

The Need for a Sacrifice



The Love of God (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as I continue to share with you on our special Christmas theme, summed up in one beautiful phrase of measureless meaning: The Love of God.

In my talk yesterday I focused on the two simple, but profound statements that contain the essence of the Bible's revelation of God. I pointed out that each statement consists of three word, each of one syllable. The first is found in the First Epistle of John, chapter 4, verse 8: "God is love." The second in the First Epistle of John, chapter 1, verse 5: "God is light." Those are the two great summations of the nature of God, God is love and God is light.

I explained that these two statements indicate a deep basic tension between love and light. For love draws us. Love is that which we crave. But light scares us. Light holds us away. Paul says, "God dwells in light that cannot be approached."

How than can we resolve this tension between our desire for the love of God and our fear of coming in our sinful condition into the light of God? Well today I'm going to explain an important practical consequence that results from this tension between love and light. The consequence can be summed up in the phrase, the need for a sacrifice to approach God. This is one of the great, and in a sense, unique revelations of the Bible that for any human being to approach God there must be a sacrifice. No one can approach God without a sacrifice. And that sacrifice speaks always of a life that must be laid down as the penalty for man's sin. And so no man can ever actually have access to God without the sacrifice which first of all acknowledges the fact of sin, and secondly indicates that the price has been paid, a life has been laid down.

This need for a sacrifice to approach God is consistently emphasized throughout the Bible. In fact, it commences with the earliest records of man's history. In Genesis chapter 4, verses 3-5, we read how Adam's two sons, Cain and Abel sought to approach God. One was accepted, that was Abel, the other, Cain, was rejected. Neither was accepted on the basis of what he was himself. But each was accepted or rejected on the basis of the offering that they presented to

God. This is how the Bible records it:

> "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And 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; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard..." (NASB)

That indicates the Lord accepted Abel on the basis of his offering, but He likewise rejected Cain because his offering did not fulfill the Lord's requirements. The difference was that Abel's offering indicated the acknowledgment of sin, the penalty of sin, the need for a sacrifice, the sacrificial life of one of his flock laid down in his place. And on the basis of this acknowledment which was contained in the sacrifice and the blood that was shed, Abel was accepted but Cain who had no such sacrifice was rejected.

Now this principle continues throughout the whole of Old Testament. Anywhere you find man approaching God, somewhere you'll find there is implied or clearly stated, the need for a sacrifice which is a life laid down, the acknowledment of man's sin and its penalty. Interestingly enough, this understanding of the need for sacrifice is not confined even to the Old Testament. It still exists in the rudimentary and sometimes a distorted form among many so-called primitive peoples around the world.

When I was in East Africa I encountered there many evidences of this awareness in man's consciousness that somehow he had to provide a sacrifice to approach God. And amongst some of the African tribes there were many, many animals sacrificially offered to God, all of them I believe proceeding from this initial revelation contained in the story of Cain and Abel. But the basic principleisthere, all through the Bible, because of God's holiness, because of that radiant unstained, unsullied light. We cannot approach Him in our sin, in our guilt without a sacrifice.

However, the New Testament makes clear what is really already applied in the Old, that no animal sacrifice could ever atone really for man's sin. This is stated very clearly in Hebrews chapter 10, verses 3 and 4. The writer is speaking about all the animal sacrifices offered in the Old Testament, and he says:

> "But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (NIV)

So those sacrifices never actually never resolved the sin question. They were merely a continual reminder of the fact of sin and of the need of a sacrifice and they looked forward prophetically to God's ultimate provision of the only sacrifice that would be sufficient. But it could never be achieved by bulls or goats. Only God, Himself, could provide the sufficient sacrifice.

The Bible further reveals in this context that a sacrifice requires two things: A victim and a priest. The victim is that which is offered in sacrifice. The priest is the one who offers the sacrifice. And the Bible laid down certain requirements for those who might be priests and offer sacrifice. But in the ultimate provision, God, Himself, provided both, both the victim and the priest and He provided both in one person, in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the sacrificial victim. He's also the priest who offered the sacrifice. Let's see first of all what the New Testament says about Jesus as victim. In John chapter 1, verse 29, speaking about the ministry of John the Baptist:

> "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'" (NIV)

So by prophetic insight, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist saw in Jesus, the one who was to be the true, final, all sufficient sacrifice, the one whose life and whose blood could alone atone for man's sins,- solooking with prophetic revelation as he saw Jesus coming toward him he said, "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." The entire world's sin was covered by the one sacrifice. Jesus was not only the victim, He was also the priest. It's very important to understand this. And this is stated for one place in Hebrews 9:14:

> "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?" (NASB)

You see, Christ offered Himself. The word there translated "offered" is the specific word for a "priestly offering." Christ was not only the victim, He was the priest. He was the total provision of God to deal with the sin problem, to deal with that which makes it impossible for man otherwise to approach God in His holiness.

And so we see here the divine resolution of the tension between love and light, between God's holiness and God's love. God's love draws us, but God's holiness sets boundaries that we cannot pass until we have the one thing that is

needed, the sacrifice. But the love of God, in a certain sense, reached out beyond the holiness of God and in the Person of Jesus, provided both the victim and the priest. How important it is that we see the absolute all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. He's the Lamb that takes the sin or the world. He's also the only authorized priest who offered Himself as the lamb, without spot, without blemish, without sin, to God through the eternal Spirit. And through that eternal Spirit He comprehended in Himself the sins of all men of all ages, past, present and future. The one all-sufficient sin offering provided by God's love to meet the requirements of God's holiness.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing on the relationship between the love of God and the holiness of God.

Radio Program

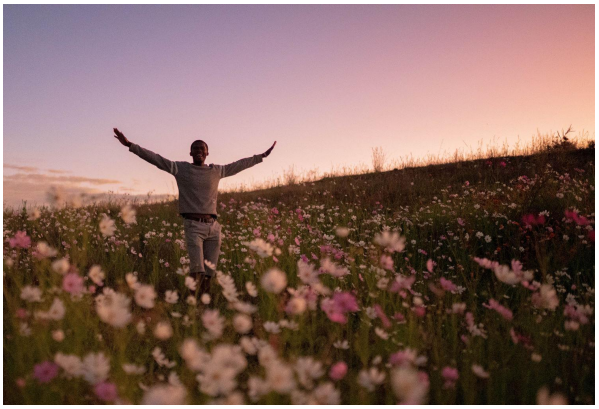
Transcript: TS-R103-103-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



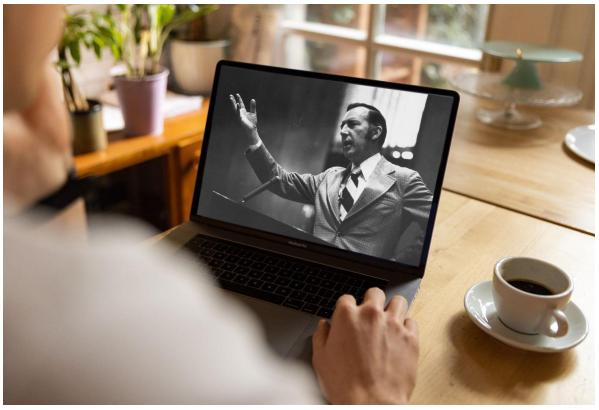
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries