



THE MEANING OF THE CROSS Divine Satisfaction (cont.)

The Divine Dilemma (cont.)

Where we left things, we were talking about the character of God, sinfulness of man and the tension – specifically identifying the tension, the love, holiness, and the wrath of God. How can God be holy in His love and holy in His wrath? When we talk about God satisfying Himself, it's probably not the best terminology, but the picture is, how can God be true to His nature, to His attributes, how can He express His holiness, without consuming us in our sin? How can He express His love without condoning us in our sin? How can He be the Judge of sin and the Justifier of sinners at the same time? How can He satisfy Himself and save us at the same time? This is the dilemma that we're looking at, that Scripture gives us, and it needs to be fixed in our minds. This is a God-centered picture of where we're going here, looking at the cross. How can God be just and gracious towards sinners at the same time? That's the dilemma, the problem, the tension.

All that leads to the reality. Don't miss this, because now we're getting into the reality that's expressed on the cross. The reality is, first and foremost, the cross is a demonstration of the character of God. First and foremost, the cross is a demonstration of the character of God. Listen to Romans 3:25-26, *"God presented (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood."* He did this why? Why did He do this, Paul? *"...To demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance, he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."* What do you mean, "demonstrate his justice?"

Well, see the problem that's being expressed here in these words. Romans 3, *"(God) had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished."* So, there's unpunished sin. The guilty acquitted, which is detestable to God, so how can there be unpunished sin, and God be righteous in all His ways? His righteousness is at stake here. This is where we realize God's forgiveness of our sin is a threat to His character. Illustration: 2 Samuel 12, David in the Old Testament is guilty of adultery, lying, and murder. Nathan the prophet confronts him on that. This is how David responds. *"David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan replied, 'The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.'"* Did you hear that? Adultery, murder, lying just passed over. Is that justice?

If there was a judge today in a courtroom who looked at an adulterer, liar, and murderer and said, "Forgiven, passed over," we would have that judge off the bench in a heartbeat. That's not just. That's not right. This is where we come face to face with a common question. People ask, "Why can't God just forgive sins? Why is the cross even necessary? We forgive one another. Why can't God just forgive us?" This is what Anselm was addressing. He said, "If anybody imagines that God can simply forgive us as we forgive others, that person has not yet considered the seriousness of sin or literally what a heavy weight sin is; has not realized the greatness of the one we have sinned against. And how His character is at stake here in His response to sin."

John Stott said, "Forgiveness is for God the profoundest of problems." Bishop Westcott said, and I love this quote, "Nothing superficially seems simpler than forgiveness, but nothing, if we look deeply, is more mysterious or more difficult." How can God be just and righteous and yet forgive sins, pass over sins? That's where we see that before the cross is for anyone else's sake, what God is doing on the cross is for God's sake. God is displaying His justice. He is demonstrating His righteousness. Why did Jesus die on the cross? Who did Jesus die for? He died for me? Certainly. Died for you? Certainly, but not ultimately. Ultimately, Christ died for God. The cross is ultimately centered around a demonstration of the character of God. Watchman Nee said, "If I would appreciate the blood of Christ I must accept God's valuation of it, for the blood is not primarily for me but for God." We need to hear this.

We have heard the gospel presented as God's answer to human problems, and it is that in many ways. It is that, but ultimately, the cross is God's answer to a divine problem, and this is what drove Jesus to the cross. The glory of God drove Jesus to the cross. Look at John 12, "*What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!*" We say things like, "You were on His mind when He went to the cross. I was on His mind when He went to the cross." Ladies and gentlemen, the Father God was on His mind when Jesus went to the cross. The glory of God drove Him there, and we're going to see how this affects us, but see the cross as it relates to the character of God.

What God is doing at the cross is He's showing us that sin is infinitely offensive. The severity of sin is put on display here. There's no room for self-exaltation at the cross. We say things today like, "I wonder what Jesus saw in me that would cause Him to go to the cross for me?" Jesus saw nothing in you, nothing good in you. Nothing. There's nothing in here and nothing in the cross that speaks to something we deserve or we earn or we should have. Nothing here about self-exaltation. The cross is not about displaying our value. The cross is all about displaying the value of God. Everything at the cross is God-exaltation. The cross is the end of self-exaltation. It's why it makes sense when we see Jesus saying things like, "Deny yourself. Take up your" – what? "Cross." "Deny yourself." "Deny yourself." The cross is completely, totally, radically about God exaltation.

