

The Propitiation for our Sins

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Date: 10 February 2008

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[0 : 00] Let's turn together to the chapter we read to 1st John and chapter 2 reading again from the beginning of the chapter. 1st John chapter 2 and from the beginning my little children.

I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous.

He is the propitiation for our sins. Not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

I want to look this evening at just a very short sentence in verse 2. He is the propitiation for our sins.

There are very few of us in here this evening who have used the word propitiation. It is a word which we simply do not use in everyday speech.

[1 : 18] And it's one of those words that some people try to change. And I want to say at the very outset I do not want to change this word. I want us to know what it means and I want us to use the word but I don't want us to change it.

The important thing with a word is that we should know what it means. And this word is so incredibly important in terms of how we understand what Jesus did on the cross.

That what we need to do this evening is to simply try and get our heads around this word. It's actually a word which is fairly easy to understand.

It's probably when I explain it you'll say well I know what it means already. If that's the case great.

Now you know what it means but for the sake of perhaps those who don't know what it means.

It's important because it draws us to Calvary. And it draws us to the place where our sins have been atoned for and forgiven. It draws us to the person of Jesus as the son of God.

[2 : 24] It draws us to how willing he was to give his life on the cross. And to rise again on the third day. And it draws us to relationship with him.

Because that's what being a Christian is all about. Is having a relationship by entering into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

And it all comes about because he is the propitiation for our sins. I want us to go home tonight saying that word. Loving that word.

Holding it in our hearts and knowing what it means. And so that whenever we read it we read it with knowledge. And we know exactly what we're talking about.

He is the propitiation for our sins. John is trying at this moment in time to strike a balance. Between those.

[3 : 18] Between. Perhaps. Giving the impression that it doesn't matter about sin. See if you talk about forgiveness.

Then somebody somewhere. Might. Get the impression. Well. If God loves to forgive. And if God can forgive. And God will forgive. Then does it matter if I sin? No.

John says yes it does. And that's why he opens the chapter with these words. I am writing these things so that you may not sin. The aim and your objective as a Christian is not sinning.

That must be a continuous prayer. Lord give me a hatred for everything that is sinful. Everything that you hate. But he says he goes on.

If anyone does sin. And this is for the other side of the balance. For those who after making this their objective and their aim. They discover they can't make it. And that every day at the close of the day.

[4 : 19] They're conscious of having sinned. And having stumbled. And having fallen. Right he says. If anyone does sin. We have an advocate with the father. That's the answer. Our advocate with the father.

Jesus Christ. The righteous. Now an advocate with someone. Someone in a court of law. Who spoke on your behalf. If you were accused of something. It's kind of like a defense lawyer.

Someone if you were accused of something. You would go to and say. Please speak to the judge on my behalf. And here we're told that Jesus is our defense lawyer. If you like. Standing beside the father.

And speaking to the father on our behalf. But John says. This is exactly what Jesus does. Day by day in heaven. We have an advocate with the father.

Jesus Christ the righteous. Now it's in that context. That he goes on to say. He is the propitiation for our sins. So let's try and find out what this means.

[5 : 17] I'm going to do this by. Referring to one of the most extraordinary photographs. I have ever seen in a newspaper. And it appeared this week. It was the kind of photograph that just compelled you.

To look at it. And to stare at it. And to wonder. At what the photograph was all about. It's the kind of thing that. All the newspapers bought this photograph.

And they all had it somewhere. In the newspaper. And I confess to having bought the newspaper.

Where that photograph appeared. On the front page. Just because it was on the front page.

The photo. Was of a baby. Falling from the third floor. Of a building. I'm sure everyone saw it this week. It was quite an extraordinary thing.

Wasn't it? And someone had obviously been ready with a camera. And had taken the photo. Just as the baby was falling through the air. And when you're looking at the photograph.

[6 : 15] The first thing. If you didn't know anything about the story. Just by looking at the photograph. You start coming to your own conclusion. This must be some awful accident.

Perhaps the baby has climbed up to a window. And has fallen through an open window. That's the first conclusion that you'd come to. You could draw many conclusions.

You could guess. You could wonder. You could be mystified. As to how in the world. Someone just happened to be there. To take a photo of this baby falling. But the more you look at the photo.

