

Day of Atonement

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 March 2024

Preacher: Stephen Murray

[0 : 00] Leviticus 16 and verse 1 to 22. The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord.

The Lord said to Moses, Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the most holy place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. This is how Aaron is to enter the most holy place. He must bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

He is to put on the sacred linen tunic with linen undergarments next to his body. He is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban.

These are sacred garments. So he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. From the Israelite community, he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

[1 : 09] Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. And then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent meeting.

He is to cast lots for the two goats. One lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering.

But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household.

And he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain.

He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover before the tablets of the covenant law so that he will not die.

[2 : 12] He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover. And then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood. He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it.

In this way he will make atonement for the holy place, the most holy place, because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites. Whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the most holy place until he comes out. Having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

Then he shall come out of the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his fingers seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

[3 : 23] When Aaron is finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He shall lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites.

All their sins. Put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Let's ask for God's help as we study this morning. Father God, won't you speak truth into our hearts this morning? Won't you allow us to meditate deeply upon your word and to find life there? Not just to know more about you, but to be changed and transformed by you. Show us your son, Jesus Christ. Show us his glory. Show us his work. Remind us of the hope that we have in him. Minister to us this morning by your word, we pray. [4 : 36] Let this be a special work of your spirit. And we ask this all for Christ's sake and his glory. Amen. So we're a couple of weeks into a series building up to Easter where we're looking at Old Testament images of the cross.

Looking at very distinct. There are lots of Old Testament images of the cross. We could have gone all over the place. But some very distinct passages in the Old Testament where it's pretty clear that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is being foreshadowed in some way. And in that way we actually learn more about what's actually happening when Jesus is on the cross. Some of the theology of what's actually taking place when Jesus is on the cross. Now today we're in a part of the Old Testament that foreshadows the cross in all sorts of different ways. What is known as the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. In the Old Testament you'll remember maybe that we have this very, very elaborate sacrificial system. Which the nation of Israel regularly participates in. It takes up all sorts of chapters of the Bible. All these details. You read some of those details now. The nation of Israel participates regularly in this very complicated sacrificial system.

[5 : 47] To remove guilt. To become spiritually clean. So essentially so that they can live as a sinful people with a holy God in their midst. That's mainly what it's trying to symbolize.

And it's a system made up of priests and sacrifices and cleansing rituals. But at the center of it is this day. And this day is the heart of the entire system.

It's the Day of Atonement. It's a day that takes place once a year. With a high priest. Through a series of sacrifices that we just read about. Goes into the Holy of Holies.

This kind of inner room in the tabernacle. And he makes atonement for the sins of the entire nation. Now there are lots of different ways in which this Day of Atonement foreshadows Jesus Christ. And foreshadows the cross. In the New Testament for example. If you go to the book of Hebrews. The author of the book of Hebrews likens Jesus. To our great high priest. Who goes into some sort of heavenly tabernacle.

[6 : 48] Where he offers a once and for all sacrifice. The sacrifice of himself. To atone for the sins of all believers. And Hebrews tells us that's what's really happening at the cross. If you want to understand the cross.

You need to understand Jesus is this high priest. Who goes into the inner sanctuary. And offers these atoning sacrifices. That's the Day of Atonement. Christ is our high priest. So that's one way in which the Day of Atonement foreshadows the cross in Christ.

But then there's also other ways. Most obvious ways is all these animal sacrifices. On the actual day. That foreshadow Christ's once and for all sacrifice. There are bulls being sacrificed.

There are goats being sacrificed. There are blood being sprinkled on the mercy seat. Or the cover. So you might remember from our series in Exodus. There's this big box.

The Ark of the Covenant. Inside that inner sanctuary. The Holy of Holies. On top of it is a cover. With these cherubim. These angels facing each other. That's the mercy seat. The cover on top there.

[7 : 45] The presence of God comes and settles. In a cloud above there. And they sprinkle the blood on that atonement cover. On the mercy seat. From all these different animals. So that's another way.

