

Doctrines of Grace Part 5

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[0 : 00] Why don't we pray together, and then we'll get started. Our Father in Heaven, we come to you, Lord, on the basis of Christ and His wonderful love for us.

! Lord, we love you because you first loved us. We pray, Lord, that in this time together we would glory in that great love. With the great love, Christ made us alive.

We pray we would look into that great love and be encouraged that your love for us is unique and you know us intimately. Father, we pray that you would be glorified in this time together.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we've been thinking and discussing in this class about the glorious topic of the doctrines of grace.

John has been our guide, and I'll be taking the next two weeks, and then John will conclude our journey three weeks from now, Lord willing. And we have focused on the streams of mercy, the doctrines of grace.

[1 : 06] But this morning we'll turn our attention to the very fountain of this grace. We turn our attention to the atonement. And the atonement has its origins not only in God's justice, but in the sovereign love of God.

A great love, Paul says in Ephesians 2, verse 4. The source and proof of God's unwavering love toward you, brother and sister. And my prayer in this class will just glory in His love together.

And so to get at the heart of the atonement, you can ask yourself this question. Why was Jesus of Nazareth executed on a shameful Roman cross?

To ask that question is to begin to gaze at the atonement, to gaze at the heart of Christianity. Paul would say this question is of first importance, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.

Why does Christ die for our sins? In earlier weeks, we saw our calamitous condition. Remember, we stand guilty before a good God, as those represented in Adam.

[2 : 19] God is good, unimaginably so. His holiness is good and pure. His justice unflinchingly righteous. God must punish sin.

And so the question the scripture asks isn't, how could a good God send us to hell? The question is, how can He not, if He is good? And because all that is true, we are in danger.

John 3, 36, the wrath of God remains on all who are outside of Christ. Enter the atonement. Christ died for our sins.

If you ask Paul what that meant, he would point you and I to the mercy seat. The place in the temple, remember, where God ordained sacrifices that would graphically portray the truth of Hebrews 9, verse 22.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the entire floor of the temple would be covered in blood. And at the center of the scene stood the high priest.

[3 : 27] Does anyone know what role the high priest played in the Day of Atonement? Ivor? He used to go into the inner court and the homily of bullies.

And he would sacrifice a goat. Put the blood of the sacrifice on the goat and release the goat. Yeah, so he would offer the sacrifice.

On behalf of the people. On behalf of the people. Right. Yes. So he was a representative of Israel. And that's an important detail that we'll return to at the end of our class. Once a year, the sacrifice was presented at the mercy seat, as Ivor said, as a substitute by the high priest.

And God's wrath would be assuaged for his people. What the Bible calls propitiation. When you hear propitiation, think wrath remover or wrath absorber.

Year after year, God's people were reminded. The appointed sacrifice would be the wrath remover, a mediator between a sinful humanity and a holy God. In the fullness of time, God provided the once for all sacrifice.

[4 : 40] Jesus, the wrath remover, the propitiator, the substitute, the God man, the lamb slain for sinners. Hell was put into his cup and he drank it dry.

Every last drop. He drank the cup the father gave him to drink. And Jesus, as Peter writes, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

So this is the atonement. The work of God to deal with our sin, to purchase and procure the blessings for God's people. And every Christian will give a hearty amen to this.

The issue we discussed this morning, however, is narrower. Christians all agree on the necessity of the atonement. Today we'll discuss its design.

Whom exactly did Christ intend to purchase with his blood? Did he intend to purchase everyone or a specific people?

[5 : 38] Was it the eternal design of God that the cross should redeem every human being? Or was it his design to redeem God's chosen ones?

A multitude so vast that no one can possibly count them all. Revelation 7. The first view is called universal or general atonement. That God intended to save all without exception.

So when Christ died on the cross, he died for every man, every woman, every child. Past, present, future. You can go to anyone on planet earth and say, Christ bore the wrath that your sins deserve on the cross.

The second view is called definite atonement or particular redemption. Christ, by his blood, purchased an eternal redemption for those whom his father chose to save, and only those his father chose to save.

He died for a specific people. And as you can see, I will suggest definite atonement is definitely the view that you ought to take.

[6 : 45] But before we begin, let's remember that there are precious gospel companions that differ on this question. And these companions are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, genuinely seeking these things out in the scripture.

