

October 19, 2014 by Steve Brandon



The Guilt Offering

Leviticus 5:14-6:7

1. Holy Things
2. Holy Procedures
3. Against Your Neighbor

Psalm 19 is one of the most foundational of all of the Psalms in the Bible. It speaks of God's revelation to us. The first half of the Psalm speaks of how the heavens declare the glory of God and how all of creation communicates of God's eternal power and divine nature (i.e. Romans 1:20). The second half of the Psalms speaks of how God has revealed Himself in His word, His perfect word.

Listen to verses 7-9.

Psalm 19:7-9
The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.

Each of those verses speak of the intrinsic characteristics of the word of God. It is perfect. It is sure. It is right. It is pure. It is true. All to say this: we follow a sure word. We can trust every single word in our Bibles. They lead us in truth. They lead us to life through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, read your Bibles. Believe your Bibles. Trust your Bibles. Confess your sin. Believe in Jesus. You won't be disappointed.

Consider once again, verse 7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul." (ESV) The New American Standard translates this, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul." Both of these are true. The law of the LORD revives. The law of the LORD converts. Both of these are within the semantic range of the Hebrew word (*shuv*).

The law of the LORD comes as refreshment to our souls. It encourages us. It helps us. It gives us hope and reason to endure. But, the law of the LORD is also powerful enough to convert a soul. As the second half of verse 7 says, it can "make wise the simple." The law of the LORD can take someone who is simple and naïve, and instruct them into the ways of God. It can bring back the one who is straying, bringing them into a saving knowledge of the LORD.

Now, like we have done in the past few weeks, I want for you to think about what David was saying. Because, when he wrote, there was no New Testament. Jesus had not yet come. Paul had not yet been born. David was talking about the perfection and reliability and trustworthiness of the Old Testament, not the New Testament.

And particularly, he was speaking about the law of the LORD. When David said, "the law of the LORD," he was referring to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And he calls them "perfect." And so, for our purposes this morning, you might say it this way: "The book of Leviticus is perfect, reviving the soul;" or, "The book of Leviticus is perfect, converting the soul."

We ought to find Leviticus reviving to our soul. As we read it and meditate upon it, it should help our faith. But, I'm also praying that the LORD would use our time in Leviticus to open the eyes of hearts to the glory of Jesus. May we find refreshment May you convert souls through the exposition of this book.

We come this morning to our fifth and final offering in the book of Leviticus. If you remember, the first five chapters of Leviticus have five offerings detailed. The first offering is found in chapter 1. It is the burnt offering. That offering that is completely consumed for our sin. The second offering is found in chapter 2. It is the grain offering. This is the offering that often follows the burnt offering, and is offered up in thanks to the LORD. The third offering is found in chapter 3. It is the peace offering. Like the grain offering, this sacrifice often follows the

burnt offering. It represents our fellowship with the LORD. The fourth offering is found in chapter 4 (more or less). It is the sin offering. This is like the burnt offering. It is for specific sins committed. It provides a way of forgiveness.

These five offerings form the basis of all the sacrifices in the book of Leviticus, indeed, of all of Scripture. The guilt offering begins in chapter 5, verse 14 and continues through chapter 6 and verse 7. The King James and the New King James call this the "trespass offering." That's a valid translation, because the guilt offering primarily deals with a specific offence (or, a "trespass") that must be made right.

We begin with some curious facts about the guilt offering. Of all the other offerings, the guilt offering is, by far, the most infrequently mentioned in the Bible. It always requires a ram, not a lamb or an ox or a bull, but only a ram. It requires a retribution, that is a payment. Whatever the cost of the offence, it needs to be returned, and a fifth is to be added. You can see this as we read through it. Let's begin by reading the entire section of Scripture.

Leviticus 5:14-6:7

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the LORD, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.

"If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, he shall bear his iniquity. He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally, and he shall be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; he has indeed incurred guilt before the LORD."

