

Why Christians don't Give up

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, well, we are gathered to be able to hear from the Lord, from his word. He has given to us a perfect treasure of all of his, all the thoughts that we need to know.
- And we're going to begin by reading Leviticus 16. It's 34 verses. This is a kind of a long read. So before we start reading it, number one, get comfortable.
- Number two, think of this. You know, if you were to go back in the days, I remember we were getting instructions on how to take the California Achievement Test.
- And I don't know why we were taking a California Achievement Test. I lived in Texas. That made no sense. But the instructions came at us like this. Okay, you're going to need two number two pencils, an eraser.
- You're going to need some sheets of paper. And after they said that, then they said, now you're going to use your number two pencils to color in the circles. But if you mess up, you use the eraser to erase that.
- [1 : 0 3] And you've got the paper there in order to work out some things. And so when you color in a circle, you need to color it all the way in. And if you're going to erase it, you erase the whole thing.
- Now, if you'll think about what I'm saying with these directions, I started by telling you everything you had to have. And then I told you what you had to do. And then I told you again what you had to do. But I got more detailed each time, right?
- When we read from chapter 16, he's going to tell you things. And then he's going to repeat it. And you're going to be kind of like, whoa. You need to understand these as instructions and not a chronological order of happenings.
- Okay? If you think to yourself, chronological order as I'm reading this, you're going to be like, wait a minute. Where is he? What's he doing again? It can get confusing.
- So it's more like instructions than it is a chronological order. So Leviticus chapter 16, beginning in verse 1, it reads this way. And the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, and when they drew near before the Lord and died.
- [2 : 0 9] And the Lord said to Moses, tell Aaron, your brother, not to come at any time into the holy place inside the veil before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.
- For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. Now, let me just pause. If you were here last week, I kind of walked out the tabernacle for us, and right here was the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat right here.
- Right? So this is where he's talking about. Don't come into here, because I'm going to come in the cloud and dwell here. Right? Verse 3. These are the holy garments, not to be confused with the other garments.
- He shall bathe his body in water and put them on, and he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.
- Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

[3 : 31] And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and use it as a sin offering.

But the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself.

And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small. And he shall bring it inside the veil and put the incense on the fire before the Lord that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony so that he does not die.

And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side. And in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

[4 : 49] Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

Thus he shall make atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleanness.

No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the holy place until he comes outside and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.

Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar all around.

And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the people of Israel. Now we're verse 20.

[5 : 53] Are you with me? Okay. I told you to get comfortable. And when he has made an end of atonement for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat.

And Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their transgressions, all their sins.

And he shall put all them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the holy place and shall leave them there. And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.

And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. And he who lets the goat go to Azazel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and afterward he may come into the camp.

[7 : 09] And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place shall be carried outside the camp. Their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned up with fire and he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and afterward he may come into the camp.

And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month on the tenth day of the month you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you.

For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you and you shall afflict yourselves.

It is a statute forever. And the priest who was anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement wearing the holy linen garments.

He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. And he shall make atonement for the priest and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be a statute forever for you that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.

[8 : 31] And Aaron did as the Lord commanded Moses. Let's pray. Father we do thank you for your word and we confess that we often read your word in certain places.

And it's hard for us to understand, to grasp, to follow sometimes. Not all things are equally clear to all people. And so we pray that today you would give us clarity.

You would illuminate our minds. You would help us to understand what this passage means. And how it ought to form up in our own lives. Help us to know what we ought to believe.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. If I have to put something together.

If I had to follow this. And I'm just given written instructions. I would struggle. I would struggle. But if you give me a picture of what it's supposed to look like, I can do a lot better with that.

[9 : 44] And as we think about the book of Leviticus for the nation of Israel. And we think about as Christians in the New Testament era. And we say to ourselves, what are we supposed to do with this?

It really does put a picture for us to be able to see. So that we know what we ought to do and live. And so here's what I want to do with this.

I want to talk about the ritual for a second. And just lay out some facts about the ritual that's happening here. Give you some facts and give you the chronology. Then I want to talk about what the Israelites were supposed to learn from this particular ritual.

And then I'm just going to end with what are the lessons that you and I should learn from this as well. So this is a ritual that was a single day. It was in the seventh month in the time of what's called the Feast of Trumpets.

