

The death that Jesus died He died to sin

Every believer accepts that Christ died, even that He died a cursed death on a cross. Php 2:8. But many theologians and church leaders have presumed that Christ's death was the death of God. But in his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul clarifies the nature of Christ's death stating that 'the death He [Christ] died, He died *to sin* once and for all; but the life He now lives, He lives to God' and is no longer hindered or answerable for sin. Rom 6:10. Therefore, in this set of notes, we will show that the death of the cross is not the death of God but the death of sin, which the apostle then instructs us as believers to likewise reckon to in our own lives. Rom 6:11-12. Then in the second part of the notes we will consider the implications of the death of sin and the manner in which we live to God.

In a recent presbytery word, we considered our deliverance from the carnal dilemma, which for the Christian, is a conversion from walking after the flesh to walking after the Spirit. We noted that salvation from sin is the outcome of repentance without regret (i.e. not turning back to what we are repenting from) and that repentance is the outcome of godly sorrow and godly sorrow is the outcome of meeting Christ.

When Christ was lifted up on the cross (in the process of dying to sin), He drew all men to Himself. Joh 12:32. And like the serpent on the pole in the days of Moses, looking upon Christ remains our only hope for our sin-sick condition. Joh 3:14. This aligns with Zechariah's prophecy, detailing that 'God will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; causing them to *look on Me whom they pierced*'. Zechariah continued, 'Yes, they will mourn [i.e. godly sorrow] for Him as one mourns for *his only son and* grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn'. This is compelling. 'Every [extended] family to mourn by itself and their wives by themselves.' Zec 12:10-14. This connects every person to the work of water, blood and Spirit in reference to the fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. Zec 13:1.

Christ's death to sin was also the demonstration of the faith of Yahweh – that is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each fulfilled, by faith Their sanctified works concerning Their covenant. And in this respect the death of Christ, which was a separation from God, was not the death of God; it was the death of sin. This is because He fully accomplished our eternal judgement. He satisfied eternal justice by the power of eternal spirit and brought all contrary rule and authority to a complete end or death. As such, Jesus was revealed as the Way, which is the truth and the life of Yahweh, at the same time being made in the image and likeness of God. He was then revealing the Father, as the Son; thus He was the Way of the Father.

When Christ was made sin, sin was then circumcised and separated from Him. It was taken out into the place of forgetfulness and sin became dead to God. So we rightly say, 'Christ died for our sin'. But the more significant point is that the death that He died, He died *to sin*, and He did it once for all. Rom 6:10. Let us consider this further.

1. *Christ was made sin.*

'For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21. Christ has taken sin captive to His obedience. Sin was made part of His body as every person was made a member of His body when He drank the cup in Gethsemane. He then suffered God's judgement upon Himself as a sin-bearer and scapegoat, and all in obedience to Their covenant purpose and according to His sanctification, as the only One who could overcome sin.

2. *Taken out into the place of forgetfulness.*

The high priest would take *the scapegoat*, lay his hands on its head and would confess the sins of the people, putting them on the head of the goat. He would then send it away into the wilderness. Lev 16:20-22. By doing this, the judgement of God upon the sin of the people was removed from the camp, as the scapegoat went out in judgement, into the forsaken place, never to return. He is the Lamb of God *who takes away* the sins of the world! Joh 1:29. *He took them away by taking them upon Himself and bearing them in His body as He became sin for us.* 1Pe 2:24; 2Co 5:21. Micah said that He cast all our sins into the depths of the sea of God's forgetfulness. Mic 7:19.

Hosea picks up the further statement of being taken out into the place of separation from God and forgetfulness when He says, 'You are not My people, and I will not be your God.' Hos 1:9. Because sin is taken out in Christ, this also becomes for us the door of hope. Unless Christ was forsaken with us, there would be no hope. But because Christ was forsaken with us, His obedience can overcome our disobedience and its subsequent judgement. Furthermore, our sin has been circumcised from Him. This is where sin is separated from Him (and therefore us) and is then dead. There is no remembrance of it. 'And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people", there it shall be said to them, "You are sons of the living God".' Hos 1:10.

3. *Sin was circumcised and separated from Him.*

Calvary is then a place of circumcision for Christ. So when Christ was made sin, it was circumcised from Him on the cross in those seven wounding events. 'Likewise, in Him we were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which we also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.' Col 2:11-12.

