

Lesson 6

THE WORK OF CHRIST: THE ATONEMENT

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly through grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, all sufficient Savior.

Introduction

In Lesson 5 we spent our time focusing on Christology; that is, the person of Christ. We answered the question of ‘Who is Jesus?’ More specifically, we learned that the historical Jesus is both fully God and fully man in one person. In lesson 6, we will continue thinking about Christ by focusing on the nature of His work on the cross. Christ’s accomplishment of redemption on the cross, or as it’s frequently called – the atonement – is central to our Christian faith. Atonement reverses the separation caused by sin reconciling man to God and God to man.

I. FOUNDATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT – THE LOVE OF GOD (PG. 23)

While it’s very important for us to understand who Jesus is, such as affirming that he is the perfect God-Man, it would be insufficient for us to leave it at that. The fact that Jesus came to earth and took on human flesh has its significance in our understanding of why he came. So why did He do it? Why did the eternal Son of God humble Himself by taking on human flesh and become obedient to death, even death on a cross? While the act of Christ’s atoning work conveyed love, it was only because the cause or source of that atonement was brought about by love – the love of God. Scripture informs us in several places that the atonement is an expression of the love of God:

- John 3:16 – “**For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son....**”
- Romans 5:8 – “**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”

These verses demonstrate that the cross of Christ is the supreme display of the love of God. It’s the supreme expression of God’s love due to the extreme costliness of the sacrifice – the Father sacrificed His own Son! The costliness of Christ’s sacrifice assures us of the greatness of God’s love for His people. This is the basis and foundation of all that we will study.

II. THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT – GOD’S JUSTICE (PG. 23)

One question that seems to emerge among discussions about the atonement is whether or not it was essential that Christ die in order to secure salvation? In other words, was the atonement necessary? Or could God have just snapped his fingers and said, “I want to save you and you and you?” Or could he have just said, “Let’s forget about this whole sin thing and let bygones be bygones?”

Does Scripture provide us with any evidence indicating that it was absolutely mandatory for God to save sinners through an atoning sacrifice? Is it necessary for a salvation that is freely and sovereignly determined to be accomplished only by the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Well, in order for us to answer these questions, we have to understand two concepts: the Holiness of God and the Sinfulness of Man.

1. In our second lesson, we established that God is a Holy God. The phrase, “**Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty**” is found in both the Old Testament and the New. (Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8). Because God is perfectly Holy, He requires perfect Holiness in those that would share His fellowship and abide in His presence.
2. In our fourth lesson, we established that man is a sinner. Romans 3:23 says that “**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” This sin causes separation from God. Isaiah 59:2 says “**Your iniquities have separated you from God.**”

It’s the righteousness of God’s law, the unchanging nature of His holiness, and the unflinching demands of God’s justice that require Him to punish sin. We must understand that God would cease to be righteous if he allowed wickedness and evil to go unpunished. If there’s to be salvation, God’s wrath against sin must be satisfied because “**without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness** (Heb. 9:22).” It’s this principle that requires sacrifice.

Hebrews 2:10 and 17 says, “**For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering... Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**”

While it was not inherently necessary that God save anyone, He did purpose salvation, which brought about the need for a substitutionary sacrifice. Thus, we can conclude that in order for God to redeem men and women from their sins, it was absolutely necessary for an atonement to be made that would perfectly satisfy the demands of God’s holiness and justice.

Ephesians 2:8, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.**” Romans 6:23, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Matthew 26:39, “**And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’**” Luke 24:26, “**Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?**” Hebrews 10:1-4, “**For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**”

III. THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM: THE OLD TESTAMENT SHADOW

If we turn our attention to the Old Testament, we see that God prepared the way for the coming Messiah by giving Israel a system of sacrifice that would foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice that would take place on the cross. Through the Law and the Prophets, God showed repeatedly the problem of sin and the need for his justice to be satisfied through a substitutionary sacrifice in order to accomplish reconciliation. All of this served to teach the Israelites and point them toward Christ.