Okay, the Feast of Trumpets. The Feast of Trumpets is talked about in Leviticus chapter 23. You can go read that. And this was going to be the tenth day of the seventh month. And so it's towards the end of the Feast of Trumpets.

[10 : 49] And this is the day on your calendar that's called Yom Kippur. You ever seen on a calendar that you bought at the store and it's got this little place that says Yom Kippur. Yom is the word for day and Kippur is atonement, right?

So this is the day of atonement. And following this Feast of Trumpets and Yom Kippur is going to be the Feast of Booths, right? The Feast of Booths was this festival that they celebrated as they came out of Egypt that they lived in tents the whole time.

This particular one day is here because you'll remember back in verse 1 and 2 of what we just read, this was happening because Nadab and Abihu had just been struck dead in the tabernacle.

As a matter of fact, the chronology of things is such that chapter 10 should be immediately followed by chapter 16 in terms of action. These men go in, they are struck dead, they're brought out.

The men are supposed to complete the service that they're doing and then they're supposed to go into this day of atonement because now everything's got to be cleansed. The people have sinned. These dead bodies in the tabernacle have made the tabernacle unclean.

[12:00] And everything has got to be cleansed. And so that's sort of the narrative connection between these two things. Chapter 11 through 15 is put in between there in order to give us a sense of the importance of chapter 16, which we'll come back to in just a second.

But here's how this was going to play out. This is sort of the chronology of this ritual, if you will. The priest, who's normally dressed in his fancy clothes, right? You remember his fancy clothes, very opulent, very luxurious, lots of gold, filigree and those kinds of things and jewels.

He was to take that off and he was to put on a linen coat, linen undergarments, linen sash and a linen turban. In other words, he dressed like a slave.

He dressed like a common person. Okay? Once he got dressed, then he would bring incense into the Holy of Holies. Remember, we talked about that there is this cube-shaped room here, the Holy of Holies.

And the only thing in here is the Ark of the Covenant. Right? And on the Ark of the Covenant is a mercy seat. The mercy seat is basically made up of two angels that face one another with their wings stretched out, almost touching.

[13:16] And this lid could be lifted off. And inside the Ark was a copy of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's staff that budded.

Now, if you don't know the story behind Aaron's staff, don't worry about it. It just budded out with these flowers and that kind of a thing. But the Ten Commandments are there. Right? And it is in this place that he's coming to offer incense.

Now, there's a veil right here. Nobody can come into this room except the high priest one time a year on the Day of Atonement. And he's bringing the incense so that it fills this room up with smoke so that God doesn't see the man and the man doesn't see God.

Now, if you read Hebrews chapter 9, you're going to see what sounds like a contradiction. Because outside this veil, there's the altar of incense, the table of showbread, and the menorah.

Right? The candlestick. In Hebrews 9, it tells us that this altar of incense is inside the holy place. And here's why I think that is.

[14:19] I think on the Day of Atonement, they actually pushed this thing inside of here in order to burn the incense. Because it says there that he takes the incense and puts it on the fire. Right? And so, anyway, the point is that there's incense in this room and there's smoke in this room.

It's filling it up so that God doesn't see the man and the man doesn't see God because no one can see God and live. Right? Okay.

Okay. Well, then, after sacrificing the bull and the goat and all these other things, he brings blood in to the tabernacle. And he comes through the veil up to the mercy seat.

And it says that he sprinkles the blood seven times in front of it. And then he says on the east side of it. That's not two different places. That's the same place. Okay?

So, as he walks up to it, he's walking and he's facing the front of the ark. And the ark is facing east. That means he's facing west.

[15 : 18] That's right. Which way am I facing right now? I'm facing west. Right? So, if we were to line this out the right way, this really should be down that way.

Right? And I'd walk up to it and that's what he would do. All right. Then he would go out to the people and they would have two goats. And these two goats, one would be slaughtered and the blood taken back into the tabernacle for the blood to be sprinkled there.

The other goat sins, confessed on it, and this goat was taken out into the wilderness. Okay? We'll talk more about the goat here in just a second. Then the priest would go outside the tabernacle.