It's another example of how this foreshadows Christ. Whose blood sprinkles us clean. Makes us clean at the cross of Jesus Christ. So there's lots of different angles. Lots of different ways we could attack this text today.

And see how it foreshadows Jesus. But I want to focus on one particular element this morning. And that is the scapegoat. You might have seen the scapegoat there right at the very end.

See part of the ceremony on the Day of Atonement. Involves the high priest Aaron at this point. Taking two goats. He casts lots for these two goats. And then he assigns the one goat as a sin offering to the Lord.

And then the other goat as the scapegoat. To be sent out. To be sent out into the wilderness. So look down in verse 6. It says Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering.

[8 : 47] To make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord. At the entrance of the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats. One lot for the Lord. And the other for the scapegoat.

Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord. And sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat. Shall be presented alive before the Lord. To be used for making atonement.

By sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat. I want us to try and understand the scapegoat this morning. Particularly in light of the cross of Jesus Christ. And particularly then how it helps us understand the cross of Jesus Christ.

What it explains for us about what is actually happening. When Christ dies on that cross. And I think when we understand the scapegoat. We understand two things. And these are kind of our two points this morning. Number one.

We understand that Christ carries our sin. And we understand that Christ takes our sin away. He carries our sin. And he takes our sin away.

[9 : 45] Here's the first one. Christ carries our sin. Have a look at verse 20. Verse 20 says. When Aaron has finished making atonement. For the most holy place. The tent of meeting and the altar.

He shall bring forward the live goat. And he's to lay both hands on the head of the live goat. And confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites. All their sins. To put them on the goat's head.

He shall send the goat away into the wilderness. In the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself. All their sins to a remote place. The man shall release it in the wilderness.

So what happens is these two goats essentially meet two different ends. First goat is assigned to the Lord by lot. As a sin offering. That goat is sacrificed. The blood is taken behind the curtain.

Into the Holy of Holies. Sprinkled on the mercy seat. On that atonement cover of the Ark of the Covenant. The place where God's presence dwells. That goat dies. We're told as a sin offering for the entire nation.

[10 : 43] So you'll see that in the preceding verses. Verses 15 to 19. The second goat is not sacrificed. Instead Aaron. He comes to this goat.

He lays his hands on his head. And he confesses. All the sins of the nation of Israel for that year. Must be there a long time.

Over that goat. One commentator suggests. One of the older commentators suggests. It's probably quite a dramatic scene. As you stand there and you watch it. Aaron's probably got tears in his eyes. As he confesses these sins upon this goat.

And then he sends the goat out into the wilderness. Under the care of some sort of designated person. Who's going to take it out. And make sure it goes really really far away.

Which is the point. From the Israelite camp. And so although the goat is in sacrifice. Is sent away. Symbolically. Bearing all the sins of Israel.

[11 : 42] Now what's happening here. Well this is what theologians call imputation. Imputation. If you are in church circles a lot.

You'll probably hear. This word imputation occasionally. But you'll hear it often. That in the gospel. The righteousness of Jesus Christ. Is imputed to us. Sinners.

Who trust in Jesus for salvation. That is. Not only does God forgive us of our sin. When we trust in him. But we're actually gifted. Christ's righteous record.

So when God. When God looks on our moral record. As people who believe in the gospel. When he looks on our moral record. He doesn't see our sins. He sees Christ's perfect moral record.

And that's what we call imputed righteousness. All of Christ's sinless. Sinlessness. All of his obedience. Is essentially credited to you.

[12 : 38] The believer. By faith. Even though you don't have that actual righteous record yourself. You haven't earned that righteous record. That it gets credited to you. Christ's righteousness is imputed. Is the word we use to you.

So you'll often hear the word imputation. Used in that sort of context. Christ's righteousness imputed to us. But there's another imputation. That takes place in the Bible. And it's that imputation that's in view here with the scapegoat.

That is our sins. Are imputed. To Christ. And he bears them for us. You see that in the visual imagery of the ceremony here.

Aaron. As he lays his hands. On the goat's head. While he confesses the nation's sins. As if there's a transfer. Taking place here.

That's what laying on of hands does. That's why they lay hands on for example. When elders get ordained. You'll get the other elders will lay hands on the new elder. There's a sense of a transfer of authority. We're now commissioning you in this office.

[13:40] That laying on of hands is a transfer idea. There's a transfer taking place of some sort. From sinful Israel. To the innocent goat. A transfer of sin. The scapegoat bears the sin of the people.

In the same way. Christ. Bears our sin. On the cross. Now you see this in many many other parts of the Bible. It's not just us.

Kind of thumb sucking here with this imagery of the scapegoat. In the book of Isaiah. In the Old Testament. We get this prophetic vision of this coming suffering servant. It's one of the Old Testament images we'll look at later in the sermon series.

We're told there in that passage in Isaiah 53. That we all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on him this future suffering servant.

The iniquity of us all. Our iniquity is laid on him. He bears it. In the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5. The apostle Paul tells us that God made him who had no sin.

[14:43] To be sin for us. The apostle Peter. 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 24. Drawing on the suffering servant passage from Isaiah. He says this.

He says he himself as Jesus. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross. So that we might die to sins. And live for righteousness. By his wounds. You have been healed.

So this is really really consistent theme through scripture. That when Christ Jesus went to the cross. He bore our sin. He carried it for us. Like the scapegoat does.

On the day of atonement. Our sin is imputed to him. And he carries. He carries it. He carries it to his death. Now we do need to be clear about what is not happening here.

So we don't want to be too confused about this. When we say that our sin is imputed to Christ. And that he bears our sin. We're not saying that he himself becomes sinful. Okay. Christ is and remains the perfect sinless one.

[15:43] He doesn't become sinful. When the Bible says that he bears our sin. What it means is that he bears our guilt. He bears our shame. He bears our condemnation. He bears the penalty that we deserve.

He bears all of that. So that it's as if he had done all the sin himself basically. He carries that all. He carries it all to the cross.

And there he faces the punishment that all of our sin justly deserves. Well known reformed theologian Louis Burkhoof puts it this way. He says on the basis of scripture we can say that our sins are imputed to Christ.

This does not mean that our sinfulness was transferred to him. Something that is in itself utterly impossible. But that the guilt of our sin was imputed to him. Strictly speaking then the guilt of sin as liability to punishment was imputed to Christ.

Jesus takes the weight. He takes the weight. He takes the weight of that guilt that brings us low. That torments us. That torments our consciences. That shames us. That crushes us.

[16:51] He takes that weight upon his shoulders. And then he marches up to Golgotha. Outside of the camp. He's our divine scapegoat. The weight of guilt is an incredibly debilitating experience.

Feeling guilty is not something any of us desire. Emotionally. Psychologically. I think it's something we wish we could be free of. Nigel Bynan is an author and a Bible teacher in the UK.

Talking about guilt in our society today. He says this. He says. In our society guilt is increasingly being recognized as a real problem. Not just because feeling guilty is unpleasant. But because it can be crippling.

It can stop us being the person we really are. We can be unable to express ourselves. Or be ourselves when we're weighed down with this burden of guilt. In particular it can stop us relating to other people as we should.

Guilt can lead to various defensive mechanisms. It leads to feelings of inferiority or insecurity. And all that affects our relationships. We can't relate with other people as we could or should.

[17 : 59] So what do we do with these feelings of guilt that we have? That we harbor? Well there's a large section of our kind of contemporary society. And this has been going on for a long time now.

But that basically says what you've got to do is you've got to get rid of traditional notions of God. Because if you do that. If you get rid of traditional notions of God. You will get rid of all those crippling feelings of guilt. You see because if you think there's a big God out there in the sky. Who watches over your every single move. Including your inner thought life. And then he evaluates everything according to his very strict morality.

Well then of course you're going to feel guilty all the time. Of course you're going to have the psychological emotional sense that I'm guilty. I'm not doing well enough. I'm wrong. Something in my life is wrong. You've got to get rid of that sort of God.

You've got to get rid of the God that Sting sings about. Somebody old enough to know who Sting is. Every breath you take. Every move you make. Every bond you break. Every step you take.

[18 : 57] I'll be watching you. Every single day. Every word you say. Every game you play. Every night you stay. I'll be watching you. You get rid of that kind of God. And then you get rid of guilt. So the culture basically comes and says look let's stop feeling shameful.

About ourselves. Just because some ancient book from the Middle East tells us this archaic morality about this big guy in the sky who's watching every single one of our moves.

Let's just get rid of him. Now that's one way that the culture has tried to lessen these human feelings of guilt that we have. The thing is though we've had quite some time to test this hypothesis out.

In fact we've been testing it out ever since the Enlightenment and the results are not great. There have been plenty of attempts in our culture to strip God from the equation in the last few hundred years. And yet the feelings of guilt have lingered.

The weight of guilt hasn't gone away. Several years ago there was a Christian blogger and author by the name of John Shaw. He posed on his blog this pretty sincere question to atheist readers of his blog.

[20 : 07] He apparently, although it was a Christian blog, he apparently had quite a lot of atheist readers. But he posed a really sincere question to them and he says, Well, what do you guys do to process your guilt? And he got over 130 responses to the question from atheists.

Now what was interesting to me reading through all those responses was that none of the atheists really contested the fact that we all still struggle with guilt. The only contestation came in, well, what do you actually do with this?

How do we process? What do we do with the guilt? But the streams of comments to that question gave the simplicity acknowledgement that guilt is still a very, very real problem whether you believe in God or not, which is somewhat odd if you think about it.

Why are you still feeling guilty if you don't believe that there's an all-seeing, all-knowing God out there looking over your shoulder with this moral compass all the time? Now, American intellectual historian by the name of Wilfred McClay wrote an essay on this recently, on this phenomenon in a rapidly secularizing world where we don't believe in God.

And he says this, he opens up with this paragraph. He says, He says, Even though we've removed all the traditional notions of guilt, presumably in relation to God, the psychological experience of guilt has just continued to ramp up and get worse in our culture.

[22 : 09] So dismissing God from the culture hasn't lessened feelings of guilt. In fact, it's exacerbated them and almost increased them. Now friends, if that is our world, and I think it is, if that's the culture that we live in, if that's our problem, if that's our burden, then is there any better news than the good news that Jesus Christ is our scapegoat?

That he lifts the crushing burden off of us. And he places it on himself.

Takes the guilt. Takes the shame. He takes our sense of dread and condemnation. Everything that is kind of driving us into the ground. He takes it, he lifts it up, and he places it on himself.

When you know that. When you know that Jesus Christ, compelled by love, has done that for you, how can you, in one sense, not feel lighter than a feather?

Friends, the scapegoat is such good news for a guilt-laden society, a guilt-laden world, when we really understand it. When the eyes of our heart understand it. Christ bears our sin.

[23 : 30] But secondly, there's a second part of the imagery of the scapegoat. Not only does Christ bear our sin, but he actually takes it away. So if you go back to verse 21. Talking about Aaron.

It says, It says, In the wilderness.

Symbolically, all the sin of Israel is carried off into the wilderness. Now there's a really interesting word that's rendered remote place there in the NIV translation that I just read. In the Hebrew, it's literally an inaccessible place.

Or a cut-off place. The idea that this goat has taken the sin out into this cut-off place and it can never come back again.

The sin can never, ever come back. It's cut off. Narratives around Israel's desert wanderings, which you find in the first five books of the Bible, the books of Moses.

[24 : 56] In those narratives, the wilderness is always pictured as this barren place. This barren place of kind of sin and evil and death and chaos even. And it's always set up in stark contrast to where the first five books of Moses start, which is in the Garden of Eden.

And where they end, going into Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. That's the whole point. You're supposed to see the stark contrast between the wilderness and these two gardens, if you like, on either side.

The wilderness is a place of darkness, evil, death. And it's into the most inaccessible part of the wilderness that the sins of the people are then carried.

Never to be seen again. Now picture this. As you stand as an Israelite in the camp, you've watched this whole ceremony. You've watched Aaron in all solemnity place his hands and confess his sins. You know they're your sins. You know all the things you've done this year. And you know that your sins are now on that goat. And then you watch it. You watch it go.

[25 : 58] And I suspect that people probably stood there and watched until it was out of eyesight. Until it had crossed that horizon. They couldn't see it anymore. That it was gone. And as you stand there, as you watch that goat march off into that distance, suddenly you have this incredibly vivid illustration of what Psalm 103 verse 11 tells us.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Sin is gone. Sin is gone. The weight is lifted and the sin is gone. And it's taken away to an inaccessible place. That's what we have in Christ.

Our divine scapegoat. Not only does he bear our sin and our shame, but he takes our sin away. He throws it into outer darkness as he himself enters into outer darkness of the cross.

Now again, we need to qualify here. This doesn't mean that we never sin again once we become Christians.

[27 : 11] We do sin again. The Apostle John tells us that we call God a liar if we say we don't sin. We do sin again. It doesn't mean our sin just disappears. I mean, we're now sinless people in our behavior and in our thoughts until Jesus comes back again.

But it does mean that we're completely forgiven. For all of our sin. Every single one of our sins. Past, present, future. All of that sin is taken away, expunged from our record.

Gone. Gone. All of our sin is taken to the cutoff place. As Christ, our scapegoat, is actually momentarily cut off from his Father on the cross.

It's beautiful. But it's a heavy, heavy, heavy topic to consider. So let me lighten it for a second for you. I have a rather unorthodox theory for why there are so many vegans around today.

Now, this is not a pro or anti-vegan statement. I'm not trying to make any value judgments here at all. This is just merely, merely an observation. So don't shoot me afterwards.

[28 : 24] I think one of the things that has contributed to the rise in veganism is talking animals. Right? Talking animals. I know I blame Disney for a lot of things in my sermons.

But growing up with talking animals in all your favorite movies and all of your favorite stories has to at least help and not hinder your journey towards veganism. Right?

You don't feel like going fishing after you've just watched Finding Nemo. See, I think talking animals has done a lot to kind of humanize them for us, change our perceptions of animal suffering to some extent in ways that maybe previous generations didn't perceive or think about animals.

You feel for the little guys now. Now, the personification of animals has a strange emotional effect on us. Now, this is going to sound strange, but that's how I felt reading a commentary on the book of Leviticus earlier this week in my preparation.

A commentary written by the 19th century free church minister, Andrew Bonar. Now, after kind of explaining in his commentary, he explains all the details of the scapegoat ceremony. And then he

asks the reader to empathetically enter the experience of the scapegoat as it goes deeper into the dark wilderness.

[29 : 48] And he paints this really vivid picture of terror experienced by the goat. He even imagines lightning symbolizing God's wrath coming down and striking the creature.

He writes this. Listen to these words. He says, Follow the scapegoat. See its doom. Is there not here a criminal led along?

There is something that speaks of the man of sorrows made sin for us. Is there not here a criminal led away to unknown woe? There is something that speaks of one made a curse for us.

Why is he left alone, defenseless? Trembling amid a wilderness. The scapegoat's solitary cry is re-echoed by the barren rocks.

And the howling of beasts of prey terrifies it on all sides. The gloom of night settles down upon it and it shrouds it in deep terror. Perhaps, too, it was not uncommon for Jehovah himself to direct his lightning stroke towards his victim.

[30 : 51] And to cause it to perish amid the tempest's roar. Wounded by beasts of prey from whom it has scarcely escaped. It is now stretched out on the ground by a stroke from that thundercloud.

Its eyes glaring with convulsive fear. And its piteous cries echoing through the dismal wilderness. And I read that, Marthus, and I felt strangely moved with this kind of deep sense of pity for this innocent yet wretched creature.

And then I thought, that is my Lord. That is my Lord. In the gloom of the night in the Garden of Gethsemane, he turns to his disciples and he says, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Three times he cries out to his Father in prayer to escape that impending death. But those prayers, those cries reverberate off the rocks. Alone, abandoned, by his disciples.

He's taken and he's torn apart by wild beasts of prey. Roman soldiers who scar his innocent body with a whip and a crown of thorns. And then he's hung on a cross with his eyes glaring with convulsive fear.

[32 : 17] And he cries out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Darkness covers over the land. And he undergoes the lightning wrath of God against human sin and wickedness.

That is our Lord, our scapegoat in the cutoff place. And it's there in that gut-wrenching moment that he takes our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west.

Maybe right now you are living your life in the shadow of your past. Things you have done wrong. Things you have failed to do.

Broken relationships that you cannot fix and you cannot repair and you cannot get back. Maybe you look at your life and you feel like a failure. You haven't done the things that you wanted to do up until this point. And you think you're never going to do them.

Maybe you even look at your faith and you think, Look, I've been a Christian for years, but my devotion, it still feels so weak and so poor and so insipid. My besetting sins, they still keep dogging me.

[33 : 21] My progress in the faith feels like it goes backwards rather than forwards. Maybe you're sitting here thinking, I need to change so, so very much. I need to put so many different things right.

I need to grow so much. Is that your weight this morning? Is that what you're feeling this morning? Well, you need a scapegoat. You need a scapegoat.

You need to know that your sin is gone. It's gone and it is never coming back. It's been cut off and it has been thrown into the darkest pit of hell.

It's not coming back. Don't let it consume you. Don't let it rule you. Do not let it become the foundation for your identity. Don't do that.

It's gone. And friends, listen, by all means, strive to live a better life, to repair, to love, to forgive, to serve more, to care more.

[34 : 21] The love of Christ compels us in holy living, the apostle Paul says, to live holy and pleasing lives, hating sin, walking in obedience to Jesus Christ. The love of Jesus Christ compels us, the Bible says, but it compels us because Christ in his costly love for us has at the very outset removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

You will never grow in godliness. You will never grow in obedience. You will never shake that shadow of your past and your present and your future sins if you do not clearly, clearly, clearly see this morning with the eyes of your heart that Jesus Christ, the divine scapegoat, has taken your sins

upon him and he's carried them to the most inaccessible part of the wilderness and you will never, ever, ever see them again.

You need to know that. You need to believe that this morning, church. That is your hope. That is your foundation. Let's pray. Father and our King, tell us who we truly are this morning, Lord, if we have trusted in Jesus by faith.

Remind us that our sins have been taken as far from us as the east is from the west. Remind us of the sacrificial love of our divine scapegoat. Remind us that he has gone into the cutoff place and been cut off so that we might be brought in and included and find complete forgiveness that the weight of our sin might be lifted off of us and placed upon him.

Fill us with a sense of that this morning. Let us know it and feel it in our bones and then let us live off of that platform being spiritually lighter than feathers because the weight is gone.

[36 : 16] Let us live with that as our identity, not with the sin that has been committed in the past, dominating and controlling us. Let us be free from sin. The penalty and the punishment of sin, the guilt of sin, the shame of sin, free so that we might fight sin in the day to day.

Father, I pray for any person who's sitting here this morning who has not known that forgiveness, who does not know that Jesus Christ is their divine scapegoat who takes their sin away. I pray that you would bring him to faith this morning, that by your spirit, you would work in their heart and change and transform them and bring them into your kingdom of light, Lord.

Bring them out of the wilderness and bring them into your beautiful garden. Have mercy, we pray. Help us, Father, to live as those who know that their sin has been taken from them as far as the east is from the west.

We ask this for Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.