

Preparing for the Lord's Supper

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Date: 06 December 2015

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and go to the book of Leviticus, Leviticus chapter 1, if you're visiting with us, there's a black Bible in the chair in front of you, if you pull that out, go right towards the beginning of the Bible and find page 74, page 74, Leviticus chapter 1.

I'm doing something a little bit different today. Here and there, what I might do, I'm doing it today, is we're going to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Not all the time will we do this, but when we partake of the Lord's Supper and we do that, excuse me, the first Sunday of the month, I'm going to do a message specifically geared towards the Lord's Supper.

I'm not going to do that all the time, but I thought here and there, I don't know, every other month or every couple months or something like that, I want to do that. So that way we're not just kind of blowing through the Lord's Supper, just to kind of prepare our hearts and actually have a message that's specifically geared towards the Lord's Supper.

And to focus us upon the Lord's Supper, the elements of the Lord's Supper, and specifically on the Gospel, to kind of get our hearts reminding us even more so of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ.

[1:33] So, thus, Leviticus chapter 1. What a fun passage to look at for the Lord's Supper. You might say I'm crazy, but you shall see there is a method to my madness. Leviticus chapter 1, I'm going to read the whole chapter, and then we will begin our study.

Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd of the flock.

If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect. He shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before Yahweh. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.

And he shall slay the young bull before the Lord. And Aaron's sons, the priests, shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces.

And the sons of Aaron, the priest, shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Then Aaron's sons, the priest, shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar.

[2:57] Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up and smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

But if his offering is from the flock of the sheep or of the goats for a burnt offering, he shall offer it, a male without defect, and he shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before Yahweh.

And Aaron's sons, the priest, shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet. And the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar.

The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it and offer up and smoke on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

But if his offering to the Lord is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from the turtle doves or from young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head and offer it up and smoke on the altar.

[4:00] And his blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar. He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward to the place of the ashes. And he shall tear it

by its wings, but shall not sever it.

And the priest shall offer it up and smoke on the altar, on the wood, which is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

Malston welcome signs are not welcome on state highways. This past week, city officials were trying to find private property to put new welcome signs.

If you go into Malston, Wisconsin, there are no welcome signs anywhere. Because you can't have welcome signs there. The Department of Transportation officials said their current signs aren't allowed on state property.

John Steiner, the Southwest Region's Operations Chief of the Department of Transportation, said a long-standing policy is the welcome to is considered an advertisement.

[5:11] So you can't have welcome signs. Welcome to our city. Isn't that silly? Malston had four signs created saying, Welcome to Malston.

Earlier this year, to put at the four major gateways to the community, they spent \$10,000 having the signs made. And they're really nice. You look on the internet, they're really nice looking signs. And then applied to the Department of Transportation to have them placed along state highways.

Malston City Administrator Nathan Thiel, he said this, Unfortunately, welcome is not an acceptable word. I wish I could explain more, but I don't understand it myself. So the signs are currently sitting in a public workshed, while the city figures out where they're allowed to put them.

I thought that was great. It's just so funny. The funniest things you can find on the internet. Just Google something. You'll find these weird newscasts. It's ridiculous.

Regulations on welcome signs? Now, not necessarily the case here, but it is good for us, personally, to be cautious with who we're welcoming.

[6:25] I mean, it doesn't necessarily apply to a city like, Welcome to Cottonwood. Welcome to Clarkdale. But for us, personally, we kind of do that, don't we? I mean, you don't put the welcome mat for a burglar to come in.

Come on inside. Come on inside. Help yourself. No, you don't do that. Last time I checked. A terrorist. You probably wouldn't welcome a terrorist into your home.

Probably not. Somebody's going to harm you or your family. You're not going to welcome them into your home. We have certain stipulations.

Does God have certain stipulations as well? Some people might say, No, God doesn't have any type of stipulations. Really? Are you sure?

Today, when we come to hear the book of Leviticus chapter 1, as we look at the burnt offering, the title for our message is this, God welcomes sinners into His presence.

[7:30] Yes, there's stipulations, but He's welcoming. He puts the welcome mat out to sinners. You like that?

He's giving amens to that. Amen. Blake's saying amen. God welcomes sinners into His presence. Leviticus, what is it about?

Leviticus is about how sinful people maintain their fellowship with the absolutely holy God. That's what Leviticus is about.

