

Redemption as Propitiation

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Preacher: Bob Akroyd

- [0 : 0 0] In just a moment we're going to turn to the New Testament, but before we leave that passage that I read a moment ago, I want you to consider the context.
- If you think of a courtroom situation, I don't know about you, but I love courtroom dramas, in a court situation the prosecution always gets the first word.
- The prosecution gives the case against the defendants. The last word, of course, goes to the defendant or to the counsel for the defendant.
- And the case, as articulated in Isaiah 59, seems to be pretty strong. There's a detailed indictment against humankind.
- God is saying that he looks and what does he see? He sees people, and he sees people that miss the mark, that fall short of the standard. Their minds, their hearts, their lips, their hands, their feet.
- [1 : 0 5] So from the top of our head to the bottom of our feet. And he then goes on to say that he's looking for someone who satisfies his requirements and who might serve as a mediator to bring people together.
- And he looks at the human race, and he determines that there is none suitable. There is no suitable intercessor. No suitable mediator.
- So he concludes the chapter, again, God is speaking through his servant. He concludes the chapter by saying, I myself. God says that he must therefore be the intercessor.
- He must therefore be the savior. He must work righteousness himself. Because he's looking for a righteous person and finds none.
- So he says, I must be that righteous person. So if you turn with me now to the New Testament, near to the very end of the Bible. First John.
- [2 : 1 0] First John chapter 1. So John wrote the gospel. That has his name. John wrote the last book of the Bible, Revelation. And John wrote three letters in the New Testament.
- This is the first of those three. And John has a lot to say. And I want to read this portion from 1 John chapter 5. 1 John 1 verse 5.
- And down to chapter 2 verse 2. So 1 John, this is on page 1225. If you have the pew Bibles or it's on the screen there. And this is what he says.
- This is the message we have heard from him. And declare to you. God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him.
- And yet walk in darkness. We lie. And do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light. As he is in the light. We have fellowship with one another.
- [3 : 1 7] And the blood of Jesus, his son. And purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin. We deceive ourselves.
- And the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins. He is faithful. And just. And will forgive us our sins. And purify us from all unrighteousness.

If we claim we have not sinned. We make him out to be a liar. And his word is not in us. My dear children. I write this to you.

So that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin. We have an advocate with the father. Jesus Christ. The righteous one. He.

Is the atoning sacrifice. For our sins. And not only for our. Hours. But also for the sins. Of the whole. World. Amen.

[4 : 14] There are a lot of books. That are written. On the subject. Of leadership. One of the most. Published. And popular authors.

Is an American. Called John Maxwell. John C. Maxwell. And in one of his books. On leadership. He says. Life is a matter. Of choices. Choices. And every choice you make.

Makes you. Choices. And John. The author here. Who by this time. Is an older man. He's coming to the end. Of his time on earth. And he's wanting to pass on.

This practical wisdom. And sound. Direction. To his audience. And he says. We have a real choice. To make.

Now I don't know about you. But some of the biggest choices. Of my life. I made. With very little thought. I remember.

[5 : 12] A family friend. Said to me. Wouldn't it be interesting. Because he knew. I was interested in history. And I was thinking. About studying further. He said. Wouldn't it be interesting. If I had to do it. All over again.

I would love. To go to Scotland. And study Scottish history. Well that appealed to me. That sounds interesting. Never been to Scotland.

I know little or nothing. About Scottish history. So I thought. Well let me explore. So. I was living in Japan. At the time. And the. The British Council. Has offices.

In major cities. In the world. You go to the British Council. And they have all of these. Prospectuses. From all the different universities. And I looked on the shelf. And I. I found three.

And I thought. Glasgow. That sounds interesting. And Edinburgh. Yes. That seems like a nice place. And St. Andrews. So I applied. To these three. Universities.

[6 : 07] And I was accepted. I don't think I was accepted. Because I was particularly bright. But I was accepted. Because I said. I would pay the fees. And. As a rule. Universities.

Like fee paying Americans. So anyway. When it came time to choose. I've got three options now. Glasgow. Edinburgh. St. Andrews. Well I kind of used the Goldilocks approach.

I thought. Glasgow. Seems too big. St. Andrews. Seems too small. I'll go to Edinburgh. Having never been to any of the three places. A major life choice.

That I made. Honestly. As. With. About that. I didn't do much research. I didn't look into it very much. But I thought. Edinburgh sounds nice. Somebody told me.

