

What a covering that will be. The fact that guilt is the subject of the text is obvious. Just pan your eyes down the page again as Paul read it this morning.

Guilt. Guilty. Guilt offering. Look for it. Number it. Ten times over. Where do we go with our guilt? [5:10] Guilt. Interestingly, the text divides easily into two units on guilt through this wonderful little phrase breach of faith.

Verses 14 to 19 open this way. If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the Lord, ah, now you're clued in.

And I'm dealing with guilt as a breach of faith concerning God. But then take a look down at 6.1. It moves. It's not only concerned with the things of God, but the way in which we treat one another.

6.1. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, if anyone sins and commits, here it is again, a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbor, well then here's what you do.

A breach of faith. Well, that's the consequence of guilt. Breach of faith.

[6:21] I love that little word. as a baby might be born breach. If you're not aware of what that is, that's just bottom first.

If a baby's born breach, bottom first, so Israel was now upside down with God. It was a breach of faith. As a whale breaches through the surface of the water for air, so Israel had broken through their place, their habitation with God.

As a warrior might breach a wall, so Israel had hammered their sinful way through a gap and trespassed onto God's holy ground with their sinful lives.

This breach of faith was something that Israel had committed. In order to have a breach of faith, in one sense, is to have a breach of contract, there was an agreement made, there was an offer extended, there were terms given, there was an acceptance of signature laid down, and then there was the breach along the way.

Exodus, the book before this, outlaid the offer in the law. God spoke and the terms were laid down.

The offer was that you're going to be my people. And here's the stipulation and the terms and in Exodus 24, two times over, the people are living in agreement saying, all that you've said will do.

[7:56] Where do I sign? And they signed. But by the time the contract came down to the people, the golden calf had already occurred. The behavior of the people had breached the wall, broken the surface, turned life upside down.

contract, damage is now needed. Where do you go with your guilt then when it's in that sense toward God?

Well, let's take a look. Verse 15, if anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the Lord, he's got to bring compensation and a guilt offering.

What are these holy things? Where can you and I go wrong with God? The holy things later in the book will be defined as all the offerings we've been reading about to this point but inappropriately brought before him.

It would be a burnt offering but your worship was deformed. It would be a grain offering of thanksgiving but you actually didn't bring him what he had given you to begin with.

[9:22] It would be a peace offering where you'd have fellowship with God but your life was out of fellowship. It could be a sin offering that you knew he was to take away but you wanted to walk into the table and into his presence with.

Whenever you breached faith whenever you didn't worship God the way he had prescribed well now you've got double trouble double trouble.

Even their worship was now going to require a further sacrifice a guilt offering. Did you ever think about that?

That God cares so much about how he's worshipped not merely that we worship. Let's just bring it forward because we're not walking things to the altar like a ram today.

I'll make a couple of assumptions here but I just want you to know that we should take care of how we worship God. He's prescribed in the Bible what he wants for us when we gather together and you should know that even in our constitution at Christ Church Chicago there's a charge to the elders of the church to order the service of worship in ways that what we do on Sunday morning are in order with what he wants.

[10:55] so in one sense we provide liturgy we provide an order to the worship but you need to know that the leadership of this church is prayerfully asking that all we do how bad it would be if even in our worship we were doing things wrongly.

So the Bible speaks about when the church family gathers for worship there's a public reading of scripture that's what he wants so that's what we do.

The Bible says that when God's people gather together there ought to be prayers offered that's what he wants so that's what we do.

The Bible says that the word of God ought to be at the center and that there ought to be a word from God for the whole family each week and it ought to be read and thought through and talked over and so that's what we do.

The Bible says that you ought to be singing to the Lord that every individual not just the ones here every individual ought to be led from the inside of their soul in ways that the words of their mouth match the music and the song to where we actually are offering worship to him so that's what we do.

[12:18] The Bible says that when you gather together there are times when you take the Lord's Supper so that's what we do. It says that people ought to be baptized when they begin to follow him so that's what we do because the last thing I want as your pastor is to stand every week and have to give a guilt offering for the worship service.