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the LORD by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby—if he has sinned and has realized his guilt and will restore what he took by robbery or what he got by oppression or the deposit that was committed to him or the lost thing that he found or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it, and give it to him to whom it belongs on the day he realizes his guilt. And he shall bring to the priest as his compensation to the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any of the things that one may do and thereby become guilty."

This passage breaks down into three sections, one for each type of sin. This first sin is identified in verse 15,

Leviticus 5:15

"If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the LORD

The second sin is identified in verse 17, ...

Leviticus 5:17

"If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, he shall bear his iniquity.

The third sin (or, really, sins) is identified in chapter 6:2-3, ...

Leviticus 6:2-3

"If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the LORD by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby—

And if any of these things take place, then the person is guilty, and a sacrifice must be offered. This sacrifice is called, "the guilt offering" And these sacrifices are really no different than the sacrifices that we have seen so far, though many of the details are missing here. An animal is brought to the priest. It is killed. The priest takes the fat and burns it upon the altar. And the leftover goes to supporting the priest. We get these details from Leviticus 7:1-10.

If there is any message coming out of these verses, it is this: there is a way to remove your guilt. There is a way to resolve your sin before the LORD and before others.

You know, many people live with guilt. They live with regret. They live with a sense that they have sinned and messed up, and they are too far gone. And they can't make it right, either with God or with others.

Now, I'm not a Shakespearian scholar by any means. But, when I think of "guilt," one scene of Shakespeare jumps into my mind. It's shortly after Macbeth killed King Duncan. We find him staring at his blood-soaked hands. And he envisions how they might be washed. He says, in Act 2, scene 2, ...

"What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red." [\[1\]](#)

In other words, Macbeth views the blood upon his hand as so potent that would he stick his hand into the ocean to wash it off, it wouldn't wash. Instead, the entire ocean would be turned red by the blood on his hands. Such is the piercing depth of his guilt in this matter. In fact, this idea of lingering guilt is a major theme in the entire play. Macbeth is visited by the ghost of Banquo, whom he murdered to protect his secret. Lady Macbeth has haunting dreams, eventually committing suicide because of her great guilt in being an accomplice with her husband in the murder of King Duncan.

And there are people who live with guilt. There is something that they did so long ago that plagues them every day of their lives. Like Macbeth, they have a blood-stained hand, and seemingly can't get it clean. They try and they try and they try, but, it just can't be removed. And the message of our text this morning is this: you can get it clean!

John Bunyan, in his classic novel, "Pilgrim's Progress" employed a different metaphor with his character, "Christian." His book begins with these words:

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep: And as I slept, I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a Man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great Burden upon his back.

I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; And as he read, he wept and trembled; And not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, What shall I do?" [\[2\]](#)

Those who have drawn this scene have pictured this burden as towering over him, far greater than any through-hiker's backpack. The weight of the burden was so great that it caused him to slouch over. And, of course, the burden represents his sin. Wherever he went, the burden was there. And he sought to do all in his power to rid himself of the burden of sin. And the message of our text this morning is this: you can have the burden removed from your back!

Now, it may be the case that the burden you carry and the guilt you feel is actually a good thing. Because, you don't have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. In your case, the burden on your back is like a red warning light on the dashboard of your car. It's warning you of the danger that awaits you if you don't deal with the problem of your guilt. That was the case with Christian. It was his burden that led him to Calvary.

In a similar way, it was guilt that led Martin Luther to the gospel. Before his conversion, was plagued by guilt. And he did everything to try to rid himself of his guilt. He wrote, ...

"I was a good monk, and I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work."

R. C. Sproul writes about his habits in the confessional.

"Confession was a requirement for the monks, but not daily. The requirement was that all one's sin be confessed. Luther could not go a day without sinning, so he felt it necessary to go to the confessional every day, seeking absolution.

Confession was a regular part of the monastic life. The other brothers came regularly to their confessors and said, 'Father, I have sinned. Last night I stayed up after "lights out" and read my Bible with a candle.' Or, 'Yesterday at lunchtime I coveted Brother Philip's potato salad.' (How much trouble can a monk get into in a monastery?) The Father Confessor would hear the confession, grant priestly absolution, and assign a small penance to be performed. That was it. The whole transaction took only a few minutes.