Okay? So, he's been inside the Holy of Holies twice. He goes out the second time to the altar, taking the blood and cleansing the utensils of the tabernacle.

He does the altar that's out there, making sure that that is cleansed. And then he would change his clothes back into the opulent, luxurious, high priestly clothes.

[16 : 21] He would take then the fat of the bull and the goat and offer it as a burnt offering on the bronze altar, while someone else took all the other carcasses and go outside the camp and burn it up so that it's no longer used.

That's what the Day of Atonement was. Okay? Now, I mean, that's kind of a strange thing. It's not something that we would do. I mean, you know, it's not really a barbecue, but it's kind of close to that, sort of.

The big question is, what was the purpose of this for the Israelites? What were they supposed to get out of this? What were they supposed to learn? What were the things that they needed to understand from this?

And there's three things that I want to point you to. The number one is that it was for cleansing. It was for cleansing. That's what this was all about. It was for cleansing. It was to cleanse the priest, the tent, and the people.

Once a year, after the tabernacle existed among God's people, because, remember, this tabernacle sits in the middle of the camp, right? You got three tribes here, three tribes here, three tribes here, and three tribes there.

[17 : 25] And they surround the tabernacle. And so because it lives among them, it's going to become unclean because of their uncleanness, because of their sin.

And so the cleansing has to be for the tent, it has to be for the priest, and it has to be for the people. And you got to remember that you got two things sort of going on at the same time that make it a little difficult for our minds to grasp, right?

Because when we talk about things being unclean, and you think about last week, there's a sense in which being unclean is about just a ritual state, right?

A ritual state is that I'm not appropriate for this moment of worship. It's kind of like if a bride showed up at her wedding in overalls instead of a white dress. Okay, maybe that would work in some places, but you understand what I'm saying.

That's really, you kind of look at that and go like, that's weird. That doesn't really match. Our culture doesn't have rituals, so to talk about someone having a ritual state just sounds weird.

[18 : 25] But the reason that they have the ritual state, the reason God put that on there, and the reason he could tell them, listen, you're unclean, is not because he's going like, you're a bad guy, woo-woo, kick you, you know, whatever.

It was because he wanted them to learn and understand something significant about sin, right? So it's an image of sin. So the tabernacle being unclean is an image of that anything that we do in this world is always going to be tainted with sin because this is a fallen world.

So for it to be cleansed is to show that God is coming to cleanse things and that he and he alone can cleanse the priest, the tent, and the people.

The second thing that it should have shown them is it should have shown them something of their duty before God concerning their sin.

And it's really fascinating to me that when you read verses 29 through 34, they're basically told to do two things. They're told to afflict themselves.

[19 : 35] He uses that word afflict themselves. The word afflict here is the idea and the concept of fasting, okay? They were supposed to fast. This fast and almost all Old Testament fasts, there's a couple of exceptions, but almost all Old Testament fasts were to mourn over your sin.

It was a visible sign of mourning and grief because of your sin, right? So they were supposed to fast, but then they were told to rest.

They were told that this was a Sabbath of solemn rest. So what their duty was on the Day of Atonement was to sorrow over their sin and watch their high priest go get atonement for them.

You just, I think that's rich. I think that's really cool. And maybe it won't hit you just yet, but maybe it will in a second. Their duty over their sin was to sorrow over their sin and rest while their high priest went to go get atonement for them.

That's just a beautiful picture. That was their duty, to mourn and to rest. But the third thing that should have occurred to them is that this was about a cosmic plan.

[21 : 01] You see, this is the first time that they're doing the Day of Atonement. This is the first time the tabernacle's been put together. It's the first time it's really been used. And as they look at the tabernacle, as they look at the priest, as they look at all the things that are going on, the Israelites should have immediately began to think about the past.

They should have been thinking about all kinds of things that had come on before them that Moses had been trying to teach them as they were going through the wilderness. And what were these things?

Well, it's this idea that there's this promise that they're all waiting on, the promise that God himself, by the seed of the woman, is going to crush the head of the serpent. That God, by himself, is going to restore the broken relationship between humanity and himself as the seed of the woman crushes the head of the serpent.

It was this promise of this Messiah, this one who would be giving them relief from the land. It was this promise of this one, the seed of the woman, who's the promised one, who would then be worked through the family of Abraham.

