Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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October 12, 2014 by Steve Brandon

The Sin Offering

Leviticus 4:1-5:13

1. In response to sin
2. For various people
3. For various sins
4. For cleansing

Psalm 1 is one of the most famous and most loved chapters in all of the Bible. It begins the Psalms. It sets forth the picture of the godly man.

> Psalm 1
> Blessed is the man
> who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
> nor stands in the way of sinners,
> nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
> but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
> and on his law he meditates day and night.
> He is like a tree
> planted by streams of water
> that yields its fruit in its season,
> and its leaf does not wither.
> In all that he does, he prospers.
> The wicked are not so,
> but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
> nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
> for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
> but the way of the wicked will perish.

The godly man stays away from the way of sinners. The godly man stays near to the word of God. In so doing, he will be a firm and stable man, unlike the wicked, who are tossed here and there and ultimately into judgment. This Psalm brings

much wise counsel to us. Company with the wicked will lead to ungodliness, and ultimately to destruction But, reading and meditating upon God's word will lead to life and prosperity as we follow the ways of the LORD. A life lived in submission to the LORD and His ways will lead to untold blessings.

So, make the word of God the object of your meditation. Think much of Christ. Think much of the gospel. Submit yourself to the truths of God's word and to its ways, and you will be blessed! That's just a simple fact of life.

But, I want for you to think for a moment of what Psalm 1 is really speaking of when it was written. It's not talking about a man meditating on the life of Jesus. The coming of Christ was hundreds of years away. It's not talking about meditating on the great truths of the gospel. The New Testament wasn't even written during the time when Psalm 1 was penned. And the New Testament says that the gospel was a mystery to those living in the Old Testament times (Ephesians 3:6).

But, what does the writer say? "Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2). What's he talking about? He's talking about the Pentateuch. He's talking about delighting in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. He's talking about meditating upon Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

And, of course, for our purposes this morning, I want for you to think particularly of the blessing that comes to the man who meditates constantly upon the book of Leviticus. Now, it may sound strange, as Leviticus isn't quite at the top of our list in terms of books of the Bible to meditate upon. And yet, it was one of the books that was in the mind of the writer of Psalm 1. "Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in [Leviticus], and on [Leviticus] he meditates day and night."

Know that our time together in Leviticus is profitable for your soul. Thinking much of Leviticus can lead to much blessing in your life. So, let's turn in your Bibles to Leviticus, chapter 4.

Over the past three weeks we have looked at chapters 1, 2, and 3. The burnt offering; the grain offering; and the peace offering. The burnt offering was offered up to God for an atonement to our sins, being totally burned up on the altar. The grain offering and the peace offerings were responses to the atonement, in thanksgiving and peace with God.

This morning, we come to the sin offering, that offering that purifies us from our uncleanness. If you look at chapter 4 in your Bibles, you will notice that this chapter is longer than all of the other chapters we have looked at so far. In fact, it's almost as long as chapters 1, 2, and 3 combined. But, when you add to this the fact that the sin offering spills over into the first 13 verses of chapter 5, it's longer than the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering combined. So, we have our work cut out for us this morning.

Over the course of my message, I do want to read the entire chapter, and spill over to chapter 5. My goal, as much as possible is to read the entire book for you in the course of my exposition. There are certainly some among us who have never read the book. At least you can come to church and hear it read. It is the Word of God. It merits your hearing.

Now, I do believe that there will be times when this is too time-consuming. But, we can do it today. But, rather than reading it all at once, I'm going to take it up in portions. So, let's begin by reading a portion of the text.

> Leviticus 4:1-21
> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the Lord's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them, if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering. He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord and lay his hand on the head of the bull and kill the bull before the Lord. And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it into the tent of meeting, and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle part of the blood seven times before the Lord in front of the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the Lord that is in the tent of meeting, and all the rest of the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And all the fat of the bull of the sin offering he shall remove from it, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys (just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace offerings); and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. But the skin of the bull and all its

flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung — all the rest of the bull —he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap it shall be burned up.

