

Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship

Lesson Th224-28 Atonement: The Free Gift

The apostle Paul wrote this in his letter to the Church in Rome: “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23, NASB). The apostle Peter also wrote about Jesus’ death: “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God” (1Peter 3:18, NASB).

Jesus’ death paid the debt for all of humanity’s sin. Atonement is the free gift of God. Now a ‘gift,’ by definition, is free. If it could be earned, it would not be a gift. There is only one thing that we must do to have our debt removed from God’s ledger. We must, through faith, *accept* God’s gift.

There was a young man who borrowed large sums of money to pay for tuition to attend university. Upon graduation he immediately found a job and slowly began to repay his school debt. He was not alone in owing great sums of money to pay for an education. Many of his classmates were also deeply in debt.

One day he received a letter from one of his classmates. They were all planning to have a reunion where one of their fellow classmates would be talking about his great success in business. The young man was very busy working. He did not have time to attend the reunion. As the years went by, he labored under the heavy burden of his school debt. This debt affected everything in life. The debt limited his ability to buy a house and provide for his family. The heavy weight of the debt was crushing. Thirty years later, he still struggled to pay his debt.

Then, while visiting the local market, he met one of his old classmates. His classmate was dressed in fine clothing and wore a gold chain and an expensive watch.

“You look very successful,” the man said to his classmate. “How did you manage to acquire such wealth? I thought your school debt was at least as great as mine?”

His classmate looked at him with a puzzled expression and asked, “Are you still trying to pay off your school debt?”

“Of course.” the man answered.

“Oh my. You must not have been at the class reunion many years ago,” the classmate replied.

“No, I was working and did not have time to attend,” the man said. “Why was the reunion so important?”

The classmate looked upon the man with sympathy and said, “One of our classmates started a business that made him wealthy beyond belief. He wanted to do something to help all

of us, his fellow classmates. He established a fund to pay off the school debt for every one of us. We only had to present the documents for our school debt, to have it paid in full.”

The man was shocked. He had not known that his debt could be paid. He had only to submit the documents. For 30 years he had suffered, trying to pay a debt that had already been provided for.

Jesus’ atonement on the Cross paid the debt for every human who will ever live. Jesus’ death was once and for all. It is God’s free gift to all of humanity. But, a person’s debt of sin remains on the ledger until they reach out in faith to receive God’s gift. Here is what the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome:

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ (Rom 10:9-17).

This lesson is **important** because it explains how Jesus’ atonement for our sins is a free gift.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that our sins, that is, our debt, has already been paid. The only thing we must do is receive God’s gift.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. For whom did Jesus die? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “Jesus died for all of humankind,” you are correct.
2. What must we do to receive God’s gift of salvation? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said that we only have to believe and ask God for the gift of salvation, you are right.
3. Why is it important that we tell everyone that Jesus has died for their sins? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “Although the price has been paid to erase their debt of sin, each person must ask God to be forgiven, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to watch this lesson at least three more times listening carefully to the word of God written by the Apostles. Memorize the following words of the apostle Paul: “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Romans 10:17), and also the words of the apostle Peter: “Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God” (First Peter 3:18).