Once sin had been circumcised from the body of Christ, there was no longer any reason for Him to be forsaken by the Father. And so He cried out, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Psa 22:1; Mat 27:46. We join the circumcision of Christ in baptism. This is where the sin that was circumcised from Christ is circumcised from us. Col 2:11-15.

4. *Sin became dead to God.*

'For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.' Rom 6:10. Christ exhausted the judgement of God upon sin, such that sin died. He also took the law out of the way, and 'apart from the law sin was dead'. Rom 7:8. He not only suffered the judgement of God upon sin, but He took sin and Satan out into the place of God's forgetfulness, and He left them there. When He came back, He came back as a New Creation, and they did not come back with Him. They are forgotten and dead to God. When Christ was restored to fellowship with the Father, sin was now dead to God and no longer exists in the light of His fellowship.

The proposition that Paul is establishing and building on is that the environment that Christ now lives in, no longer has sin in it. This is because sin is dead to Him and the key implication is that this is now our environment also. The death that Jesus died, He died to sin; and the life He lives, He lives to God. This is the meaning of eternal life. The environment He now lives in has no more sin in it. It is dead to Him and He is dead to it.

We then note the word 'likewise' throughout Romans 6 because Paul is saying it is the same for the believer. Because He died to sin, we who are joined to His death are becoming like Him and can live our lives to God in a sinless environment. Therefore, He ended our connection to sin, so long as we remain joined to His death each day. Rom 6:3-6. But for those who continue in sin, He ends their connection with Himself (if we are those who are connected to Him). We can then add that the law was fully satisfied in the cross - that is, nailed to the cross and no longer has any place or purpose because we are now in a sinless environment. It is no longer valid for the believer because it has been taken out of the way, and that is where it must remain. However, when a believer takes hold of the law, they are locked back into carnality. Rom 7:6. And this produces violent desire, which describes the action of the abuser and the reaction of the abused, which we will now look at in more detail.

Justification and Reconciliation

How can a believer who has committed some kind of abuse be justified and how can they be reconciled? And then how should a believer who has been abused respond to their abuser regardless of whether their abuser seeks forgiveness or not?

We will begin by considering the attitude of the abused. Forgiveness and peace are not contingent upon an abused person first receiving an apology from their abuser. Neither is the repentance of the abuser dependent upon the abused person first finding peace through forgiveness toward them. We need to separate any apology or repentance from an abuser from the peace and forgiveness of an abused person. When we separate the elements, we can rightly ask, ‘What connection, if any, might the abuser have with the abused? In other words, is an abuser’s justification based upon being forgiven by the person they abused? Or is an abused person able to forgive without an apology from their abuser? And how might these things be determined? Noting there are sins of commission and there are sins of omission, meaning abuse comes in different forms (e.g. apathy, neglect, deceit, assault). Likewise, the response of the abused can also come in different forms (e.g. self-loathing, depression, jealousy, anger, vengeance).

Concerning King David and the death of Uriah, it is clear that there was no way for David to seek forgiveness from Uriah or for Uriah to forgive him, provoking David to confess his dilemma ‘my sin is ever before me’. And yet we know that King David did find forgiveness without any connection to the one he had abused. This brings to the fore the issue of accountability and where it rests. *In other words, is an abuser firstly accountable to the person they have abused or firstly accountable to God?*

Repentance of the abuser is not required for an abused person to find peace through forgiveness (i.e. forgiving their abuser). This means the abuser's power can be broken without them apologising or repenting to the person they abused. This is why it is important that we do separate these matters so that we break the cause and effect narrative and walk in a proper and accountable manner as a son of God. Accordingly, an abused person can forgive their abuser, even though it may not be possible to be reconciled relationally to them. Furthermore, forgiveness from an abused person should not be confused as atoning for the sin of their abuser. Forgiveness from an abused person toward their abuser does not absolve the abuser because an abuser is firstly accountable before God.

The abused profile

One of the very common features of an abused person’s profile is anger. In Scripture, Esau would well fit the profile of an abused person, believing that his birthright and the blessing of the birthright were stolen. And his response was to hold onto that offence which initially manifested as murderous rage and ultimately became an ancient hatred. However, the real tragedy was his unwillingness to choose to be reconciled to his predestination (i.e. the older shall serve the younger), which prevented him from forgiving his brother and being properly restored to him which ultimately led to his destruction as recorded in the passage ‘Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated’. Rom 9:13.