"If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be killed before the Lord. Then the anointed priest shall bring some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting, and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord in front of the veil. And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is in the tent of meeting before the Lord, and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And all its fat he shall take from it and burn on the altar. Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. And he shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it up as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

Let's stop there. We see here in the sin offering many of the same characteristics that we have seen in the other sacrifices. We see an animal being brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting (verse 4). We see the animal killed (verse 4). We see the priest accepting the animal (verse 5). We see the blood poured out at the base of the altar (verse 7). We see the fat burned on the altar (verse 7). In fact, even at one point, we read how similar this offering is to the peace offering. Look again at verse 8, ...

Leviticus 4:8-10
And all the fat of the bull of the sin offering he shall remove from it, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys (just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace offerings); and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering.

Now, there are some things that are different. First of all, we see that this offering is ...

1. In response to sin

Look again at verse 2,

> Leviticus 4:2
> ... If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the Lord's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them,

And we shall see this throughout the rest of the sin offering. Verse 13, ...

> Leviticus 4:13
> If the whole congregation of Israel sins ...

> Leviticus 4:22
> When a leader sins ...

> Leviticus 4:27
> If any of the common people sins ...

And continuing in chapter 5, verse 1

> Leviticus 5:1
> If anyone sins ...

Here, we see the great difference between the sin offering and the other offerings that we have seen thus far. In all of the other offerings, the relationship between sin and sacrifice has been assumed. Leviticus 1:4 promises that the sacrifice "shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." There's no mention of sin, but "atonement" was mentioned. "Atonement" implies sin.

Throughout the first these offerings, you see the mention of the "pleasing aroma to the LORD." [1]There's no mention of sin, but an act that gives pleasure to God is mentioned. That's an implication of sin as well. We can tell that something is amiss between the worshiper and God, but the offering pleases the LORD.

But, here with the sin offering, things change. There is a clear reference to sin. And the implication is clear. If you sin, you need a sacrifice.

That's the clear teaching of the sin offering. If you sin, you need a sacrifice.

And what was true in the days of the Old Testament is true in our days as well. If you sin, you need a sacrifice. God can't simply overlook sin like we can. You see, when someone sins against us, we can choose to overlook the sin and forgive the person, without demanding a price or retribution of any kind. We can do this, but God cannot. Because, at that moment, we are choosing to be merciful, and not demand a payment to be made for the sin.

And that's OK for us. But, God cannot do that. Oh, He's merciful enough to do so. But, His justice prohibits it. See, God is a perfectly just God. And being perfectly righteous means that justice needs to be executed every time a sin is committed! And to merely overlook sin is to be unjust.

This was Paul's argument in Romans 3:21-26, a passage considered by some as the most important paragraph in all the Bible. Paul was debating how it could be that God could be just in "passing over sins (Romans 3:25). He passed over the sins of Abraham, the sins of Moses, the sins of David, the sins of Elijah or Elisha, the sins of Ezra or Nehemiah. How could God forgive them? How could God forgive any of the sins of the Old Testament saints?

Paul came to the conclusion that only Christ's sacrifice on the cross met the demands of His justice, while at the same time allowing Him to be merciful. He is just in that He punished Jesus. He is merciful in that He punished Jesus in our place.

That's why all of these sacrifices of Leviticus point us so well to Jesus. Because they point us to the ultimate sacrifice that we all need. They point us to the sacrifice that can cover all of our sins!

See, in Leviticus, when the sin offering was brought, the sacrifice was sufficient for that sin and that sin alone. An Old Testament saint would know that one sacrifice is not enough. We each are guilty of many, many sins. But the sacrifice of Jesus was so much greater. The sacrifice of Jesus wasn't for one sin. No, the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient for the sin of the world. That's why Paul boasted in Colossians 2:13 that Jesus Christ has "forgiven us all our trespasses."

It only makes sense, for an animal is of some worth. So, it can forgive a single sin. But, Jesus is of infinite value. His payment was of infinite worth! Therefore, His sacrifice is for the sin of the world, as John the Baptist told us. It wasn't for one

particular sin. It was for many, many sins. Let us be thankful to God that He has made a way for all of our sin to be forgiven.

This sin offering was given In response to sin. Second, we see that this offering is ...