And so no matter where we land, we land charitably. Amen. Christ has died for those of us who disagree with you on this question.

We can all agree on that. Christ has died for our brothers and sisters who might disagree with us. And I actually love George Whitefield and John Wesley's friendship. These are two brothers who disagreed on these kinds of issues.

Whitefield once wrote to his friend Wesley. He says this, Amen to that.

One day we'll have perfect unity on this question. Now, I trust that your heart is open and my heart is open to those who disagree. But we will argue in this class that definite atonement is the scriptural approach.

[7 : 55] And, you know, normally when people are talking about this question, you know, we resort to straw manning. You know, we go for shock value rather than representing each other accurately. You know, check out the world's biggest lie.

You know, gets clicks on the internet. And who doesn't love the clicks? Because of that, I'm sure we've all walked around with certain caricatures in our minds about the other side. So hopefully this class will display some of that.

So we're going to ask three questions together. Question number one, why might faithful Christians deny definite atonement? Question number two, we'll do a brief cross-examination.

And then question number three, we'll consider Christ's special love secures the salvation of his people. Why it's gloriously true. Let's start with question number one.

So why might Christians deny definite atonement? Let's look at the arguments for what we call universal or unlimited atonement. That Christ died for all without exception.

[8 : 51] Let me give you five reasons. What is that? It would be the universalists. Some, not all. I mean, we'll talk about that.

Yeah. Not all who are, if you believe this truth, doesn't necessarily mean you're a universalist. But let me give you five scriptural reasons why people would deny definite atonement.

And at first glance, this view seems fairly obvious. And any contrary view, implausible. First, doesn't scripture very straightforwardly teach that God loves the world and that Christ died for the world.

John the Baptist, heralding Jesus' arrival, says, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Or take John 3.16, maybe the best known verse in the Bible.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. Isn't there a certain universality to these statements about God's love? God loves the world.

[9 : 54] Whosoever believes will not perish but have eternal life. You know, the arguments that the word world mean only God's chosen ones seem pretty unconvincing.

And doesn't God love everyone in the entire world? Roger Olson, a strong proponent of unlimited atonement, says to take any other view means you cannot avoid limiting the love of God.

Who wants to do that? We certainly don't want to limit God's love. Who wants to portray God as cold and narrow when his beating heart is one of mercy and love? And normally when people talk about this, definite atonement sounds like a scarcity issue.

You go to the restaurant, you try to get a table, and the hostess says, Well, let me see if your name is on the list. Oh, nope, you can't come in. God says, I know you want it, but there's not enough for you here.

That's certainly not right. God overflows with grace for sinners that come to him. Second, the argument goes we should never separate God's desires, his aspirations, with his actions.

[11 : 02] 1 Timothy 2.4, Paul writes, God desires, quote, all people to be saved. His aspiration, then, must not be separated from his action. If he desires all, then we shouldn't limit his actions when he sends his son to die.

Third, doesn't there seem to be a difficulty in the free offer of the gospel if Christ did not die for everyone? I mean, what good is an atonement that you can't be sure applies to you?

Is that sincere? The thought is we should be able to say to everyone on planet Earth, Christ died for you. Therefore, the atonement must be unlimited.

Fourth, Peter speaks of some who are even denying the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

And Jude has a similar statement in that book. This very much sounds like a universal intention that when Christ, when Jesus died, he died to buy, to redeem every single person, sadly, even some who will be lost in the end.

[12 : 04] And finally, and fifth, aren't there passages that plainly say Christ died for all people?

Take 1 John 2, verse 2.

He is of appreciation for our sins, the wrath remover, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Paul writes to Timothy, For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.

Isn't that all we need? I mean, this is the plain meaning of the passage, people claim. One memorable slogan is, All means all, and that's all it means.

So, the argument goes, He must have died for all, without exception, for everyone who ever lived. Now again, this seems fairly straightforward. And anything opposing seems fairly implausible.

And friend, if these were the only scripture passages, I would agree with you. Right? The evidence has been presented, let's just cast the verdict. But friend, let's pump the brakes.

[13 : 12] One of my favorite genres of movies and books is a British murder mystery. And I love it when everyone's ready to cast the verdict. Right? If Sherlock Holmes comes in and begins to notice clues that maybe were missed, that weren't noticed.