The more information comes across. To give you the right story. If you look upwards. You will see an even more remarkable sight. You'll see the window from where the baby fell.

And there are people. Including the baby's parents. And they're hanging out the window. And obviously the gestures that are making. They're clear. That the baby has actually been thrown out the window.

[7 : 12] By the baby's own parents. That's even more mysterious. Isn't it? But then if you keep looking upwards. You see there's more information. And that is the building is on fire.

And so we're now reaching. We're now jumping from one conclusion. That this is some kind of tragic accident. To another conclusion. That somehow. These awful parents have somehow.

Monstrously thrown their own child out the window. To the real reason. Which was that the building was on fire. And if you look downwards. You see that there were people on the ground. With their arms outstretched.

Ready to catch the child. And that's exactly. What happened. They say that every picture tells a story. But actually that's not true.

Because the easiest thing in the world. Is to see a picture. And to jump to your own conclusions.

About that picture. And your conclusion could easily be wrong. Just like my conclusion could easily have been wrong.

[8 : 10] If I'd first looked at that photograph. And jumped to conclusions. This was not some accident. This was not some monstrous murderous act.

This was salvation. The salvation. Of a little boy. A little baby. I want us tonight to go to another picture.

To see another picture. Just as real. Taking place at a time before cameras. And the place this time. Is not Germany. Where the picture of the baby was.

But Jerusalem. And it's 2000 years ago. And it's Calvary. Just outside Jerusalem. And it's round about March or April. In our time. And there are three Roman crosses.

With three men. Crosses were places of execution. Execution. But in a way. That was most excruciating. Someone said once. That if you were crucified. You died.

[9 : 09] A thousand deaths. The person who invented crucifixion. Must have been an incredibly cruel person. But there was a man. Who was nailed to a cross.

And there were two others. One on either side of him. And there's a crowd of people. At the bottom of the cross. And they're yelling and shouting. It's quite obvious. That these three men.

Are despised and hated. By the crowd that's around them. Particularly. The one in the middle. That seems to attract. The most hatred. From those. Who are around him.

Even. From those. Who are being crucified. Alongside him. Or at least. From one of them. At first. You want to. With our 20th century mindset.

We want to feel sorry. For anyone. Who has to die. In such awful circumstances. But. Pretty soon. You'd have to just conclude. That. Well that's the way things were.

[10:02] In the Middle East. In the ancient world. If you were a criminal. You were often put to death. And even. Being put to death. Was better than being put into a dungeon. In some parts. Of the ancient world. And no matter how sorry.

We might feel. For any criminal. Who has to meet such an end. Such a barbaric end. You have to conclude. Well that was life. In the ancient world. A picture of a man.

Dying in Palestine. It happened. Every day. It was a common sight. In that time. In the world. God. But then. You discover. That on the top of this.

Cross. In the middle. There's a notice. That has been written. And the notice says this. Jesus. Of Nazareth. The king. Of the Jews. So now.

You know the man's name. And as soon as you discover. Anything about this man. Jesus. The question arises. As to why this man. Is being crucified. And it's a mysterious question.

[11:00] Particularly. If you know anything at all. About this man. Jesus. Of Nazareth. You'll know that he was. For a start. Well known. In the area. Around Jerusalem. And Galilee.

But not. As a criminal. In fact. If you know anything about him. In his life. In his history. In his ministry. The last place. You'd ever expect him to end up.

Would be a Roman cross. Then you discover something about. The circumstances. That lay behind his execution. His trial was a shambles. Hurriedly convened.

A hurriedly convened meeting. Of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Where charges were. In a rush. Brought against him. And a verdict was rushed into. You discover.

The circumstances behind his arrest. And his. His trial. And by now. You might feel a sense of outrage. That anyone should have been put to death.

[11:57] Because of a mistrial. It kind of raises questions. About the whole. Idea of the death penalty. In every age. And in every civilization. But you feel outraged.

That the fact that anybody. Who has not committed a crime. Should be. Should be punished at all. But particularly punished by. By. Through.

A corrupt trial. Which this man. Had to face. So why was it. That this Jesus of Nazareth. Was condemned. And nailed. To a cross.

Well for one thing. He had just become too popular. Among the people. As a religious teacher. Wherever he went. Hundreds. And indeed thousands of people. Began to follow him.

On one occasion. Someone said that the whole world. Has followed. Has gone after Jesus. And this had clearly. Provoked jealousy. In the minds. And in the hearts.

[12:54] Of the Jewish religious leadership. Who commanded. Tremendous authority. At that time. Amongst the people. And respect. Among the people. But instead of respecting them. The crowds of people. Were now beginning to.

Show more respect. And more attention. To Jesus. That had aroused jealousy. In the minds. And in the hearts. Of the Jewish leadership. Secondly. He had stood up.

To the Jewish leadership. At the time. And he even openly. And publicly. Rebuked. And he criticized. Their hypocrisy. And when he. When they challenged him. He always seemed.

To have the right answer. There was something. About his intuition. And his peculiar knowledge. In which he all. Didn't matter what you said. Or what question you asked him. Even if you were trying your best.

To trip him up. In something that he knew. Or he didn't know. He would always have an answer. For every question. And he even. He even seemed to know. What you were thinking.

[13:50] At the time. Your thoughts were. But thirdly. Because he claimed to be. The Messiah. As promised. In the Jewish scriptures. The Old Testament.

He claimed furthermore. To be. The son of God. Having a special relationship. With the God. In which. He called. God. His father.

That you just. Didn't do. Amongst the Jews. Whatever relationship. There was. In the covenant. In the Old Testament. You could say. That you belong. To God. As his people.

You could say. That you worship. God. You could say. That you had hope. For eternity. But you could never. Ever say. That God. Was your father. Well that's exactly. What Jesus did. He called. God. His father. God. And all of this. Had resulted. Everyone knew. And the Jewish authorities. The Jewish rulers. Plotting against him. And when they knew. [14:45] That he would be. In a particular place. At a particular time. They knew perfectly well. Where he would be. They arranged. For his arrest. And they. On his trial. And they. Tried. They tried him.

In their own Jewish courts. They took him. To the Roman governor. Who first. Wanted to release him. He showed some. Some reason. And some. Sensibility. At that time. But having questioned him. And having looked into. The so-called evidence. He could find nothing. Against him. But then there was a crowd. And the crowd. Were threatening. The crowd. Were threatening. To rise up. Against the governor. And the governor. Just simply. Couldn't handle it. And he did. Exactly. What they wanted. Even if it meant. Handing over. An innocent man. To be. Put to. An unjust. Death. See the more you find out. About this. The more uncomfortable. It is. And the reason. You might be saying tonight. [15:39] Well I know this story. But there are others. Who don't. And even when we do know the story. It's good to go over the story. So that you can see. The kind of mystery. And the discomfort. That you feel.

Anyone who comes across. The life. And the death. Of Jesus Christ. You instantly. Begin to feel. A sense. Of unease. That you. Because on the one hand. You find a man. Who has never done anything wrong. And yet. He is taken. And he's mercilessly beaten. And subjected. To a sham trial. And then he's nailed. To a Roman cross. But that's not. The end of the story. At all. That's only the beginning. Of it. And again. We're delving. Deeper and deeper. Into this man. Jesus Christ. And again. We're doing this. Because we live in a world. Where little is known. In our world. About Jesus. It's our job. As Christians. To go out into the world. And to introduce people. To Jesus. And to take them through. [16:33] The life. Of Jesus. It's important. That the simple story. Be shared. In a world. That needs to hear. About Jesus. And it's also important.

Because if we really want to know. About what this word. Propitiation means. You don't just start. At his death. You have to start. At the life. The circumstances. Leading. To his death. So that you get. The whole story. It's important for us. To have. The whole story. The old testament. The birth. The life. The ministry. The arrest. The trial. The death. The resurrection. And the ascension. And the second coming. The whole story. Of Jesus Christ. Of Nazareth. We're only at the beginning. What's more. When you deep. When you delve. Deeply into his life. You discover even more. Mysterious about him. You discover the reason. So many people. Followed him. Was his extraordinary. Power. Everywhere he went. They would bring sick people. Even dead people. [17:30] We read. Even people who had died. Were raised to life. By his touch. And by his word. There was a special command. A unique command. A power.