2. For various people

Did you notice this? It began in verse 2 to speak of anyone sinning. Verse 3 puts forth what to do when the anointed priest sins. Verse 13 speaks about what to do when the whole congregation of Israel sins. Verse 22 speaks about what to do when a leader sins.

In fact, the various people listed is the main organizational thread with the sin offering. With the other offerings, the organization was with the type of animal to be sacrificed. But, here, it's the people. Let's pick up our reading in verse 22.

> Leviticus 4:22-35
> "When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the Lord his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish, and shall lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord; it is a sin offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. So the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven.
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> "If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering. And the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar

for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.

"If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the Lord's food offerings. And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

The sin offering covers four different scenarios. First, when the anointed priest sins (verse 3). Second, when the whole congregation sins (verse 13). Third, when a leader sins (verse 22). Fourth, when one of the common people sins (verse 27). And, for the different people who sin, there are differing instructions.

If it is the anointed priest who sins, a bull must be offered. And the blood must be brought into the tent and sprinkled seven times in front of the veil of the sanctuary (verse 6). Also, blood must be placed on the horns of the altar of incense before the LORD. We haven't seen this yet. The burnt offering and the grain offering and the peace offering were all dealt with outside the camp.

Remember a few weeks ago, I showed you the picture of the tabernacle. It shows the entire tabernacle arrangement. The curtain all around. The bronze altar (where the sacrifices were burned). The tent of meeting. But, for this sacrifice, the priest goes into the tent, into the Holy place.

I have another, inner picture of the tent, the Holy Place. You see the bronze altar. Between it and the tent is the bronze laver, used for washing before entering into the tent of meeting. Then, you see two rooms. The outer room, called, "The Holy Place." The inner room, called, "The Most Holy Place" or "Holy of Holies."

In the first room, there is the lamp stand, the table of showbread and the altar of incense. And then there is the veil of the sanctuary, behind which rests the Ark of the Covenant. For the sin offering for the anointed priest, he takes the blood of the

bull into the first room, sprinkles blood "in the front of the veil of the sanctuary" seven times (verse 6), and puts some blood on the horns of the altar of incense. The horns are the four projectiles at each corner of the altar.

Now, the same thing takes place when the whole congregation of Israel sins. He takes the blood of the bull into the first room, sprinkles blood "in the front of the veil of the sanctuary" seven times (verse 6), and puts some blood on the horns of the altar of incense.

Now, something different happens when a leader sins. Then, it's only a male goat (i.e. a smaller animal of less cost). And the sacrifice takes place at the bronze altar, not inside the tent of meeting. And, when a common person sins, it is also different. Then, it's a female goat (verse 28) or a lamb (verse 32). And, again, the sacrifice takes place outside the tent of meeting.

So, why the difference? I believe that it has to do with the access to the LORD. When the anointed priest sins, then how are you going to get to God? To approach the LORD, you need a holy representative. And if your representative has sinned, he is no longer worthy to bring you to God!

And when the whole congregation sins, then how are you going to get to God? You can only come to God if you are pure and holy.

See, it's different when a local leader sins. Because the priest can still bring you to God. And not everybody is defiled. Likewise, when a common person sins not all are defiled. But, when the whole congregation is guilty or the priest has sinned. Then, things need to be made right inside the tent at the veil of the sanctuary, right at the presence of where God dwells.

And here we see the significance of having a holy priest. That's why Hebrews 7:26 says, "For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." Because Jesus is a pure priest, we have forever access to God! He never sinned. He never will sin. He is seated at the right hand of God, ready to receive all those who come to Him. He never has to enter the sanctuary to cleanse himself, "since he did this once for all when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:27). So, we can enter into the presence of God through Christ!

In fact, it's better than that! It's not simply that we can enter! He's always praying for us and helping us to come to God. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Consequently, he is

able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." So, come to Christ; He is your only way to God. He is never unqualified to bring you to God.

I think that we take this truth for granted. But, what if we didn't have such a high priest? Can you imagine the disappointment you would have in coming to worship, with animal in hand to sacrifice, only to have a sign at the door. "Do not enter. Access prohibited. The priest sinned. The priestly sacrifice is taking place."

Can you imagine coming to church, only to have a sign at the door. "Do not enter. Access prohibited. The pastors sinned. The sacrifice is taking place. Come back at noon."