Maybe there's a dust print of a cup that's missing on the bedside table. And when you're expecting noise, no one heard the dog bark at night. All right, that was Agatha Christie, but you get my point. So, if you're here and you are adamantly for that first view, my goal isn't really to persuade you this morning, but rather it's to maybe have you second guess the certainty of your position.

Proverbs 18, verse 17 says, One who states his case first seems right until the other comes and cross-examines it. So, question number two, let's do a brief cross-examination of this first view of universal atonement.

Friend, is it possible that we are mistaken about the meaning of these passages? Could it be that universal language doesn't mean a universal atonement?

For example, in 1 John 2, verse 2, when it says he died for the entire world, could it be that we interpret the entire world as that he did not die for all without exception, but all without distinction?

[14 : 35] An ethnic universalism. In John's immediate context, could it mean that Jesus died for the world, for Jews and Gentiles, and Germans and Jamaicans and Nigerians, Eskimos?

Not just for Gnostics in John's day, but for all the nations? He died for all kinds of people. We might think this is the plain meaning of the passage, but to say all without exception, but that's not the way Augustine understood that verse.

And many Christians, after Augustine, in the medieval time, to the Reformation, to the modern day, have understood that verse not to mean all without exception, but all without distinction, as referring to the church across all nations.

God's people scattered across every region. You'll find a parallel verse in John 11, verse 51 to 52, same pattern of wording from the same author.

Caiaphas, speaking, says this, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

[15:42] Maybe. And we could easily spend the next hour talking about the all passages. And these are highly complex passages. And, you know, it tends to be a merry-go-round, you know, where each side is unpersuaded.

We go back and forth. So we're going to move off of the all passages, and let's continue our cross-examination. And we're going to bring in two interlocutors, conversation partners, John Owen and Spurgeon.

Owen raises the issue. If the atonement is universal, and Jesus paid for everyone's sins, I mean, Jesus says it is finished, right?

The work is complete. That debt is paid in full. Nothing more needs to be added. If that is so, wouldn't that bring salvation and forgiveness to everyone? Owen writes, If Jesus died for all men, quote, why then are not all freed from punishment of all their sins?

You will say, because of their unbelief. They will not believe. But this unbelief, is it sin or not? If it be sin, then Christ underwent the punishment due to it.

[16:51] If this is so, then why must unbelief hinder them more than their other sins for which he died? If he did not die for their unbelief, then he did not die for all their sins. So Owen is asking, did Jesus die for only some of the sins of all people?

Well, no, surely not. Well, I think the reply is this. Yes, it's universal in extent, but its application is limited.

You see, Jesus has done his part. Now you must do yours. God intended to save all, yes, but it was not efficient to save all. The atonement is limited by individual choice to believe.

So Jesus died for all. He opened the door, but there's nothing that guarantees the salvation of anyone. Enter Spurgeon, the second interlocutor.

He writes, they will say Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, no, no, no, certainly not.

[17:54] We ask them the next question. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, no. They're obliged to admit this if they are consistent. No, they say, no, Christ has died that any man may be saved if, and then they follow certain conditions of salvation.

We say then, we will go back to the old statement, Christ did not die so as to, beyond a doubt, secure the salvation of anybody, did he? And he asks at the end, now who is it that limits the death of Christ?

So you see what he's saying. He's pointing that Jesus did not die to save actually, but only to make you savable. The ultimate distinguishing factor is your spiritual impulse, the impulse of the depraved sinner, to be spiritually discerning and to choose Christ.

Well done to you. So I very intentionally avoided using the term limited atonement because it's a little misleading. It's not that one view wants to limit the atonement and the other doesn't.

No, in fact, unless you're a universalist, which is plainly unscriptural, everyone believes in some kind of limitation. To quote John Murray, an old professor, he says, these limitations will either be related to God's power or God's purpose.

[19:14] Consider, God declares he is all-powerful, omnipotent. God says, I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

Isaiah 46, verse 10. But maybe God's power is limited. I desire all to be saved. And God says, you know, I tried my best. My plans to save were frustrated.

I saved as many as I possibly could. You know, maybe God is like a Wizard of Oz. You know, you pull back the curtain and he's really not as powerful as he claims to be. You know, hiding behind a

curtain using a booming voice to project power.