And an authority. In the voice. Of Jesus. That even. Raised the dead. Little girl. I say to you. Arise. She was dead. She rose. Lazarus. He said. Come out. Take the stone away. They took the stone away. Lazarus.

Come out. You're asking the impossible. You're saying something. That doesn't make any sense. Until. Until. He comes out. In front of them all. With the grave clothes on. All they have to do is. Take off the grave clothes. Let him go. Out he came. After being dead. Four days. People. Have to be confronted. With the truth. About Jesus Christ.

[18:25] In front of. Many. Many people. All those who had come. To witness. And if ever. There was a skeptical crowd. You say. Oh well. All these people. They all agreed. No.

They didn't. They were the Jewish. Ruling. Ruling leaders. They were trying. To find reason. To put Jesus to death. They were trying. To prove. That he was an imposter. They were trying. And if they could only. Prove on this occasion. As he said to Lazarus. Come out. If only he wouldn't come out. Then that would be their proof. But they couldn't. Because he did come out. You see. This is the problem. That you have to face. As a person. This is the problem. Which Jesus poses. When you look into the life.

And the extraordinary power. Of Jesus Christ. You have to come to terms with it. People talk about religion. As a choice. I actually don't believe. It's a choice.

[19 : 22] I don't think you have a choice tonight. But. If you're a reasonable human being. To look into the life. Of this extraordinary man. Jesus Christ. You can't get away from him. You say. Well he's just a religious leader.

No he's not. He stands alone. I've said this before. And say it again. We have to go out in the world. And to show people. That there is a vast difference.

Between Jesus. And every other religious leader. That walked the face of the earth. Don't believe people. When they say. Your religion is the same. As everyone else. No it isn't. And anyone who says that.

Is simply. Hasn't read their Bible. Simply hasn't done. The proper comparison. I'm asking you. To have an open mind. And to go to the Gospels. And to let them speak for themselves.

The problem is. That you don't want to do that. Because you know. That as soon as you come face to face. With the truth and the reality. Of this Jesus Christ. You have to follow him. That's why the Jews hated him.

[20 : 18] Because they were faced with the same dilemma. They knew that if he really was the Messiah. If he really was who he says he was. They must fall down and worship him. So must you. That's why you don't want to discover him.

Because it's nothing to do with. Will you believe in science. Or will you believe in atheism. And all these things. It's when you. It's because. You know the impact. That discovering Jesus is going to have on your life.

I'm challenging you afresh. That is that not the case. And that's why people. Don't talk. Please don't tell me you have an open mind. Please don't tell me.

You're going to the Gospels afresh. And you're saying. You're saying. Well I'm coming honestly too. Everything. You're not. Because anyone who comes honestly. Must be prepared to say. That's it. This is the truth. And I. Am a bankrupt. Lost sinner. And I need God. That's what it means to discover Jesus.

[21 : 22] That's what it means. To come to Christ. To come to faith in Jesus. You see. It has a personal. Impact. On you. Just the same.

As it has a personal impact on me. That's why. There is nothing more important this evening. That you discover this Jesus. Because there is no other way to God. If you want to find the way to God. Jesus is the way. He is the propitiation. But we haven't come to that. Just let me. Just again. Again dwell on the miraculous power. Which proved beyond any reasonable doubt whatsoever.

I would say beyond any doubt whatsoever. That Jesus was indeed who. They said. And the biggest mistake. That the Jewish people. The Jewish rulers made. Was to refuse.

To recognize him. As the son of God. And it's the biggest mistake. You're making. If you don't recognize him. As your savior. And if you don't come. To believe in him. As your savior.

[22 : 19] This evening. You see. Why is it. That when somebody extraordinary. Walks the face of the earth. Like this. This man.

Nobody has ever. Ever matched him. In the whole of the history. Of human. Of human history. Someone who matched. Exactly.

What the Old Testament. Prophesied. About what Messiah. Would be like. You see. If these men. And some of them were. By the way. You got people like Nicodemus. He was prepared. To sit down.

