

What did Jesus do? Part 2 - Atonement

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[0 : 00] And today we're looking at what else Jesus did for us, particularly his death and resurrection, because it wasn't enough for Jesus just to come and earn our righteousness, right?

He didn't come, he didn't leave this perfect life and then just ascend to heaven. He first had to die. He had to go through death. And why is that? Why couldn't it have been that Jesus came down and lived this perfect life, was blameless, and then went up to heaven?

It's because of this. It's because death is the only way to pay for sin. Romans 6.23 says the wages of sin is death. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

There's no loophole in that scenario. That's the equation. That's the law of sin and death. And because God is just, he has to deal appropriately with sin.

And here's this great dilemma, right? You have, on one sense, God wants to be reconciled to us. He wants us to be reconciled to him. He wants us to be in a relationship with him and be close to him.

[1 : 04] But then he can't abide sin and he can't be with us because of our sins, so we're separated from him. And also, God has to punish sin. He just can't erase it and pretend it never happened. And so here's the problem.

If God was to just reconcile with us without punishing us, because he's a just God, he would no longer be just. That's a big problem. And yet, if God punishes us, we would die.

And we can't be reconciled to someone who's dead, right? Nobody has a great relationship with the corpse. It's just true. Unless you're Norman Bates. So there's this seemingly unresolvable problem. So in one sense, you know, God wants to be reconciled, but he has to punish sin. Man, it's this, how is he gonna get past this?

And so we see in Jesus Christ that God makes himself the solution. Jesus died to pay the debt of our sin. Our three-year-old daughter was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in January.

[2 : 10] And so that involved us having to rush to Vidant and Greenville. And we spent quite a few days in the hospital and doctors and medicine and blood work and yada, yada, yada. You know, those of us who know how this just, there's dollar signs that are like registering in our head.

And so the amount just added up. And so we got the bill and it was thousands and thousands of dollars. And so we were sitting under this debt that we knew that we had to pay, that we couldn't get out of.

And we're thinking like, man, we're gonna have to work extra hard, you know, and slowly pay this debt off over time. And so we were under this crushing weight of debt. And then literally last week, the most amazing thing happened.

We got a letter from Vidant that said, your debt has been paid. You have nothing, zero. Yeah, right? And so that's a cool story.

And we're like, oh, this amazing relief. I mean, we were crying. We were like, wow, we don't have to pay this debt off anymore. What an amazing thing. But man, here's the thing, guys.

[3 : 14] The debt that we owe God because of sin is incomparable to the few thousand dollars we owed to pay Vidant off and get out from under that debt. It is so incomparable that we actually can't pay it off.

It would take a whole eternity to do it. And that's why it's called eternal death because we actually will never be able to pay it off. And so that's what Jesus did. Jesus paid the whole debt for you and I, our whole debt of sin by dying for us.

And so now, because through faith in Jesus Christ and what he's done, our heavenly account statement says paid in full for every single one of us. And that's our reality. We're released from the burden of debt of our sin.

And it's more than just the ones that we've committed in the past. It's the sins that, yes, we've committed in the past, but it's the sins we'll commit today and the sins that we're gonna commit for the rest of our lives.

Jesus died for all of those sins at one time, our past, present, and future. And by faith, through confession and repentance and believing in Jesus, God rolls those sins, the heavy burden of those sins away from us.

[4 : 21] And for many, this is good news. And for many others, you might still be here and have this objection. Well, why couldn't God just forgive our sins? Why couldn't he just look at them and just take them away without Jesus having to die?

I mean, isn't he almighty God? Isn't he sovereign? Doesn't he get the final say? And that's a really good question. And actually, that question is answered by getting at the heart of justice, which all of us have a sense of justice, right?

And here's the thing. Forgiveness and justice are always tied together. You can't separate the two. There's no such thing as a victimless crime. When we sin, oftentimes there's a victim to it, attached to it.

Someone pays for it. Someone pays for our sin. And we all agree it's an injustice to actually require the victim to pay for it or force them to forgive it.

And if you think about it, the more closely related we are to the injustice that has been perpetrated, the more outraged we become. And the greater our demand for justice is.

[5 : 29] Let me give you a little scenario. Imagine there's a marriage, a close friend of yours. And this guy married this gal. And he's a nice guy.

And he's pretty wealthy. And he loves his wife. He is so committed to her. He is faithful. He only has eyes for her. He dotes on her and lavishes her with love. He's created this wonderful place for her to flourish and thrive.

She has no need for anything. She's well taken care of. Not only by his love, but he's made sure that she is never wanting for anything.

So she's not lacking any physical and material needs. She's not lacking any emotional and romantic needs. This gal knows that she is just perfectly loved by this man. And then slowly her heart starts to turn from him.

She starts to take on other lovers and to pursue other men and to love them and spurn her husband's love. And because the husband isn't cool with her having other guys, other lovers, she gets mad.

[6 : 36] She says, how dare you? And starts to slander his name to everyone, saying he isn't a good husband. He isn't kind. He isn't any of those things. He's just making that up.

He's putting on a front. And she begins to slander him and she even begins to believe those lies about him. And then she starts to think, man, you know it would be nice if I could keep all the stuff that my husband has done for me and has prepared for me, but just get rid of the husband.

That would be awesome. And so she plans this plot to kill him and she pulls it off. But she gets found out and convicted. If that was a close friend of ours, how outraged would we be towards that lady?

How outraged would we be if we were the victim? Imagine if we were the husband in that scenario. And we would find the injustice of that would be intolerable.

We would want justice. And here's the point. If you and I aren't willing to overlook an injustice like this, why should we expect God to do that? Because what I just told you is the exact story of the gospel.

[7 : 47] Except we're the faithless, lying, cheating wife, you and I. We're the one who killed Jesus. We're the one who put our husband on the cross.

And God's the victim because of our sin. And here's the thing about justice and forgiveness, about knowing what good justice is. It's not the perpetrators who get to determine how evil their sin is, right?

Why? Because they're always gonna downplay it to their own benefit. It's the victims who feel the cost. It's the victims who know the injustice and they feel it. They feel the weight of it.

And they have the right to feel outraged toward the injustice. In the same way, God has this right because he's the victim. He was the faithful, doting husband.

He loved us. He cared for us. He provided for us. He was faithful and we were faithless. He was faithful. And we were the one who ran after other idols and other lovers.

[8 : 47] We were the ones who didn't want him around. We wanted his stuff, but we didn't want him. And if you and I, if we want impunity for ourselves, man, we want something outrageous.

And God is not outrageous. He said there's gonna be justice. It's a universal truth. But Jesus said this. Jesus said, you know what? That's gonna be me. That's gonna be me.

Man, and that's not an outrageous thing that Jesus did in dying for us, but it's definitely extravagant. He demands justice. And he offers it himself.

He satisfies it himself as a propitiation, the sacrifice for that. He dies in our place, the last and final sacrifice to deal with the justice that needs to be served.

And at the heart of Jesus's death on the cross is this wonderful thing of justice and forgiveness, reminded of that old hymn that talks about, man, heaven's peace and perfect justice, came and kissed a guilty world in love.

[9 : 51] And that's what Jesus did on the cross because he's the faithful husband that wanted to be reconciled with his wife, that wanted his wife back. And there was no other way.

So he fulfills the required justice by taking the punishment, right? And in this way, he offered a way to be reconciled with us. Justice satisfied.

Justice satisfied. Forgiveness offered. It's a beautiful thing. But here's the thing. If we think about it, this scenario, man, forgiveness of this wife that sins against her husband, man, that's awesome, but that's not gonna change her heart, right?

She's just gonna keep on living the way she's been living. That's no good. If she just goes on sinning against her husband, then what's the point of the forgiveness in the first place? It seems kind of, is that the relationship that God wants?

Is he okay with that? And here's another aspect of the atonement that's so powerful of what Jesus did. Not only are we forgiven, but we're also given a new heart.

[10 : 58] See, our old heart was so corrupted with sin. Our old heart was so messed up that we couldn't help ourselves. Man, we were hell-bent, like literally hell-bent on running after other lovers.

And pushing God away. We just didn't need God to come in and fix our heart with a little bit of medicine, man. We needed a heart transplant. We needed a totally different heart. And that's what God did.

He didn't just forgive us our sins, he gives us a new heart. Check this out in Ezekiel 36. It says this, verse 25. I'm gonna sprinkle clean water on you. He's saying this to Israel. And you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses.

And from all your idols, I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Which means what this verse is getting at is actually we don't go on sinning.

