

Preaching the Truth about Limited Atonement

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“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.” **John 10:11. 14 -15**

As we continue our studies on the Doctrines of Grace or if you wish in truth on the Doctrines of Salvation we come to the third letter of the acrostic TULIP, the “L” which stands for Limited Atonement. As an individual I prefer the term Definite Atonement or Particular Redemption because the phrase Limited Atonement does carry a negative connotation if not understood properly whereas Definite Atonement clearly sets forth the work of Jesus Christ in the true meaning of His accomplishment and His application to those whom He saves. Now I am not ashamed to use the term Limited Atonement, because I understand clearly that this is not speaking in terms of the extent of the atonement but in the actual INTENT of the atonement.

Now whether we use Limited Atonement, Definite Atonement or Particular Redemption we are speaking of the same thing.

When we speak about a limited or definite atonement we are speaking as to what Christ accomplished and how it is applied to all those whom He saves because it clearly sets forth the work of Christ upon the cross as an actual atonement that redeems and not a means of a potential atonement that could redeem. Or as we have said often from this pulpit, Christ’s atonement did not make salvation possible, but that Christ procured the salvation of His people, the Atonement of Christ is Definite and final in that He actually accomplished what He intended to do and thus, “...obtained (secured, acquired, procured) eternal redemption for us.” Hebrews 9:12

In considering the subject of Limited Atonement this morning, of all the five doctrines of Grace none is more hated, more opposed, more scorned, more despised and more abhorred in the hearts of men than the doctrine of limited atonement. The Arminian would sleep better and be less vicious if they would but understand that when we speak of Limited or Definite Atonement, the issue at hand is not the value of Christ’s blood or Christ’s death, but of the efficacy of the blood and death of Christ. We are not talking about the extent of the atonement but of the intent of the atonement. This is what I believe Charles Spurgeon was trying to convey when seeking to put the matter in perspective, listen to his words, quote; “We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ because we say that Christ has not made satisfaction for all men or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it; we don’t. The Arminian’s says, Christ died for all men. If you ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die to secure the salvation of all men? They say no, certainly not.

We ask them the next question: Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular and they answer, NO, because died that any man may be saved if...? Then there follows certain conditions of salvation. Now, who is that limits the death of Christ? Why you, you say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly to secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, no, my dear sir, it is you that do limit Christ's death. We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it, we will never renounce ours for the sake of it." Amen and AMEN! Years ago Dave Hunt wrote a book entitled, "What Manner of Love is This," as he tried to defend the Arminian cause, he tried to make a case for Spurgeon, that is; that Spurgeon was on his side, well Mr. Hunt, Spurgeon speaks from the grave and tells you to keep your atonement for he will never once renounce his definite atonement!

George Whitefield in writing to John Wesley concerning this doctrine of limited atonement says in a letter to him, *"This is one reason among many others why I admire the doctrine of election and am convinced that it should have a place in the gospel ministry. It has a natural tendency to rouse the soul out of its carnal security and therefore many carnal men cry against it: whereas universal redemption is a notion so sadly adapted to keep the soul in its lethargic and sleepy condition and therefore so many carnal men admire it and applaud it."* Amen and AMEN! Please understand that I do not hold to these truths because godly men like Spurgeon and Whitefield or other godly ministers, hold to these truths, but solely because the Bible teaches these truths. It does not matter what men say because man does not put the stamp of approval on the truth; the BIBLE DOES! I believe these glorious truths known as Doctrines of Grace because the Bible teaches them, they come out of the Bible and I hold to them not because this person or that person holds to it.