He shows us that sin is infinitely offensive, and that God is infinitely glorious. The cross is not a display of the finite worth of man. The cross is not a picture of how valuable we are. The cross is a picture of how valuable God is. The cross is a display, not of the finite worth of man, but of the infinite worth of God. Now, here's the deal. As soon as we begin to see the cross, first and foremost, as good news for God, for the first time, we begin to realize how good this news is for us, because the cross is not about exalting us and our value. The cross is about exalting God and showing the value of the God that we will supremely enjoy for all of eternity, and get this – your salvation at the cross is now grounded in a God who is radically committed to His glory, and He will for all of eternity, enable His people by the cross to enjoy that glory, guaranteed. The cross is about showing us, not our value, but the value the God that we will eternally be with. God-centered because He will be true to His character, guaranteed.

So, how does He do that? How does He satisfy Himself and save us?

Divine Substitution

God satisfies Himself by substituting Himself in the place of sinners.

How does divine satisfaction happen – second part – through divine substitution? *"There is one God,"* starting point of 1 Timothy 2:5-6, *"and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself..."* One mediator. This is where we begin to see that the cross is not just one of about ten options God had for how to save sinners – "I'm going to choose this one." This is the only way. Why? What was so significant about Christ? These words, "divine substitution," what do we mean by them? God satisfies Himself by substituting Himself in the place of sinners. *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us."* (2 Corinthians 5:21) Instead of us.

Consider the person of Christ

Now, in order to get the substitution idea, we've got to consider some facets of Christ. First, consider who He is, the person of Christ. We need to see the humanity and deity of Christ, and both of these are extremely important. I think it's to our detriment today that you will search most evangelistic tracts, and even a lot of evangelistic preaching and teaching, and you will find very few that talk about the full humanity and full deity of Christ. It's like we don't think it's that important, but it is that important. This is what separates Christianity, the Christian gospel, New Testament gospel from the multitude of cults that are out there today. It's what separates New Testament Gospel Christianity from Islam or Judaism. This is the picture here, humanity and deity.

John Stott said, "The possibility of substitution rests of the identity of the substitute." By the way, I'm quoting Stott numerous times, and there's a part of the back of your notebook that has recommended reading. Probably the top book on there is *The Cross of Christ* by John Stott, incredible book. "The possibility of substitution rests in the identity of the substitute."

Who is Jesus? First, He's fully man. Hebrews 2:17 says, *"He had to be made like his brothers in every way."* How is He like us? He was born, obviously, somewhat differently than us in that He was born of a virgin. Here's the picture of the Spirit conception of Christ. He was born. He possessed the full range of human characteristics. He had a human body. He was wrapped in cloths at His birth. He *"grew and became strong,"* Luke 2. John 4 says that He had a body that got tired. He'd get a little weary at the end of a long night. Matthew 4 says that He was hungry. Had a stomach that would growl like ours. This is the picture. He is fully human, human body.

A human mind. He grew in wisdom. Human mind; human soul. *"My heart is troubled."* *"Jesus was troubled in spirit,"* John 13. Matthew 26, *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."* A human soul. Human emotions. Matthew 8:10 talks about how Jesus was astonished when He heard something. John 11:35, *"Jesus wept."* Hebrews 5:7-8, *"He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears."*

He had human emotions and human observation. *"Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers,"* in Matthew 13, *"Isn't this the carpenter's son?"* Where did this man get all these things? People looked at Him as a man. They saw Him as a man. They identified Him as fully man. That means He is fully able to identify with us. He is not unlike us trying to do something for us. He is a representative of us. If He is not fully human, if He is not like us, He cannot represent us. It's what I love about Hebrews 4:14-16. Let these words soak in:

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone to the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus is familiar with our struggles. He's familiar with our sorrow. Hurting brother or sister tonight, He's familiar with your sorrow. He's familiar with our suffering. The longer I walk with Christ, it's the humanity of Jesus that brings more and more comfort to my soul.

There's a term in music called sympathetic resonance. If you had two pianos on stage up here, and you were to hit middle C on one of the pianos, that note would resound just ever so slightly in the other piano. The same note would respond to it. It reminds you, when you go through difficult times in this life, and when your heart is broken, and you're weeping and you hurt, know that there is a man in heaven whose instrument is like yours, and when you feel that hurt, there is a resonance that comes from Him. He's our sympathetic resonance. What an incredible picture! Fully human.

Second, He is fully God. Fully God. C.S. Lewis said, "The doctrine of Christ's divinity seems to me not something stuck on which you can unstick but something that peeps out at every point so you'd have to unravel the whole web to get rid of it." There are a lot of people who believe Jesus is fully man. Not a lot of people – a lot less people – who believe He is fully God.

