

BIG Questions

Why do we feel guilty about sin even though God forgives us we feel as though it is possible to earn Gods love?

Are we reminded often enough that Satan is constantly “Prowling around like a roaring lion and can we always discern when we are directly and personally under attack by him?

How can the suffering and death of an innocent man- even the man who is God “pay for “the sins of the guilty? Is this compatible with a God of Justice?

Jesus when you said, we are forgiven when you died for us, why is there still a day of judgement?

What exactly do we mean by the second coming?

Starter Have you ever felt the need to atone for something?

Reading Leviticus16:6-10, 15-17, 20-22 second reading Matthew18:23-36

Sermon outline

The need for God’s people to be clearly different from the surrounding culture is as powerfully taught in the NT and required of Christians as it was for OT Israel.

Sacrifices and the sacred Day of Atonement opened the way for unholy people to come to God. The sin offering was for those who unintentionally failed to follow God’s way of living or did so through weakness or negligence. Most importantly before offering the sacrifice the individual had to confess exactly what they had done wrong. The Guilt offering used when the offender had shown a lack of integrity or honesty in their dealings with people and had freely of their own choice made a voluntary confession to such errors of judgement because they were conscious of their wrong doing. In such cases the person had to make full restitution to the injured party before making an offering to God. Reconciliation with God assumes a prior reconciliation with people. The offerings were not to deal with sin but to cleanse away the effects of sin on their relationship with God. Although God had made full provision for accidental sin, there was no offering to cover wilful rebellion against God. This is picked up in NT Deliberate rebellion in those who have been forgiven is very serious, In the parable of forgiveness the consequences for deliberately going against God are made very clear.

Reasons we may feel guilty about sin:

Failure to behave in ways that are noticeably different from the surrounding culture

Failure to seriously call to mind our sins and repent. We just go through the motions of the confession before offering Christ’s death on the cross to repair our relationship with God.

Failure/reluctance to be reconciled with the people we have wronged

Conscious that we have wilfully rebelled against God.

We feel that personally we have done nothing to pay our debt to God?

Our personal payment is met by our allegiance to Christ and our willingness to live holy lives. Every day we must set out with the intention to follow the way God wants us to live. Every minute of every day we are vulnerable to attack from Satan. However God also knows our weakness and has made provision through Jesus Christ to cover the things we do that we never set out to do. The real evidence of our faith in Jesus and our love for God will be the way we have tried to live holy lives and this will determine our heavenly rewards. When Jesus returns at the second coming he will judge how much treasure we have stored up in heaven.

In the rituals of the Day of Atonement by the substitution of an innocent life for a guilty life. God had found a way by which for Him both justice and mercy can be satisfied. The sacrifices for sin in Leviticus speak of the sacrifice that Jesus made.. In Isaiah53 the death of the Servant of the Lord is described in sacrificial terms. He is the one who will suffer and die in the place of others making restitution for the wrongs of others so that they may be counted righteous. The writer of Hebrews makes detailed use of the specific rites of the day of Atonement in explaining Christ’s crucifixion His climactic point is that at the time of Christ’s death the curtain separating the Most Holy place from the rest of the meeting place was torn in two demonstrating that by his blood Jesus Christ had opened the way for all into the very presence of God.

Questions of application.

1. Look at the reasons we may feel guilty about sin which if any of them resonates most with you.
2. What if anything can you do to better resist the continuous temptations of Satan that lead us to unintentionally fall short of God’s standards.

3 Read Hebrews 10:12-25

Focusing on verse 23-25 how might we motivate each other to do good works or as the hymn says trust in his unfailing love and try his works to do?