But the true power comes from within Dorothy. to tap her red slippers of faith three times. Is that how the God of the Bible is to be understood? No, no, a thousand times no.

No. God's plans are never frustrated. He accomplishes all his purpose. The power lies in God's hands alone. The Father's plan to save will never be defeated.

[20 : 25] God has the divine prerogative in his own hands to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, as we've heard in previous weeks. J.R. Packer, in his short intro on John Owen's work on this subject, which is a great essay, you should read it.

He writes this, One makes salvation depend on the work of God, the other on a work of man. One regards faith as part of God's gift of salvation, the other as man's own contribution to salvation.

One gives all the glory of saving believers to God. The other divides the praise between God, who, so to speak, built the machinery of salvation, and man who, by believing it, operated it.

Let's move to our third point. Let's get into the scripture. Christ's special love secures the salvation of his people.

Now, definite atonement doesn't deny God's universal loving stance and his yearning heart for the entire world. It recognizes that God provides a savior that is sufficient to save all.

[21 : 34] He sends out his ambassadors to persuade, to pray, and even to plead that every human being come to accept this all-sufficient savior. We can say, he will save everyone who comes to Christ by faith.

Everyone. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. You know, for work, I negotiate contracts as an attorney. And toward the end of the day, it feels like when I'm reading a document, I have to get the magnifying glass out because you always have to read the fine print. You know, you'll find language like this. You know, notwithstanding the foregoing, the following exceptions apply. There is no exception clause here. There is no fine print.

Everyone, without exception, who calls on Christ will be saved. There's enough for everyone in the entire world. And if human beings live on other planets, it's enough for them too. But definite atonement believes more than that.

It believes that Christ did not die for a nameless blob of people. And definite atonement recognizes that this lover had a distinguishing love, a special love toward a certain people.

[22 : 46] God shows you and set his love on you. And God's love for you, brother and sister, is unique. He has a care, a love, a particular knowledge from eternity past.

And the success of this divine effort was never in doubt. There's a t-shirt that says, Jesus loves you. But then again, Jesus loves everybody.

Maybe that's how we think about God's love for us. You know, God loves me. But then again, that's kind of his job, right? God loves the world. I'm part of the world, so I guess God loves me too.

Doesn't he love everyone?

Nothing special about that. Oh, friend, but this is like a husband who seeks his beloved bride who wandered away, finds her deep in sin, a prisoner of this world.

And it's not only that he secured the opportunity for her release from prison, but because of God's amazing love for her, he reaches into the prison cell and by grace grabs her out into his everlasting arms.

[23 : 50] And he will never let her go. That love actually exists. And that's why this is a beautiful doctrine. It is a large jewel in the crown of doctrines of grace.

That this love, specific love, had no beginning and will have no end. Paul can write, before the stars were ever created, before the planets were orbiting the sun, God delighted and loved you.

Ephesians 1, when he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love, he predestined us for adoptions as sons. You see, in eternity past, his heart was wedded to his bride in devotion.

And God distinguished her and set her apart. And for her sake, secures her salvation. So your very name was written on his heart as he goes to the cross.

The names of countless millions, a countless multitude from every tribe, tongue, and nation. scripturally, where do we see this? Let me give you four reasons.

[25 : 01] Four reasons. Number one, Christ's love for a specific people. In fact, the scripture repeatedly hits this note. It emphasizes that the atonement had an aim.

There was a special design. There was a relationship between the mission of Christ and that it was oriented toward a certain people. And while God has a general love for all people, and the gospel call is freely preached and offered to all, he has a special, saving, covenantal love for his own bride. Consider some verses with me. Matthew 1, 21, Jesus will save his people from their sins. John 15, verse 13, greater love know no man than this.

Christ laid down his life for his friends. The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10, verse 45. We can reach further back.

Isaiah writes to the Messiah in chapter 53, yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors. John 10, the shepherd lays down his life in the place of his sheep.

[26 : 16] John 10, verse 11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Verse 15, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The shepherd dies so his sheep can live. He loves them. He cares for them uniquely. In that chapter, Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

He knows them. That's like a covenantal language. It's rich with intimacy. The way a husband knows his bride. The apple of his eye, faithful to her forever.