There are a number of aspects of justification that we must understand. King David found justification with God despite never finding a justification and a reconciliation with Uriah. This is because David understood (as an abuser), that his accountability was firstly in relation to God. By establishing that a believer's accountability is firstly in relation to God, pastoral carers will rightly exhort an abused person toward forgiveness as a condition of God forgiving them for their sins. Mat 6:12. This is not justifying the abuser, rather it is clarifying that an abused person is going to need to get connected to God so that they are able to receive healing in order that they might forgive their abuser. This is an aspect of *exanastasis*. This will only happen as they join Christ with the cry 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do'. This is the prayer of Stephen, who, when he was being martyred, prayed 'Lay not this sin to their charge'. Acts 7:60. We can then add a further point. *An abuser can receive forgiveness from God and find justification without the forgiveness of the person they have sinned against.* That is, even if the abused person will not let it go, the abuser can be forgiven.

But a matter that we have remained unclear on, is whether or not an abuser is accountable to the person they abused. We know they are accountable to God, but what is their accountability to the one that they have abused? We know that the law asks for retribution or payback. For example, the law addresses the matter of stealing by imposing upon the thief that they restore what they stole. But how does this work in the New Covenant when Calvary has answered the whole matter and there is no righteousness that we can enact to compensate for where we have sinned.

Whether it be deliberate sin or the sin of ignorance, only forgiveness can release the accountability of an abuser to the abused. For example, if a person steals a sum of money, the one stealing is said to have abused the person they stole from. But when the abused person forgives them, (which by the way, is how God has forgiven us), the abused person is released from any accountability to the abuser in relation to that debt. *Forgiveness releases any sense of accountability of an abuser to the abused, freeing the abuser, and then leaving the accountability of it with God. Every believer in the end will need to come to that position in relation to every other person - releasing them from an accountability to them, and then leaving it with them and God.*

Importantly forgiveness should not be confused with reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a separate issue, because when we sin against another, we sin against God. Therefore, reconciliation must first be toward God, and then reconciliation can be sought with the one we have sinned against.

An abused response

Now, if a matter in the life of a believer is not properly dealt with - that is, releasing their abuser, then it can be commuted to vengeance which is part of an

abused response. This is because they have taken hold of the law again, with a view of righting an injustice or addressing an abuse. This is carnality. As Christians, we are warned against taking vengeance because it belongs to God. Rom 12:17-19. Any use of the law is carnal and the basis for vengeance, and it is a device by which Satan takes advantage over believers. We then, with a god-like desire, covet the law and its power, but it only works in us violent desire. Accordingly, those who live after the flesh will carnally take hold of the law, producing only death.

For an abuser to find forgiveness they must firstly acknowledge their transgressions before God. King David acknowledged his transgressions before God, in search of forgiveness confessing ‘my sin is always before me’. Ps 51. *And this is true for every person because all have sinned, which means every person has been an abuser.* Therefore, all of us have transgressed the law and therefore all are under its judgement. However, we cannot satisfy its condemnation by our own good works (penance). Neither by apology, compensation or restitution can we resolve the issue of the law. When you break the law, you must bear the consequences. No amount of good works can satisfy the condemnation of the law. If you do the crime, you must do the time.

The judgement of the spiritual

A Christian must be very careful in relation to the law because it is through the law that they receive a knowledge of sin. Furthermore, when they take hold of the law, it produces violent desire in them proving they are carnal which leads only to death. However, Christians are instructed to judge matters between themselves. The apostle Paul rebuked the Corinthian presbytery for not judging properly the matter of incest in the church. 1Co 5. This highlights two kinds of judgement - spiritual judgement or carnal judgement. We must learn to judge matters spiritually and not carnally (i.e. with no reference to the law).

Concerning spiritual judgement, ‘He that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one’. 1Co2:15. This means that those who are spiritual are no longer tempted to take hold of the law to address matters, but they discern all things as led of the Spirit, which is guarding and preserving the sanctification of every person. Likewise, those who are spiritual may often be judged by others according to the law but they are not troubled by this, being as Paul wrote ‘judged by no one’. However, concerning carnal judgement, it is a misappropriation of the law and works with the condemnation of the devil because that is how he works. In other words, the one who exercises carnal judgement falls under the condemnation of the devil. The apostle Paul refers to this one as the novice in the ministry, who is lifted up with pride. He takes ahold of the law and is motivated then by covetousness to exercise power and then he does this in the ministry, working in him all kinds of violent desire and all kinds of corruption.