His identity. John 1:1-4, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."* He is eternal. Hebrews 1:8, *"But about the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.'"* Jesus is eternal. He's our creator. We've seen God as creator. *"By him,"* talking about Christ, Colossians 1:15-16, *"By him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."* He's creator. He's sustainer. You see Him being equated with God here. *"In him all things hold together."* Christ holds all things together, Colossians 1:17. He's omnipotent. He stands up and the wind and the waves obey Him, Matthew 8. Matthew 14, He multiplies the food.

He's omniscient. *"Jesus knew in his spirit this is what they were thinking in their hearts."* *"He knew what was in a man."* People said, *"We can see that you know all things...This makes us believe that you came from God."* He is sovereign. I put Mark 2 there where Jesus claims to have authority to forgive sins. For C.S. Lewis, this is what convinced him of the divinity of Christ. To claim to have the authority, to be the one sinned against and then have authority to forgive sins. Then, I've got Matthew 11 there, *"All things have been committed to me by my Father,"* in the middle. His testimony, Jesus claimed identification with the Father. *"I tell you the truth,"* Jesus answered, *'before Abraham was born, I am!'"* God uses this picture of *"I am"* in the Old Testament to identify Himself.

"I and the Father are one," John 10:30. Man's testimony of Him. *"Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'"* (John 20:28) after He'd risen from the grave. Colossians 2:9, Paul writes, *"All the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form..."* Then, you've got the author of Hebrews telling us that Jesus is the exact representation of the being of God. Then, you've got John in Revelation showing us this picture. *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'"*

The quintilemma – in other words, five options. Aren't you glad I didn't leave that a blank right there? Quintilemma. "Yeah. Sure. I was just talking about quintilemmas today." Yeah, anyway. It's one of those moments I know you're like, "Man, you preachers have got too much time on your hands. You're making up words. That's not a word." The quintilemma, number one, is Jesus a legend? Are all these writings about Him phony? He's a myth that's developed over time. We don't have time to dive into this, but there is more historical reliability in the New Testament than in any other ancient book in history. Not just a legend. Is Jesus a lama, a picture here, being an Eastern pantheistic sense, like the Dalai Lama, picture of a guru, Eastern guru? So, when Jesus was claiming to be God, was He just saying, "I'm one with God like everything is?" The only problem was that He was a Jew. That didn't fit at all with the entire worldview that He was living in and representing.

Third, is Jesus a liar? He said He was God. If He wasn't, and He knew He wasn't, then He was a liar. Even secular scholars would claim Jesus was a great man. Was He really a great man if He walked around identifying Himself with the creator of the world, deceiving others in the process? Does that make one great? Does that make one humble and meek, as He is described? Is Jesus a lunatic? Maybe He said He was God, and really thought He was, when He wasn't, or if He's not a legend, Eastern guru – lama, liar, lunatic, then this is C.S. Lewis' conclusion: He is Lord. "You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit on him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Jesus is able to fully identify with God. Jesus is God in the same sense and the same degree as the Father. He is not any less God than the Father is God. He is fully able to identify with God. John Owen said, "He suffered not as God, but he who suffered was God." Now, that doesn't make this picture simple, fully human, fully God. The person of Christ is a mysterious unity of two natures. I've got a quote there from the Athanasian Creed, a mysterious unity, not a contradiction, but a mystery. How does this come together? I was looking back and reading some about these natures of Christ together, and I came across Arthur Pink and what he wrote, and I think this clears it up.

This important distinction calls for careful consideration by a person as meant an intelligent being, subsisting by himself. The second person of the Trinity assumed a human nature and gave it subsistence by union with his divine personality. It would have been a human person if it had not been united to the Son of God. But being united to him, it cannot be called a person because it never subsisted by itself, as other men do, hence the force of that holy thing which shall be born to thee. It was not possible for a divine person to assume another person subsisting of itself and to union with himself, for two persons remaining two to become one person is a contradiction.

Ah, that's it. Thanks for clearing that up, Arthur. It all makes sense now.

So, we've got a mysterious unity here. How does this fit together? Think about it this way. First, His human and divine natures are different. There are things He does that give us a picture of human nature, and things He does that reveal divine nature. There's a distinction here, in a sense. We're going to get to how they're unified, but we've got examples here. He has returned to heaven, human nature, and He's present with us, divine nature. He was 30 years old, and He eternally existed. Human nature, divine nature. My goal is to give you a headache in this process right here.