Not so with Brother Luther. He was driving his Father Confessor to distraction. Luther was not satisfied with a brief recitation of his sins. He wanted to make sure that no sin in his life was left unconfessed. He entered the confessional and stayed for hours every day. On one occasion Luther spent six hours confessing the sins he had committed in the last day!

The superiors of the monastery began to wonder about Luther. They considered the possibility that he was a 'goldbricker,' preferring to spend his waking hours in the confessional to studying and performing his other tasks. Concern arose that perhaps he was mentally unbalanced, rapidly moving to serious psychosis. His mentor, Staupitz, finally grew angry and scolded Luther:

"Look here," he said, "if you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive--parricide, blasphemy, adultery--instead of all these peccadilloes. ... Man, God is not angry with you. You are angry with God. Don't you know that God commands you to hope?"

Here it is! Here is the aspect of Luther that has most brought the verdict of insanity. The man was radically abnormal. His guilt complex was unlike anyone's before him. He was so morbid in his guilt, so disturbed in his emotions that he could no longer function as a normal human being. He could not even function as a normal monk." [\[3\]](#)

And this was one of the driving factors leading Martin Luther to the cross of Christ. He was overcome with guilt! He understood his sin. He understood his need for forgiveness. And he searched high and low to find it. And it was never to be obtained through his "monkery." It wasn't ever his good works or his Bible reading or his praying that would get him there. It was only to be found at the cross of Christ. So, blood on your hands and a burden on your back may not be such a bad thing at all. It may well be the best thing that you can have, as it will drive you to Christ!

Now, it may be the case that the burden you carry and the guilt you feel is actually a bad thing. It could be a bad thing if you have trusted in Christ and He has forgiven your sin, but you still insist upon bearing your sin upon your back. You still try to right the wrong that was paid for at the cross. And for you, it may be that you simply don't believe the promise of the gospel. If you trust in Jesus, His sacrifice upon the cross paid for all of your sins (Colossians 2:14).

The Bible tells us that there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). This means that we stand before God and He will not condemn us in any way. Through faith in Christ, there is no more guilt to be felt! Certainly, there is room for repentance and sorrow and confession over our sin. But, as you confess your sin to the Lord and seek to make it right with others, there is no room for guilt, because we are set free in Christ!

Do you know the hymn, "Before the Throne of God Above"? Do you know the second stanza?

When Satan tempts me to despair,
and tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there,
who made an end to all my sin. [\[4\]](#)

It is Satan's ploy to stir the feelings of guilt within you, as if your sins are not forgiven. Believers in Jesus, look to the cross, and again be reminded of the utter and complete forgiveness that you have received by God's grace through faith in Jesus. Let's get on with guilt-free living!

This is how Paul lived. He told Felix, "I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man" (Acts 24:16). He wrote to Timothy, telling him that he serves the Lord "with a clear conscience" (2 Timothy 1:3). Or, as Keith Getty & Stuart Townend wrote, ...

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.

No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand. [\[5\]](#)

So, let's stand in the power of Christ! Well, for the Jews in the days of Moses, they didn't have the cross of Christ to look upon. They had sacrifices to give. But, in giving these sacrifices, they experienced forgiveness. [\[6\]](#)

Let's look at the first offence. I'm calling it, ...

1. Holy Things

Look again at verse 15, ...

Leviticus 5:15

"If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the LORD, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.

Here we have sins against the "holy things of the LORD." This could refer to a whole myriad of things. This could refer to the animals that were brought to be sacrificed, if they weren't "without blemish." This could refer to the grain that was presented, if they weren't made of the right ingredients. May you forgot the salt? This could refer to a failure in giving the priest his proper due of the food offerings, you and your family ate it all, rather than sharing it with him. This could refer to how you ate the fat of the sacrifice or ate some of the burnt offering. This could refer to your failure in presenting their first fruit offerings. This could refer to how you failed to fulfill your vow that you brought with the peace offering (Leviticus 7:16).