Hosea 13 is a great example of this knowledge, this intimacy. Verse 5, but I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt. You know no God but me and besides me there is no Savior.

It was I who knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. God knows his people in an intimate, loving way. Galatians 4, 9 speaks of salvation in this way.

[27 : 11] But know that you have come to know God or rather to be known by God. Don't rob yourself of this love, beloved.

You are an object of distinguishing love, a unique love. You love him because he first loved you.

The Jews in John 10 didn't believe Jesus. Speak plainly, they say.

Tell us if you are the Christ. Jesus' track record up to this point about his identity, let's just say it's been pretty solid. But why do they not believe? Verse 25, Jesus answered them, I told you and you do not believe the work that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. And the logic is striking. Did you hear that? It's not that you don't believe therefore you're not my sheep.

It's the opposite. Because you are not my sheep therefore you do not believe. My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me.

[28 : 18] I was at the trampoline park with my kids this week. For those of you who haven't been to a place like that, it's chaotic. There's a cacophony of noises. It's loud. It's crowded.

Kids are yelling and screaming. They're running into each other. The music is blasting in your ears. When I was there, I faintly heard a child cry. And I immediately knew that's my child.

I know my child. I know them in a personal way. It's the same way for you, brother and sister. Jesus knows his sheep.

And he has other sheep of this fold. All the Father has given him will come to him. Parents, this is the difference between the love you have for all the kids in the nursery.

You love them. You do good to them. You care for them. But there's a difference between that and the love you have for your own child. You hear the cacophony of crying and then you recognize their voice in the crowd.

[29 : 17] Husbands, wives, again, this is the difference between your love for others. You sincerely love them. You do good to them. But you love your spouse differently, don't you?

Husbands, you love your bride. She's distinguished. She's set apart. And that love is higher, deeper, wider than your love for others. When Jesus' audience heard him say, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, no one in the audience is asking, you know, I wonder, does he mean only his sheep or all sheep?

It only makes sense for him to speak of specific sheep. Now, it is true that logically speaking, his only dying for the sheep doesn't automatically mean he didn't die for all the other sheep.

So I want to be careful not to make sweeping conclusions. But I think if you look at the other scriptural witness, it's pretty clear he's talking about his sheep only.

Doesn't he make that point in the parable of the lost sheep of his intention? The good shepherd responds to one missing sheep by leaving the 99, he goes out until he finds the missing sheep.

[30 : 33] And when he finds this missing sheep, was it an invitation, you know, a mere possibility? Sheep, I invite you to travel back on your own legs. No, he doesn't do that. He doesn't say, I've done my part, sheep, now you do yours.

No, the shepherd finds the sheep, he takes her, lays her upon his shoulder, and brings her home rejoicing. Not one would be lost. Of course, one more passage we must mention.

Ephesians 5, 25. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. The special love where a loving bridegroom gives himself for his bride.

So, you see, while the scripture speaks about Christ's death for the entire world, it also speaks of Christ's death for a people. And scripture cannot contradict scripture.

And when rightly understood, this opens a door to an ocean of love that you'll swim in your whole life into eternity. You know, we might get a small taste now, but you cannot exhaust the depth of it.

[31 : 35] The greatness and majesty of this great love. As if you're a small guppy swimming in an ocean of God's love, you're never going to get to the bottom of it. There's always more to discover.

Christ has a love for you uniquely. Second reason. Salvation is secured. The scripture tells us that salvation has been secured.

Christ says, Even so, it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. All that the Father gives me will come to me. And whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

John 6. My sheep hear my voice. I give them eternal life and they will never perish. And no one will snatch you out of his hand. No power of hell can pluck you from his hand.

That is a promise. Christ will give an account to his Father for each one of his sheep that the Father had given him. Not one of them would be lost. None of the language in the New Testament refers to something potential.

[32 : 39] You know, a mere possibility. I think you and I should have that same conviction in our ministries. whether it be at home or at work or in the church. You know, our confidence is not in good marketing.

You know, maximizing the psychological pressure to get people to make a decision for Christ. You know, the music, the lights, try to get people to make a decision, walk the aisle, embrace pragmatism.