The essence of the gospel is what God has done for us, not what man has done, listen to Spurgeon once more, *"I have my own opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified unless we preach what is nowadays called Calvinism, it is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel and nothing else. I do not believe I can preach the gospel...unless we preach the Sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; not unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel unless we base it on the special particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which a saint can fall away after they are called and allows the children of God to be burned in the fire of damnation after having once believed in Jesus, such a gospel I abhor."* Amen and AMEN! What Spurgeon is simply saying is that salvation is of the Lord, that is; it is God who performs the work of salvation and therefore man is not going to boast in their freewill or in their good works knowing that God did the work from the beginning working actively as He chooses, He calls, He draws, He saves and He keeps. It is all His work, it is all His accomplishment, it is all His doing and it is all His operation and anything less in not the gospel. Therefore God gets all the glory and all the honor and no one will strut their feathers in heaven like a proud peacock. As one writer put's it, *"The Apostle Paul said that God saves in such a way that it leaves no room at all for men to congratulate themselves."* Therefore, we believe that the atoning work of Christ actually secured the salvation of all His Elect. We

also do not for a moment say that this is an easy doctrine to receive or understand and is usually the last one to accept when coming to the doctrines of grace.

I share this lengthy introduction because the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is the hinge that turns the whole doctrine of salvation. This is why the “L” is in the middle of TULIP, without the doctrine of limited atonement of definite atonement or if you wish particular redemption none of the other 4 points makes sense or come together. This is why I do not in any form or fashion believe in a 4-Point Calvinist, that is; those who foolishly believe in TUIP, instead of TULIP! If you leave out the “L” from TULIP they will not stand, it is inconsistent and even in the argument of pure logic it does not make any sense. All these 5 doctrines stand or fall together. In considering the subject of Limited Atonement I have 4 things for you this morning:

- I. **Limited Atonement: Defined.**
- II. **Limited Atonement: Defended.**
- III. **Limited Atonement: Designed**
- IV. **Limited Atonement: Definite.**

I. **Limited Atonement: Defined.**

A. What I mean by Limited Atonement.

1. By Limited Atonement I mean that Christ actually secured the salvation of His people.
2. By Limited Atonement I mean that Christ fully accomplished everything needed for our salvation.
3. By Limited Atonement I mean that all whom Christ died for, will finally be saved.
4. By Limited Atonement I mean that Christ did not die to just make salvation possible but to effectually procure the salvation of His people. Matt.1:21, *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.”* Hebrews 9:12, *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*
5. By Limited Atonement I mean that Christ’s redemption actually redeems and reconciles to God all the elect of God.

6. By Limited Atonement I mean that Christ did not die for all the sins of all people, but that He died for all the sins of HIS PEOPLE. . If Christ died for the sins of all people, everyone would be save, there would be no one in hell and I say this in the context that the atonement of Christ was effectual. When speaking on the atonement of Christ there is no language for the aspect of “Double Jeopardy” to which the Arminian hold to, that is; Christ paid for all the sins of all man and when one of those for whom Christ paid for dies in unbelief, that is not believing in Christ, that sinner now has to pay for their sins at death in the hell. Well this is double jeopardy, this the Arminian believes. Thus, they limit the atonement in its power to actually save, this is why they believe in a potential or possible salvation, whereas we believe in an actual salvation as Matthew 1:21 says, “*He will save His people from their sins.*” We are speaking again not about the intent of the atonement because if the intent of the atonement was for all then all would be saved. But we know that not everyone will be saved because in Matthew 25:31-33, “*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and **he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:** 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*”
- A. At the end of time there shall be two types of people represented, sheep and goats. In our day there are also two people represented, sheep and goats. Sheep are designated the save people of God and goats are designated those lost people who never took an interest in Christ.
- B. My simple question is, did Christ die for goats as much as He did for the sheep. I do not find one verse that speaks that Christ died for goats, but we find verses that clearly state that Christ died for the sheep:
1. John 10:11, “*I am the good shepherd: **the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.**”*
 2. John 10:15 & 16, “*As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and **I lay down my life for the sheep.** 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and **there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**”*
7. Therefore Christ died for His people, Matthew 1:21, “*And she shall*

bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Christ died for His people, that is; Christ died for the SHEEP! This is what I mean by Limited and Definite Atonement or if you wish Particular Redemption.