He was tired. This is a great thing. Matthew 8 is such a picture. He's tired. He's worn out, sleeping on a boat, and then He wakes up and tells the wind and the waves to obey Him. Tired and omnipotent, right there together. He was born a baby, and He sustains the universe. He lost His human life, and He possesses divine authority. How does this happen? This is the picture of the human nature and the divine nature together, yet different. Human nature and divine nature are different.

At the same time, His human nature and divine nature are unified, and what I mean by that is anything that Jesus does that shows the picture of His human nature is truly the person of Christ. In the same way, anything He does that shows His picture of the divine nature is truly the person of Christ. When He says in John 8:58, *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'"* He doesn't say, "Before Abraham was born my divine nature existed." That's not what He says.

It's like if I were to write you a letter, and I were to say, "I wrote you this letter," I would not say, "My fingers wrote you this letter, but my toes had nothing to do with it." I would not say that. Anything my fingers are doing is representative of me doing it. So, that's the picture, and when we look at a picture Paul writes, *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures..."* Did God die? Did God die on the cross? The picture is – certainly, in His human nature, Jesus died. His divine nature, though, sustaining the entire universe, cannot die. If the divine nature is dead, then how can things continue to exist? If the divine nature's not there, we're not there.

So, would it be right to say, "Did God die on the cross?" Yes and no. In the sense that Jesus in His person died? Yes, but His divine nature did not die. Different but unified. When He says, *"I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."* (John 16:28) Then, He says, *"And surely I am with you always."* (Matthew 28:20) So, when it comes to the person of Christ on the cross, this is not Jesus alone as if He had no divine nature. It's not God alone as if He had no human nature, but the one on the cross is God in Christ. Not God alone, not man alone, but God in Christ; fully God, fully man, displayed wonderfully in Colossians 1:19-20, *"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether the things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."* That's the person of Christ, fully able to identify with us, fully able to identify with God, fully human, fully God. That's His person.

Consider the purpose of Christ

What about His purpose? He came with a purpose to seek and save what was lost. Jesus came, divide that up into two pictures. He came to live a sinless life. He came to live the life that we could not live. See it listed there, John 18:38, *"I find no basis for a charge against him."* Hebrews 4:15, *"(He) was without sin."* 1 Peter 1, *"a lamb without blemish or defect."* 1 John 3, *"In him is no sin."*

He was obedient, perfectly obedient to God. This is important. It's important because, obviously, Jesus didn't come and give His life for us on the cross as a child. He was obedient. He demonstrated obedience to the law of God, fulfillment of the law of God in His obedience. John 15:10, *"I have obeyed my Father's commands."* He was obedient, and His obedience is necessary for our salvation. He was righteous. In order to be reconciled to God, we don't need to just be rid of sin; we need to be clothed in righteousness. So, it's necessary for Christ to be righteous, and you see these verses that show us that picture.

So, He came to live a sinless life, obedient and righteous, and He came to die a substitutionary death. This was the purpose of Him coming. You look at every one of the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – and you will see in different ways this picture that the fact of the cross was not an accident. This is why Jesus came. Mark 8, 9, 10 back to back to back, Jesus is giving us pictures of where He is going. Luke is showing us how He is going to Jerusalem. John constantly talks about the hour that is to come. It's not time.

There were times when they wanted to stone Jesus or wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff, and the picture is that He walked right through them. It was not time. He came to die a very purposeful death at an exact time. Substitutionary death; what does that mean? It means that He assumed our identity. Think about this with me. What is the payment for sin? Death. Well, if Jesus is obedient and righteous, then He has no payment to pay. He does not deserve death. So, if He were to die, it would not be because of Himself; it would be because He is dying on another's behalf. He is assuming our identity that He might make, Hebrews 2 says, *"...atonement for the sins of the people."*

The picture is that He died, and the keywords here are in the place of the disobedient. He died in the place of the unrighteous. You've got verses listed there – John 11, Romans 5, and on into 2 Corinthians and Galatians – and what you see is this little, three-letter word, "for," mentioned over and over and over again. *"That one man die for the people,"* Caiaphas said. In Romans 5, you see it over and over again, *"At just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died,"* circle it there, *"for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Now, this word – it's two prepositions in the original language of the New Testament that are used in these passages. It can mean "on behalf of" or "instead of." The picture is, and it's really summed up well in 2 Corinthians 5 here, *"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."* In one dying, all died. That's a representative. It's a substitute. He is doing something, not just on behalf of, but instead of, in the place of, as a representative for all these others.