With his Bible. And he's prepared. To say. Hey. This man. Jesus. Matches. What we expect. Messiah to be. But there weren't. Very many of them.

There's only people. Like. Like Nicodemus. But you know. It's amazing. Isn't it? That these. Jewish leaders. Having so much.

[23 : 14] Knowledge. That they should conclude. At the end of the day. To put him to death. You see. Jealousy. And sinfulness. Is the most. Extraordinary.

Power. It doesn't. Act with reason. Doesn't. Act with logic. It just says. Crucify him. We don't. Want. To know. Do away with him. Crucify him. There's one more.

Mysterious thing. About the death of Jesus. The picture. That we're painting. That we're. That we're. That we're. Looking at this evening. And that is the way. That Jesus died. I'm quite sure.

That from time to time. The innocent men. Were put to death. On the cross. But they would be. Struggling. Screaming. Objecting. Crying out. Calling.

[24 : 09] For justice. And for mercy. They would be asking. They would be promising. The world. They'd be trying. To bribe the soldiers. They'd be trying. To attract. The attention.

Of the crowds. They'd be trying. To. Trying to call out. And announce. Their own innocence. But not this man. There was something.

Silent. About him. Something. Incredibly. Dignified. And there was. One more thing. And that was. The very God. In whom. He claimed. To be. In relationship. With. As his father. He spoke. To God. As he was dying. On the cross.

And he said this. My God. My God. Why. Have you. Forsaken. Me. I tell you tonight.

[25 : 05] That the more you look into the cross. The more questions are raised than answers. It's only as you come. To the rest of the New Testament.

That you begin to discover answers. For those very questions. That the cross raises. But it's important. For these questions. To be asked. Because it's in asking these questions.

That we come to an understanding. These were the very questions. That drove the disciples. To despair. As they watched to. The man in whom they had put their trust. Being taken down.

As they tried to. Understand. How is it that this man. Who we believe to be. The son of God. And the Messiah. And we trusted in. For this life. And for eternity. How.

How can we understand. How the son of God. Can be put to death. So mercilessly. And how he can give himself. Into the hands. Of such cruel people.

[26 : 00] And what hope is there for us. We believe. That he was the savior. The Messiah. We believed. He was the forgiveness. Of our sins. We believed. That through him. We were saved. And we were made right with God.

How can he be dead. How can he. Be taken down. From a cross. They must have. They must have been filled. With such utter darkness. The rest of the crowd.

Could go away. They just watched a spectacle. Some of them were happy. Because they got rid of. The person they hated. So much. But the disciples. Were filled with despair. And darkness.

As they watched. The very person. Who they believed. Had changed their lives. Being taken down. And put in a grave. Where now. Was the promise. Of everlasting life.

Where now. Was the promise. I am the resurrection. And the life. He that believes in me. Though he were dead. Yet shall he live. Where was that promise now. How could they believe. In him anymore. How could they believe. In anyone anymore. If you can't believe.

[26 : 54] In Jesus. How can you believe. In anything. And I'm sure. That these were the thoughts. That rushed. Into their minds. As they tried. To grapple with them. As they watched him. Being put in a grave.

Why. Could God. Abandon. Someone. He said. He loved. This.

Is my beloved son. In whom. I am well pleased. How. Can he abandon him. And if we leave the picture.

As we found it. We go away despairing. We go away. Having to conclude. That there is no hope. Whatsoever. Until we see.

Another picture. Another place. Another location. This time. It's a cave. It's a grave. In a garden.

[27 : 53] The cave has been bought. By a man called Joseph. And it was Joseph. That took the body of Jesus. Down when he had died. And he had placed. Wrapped the body. In linen.

And he placed it. In that. Cave. And it was that cave. To which the disciples. And the women came. On the first day of the week.

To anoint the body. That's what they did. In those days. They anointed it. With spices. But they found. To their. Astonishment. That the grave.

Was empty. Not only that. But they met. With the very Jesus. As they had watched. Dying. Who was now risen. Having been raised.

By the power of God. Once again. You see. Just like I said. Two weeks ago. It's the resurrection. That gives meaning. Only the resurrection. Gives meaning.

[28 : 48] To the death of Jesus. Without the resurrection. His death. Is utterly. Meaningless. But with the resurrection. Because he is now. Risen from the dead.