And Moses eventually tells us that this man will be a prophet like himself, yet God's people would listen to him. This cosmic plan, as it centers on and is founded on this promise of the one who crushes the head of the serpent, the people should have recognized that there's something going on here.

[22 : 28] As a matter of fact, looking at the temple should have reminded them of the Garden of Eden. Well, let me just show you how, right? So first of all, both the temple and the Garden of Eden were the place that God met his people.

That was the place that God met his people. Both in the garden and in the temple, Adam and the priest were given duties, right?

Remember the garden? Adam was given duties. What were his duties? To work and to keep the garden. Those are the exact same Hebrew words used to describe the duties of the priest.

When it talks about service, when it talks about worship, it's the words work it and keep it. So their duties are identical. The other thing is that once they've sinned and they're outside of the garden or they're outside of the tabernacle, the way back in is guarded by cherubim and a flaming sword to the garden.

And in the Holy of Holies, you've got cherubim all in that Holy of Holies guarding the way in. Where does the sacrifice take place?

[23 : 40] In the garden? No. In the Holy of Holies? No. The sacrifice takes place outside and can then be brought towards. And here's the thing.

Both the garden and the tabernacle are facing east. And to get to God, the priest, whomever, has to go west.

All I'm saying is this. I'm not saying that the garden is the temple. I'm saying that the garden foreshadowed a temple. And the temple that they're seeing in front of them, as they're seeing this, they should have been reminded of what has transpired and gone on before.

Which tells them there's something bigger going on than just what's right in front of me. Not only that, but then they should have been thinking about every person in every generation.

These men were all priests. Adam served as a priest. And I want you to think about this. Adam was a priest in the garden. And could have interceded for his wife when she ate.

[24 : 49] But instead of taking up the priestly duty, he rebelled and went a different direction. You can see Job.

Right? Job was a priest for his children. You can see Noah as a priest for his children. You can see Abraham as a priest as he offers up his son.

And Moses serves as a priest. And as they look at these priests and they look at this priest in front of them and they think about all these men, they should have realized the priest is like me.

The priest is like me. He's dressed like a commoner, like a slave. And he represents me. And he represents me.

The point is, is that as they looked at this, they should have understood there's something of a cosmic plan, something of a cosmic scale that's going on that should have made them realize that they're participating in something that is beyond themselves.

[25 : 54] As we look at the book of Leviticus, we have the final revelation from God. And one of the things that maybe you don't know is the Day of Atonement is the center of this part of Old Testament history.

And what I mean is this. Leviticus is not only the center book of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, but chapter 16 is the center chapter.

Meaning that everything that's happening from Genesis to Deuteronomy is aimed at and getting us to and funneling us down to the Day of Atonement.

This moment that points forward to Christ. Well, I find all that super fascinating.

I hope that it kind of begins to thrill your soul a little bit. But without taking that truth and making application of it to our hearts, that's all it is, is fascinating.

[27 : 01] So I want to turn now then to talk about the lessons that we need to learn from this. And I want to begin by just laying out a big picture truth that you already know.

We're just going to confirm it. And then I want to take that big picture truth and I want to apply it to non-Christians and to Christians. The big truth is given to us in the verse that was playing a while ago, Hebrews chapter 9, verse 11 and 12.

And let me just tell you something. Go read Hebrews chapter 9 today. You'll be amazed at how many connections there are to what we're talking about here. But in verse 11 it says this, But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is not of this creation, He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, and here's the point, securing an eternal redemption.

Now the truth is this, is that Christ fulfills this day of atonement. He is the high priest. He is the sacrifice. He is everything we need of the day of atonement for ourselves.

He goes to secure an eternal redemption for us, meaning that He's the sacrifice that cleanses us. He's the high priest that mediates for us.

[28 : 32] He's the center of God's cosmic plan, bringing to us the promise to destroy the serpent. And He is the one who put on clothes just like us to come dressed, representing us before God.

That's the truth of this, is that Christ is our, He is our day of atonement. He is our high priest. So here's the question. How does that truth, how does that, how does it get applied to somebody who's lost, somebody who's not a Christian?

Well, it starts by understanding your sin. I mean, if you don't understand that you're a person who has sinned before God, then you can't really understand what it is to be saved.

And to sin, you know, there's a lot of people that like to define sin, but the Bible defines sin as lawlessness. Lawlessness is the idea that we have broken God's law. We have not done the things that He's commanded us to do, and we've done those things He's commanded us not to do.

And all you have to do is think of the first greatest commandment, right? What did Jesus say is the greatest commandment? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

[29 : 51] And here's the thing. Have you ever had a moment in your life that you loved something else more than God? If you're a Christian, I know that you're sitting there going like, oh, yeah, I sure have, because you know your own heart.

But the problem is, is that if you're not a Christian, you might think to yourself, well, no, I love God. Yeah, I love Him, I love everything. But the truth of the matter is, is that you don't. To love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind means that there's not a single nanosecond and a single breath of life that is not fixated and loving God with every fiber of your being.

Then nothing else becomes more important to you than Him. No family, no reputation, nothing. He is your all in all.

And Paul tells us in Romans that none of us are righteous, that none of us seek for God, that we've all turned away. And unless you're convinced that you have personally broken God's law, unless you're convinced that you have personally become unclean by your sin, you will never be cured, saved, rescued, or redeemed.

And when we don't love God the way that we ought to, even if you could love Him the way you should for all of your life, but you had one moment that you didn't, because God is of infinite value, that one time is worthy of infinite punishment.

[31 : 28] And what will you try to use to pay God back for that sin? I mean, there's nothing. The only thing that He will take in payment is infinite righteousness.

And the only way that we can have an infinite righteousness is if we have the righteousness that belongs to somebody else. And when we confess our sin and we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, He gives us that righteousness.

And so I say to you today, if you're not a Christian, surrender to the Lord, confess your sin to Him, trust in Him, ask Him to save you, be covered in His righteousness, because without that, there is no salvation.

But we need to apply this to Christians, and we need to really sort of grapple with this for just a little bit. Because as I think about this, and I think about what good is the Day of Atonement to us, what good is going back over again, that Christ is our sacrifice, He is our High Priest.

As Christians, why do we need this again? Because so often, when we think about Jesus dying on the cross, we just think about somebody going to heaven, right? We just think about somebody who was lost, now they're saved, now they go to heaven.

[32 : 54] So what can you really say to me again as a Christian that makes me kind of say, I love the cross, right? And there's this passage in Galatians that I want to turn to, and it's Paul talking about not growing weary.

He says, let us not grow weary of doing good. I just want you to think about that for a second. Let us not grow weary of doing good.

We're going to reap if we don't give up, right? But just the very thought that it's possible for us as Christians to grow weary of doing good.

Have you ever been weary of doing good? You know, good is not defined by us as to what we think is good, but good is defined by God.

Some of the things that I think God would say are good things are things like fighting against our sin, right? There are certain sins that you and I have, things that we know that we're more prone to do than other things.

[34 : 07] And because of those things, we try as Christians to fight against those things, but sometimes the fight gets tiresome. And it gets tiresome and discouraging for certain reasons, and those reasons are different for each of us, but we find ourselves sometimes in the place of going like, what's the use in keeping fighting this thing because I keep doing it over and over again?

Or maybe it's trying to really obey God's word, right? I think that's a good thing. I think that Paul would agree with us that obeying the commandments of the Lord is a good thing.

And sometimes the commands that God gives us throughout Scripture, I mean, it puts us contrary to the world around us. I mean, just think about the number of people that if you were to really live out the truths of Scripture and the commands of Scripture as they are, how many people might say things to you that like, well, you're a misogynist, or they might say you're just outdated, or they might say, well, you're just a no-accounter, you're just not a very smart person or whatever.

I mean, the world around us presses in on us and tries to get us to not obey these things. And when we even have family who would press against us in obeying things that are in the word, I mean, we can grow weary.

Constantly defending ourselves, constantly defending God and His honor because people call it into question, yeah, we can grow weary of being obedient to the Lord.

[35 : 37] You know, the Scriptures tell us that we're to love our enemies. We're to love our enemies. I think Paul would say that would be a good thing. Have you ever grown tired of loving your enemies?