There's a festival here. And there's a castle. What more could you want? Choices. Choices. And consequences. That happened to be the best choice.

[7 : 05] I could have made. But I didn't know it at the time. Now the Apostle John. Is telling us. That we have a significant choice. To make here.

In verses 8 to 10. He says there are two options. Verses 8 and verse 10. Put it this way. If we claim to be without sin.

Or verse 10. If we claim we have not sinned. So the idea here is. It wasn't me. I didn't do it. I. Don't need help.

Now. I've told you this. Many many times. But I work in our local prison. And I meet two categories of prisoners. I meet category one.

It wasn't me. I didn't do it. I wasn't there. The accusation is false. I was stitched up. And there's a good category.

[8 : 02] Of these guys. That I meet on a daily basis. Now. The sheriff. Or the judge. Or the jury. Obviously thought different. But they say.

I am not guilty. Another category of prisoner. Generally. The folks who have done. You know. Maybe these are the organized criminals.

Or the gangsters. When I speak to them. Yeah. I did it. How are you going to plead? Not guilty. But I did it. You get it. At least. You get the honesty.

Yeah. I did. Or maybe. I didn't do that particular. I've done a lot of other things. But I did do that. So you've got the two categories. You've got the one category. You said. It wasn't me. I'm not guilty.

But then you had the other category. That said. Yeah. I was caught. Bang to rights. Yeah. I knew what was wrong. It's an occupational hazard. And I was making so much money.

[8 : 56] That I knew. That if I got caught. I would have to pay the price. So John says. That's a real choice. That you. And I need to make. Because we can claim. To be without sin.

Verse 8. But if we make that choice. We are deceiving ourselves. We're not deceiving God. God can't be deceived. But we're deceiving ourselves. I'm okay.

I don't need help. I don't need forgiveness. Or the language of verse 10. If we claim we have not sinned. We make him out to be a liar. So not only can we deceive ourselves.

But we can pretend. Or make it out. As if God is lying. But notice the language of verse 9. This is the other choice. If we confess our sins.

You put up your hand. I did it. I'm guilty. That list of. That indictment in Isaiah 59. Which was so detailed. The words that you speak.

[9 : 56] The actions of your hand. The thoughts of your mind. The direction of your life. Isaiah is saying. The big problem. That you and I have. Is that generally speaking.

Our back is turned to God. Now. In terms of basic. Politeness. Or basic courtesy. If you're there.

I'm facing you. If I began to speak like this. This is. In any culture. That is impolite. That is contempt. I am demonstrating contempt.

If I turn my back to you. And attempt to have a conversation. That's an insult to you. And Isaiah says. That's what we're doing to God.

We are turning our back on him. And we are moving. In the opposite direction. So the choice here. Is. Is God.

[10 : 53] Correct. Is God. Correct. In his. Indictment. Is God. Correct. In his. Observation. Does he see. Things.

As they really are. We can claim to be without sin. And we're doing two things. We're deceiving ourselves. And we're saying. God. I think you're lying here. Or.

We can say. God. You're right. You're right. I am living. As if you don't exist. I am behaving. As if you don't matter. If we confess our sins.

We put up our hands. He. Is faithful. And just. And will forgive us. Our sins. And purify us. From all unrighteousness.

This is what he can do. This morning. I was speaking. 830 and 915. At Edinburgh prison. And I used. An illustration.