- B. What I DO NOT mean by Limited Atonement.
 - 1. I do not mean that the atonement is limited in its power.
 - 2. I do not mean that the atonement is limited in its intent.
 - 3. I do not mean that the atonement is limited in its nature.
 - 4. I do not mean that the atonement is limited in its design and scope.
- C. Now, before I continue to my next point let me say that everyone in one way or another limits the atonement of Christ. We only limit it in its **EXTENT**. Whereas the Arminian limits it in its power and in its ability to secure the salvation of any. The Arminian also limits its extent to a degree because they say that Christ died for **ALL** the sins of **ALL** men of **ALL** time, **EXCEPT** (As soon as you use the word except you have limited the atonement.) for the sins of **UNBELIEF**. Thus, Christ did not die for the sin of **UNBELIEF**, but according to John 16:9 unbelief is a sin. So we see that the atonement is limited in some sense by all.
SECONDLY:

II. Limited Atonement: Defended.

- A. What was the purpose of the atonement? It was to save sinners from their sins.
- B. In other words the atonement presupposed man’s condition in their sinful nature and depravity and we have seen this in our first message on total depravity.
- C. We have seen that sinners are spiritually dead, blind and deaf, if they have no ability to save themselves or since they are in bondage, how then will a sinner ever be saved. Not only this but we’ve also seen that since salvation of sinners is based upon the unconditional election of God and inasmuch as election is not salvation but unto salvation, how then is a sinner saved? A sinner is saved by Christ’s effectual work on the cross in that He fulfilled, satisfied and finished the work that the Father gave Him to do, He therefore fulfilled every aspect of our salvation. The Father chooses and the Son redeems, they go hand and

hand, this truth cannot be separated.

- D. Thus, Limited Atonement is that work of Christ in which He fulfilled the purposed of the Father in the salvation of His people. Not one thing was left undone in this blessed work. You see, the issues of sin in the breaking of the Law, death and even the Holy Character of God, that is; anything and everything that was needed to be done to effect the work of our salvation by our Triune God was fully and completely accomplished by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and everything fulfilled and finished so that Christ would effectually save all those whom the Father had given Him. In John 17:1 & 2 We see this in TIME PAST and then in John 6:37-40 we see this TIME PRESENT.
- E. Therefore, in defending limited atonement we must see it in the purpose or if you wish the efficacy of the atonement, in other words we must establish a relationship between the necessity of the atonement and its purpose. The purpose and efficacy arises from that which we have derived from the necessity of the atonement, i.e. God's character, God's law and man's condition.
1. The necessity of the atonement answers the question, what was the purpose of Christ dying?
 2. The purpose or efficacy of the atonement answers the question, what did Christ accomplish by His death?
 3. Now in considering the purpose and efficacy of the atonement we must without question consider Christ's mediatorial office as High Priest. As High Priest He was our mediator, as mediator He acted as our PRIEST. As a FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST and as the only mediator between God and man Christ accomplished for us His purpose and efficacy and as we saw last Sunday as we spoke on the last words of Christ on the Cross, "IT IS FINISHED," He fulfilled everything needed for the salvation of HIS PEOPLE when He CRIED OUT IT IS FINISHED!
 4. Christ therefore reconciled sinners to God by His work on the Cross. The question is asked, is everyone reconciled to God? No and please remember that reconciliation flows from and is based on propitiation. So did Christ's death propitiate God for every sin of every sinner? No, and again this is where we say that when we

speaking on limited atonement we are not talking about the extent of the atonement but on the intent of the atonement. The verse that won me over to the doctrine of particular redemption is in 2 Cor.5:19 *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing **their** trespasses unto **them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* I had to answer in my heart not emotionally or with feelings that is; subjectively, but objectively and realized the essence of this text. Did God reconcile the whole world to Christ if He did then not one sin can be imputed to any sinner, because the atonement is effectually then I had to realize that He died for a people not all people, but all whom the Father had given Him, to them and them alone did Christ reconcile them to God not imputing their trespasses unto them because they were imputed to Christ on the cross and thus, Christ righteousness was imputed to as verse 21 of same chapter says, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

