignty. And this is the essence of sin. This is the tragedy in the garden of Eden, AND its reversal in the garden of Gethsemane!*
- *Movement from seed of God (image), to seed corrupted, to question of where the fruit will now come from? (All this foreshadows Christ as the incorruptible seed, who shares the Spirit from whom we bear fruit. All of this is a paradigm of the Kingdom)*

Continued from last week on the Need for Christ:

4. Redemption: God’s Answer to the Problem of Sin – The Atonement

- a. Atonement = OT Sacrificial system as paradigm for the Gospel (Death - Life, Suffering - Glory, Sovereign God - Salvation)
 - i. OT sacrificial system foreshadows Christ. From the death of one thing comes life for the other (unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a seed - John 12:24).
 - The current state of the natural world speaks to this “death gives life” reality. Lion King – Circle of Life analogy.
 - All creation awaits the fulfillment of redemption from this natural system - Romans 8:18-25
 - ii. The great meaning behind the sacrificial system!!
 - Sacrifice of self (or one’s livelihood) as counter to the sin of self-sovereignty. Labor the land, then give it’s fruit back to Me. The system itself counters the idolatry of the self. We are forced to depend and trust in God (what we didn’t do in the garden of Eden)
 - Self-sovereignty led to death

- God's sovereignty to life (breviary of Rom 3-5 – all have fallen short, sin is death/righteousness is life, Christ is our righteousness, faith in Him imputes this righteousness and makes us all children of Abraham's promise (seed - Christ), humanity has a new representative (Christ – New Adam)
- iii. Now, faith in His way is the undoing of faith in our way. We may still have sinful nature, but the sovereignty issue is being restored...and grace follows.
- And suffering (from our self-sovereignty) precedes glory (from God's self-sovereignty)
 - Romans 8:17 ***Great counseling concept. Suffering can always be traced to a frustration of sovereignty (our will).
 - a. While sometimes understandable (loss of a child), it still requires learning to "be" in what we cannot control and trust God in the outcome as the key to contentment
- iv. Problem: OT sacrificial system provided temporary atonement
- Needed to be done repeatedly
 - Return of first fruits each harvest
 - Day of Atonement was just a day
 - THUS, the need for a once and for all substitutory atonement. A final reversal of mankind's sin of self sovereignty
- b. Christ as the fulfillment of the sacrificial system
- i. Hebrews 10:1-23
- Review: High Priest procedure for sacrifice
 - Jesus as lamb, high priest, and temple (perfect sacrifice)
- ii. God desired something more than animal sacrifices. He desired the total commitment of the human heart back to Him, which Christ's fulfills, giving a new hope for humanity.
- If a violation of sovereignty is at the heart of sin, how telling is Christ's comment in the Garden of Gethsemane ("not my will, but yours...") as to what the work of Christ really is in relation to sin, evil, & the redemption of man?
 - Garden of Gethsemane (submission to God's sovereignty) reverses the Garden of Eden (act of self-sovereignty)
- iii. Cross as a demonstration of the ultimate reliance on God's sovereignty (not my will, but yours). Being able to pay the ultimate price of reliance on God, where Adam & Eve failed. A reversal of will, a reversal of identification for humanity
- New Adam = representative for humanity (Romans 5).
 - Obedience with a tree vs. Disobedience with a tree.
 - Cross is tree of life for us (RESTORATION of 2 Trees)