So if you're new to church or church gatherings you're like I don't get it. I walk into this place and they call us to worship.

They read the Bible and they read from I mean let's put it some of you are going home now and going man that church I'm going to now they'll read from anywhere. They preach and teach.

They sing. They pray. God takes seriously how we worship him and so I would just say this where do you go with your guilt even when you're you want to worship him and you're just not doing it right?

Go to church or I would say go to a church that is at least thoughtfully thinking through what are we doing when we're getting together. That's why this hour is unlike any other hour you'll spend all week.

[13:45] That's why it's strange. That's why it's different. That's why at times it's uncomfortable. God wants us to worship him well and so we try to order our service in that way.

Where do you go with your guilt when your worship is a mess? I go to church and pray that those people organizing it aren't making our mess even worse.

Verses 17 to 19 are especially interesting to me in regard to where you go with your guilt when you're feeling guilty but you didn't know what you were guilty for.

Take a look at this 17 to 19 if anyone sins doing any of the things that the Lord's commandments are not to be done though he did not know it then realizes his guilt he shall bear his iniquity.

He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish to the flock or it's equivalent for a guilt offering the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally.

[15:09] You know this gets back to sometimes the feeling of guilt. Man I feel guilty I just don't know what for. I'm not measuring up but I don't know what it is.

I'm falling short but I feel like I need to have some atonement made. These aren't the holy things but these are in some sense the unknown things.

I want to sit on this for a moment this unknown thing. It's fascinating to me. Are we to bring a ram time to atone for the things I'm not aware of?

No but it's going to take me a minute to explain. No it's going to take me three minutes to explain. You're going to have to stay with me. What takes place in Leviticus 5 and 6 is only the beginning moments in the story of the whole Bible on where we go with our guilt.

This is early in the story. You see God is a great storyteller and he puts things in here that will have greater significance as the story proceeds.

[16:37] Think about any great story writer. They preload their script with stuff that later is incredibly significant.

Anybody seen the movie *Wicked*? Come on. No? Who are you? What are you going to see these days? Yeah, so a couple willing to say, okay, I went.

Let me illustrate with *Wicked*. Early on in the story, Elphaba is thrilled when she learns about the prospect of being brought into the presence of the Wizard of Oz.

She is going into the presence of Oz and she sings. She sings these words, my future is unlimited and I'll stand there with the Wizard feeling things I've never felt and though I've never show it, I'd be so happy I could melt.

and the observant listener who knows the story later is amazed at the tragic irony of her phrase, when I get there I could melt because you know that later everything turns on her and the wicked witch will melt.

[18:04] See, that's preloading something in the script that has greater significance later on. God did that for you and me in the history of Israel and her people.

So the ram for unintended sacrifice actually is just an early indicator of what is going to happen when a person, not an animal, makes complete sacrifice.

And it's not going to be a tragic irony when Jesus dies on the cross. It's going to be dramatic irony that what a lamb or ram stood for here, his son completes there.

And so when you read the gospels, you're like, I got to go back and read Leviticus. Those things take on greater meaning. That's what's happening here as you read books like Leviticus.

You're early on in the story. In fact, there becomes a promise. You ought to see it. It's kind of fascinating to me. I saw it this week in Isaiah 53.

[19:14] It's a chapter that most people run to when you get to Good Friday. But if you know your Bibles at all, Isaiah is a prophet that comes after the writings of Moses. And he has a prophetic word that what's going on with rams and goats and lambs and bulls is going to be replaced with a suffering servant, a person who's going to become this offering on our behalf.

And Isaiah 53 not only talks about this suffering servant as being like a lamb led to the slaughter, but look at verse 10. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has put him to makes an offering for guilt. Same phrase as Leviticus 5 and 6.

The guilt offering in the ram is prophesied to become later in the story the guilt offering of the son, the suffering servant, so that when you get to the gospel, if you've never read it before, it's fascinating, you get John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets looking at Jesus at a distance and saying, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

So what happens is when he dies on the cross, he is the offering for all the things you did that you shouldn't have done and the unknown things that you couldn't get out from under the weight of.

[20:51] Now, some of you think, I'm not worthy to come to God through that. My guilt holds me, my guilt pins me.

If you knew, pastor, what I've done, if you knew what came to my mind later that I had even forgotten that I'd done, you would know that God won't take me.

But what the passage is saying is that even your guilt against the holy things of God or the unknown things of life, he's saying, my grace is sufficient for you.

It's amazing. No more self-deprecation and self-pity for any of us who say, my life is such a mess, God won't have me.

I'm not going to come to Jesus because I'm not worthy. And this happens by disposition too, right? For Christians and non-Christians. Oh my, I can't go back to God given where I've been the last four years.

[21:59] He's not going to take me. I'm not worthy. I have the guilt but I can't really ask him to be my offering.

And what this text is saying is, no, no, you go to the right place, you put your life under the right person. The Bible says, he shall be forgiven. So come.

See, Leviticus is an invitation to draw near. There was a poet, a long dead now, lived in the 16th century by the name of George Herbert.

I'm going to read three stanzas of his poem called love. And you're going to have to listen to it as an invitation to your soul.

If you are a non-Christian who feels Jesus won't forgive you, or if you are a Christian who feels, I've messed up so bad there's no way back, listen to this poem.

[23:09] You ready for it? Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed love, observing me grow slack from my first entrance in, drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning if I lacked anything.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here. Love said, you shall be he. I, the unkind, ungrateful?

Ah, my dear, I cannot look on thee. Love took my hand and smiling did reply, who made the eyes but I?

Truth, Lord, but I have marred them. let my shame go where it doth deserve. And know you not, says love, who bore the blame?

[24 : 20] My dear, then I will serve. You must sit down, says love, and taste my meat. So I did sit and eat.

That's the story of the Bible. Love bade you welcome. Love is bidding you welcome. I'm telling you this morning, God loves you in Christ.

He's willing to cover all the mess of your worship. He's willing to do something in his son through all the unknown things that you've done.

He's willing to take all the blemishes and the blots, the inappropriate burnt offerings, the thanksgivings that were never complete, the fellowship that was marred, the sin taken away that you picked up again, and he's willing to say, I got an offering for that too.

This is where you go with your guilt. Where do you go with your guilt? Go to a church that takes how he wants to be worshipped seriously.

[25 : 40] Where do you go with your guilt? Go to the cross where that sin has been taken fully, whether you feel it or not.

In one sense, you think, wow, the sermon must be done. He got to Jesus. Can't get any better than that. And unfortunately, that's the way a lot of people read the Bible.

Once you go to Jesus, then they think he is nowhere else to go with your guilt. But interestingly, the text is escalating in its answer.

I got to get to the right place. grace. I got to go to the right person, but grace requires something of me as I walk out the door.

See, a lot of people think, hey, Jesus did it. I'm good. The text now actually says, whoa, time out. One more thing.

[26 : 47] man, you're not good with God until you get good with those you offended. Did you see that in the text?

Let's go there. Because this means ethics are yet important, even though grace has taken hold. Look at the language of the text in verse 15. He shall bring to the Lord as his compensation. There's some compensation that God be made.

Verse 16. He shall make restitution. And he's actually got to add a fifth. Like, this is like compensatory damages in the court of law.

Like, you do something, you got to make them right, and you got to make it right for the opportunities you took from them when it wasn't right.

[27 : 53] So you got to actually add something on your reparation, on your restitution, on your compensation. It goes on.

Different times. It will talk here about what you have to bring something to restore. Verse 4 of chapter 6. You got to restore things.

Again, verse 5. You got to restore things. Again, verse 6. He shall bring to the priest as his compensation things. There it is right there. Compensation, restitution, restoration, restoration, compensation.