5. So if Christ died for all the sins of all man as the Arminian's teach, then why are there sinners in hell? Their answer is unbelief, but if these same Arminian say that Christ didn't die for the sin of unbelief, why are they in hell? The Arminian then limits the atonement in its power, because they say Christ died for all, but all are not saved.
 - a. For example if Christ's work of propitiation is actual as the word of God teaches in Romans 3:24 & 25, *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath **set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”* Is therefore the whole world propitiated before God? Of course, no, thus the Arminian limits the power of the atonement, because I believe Christ effectually propitiated the Father and thus all those whom the Father gave to the Son were and are PROPITIATED, thus we only limit the atonement in its EXTENT not its INTENT!
 - b. We could go down with every word used regarding the atonement, like sacrifice, reconciled, expiate, redeemed, justified and so forth and ask the same question as we did on propitiation and the results are the same.
 - c. Therefore, Christ came to die on the cross not to make salvation possible or make us savable, no He came to

accomplished all that the Father gave Him to do and thus the ATONEMENT is final and complete, yea EFFECTUAL because every lost sheep of God will finally be SAVED, because Christ came to die for the sins of HIS PEOPLE Matthew 1:21; HIS SHEEP John 10:11 & 15: HIS CHURCH Acts 20:28; HIS FRIENDS John15:13 and His BRIDE Eph.5:25.

- d. I have asked Arminians, basically you are telling me that Christ died for the whole world, but then He would not pray for the whole world, I find this being very inconsistent. John 17:8 & 9, “*For I have given unto them the words which **thou gavest me**; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: **I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me**; for they are thine.*” Thus, I believe in PARTICULAR REDEEMTION! Thirdly:

III. Limited Atonement: Designed

- A. By the word designed I basically mean, intended, or if you wish; the intent of the atonement.
- B. The atonement of Christ was sufficient, satisfying, and final when Christ cried out, “*It is finished,*” from the cross.
- C. The atonement was sufficient and efficient in that Christ totally satisfied all the holy demands of God in the punishment of the sins of His people.
- D. Christ did not leave anything undone as He accomplished a full and complete redemption and thus secured the salvation of all those for whom He died.
- E. Christ sacrifice was vicarious, that is; it was a substitutionary work as He died in place of sinners.
 - 1. Jesus Christ gave Himself for His people.
 - 2. He died in our place.
 - 3. He died in our stead.
 - 4. He took upon Himself our penalty.
 - 5. He suffered for our sins.
 - 6. He died in our behalf.

F. Christ gave Himself for His Sheep.

1. John 10:11 again says, *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."*
2. Gal.1:4, *"Who **gave himself for our sins**, that **he might deliver us** from this present evil world, **according to the will of God and our Father**."*
3. Notice all the following verses have the words: **FOR US**: This indicates Christ died for all those whom He saves, that is, this phrase "for us" speaks of a particular people and not the whole world, but the lost sheep of the whole world.
 - a. Roman 5:8, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us**."*
 - b. 1 Cor.5:7, *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us**."*
 - c. 2 Cor.5:21, *"For he hath made him **to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*
 - d. Gal.3:13, *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made **a curse for us**: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*
 - e. Eph.5:2, *"And walk in love, as Christ also **hath loved us**, and **hath given himself for us** an offering and **a sacrifice to God** for a sweet-smelling savour."*
 - f. 1 Thess. 5:9 & 10, *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 **Who died for us**, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."*
 - g. Titus 2:14, *"Who **gave himself for us**, that **he might redeem us** from all iniquity, and **purify unto himself a peculiar people**, zealous of good works."*
 - h. Heb.6:20, *"Whither the forerunner **is for us entered**, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."*
 - i. Heb.9:12, *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained eternal redemption for us**."*
 - j. Heb.9:24, *"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, **now to***

appear in the presence of God for us.