When any of these things took place, restitution had to be made. First of all, a ram without blemish was to be sacrificed. Second, restitution had to be made to the priest by adding a fifth to it. In other words, if you sin, you need to restore what you took and add 20% to make it good. How you do that in all circumstances, I don't know. How you know the value of the grain offering, I don't know. How you know the value of the ox that wasn't "without blemish"? I don't know. Leviticus 27 seeks to answer some of these questions.

But, the principle is clear, isn't it? If something was wrong, make it right and add a fifth. This was the heart behind the statement made by Zacchaeus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will restore it fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Now, Zacchaeus went way above the 20% to 400%. He wasn't offering a guilt offering. Furthermore, his generosity was entirely voluntary. But, you can see the principle at work. "If I have defrauded anyone, I will make it right. I will return it, and increase what they lacked."

S. Lewis Johnson, in applying this to Christ pointed out how the cross did more than simply restore us to where Adam was. He explained that when Adam sinned, he brought the world into sin. And when Christ came, He undid everything that Adam's sin did and more so. See, Christ's sacrifice did more than simply restore us to Eden. Christ's sacrifice secured heaven for us. We stand better today than ever did Adam in the garden. Though Adam was perfect in the garden, his sin could ruin the whole thing. But, believers in Christ, though they sin, will never forfeit the heavenly inheritance that awaits them.

In this way, Christ did more than simply restore us to Adam's state. He guaranteed heaven for us. And we are better off for it. It is far better to live after the cross, redeemed by Christ, that it is to live in Eden, where you must maintain your righteousness to live.

You can also think about this regarding double imputation. When Christ died on the cross for our sins, He took the penalty in our place. But, Jesus did more than this. He also gave us His righteousness. In other words, Jesus didn't merely restore us to a pre-sin state, so that now we are neutral, having done nothing good nor bad. Rather, He imputed His righteousness to us, so that now we have more to our credit. We have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. And now, God looks at us not merely as innocent, but as meritorious as earning heaven's reward. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Well, there are the Holy Things. Let's look now to the ...

2. Holy Procedures

This comes in verse 17.

Leviticus 5:17

If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, he shall bear his iniquity.

When we read "the LORD's commandments," the idea isn't the "Ten Commandments." A breach of the Ten Commandments isn't resolved using the guilt offering. The burnt offering and sin offering are what should be offered when the commandments are broken. Rather, the idea here is the commandments that God has given in Leviticus concerning the offerings, a break in protocol.

One of the things that Yvonne has repeatedly told me in our study of Leviticus is how confusing and complex this law code was. It is confusing like our modern day tax code. How easily one could fail in following everything exactly according to the standards set by the LORD! And however you may fail, when you come to realize it, you need to make it right. You need to make it right by offering a ram without blemish to the priest.

Note here that there is no 20% added onto the infraction. Perhaps this is because some infractions would be difficult to measure. How do you measure the damage done when you don't lay your hand upon the sacrifice? How do you measure the damage done when you don't get both kidneys upon the burnt altar, but one gets burned outside the camp?

Perhaps it's because there's no profit in these matters. In other words, it's not like you are gaining by neglecting to lay your hands upon the altar. It's not like you are gaining when the sacrifices are burned in two different places. At any rate, one thing is clear. The LORD didn't give Leviticus to the people of Israel to ignore. He gave it to them to be followed, word for word. Every bit of it. And he even gives provision when something isn't quite followed exactly. God doesn't speak in vain. When He speaks, He expects to be obeyed.

Now, the only reason why we don't have to follow these things is because of Christ. He has become our guilt offering. Jesus paid it all! In fact, turn over to Isaiah 53. This is one of the few places outside of Leviticus where the "guilt offering" is mentioned. And it speaks of how Jesus was our guilt offering. He's the one who has taken all of our guilt. Isaiah 53 is describing the suffering servant, fulfilled exactly in Jesus. Let's look at verse 10.