In the Old Testament, we find four characteristics about sacrifices for atonement:

- a) **They had to be offered voluntarily** – Coercion would negate the idea of true sorrow or repentance.
- b) **They had to be offered on behalf of the guilty party** – In order to account for an individual's sins, he had to pay the cost – the substitution had to be made for him specifically. This is why the Old Testament worshipper was required to place his hands on the head of the animal being sacrificed to symbolically show that the liability for his sin was being transferred, or placed on, the animal victim. Lev. 1:4, "He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Lev. 4:4, "**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.**" Lev. 16:21, "**And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.**"
- c) **The sacrifice had to be without defect** – Perfect purity was required. Lev. 22:21, "**And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it.**" An injured or blemished animal would not be considered acceptable to God. Only the healthy would be an acceptable offering for the sick.
- d) **The sacrifice had to involve the loss of blood (or life) of the victim in exchange for the worshipper** – It clearly indicated that the punishment for sin is death to the sinner, and blood is required to atone for it.

All of this Old Testament activity culminated with the Day of Atonement, when the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies bringing in the blood of a sacrifice offered for the sins of the entire people. These sacrifices, though, in and of themselves did not fix the problem. They had to be done endlessly year after year after year and were a constant reminder of the people's sin. The OT sacrificial system was a temporary picture of what was coming. It was only a shadow of the Messianic atonement that would obtain eternal redemption for the people of God.

Listen to what Hebrews 10:1-4 (*at the bottom of page 23*) says about the Old Testament sacrificial system:

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin."

So the Old Testament sacrifice brought awareness of sin, but did not actually take away sin because the sacrifices were not worthy enough to satisfy God's justice. They made one clean outwardly but did not remove man's sinfulness in the heart (Heb. 9:13-14).

Questions or Comments?

IV. ATONEMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

A. HISTORIC OBJECTIVITY (PG. 24)

It's not until we look to the New Testament to find the plan for Christ's atonement being fulfilled. It's important to stress that Christ's atonement took place in actual history. Jesus died on the cross in a particular point in time and space. Galatians 4:4-5 states, "**But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.**"

The atonement is an event having reality independent of the mind or experience. It has occurred. Therefore, it cannot be repeated. Christ cannot be re-sacrificed, and there is no continuing act of atonement. If there were, then it would show Christ's work as insufficient. Heb. 6:4-6, "**For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.**"

B. The Nature of the Atonement (Pg. 24)

The Atonement is a completed work. It has been accomplished. But how has it been accomplished? It has been accomplished through the obedience of Christ. Paul in Philippians 2:8 says, "**And being found in appearance as a man, [Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!**"

Philippians 3:9, "**and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith**"

The primary emphasis of Christ's work of redemption is not on us but on the Father. Jesus obeyed the Father in our place and perfectly met the demands of the law. Jesus' purpose for coming down from heaven was not to do his will but to do the will of the Father who sent him, as we read in John 6:38.

(sub-points in workbook)

The obedience of Christ is typically sorted into two categories: active obedience and passive obedience. Let us look at each.

Christ's active obedience just means that he obeyed the requirements of the law in our place and was perfectly obedient to the Father's will as our representative.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus actually lived a life on earth before dying on the cross? We've already learned that he was sinless as God-incarnate. Wouldn't it have been enough for him to be sacrificed as an infant for the salvation of his people and not a 33 year-old man?

Well, just as Adam's disobedience made people to be sinners, Christ's obedience was necessary to make the many righteous. Rom. 5:19, "**For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**" Jesus became our righteousness before God and saw it essential to fulfill all righteousness, as he explained to John the Baptist before he was baptized. If Christ had not done this for us, we would have no record of obedience by which we would merit God's favor and eternal life with him. We would be just like Adam and Eve before God established the Covenant of Works with them that required obedience for life and relationship with God

(Gen. 2:16-17). What we see in Adam was someone who was sinless but his sinlessness was not developed to full maturity. When he was tempted, he fell. Christ took that sinlessness to full maturity through his life.

And so we see that it was not through the mere incarnation that Christ secured our salvation. Nor was it through mere death. It was Christ's obedience, brought to its consummate fruition on the cross that constituted Jesus as an all-sufficient and perfect Savior. Death upon the cross was the price of redemption and was discharged as the supreme act of obedience.