It's great that Jesus will forgive you, but you got to live in the power of Christ and make things right with others through you. It's not good enough just to go, you know, I know I screwed up your life.

Thank God Jesus forgave me. Hope you have a good rest of it. In fact, the text actually highlights four ways that we mess with other people that need restitution.

[29 : 06] Just take a look. this little word or keeps coming, but look back at chapter 6, the opening verses. You've got to make restitution when you've deceived your neighbor in a manner of deposit or security or through robbery or if you oppressed your neighbor or if you found something lost and lied about it swearing falsely in any of all things that people do and sin thereby.

There's four things there. I mean, you've got to go make things right if you kept something that belonged to someone else, if you stole something that never was your own, if you withheld something that you should have given, if you found something and then swore as though it was going to be yours when it was actually somebody else's.

I mean, that's what is there in the text. The principle then of life for any who have come to the cross, anyone who finds forgiveness in Christ, you are under an obligation to make things right.

Let me just get it down there where I can grab it on the kitchen table. You cannot make things right with God ultimately until you make things right with the one you offended.

You're not good until you can look at someone and say, you good now? Did I make you whole? That's the work that we have to do.

[30 : 50] Now, if you want an example for it, there's one in the New Testament, there's a little short guy, came to church one day, had to sit in the back row, but he liked the incline because he was able to see Jesus from where he was.

If he got down too front, he wouldn't have been able to see him, but he stayed in the back where the sight lines were higher and he could see Jesus. And Jesus says, hey man, I'm coming to your house for dinner today. His name was Zacchaeus.

Now, this guy had collected money. He was a tax collector. He was a revenue man. You've seen the vans in the city? City of revenue. I don't like seeing those vans drive by my car. I'm waiting to see.

Don't get that big yellow thing out and put it on my tire. I see those little signs now, you know. Camera ahead. Those are revenue guys. Zacchaeus was a revenue man.

He had cameras everywhere, even where he shouldn't have had them. He was putting the boot on everything he could get. And he was taking more money in return than he was supposed to. And yet Jesus came to him and Zacchaeus had become very wealthy by robbing, by stealing, by deceiving, by withholding, by taking.

[31 : 51] And what happens is after he meets Jesus and gets grace, he also goes on then and makes restitution. This is his word on a lunchtime with Jesus that changed his life.

Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I've defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.

I mean, he went even beyond the fifth. This dude must have really been in the trenches of other people's money. But the sign that forgiveness is authentic and that repentance is real is the effort to go make it right.

so here it is. Where do we go with our guilt? We go to church or a church that's trying to worship well so they don't add confusion to my already messed up life.

We go to the cross because that is where guilt is washed away and I find that his mercy is more than all the sins I've made.

[33 : 10] And then we go to one another and we say, hey, I threw you under the bus. I'm responsible to help you get out.

I didn't do right by you. I want to make it right. I feel good with God, but I got to know, are you good? Are we good? When the church lives in that way, great things happen.

and what happens then in this text is you need to know your guilt cannot extinguish the flame of God's mercy. He made a way.

He gave Israel a way. And you know a better way. He has a plan on how you can draw near.

[34 : 13] I mean, the question has to be asked, what love would render no wrongs, all the things that we've done?

What patience has he made with us? Praise the Lord. God's mercy is greater than than your sin and the consequence of it, your guilt.

And if that doesn't send you out on a good note, well, I got nothing else for you today. Our Heavenly Father, thank you again for this old and ancient book called Leviticus that helps God's people, Israel, learn what is needed to draw near to you.

And Lord, as they have learned now through these chapters, that they can draw near to you through a burnt offering that honors you.

That they can draw near to you through a grain offering that gives thanks to you. That they can draw near to you with a peace offering that has fellowship with you.

[35 : 39] That they can draw near to you as their sin is taken away from you. Lord, today that we can draw near to you even though guilt is great.

What then a joy for us to give our lives to you and to give them to one another. In Jesus' name, amen.