- [11 : 48] That I've often used before. I'll often use it again. Back in the 1950s. Late 1950s. Billy Graham. Was. A young. And a popular evangelist.
- He came from North Carolina. And he was driving through. One of the more rural districts. Of North Carolina. And he exceeded the speed limit. He was 10 miles over the limit.
- And he was brought before. The. Maybe justice of the peace. Or. The judge. The next day. And he appeared in court.
- And the judge. You know. Had the papers in front of him. And wasn't really looking up. And he says. Mr. Graham. You've been. You've been. You've been charged. With exceeding. The stated speed limit.
- By 10 miles per hour. How do you plead? Guilty your honor. Well. In light of your infringement. I will fine you. One dollar. Per mile.
- [12 : 43] That you exceeded the limit. Tells you how long ago it was. So. 10 miles per hour. Ten dollars. Ten dollars. Fine. But then the judge looked up.
- And he saw. The accused. Now the guilty. You see. You go from being accused. To being guilty. When you put up your hand. And say. I did it. You're no longer accused.
- You're guilty. He looked up. And he saw Billy Graham. He saw the famous evangelist. And he did something remarkable. He reached into his pocket.
- He took out his wallet. He took out a ten dollar bill. He attached it to. The court paper. And said. Mr. Graham. I have now paid.
- Your fine. And what I want to do. Is to take you out. For a steak dinner. You see. There was a. A penalty. Had to be paid. The ten dollar fine.
- [13 : 37] Had to be paid. And the judge. Paid it. For. For. The guilty. I was saying to the guys. This morning. I said.
- You might not have that experience. Of the sheriff. Or of the judge. But that's what grace. Looks like. Not only does the judge.
- Pay the fine. But the judge says. I want to take you out. For dinner. I want to. I want to. I want to celebrate. I want to entertain you. He is faithful. And just.
- And will forgive us. Our sins. And purify us. From all unrighteousness. Isaiah 59 said. God's looking for a mediator.
- But he doesn't find one. So he says. I will be that mediator. The Lord Jesus came on a mission. To seek and to save the lost. He came. As a human being.
- [14 : 31] God in the flesh. To do. What no other human being could do. To pay a price. To satisfy the debt. That was not his. So that the guilty.
- Could go free. You see. In a prison setting. That category of prisoner. That doesn't put up his hand. And say. I did it. There's not much you can do for them.
- It's not much. In the way of rehabilitation. It's. There's not much. In the way of. Of programs. There's not much. In the way. That you can help that person. Because the person said. I didn't do it. Now of course.
- It's possible. With human. Systems of justice. That innocent people. Can be convicted. Possible. Maybe I'm a bit cynical. But most people. I think.
- Have been convicted. For a reason. But you see. If you don't put up your hand. If you don't make this choice. God can't do much for you. If.
- [15 : 26] I haven't sinned. I'm not guilty. I haven't done. Well then. You know. When Billy Graham. Put up his hand. And he said. Yes. I did exceed the speed limit. By 10 miles per hour.
- I am guilty as charged. Then the judge. Could do something. When you put up your hand. To God. And say. God. You're right. I've not lived the life. I should have lived.

I've not. Spoken. Or acted. Or thought. In the way. I should have thought. So you've got a choice. You can claim. To be without sin. Or you can confess your sins.

Whatever they are. You don't need to confess them to me. But you say. God. You know. He knows anyway. He knows everything anyway. He knows our thoughts. Our words. And our deeds. If we confess our sins. He is faithful.

And just. To forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. So John says. You've got a choice. We all have choices. In that second part.

[16 : 22] Of that reading. God makes an offer. Through John. Through the writer. He says. I've got an offer. For you here. And this is a great offer.

You see. We're told. My dear children. I write this to you. So that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin. We have an advocate.

With the father. So if you are. A Christian. Tonight. You have an advocate. You have a spokesman. You have an intercessor.

You have a mediator. You have someone. Who stands up. On your behalf. Abraham Lincoln. My favorite. American president.

A man of great wisdom. He himself was a lawyer. He was a circuit lawyer. In Illinois. And he once said. A man who represents himself.

[17 : 20] Has a fool. For a client. You see. If you're. If you're accused. Of a crime. Or if you're accused. Of any sort of breach of the law. You do have the right.

To represent yourself. You can stand up. In the. Sheriff court. Or the district court. Or the high court. And you can be your own lawyer. As a general rule.

That's not a good idea. Because most of us. Are not well versed. In the law. Most of not. Us are not trained. In court procedure. Again. My experience.

Inside. Over the last 25 years. Or so. Is I've met. Several people. Who are. Who were looking forward. To their day in court. I said. So who's representing you?

I'm representing myself. I said. I mean. To myself. I said. That makes sense. You see. They want their day in court. They want to say. What they want to say. But it never works out well.

[18 : 14] Because they're not trained. Because they don't know the law. Because they're in a place. Where everyone else knows the law. But they don't. So as Lincoln said. If you represent yourself.

You're ultimately going to have a fool. For a client. But you've got a choice. You can engage. A solicitor. Or an advocate. In my work.

Over the years. I keep track. I keep track. Of who represents who. So I meet people. And you know. I'll just ask. Who is your lawyer.

And they'll list a defense firm. In town. Or in Livingston. Or wherever. So I've got a list. Of defense lawyers. In my head. Now if I ever get in trouble.