You look at Galatians 3, *"Christ redeemed us"* – we'll look at this passage later – *"from the curse of the law becoming a curse for us."* Instead of us. He took the curse. *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins...by his wounds you have been healed."*

So, He assumed our identity, and as a result, He accomplished our salvation, so that Paul would say, *"I have been crucified with Christ."* (Galatians 2:20) There's a unity here, and in His assuming our identity, He is accomplishing our salvation. He loved me and gave Himself for me on my behalf, instead of me, as my representative. That's how God is reconciling us to Himself, Colossians 1.

The Divine Dilemma Solved

So, here we come back to the divine dilemma, and here is how it is solved. Divine satisfaction, now look at the cross. Bring everything we've talked about when it comes to satisfaction through substitution – bring it all together. Divine satisfaction: the totality of God's character is expressed. At the cross, we see the full picture of His justice, and His wrath, and His holiness, and His love, and His mercy. Here I put Psalm 85 and Habakkuk 3. We've got this picture of love and faithfulness meeting together, and wrath remembering mercy. They're all converging, all of the attributes of God converging, right here at the cross. The totality of God's character is expressed at the cross.

Divine substitution; salvation through God's Son is achieved. The unique Son – fully God and fully human. Think about it. The essence of sin: man substitutes himself for God. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be. That's the essence of sin. What is salvation? The essence of salvation: God substitutes Himself for man. God, in Christ, sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be. This is what 2 Corinthians 5:21 is all about. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us," instead of us, on our behalf, "so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God."

There is nothing greater than this. He lived the life we could not live. He died the death we did not want to die. In our place, He substituted Himself, and at the cross, God does these things: He expresses His judgment on sin. See the beauty of the cross here. At the cross, God expresses His judgment on sin. At the same time, God endures His judgment against sin. He expresses judgment on sin and endures judgment against sin. That can only happen through substitution, and at the cross, God enables salvation for sinners. Christ, the God-man, is the only possible substitute that brings satisfaction to the glory of God and salvation to the sons of man. That's the picture that's being displayed here. Let me show it to you.

Isaiah 53, if you have a Bible, turn with me to Isaiah 53. This is the prophecy spoken 700 years before Christ went to the cross. Listen to what it says. I want to show you here, satisfaction through substitution. Isaiah 53:1,

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

That is one beautiful chapter of Scripture. What we see here are the same truths, and this is an important passage, eight of these twelve verses are attributed directly to Jesus in the New Testament, eight of those twelve verses. Verses 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 twice and verse 11.

Eight out of those 12 verses. It's quoted seven times in the New Testament. Seven different times, and you can see the parallels – I just listed them for you there. Quoted seven different times, but here's the picture.

Go past all those verses, and I want you to think about all that we've seen in this point displayed in this one chapter of Scripture – an insightful passage. Number one, see the person of Christ. This passage shows us that in His humanity, He is familiar with suffering. Verse 3, *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering."* Jesus is not a Savior with flowing hair and impeccable features who is always clean, and everything looks nice, and He's got a little crown around His head at every moment. *"He had...nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."* Familiar with sorrow, familiar with suffering, like us in His humanity.

His deity: He is free from sin. *"He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."* Sinless and righteous, just like we just saw, the person of Christ. The sinfulness of man, what we've looked at. Verses 4-6, 8 and 12, we see our sins all over this passage. That leads us to the substitution of God, verses 4-6. You can circle every time we see the picture of Him taking on our infirmities. Whose infirmities were put on Him? Ours were. Whose sorrows put on Him? Ours. *"Pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. By his wounds we are healed. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* It's all put on Him as our substitute.

Over and over and over again we see this, substitution of God, satisfaction of God. Who sent Jesus to the cross? Whose will was it to crush Jesus on the cross? It was the Father's will. It was the Lord's will to crush Him, verse 10. Neither the Jews nor the Romans were ultimately responsible for the death of Christ. God the Father was ultimately responsible for the death of Christ. It was the Lord's will to crush Him. God, the substitution of God, satisfaction of God leading to the salvation of men in verse 11. *"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."* The way we are justified is because of the satisfaction and substitution of God that leads to our salvation, so this is the picture.

THE JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

If we were to imagine that the cross as an infinitely precious diamond, at the core of that diamond – I want to invite you to see – look into it and see satisfaction through substitution. God glorifying Himself by substituting Himself on a cross, and based on that picture, here's what I want us to do. I want us to go to the Passion narrative, four scenes, and tilt this diamond a little this way and see the light just shine from it. Then, we'll tilt it a little another way in the Garden of Gethsemane and see the light shine. Then, we'll go to the cross and see Jesus crying out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* and we'll see it shine. Then, we'll look at that declaration of triumph, *"It is finished,"* and from these four angles, see this glorious picture of satisfaction through substitution just come alive. The journey to the cross. That's where we're going. Those four different scenes. What does it mean in 1 Timothy 2:5 – this is where we're focusing here – *"Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom?"* The Last Supper, Garden of Gethsemane, cry of dereliction, declaration of triumph.