To have His presence, and to maintain God's presence. And His presence was there with His people in the tent of meeting, or the tent sanctuary, or what you may know as the tabernacle. So here you have the Almighty God, had just brought them out of Egypt, to Sinai, bringing them to Sinai, as their God, the enthroned King, whose glory filled the tent meeting.

[8:39] If we took time to look back at Exodus chapter 40, they finished establishing the tabernacle, building it, and God's glory filled the most holy place. And then you move here into Leviticus, and God says, I'm with you, here's my presence, but this is how you can have my presence, this is how you can maintain my presence.

With you, as my people. We meet with them there. In an ongoing reciprocal relationship, so holiness was crucial.

Respect was vital. Leviticus points us to the Lord Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all the requirements given in this book, Leviticus, judicially, morally, and of course, sacrificially.

That's how you can split up the laws in Leviticus. There are judicial laws. Laws of justice. There's moral laws, morality.

And there's sacrificial laws, or cleansing type laws. Sacrifice was needed as a way to God. Sacrifice was needed to put oneself in a right relationship with God.

[9:58] Those are the stipulations for His presence. For Him to welcome sinners. It shows us, we don't worship God on our terms.

People like to worship God on their own terms. It doesn't work that way around here. We worship God on His terms. And see, this is really the heart of the Gospel.

In the Gospel, you admit, I don't have the answers. I can't save myself. I should be condemned right now, because I'm a sinner.

So I come to you, God, on your terms. Please be merciful to me in Jesus Christ. That's the Gospel. Atonement is needed.

A substitute payment as a ransom. And it brought acceptance. Which we'll look at what that means. Forgiveness. Consecration. Purification.

[11:04] And the sacrifices given by the worshiper, they were not cheap. There was a cost. And yet there was a cost.

The material value of the sacrifice, that wasn't the thing that mattered to God. You didn't say, and you'll notice, when we come to the text, there's bulls, which is the most expensive type animal. Then you have goats, sheep, and then you have birds. So someone who had more money, they had bulls, and then kind of middle type person, sheep and goats, and then the really poor, they would do birds. But it didn't matter to God, the cost necessarily, that it has to cost you, like you have to do all bulls.

And he didn't do that. What mattered most to God, was the motivation of the worshiper. I'm coming to you, giving to you, knowing that I'm supposed to be the sacrifice.

And yet you're showing me mercy. People brought their animals for sacrifice, they killed them, they received atonement, so that the person may be accepted.

[12:12] Which we'll see what that means, in just a moment. So what mattered most to God, was the motivation of the worshiper. Now, so let's start in, I'm going to look at different points, within Leviticus chapter 1, and see the importance of it, looking at it through New Testament eyes, with our New Testament glasses on.

Burnt offerings, God's way to welcome sinners. Interesting, burnt offerings, is referred to more times in the Old Testament, than any other sacrifice.

Offerings are from the domestic herds. Bulls, goats or sheep, bulls, goats or sheep, or birds. It's what you owned. Because, you couldn't just get a wild animal, oh, look at that bull, let's get it, alright, I'm going to sacrifice that, you know.

You don't own that. It was a no cost to the worshiper. In other words, you're pulling out your wallet. I mean, they didn't have, you know, the US dollar was not very strong in those days.

So, you had bulls, and you had sheep, and goats, or you had birds. I mean, that's how you had your, retirement, so to speak. So, there was a cost to it.

[13:32] And this offering was unique to Israel. There's no precise parallels to the ancient Near East, with any other religions. And, the sacrifice was completely consumed.

That's why it's also known as the whole offering, or the whole burnt offering. Because it belonged to Yahweh God in its entirety. So, it was, and it was done, it was for repentance of sins done, with the desire to be purged.

It displayed one's dedication to worshipping the Lord God. Yahweh God. And you see from the text, it had to be male.

They were of great value, but they were much more expendable. It could only be the best. High value, high quality. Not, oh yeah, look at that thing, let's sacrifice that, you know.

No, it's not like that. Poor quality would be an insult to God. Showing an attitude of indifference, and also, you had to do it willingly.

[14:39] Showing an attitude of gratitude, and commitment. Now, I'm going to bring up two sub points to this, God's way to welcome sinners. First, God's presence constantly needed atonement, and then we'll look at God's presence constantly needed substitution.

God's presence constantly needed atonement. Look at verse 3. If his offerings are burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect.

He shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. Look at also verse 4. Lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.

That word accepted. The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, uses the word dektos, for this word accepted.

And it means, or describes, one of whom there has, or is, or has been, a favorable decision of the will. It conveys the picture, of an open reception.