We are now able to say. That his death. Achieved. The removal. Of our sins. And that's.

What propitiation is. Propitiation is. What happened. To Jesus. On the cross. Propitiation. Is what happened.

When Jesus said. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? It's when God. Instead. Of. Pouring out.

His righteous. Anger. On you. And me. Who deserve it. He turns. That anger. And directs it. On his son.

[29 : 41] And instead of. Us. Having to suffer. Hell. For all eternity. Because that's. What we deserve. Jesus. Suffers the cross. And the abandonment.

Of God. And all the. Indescribable. Suffering. And no one. Will ever. Understand. What Jesus. Had to suffer. At Calvary. But what we do know.

Is this. That he suffered it. For us. And instead of us. And God. Turned. His anger. Away from us. And on to Jesus. That's propitiation. That's what. Atonement. Let me give you another word. Atonement. Atonement.

Atonement. Atonement. Simply is. Coming together. Of two words. Whenever you see it. In the bible. It needs. Simply means. At. One. Mint. Why do we need to be at one?

[30 : 36] We need to be at one with God. We need to be right with God. With the only way. In which we can be right with God. Is the removal. Of our sin. Because. It is your sin. And my sin.

That separates us. From God. It stands. Between. Us. And God. This evening. And the whole of the bible. Is about. The removal. Of our sin. There would be no bible.

If God had decided. To leave us in our sin. And to destroy ourselves. And to punish the world. He could have done that. But the bible. Is about. God's love. For the world. A lost world.

A hurting world. A world. That needs to know. That there is a way. Back to God. There is a way. For the world. And there is a way. For you and I. This evening. By coming to faith.

In this son of God. By coming to discover. That he is. The son of God. And that he came. In our nature. As a human being. And that he. Voluntarily.

[31 : 29] Took. Our place. And accepted. The punishment. That I deserved. On the cross. So that. As I come to him.

Tonight in faith. I know. That my sins. Are forgiven. Why do I know? Because I am any better. Than anyone else? No.

But because. Jesus died. For sinners. I am a sinner. I need to come. To Jesus. I need to ask him. To have mercy on me. I need to come.

To him. Because he invites. Me to come to him. And because he has. Opened up. A way of forgiveness. And mercy. And eternal life. And I need to come. I need to leave behind.

My old life. I need to turn away. From everything. That's sinful. And I need to follow Jesus. By faith. Faith is when you trust. In Jesus.

[32 : 25] And in Jesus. Alone. That picture. I spoke about it first. It's a marvelous picture.

Of faith. Isn't it? Here were parents. They had the most precious thing. In all the world. Their building. Was condemned.

If they stay there. They're going to die. Your building is condemned. You stay there. You're going to die.

So what happens? They see out the window. And there's someone. Down. Down there. And they say. Throw the baby. It's the only hope.

They have. And they throw it. And he's saved. The most important possession.

[33 : 22] You and I have. This evening. Is your own soul. And Jesus says. Come to me. Trust in me. Follow me.

Will you come? That's why next week. Is so important. To those who love Jesus. And I hope. That this evening.

That if you have. Trusted Jesus. With all your heart. If you're following him tonight. Then you come. Remember. Remember. What he has done. For sinners. Like ourselves. Come. And if you have never come before. Then come for the first time.

Because he commands you to do so. Do this. In remembrance. Of me. Let's pray. Amen. Father in heaven.

[34 : 27] We ask. Once again. For your word. To reach deep. Into our hearts. We pray. That you will give us. An understanding. Of. Of what Jesus did. On the cross. The finished work.

Of Jesus. We pray. That you will. Illuminate. Our hearts. And that you will. Draw our hearts. To trust in him. The son of God.

And our savior. We ask. That he might be. The savior. To every single one of us. In this building.

We believe. That you're powerful enough. To work in all of our hearts.

And to draw us. Into a relationship. With Jesus. In which we go out. This door. Believing. And trusting in him. And if we don't. It is only ourselves. That refuses.

To do so. We pray. That you will have mercy. On anyone. Who refuses. To believe in Jesus. This evening. For we ask. In his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.