We judge our ministry method by the whether it produces immediate decisions. Show me the cash value of decisions. No, none of that. Like Jesus, our confidence is in the Father, drawing his people. And friend, that fuels missions. That's what empowered evangelism for a young man who's known as the father of modern missions, William Carey. It empowered John Patton in the South Sea Islands, George Leal in Jamaica, the first African-American missionary from America, but maybe even the first missionary at all going from America, George Leal.

Now, Christ will have the prize for which he died, an inheritance of people out of every nation, tribe, and nation, and tongue. When Jesus makes you a fisher of men and women, he doesn't send you out with potentiality.

[34 : 03] When we hold up the gospel of grace, there are fish who will bite the bait of the gospel. His death and resurrection guarantee it. Not a mere possibility.

That was Paul's confidence. God says, I have many people appointed in this city. Go on preaching. Go on teaching. Every one of God's elect and every dunghill will be found.

Not one will be lost. And the apostles learned from Jesus how they were to understand salvation is death on the cross. The apostles used images to convey the reality to us.

Jesus as a sacrifice, a reconciliation, a military victory, and redemption. And each image conveys the reality that salvation is something that was secured.

It accomplished its ends. Listen to Colossians 1, verse 20. Speaking of Jesus, Paul writes this, For through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on heaven or on earth, making peace by the blood of his cross.

[35 : 10] How can we say that God and sinners are reconciled if these reconciled sinners are then cast into hell? Is that a true reconciliation?

reconciliation? What kind of redemption would it be if the hostages aren't set free? In fact, Revelation 5, verse 9, Jesus redeemed or ransomed people for God from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Christ secures their salvation. Ambrose of Milan, one great teacher who produced another great teacher in the church, Augustine, Ambrose wrote this, Can he damn you whom he has redeemed from death?

For whom he offered himself? Whose life he knows is the reward of his own death? The answer is, no, of course not. He has died for you.

You are an object of special love, a daughter, a son of love, a special love. He will not cast you away. He did not die. Not one drop of his blood was in vain.

[36 : 13] Christ secures the salvation of his people. Two more reasons. Third, assurance is grounded in definite atonement. It's grounded in definite atonement.

And this is the rock solid assurance in Romans chapter 8. It's not based on a potential salvation, but a definite one. Verse 32, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

If he died for us, everything else follows, brothers and sisters. He has done greater things for us, will he not do less? If he gave us the greatest thing, his son, he will give us all things.

Will he give you faith and repentance? Of course, those are a gift. Perseverance? Yes. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Will he condemn those whom he died for?

No. Who will bring any charge against God's elect? Will they be defeated? No. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. This all flows from the cross, brothers and sisters.

[37 : 20] If he has done the greatest thing, will he send someone to tell you about it? John Owen makes this point. What if God died for everyone, but doesn't bother to send someone to tell you about it?

Is it wise of God to send Christ to die for men that they might be saved and never cause these men to hear of any such thing? What wise man would pay a ransom for the delivery of those captives, which he is sure shall never come to the knowledge of such payment made?

And so never be better for it. Was this the mind and will, the design and purpose of our merciful high priest? I don't think so. We have a merciful high priest, one who never sleeps nor slumbers. He daily watches over his people, provides for them with unfailing care. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost who come unto God by him because he has ever lived to make intercession for them. Christ's intercessory work, he's interceding for us because of the right hand of God. Let's turn to his last, the last point, his intercessory work. And this is the strongest argument, I think, for this.

[38 : 29] We could talk about the previous ones I made, but this one's the strongest argument. Referring to Jesus as the high priest. Recall we said in the beginning how Jesus, as the high priest, would be, he would offer the sacrifice and he would represent the people.

And recall his high priestly prayer in John 17, the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Bible. right before God's wrath comes crashing down, his arrest, his trial, his crucifixion, only hours away, Jesus begins to pray.

And in his office of priests, he represents the people. And Jesus in the high priestly prayer intercedes for the world, right? No. Verse 9, Jesus says, I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

And the focus in verse 9 extends to his disciples. He later extends that to all who believe through the witness of the disciples in verse 20. So, in his office of high priest, if Jesus had indeed died for all, why is he now only interceding for some?

Why is he not praying for everyone in the world? Why pray only for those whom the Father had given him? John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, one book I love.

[39 : 51] How many thousands are there for whom Christ doth not so much as open his mouth, but leaves them to the accusations of Satan and to Ahab's judgment and Ahab's because there is none to plead their cause.