Spiritual judgement is firstly the judgement or discernment of faith, producing fellowship. This is the aim because the end of the command is to love from a pure heart. That should be the result of any spiritual action – it is to love. Paul wrote, ‘We judge thus, if one died for all, then all died’. So that having died to sin, we are now found in a new environment, which is that we live to God.

Our accusation of others

Another very common reason that triggers an angry response is our accusation of others. The basic premise of this response is that we believe another person is responsible for making me angry. This is not what the Scriptures teach. In fact, we are instructed to own our own anger. For example, the apostle Paul wrote, ‘Be angry and sin not and do not let the sun go down on your wrath’. Eph 4:26. Notably Paul did not write *do not be angry*, but he warned against committing sin whilst angry. *So it is helpful to distinguish between the emotion of anger, as an action or reaction and anger as an accountable response and exercise of spiritual judgement.*

An accusation that claims another person is responsible for my anger, simply exposes my refusal to be personally accountable. In this case, it conveys that I am not accountable for my anger. However, this mindset will keep us unresolved and always a victim until we can take responsibility for our own anger. It does not matter what another party does. I must be accountable for my anger.

A further point to note concerning anger is that it cannot be restored. Like toothpaste, once it is squeezed out there ain’t no putting it back in the tube. Once anger is let fly, you cannot restore it. You can apologise and even confess your need to get your anger under control, but once it is released, it cannot be reversed. The damage is done. This is because anger is a response or a reaction to a process. It is not the source. Even if a person were to suppress their anger, the anger which is already in motion would simply convert to another pathway and have its impact in another way (e.g. internalised).

The source of anger is the result of how we set our mind toward a matter. In other words, how a person thinks is what provokes a person to anger. In other words, our thoughts inform our motives, and our motivations lead to their expression (e.g. an angry or hostile response). Accordingly, the only way to resolve an angry profile is to change the way a person thinks which then impacts their motives thus changing how they express their motivations. The apostle Paul makes this seminal point when describing how a Christian is changed or transformed. It is by the renewing of their mind. Rom 12:2. This we know is part of the washing of regeneration. Tit 3:5.

Every believer must come to terms with their need to deal with the way they think, in order to deal with their motives which is the only way they can resolve

their outbursts of wrath and anger and to resolve their inbursts of self-loathing and depression.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but are mighty through the Holy Spirit. This then directs us to pray in the Holy Spirit in order that we might take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ which includes the supernatural capacity for forgiveness. Accordingly, an apology for an angry outburst is not a solution, because unless you change the way you think it will continue to happen. We have to delve deeper and get to why we are thinking a particular way. This applies to both the abuser and to the abused.

As an aside, it will be helpful to employ the term *hurt* rather than *anger* because people can more readily hear the word hurt than they can hear the word anger. Even if we shift away from the statement, ‘You made me angry’, and restate it as ‘You have hurt me’, we still need to understand what hurt means. In simple terms *hurt leads to resentment*. What is resentment? It is the recall (so this is how you think) of a grievance that has not been let go of. It has not been forgiven. The stronger the grievance then, the stronger the anger. However, *forgiveness does not hold on to anger*. That is what the Scripture tells you. Love keeps no record of wrong, forgives all things. 1Co 13:5. So we regain emotional control through forgiveness because we get on top of the thinking that causes resentment when we find a resolution in God.

‘I’ statements

How we think is often exposed in our choice of language. Accordingly, how we speak exposes our intrinsic lack of accountability. As such, we must learn to be accountable. This includes the need to speak in an accountable manner. *This directs us to the need to make ‘I’ statements. As we learn to make ‘I’ statements, we are learning to think differently, and we are learning the vocabulary of an accountable son who is putting off ‘you’ statements or ‘them’ statements.* ‘I’ statements talk about what I need to take responsibility for, which is my own thoughts, my own actions, and my own forgiveness. We need to be responsible for these things personally, and responsible before God because there is love being poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. ‘You’ and ‘them’ statements are accusative and they are the basis of my failed attempts to be accountable, which always presume it is someone else’s fault. So praying in tongues is then central to how we lower mind chatter that produces this kind of accusative self-talk.