When we look at Christ's passive obedience, we must say that it simply means that Jesus took on the penalty for our sins and died for those sins. He is the Suffering Servant that we read about in Isaiah chapter 53. Christ's passive obedience does not mean that Jesus was an involuntary victim of affliction imposed upon him or was a passive recipient of his suffering.

The author of Hebrews says of Christ that, "**he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8-9).**" The perfection envisioned here is not one of becoming sanctified because Jesus was already sinless and holy. What is being put forth is the idea that the obedience of Christ learned through suffering, perfected through suffering, and consummated in the suffering of death upon the cross is what defines His work and accomplishment as the author of salvation. Through this course of obedience in suffering, Jesus was made perfect as Savior.

A. The Language of Atonement (pg. 24)

It's not hard to see how Christ's atoning work is brought about by His perfect obedience, but what did the atonement actually do? It would be beneficial for us to look up the various vocabulary used of the atonement and look at what it accomplished.

1. Sacrificial and Ritual language (pg. 25)

The first thing to note is that Christ's atonement was a sacrificial work. In the New Testament's treatment of Christ's work on the cross, we see the continuation and enhancement of the Old Testament idea of ritual sacrifice for the purpose of atonement. The difference here is that Christ's sacrifice is effective, and it finally and permanently reconciles man to God.

- Ephesians 2:13, "**Now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.**"
- Romans 5:9, "**Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!**"

Note that the language in these passages (two of many) specifically deals with blood. This suggests that it was not only Jesus' willingness to die that was important, but also His actual physical death, and this being consistent with the Old Testament system. We deserved to die as the penalty for our sin, but it was Christ who was sacrificed for us.

2. Redemption: Language of the Prison/Marketplace (pg. 25)

The second thing to note is that Christ's atonement was a work of redemption. This theme in the New Testament captures the idea that [1] people are slaves to sin, [2] that a payment is required for freedom, and [3] that Jesus paid the ransom for the sins of His people.

- Matthew 20:28, “**The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.**”
- Revelation 5:9, “**You were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God out of every tribe and language and people and nation.**”

3. Reconciliation: The language of Relationship (pg. 25)

The third thing to note is that Christ’s atonement was a work of reconciliation. This language takes a slightly different angle implying that there’s hostility between the holy God and sinful man. There’s a broken *relationship*, and Christ came to restore it.

- Romans 5:10, “**For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!**”

Through Christ’s atonement we have overcome our separation and alienation from God that began with Adam’s exile from the Garden of Eden and have been given peace and harmony with God.

4. Justification: Language of the Law Court (pg. 25)

The fourth thing to note is that Christ’s atonement was a work of justification. Similar to the other three aspects of the atonement, this idea emphasizes [1] the reality of our legal guilt, [2] the reality of a penalty to be paid, and [3] Jesus (God Himself) as the one who pays the penalty for us.

- Acts 13:39 , “**Through Him (i.e., Christ) everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from through the law of Moses.**”
- 1 Corinthians 6:11, “**But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**”

In all of the New Testament passages on the cross, we see a clear picture of the completion and ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament system of sacrifice and atonement for sin before a Holy God. It’s out of His love that God reached out to us and saved us back into fellowship with Him from a place of condemnation. And he did it through the death of Jesus.

V. THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT (PG. 25)

It would be good for us to take some time to consider how various parts of the church throughout history have viewed the atonement. We won’t spend much time here other than to give you some various theological perspectives. In a number of these theories we will see bits of truth or incomplete, if not wrong, pictures of Christ’s work. The problems come in what some of these theories do *not* deal with, as will be explained.

A. The Ransom to Satan Theory (pg. 25)

The Ransom to Satan Theory indicates that Christ’s death on the cross was a victory over the powers and principalities of Satan’s kingdom and over Satan himself. The image set forth is one where we were held hostage by Satan, and Christ “paid the ransom” for us.