I have. Because, you know, in your mind, maybe not your mind, because you guys are a little bit sharper than I am, but in my mind, I think this. I think to myself that if I love my enemies, it's going to have an impact in them, and it's going to, like, change their perspective and change their heart, and we're going to see some progress happen.

But when I love my enemies, guess what? They don't care. Like, it doesn't seem to have any kind of impact at all, and so I think to myself, why in the world would I keep doing that?

I mean, I can go fight my sin and live in obedience and just sort of cut myself off from the world, find myself a little place to go hermit up and just be done with humanity. And then it'll be easy to love my enemies because none of them will be around.

None of them will be around. Or maybe being able to count it all joy when we encounter trials of various kinds. Suffering.

[36 : 54] Suffering's tough. And we're supposed to handle suffering a certain way according to the Scriptures, and I don't know about you, but sometimes wave after wave of suffering, I find myself going like, well, you know, I was good the first time, but like, we're doing this, we got two or three more waves that have come, and I'm just tired.

I don't have anything left. I don't have anything left in me to be able to fight against this suffering and not get discouraged because of this. And I don't know about you, maybe you're somewhere on this scale, right?

Maybe you're at the place where, as a Christian, you know if you were to die today, you're going to heaven. So I'm talking to Christians. Do you know that in maybe one of these ways or other ways, you've actually just given up?

You're so weary, and you're so tired of fighting, and you've just kind of given up on one of these things. Or maybe, as a Christian, you haven't given up on doing the thing.

You're doing the thing externally, but your heart's kind of far from it. You know what I'm saying? Like, you know you ought to be reading your Bible, and you get up and you read your Bible, and it's like, I don't even know why I read my Bible, and you're getting nothing out of it, and your heart's so far from it, and it's just so hard.

[38 : 13] You know, it just sits like a rock in your stomach, and you're just like, I just don't even know. Or maybe you are on this side of things where you're still doing the things, and your heart is really engaged, but man, the fires of temptation surround you to say, just give up, just give up, just give up, just give up.

You're like one who's gone into castle despair, being told you might as well just give up and end it. What I think that the Day of Atonement speaks to this attitude, and there's three pictures inside the Day of Atonement that I think help us, and I just want to hit these three pictures, and we're done, and it won't take long.

The first image, the first picture out of the Day of Atonement is the second goat, the goat that goes to Azazel. Now, who is Azazel?

The answer is, nobody knows. As a matter of fact, how many of you have ever heard the term scapegoat? Yeah, then you've been infected by William Tyndale.

William Tyndale translated the scriptures into English way before the King James, and when he came to this particular Hebrew word, he translated it as scapegoat, and there are probably 20 different theories about who Azazel or scapegoat or what that is.

[39 : 42] Nobody knows if it's a person or a thing. We just don't have enough information, and this is the Hebrew. Azazel, if you say Azazel, you'd be like, hey, listen, I know Hebrew, right?

So you just said the Hebrew, right? But here's the point. The point is, it doesn't really matter who or what. The point is this, is that the sin of the people go on the goat, and the goat is taken so far away that it can never come back.

Your sin is put on the goat, and it's taken so far away, it can never come back.

It's gone. The psalmist writes, your sin has been removed from you as far as the east is from the west.

And the reason that's important is because if you go east and keep going east, you'll never start to go west. But if you go north and you keep going north, you'll eventually start going south.

[40 : 49] But if you go east and east and east and east, you'll never reach west. That's how far apart they are. Our sin has been removed from us. It's gone. It's so far out there that we can never see it again.

It can't ever happen again. So you as a Christian, if you're tempted to sin, if you're tempted to give up, this truth is great for you because here's what it means. It means that the sin that you're having to fight is already gone.

The sin that you're having to deal with right here, right now, is already defeated. It's already forgiven. It's already cleansed. It's already covered.

I mean, do you understand what I'm saying? When Jesus died on the cross, not only the sin that I commit today, but all the sin that I'm going to commit the rest of my life, it's all forgiven and covered and cleansed and gone, defeated.

In other words, at the cross was D-Day for my sin. And I'm just waiting for V-E Day. And so if I have an enemy in front of me that's already defeated, then as a Christian, how much easier it is for me to fight my sin.

[41 : 58] You see, we've got to understand as we fight our sin, we fight the discouragement, it's something that's already doomed. On its last leg.

