

09-14-14

Series: The Anatomy of a Church

The Anatomy of a Church (30)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 09/07/14)

PERSONAL HOLINESS

STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, [Romans 7:1-25](#)

The Third Lament

[Romans 7:21-23 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

[Genesis 4:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

[\(Genesis 4:4-5\) Worship— Offerings— Cain— Abel](#): next scene: God's response to the worship of Cain and Abel. The Lord looked upon Abel with favor and accepted his offering, but He looked upon Cain with disfavor. He did not accept Cain's offering.

Note several significant points.

1. God did not just accept and reject the offerings; He accepted and rejected the man as well.
2. What was it that made Abel's offering acceptable?
3. What was it that made Cain's offering unacceptable?

Thought 2. God accepts no person apart from Jesus Christ, *the promised seed* and Savior of the world. Before Christ came, the persons who truly believed in the promised Savior approached God through the sacrifice of an innocent life (an animal sacrifice). But since Christ has come, we who believe in Him—truly believe—know that He, Himself, is the great Lamb of God who was sacrificed for our sins.

The point is this: God has never accepted any person—Old Testament or New Testament, before Christ or after Christ—apart from the shedding of blood. The blood of the innocent life—the animal which pictured the coming Savior and His death—

had to be shed for Old Testament believers. The blood of Christ Himself had to be shed for all persons through all the generations of human history.

Romans 5:6 (NASB)

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

John 1:29 (NASB)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

1 Corinthians 5:7 (NASB)

⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

1 Corinthians 15:3 (NASB)

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Galatians 1:4 (NASB)

⁴ Who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

Ephesians 5:2 (NASB)

² And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Hebrews 9:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Thought 3. Note this: there have been two Scriptures thus far in Genesis that deal with the sacrifice of an animal(s). These two Scriptures are significant events in the early life of man's history as recorded in Genesis ([Genesis 3:21](#); [Genesis 4:2-5](#)). In both cases an animal was sacrificed.

⇒ In the first case, the animal's life was given up to clothe Adam and Eve, thereby symbolizing their need to be covered by God in righteousness through the sacrifice of another.

Genesis 3:21 (NASB)

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

⇒ In the second case, the animal life was given up as an act of worship.

Genesis 4:2-5 (NASB)

² Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

The clearest explanation as to why Abel offered an animal sacrifice and was approved by God is that God did institute salvation by animal sacrifice with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were bound to have taught their sons to approach God through animal sacrifice. But only Abel approached God properly. Cain, as so many down through history, rebelled and did not.

Thought 4. Some persons look upon the Old Testament sacrifice of animals as ugly, repulsive, and awful. They call such an approach to God a “**bloody religion.**” They reject *the blood of Jesus Christ*—His death, His cross—as the major purpose for His life. They turn away from the sacrifice of His death to the teachings of His life. They claim to follow His teachings, to approach God by patterning their conduct, goodness, rituals, ceremonies, and religion after His teachings. They do just what Cain did, they offer God the best they are able to produce with their own hands and works.

Man just feels a little more humane, a little more civil, by denying “**the blood of Christ**” for the sins of the world. To reject what is sometimes called a “**blood religion**” makes a person feel more acceptable in a so-called *civilized society*.

Two things need to be noted.

- 1) The cross should be viewed as repulsive. The cross is a symbol of sin and shame. Hanging upon the cross, God’s *very own Son* bore our sins and the sins of the whole world ([1 John 2:1-2](#)). Sin and shame are always repulsive, and the fact that God’s Son hung there *becoming sin for us* is abhorrent. Nothing could be any more distasteful than what actually happened.

1 John 2:1-2 (NASB)

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*.

- 2) The cross should be viewed as glorious. The cross is a symbol of life and of forgiven sins ([1 Peter 2:20](#)).

1 Peter 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

Through the cross God gloriously reconciles man to Himself and to one another. So much comes through the glorious work of the cross that Paul just exclaimed:

Galatians 6:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.