And why does he not concern himself with them? It would seem pretty odd if he was going to die for them, not even to pray for them before he goes to the cross. But remember, in the Old Testament, in the office of priests, he would offer the sacrifice on behalf of God's people, not the Moabites, not the Malachites, but a particular people for Israel.

And this same pattern seems to apply to the high priestly prayer. The Son gives eternal life to those whom the Father had given him. The Father had not given him the world, but only those sheep whom the Father had given to the Son.

Jesus continues, for their sake, his disciples, those sheep, I consecrate myself. Jesus died to accomplish a definite, full, irreversible atonement for his people.

So, friend, this is the depths of Christ's love for you. Because we know the meaning of his death, we can know the meaning and the depths of his great love for us. So, my prayer is that you would know that God has had an eternal love for you.

[41 : 19] It's eternal. It had no beginning and it will have no end. And for those whom Christ loves, he loves until the very end. Okay. Well, let's have a hearty discussion about this topic.

Next week, just so we're put the path markers out. We're going to talk about assurance and Christ's love until the very end.

Richard. I've heard it said that in this respect, with respect to a definite atonement, even John Calvin wasn't a Calvinist.

He doesn't reject a definite atonement outright, but he does not affirm it either. Yeah, certainly I don't know specifically his view.

And if he didn't, I'm not going based on a teacher. I'm trying to stick to what I believe the Word of God teaches. Well, from an Armenian.

[42 : 24] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I don't know what Calvin believed on that. I didn't consult Calvin when I was preparing for this. He's dead. He's dead.

Jesus is alive. Yeah. Certainly Ambrose and Augustine, Aquinas, many of the Reformers believe this, but it would be anachronistic to say they used the term unlimited atonement before the Reformation.

But I think if you look in the writings of someone like Augustine, you'll see the special love that Christ had for his people. I'm sure that didn't escape Calvin's notice.

Yeah. I'll ask just for simplifying, you mentioned Whitfield and Wesley.

Who else in the beginning and which who's in which camp? Oh, yeah. So John Whitfield was firmly in this camp and John Wesley, Wesleyanism was in another camp.

[43 : 32] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Any thoughts, questions?

Just that when I first learned about this, it was surprising to me, but the kind of the conclusion that it gave me was kind of this security in God's love as well.

Not that Christ's love is just kind of scattered liberally and all be gathered up in heaven whether or not he feels any particular kind of way about me, right?

Like sometimes I get this idea of being the last in the game. Jesus is there with his arms cross-line. Yeah, I guess you can do it. It's like, no, no.

It's like, none of us deserve this. Yeah. So the fact that he chose any of us is staggering. And that means he was intentional, he purposed it.

[44 : 46] He said, I choose you. And I'm like, why? He's like, no reason. I just wanted to. You know, like, there's nothing you can claim.

That's what I ask every day. How could you? I'm just so worthless. He gives me just the opposite. He gives me the, you know, not, but we'll get to that next week with the assurance.

Yeah, we'll talk about that. Yeah, I think you're right, Josh, that I think Christians walk around and they think, you know, God, yeah, he loves me.

He's kind of merely tolerating me. He hasn't really delighted me at all. But I think if you realize that if God knew the worst about you and died for you specifically on the cross, of course he loves you. of course he's going to give you everything. And I think that's... If his son's record of perfection has been imputed to me, that's when God looks at me, he sees nothing but delight.

[45 : 52] He's delighted because he sees perfection. He sees it. That the son gave him. Yeah, amen. It's like... Beth. How do you guide and respond to people who hear this and they kind of produces survivor guilt?

Can you explain survivor guilt? That God might choose them and grant them saving faith over someone else when there's no reason.

Yeah, that's a great question. It's certainly, I think we should follow the Apostle Paul's example in Romans chapter 9 where he is just broken over the sin of the unbelief of Israel.

He's like, I myself wish myself if I could be accursed if they could come in. There should be just a brokenness that everyone comes to know this great love.

But I never, I don't think that the scripture gives us warrant to ask the question, who are God's chosen ones when we present the gospel to other people?

[47 : 03] people. I think Christ holds out his hands, nail-scarred hands and said, all who come to me, I will never cast out. And so that's the message we give to people. It's not, am I part of the chosen ones?