Jesus doesn't leave you a strong warrior to have to fight. He gives you a wounded animal to take out. And by his power and his strength, we can do so.

The second image or the second picture is that of the slave, the linen clothes. I find that so fascinating. I find it so fascinating.

The priest, typically as a mediator, represents God to man and man to God, but in this moment of the Day of Atonement, all he does is represent man to God. He takes on their flesh and lives their life as Christ who took on our flesh and came into this world and he understands our weakness, he understands our limits, he understands all the struggles that we go through and because he knows and understands in the fight against our own sin and our weariness and doing good, we have someone who not only understands, but then because of that understanding invites us to come to him.

You know, that's what Hebrews is talking about when he talks about that because we have a great high priest who sympathizes with us, we can approach the throne of grace to find help.

[43 : 35] That because Christ is like us, we can find help. That because Christ took on flesh and understands our limits and there in the Garden of Gethsemane as he's praying and he says, not my will, but thine be done, how did he have the power to say not my will?

It wasn't because he tapped in to his own divinity, but it's because he leaned upon and rested upon the Holy Spirit of God and he was able to do that which his flesh didn't want to do.

How can we do that? How can we get that help? We go to the Lord and go get help. The number of Christians, how many times when we are tempted to sin, when we're tempted to give up, when suffering comes, when the heat of the moment just rises up, when the dread sits deep within our stomach, how often are we praying, really praying in those moments and how often are we just sort of belly aching?

I know for me that if I'm in one of those moments, it's so hard to pray. It is so hard to pray.

But there I've got help ready because Christ took on flesh. And the third and last image is that of the Sabbath rest.

[45 : 04] They were told to afflict themselves. They were told to not do any work. And they were not told that either one of those things brought them atonement.

Neither of those things brought them atonement. What brought them atonement was the priest who went to go get it. And all they had to do was rest, wait, and watch.

It's a Sabbath day. You can't do any work. So you've got to sit there at the tabernacle and just watch it happen. What a glorious truth.

The way that that hits us as Christians is Christ is our rest. He's our high priest. He's our Sabbath. He's the one who has entered in to secure an eternal redemption for us.

And all we need to do is just watch. See, here's the thing. As we're struggling with temptation to sin, as we're struggling with this wanting to give up in this life, what we need to do is look.

[46 : 11] Just look at what He did. Just look at Christ. Just look at who He is. And just watch and just wait as you see all that He's done and all that He's doing on your behalf.

And see, here's the way I think this works. The way I think this works is that we've got to put Him in our minds all the time. It is said that we become that which we think about the most.

That we become that which we think about the most. And I am just calling for us to think about Christ. To think about the Lord Jesus Christ.

To think about how He is the second person of the triune God. That He's omnipotent. That He's all-powerful. Right? That He's omniscient. That He's all-knowing. That He's omnipresent. That He is everywhere.

That He has all wisdom. That He has all strength. That He has all grace. That He's infinite and unchangeable. To think about Him as the second person of the Trinity.

[47 : 11] To think about Him taking on flesh and that He's the Son of God. The Son of Man. To think about how He lived a perfect life. To think about what His death was like there upon the cross and what transacted there upon the cross.

To think about His resurrection and how He defeated death and death couldn't hold Him any longer. Therefore, death has no more power. Right? There's no sting left in death because of what Christ has done.

To think about His ascension back to His Father. To think about His enthronement there with His Father. To think about one day He's coming and when He does He puts an end to everything. And not only does He put an end to everything but He writes everything.

And the goal is to think about Him when you wake up. To think about Him while you're eating your breakfast. To think about Him while you're tying your shoes. To think about Him while you brush your teeth.

To think about Him while you're taking a drive to the mailbox. To think about Him while you're sitting there fishing in the river. To think about Him while you're doing whatever it is you're doing every single moment of every single day to fill your mind with Christ and Christ alone.

[48 : 14] If I have Him all in my mind resting and watching what He has done. Do you think that's going to help me fight my sin? Do you think that's going to help me to keep from growing weary?

Yes, beloved. Yes, it will. Yes, it will. Christ He is our day of atonement.

Run to Him. Let's pray. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you.

Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you. Well, let's pray for you.!