The Last Supper **Matthew 26:17-30**

Let's dive right into the Last Supper. We're going to do our best to fly through this. We're not going to dive into all of these passages in depth because there's a lot, especially in this section right here. You know that Jesus was having the Passover meal, it was the time of the Passover, there in Matthew 26.

What I want to do in each of these scenes that we're going to look at is think about three components of each. I want us to think about a theme, the key text to help us understand that, and the key truth. So, the key theme here in the Last Supper is sacrifice. Basically, we're going to look at four key themes based on these four events. Sacrifice, and the key truth here is that Jesus died our death. Again, feel the substitution there. He died our death as a representative for us; instead of us dying, He died.

The key texts that we're going to run through as best as we can – Exodus 12, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, and then in 1 Corinthians 11 is Paul's description of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament Epistles.

Sacrifice: Jesus died our death.

Sacrifice: Jesus died our death. Here's the reality the Scripture teaches: we deserve to die for our sin. God made this very clear in Genesis 2, *"when you eat of (the tree, fruit from the tree) you will surely die."* Romans 6:23, *"The wages of sin is death."* We deserve to die for our sin.

On the cross, Jesus sacrificed himself and died in our place. *"(He) gave himself up for us."* (Ephesians 5:2) He sacrificed Himself. Hebrews 9:26. Now, you know the picture of sacrifice goes all the way back to the Old Testament and all the way back – I mentioned Exodus 12 there, but even go back to Genesis 22 – the Patriarchs, ever since before that. You've got a picture of Cain and Abel, a sacrifice being offered to God for man's sin. Even in Genesis 3, you've got Adam and Eve—as soon as they sin, an animal is sacrificed to provide covering for them.

So, what you've got is sacrifice from the very beginning of Scripture, a dominant theme, and you've got substitutionary sacrifice in Genesis 22. Remember Abraham and his son, Isaac. God says, "Abraham, take Isaac up on Mount Moriah and sacrifice your son." What's the point here? Why does God tell Abraham to do that? Abraham, in obedience, takes his son up and raises the knife above him. At that moment, God intervenes, and He says, "No, do not kill your son. Instead, I will provide a ram in the thicket. You take the ram, and you sacrifice the ram instead of your son." Substitution. Sacrifice. Genesis 22, from the very beginning.

If you were an Israelite listening to that story as it's passed down, you identify yourself with Isaac. Isaac is the lineage of Abraham, the son of Abraham, the promised line of Abraham. If Isaac is gone, the line of Abraham is gone. That's tension. The climax there in the story is that, when the knife is raised, it is raised over the lineage of the people of God, and God says, "I will preserve my people by providing a sacrifice for them." That's the picture in Genesis 22.

Remember the Passover

Then, go to Exodus 12, the picture of the Passover. I put Matthew 26 and John 19 very intentionally here because the week of Jesus' crucifixion was the week of the Passover. There's a little bit of discrepancy when you compare the Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke – with John, but John's intention will show us, in John 19:14, *"It was the day of preparation of Passover week, about the sixth hour."* So, John is intentional to show us that the time Jesus is being sacrificed at the cross is the time of the sacrifice of the Passover.

Old Testament and what we've got in Exodus 12 – you remember God's people were slaves in Egypt, nine different plagues demonstrating His glory to the people of Egypt and Pharaoh, and the Egyptians not getting it. So, the tenth plague comes, and what happens is God says, "I'm going to go throughout Egypt, and I'm going to go to every home – Egyptian home and Israelite home – and I am going to strike down the firstborn son in every home. I will pass over your home if you take a lamb without blemish, you bring it into your home for a few days, and then you sacrifice it, and you take the blood of that lamb, and you put it over the door post of your home, and when I see the blood over the door post of your home, I will pass over." That's the picture in Exodus 12. It's a picture that is celebrated every single year after that in the Passover.

So, what are we seeing about God in this picture? Three pictures of God. He is the Almighty Judge. He says in Exodus 12:12, *"I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord."* He's the Judge. He's the Gracious Savior. He will save these homes, and He's the Faithful Provider – "I will provide a way out. I will provide you with a lamb, and you will take the blood of the lamb and put it over your doorpost, and you will commemorate my faithfulness to you, because I will do what I've promised and deliver you out of slavery in Egypt."