Isaiah 53:10

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Note how verse 10 speaks of how God, the Father, crushed God, the Son. It was according to His will. That which He decreed before the

world ever came into existence, He brought about on Calvary, sending Jesus to the cross.

Jesus in the garden pleaded His heavenly father to avoid the cross. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). It wasn't God's will for Him to remove the cup. It was God's will that Jesus would bear the penalty for our sin upon the cross. And so, God, the Father, put His Son to grief. He suffered a cruel death. He suffered God's wrath for the guilt of our sins (verse 10).

Jesus became our guilt offering. He righted every wrong. We no longer need to offer up the guilt offering. Full retribution has been made to the LORD. Praise be to God!

Now, that doesn't mean that the principle of the guilt offering doesn't apply to us today. Because, I think that it can.

Let's look at my third (and last) point. We are looking now at sins committed, ...

3. Against Your Neighbor

That's what chapter 6, and verses 2-5 are speaking about. They are talking about the sins that we commit against each other: deceit, robbery, oppression, and lying. These words speak about any way in which you fail to love your neighbor as yourself.

Leviticus 6:2-5

If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the LORD by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby— if he has sinned and has realized his guilt and will restore what he took by robbery or what he got by oppression or the deposit that was committed to him or the lost thing that he found or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it, and give it to him to whom it belongs on the day he realizes his guilt.

Earlier in my message, I mentioned two types of guilt. Good guilt and bad guilt. I said that "good guilt" is the guilt that unbelievers experience as the Holy Spirit begins to put pressure upon them (John 16:8), leading them to Christ. I said that "bad guilt" is the guilt that believers experience, when they have confessed their sin to the LORD and sought to make things right. It's "bad guilt" because they have refused to believe the promises of God, that such sin is completely forgiven.

I want to give you a third category. "Convicting guilt." This is the guilt that believers in Christ feel as they refuse to confess their sin. It may well be that you are a believer in Christ, and yet, holding on to some sin that you simply won't confess as sin. And it may be that God is placing some pressure upon your soul to acknowledge the sin.

Particularly, this may be some sin that is between you and another person. Leviticus 6:2-5 identifies some of the sins that this might entail, such as deceit, robbery, oppression, or lying.

I remember some years ago having some illegal software on my computer. It was early in our marriage, and we didn't have a lot of money, and the software was particularly helpful to me. And I remember suppressing the thought that we needed to pay for the software. It was on my computer. We need to pay for it.

I remember the agony that took place in my soul for months before finally talking it over with Yvonne. But, when it finally was out in the open and we purchased the software legally, I remember the freedom I experienced to be out from under the weight of this "convicting guilt."

I remember in the months before I was baptized being convicted of how I needed to walk in obedience through the waters of baptism. I was tormented in my soul. I was sprinkled as a child, but never baptized after coming to faith. I wish that I could tell you that the moment I understood that I should profess my faith in the waters of baptism that I went forward. However, such was not the case. I delayed. I thought about it. And the convicting guilt laid heavily upon my shoulders. Eventually, I followed the Lord in obedience. And the weight of "convicting guilt" went away.

Perhaps you are a believer in Christ and there are some things burning in your hearts this morning that are burdening you with guilt. Perhaps you have been deceitful in some way, and are still playing the game. Confess your guilt and come to Christ! Perhaps you have cheated someone, a store, a friend, your employer. Confess your guilt and come to Christ. Perhaps you have misused your position of authority. Confess your guilt and come to Christ. Perhaps you are caught in a big web of lies. You don't know how it started, but it continues on and you continue to go along with it. But, your conscience is guilty, not clean. Come clean! Confess your guilt and come to Christ. Search your heart and come to Christ.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 19, 2014 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Shakespeare, "Macbeth," Act 2, Scene 2, lines 56-60.

[2] John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress. This work is in the public domain. Here's one place to read it:
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim.html>.

[3] R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, pp. 113-114.

[4] Charitie Bancroft, "Before The Throne Of God Above," Public Domain.

[5] Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, "In Christ Alone." © 2001 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

[6] Leviticus 5:16, 18; 6:7.