Imagine that! You weren't able to come and worship, because you didn't have an adequate priest! Praise be to God that this is not the case. Jesus is our perfectly adequate priest.

Now, before we move on, I do want to point out one more principle here. It's the principle of influence. The sin of the anointed priest or the sin of the whole congregation is a greater sin than the sin of a leader or a common person, simply because it impacts more people. Think about it, isn't there more impact when the President of the United States sins as opposed to when the mayor of a city sins? It's greater because it impacts more people.

And when a spiritual leader falls, isn't there more impact when a pastor of a multi-site congregation with thousands in attendance every Sunday sins, than when a pastor of a small congregation of fifty sins? Of course it does.

Satan isn't oblivious to this. He goes after spiritual leaders. He goes after influential spiritual leaders. So, pray for those in spiritual leadership.

That's the warning that James brings: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1). That's why Paul admonishes, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Timothy 5:22). In other words, sinful leaders will bring troubles to themselves and to their congregations. And at this point, you might simply be thinking of me or the other elders of the church. But, you parents also have a spiritual impact upon your children.

You may not be leading a congregation of 100. But, you are leading your flock of 3 or 4 at home (or, in some cases, your flock of 5 or 6 or 7). Parents, your aim in raising your children is to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). And your sin can be a great deterrent to this task.

How many parents have negatively impacted their children because of their sin? And how many parents have actually prohibited their children to come, because they were never right with God themselves. The sinful priest can't bring people to God. Nor can the sinful parent.

Let's move on. The sin offering was given In response to sin. The sin offering was given For various people. Thirdly, the sin offering was given ...

3. For various sins

Until this point in our reading of Leviticus 4, we have seen the category of "unintentional sins" mentioned. And I'm sure that's a big question. And I'll seek to answer it shortly. But, chapter 5 brings some more sins to light.

> Leviticus 5:1-13
> "If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity; or if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean wild animal or a carcass of unclean livestock or a carcass of unclean swarming things, and it is hidden from him and he has become unclean, and he realizes his guilt; or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort the uncleanness may be with which one becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it, and realizes his guilt; or if anyone utters with his lips a rash oath to do evil or to do good, any sort of rash oath that people swear, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it, and he realizes his guilt in any of these; when he realizes his guilt in any of these and confesses the sin he has committed, he shall bring to the Lord as his compensation for the sin that he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.
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> "But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord as his compensation for the sin that he has committed two turtledoves or two

> pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first the one for the sin offering. He shall wring its head from its neck but shall not sever it completely, and he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a sin offering. Then he shall offer the second for a burnt offering according to the rule. And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.
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> "But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two pigeons, then he shall bring as his offering for the sin that he has committed a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it and shall put no frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. And he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take a handful of it as its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, on the Lord's food offerings; it is a sin offering. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be forgiven. And the remainder shall be for the priest, as in the grain offering."

So, let's talk about the "unintentional sins." It comes up 4 times in chapter 4 (verse 2, 13, 22, 27). All of the major translations (ESV, NASB, NKJV, NIV) translate this, "sins unintentionally." It's easy to get a mis-conception as to what that means. When we think, "unintentional," we might think that it's something over which you have no control, and therefore aren't responsible.

For instance, when I sleep at night, I snore. In fact, I snore badly. To give you some idea, I want to tell you how Andy described it. See, normally, it's only my wife and children who hear me snore. But, occasionally, you have overnight trips with the guys. We were up in Minneapolis at the DesiringGod Pastor's Conference. Andy and I were sharing a room together. He told me in the morning how bad my snoring was. He said, "Steve, normally when people snore, people say that you are 'sawing logs.' But, with you it's different. Much different. Last night, you weren't 'sawing logs,' you were cutting them down with a chainsaw!"

My snoring is pretty loud. And, in fact, it's entirely uncontrollable. I don't mean to snore, but I do. Now, you shouldn't feel sorry for me. You should feel sorry for Yvonne, who has to sleep through the chainsaw every night. She wears earplugs to help her endure the decibels. But when I get too loud, and wake her up, she bumps me. And as I change position, my snoring is often quiet for a bit.

