

THE FIRST SACRIFICE
Gen. 3:21

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3.

Intro: There are two things that we always should keep in mind when we come to the Lord's table:

- 1) Our main reason in coming is to remember the Lord.
 - 2) But specifically it is to remember the Lord's death.
- Not only did the Lord say, "This do in remembrance of me," but Paul added, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." See 1 Cor. 11: 24, 26.

The bread and the wine which the Lord used to establish this Supper were to represent, to be types, to set forth, the death of Christ.

So, as we come to the Lord's Supper, our thoughts should be centered on the Lord, and upon both the fact and the meaning of His death. We are here confronted with our Saviour dying on the Cross.

Only the most immature babe in Christ would think of this as a limited purpose. Actually it is as extensive as the Word of God itself, running from Genesis to Revelation. And there is no major doctrine of Scripture which is not related to the death of Christ in some way.

We see the death of Christ taught in various ways.

Four books of the NT give us the history of it--the Gospels.

From the book of Acts on to the end of the NT we are concerned with the explanation of that death.

All through the OT we find prophecies of the coming Messiah and Redeemer.

And then we have that rich study known as types. What is a type?

A type is a picture, a pattern, a representation, of something to come. It is a simplified way of teaching.

For example, when Paul said in 1 Cor. 5:7 that "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us," he was saying that the Passover Lamb was a type of Christ! John the Baptist was saying the same thing when he preached, "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

There are types which represent many things in Scripture, but a lot of them have to do with Christ.

Such is the case with our text tonight in Gen. 3:21. It speaks of Christ, and is the first recorded sacrifice in the Word of God. The details of the verse, and the circumstances leading up to it, show that it speaks of Christ.

Let us use it as the basis of our meditation as we come to the Lord's table.

I. THE BACKGROUND.

A. The original state of Adam and Eve. See Gen. 2:25.

They were "naked," but "not ashamed."

They had been created in the image and likeness of God, which, among other things, must have meant that there was a glory upon them. That was their covering, but they had no clothes as we know them now.

B. After the fall into sin. See Gen. 3:7-11. (Read.)

There are three things that we need to see in these verses:

1. Adam and Eve knew that they were naked. They knew that they could not stand before God in their changed condition.
2. They made an attempt to cover their nakedness.
3. They knew, when the Lord came, that what they had done was not sufficient.

These three points tell us a great deal about men and women from that day until this, and really form the substance of Paul's teaching in Romans 1.

Adam and Eve were condemned by God. Judgment was passed upon them, and upon the serpent. But, before the Lord put them out of the Garden of Eden, He did that which is described in our text: v. 21.

But how did it picture Christ and the salvation which He would eventually provide through His death--those great themes which we are considering as we come to the Lord's table?

II. THE LORD'S PROVISION in Gen. 3:21.

A. It was a replacement for the fig leaves.

The fig leaves are never mentioned again. In fact, the next time figs are mentioned in Scripture is in Num. 13:23 when the spies brought figs out of the land of Canaan.

When we understand the Cross, we do not talk any longer about our works for salvation because we know that they are worth nothing!

B. It was provided by God.

What an act of divine mercy, as Tit. 3:5 teaches us! They sewed the fig leaves together, but God provided the coats of skins for them freely.

C. It was not asked for by Adam and Eve.

What a picture of depravity! They first of all ran away from God, but even at this point they did not seek His forgiveness. "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11b).

D. It required the death of animals who died as substitutes.

This is what we are to remember as we come to the Lord's table. "Christ died for our sins."

Adam and Eve could not be covered as long as the animals were alive. It was not the perfection of Christ's life, not His example, but His death by which we are saved.

E. It was specifically for Adam and Eve.

This is the first teaching of particular redemption in the Scripture. It shows very clearly that the Lord's intention in putting the animals to death was to make a provision for Adam and Eve.

But, you say, they were the only two people on earth. How could it be otherwise? And I answer, "The Lord could not have made it clearer, could He?"

F. The Lord clothed them.

It is not a case where He provided the skins, and then left it up to them to decide whether or not they would put them on. Gen. 3:21 does not teach so-called free will. It teaches the sovereignty of God. God's purposes were carried out.

Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21.

G. The covering was sufficient.

It was the only covering required. Adam and Eve did not have anything to add, nor did they even make such a suggestion.

Concl: Types are a simplified way of teaching. How gracious of the Lord to put this wonderful picture of our salvation right at the beginning!

But, you say, where do we see Adam and Eve's faith?

Remember that faith follows from God's work in our hearts, and that it is itself a gift from God. We see their faith as they submitted to God's provision and accepted the covering which God provided for them.

Jesus Christ died as our Substitute, God's provision for our sins, covering us with the righteousness of His Son. All of our works are worthless, and, once we understand what He did, we do not even talk about what we have tried to do.

Yesterday I attended the memorial service of Ruth Ryder Sykes Flansburg who died last Tuesday. The service was held at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Vancouver. What a blessing it was! The message of the pastor indicated that he knew the Lord and he was very strong in assuring us that Mrs. Flansburg knew the Lord.

But one of the things about the service that I enjoyed the most was the playing of some of the old hymns on the marvelous pipe organ that they have in that church. Among the hymns played was one that I want to quote for you as I close. They are attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, who lived from 1091 to 1153. Listen to the words, and I trust that they will be a blessing to you as they always are to me.

O sacred Head, now wounded,
 With grief and shame weighed down;
 Now scornfully surrounded
 With thorns, thine only crown:
 O sacred Head, what glory,
 What bliss till now was thine!
 Yet, though despised and gory,
 I joy to call thee mine.

What thou, my Lord hast suffered
 Was all for sinners' gain:
 Mine, mine was the transgression,
 But thine the deadly pain.
 Lo, here I fall, my Saviour!
 'Tis I deserve thy place;
 Look on me with thy favor,
 Vouchsafe to me thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
 To thank thee, dearest Friend,
 For this thy dying sorrow,
 Thy pity without end?

(Over)

O make me thine for ever;
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee.

Be near when I am dying,
O show thy cross to me;
And for my succor flying,
Come, Lord, to set me free:
These eyes, new faith receiving,
From Jesus shall not move;
For he who dies believing,
Dies safely, through thy love. Amen.
