

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 6: Restoring God's Love When It is Broken (Leviticus)

In antonymic fashion, hot is the opposite of cold, tall is the opposite of short and happiness is the opposite of sadness. What is the opposite of Love? Some might say hate, but in terms of God's Love Story it would be Sin. This is because sin is the obstacle we put in the way of God's love, going contrary to His will for our lives.

- Jesus stated in John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
- He also said in John 15:9-10 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

Sin is the breaking of fellowship of God's love for us. He requires perfection, but we are not able to deliver. The Book of Leviticus not only communicates this, but also the mechanism to bring us back into fellowship with God.

Jesus was asked by a lawyer in Matt 22:35-40 "*What is the greatest commandment in the Law?*" The answer He replied was "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.*" Jesus was clearly teaching a two-step approach in dealing with sin, 1) loving God and 2) loving your neighbor. What was Jesus referring to?

In Exodus 20, we find God handing down to the children of Israel something called the Ten Commandments. These Ten Commandments listed as following.

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| I. You shall have no other gods... | VI. You shall not murder |
| II. You shall have no idols | VII. You shall not commit adultery |
| III. You shall not take God's name in vain | VIII. You shall not steal |
| IV. You shall keep the Sabbath holy | IX. You shall not bear false witness |
| V. You shall honor parents | X. You shall not covet |

To look at them on the surface, they appear as ten rules to follow indiscriminately, but with further analysis it can be seen that there is more. The commandments are divided into two groups of five.

- The first five commandments are direct violations to God; the second five are indirect violations to God through man.
- The first five commandments are vertical sins; the second five are horizontal sins.
- The first five are about "Loving God" and the second five are about "Loving Man".

Jesus referred to them as two commandments. The two categories of sin that separate us from God are 1) Sins directly against God 2) Sins indirectly against God through man. Leviticus also categorizes the same.

1. Sins against God.
 - a. Making sacrifices at other locations away from the tabernacle and to other gods (17:1-7).

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- b. The pagan ritual of drinking animal blood (17:10-16)
 - c. Idolatry (19:1-8) and Sacrificing children to Fire of Molech (20:1-5)
 - d. Consorting with spiritualists and mediums (20:6-8)
 - e. Offering flawed sacrifice (22:17-25)
2. Sins against our fellow man.
- a. Immoral relations among the people (Chapter 18).
 - i. Incest, homosexuality, rape, premarital relations
 - b. Sundry Laws (Chapter 19:9-37)
 - i. Neglecting the poor and disabled, abusing or stealing from our fellow man, slander, being a stumbling block to others, misuse of property, abusing slaves
 - c. Food consumption laws (Chapter 11)
 - d. The treatment of leprosy and other skin conditions (Chapter 13).
 - e. Rules on personal sanitation (Chapter 15)
 - i. Neglect in these last three areas would likely threaten the health of the others in the populace.

Every sin committed was either directly against God or indirectly against God through man. Because of this there were sacrifices to be offered by the Jewish people to restore fellowship back to God.

The Healthy Relationship with God

A healthy spiritual relationship of the Jew was exhibited in the three-fold sacrifice found in Leviticus chapters 1-3. These are 1) The Burnt Offering 2) The Grain Offering and 3) The Fellowship Offering. These are all foreshadowing the Christian's relationship with God.

A) Burnt Offering: The Sacrifice of Dedication (Lev 1:1-17)

This offering was an expression of pure worship and devotion to God. It was the sacrifice that said, "I am Yours God and You have my full commitment."

Stage One) Presentation of both the worshipper and sacrifice (1:1-3)

Stage Two) The Laying on of the Hand (1:4)

- Though there is an atoning factor since man is sinful in his nature, the central thought of this sacrifice is consecration.
- This is also symbolic of Christians transferring their burdens to Christ. In our Christian life we must lean on Jesus for our strength on a daily basis. *Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."*

Stage Three) The slaying of the animal (1:5)

- We as Christians are responsible to die to ourselves. We have a responsibility to allow ourselves to die to the world so that we can be alive to Christ. *Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..."*

Stage Four) The Sprinkling of the Blood (1:5)

- Peter said in reference to Christians in 1 Peter 1:2 "...to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood..."

Stage Five) Skinning and Dividing the Animal (Lev 1:6)

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- This is what the regular study dedication to God's word does for the Christian (Heb 4:12)

Stage Six) The entrails and legs of the sacrifice are washed in water (1:9)

- This is symbolic in our approach to God, for we are not to offer God the waste of worldliness and impurity. He wants us clean in every way.
- *1 Corinthians 6:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

Stage Seven) The burning on the altar (1:9)

- God's portion of the sacrifice was fumed up to Him. This was equivalent to a message being sent to God which communicated that they fully committed to God. God enjoys the devotion and total consumption of an individual. *Ps 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*
- The Burnt Offering is a description of Jesus. *Eph 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.*
- Therefore we must follow Him as our example. *Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

B) The Grain offering: The Presentation of a Gift (Lev 2:1-16)

There was a grain offering that typically followed the burnt sacrifice. It was recognition of God's goodness and provision for His people. Gifts to others in authority are to demonstrate reverence on behalf of the presenter (Gen 43:26; Mt 2:11).

In the meal or grain offering, the amount to be offered was one-tenth ephah, which was one day's worth of food for the average man. It could be uncooked, baked, pan-fried or roasted grain and often included a drink offering. The ingredients to be added were...

1) The oil -Lev 2:1 "and he shall pour oil upon it..."

- This was symbolic of the anointing of God.
- *Titus 3:5-6 "...by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior..."*

2) The incense -Lev 2:1 "and put frankincense thereon:"

- This was a symbol of acceptance from Jehovah. All the incense must go into the part that is burned. The smoke would rise up unto the Lord and be a sweet smelling savor unto Jehovah.
- It is with that in mind that Paul referred to Christians.
 - *Ephesians 5:2 "...Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."*
 - *2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.*

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3) The salt -Lev 2:13 "...with all thine oblations thou shalt offer salt."

