

Atonement

STUDY NOTES

If we are honest with ourselves, we admit that every one of us struggles with our human nature. Rather than doing the things that are right, our natural inclination is to be self-centred. The apostle Paul put it this way:

“For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” (Romans 5:15)

Sin is the greatest problem that we face.

Key Verses:

“For **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.”

ROMANS 3:23

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

JEREMIAH 17:9

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”

ROMANS 5:18-19

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and **death through sin**, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

ROMANS 5:12

“For the wages of sin is **death**...”

ROMANS 6:23

God's Answer to Sin

When we read the verses above, it might seem hopeless. We don't like to think of ourselves as sinners – but we are. What is worse, the Bible tells us that sin leads to death. We are all destined to die because we sin against God.

However, the Bible tells us that God has an answer to sin – he can forgive our sins and take away its consequence. He is willing to give us life! God wants to show us mercy and give us life.

Key Verses:

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

2 PETER 3:9

"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

MICAH 7:18-19

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

PSALM 103:11-12

God's Righteousness

After reading those passages, we are comforted to know that God is not only happy to forgive our sins, but he wants to erase all memory of them and consider us righteous! God is much more forgiving than we ever are.

But at the same time God is a righteous God. He is insistent on showing us that sin is wrong and cannot be ignored. He wants us to understand the gravity of sin and work to overcome it in our own lives.

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the
Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

ISAIAH 55:8-9

*“But your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.”*

ISAIAH 59:1-2

*“The way of the wicked is an abomination to the
Lord, but he loves him who pursues
righteousness.”*

PROVERBS 15:9

Jesus' Sacrifice

This is where the sacrifice of Christ comes in! God sent his son Jesus as a sacrifice for sin – to provide a means where we might be saved, but also to illustrate some important principles.

The first thing to note is that Jesus was a human being like you and I. He was subject to temptation and sin. The temptation he felt to do evil was just as strong as the temptations that you and I feel every day. The difference being that Jesus never gave into to temptation – he never sinned. But that fact that he shared our sin prone nature was essential to God's plan.

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable
to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who
in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet
without sin.”*

HEBREWS 4:15

*“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in
every respect, so that he might become a
merciful and faithful high priest in the service of
God... For because he himself has suffered when
tempted, he is able to help those who are being
tempted.”*

HEBREWS 2:17-18

Jesus Provides The Example

By bearing our same nature and suffering with temptations just like us, Jesus demonstrated that it is possible to say no to the temptation to sin. He illustrated that through prayer and dedication to God's principles sin can be overcome. He provided an example for us to follow.

"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

MATTHEW 16:24

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

JOHN 16:33

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

1 JOHN 2:14

Forgiveness When we Fail

Yet despite our best efforts we cannot live a perfect life without sin like Jesus did. Although we try to follow his example, we often stumble and sin. Although we share the same human nature that Jesus had during his life on earth, we were not conceived by the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for us to live a life without sin. So, God provides a means whereby our sins can be forgiven by faith in his son.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."

EPHESIANS 1:7

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

ROMANS 5:8

Putting Sin to Death

Jesus' death also illustrated that human nature must be destroyed. Every other man who has died, died because of his sin. Jesus, who did no sin, died to demonstrate that our sin prone nature needs to be put to death. Miraculously after three days in the grave, God resurrected his son with a new nature – one that was no longer capable of sin and one that was immortal.

God has promised us that same gift if we understand these principles and believe in him. Jesus didn't die in your place. His sacrifice was not a substitutionary one. Jesus life and death was a representation of what God is looking for from everyone who would be his faithful servant.

“For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

ROMANS 6:7-11

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

Summary

- Sin is a problem, and it leads to death.
- We all sin and are in need of salvation.
- God is merciful and will forgive us.
- God is also righteous and hates sin.
- Jesus was a man who faced real temptations.
- Jesus was capable of sin, but never sinned.
- In his life, he provided an example of how we can overcome sin.
- In his death, he showed that our sin prone nature must die.
- Those who associate with Jesus and his death can have their sin forgiven.
- God has provided the solution to sin and death.