[15 : 52] So the idea is this. One puts out the welcome mat at their front door. God welcomes sinners.

So what the Lord is saying to Moses is, when you give this burnt offering, so you've given it, so that way the Lord can put the mat out, open his door, and welcome you into his presence.

So get the idea of someone coming to your door, you don't have a welcome mat out. You say, oh, it's someone you want to have connection, relation with. You put the mat out for them.

You open your door, you welcome them, and come in. I want your presence. I want to be with you.

That's what God does with sinners. And the only way he can do that is through the burnt offering.

That's what the Lord is saying. And because of the Lord Jesus Christ, God welcomes you, sinner.

[16 : 58] God welcomes you, sinner. He welcomes, he puts his mat out to you, and he says, come, I want to have fellowship with you. I want your presence, and I want you to have my presence, because I will satisfy you.

Jesus is the soothing aroma to the Father, we'll see that in a moment, by whom he can have an open reception to sinners. His arms are open wide, wide open.

Unlike the God of Islam, which you never know if he's going to be forgiving or not. Unlike the other gods of the different religions, you have no idea how they're going to respond to you.

No, God has made it clear. Through the sacrifice, he welcomes sinners. It's made clear, when it says the offering is a soothing aroma, I'm going to look at that later on.

But notice how God welcomes people on his terms, are you here today, and you're not a follower of Jesus Christ, are you here today, and you've seen the gospel displayed, you're going to see it again displayed tangibly, physically, you're going to see it displayed, you're going to see how the Father sent his Son, Jesus Christ, who lived, who died, and who rose, that's what we celebrate, we celebrate this gospel truth.

[18 : 31] If you're here today, you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, you have not responded, you need to do that, you need to repent, turn away from your sins, and put all your trust in Jesus Christ alone.

And God will show you his grace. So there's an element, notice, of representation, of substitution. Bearing the person's judgment, in his place, that it may be accepted for him, so that God may welcome him or her, which leads us to the next second point, God's presence constantly needed substitution.

notice verse 4 again, the first part, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering.

Notice, the priest, wasn't the one slaying the neck, of that sacrifice. It would have been you. It would have been me.

When you were come to the tent of meeting, you were bringing your sacrifice, and you laid your hand, on the sacrifice. It's interesting, the word lay, means actually, laying.

[19 : 51] Implying dependence, ownership. So you would rely, on this offering, for acceptance, forgiveness, dedication, purification.

You would slay it. Interesting, the priest would be the one, to do it for the birds. But the idea is, it's a form of judgment. Condemned, condemned on behalf, of the worshiper.

You would cut its throat. This should happen to me. Animals, receive the judgment, of the worshiper. So you're coming, to the door, of the tent of meeting.

You're bringing your offering. You slay the neck. What should be happening to me, is happening to this animal.

What should be happening to me, is happening to this goat. The idea of substitution, it's getting what you deserve. It's getting what you should get.

[20 : 55] What these animals, were receiving, was exactly what the worshiper deserved. So that's why, you would lean on it.

You're leaning on the sacrifice. You're leaning on that sacrifice, saying, if it's not for this sacrifice, I'm going to be condemned. If it wasn't for the sacrifice, I have not God's presence with me.

That's of leaning. Animals, would be in the place of the worshiper. The same with Jesus. Sinner, he was the sacrifice for you.

Christian, he was your sacrifice. He was in your place. We lean on Jesus Christ. You can't lean on your works.

You can't lean on baptism. You can't lean on the fact, you're a good person. You can't lean on any of that. You have to lean on the sacrifice, totally. Notice, how Leviticus is doing this.

[21:59] It's pointing you to Jesus. It's pointing you to Christ. It's pointing you to his sufficiency. It's pointing you to the fact that only he can take away your sins. Do you see that?

So that way, when you are partaking of the bread, when you have this bread, and then when you are partaking of the juice, you lean. You lean upon the gospel.

And it's a tangible reminder, physical, that you touch it, and you taste it. It's a tangible reminder that I must lean on Jesus Christ.

Not on the pastor. Not on the fact that I'm a member of a church. Not on the fact that I'm coming to a church service. Not on the fact that I'm a good person.

Not on the fact that I do good things to people. But I lean on Jesus Christ alone. It's the only way. Notice, in verse 6, he shall skin the burnt offering, cut it into pieces.

[23:07] That's not the priest. I believe this is you. The worshippers doing this. The priest can't touch the unclean parts.

They cannot have contact with the holy. With the unholy, excuse me. There was no place for defilement in the tent sanctuary. Notice, verse 5, the priest shall sprinkle the blood.