Now certainly there are truths here. Christ's death on the cross was victory over sin, over evil, and over Satan. Certainly, the New Testament authors understand the cross to be a triumph. The problem with this idea is that it's not to Satan that the ransom is owed but to God. It's God's justice that requires satisfaction. The modern biblical church has not fully embraced this theory because it has as its end the wrong object: Satan rather than God.

B. The Governmental Theory (pg. 25)

The Governmental Theory of the atonement holds that because God is omnipotent, he did not actually have to require payment for sin and could forgive sins without a penalty. The purpose of Christ's death was to demonstrate that God's laws had been broken and that *some* kind of penalty would be required whenever His laws were broken. Thus Christ did not exactly pay the penalty for the actual sins of anyone. He simply suffered to show that when God's laws are broken there must be some penalty paid and to reinforce that God's laws must be kept. The atonement served merely as a deterrent from future offenses by man.

This theory fails, of course, to account for all of the Scriptures that speak of Christ bearing our sins on the cross (Is. 53:6). There is no notion here that Christ is the propitiation for our sin. Also, to say that God can forgive sins without requiring any penalty in spite of the fact that throughout the Bible sin always requires the payment of a penalty is to completely misunderstand the absolute character of the justice of God.

C. The Moral Influence Theory (pg. 26)

The Moral Influence Theory states that Jesus died on the cross to provide an example to rebellious humanity of how we should live before God. It's thought that in viewing Jesus' example, we will be compelled to a response of grateful love toward God and would be forgiven because of this love.

Now, Christ certainly is an example to us, which may result in moral improvement. We're commanded to love as He loves, to pray as He prayed, etc. He did submit to the Father in the crucifixion. These are all Scriptural ideas. However, there are problems here.

As with other theories already mentioned, this theory completely avoids the idea of God's hatred towards sin. It completely ignores the reality of God's punishment for sin and our desperate need to be reconciled to God. As an end in itself, this theory undercuts much that we would call the work of the atonement. It cannot explain how the cross justifies sinners or how sin can be removed. This view of the cross really ends up arguing that man can save himself, if he would only follow Christ's example.

D. Penal Substitution (Substitutionary Atonement) (pg. 26)

The last view that we want to consider is that of Penal Substitution. This is the view of the atonement that we believe Scripture takes and that the evangelical church has consistently embraced. It states that Jesus took on the sins of His people and substituted Himself in their place taking on the judgment and wrath of God in their stead.

- 2 Peter 2:24, **“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”**

The cross stands as the vindication of God. This is Paul's argument in Romans 3:24-26, he says, **“[We] are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to**

demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Here we have the classic statement of the great central doctrine of the Atonement. These three verses in Romans explain the cross. God presented Jesus as a sacrifice to display His justice. The cross shows God's judgment against sin. Every sin will be punished. Every sin demands a full outpouring of the wrath of God.

God is just in redeeming those who have faith in Jesus because Christ's sacrifice pays the penalty for their sin. It satisfies the requirements of God's justice. God is just because their sins have been punished in Christ – he didn't allow sin and rebellion to go without penalty. God is also the justifier because he atoned for their sins allowing Him to declare the believer "not guilty."

- 2 Corinthians 5:21, **"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."**

VI. KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ATONEMENT (PG. 26)

The fact that Jesus, who had no sin, became sin and substituted himself for others and paid the penalty for those sins is a great truth, but it has also raised a couple questions.

A. Is Jesus' atonement the *only* atonement that saves? (pg. 26)

If we are believers, this is an easy one. (*Write Y-E-S in your handouts.*) We cannot atone for our own sin, as we have nothing to bring to the table but our own unrighteousness. Christianity is distinguished from all other religious systems in that it depicts a perfect view of God's justice and God's mercy sweetly meeting at the cross. The Apostles were not ashamed to proclaim the exclusivity of Christ's meritorious atonement: **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)."**

B. For Whom did Christ Die? (What is the extent of the atonement?) (pg. 26)

While the first question is controversial between Christians and non-Christians, this second question has been a lot more controversial within the evangelical community of faith. Did Christ die to make salvation a possibility, or a certainty? You see, obtaining salvation and giving salvation are not exactly the same thing.