If I ever find myself. In need. Of a defense lawyer. I've got a list. Of lawyers. That I will not. Contact. You see.

[19 : 10] I don't want. A defense lawyer. Whose clients. Are in prison. I want a defense lawyer. Whose clients. Are out of prison. I want someone. Who can do for me.

What I need. To be done. And I said that. To the guys. And they said. That's what they all say. They. You. We'll get you off. And I said. What if you had.

A lawyer. Who has a hundred percent. Success rate. Oh they all say that. But none of them. Has a hundred percent. Success rate. But we have. An advocate. If you're a Christian. You have an advocate. Every case.

He takes on. He wins. Every case. He pleads. He's successful. My dear children. I write this to you. So that you will not sin.

But if anybody does sin. We have an advocate. With the father. Jesus Christ. And notice the description. The righteous one. Isaiah 59.

[20 : 03] God says. I'm looking for a righteous person. He finds none. He sends his son. Jesus. And Jesus. Is the righteous one. Jesus is the pure one.

Jesus is the good one. So not only does he satisfy God's requirements. But he's now suitable to satisfy our needs. Jesus Christ.

The righteous one. We have an advocate with the father. In court proceedings. Whenever your name is called. If the clerk.

Or the judge. Or the sheriff. Calls your name. You stand. It's a mark of respect. You stand up. Your name has been called. Robert John Aykroyd.

Please stand Mr. Aykroyd. I stand. Now I would have a solicitor. Or an advocate. And the first thing the advocate would say. Is I represent Mr. Aykroyd.

[21 : 00] Then the sheriff. Or the judge. Or the clerk of court. Says Mr. Aykroyd. You may sit down. Why? Because someone else is standing. You don't need to stand.

If somebody is standing for you. You don't need to speak. If someone is speaking for you. And that's what Jesus is offering. And that's what Jesus provides. He's the advocate.

He's the spokesman. We sit down. He stands up. When you place your case in his hands. When you place your life in his hands.

When you say I've got. I need help. Will you help me? He takes on that case. And he pleads. Not your goodness. But his.

Not your righteousness. But his. So there's an offer here. If you need help. He can help. If you need a spokesman. He can speak.

[21 : 55] If you need representation. He will be. That representative. And as I read in scripture. He has not lost one case yet.

And I don't think. Yours will be the first. So we have an offer of an advocate. And secondly. In verse 2 of chapter 2. We have an offer.

Of an atoning sacrifice. Now the language here is a bit complicated. But the idea is pretty straightforward. In the Old Testament. You had a sacrificial system.

You had holidays. You had feast days. You had celebrations. That took place in the tabernacle. Or in the temple. And these would involve sacrifice.

Generally an animal. Would be sacrificed. Its blood would be sprinkled. As a way by which. Sin would be atoned for. Now these sacrifices.

[22 : 53] In the Old Testament. Were pointing forward. To the sacrifice. The many sacrifices. Were pointing forward. To the one sacrifice. The language here.

Technically. Is a word. Propitiation. Propitiation. Means two things. First of all. Propitiation means. Anger. God is rightly.

Angry at sin. Sin is contrary. Contrary to his character. Contrary to his nature. Again. The idea of a person. Made by God.

For God. Who spends their entire life. Walking away from God. With their back toward him. He's angry with sin. And we understand that.

Don't we? You look at the newspaper. You look at the BBC News website. You look at what's going on. In our world. And you say. That's not right.