The other night, I guess I was very loud, and she wasn't sleeping so well. I woke her up on several occasions. She told me in the morning how she bumped me on several occasions, but I didn't quiet down. So, she bumped me some more. Finally, I was using a smaller chainsaw. And I feel really bad about keeping Yvonne up so much, But it's entirely unintentional. I can't help myself.

Now, this is not what the term, "unintentional sin" means. A better way to understand, "unintentional" is to think of sins that you "fall into." They are sins of "going astray." You didn't think about them beforehand. You didn't plan them out. It was a situation that you responded to, that you responded to sinfully. In other words, you sinned in your weakness. Not as an act of high-handed rebellion. This is the sort of, "unintentional sin" we are talking about.

We aren't talking about some sin in which you have no control, and therefore have no guilt. Obviously, this isn't the case. Because, there are sacrifices being offered for the sins being committed! The idea here is that you have stumbled upon them, and you have become guilty. It's taking the name of the LORD your God in vain. It's going after the Baals of the land, like foot-baal or base-baal or basket-baal. It's not being forward with the truth. It's seeing something and coveting and taking what isn't yours.

And for all of these sins, there is an offering for sin. Chapter 5 includes some more sins for which this offering applies. For not speaking up as a witness (verse 1). For touching a carcass of an animal (verse 2). For touching any human uncleanness (verse 3). For failing to keep an oath (verse 4). And, of course, Jesus took these sins to an entirely new level in the Sermon on the Mount. It's not simply murder, but angry words that come from your mouth. It's not only physical adultery, but even the thought is sin. It's taking vengeance into your own hand. It's failure to love your neighbor as yourself. It's anything less than being perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

Perhaps you can think of some "unintentional sins" in your life Perhaps even some that you committed this week!

The sin offering ought to raise our awareness of sin. "You shall be holy." Some of the "respectable sins" that Jerry Bridges writes about in his book of that title are instances of "unintentional sin:" ungodliness, anxiety, frustration, discontentment, pride, selfishness, lack of self-control, anger, judgementalism. The list goes on.

When you track "sin offerings" throughout the Bible, you see that they are often very general. They are offered every month along with the burnt offering (Numbers 28:15). Furthermore, they are offered at many of the yearly festivals: [2] the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement. And, there are times when they are offered to bring ceremonial cleansing, irrespective of any particular sin. This would be after a birth of a child (Leviticus 12:8) or to cleanse a leper (Leviticus 14:22) or after a bodily discharge (Leviticus 15:15).

This leads me to my last point. The sin offering is ...

4. For cleansing

Perhaps this is the best overall idea of the sin offering. Sin has stained us. We need to be cleansed, so that we can worship the LORD in holiness once again. The sin offering is given to restore us to God.

That's the idea of the often repeated phrase, "And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven" (4: 20). "So the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven" (4: 26). "And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven" (4: 31). "And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven" (4:35). "And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin" (Leviticus 5:6). "And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven" (5:10). "Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the win which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be forgiven" (5:13).

Because, when we sin, we break fellowship with God. We have need to be cleansed. We have need to be restored. And the sin offering restores us to God. It restores us to God by washing us, by forgiving us, by cleansing us.

Do you remember that great verse in the first chapter of Isaiah? Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall become like wool." This is the promise of the sin offering. We come to the LORD polluted in our sin. We need the cleansing that only He can give. And so, we come and we wash. And we are forgiven. We are made right!

1 John 1:9 is a great New Testament parallel. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Today, the sacrifice has been paid. We simply need to acknowledge that this sacrifice was our sacrifice.

Remember the act of the worshiper, who laid his hand upon the animal that was to be killed? [3] It was as if to say, "this offering is mine. I'm placing my faith here in this animal to be shed for my sin." So also with Christ, we must lay hold of him. We must lay our hands on him. We must confess that he is our sacrifice. We must confess that Jesus is where our faith rests.

Romans 10:9-10 tells us, "If you confess with your mouth, Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Have you done so?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 12, 2014 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

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[1] Leviticus 1:9, 1:13, 1:17; 2:2, 2:9; 3:5, 3:16.

[2] Numbers 28:22; 29:5, 11, 16ff.

[3] Leviticus 4:4, 15, 29, 33.