Notice in verse 11, when the worshipper slays the animal, Aaron's sons, the priest shall sprinkle the blood. And with the bird there, in verse 15, they'll wring its head and offer it up in smoke and his blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar.

There's an element of blood to symbolize cleansing. To be welcomed and have atonements, it's a bloody gory job.

Can you imagine the blood that was everywhere in the tent sanctuary? Can you imagine that? I mean, animal activists would just die of heart attacks.

[24:15] I mean, seriously, this would just be an absolute gory thing to see. I'm serious. I'm not being facetious. I mean, it was. And notice too, verse 7, shall put fire on the altar and arrange the wood on the fire.

Notice in verse 12, shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that's on the altar. They arrange the wood for burning, never allowing it to go out.

This symbolized continual intercession or prayer to God on behalf of His people. The never-ending fire was also equivalent to the never-ending attachment to God.

You're always attached to Him. That's why the fire could never go out. And they would offer the burnt offering in the morning and the evening and the fire would never go out because you always have the attachment.

There's always an intercession for God's people and never cease so the fire must not go out which is why Hebrews chapter 7, verse 25, the writer of Hebrews says, Jesus safeguards His people because He makes continual intercession for us.

[25:29] He says, Father, I died for Daniel. He's clean. Father, I died for Travis. He's clean.

I died for that person. I died for Michael. He's clean. I died for Harry. He's clean. And notice verse 9, the end of verse 9, He offered it up and smoked all of it on the altar and offering by fire of a soothing aroma.

Notice verse 13, offering, offered up in smoke is a burnt offering and offering by fire of a soothing aroma. Notice verse 17, is a burnt offering and offering by fire of a soothing aroma.

And it was a satisfying, soothing aroma to God. smoke rising to heaven was that which pleased God.

Interesting how Paul picks up this understanding in Ephesians chapter 5. He says in Ephesians chapter 5, Be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

[26:59] So Jesus is the one. All of these, all of these look forward to fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ because in Him there's never any attachment to God.

In Christ Jesus you are continually attached to God. And because of Him God is pleased. Because of Jesus Christ God is pleased.

So that's why when we partake of the elements the elements don't do something to you but the elements point you to the sufficiency of Jesus. It points you to Christ.

It points you to the cross and it points you to His resurrection and it points you to the fact that Jesus will return. Nothing but promise. Feelings of pleasant sensation was stirred up in their King. Not merely because it smells good when you got that sirloin steak cooking on the flame. It smells good when you got the steak on there. No, not just that.

[28:09] Because God was impressed with the obedience of His people achieving His desired purpose. Atonement to dwell with God. Animal sacrifices in and of themselves gave no true complete pleasure to God.

Pleasure came in what the animals reflected and in who they anticipated the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the sacrifice of atonement who dealt with our sin.

He was the one who atoned for our sin. He's the one who's interceding for us. He's the one by which the Father puts the welcome mat out and says come on in and be with me.

That's why we read from Hebrews chapter 10 this morning. Going back there or forward whatever you get what I mean. Hebrews 10 verse 1 says the law since it is a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things can never by the same sacrifices year by year which they offer continually make perfect those who draw near.

In verse 4 it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. And yet he takes away the first in order to establish the second.

[29:41] By this will we've been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

But verse 12 but he having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time sat down at the right hand of God waiting for that time for his enemies to be made a footstool for his feet for by one offering he's perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Which is why we read we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way we have great high priest over the house of God let us draw near.

Come near. Come near to God. We are all welcomed into God's holy presence through the Lord Jesus Christ Jesus satisfied it all on our behalf all our sins are gone so now we can both enter God's presence.

I mean he has the welcome mat. And what's our first reaction though when we sin? Our first reaction is we run away. No.

[30:59] Don't run away don't run away from God. Run to God. Run to him saying it's because Jesus had to die thank you for that sacrifice I've sinned once again and thank you that the sacrifice is totally sufficient and you have the welcome mat out for me to come and enter your presence.

He wants your presence because you need his presence. Take a few moments ponder the gospel ponder what we've seen in the scripture I want you to ponder and even begin to prepare your heart we're going to prepare to take the Lord's supper and hopefully the message has directed you to the gospel has prepared your heart for the gospel when we take the Lord's supper together so I have you take a few moments of preparation then we'll do our time of giving and then I want to give some instructions for the Lord's supper and then I want us to then sing one of our songs okay so take some time to think and then we'll do our time of giving I want you to see you