

Sermon Guide: Towards Easter: the Good News of Jesus: “The Good News Of Atonement” | Samuel Voo | March 10, 2024

Summary

In this message, Samuel Voo focuses on the theme of atonement and its place in relation to the good news of Jesus. This good news, we have been learning, is the climax of the Bible's narrative that Jesus of Nazareth, who lived 2,000 years ago, is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies as the Christ (= Messiah) and the sovereign Lord over all creation.

Sam began by addressing the place of salvation in relation to the good news. Salvation is the transformative process that begins when we receive the truth of Jesus' kingship and choose to live under His reign. It is both a present reality and a future hope, encompassing “life after life” as well as life in the present world.

The meaning of the word “atonement” originates from the Old English, literally, “at - one ment,” having to do with reconciliation, reparation, and restoration of that which has been broken. To unpack the meaning of atonement through Jesus, we turned to the Gospel of John, where John the Baptist introduces Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” This title, “Lamb of God,” is rich with Old Testament symbolism and points to Jesus' role in atonement. It is associated with at least three rich traditions: the Passover lamb, the suffering servant in Isaiah, and the sacrificial system of the Temple for the forgiveness of sins.

The Passover lamb, part of the Exodus story, was the primary symbol of God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and towards the end of Old Testament times, the Passover lamb became associated with the sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem for the forgiveness of sin. The suffering servant in Isaiah is depicted as an innocent lamb led to the slaughter, bearing the transgressions of the people. Although the servant was originally intended to be a remnant of Israel, by the end of this section in Isaiah (chapters 40-55), the hope of Israel's redemption seems to lie in an individual outside of Israel. Centuries later, reading the servant texts of Isaiah through fresh eyes, the early Christians realized that these texts were prophecies of Jesus. Lastly, the Old Testament sacrificial system provided a means for atonement through the shedding of the blood of an animal at the Temple altar. Through the ritual killing of an animal for offering at the Temple, the people of Israel had their sins forgiven and maintained their relationship with God as his holy people. Jesus' death on the cross is the fulfillment of all these traditions, offering atonement to those who acknowledge him as Messiah.

In conclusion, Sam emphasizes that salvation is not only about eternal life but also about experiencing God's presence, power, and healing in this life. Atonement is a key aspect of the salvation we receive through Jesus, and as we enter into the story of the good news, we participate in this atonement through confession. Confession is an important spiritual discipline where we acknowledge our need for forgiveness by and reconciliation with God. Sam encourages us, especially in this season of Lent, to practice confession – both to God and to each other so that we might receive the atonement and restoration that our hearts yearn so much for.

Key Takeaways:

- The title "Lamb of God" draws from the rich tapestry of Old Testament imagery. It signifies Jesus as the ultimate Passover lamb, the suffering servant, and the fulfillment of the sacrificial system for sin. [\[29:37\]](#)

- Atonement is not merely a theological concept but a lived experience of restoration with our Creator. It transcends human logic and systematic theology, as it is rooted in the holy mystery of the cross. [\[24:08\]](#)

- Salvation encompasses both the present life and the life to come. It is a mistake to view salvation solely as a future hope, as it also involves the tangible experience of God's comfort, power, and peace in our current existence. The gospel promises not only eternal life but also an abundant life here and now, marked by the healing and presence of God. [\[14:21\]](#)

- Reflecting on our mortality and the frailty of life can deepen our appreciation for the salvation Jesus offers. As we recognize the limitations of our earthly existence, we are reminded of the eternal life promised to us—a life free from the constraints of sin and decay. This hope is an integral part of the Christian message and should shape our understanding of salvation. [\[11:50\]](#)

Bible Reading:

1. John 1:29 (ESV)

"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"

2. Isaiah 53:5-7 (ESV)

"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

3. Exodus 12:13 (ESV)

"The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

Discussion Questions

1. In John 1:29, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." What might this title suggest about Jesus' purpose and mission?
2. Reflecting on Isaiah 53:5-7, how does the description of the suffering servant as a lamb led to slaughter connect with the title given to Jesus by John the Baptist?
3. In what ways does the imagery of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 deepen our understanding of the sacrifice Jesus made?

Going deeper

1. Reflect on a recent time when you felt distant from God. How might the truth of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away sin influence your approach to restoring that relationship?
2. Consider a situation in your life where you are seeking peace or healing. How can your own forgiveness and atonement through Jesus inform your perspective God's presence in the midst of that situation?
3. Identify a habit or behavior in your life that represents a form of bondage or slavery to sin. What steps can you take this week towards confession and receive the atonement that Jesus provides?