

Suffering and Serving
Matthew 20:17-28
September 16th, 2018

Intro

Why did Jesus die?

Because of sin – but what did His death accomplish regarding sin?

He died as a substitute in the place of people who have rebelled against God. That is the blazing center of the gospel.

But because that is true, there are other facets of the atonement that are also true. Two of those receive attention in this passage today and they have great relevance for us.

We'll start by seeing another prediction Jesus gives of us His death.

Then I want to pause and briefly consider this blazing center of the gospel – His death as a substitute for us.

But then we'll see two other benefits accomplished by His death, two other facets of the atonement.

1. Jesus predicted His **suffering** and **death**. (20:17-19)
 - a. Jesus and his disciples were on the road going up to Jerusalem.
 - i. Always “up to Jerusalem” regardless of direction because of the elevation of Jerusalem at around 2,500', compared to the dead sea at 1,400' below sea level and “sea level” along the Mediterranean coast
 - ii. Psalms 120-134 were Songs of Ascent sung on the way to Jerusalem
 - iii. They were in the region just east of the Jordan river and would be in Jericho 14 miles from Jerusalem in v. 28
 - iv. Road likely packed with travelers to the holy city for the upcoming Passover celebration.
 - b. He pulled the disciples away from that crowd for a moment to remind them of what will happen when they reach Jerusalem.
 - i. This is the 3rd clear statement to the disciples in Matthew about his upcoming suffering and death.
 - ii. As we saw in the other accounts in chapters 16 and 17, He wants them to be prepared. He wants them to understand that God's plan is unfolding just as He intends. He isn't merely a kind teacher caught up and crushed in the gears of an empire.
 - c. His suffering would
 - i. Come from the Jewish religious leaders
 - ii. Involve the Roman authorities
 - iii. Be emotional as he was mocked
 - iv. Be physical as he was whipped and ultimately crucified
 - v. Of course, that's exactly what happened
 - d. The whole sweep and flow of the OT in specific, detailed prophecies and types and foreshadowing in the sacrificial system and priesthood move toward the inevitability of a suffering Messiah.
 - i. Exodus 12:46 - None of His bones would be broken

- ii. Psalm 22:1, 16, 18 – He would cry out in pain, would be pierced, and they would gamble for His garments
 - iii. Psalm 69:21 – He would be given vinegar to drink
 - iv. Psalm 16:10 – He would rise from the dead
 - v. Psalm 110:1 – He would ascend into heaven
 - vi. Zechariah 9:9; 11:12 – He would enter Jerusalem on a colt and be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
 - vii. Zechariah 13:7 – He would be deserted by His friends
2. Jesus suffered and died as a **substitute** for us, taking the **penalty** for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)
- a. Penal-Substitutionary Atonement: The **penalty** of God’s broken law must be fully paid before reconciliation can occur. Otherwise, God would be guilty of breaking His own Law. Jesus satisfied God’s law by His perfect **obedience** in life. Jesus satisfied God’s justice by His bearing sin's penalty in His death as a willing **substitute** for sinners.
 - b. **Isaiah 53:5-6** But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.
 - c. Jesus’ death as a substitute for people raises some common questions or objections for many.
 - d. ***Why is atonement necessary? Why doesn’t God simply forgive sins? Humans can forgive as an act of the will, why cannot God do the same?*** (objection to the concept of the necessity of the atonement)
 - i. Fails to consider who God really is.
 - 1. He is not merely a private person who has been wronged, but is also the official administrator of the judicial system. For God to remove or ignore the guilt of sin without requiring a payment would in effect destroy the very moral fiber of the universe, the distinction between right and wrong.
 - 2. Genesis 18:16 describes God as “the judge of all the earth.”
 - 3. God is a being of infinite or perfect holiness and goodness. An offense against him is much more serious than an offense against an ordinary sinful human.
 - e. ***It is unfair and unjust to punish an innocent third party in the place of a guilty person.*** (objection to the concept of substitution).
 - i. **John 10:17-18** "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.
 - ii. **John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
 - iii. In the Trinity, the Father and the Son are really one. Because of this, Christ’s work is also the Father’s work. Although the exact nature of the relationships among the persons of the trinity is not known to us, it is clear that God is both the judge and the person paying the penalty.
3. Jesus served as our **example** in His suffering. (20:20-28a)
- a. The disciples clamored for **leadership** without understanding that **suffering** goes with it. (vv. 20-24)
 - i. Two disciples and their mother came to Jesus with a request. She apparently initiated by the sons were involved so that Jesus spoke with them in this exchange and in Mark’s account it only mentions the sons.

- ii. He explains that leadership will involve suffering more than glory. Are they up for that?
 - 1. “the cup” is a frequent metaphor for suffering in the old and new testaments
 - 2. The cup of God’s wrath in Is 51:17 and Jesus’ request for the cup to pass from him in the garden before the cross.
 - iii. They naively say, “Yes!”
 - 1. Yet they ran away when they felt endangered
 - 2. Yet Jesus lets their ignorance stand for a while. Marvel at Jesus’ patience.
 - 3. They will eventually drink the cup
 - a. James was the first apostolic martyr
 - i. **Acts 12:1-2** Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. 2 And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.
 - b. John died an old man exiled on an island
 - 4. But the position is up to the Father, not the Son
 - iv. The other disciples were indignant, angry, displeased
 - 1. Not at the display of selfishness because we in other situations see them all involved in the jockeying for position and power.
 - 2. **Luke 22:24-25** And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. ²⁵ And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.'
 - 3. They are simply jealous the other brothers got there first!
 - v. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach them all about service in His kingdom.
- b. True greatness is found through **sacrificial service** (vv. 25-28a)
- i. Outside the church leadership is often demonstrated through lording authority over people.
 - 1. Who can I command? Who can make life easier for me? Who can accomplish my goals or vision?
 - ii. But it should not be this way “among you”
 - 1. Greatness comes through service
 - iii. Uses Himself appropriately as the example.
 - 1. His example only carries weight because He really served as our substitute. It wasn’t suffering without reason.
 - 2. Would that example have any real validity if Christ had not died *for us*?
 - a. Millard Erikson - A fireman rushing into a burning house to save an infant only to die himself from the smoke inhalation would be a beautiful example of love for one’s human at a disregard for one’s own safety.
 - b. However, if there were no infant to save – and the fireman, the parents, and his supervisor all knew it – would it be a powerful example if the fireman rushed in and died anyway?