- k. Heb.10:20, “By a new and living way, which **he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.**”
 - l. 1 Peter 2:21, “For even hereunto were ye called: **because Christ also suffered for us**, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”
 - m. 1 Peter 4:1, “Forasmuch then as **Christ hath suffered for us** in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.”
 - n. 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, **because he laid down his life for us**: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”
4. Who are the “FOR US PARTICULAR PEOPLE?” I’ll let the Apostle John answer that question in Rev.5:9, “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God** by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”
5. I don’t have the time to go through all the words that are misinterpreted and misunderstood in studying the atonement. The words are world, all, every and whole. The word all is used interchangeably in its meaning, it sometimes means all without exception meaning everyone and sometimes it mean all without distinction meaning a certain group of people and not every single individual. Sometimes the word all is inclusively meaning everyone and sometimes exclusively meaning a certain group of people and not everyone. For example look at the words of Matthew 3:4 & 5, the word all is used exclusively and not inclusively, because not every single individual in Jerusalem or in Judea were baptized. The word all only includes those who were baptized. In Romans 3:23 the word all there is used inclusively and without exception, meaning everyone born into this world, so you see that these must be interpreted within their context. The word world has at least 7 different meanings, it does not always mean every single individual in the world. When people try to use these words and use them with the same basic meaning in every text you will find that it will not fit.
6. This helps us to qualify the words world and all, how that at times these words can be used without exception which includes all that

is, the whole or without distinction a group of people in the whole world, that is; the sheep of the whole world, the **for us** of the Apostle Paul, the **for us** of the Apostle Peter and the **for us** of the Apostle John, out of every kindred, every tongue, every people and out of every nation, Christ has REDEEMED US to GOD! Fourthly and lastly:

IV. Limited Atonement: Definite.

- A. The Atonement was final and complete and nothing was left undone, so that, when Christ said IT IS FINISHED, the word that the Father gave Him to do was completed and accomplished.
- B. The Atonement was final in that it will never be repeated. Christ died once and for all. Hebrews 10:10 & 12, “*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of **Jesus Christ once for all**. 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins **for ever, sat down on the right hand of God**.” 1 Peter 3:18, “**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins**, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”*
- C. The Atonement was final in that our sins were paid in full, Col.2:13 & 14 “*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, **having forgiven you all trespasses**; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and **took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross**.”*
- D. The Atonement was SATISFYING: Christ satisfied all the Holy demands of God the Father, Isa.53:11, “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, **and shall be satisfied**: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant **justify many**; for **he shall bear their iniquities**.”*
 - 1. The fact that God raised Christ from the dead shows clearly that He was satisfied, Romans 4:24 & 25, “*But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, **if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead**; 25 Who was **delivered for our offences**, and **was raised again for our justification**.”*
 - 2. If God the Father had not been satisfied Christ would have been left in the grave, but God was satisfied and so now He is the just and justifier for all those who believe in Jesus, Romans 3:25 & 25.
- E. The Atonement was SUFFICIENT and EFFICIENT: God was effectually satisfied regarding all the demands for the punishment

of sin.

- F. The atonement was complete as Christ fully accomplished a full redemption for His people and thus secures the salvation of those for whom He died.
- G. Christ died effectually for HIS SHEEP, for HIS PEOPLE, FOR HIS CHURCH. Christ accomplished a complete and finished word so as not to make salvation possible, but to effectually PROCURE, obtain, acquire and secure the SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE: Christ had purposed in coming and He accomplished that purpose: *“For He shall save HIS people from their sins.”*
- H. Therefore we believe in a salvation that ACTUALLY SAVES, not a potential or possible salvation but an ACTUAL SALVATION:
 - 1. We believe in a REDEMPTION that REDEEMS!
 - 2. We believe in an ATONEMENT that ATONES!
 - 3. We believe in a RECONCILIATION that RECONCILES!
 - 4. We believe in a JUSTIFICATION that JUSTIFIES!
 - 5. We believe in a PROPITIATION that PROPITIATES!
 - 6. We believe in a SACRIFICE that EXPITIATES that is COVERS OUR GUILT and SINS!
 - 7. We believe in a RANSOM that DELIVERS!
 - 8. We believe in a PAYMENT that PAYS OUR SINS!
 - 9. We believe in a SUBSTITUTION that is VICARIOUS!
 - 10. We believe in a FINISHED WORK THAT IS TOTALLY COMPLETE!
- I. Therefore, we believe that CHRIST’S ATONEMENT is
 - 1. DEFINITE:
 - 2. PARTICULAR:
 - 3. LIMITED:

Let’s PRAY: