

The Atonement

The atonement of Christ is the single event in all of the existence of this earth, and all other worlds combined, which gives meaning, purpose, and hope to our existence. As such, there is no other topic in the gospel which can exceed the atonement in importance. In fact, the good news of the gospel is that Christ atoned for our sins.

Christ's atonement is of intimate importance to every human being on every day of our existence. We cannot live without committing sin, and Christ's atonement is the only means whereby we can be freed from sin. We need to understand that the atonement was not one great act in a vacuum, but an understanding and assumption of every pain, suffering, adverse circumstance and sin experienced by every individual in all of God's creations. Anything less than that would not suffice. How could Christ understand and accept the burden of my failure to magnify a calling if he did not understand the background in which I committed that act of omission? We can never claim that Christ is an unfair judge due to lack of understanding because he has experienced everything that each of us has experienced. How did he achieve that in the brief period between Gethsemane and Golgotha? It is beyond human comprehension. It is infinite. We cannot understand the exact mechanics of the atonement, but it is imperative that we understand its effect in our lives.

As far as judgment is concerned, the atonement is the factor which allows God to be a just and a fair God, notwithstanding the variety of our experiences. Christ, having experienced and understood every facet of our existence, completed the atonement which is sufficient for everyone. No act of ours, short of a rejection of the atonement itself, can put us beyond the reach of that atonement. When we arrive at our eternal reward we cannot say that someone else achieved more because of more favorable circumstances, because we all arrive at our destinations by the same means – the atonement of Christ.

I frequently am beset with feelings of doubt, unworthiness, and depression. Some of these come from my own choices and actions, others are aided by the actions of others. But I always recognize that ceasing to try doesn't make sense, because the atonement of Christ covers everything I have done. True faith in Christ, then, includes going forward when I cannot see a path. Faith in Christ includes believing that he is completely familiar with me, my personality, strengths, and weaknesses, and he felt it was worth performing the atonement in my behalf, given all the forgoing.

Christ's atonement gives me hope. I know that he loves me, and cares personally about me. He does not expect me in any way to perfect myself, he expects me to turn to him for perfection. Therefore, my greatest asset is humility; my greatest liability, pride. I cannot give up, because Christ has already paid the price for me. I cannot lose hope, because he has not. Indeed, he is the Rock whereon if I build I *cannot* fall.