[12 : 00] Because of what Jesus has done and what God does to us, we don't go on sinning. Like it doesn't matter. Like it's kind of, well, at least I'm forgiven. I'm just gonna keep on living how I used to be living.

No, actually God, his atonement, it's so amazing. It not only forgives our sins and the punishment for our sins, man, it releases us from sin's power. We're released from it.

We don't walk the way we walked before. We don't have those same desires to run after other lovers. Actually, we just wanna be faithful to God. Jesus and his cross releases us from sin's power. And this is what we see. Jesus is our champion who set us free from sin's power. In our cultural moment today, it denies. We kind of deny that sin exists.

So we have this like denial that you even need to be forgiven of anything because nothing you do is really that bad. And while that's on one side, that's being said. And on the other side, like dead religion says, just do better, try harder to be righteous.

[13 : 03] And if you just do better and try harder, you could change your own heart. You can free yourself from this prison of sin. You can change yourself. You could rehabilitate yourself. But the gospel says you can't.

Can't. The gospel says you can't. You need to be rescued. And you may be able to change your behavior, but you can't change your heart. You can't change those desires.

The gospel says the prison of sin is impossible to escape from. So Jesus came and he broke us out. Right? Isaiah 61.1 says, The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to those who are bound. We see Jesus. He is our champion.

He is the anointed one. He's the hero. He's the rescuer. Right? And in his death and resurrection, he rescued us from sin by defeating it. Sin and death in our place for us.

[14:08] Think of like when David went out to slay Goliath. We're all familiar with that story. This little shepherd boy goes and he stands in the front as a champion for Israel because Israel, all the mighty men of Israel and all the soldiers looked at Goliath and said, I can't defeat that guy.

And if I fight him, we're gonna lose and we're all gonna be enslaved to the Philistines. And David steps in and he slays Goliath the giant. And that's the picture of Jesus.

That's what that story is pointing us to. You and I were helpless in the face of the true giant in our lives, sin and death. We were helpless. We could not defeat that giant.

And so Jesus, the greater David, steps in our shepherd and he kills the giant as our champion for us. What we could never do, Jesus did for us.

That is what's amazing about the gospel. Romans six, verse five, it says, for if we have been united with Jesus in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

[15:14] We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. Death no longer have his authority over him. For the death that Jesus died, he died to sin once for all.

Once for all. But the life he lives, he lives to God. So you, fellow Christian brother and sister, you, me, also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. For sin will have no dominion over you. Sin will have no authority over you and me since you are not under law but under grace.

These are amazing promises that we have because of what Jesus has done and through faith in him, we're united to our champion, our savior, who defeated death and sin for us and now it has no dominion, no authority, no power over us.

Now what I'm not saying is that we're not gonna be tempted towards sin. We most definitely are tempted to sin. But, man, brothers and sisters, we have to remind ourselves that we are not under sin's authority.

[16:39] We are not under sin's power. We're released from it. We're not powerless to it. It doesn't lead us around by the nose. First Corinthians 10, 13 to 14 says, no temptation has overtaken you.

You, Christian, disciple of Jesus, no temptation has overtaken you. That is not common to man. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.

But with the temptation, he will, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

As Christians, we don't stand back and we have this excuse, oh, the devil made me do it. Couldn't help myself. The devil made me do it. That's not our reality.

That's not our reality in Jesus Christ. We've been set free from sin's bondage because we've died with Christ because Christ died for us and we're living for Christ because he's risen from the dead and we're joined with him and we get to live for God too.

[17:50] And this means that when we do sin, we don't wallow and sit in despair like woe is me. No, we run to God. We run to God in grace because he's paid it all.

He's paid for that sin you and I are gonna commit at two o'clock today that we haven't even thought of that we were gonna do, right? Or tomorrow or whenever. Man, he paid for that on the cross.

There's no punishment for it because Jesus took the punishment for that, right? Romans 8.1, there is therefore now no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, our Lord. There's no more condemnation.

There's no more guilt. There's no more punishment. We don't have to, we don't have to like get our sins forgiven by making these big huge promises to God.

Man, I used to be so bad at this when I was a teenager trying to figure this relationship with God out and what it meant. I would sin and I would be like so crushed by it. Like, oh Lord, I'm so sorry.

