

07-23 Sermon Recap: Doctrine of Propitiation and Salvation

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Sermon Recap: The Doctrine of Propitiation (Luke 18 & Romans 3)

Opening and Preparation

- The pastor began with a call to silent prayer, emphasizing the importance of confessing known sin to ensure the filling of the Spirit and restored fellowship with God (**1 John 1:9; 1 Peter 5:7**).
- He encouraged the congregation to cast their cares on God and focus on His Word, regardless of personal struggles or bad days.

Introduction: The Simplicity and Depth of Salvation

- The pastor referenced a story from a "Moses series" by Pastor Bob, highlighting that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.
- He noted that even seasoned pastors can overlook the profundity of this truth, seeking something "deeper" when the core of the gospel is already profound.
- The doctrines of propitiation and reconciliation are often misunderstood or under-applied, especially when believers walk in guilt and condemnation after failure.

Key Point: The Object of Faith

- Salvation is not about what we do, but about what Christ has done. The only merit in salvation is the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- The example of the thief on the cross illustrates that salvation is not about doctrinal knowledge but about trusting in Christ's sacrifice.

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:9-14 – The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

- **Context:** Jesus addresses those who trusted in their own righteousness and looked down on others.
- **Characters:**
 - The Pharisee: Represents self-righteousness, approaches God with pride and a list of works.
 - The Tax Collector: Represents humility, stands far off, and pleads for mercy.
- **Greek Insights:**
 - The word “stand” (histami) is used differently for each man, reflecting their attitudes—self-exaltation vs. humility.
 - The tax collector’s prayer uses the word “hilaskomai” (be merciful/propitiate), which is central to understanding propitiation.
- **Outcome:** The tax collector, not the Pharisee, goes home justified. “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The Doctrine of Propitiation

- **Definition:** Propitiation is the Godward side of salvation—God is satisfied with Christ’s sacrifice.
- **Scripture References:**
 - **Ephesians 5:2** – Christ’s work is a fragrant aroma to God.
 - **Numbers 29:2; Leviticus 1:9** – Old Testament sacrifices as a soothing aroma.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** – Christ became sin for us so we might become the righteousness of God.
- **Key Points:**
 - i. God’s righteousness and justice must be satisfied before fellowship is possible.
 - ii. Propitiation precedes God’s love and salvation; it frees God’s justice to give us righteousness.
 - iii. Propitiation and expiation (the work of Christ) go hand in hand with justification and reconciliation.
 - iv. Propitiation turns away God’s wrath and is the basis for mercy and grace.
 - v. Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve; grace is God giving us what we don’t deserve.

Application: How God Responds to Humans

- God is not impressed by human works or self-righteousness; only what He does through us counts.
- Our point of contact with God is His justice, not His love. God's justice demands sin be punished, but Christ's sacrifice satisfies that demand.
- The law reveals sin but cannot justify; justification comes by faith in Christ alone (**Romans 3:19-28**).

Who God Says You Are

- At salvation, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to you. You are justified, forgiven, and possess God's righteousness.
- You have potential: first, the potential for salvation (even though born in sin), and second, the potential to glorify God as a new creation.
- Spiritual blessings are held in "escrow" for believers, released as we grow in spiritual maturity.

How to Live: Walking in Grace, Not Condemnation

- Keep short accounts with God—confess sin quickly, don't linger in guilt or condemnation.
- Spiritual growth comes through being filled with the Spirit and consistently taking in and applying Bible doctrine.
- Only what is done in the power of God counts for eternity.
- Don't let feelings dictate your walk; spiritual discipline is necessary regardless of emotional state.

Warnings and Encouragements

- Beware of self-righteousness and legalism; do not approach God on the basis of works.
- Many churches and pastors fail to teach these foundational doctrines, leading to confusion and performance-based Christianity.
- The devil seeks to rob believers of assurance and joy by promoting works-based spirituality.

Old Testament Typology: The Mercy Seat

- The mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant (covered in gold, with cherubs representing God's justice and righteousness) is a picture of propitiation.
- The blood sprinkled on the mercy seat satisfied God's righteousness and justice, foreshadowing Christ's sacrifice.
- In the Old Testament, sins were covered; in the New Testament, they are paid for and removed (**Hebrews 10:1-14**).

Assurance and Eternal Security

- Once justified, always justified—God's satisfaction with Christ's sacrifice means you cannot lose your salvation.
- Emotional cycles of guilt and rededication are unnecessary and contrary to the doctrine of grace.
- The devil wants believers to doubt their salvation and live in defeat, but God calls us to stand firm in the gospel.

Practical Takeaways

- Approach God with humility, relying solely on Christ's finished work.
- Grow in grace and knowledge by daily intake and application of Scripture.
- Understand your identity in Christ: justified, righteous, and eternally secure.
- Reject performance-based spirituality; rest in God's satisfaction with Christ.

Closing Prayer

- The service closed with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's salvation, sanctification, and correction, asking for continued growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Scriptures Referenced:

- **Luke 18:9-14** – Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
- **Romans 3:19-28** – Justification by faith, not by works
- **Ephesians 5:2** – Christ's sacrifice as a fragrant aroma
- **Numbers 29:2; Leviticus 1:9** – Old Testament sacrifices
- **2 Corinthians 5:16-21** – Reconciliation and imputation of righteousness

- **Hebrews 10:1-14** – Christ’s sacrifice vs. Old Testament sacrifices
 - **1 John 1:9** – Confession and forgiveness
 - **1 Peter 5:7** – Casting cares on God
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Summary Statement:

God is perfectly righteous and just, and only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ satisfies His demands. Our salvation and ongoing fellowship with God are based solely on Christ’s finished work, not our performance. As believers, we are justified, secure, and called to live by faith, humility, and continual growth in grace—rejecting both legalism and condemnation.