Did he die for me? it's like, if you come to me, I will never cast you out. Yeah, but if you're dead in your sins and trespasses, you can't come to him. So he has to throw you a lifeline. And then he pulls you in.

But he does all the work. He does. Salvation is from the Lord. Yeah, I mean, Paul says we seek to persuade, right? And we... You don't turn to God. No, we pray, we pray, like, you know, before, every time I, before I teach or I preach, every step in the Trinity and the sanctuary, I say to myself, I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Spirit. Because I know what you're saying, Raul, like, I could speak and make a lot of noise, but the Holy Spirit's not in operation in this room. Like, all of it's for nothing. I cannot raise people from death to life. But I think it just gives us a warrant to pray. And, you know, certainly there's, you know, the most unlikely person is God delights to save those who are alone in the world.

[48 : 21] So, I think rather than feeling guilty, just feeling gratitude would be the right response. Okay.

Last questions? All right, well, next week we'll talk about Christ's love for us until the end, and then John will conclude our journey the week afterward.

All right, friends, go in peace. do you Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. What I need is either the motivation and the time to...

[50 : 39] Okay, just sit down. They'll naturally drop. Gravity will take care of it. Okay. So, if we have that...

Let's see if when we turn it over if that will drop to hold it to place.

No, there's something wrong with this. Yeah, let's maybe not use this one. Yeah. Golly.

Yeah, let's see if we can get another one out of it. And we should mark it too. Yeah, look at that. It's not all...

Yeah. So... So it's supposed to... Be straight. Okay. Okay. Okay. So when we turn it over, that ought to drop. There we go. There we go. Yeah.

[51 : 46] Oh. Thank you for the lovely... Good admin this year. Great. Great. Great. Great. Thank you. Great. Thank you for the lovely... Thank you for the admin this year.

Great. Thank you. Thank you for the lovely... Thank you for the admin this year. Great. Great. So, only two... And this one goes for the door. Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Okay. Thank you for the lovely... Thank you for the lovely... Oh. Thank you for the lovely... Oh. I'm an admin this year. Great. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. So, only two...

And this one goes for the door. Yeah. So this one's turned... A little bothered. No. No. All we need is... One more in the hallway. Yeah.

[52 : 46] But all we need is two... Four and six. All we need is six. Yeah. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[54 : 45] like advent calendar like toys have been the thing. Yeah, and so we're enjoying. We didn't start the puzzle. Jeff has something for you guys.

Oh, and congratulations. Not that we aren't a rude flavor here. Congratulations. Thank you. Now, if we need to do a certain thing in my head.

I was very good. I was actually thinking of a movie. I was thinking of a movie when they got that text. That's great for him. That is great. That's great to think.

It came to ruin. Yes, we are happy. And now it's time for me to learn my way around. I've not learned my way around because I keep thinking, there's so much to me.

Yeah. I don't know. I don't know. So I used my GPS to get everywhere. And now I think I need to learn. It's time.

[56 : 08] It's time. No, they're all up on that. I was here. I was here. I was there. Well, when you can't. Other places are not like this. Or at least not to me. Savannah is Savannah.

All of it is Savannah. Yeah. But Milford is Milford. And if you need the thing in orange, you have to go to a home in that little town. Or to Westport, whatever.

It just feels completely disconnected to me. Yeah. That's not what I'm used to do. But like, just saying, we are looking up in the summers. And they would want to go get ice cream. And we would drive to the road to this ice cream place and have a lot of help.

We really had to get on the highway to go through. To get ice cream. And you get all ice cream here. Yeah. Yeah. Wow. But they don't. That's just what you do.

It's just. So, whatever. Anyway. You just have to do it. Well, you have to learn your way around. Here. By learning how. I'm not going to take a different thing.

[57 : 13] This is how I want to get some of these. These are the things. I like to go through the ice cream. I like. Like, now that you're kind of like learning where you're going around, I'm going to say, like, this is a bonus thing. Did you guys go out to your team?

These are like, fine. I always realized that when I'm family from out of town. And I, one, I think. Well, sorry guys. We were out.

I got to go out there. I'm like, I'm on the phone for this. We could walk and eat food. But if you come see us. But that might go away. Come on. Come on. Come on.