- [23 : 46] That shouldn't happen. People shouldn't treat each other that way. People shouldn't behave in that way. We feel anger. And we are limited. God is unlimited.
- He sees everything. He knows everything. And when he sees. Violence. When he sees oppression. When he sees abuse. He says.
- I am angry with sin. So propitiation. Is the fact that God is angry. But propitiation. Takes the anger of God.
- And turns the anger away. How is that possible? How can God. Who is angry at sin. Do anything. But.
- Express that anger. Towards sin. Well it brings us. Right back to Jesus. Because not only. Does Jesus stand up. And plead our case. As our advocate. Jesus takes our place.
- [24 : 43] As a sacrifice. As a substitute. He. Pays the price. He satisfies the debt. He bears the wrath. And the anger of God.
- Was it last Wednesday? Was Ash Wednesday? We are now in the season of Lent. We're looking forward. To. Good Friday. Easter Sunday. And we remember.
- That on that Friday. Jesus Christ. Died on the cross. He was verbally abused. He was physically abused. He. Bore the cost.
- Of our sin. On the cross. The anger of God. At sin. Was poured out. On him. Not because he had sinned. But because he took. Upon himself.
- The sin. And the guilt. And the shame. Of others. So not only does he stand. And plead your case. He takes your place. Satisfies your debt.
- [25 : 40] Pays the cost. Or the price. That is yours. To pay. He is the atoning sacrifice. For our sins. So you see. John wants his people.
- God's people. To know. That they are God's people. You've got an advocate. You don't need to speak. On your behalf. Let him speak. You've got a sacrifice. On a substitute. On your behalf.
- You don't need to do anything here. He's done it all. And therefore. We want to live lives. We want to live lives. That are characterized. By joy.
- Not despair. We want to live lives. That are characterized. By generosity. Not selfishness. We want to live lives. That are characterized. By love. And joy. And peace.
- And patience. And kindness. And gentleness. And faithfulness. And self-control. Rather than. The sinful nature. Or the way of the world. Or the evil one. We want to live in light of what he has done.
- [26 : 35] So we have one who speaks. We have one who acts. And if you're not yet a follower of Jesus. John says there's good news. There's good news for you.
- But there's good news for the whole world. Because the death of Jesus. And the resurrection of Jesus. Is a game changer. For me as a Christian.
- For you as a Christian. But it's a game changer for those who are not yet Christians. Because it opens the door. It puts out the mat. It says to people.
- Whoever. Wherever. Whatever. You can come. You need an advocate. You've got an advocate. You need a sacrifice or a substitute. You've got one.
- If you confess your sins. This morning I was speaking to a lot of guys. 33. 22 at the first service. 11 at the second service. Some of them I knew what they were in for.
- [27 : 29] Many of them I didn't know what they were in for. But I had every confidence to say to them. Whoever they are. Whatever they've done. If you place your trust in Jesus.
- He will set you free. He will forgive. He will restore. He will renew. That's his guarantee. He's the atoning sacrifice.

He's the propitiation. Not just for our sins. But for the sins of the whole world. He's paid a price. To set the captives free. And it's as if God is saying.

There's an open invitation. To anyone. To everyone. To the whosoever will. Why? Because God so loved the world. That he gave his one and only son.

That whoever believes in him. Whoever. Whoever. Anyone. Everyone. Whoever believes in him. Will not perish. But have everlasting life.

[28 : 31] So the choice is yours. Do you claim to be without sin? Or do you confess your sins? And the offer is there. Do you need an advocate?

Do you need someone who speaks on your behalf? Do you need a substitute? Someone that takes your place? Because when someone speaks. And someone takes your place. You have been released.

You have been set free. Those many years ago on that Good Friday. There were three crosses that were set up. Three convicted criminals. That were scheduled for execution.

But there was a late minute substitution. You remember Pilate. Pilate said to the crowd who were crying out for Jesus to be crucified.

He says let me make you a deal. You got a choice. There's Barabbas. And Barabbas was a nasty character. He was an insurrectionist. He was a murderer. Rioting.

[29 : 31] Here's a dangerous guy. So he says to the audience. The governor says you got a choice. You can have Barabbas. I'll let him go. Or you can have Jesus. I'll let him go.

What do we know about Jesus? Jesus did everything right. He healed the sick. Gave blind back their sight. He gave that deaf their hearing. He enabled the lame to walk. He even raised the dead. What did Barabbas do as far as we know?

Barabbas didn't raise the dead. Barabbas hastened the death of others. He caused the death. Jesus brought life. Barabbas brought death. Jesus brought happiness and harmony.

Barabbas brought havoc and destruction. And the crowd said away with this man, Jesus. Give us Barabbas. And Jesus was crucified on the cross that was scheduled for Barabbas.

He took the place of Barabbas. And Barabbas was set free. That's a visual illustration of what God does on the cross through Jesus.

[30 : 33] Our advocate. Our atoning sacrifice. The best advice I can give to you or to anyone else. If you're in trouble, get the best help you can get.

And there is no better helper. No better advocate. No better answer. Than Jesus Christ. The righteous one. He satisfies the requirements.

He speaks on your behalf. And he takes your place. So that you and I can go free. That's why we call the message of Jesus gospel.

It's good news. Good news for me. Good news for you. And good news for this world. May God bless his word to us.