- c. Cross becomes then a paradigm for what must die in us to find life in Him (cutting away of the sinful nature, crucified with Christ). Symbolically - find self by losing self in God.
 - i. Die to self to find life (ultimate act of reversal of self-sovereignty) Col 2:11-15, Gal 2:20, Rom 6:17-23
 - ii. John 12:24 now must apply to us (old seed dies in us, incorruptible seed takes place)
 - iii. *Cross is justice, not because an innocent man was punished (God's need for vengeance applied to an innocent man would be doubly unjust), but because in Christ we die and are raised again.*
 - *When you give your life to Christ, you give the old self to the cross so as to live the life of the resurrection (which we taste now even as we await its fullness!)*
 - *He took us by the hand, overcame our curse (and our biggest fear - death), and for the sake of the love of God (glory – revealing the God of sacrificial love) showed us the life on the other side!!*
 - a. *This is the life defined by God's sovereignty*
- d. Atonement as the Fullness of God's Glory
 - i. Having understood the fulfillment of the sacrificial system, we need to ask why the system at all?
 - Why? - for God's glory
 - ii. Cross reveals God as the God of sacrificial love
 - iii. God was not forced to this system to meet demands of a higher law than His sovereignty, nor to barter with Satan for lives ransomed
 - Again, how does the "Holiness requires justice, which requires punishment" find fulfillment in punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go free? (if anything this seems like double injustice)
 - iv. God was not forced into this by the demands of holiness. In His holiness He chose to do it this way. Why? To reveal something of Himself (character, nature, being) The cross brings glory to God
 - How is the Father glorified through the cross? What does it say about the nature of God, and His glory?
 - Revelation of God in Cross = Christ glorifies the Father in the Cross, and receives glory in the Resurrection (John 21:18-19, 17:5)
- e. Atonement as the Revelation of God who is love
 - i. 3 Greek words for love in the Bible
 - eros - lust, attraction
 - philia - companionship, friendship
 - agape - sacrificial love
 - ii. What does this say about the nature of God as love? Remember back to first few lectures, God is glorified through the revelation of who He is. Christ reveals God in His ultimate revelation as the God of love...sacrificial love.
- f. Atonement is realized in new life (dying and living anew in Christ - John 15:1-17)

- i. His incorruptible seed is implanted in us (1 Peter 1:23 – living Word/Christ/Logos)
 - Sacrificial love is the fruit of the imperishable seed
 - Corrupt fallen image (seed of Adam) is perishable, incorruptible seed comes from tree of life! (seed of Christ)
- ii. The fruit we bear is of His Spirit
- iii. We know His seed is in us (true discipleship – to be the image of your rabbi...which in the case is to be the image of God) when we love sacrificially as He does. It testifies to the new seed over & against the old
 - Seed of God’s Sovereignty = seed of sacrifice (agape love)
 - Seed of self-sovereignty = seed of selfishness
 - The new replaces the old, and will eventually find fulfillment in the garden that is to come! (More later)

SUMMARY: WHAT DOES THIS ALL SAY ABOUT GOD!! - Atonement is not only about fulfilling the sacrificial system, but also that God chose this way to reveal something about who He is! God did not abandon us to this broken system of decay, nor ask us to walk something he wouldn’t walk, but rather teaches us to walk through it - even through our greatest fear (the curse of death), to show us what is on the other side (resurrection)!! The love that cannot die. Our atonement is found through dying with Him to the old, and raising with Him to the new seed of humanity. In all of this, we find the God who is love revealed and glorified.

Interesting question:

If God is love, and love is defined as ultimately sacrificial, then was the Fall purposeful? Does “sacrificial” imply and necessitate brokenness?

Is there anything we gain from “the fall” that might give insight as to why God allowed it in the first place? Did God allow it, or was it in His plan? Did He arrange the pieces knowing the outcome? If not, how does this affect God being Sovereign over all (Christ as God's plan before creation)? If so, how do we view God in relation to the problem of evil? (good questions to ponder, but beyond our rationale. We must always hold to God is all good, and God is love.)

- *In essence, despite these lingering questions about good and evil, we must once again face our limitations with the tree of knowledge and ask if we will be obedient to the one who defines and is righteousness...or will our limitations cause us to once again reach with the hand of self-sovereignty and define for ourselves what is good and evil!!*

Assignment

- 1) Read Genesis 3-9 and review lecture notes above.
- 2) Read Matthew 5:15-16, John 5:44, & John 7:17-18. Write an essay on how your work as a follower of Christ both gives glory to God (reveals Him) and reveals something about who you are (in His image)