Now if we adjust our language and say ‘the person who has hurt me’ rather than ‘the person that I am angry at’, we produce a different response. If I say *I was hurt by your comments* a person is more inclined to feel sorry about that. But if I say *I am angry with you because of your comments* a person will likely become defensive. So we are definitely not going to build a bridge, even get started in any dialogue with the statement, ‘*I am angry with you*’. We are all compassed about with the same infirmities. We know that people are more receptive to

hearing about hurt than hearing about our anger, either passive or aggressive. For example, there is no real difference in your wife saying to you, 'I am terribly depressed today because of you'. She could equally say, 'I am very angry today because of you'. Because the variation in the language is probably temperamental. It is the same dynamic - just a different expression based on temperament. This is *because anger processed passively leads to depression*.

The point to note is that *the person who has hurt us is in the same position before God as we are*. That is, when we are in the flesh, we are hating one another and devouring one another. Gal 5:15. So we are all being hurt by one another. *And we are told to forgive them just as Christ has forgiven us*. In fact, Paul wrote to the Ephesian church the following words: 'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you all with malice and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God is Christ forgave you'. Eph 4:30-32. We are to be compassionate toward them just as Christ has been compassionate toward us. This is one of the very significant outcomes of the love of God being poured in. It is enabling forgiveness.

Be angry and do not sin

Aggressive anger becomes vengeance and passive anger becomes depression.

But there is another kind of anger that we will refer to as righteous anger. We know the Scriptures say, 'Be angry and sin not', so we can be angry and not sin. But what does that actually mean? It is a clear conviction concerning our accountability to guard what God has sanctified and burns against all manner of evil, hating what God hates and loving what God loves. This was the case when Jesus became angry in the temple turning over the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves'. Mat 21:12-13. Jesus was rightly exercising His accountability to guard the sanctification of the temple.

At a more personal level, righteous anger refers to a *noted intrusion*, or the awareness that *I have been intruded upon* moving me to a protective mode concerning what I am accountable for and compelling me to have a good look at you and to assess whether I am likely to be subject to abuse by you. *So this would be the right and proper place for anger, which has not yet led to sin*. I am free to acknowledge that there has been an intrusion against me, but I am also learning to judge with a spiritual mind, which is to maintain a compassionate attitude toward everyone. But we do need to be wary and accept that some people are a bit distorted among us. The positive aspect to anger is that it keeps us vigilant, concerning any breach or notable intrusion. It has a protective element preparing a person to defend should matters escalate. I need to protect myself, be wary of abuse because we are not called to be naive and passive such

that we invite abuse. Jesus said that tares have been sown among the wheat (i.e. among us). Jesus also informs us that there are wolves dressed in sheep's clothing and Jude warns us that there are hidden reefs seated among us at the *agape* meal. Jud 1:12.

So there are things that should rightly provoke anger among believers, so long as we do not sin. In this respect we do need to understand the positives concerning righteous anger, so long as we are learning to judge with a spiritual mind. Paul exhorted the Ephesians, 'Do not let the sun go down on your wrath'. Wrath is aggressive anger and becomes the motivation for a broad array of violent and destructive activities. Rather, mercy must be with us before the morning because the word says, 'God's mercies are new every morning'. In this respect anger has a clear timeline. Lam 3:22-23.

Conclusion

We are all accountable firstly to God for our actions and reactions. Further to this, we are all accountable before God to forgive. This capacity of forgiveness does not reside in me as a matter of intention or temperament. It belongs to His finished offering. I am accountable before God to forgive just as He forgave me, and as He also forgave my abuser. I cannot reach for the law and reserve the right not to forgive or to forgive conditionally, as though another's offence towards me is greater than my own sin (parable of the unforgiving servant). Mat 18:21-35. True forgiveness is the capacity of *exanastasis*. Perhaps better said, forgiveness *is exanastasis*. I receive it in the fellowship of His death, where the whole matter dies in Him. *Likewise*, I reckon myself dead to sin and alive to God as new creation in Christ. I am made able to minister, by *exanastasis*, the fellowship of His forgiveness. This is supernatural forgiveness.