There are two acts of deliverance that are going on here. Number one is deliverance from the rulers of Egypt. They've been slaves there for hundreds of years. They're being delivered out of that. God has heard their cries, seen their suffering, and is delivering them out from the rulers of Egypt, but not just out of slavery. They are being delivered from the judgment of God. This is what's interesting.

When you look at the other plagues, they were plagues that God just brought on the Egyptians. He's bringing this judgment on Egyptians and Israelites alike. It doesn't matter who you are, if you don't have blood over your doorpost, then the firstborn son is being struck down. So, they're being delivered from the rulers of Egypt and the judgment of God here in Exodus 12. The decisive element is the blood of a substitute sacrifice, a spotless lamb. Take this lamb and put the blood of the lamb over your doorpost.

That's the picture in the Old Testament, and it sets the stage for this Passover celebration in the New Testament as Jesus sits down and has the Last Supper with His disciples in the New Testament. On the cross, God is going to reveal Himself in the same way, as the Almighty Judge. We've talked about this. He's going to demonstrate His justice as the Gracious Savior, as the one who sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. He is going to provide a way out – Faithful Provider. It's the same picture we see of God in the Old Testament, a pre-representation of what is to come in the New Testament. On the cross, God delivers us from the power of sin. No longer slaves to sin, Romans 6 says, and what happens at the cross is we're delivered out of that slavery, and not just the power of sin, but the penalty of sin. We're delivered from the wrathful judgment of God due sin, and all of that happens because of one element: the blood of a substitute sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

This is where it's really interesting. You see in Exodus 12 that in the Passover, *"(The food) must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside of the house. Do not break any of the bones (of the lamb)."* That is why John is intentional to show us these things happening so the Scripture would be fulfilled – not one of His bones will be broken. That's why, when we take the Lord's Supper, we don't say, "Jesus said, 'This is my body broken for you,'" but, "This is my body given for you." It's an intentional picture here. John is identifying Christ with the Passover lamb, and that's why there's the introduction to Christ in the book of John, with John the Baptist's words, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29) 1 Corinthians 5:7, *"Christ, our Passover lamb."* That's Exodus 12.

Remember Mount Sinai

Move forward to Mount Sinai, Exodus 19, and what happens in Exodus 19 through 24 and 25 is God enters into covenant with His people. When Jesus says in Matthew 26, the Last Supper, *"Drink from it...this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* What He's doing is He's harking back to this picture in the old covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. What happened?

Overview, Exodus 19, God brings His people to Mount Sinai, and He says to them at Mount Sinai, in Exodus 19:12, to stay back in fear. *"Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up to the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.'"* God is going to reveal His glory, and the picture is in Exodus 19, when God reveals His glory on that mountain, the whole mountain starts shaking. There's smoke going up everywhere. It's an intense scene, and everybody is sitting back afraid to go anywhere near it because God has said don't go near it.

What happens in Exodus 20 is He gives His people the Ten Commandments. In the chapters to come, He gives some other laws, rules, and regulations. He's entering into covenant with them until you get to Exodus 24, and what we see is God – it's like a marriage relationship. You can almost picture it, entering into covenant like a wedding, but God is entering into covenant with His people – the Mosaic Covenant, and He's promising to bless them and to be faithful to them and be with them. It's inaugurated with blood.

Old covenant people, in need of the blood of a sacrifice. *"Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'"* Those people were in need of the blood of a sacrifice, because they had sin and because they were unable to obey the law. What happens, when the covenant takes place, is the people respond and say, *"We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey,"* Exodus 24:7. Then, all throughout the Old Testament, we see the people of God turning their backs on God, turning from the covenant with God.

So, we come in Jeremiah 31 to the old covenant promise,

"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was husband to them...This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time...I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all

know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

That's what was promised. This is a new covenant that is coming, and what we see in Christ is that new covenant inaugurated, new covenant fulfillment. *"The Holy Spirit also testifies about this. First he says: 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.'"* This is Hebrews 10, giving us a picture. *"I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."* It's exactly what Jeremiah had said. *"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."*

How? New covenant people. Old covenant people in need of the blood of a sacrifice. New covenant people, forgiven by the blood of a sacrifice. Old covenant people, unable to obey the law. New covenant people, enabled to obey the law. Christ has covered over their sins, and He dwells in them, and He changes them from the inside out. The new covenant invitation – remember old covenant, stay away from the presence of God; stay back in fear – new covenant invitation, draw near in faith.