[18 : 46] I'll never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever do that again. Just forgive me. And you know what? I'm also gonna go, and I'm also gonna go witness to 20 people.

I'm like parlaying with God, like, yeah, please forgive me my sins. I'm like really serious this time. And then two hours later, I commit the same sin again, you know? I look back, oh Lord.

I'm such a sorry excuse, please. This time I really mean it. I'm never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever gonna do it again. But we do these things because we don't understand the depths and the grace of God's love.

And forgiveness and what it means. We simply come to him and we confess. We repent. And 1 John 1 says this. I think it's verse 8. Man, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness.

We don't have to parlay with God when we sin. We don't have to come and be like, I'm gonna make you all kinds of promises, God, so that you can really forgive me this time. No, we come, and he receives us with open arms.

[19 : 48] We say, man, Lord, I blew it. I sinned. I sinned against you. I sinned against this person. Will you forgive me? And he does every single time and purifies us from all unrighteousness.

And we're released from sin's power. We're released from it. And this is an incredible gift to you and I. It's the blessing of Jesus' atonement for us. In one of Paul's letters, he talks about taking off the old self.

You know, before Jesus saved us, before we realized that he was our savior, you know, we have this old self. And Paul says, man, we wake up every day and we're doing this all the time.

We're putting off our old self. We're not agreeing with who we were. We're putting on the new self, who we are in Jesus Christ. Off with the old, in with the new. And that's our life in Jesus.

And this is how we as Christians fight sin. And we remember that it has no dominion and power over us. And we don't do it by our own strength, but we do it in God's power, in his grace. Man, fighting sin in our own strength is like running up an escalator that's going down or just trying our best, trying our best, doing it in the flesh.

[20 : 56] I'm gonna beat this, I'm gonna beat this. And we just grow tired and weary. But man, when we realize the power of God's grace, when we realize the goodness of his love and we step into that, man, it's like going on this, like in the airport, they have those conveyor belts that you step onto.

And like the chumps over here just like walking with their bags, like you're just like, why are they doing that? Because I'm like going twice the speed they are. And you're just like moving along really nice and easy, just cruising, you know?

And that's what it's like, man, living in God's grace and living by God's power. We're gonna face temptation and sin, but we don't fight it in our own flesh. We lean into his grace. And it gives us endurance.

We could go farther by that, not in our own strength. And so when you and I feel tired, we wanna tap out. We wanna give in to sin. We gotta remember, man, we have this hope.

We have this amazing hope that the reality that you face in that moment for that temptation to sin isn't your greatest reality. Jesus has authority over that sin.

[21 : 55] And you need to press into him and press into that his authority over that and into his grace over that. But here's the other thing, friends. It's not only that, the thing that really helps us to endure and fight the good fight against sin is we realize that sin is not gonna be around forever.

Jesus is a reigning king. He ascended into heaven and he's sitting there on the throne and he's ruling and reigning now and everything has been subjected to him.

Everything has been put under his feet. Everything is underneath him. He's sovereign over all these things, right? And one day he's gonna come back and he's gonna bring the fullness of his kingdom with him.

All right, we see that in Revelation. His kingdom is gonna come down from heaven and he's gonna bring it here to earth. And it's a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy.

It's a kingdom where sin isn't just powerless. Sin isn't even present. I don't know how you are, but I can't wait for that day. Jesus is our reigning king who is coming to eliminate sin's presence forever.

[23 : 01] I don't know about you, but that gives me hope. And I look forward and see like, man, one day this fight is gonna end, right? When we work out, there's, you know, you can work out and you're like, you start to feel the ache and the tiredness in your muscles, right?

For those of you, maybe you're a runner and you know like, man, I'm running, I'm running. But if you know where the finish line is, then when your muscles ache and your lungs are feeling winded and they're burning, but you know the finish line isn't so far away, you can endure a little bit more because it gives you hope.

And that's what this beautiful truth of faith is that Jesus is coming again does. It gives us hope because we can see the finish line. We can see it. And so when we get tired and we ache and we're like, man, I don't know if I can cope with this anymore.

I'm getting pummeled from every side. We remember and we look to heaven and we're reminded, you know what? Jesus is coming again. This fight is gonna end one day.

Man, don't give in, don't give up. Keep plodding along, Christian brother and sister, one foot in front of the other by God's power in his grace, knowing that he's coming and it gives us endurance.

[24 : 12] Man, that day, sin and death will be no more. Sin and death will be fully defeated. It won't even be around. I can't even imagine what it's gonna be like to live where there's no temptation for sin, not even a possibility for it.

To just live totally sold out and love to God, that's it. But I look forward to that day because that's gonna be restful. That's gonna be enjoyable.

Sin's curse and destruction being no more. Only Jesus's perfect love, peace and joy remaining. And here's the promise. Let's read it in God's word and then we'll bring this to a close.

Revelation 21, it says this. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people.

[25 : 19] And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamb, Jesus Christ. By its light will the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day.

And there will be no night there. They will bring it into the glory and the honor of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter into it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So, how do we respond if you're here and you're not a Christian? Man, you've heard really the fullness of the gospel today, what Jesus did and his death and his resurrection and what he's doing now and what he's gonna do when he comes again.

And I wanna, man, plead with you. Put your faith in Jesus Christ. That's all it takes, faith in him, believing in what he's done for you. Believe and receive his sacrifice, that he died in your place for your sins because he loves you and he wants to be reconciled to you.

[26 : 45] And you can lay down, man, your bondage to sin. You can walk away from that. You can walk away from your burden of sin that is over you. Free to live for God, live for his glory, live to love him and know him.

If you're here already a Christian, man, I wanna call us, just, man, let's rest. Let's remember that.

That's what we get to do here on this earth. To rest in Jesus's life and death and resurrection.

Putting off the old self, putting off the new self. I think some of you heard that, sorry. Putting on the new self and just remembering what Jesus did for us and agreeing with that, remembering that we're united with him.

We're united with him. We are dead to sin and alive to God. Sin has no authority over us anymore.

And then we get to look forward to remembering this amazing inheritance that is waiting for us, that we get to inherit.

In Jesus Christ, our Lord, not only power over sin, but totally released from the presence of sin.

Gives us strength to endure, hope to endure. Let's pray together.

[27 : 59] Jesus, all of us here, all of us here are the poor and powerless. All of us here, we're at one time or another without hope.

Man, and deceived, darkened in our own minds, but Lord, you came as the light of the world, as the light of truth, and your light shone into our hearts at some point, and you saved us, Lord God, and

freed us from sin, the debt of sin and the burden of sin and the bondage of sin, having been forgiven.

And we thank you for that, Lord. I pray for my friends here in the room who have not surrendered to you yet, Jesus Christ. I can remember as an eight-year-old boy, having grown up knowing about who you were, and that all changed in a moment where I felt for the first time what forgiveness was, what saving forgiveness was, and how amazing your steadfast love as you saved me and you gave me a new heart and you poured those things into me.

You poured your love into me and you rolled my burden of sin away, Lord God. Even as an eight-year-old boy, I felt it and I knew it and I knew something had changed. And I pray for those who are here today who have known you and have heard about you but have not experienced that, I pray, Jesus, you would do that amazing thing of giving them a new heart and you would experience that today and they would respond with faith in you and they would bow their knee and surrender to you, Jesus Christ.

I pray for that, Lord God. I pray for those of us who are here that are struggling with temptation.

[29 : 39] I pray for those of us who are here and I pray for those of us who are here and we would remember Romans 6, that we are united with you in your death. That that old self who we were and sometimes we see that rear its ugly head again when we sin, but we don't have to agree with that.

We have to remember, man, sin has no authority over me. Not because I have any power over it, because Jesus, you have power over it and I am united with you, Jesus Christ.

And where we've sinned and we're struggling to come and repent to you, Jesus Christ, because we're afraid of being punished. We're afraid of being chastised. We're afraid of being rejected. That we would remember Romans 8, 1, therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Nothing. Jesus, you paid it all. All of the punishment that was reserved for our sin, past, present, and future, has been, was put upon you, Jesus Christ, and you received it all upon yourself in our place.

God doesn't have this reserve bank of punishment for anything, for any of us anymore, for any of our sins. And we get to run to you freely and receive acceptance and love and forgiveness as we confess and repent to you for our sins.

[30 : 55] And Lord, that is an amazing thing about the gospel. that we're released from our debt of sin, that we're released from the power of sin, and one day we're gonna be released from the presence of sin.

Amen.