We could dedicate an entire class discussing this question, but the short argument is encompassed in a lot of what we have already covered. In Scripture, we have no evidence of Jesus "trying" to redeem us or "trying" to save us. The fact of the matter is that Jesus saves us, he redeems us, and his work is effective. If Christ died instead of others, as we have seen from Scripture, then it must follow that all those whose place he took must now be free from the anger and judgment of God.

Well, if this is the case and Christ's work on the cross actually paid the penalty for sin and actually redeemed man from God's wrath, then who are those redeemed? Did Christ die for everyone? Is everyone saved?

If we look at the nature of substitution, it necessarily implies substituting for a definite group of people. We understand from Scripture that this group of people makes up the universal church, God's elect. Jesus, in his own words, came to give his **"life as a ransom for *many*"**, to **"lay down his life for his sheep."**

Paul says, **"Christ loved *the church* and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without**

stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:25-27).” The death of Christ was designed for the salvation of God’s chosen people.

The Biblical perspective on this has been described in a number of ways – limited atonement, particular atonement, but a better way to put it is *definite* atonement or *accomplished* atonement or *certain* atonement.

Someone may object and point out that there are New Testament Scriptures that talk about “everyone being saved” or “all being saved” or the “whole world being saved.” We don’t have time to go through each of these passages, but there is usually an easy solution taken from these verses’ context and the whole of Scripture.

Take 1 John 2:2 for example: “[Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” Clearly, John’s point is that Jesus’ death was not for the Jews only, as many Jews believed, but Christ’s atonement was for all peoples – Jews and Gentiles. John is referring to all people groups and not to every single person. If “the whole world” referred to every person in the world, we would be forced to say that John is teaching that all people will be saved, which he clearly does not believe.

John Owen, a 17th Century theologian who wrote one of the greatest books ever written on the Atonement, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, provides a strong argument for the position that the unlimited merit of Christ death was limited in its intent.

Owen starts out with Isaiah 53:

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

This passage makes it clear that Christ died for sins and brought peace with God. According to Owen there are three possibilities: (*invite students to record these three*)

1. Christ died for some of the sins of all men;
2. Christ died for all the sins of all men;
3. Christ died for all of the sins of some men.

No one says that the first possibility is true. If Christ died for only some of the sins of all men, then all would be lost because of the sins that Christ had not died for.

The second statement is that “Christ died for all the sins of all men.” Undoubtedly, Christ would not have to do anything more to have died for all the sins of all men, but if this is true, then why are not all saved? The answer normally put forth is “Because of their unbelief; they will not believe.” But Scripture tells us that unbelief is categorized as a sin. If it is a sin, then according to the proposition that “Christ died for all of man’s sins,” Christ died for that sin. Why should that particular sin hinder them more than their other sins for which Christ died? Why isn’t that sin covered by Christ’s blood, as well? So we see that this statement cannot be true either. While obtaining salvation and giving salvation are not exactly the same thing, they must not be separated either.

It is the third statement that accurately reflects the whole of Biblical teaching: Christ died for all of the sins of some men. That is, he died for the unbelief of the elect so that God's punitive wrath is appeased toward them. This is saving grace.

When we are before the judgment seat of God, we will have nothing to boast about before our Creator. We cannot pat ourselves on the back for believing. Salvation is all of grace. We are not left to accomplish our own new birth and bring ourselves to faith, no, we hear the voice of the Shepherd calling, and we follow him, finding ourselves to be drawn irresistibly out of darkness into his marvelous light. This is Biblical theology at its best. This is the most tremendous, the most glorious, the most staggering thing in the universe and in the whole of history.

Questions or Comments?

So for application purposes, what does the atonement mean for us? What is the application of this doctrine? *[1) It's the basis for salvation and gives us assurance that our sins are forgiven; 2) It keeps us from the wretchedness of trying to save ourselves apart from God; 3) It builds up joy in our hearts; 4) God's love inspires us to love; 5) It cultivates humility in our lives; 6) We can learn from Christ's suffering for what is good and teaches us to live sacrificially for Him (I Peter 3).]*