Brothers and sisters, we have this confidence to enter the throne of the Most Holy Place, the Most Holy God, and we can go there any time we want because of the blood of a new covenant. That's what Hebrews 10 is all about. Now, Exodus sets up the picture of Leviticus. We're just running through Old Testament history here. Exodus sets up the picture of Leviticus because in the covenant, God said, "I'm going to dwell with you, and I'm going to live with you."

Remember the Day of Atonement

How can a holy God dwell with a sinful people? Leviticus answers that question by saying, "Via sacrifice." There must be sacrifices to atone for sins. The heart of Leviticus, Leviticus 16, once a year, the Day of Atonement. *"This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work – whether native-born or an alien living among you – because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will then be clean from all your sins."*

So, here's what happened. In the Old Testament what we have is an old covenant provision, an annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. What you had was God dwelling among His people in the Tabernacle, and the way this whole picture worked was you had an outer court and inner court, and basically, the very core center was the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies, you had the law, and this was spelled out in Exodus 25. You had the law of the covenant God had made with His people, and over it you had the atonement cover or the mercy seat. You had this picture of God dwelling among His people.

Obviously, God is everywhere, He's omnipresent, but in a special way, His glory was dwelling among His people. The ultimate picture among His people is in the Holy of Holies. So, once a year on the Day of Atonement, a priest goes into the Holy of Holies – the priest entering an earthly sanctuary. The priest would wash himself. This is where we remember – if the priest treated this lightly, like Aaron's sons earlier in Leviticus, they get struck down. So, a priest enters that place, and it's intense. History tells us, Scripture tells us, the priest would have bells sewn into the hem of his garment so that when he went into the Most Holy Place, you could hear him moving around, and if the bells stopped ringing, you knew he had stopped moving. History tells us they would put a rope around his leg that would reach to the outside, so that if he went into the Holy of Holies and was struck down, they would be able to pull him out.

Can you imagine the intensity of that scene, sitting outside the presence of the dwelling of God with His people, and you're listening intently in silence for these little bells because a man is going to meet with God? He comes out, and everybody breathes a sigh of relief. A priest entering an earthly sanctuary. What he would do is the priest would go in, and he would take the blood of an animal, and he would do this twice. He'd do it once to atone for his own sins, and then he'd do it to atone for the people's sins, and he would sprinkle blood over the atonement cover so that, when the presence of God looked down and saw His law that had been broken, instead of seeing a broken law that resulted in condemnation of His people, He would see that that had been satisfied in the blood of another, and the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled over was a substitute for the people's sin. It would atone for their sins. The blood of a spotless animal, and it was a sacrifice that would need repeating. It was a sacrifice that would need repeating because they would do it every year, year after year after year. They would do it over and over and over and over again.

The old covenant effect was a reminder of all our sin. Hebrews 10 tells us that this is a reminder over and over again for the people of God, that they needed the blood of another to atone for their sins.

So, you come into the New Testament. We don't have an annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Instead, the new covenant provision: we have an abiding sacrifice in the death of Christ. We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Here are the new covenant elements. A priest entering, not an earthly sanctuary, but a heavenly sanctuary. Jesus did not enter into some place that symbolized the glory of God dwelling with His people. Instead, He entered into the very throne room of God in the presence of God, the heavenly sanctuary, not a copy of the true one, Hebrews 9 says. He appeared for us in God's presence, the blood, not of an animal, but the blood of a sinless man. He didn't offer the blood of another. Don't miss this. Jesus offered His own blood on the atonement cover so that, when God the Father looks at your life and my life, and He sees His law broken in your life and my life, instead of pouring out His judgment on us, He sees the blood of another. He sees the blood that has been offered on our behalf, and that's why Hebrews 10 says that our hearts have been sprinkled with His blood, and we are free from a guilty conscience, purified. We are able to enter into the throne room of God, and that's a sacrifice that will last forever.

The new covenant effect: the removal of all our sin, and what Jeremiah prophesied is true. Brothers and sisters, when you trust in the blood of Christ, He remembers your sins no more. You say, "But you don't know what I did last week; you don't know how awful that was." You are not condemned for that. You are not guilty. By the blood of Christ, you are not guilty.

Sacrifice: Jesus died our death

Sacrifice. This is the picture in the Last Supper – Jesus died our death. So, when we see in Matthew 26, Him saying, *"Take and eat, this is my body...drink from this cup; this is my blood,"* the picture is of a sacrifice. Remember the Passover. We are delivered by His blood. Remember the covenant. We are sealed by His blood; His relationship with us sealed by the blood of Christ, and remember the Day of Atonement. We are cleansed by His blood.

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