

So, What Difference Does Christ's Atonement Make?

April 21, 2013

Illustration: Jörg Gerkner, a German soldier who escaped from a U.S. prisoner-of-war camp, lived in fear for years, thinking he was going to be sent back to prison for his crimes. Gerkner eventually confessed his crimes, and the U.S. released him from the charges and made him a United States citizen.

Most of us readily recognize that God could stack up a mountain of evidence to make a case for our condemnation. And yet, God makes the most astounding and emphatic of declarations through the apostle Paul:

"There is now, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" (Romans 8:1).

The "So What" of our belief that Jesus is God's perfect sacrifice, atoning for all our sin, is that, if you have given your life to Jesus Christ, all condemnation is gone!

In the first seven chapters of Romans Paul enumerates why **condemnation** should be expected:

- The rebellion of human beings

For even though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Romans 1:21)

- Ungodliness and unrighteousness

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. (Romans 1:18)

- Those who have sinned without the law

For there is no partiality with God. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law. (Romans 2:11-12a)

- Those who have sinned under the law

All who sin under the law will be judged by the law (Romans 2:12b)

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

For the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

- Our hopeless condition

O wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from this body of death? (Romans 7:24)

No Condemnation

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

When you are in Christ, you are secure. It's not your holding on that saves you, it's the fact that those nail-scarred hands are holding onto you.

Justification - a new standing before God

Because we continue to sin, we continue to ask for forgiveness, but we don't get saved all over again. Justification is eternal.

Justification not the same as a pardon. With a pardon, you still have a record. With justification there is no record against you at all.

Illustration - Rolls Royce: "There is no such account saying anything has ever been wrong."
Jesus: "There is no file on your sin."

Video-Shepherd University 2013 McMurrin Scholars Convocation: Dr. Gordon DeMerrit honoring Chris Korcsmaros: "Better than I deserve, sir."

What a great description of what we have in Christ. Instead of guilt, shame, fear, death, the hauntings of the past, we have salvation, we have justification, we have freedom from guilt and shame, we have confidence, we have hope, we have joy, we have God's grace; better than we deserve.

Death doesn't have the final say on my life.

For what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. (Romans 8:3)

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep."

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Jesus has done all of this great work in you, because he loves you!

Illustration - Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Alice: died from giving a consoling kiss to her crying and grieving son who had diphtheria.

You and I were dying eternally in our sins and transgressions when we cried out to God. God heard our cry, came and took us up in his arms, and smothered us with a kiss of grace—and it took his death to do it.

God gives us freedom from guilt, shame, and death.