- iv. Leadership means sacrifice, service, pouring self out, taking the hits
 - 1. That's the way it is in leading a family, leading a church, leading at work, leading in a ministry area.
 - 2. It's easy to become discouraged at the complaints, sacrifices, struggle and throw in the towel. Better to conclude that this is merely the life of servant leadership and it mirrors Jesus' experience.
 - 3. A servant leader continually widens the circle out from themselves to take care of others.
 - c. Doriani – the act of Jesus is unique and unrepeatable. Yet Jesus also says we should serve “just as” the Son of Man came to serve.
 - i. Washed feet – now wash one another's feet John 13:14
 - ii. Went to the cross and said “take up your cross and follow me” mt 16:24
 - d. Service starts in small ways
 - i. We might listen to this and say, “yes, Lord! I want to serve! Make me your servant today!” with visions of washing the faces of orphans in southeast asia or feeding the poor in Romania
 - ii. Then we go home. And mom is frantically at work in the kitchen and asks for a little help cleaning up the living room. And we groan. And complain.
 - iii. Or we see the need for church cleaning in the bulletin and wonder why someone doesn't sign up for that already.
 - iv. Or we are exasperated by the 20th dirty diaper of the day that needs changed.
4. Jesus died as our ransom. (20:28b)
- a. Ransom/redemption – used of a king that would pay a ransom price to release a general or son taken in war, used of a commoner who would pay a financial price to set a slave free (adapted from Doriani)
 - b. But Jesus offered Himself – not money – to deliver us from bondage to sin, its power, and its consequences.
 - c. **1 Peter 1:18-19** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.
 - d. There is an understanding of the atonement as ransom states that God triumphed over Satan and the forces of evil by offering Jesus as a ransom to Satan, who, under the self-delusion that he could hold the Son of God, agreed to release humankind.
 - i. Penal-substitutionary Theory likewise affirms that victory over evil was won by Christ's giving of himself as a ransom – but to the requirements of God's justice, not to Satan.
 - e. What is the root of Satan's power that enabled him to hold humanity under his control and domination?
 - i. *Satan* literally means “accuser” – he induces us to sin so that he can lay accusations against us and bring us under the condemnation and curse of the law. This is the essence of his power over us.
 - ii. If we are to be liberated from his power, we must be freed from the condemnation of the law.
 - f. The Penal-substitutionary theory maintains that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law and thus freed us from the slavery in which Satan held us.

- i. We are freed from the curse of the law precisely because Christ took our place – in Him our penalty has been paid.
 - ii. **Romans 6:6-7** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.
 - iii. **Galatians 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us . . .
 - iv. **Romans 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- g. By using the term ransom Jesus communicates a few more essential elements of His sacrifice.
- i. It compares the human condition to slavery or captivity that we can't get ourselves out of.
 - ii. A price is paid on our behalf
 - iii. We belong to a new master
 - 1. We are set free from the bondage of sin but set free to a better master, our Lord who purchased us and adopted us into His home.



1. Jesus predicted His suffering and death. (20:17-19)

None of His bones would be broken
(Exodus 12:46)

He would cry out in pain, would be pierced, and they would gamble for His garments (Psalm 22:1, 16, 18)

He would be given vinegar to drink
(Psalm 69:21)

He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10)

1. Jesus predicted His suffering and death. (20:17-19)

He would ascend into heaven
(Psalm 110:1)

He would enter Jerusalem on a colt and be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 9:9; 11:12)

He would be deserted by His friends
(Zechariah 13:7)

2. Jesus suffered and died as a substitute for us, taking the penalty for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Penal-Substitutionary Atonement: The penalty of God's broken law must be fully paid before reconciliation can occur. Otherwise, God would be guilty of breaking His own Law. Jesus satisfied God's law by His perfect obedience in life. Jesus satisfied God's justice by His bearing sin's penalty in His death as a willing substitute for sinners.

2. Jesus suffered and died as a substitute for us, taking the penalty for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Isaiah 53:5-6 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

2. Jesus suffered and died as a substitute for us, taking the penalty for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Why is atonement necessary?
Why doesn't God simply forgive sins?
Humans can forgive as an act of the will, why cannot God do the same?

2. Jesus suffered and died as a substitute for us, taking the penalty for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

It is unfair and unjust to punish an innocent third party in the place of a guilty person.

John 10:17-18 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

2. Jesus suffered and died as a substitute for us, taking the penalty for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

It is unfair and unjust to punish an innocent third party in the place of a guilty person.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

3. Jesus served as our example in His suffering. (20:20-28a)

- a. The disciples clamored for leadership without understanding that suffering goes with it. (vv. 20-24)

Acts 12:1-2 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. ² And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

3. Jesus served as our example in His suffering. (20:20-28a)

- b. True greatness is found through sacrificial service (vv. 25-28a)

4. Jesus died as our ransom. (20:28b)

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

4. Jesus died as our ransom. (20:28b)

Romans 6:6-7 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us . . .

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.