- This was a symbol of the covenant. Naturally since salt was such a lasting compound with stable qualities, it would make sense to have it symbolic of an enduring covenant (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5; Mt 5:13).

The Presentation of the Grain Offering

- The one who brought the burnt offering also the one that brought the grain offering. The priest would take one handful of the grain of cake mixed with oil, whichever was brought, and offer it into the fire on the altar of burnt offering.

C) The Fellowship Offering (Lev 3:1-17)

It was called the Fellowship or Peace Offering because the individual is in fellowship with God and their fellow man. The fellowship offering was a voluntary offering that followed the burnt and grain offering. It was a meal of fellowship to be eaten by the one who sacrificed and the others in the courtyard.

Stage one) The Presentation (3:1)

- The bringer of the animal must be there to present it because it was his fellowship that is being addressed. Nobody else could do it for him.

Stage two) The laying on of one hand (3:2)

- The primary function of this sacrifice was not the transfer of sin, but fellowship.

Stage three) The killing of the sacrifice (3:2)

- Once again, the stress of the sacrifice was fellowship and not atonement. This is why the blood was sprinkled around the altar, not on the altar.

Stage four) Distribution: All the fat, kidneys and liver removed/"fumed" upon the altar (3:3-4)

Stage five) The animal divided for the meal (32-34)

Stage six) The rest is given to the one that offered the sacrifice.

- The fat and the blood went to God; the breast went to the High Priest; the thigh went to the officiating priest and the rest went to the one offering the sacrifice. They would then have the banquet on the premises of the temple courtyard.

Christians who are walking with God are in fellowship with God.

- Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
- I Jn 1:7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- This was the scene in the parable of the Prodigal Son. (*Luke 15:22-24 "and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."*)

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But what happened when a Jew was sinning and not in fellowship with God? They were to offer the Sin Offering prior to the Burnt, Grain and Fellowship offerings.

D) The Sin offering: "Loving the Lord thy God" (4:1-35)

There is a graded responsibility of sacrifice, a sort of sliding-fee scale. The grade was for the high priest, the congregation, the civil ruler and the common man.

Leviticus 4: Graded Responsibility

1) The High Priest: (4:3)

- He must offer the bullock, personally sacrificing it himself. The blood was to be wiped on the Altar of Incense, sprinkling it seven times on the Veil before the Holy of Holies. This is because his sins were more serious to the nation, for the High Priest is God's representative of the people.

2) The Whole Congregation (vs 13-14)

- They must also offer a bullock, sacrificing at the hands of the elders of the people. The blood was to be wiped on the Altar of Incense, sprinkling it seven times on the Veil before the Holy of Holies. This was done because sin had already infected the congregation of the Lord.

3) A Civil Ruler (vs 22-23)

- He was required to offer a male goat, which is a lesser animal compared to the bull. Since it was a male, it was considered a greater sacrifice than a female goat. The blood would be wiped on the horns of the altar in the courtyard.

4) The Common Man (vs 27-28)

- He must offer a female goat; or a lamb; or 2 doves; or 10th ephah of grain, based on a sliding-fee scale. Since they are common, many of them are not wealthy; therefore it would be necessary to put in place a scale that would punish, but yet make forgiveness accessible.
- The blood was wiped on the horns of the Altar of Burnt Offering in the courtyard and the remainder of the blood was to be poured out at the base of the same.

Christ is our Sin Sacrifice to God

- It is through Him that God takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)
- It is through His precious blood that we are cleansed (1 Pet 1:18-21).
- Jesus is the sacrifice that we brought with a broken heart before the altar (2 Cor 5:21).
- We brought Jesus to the gate for sacrifice when we entered the waters of baptism (Col 2:12-15).
- We commemorate this fact through the Lord's Supper every first day of the week (Mt 26:26-28).

But what if our sin was indirectly against God when we sinned against our brother? There was yet a prior step called the Trespass Offering.

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E) The Trespass Offering: "Loving Thy Neighbor" (Lev 5:14-6:8)

Because their sin against God was committed through another human (someone made in the likeness and image of God), the trespass offering and restitution must be made before all other sacrifices. The sacrifice always had to be a ram.

Steps:

1. Restitution: Must pay back for what was wronged and add one fifth for penalty.
2. Open or public confession (Num 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong, and add to it one-fifth of it, and give {it} to him whom he has wronged.)
3. Slaying of the ram by offender
4. The blood was sprinkled on the side of the altar
5. Note: The application of the blood of the ram. It was to be sprinkled on the side of the altars. This places atonement as secondary to restitution and reparation
6. All the fat was removed and "fumed" unto God
7. Disposition of the body of the ram

Summary: In Matt 5:23-24, Jesus said *"If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering"*.

- They understood that God could not be right with them if they were holding a grudge against another. They could offer God everything they had, but in the end it was fruitless if they were not right with our brother. This was why there was no fellowship with God under the Law until repentance and reparation was complete.
- Christians are to be in a relationship with God. We are to offer ourselves up as a daily sacrifice unto God. We are totally consumed as a gift to Him like the grain offering, a holy fragrance unto the Father. We can have the confidence of sitting at the same table of fellowship with Him and the heavenly host.
- All this could be at risk if we are living a life in violation to Him or to our fellowman. If we choose to hold grudges against our fellow man, then do not even attempt to approach the throne of God with confidence because it will backfire. Get right with your neighbor and get right with God. He wants you at His heavenly table of fellowship in the end. A restored fellowship with God is at the core of His Love Story.