**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Ekklesia Sermon Series

*“I And The Father Are One” John 10:30*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

March 15th In the Year of Our Lord 2020

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

Once the Reformation took place, there were many separate and distinct theological schools of thought formed. There was a shift in authority as to who could read and interpret the Bible. With the lid blown-off, anyone could make their own biblical determinations. The breaking away from the State-Church and its counsels that interpreted the Bible through the centuries created a theological free-for-all. Remember the counsels of Nicaea, Ephesus, Constantinople and Chalcedon?

There was still a partnership between the religious leaders and the local political systems, thus, creating more local formal structures that became within geographical political-religious boundaries, rules by which to live and govern. These were influenced by the leaders of the Reformation. Many people are familiar with the names of Martin Luther and John Calvin of the early 1500’s on the continent of Europe, and, from the British Isles, there came John and Charles Wesley in the 1700’s. Prior to these were those that “primed the pump”, you might say, in preparing the way for full-blown Reformation, taking place in the first half of the 16th century (1500-1550). Particularly men like Wycliff, (England) who translated the biblical text into his native English (1382). And then came Jan Huss, who continued Wycliff’s teachings on the continent in Europe who was a Czech (Bohemia) theologian. He was burned at the stake in 1415.

**Arnoldist**

Arnold of Brescia (1090-1155)

**Waldensian**

Peter Waldo (1140-1205)

**Lollard**

John Wycliffe (1320-1384)

**Hussite**

John Hus (1369-1415)

Jerome of Prague (1379-1416)

Petr Chelčický (1390-1460)

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498)

Tomáš Štítný ze Štítného (1333-1409)

The reason these men were a mortal political threat to the State-Church is that they put the Word of God into the hands of the masses. This is what blew the lid off the boiling pot of unrest. The Reformers worked to translate the Bible into their native language. Once the biblical text was read, people made their own determinations. This created ~~a~~ one of the biggest political and theological/religious swings in history. The most common subjects up for determination and debate were, but not limited to:

Authority of the State-Church and the Bible

Infant Baptism

Transubstantiation (Lord’s Supper)

Priest of the Believer (no priesthood needs to access God)

Water-Baptism necessary for salvation

Separation of power of state and church

Selling of indulgences (Purgatory)

Forgiveness of sin

Merit-based salvation (Faith Alone)

Since the onset of the Reformation, the above list has been expanded into many discussions encompassing interpretations of the Bible. These range from the Genesis account being six days of creation with the seventh being a day of rest, literally seven twenty-four-hour periods, to End Times hardline teaching in the book of Revelation. Everything between Genesis and Revelation has been ‘gone to war over’ since the Reformation. Calvin executed people in Geneva, and the English Crown, depending who was on the throne, executed thousands over religious issues, be it, under Roman Catholic or Protestant rulers.

It is understandable that by the time of the formation of the American States with its Declaration of Independence (1776), Constitution (1789) and Bill of Rights with Ten Amendments ratified by 1791, the people in the New World had enough religious wars. They had enough of religious states (Theocracies). Yes, it was the age of Reason/Enlightenment. The religious-killing of hundreds of thousands, over the centuries, just did not seem reasonable any longer. American struck a balance, particularly with the First Amendment:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

Even with this balance, there have been numerous religious-cultural wars fought for over two hundred and twenty-five years. In our present time, there seems to be no end to those who seek religious turf and dominion over others. True, today, in America no authority can arrest, execute or take property from another, because they do not go to the same church, thus, for not holding to the same interpretation of the Bible. Except, the religion of the H.A.S. community (Humanist, Atheist, Secularist) who do use state power against people who refuse to bake a wedding cake for a homosexual wedding.

For the common person, we are more subtle in our ways. We simply stop talking to someone, go to another church or stop going to church. It is true, churches, synagogues or places of worship, in America, still have the option to separate themselves from people or members whose lifestyle is a contradiction to their group. But then again, what is faith? What definitions are used to define people of faith? Christian, Judaism or Muslim and the list continues.

In reality, the freedoms we enjoy here in America give all adults a free-will choice regarding beliefs. I see this consistent with the Bible. This is what God has done. He gave Adam a choice, detailed in Genesis 2:17. So, we all have religious choices, except?

Not to labor the point, but the state-religion of H.A.S, which encompasses the religion Darwinian Evolution, is the only view allowed to be taught in public schools. There cannot even be a textbook peer-review critique of evolution. The sad truth is, in the scientific community, Darwinian Evolution has been disproved as a theory regarding the origins of life. Agreed, not all scientists surrender to the overwhelming evidence against evolution. Only a few have.

See book list:

*Signature in the Cell*, *Darwin’s Doubt* and soon to be released *The Return of the ~~to~~ God Hypotheses* all by Dr. Stephen Myer. Prior to his publications, see Dr. Michael Behe’s, *Darwin’s Black Box* and Law Professor Phillip Johnson’s *Darwin on Trial*.

These men, scientists and a lawyer, represent a critique of Darwinian Evolution. However, the secular world, with their judges on the bench, will not even consider their scientific hard evidence. This is seen in cases like the Dover school district where the judge refused to acknowledge the scientific evidence proving Darwinian Evolution is false regarding an explanation for the origins of life.

So, we cannot escape religious persecution in America at the hands of those who call for no state-religion and, in reality, no religious culture at all, except for theirs (that is the H.A.S. community and their religion of Evolution). This can be said because Evolution has been scientifically proven false, but they hold to a theory. Since it is not a science, it is a belief system, and therefore, a religion.

**Peer review in the Church**

We, in the Church, should not be afraid of peer-review. When I went to seminary (1991 – 1994), I got my whole religious life ‘peer’ reviewed. I should say ‘theologically’ reviewed. Actually, the professors were not my peers. As a student, they were senior theologians. Now, my classmates were my peers, and we had great peer-discussions. Among the student group, the theological teaching, or lack thereof, came to be exposed under the seminary system. But, hey, that is why I went to seminary. I did not go there just to confirm what I already believed and thought I knew. I went there to learn and spiritually grow.

I remember the first day in the Biblical Backgrounds course. The Professor stated we did not have the Ten Commandments in the Smithsonian. Student’s hands raised for clarification. You can hear in their questioning a somewhat interrogative-tone of concern. This was at a time when Baptist seminaries were in a raging battle over Bible inerrancy. The professor was a tenured A-class biblical scholar and a conservative. He was there to teach the truth and not fairy tales. I forget his exact response. This is what I remember from his critique of the question. He explained that the Bible details the account of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and that was true. However, the actual stone tablets had been lost to the ravages of history. We have the biblical account that speaks to the reality of their production and existence that we accept as 100% truth.

So, from this early exchange, and, by the way, I never believed the Ten Commandment tablets were held in the Smithsonian, I could see that there were sincere beliefs held that were not substantiated through the Bible nor were they ever intended to be.

In growing up, there were many teachings I had received by well-intended people that were just inconsistent with the Bible. Most of these false-teachings, even though they were not intended to be inaccurate, were due to reading the Bible “out of” or not considering the “full” textual context.

**Example:**

Last week, I read Ephesians 2:8, comparing it to Philippians 2:12,13.

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

If we just read verse 12 by itself, we could see how a person might have to earn their salvation. However, by reading the very next verse, we see that “it is God who is at work” in a person. It is not you earning your salvation; it is God at work in a saved person. This is the process of sanctification that happens throughout a Believer’s life. The Bible does not contradict itself. We have the biblical witness of Ephesians 2:8, 9 that cannot be clearer, that works cannot produce salvation.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

These are not the only verses detailing that faith saves apart from works. We stand on Hebrews 11:1ff where there is the “Great Hall of Faith” starting with Abel, where all named are made righteous by their faith. These passages are numerous like Romans 4.

One of the most fundamental understandings in reading the Bible is that the Bible does not contradict itself. People can be contradictory within themselves. It is easy for a person to become conflicted in their views. On the one hand, they have parents or respected persons who provide a biblical teaching to them that they carry with them for years, perhaps all their life. Then one day they are challenged with more information about the Bible that confronts their long-held beliefs. They can hold to their traditional beliefs because that makes them feel comfortable. Many of these misunderstandings have nothing to do with salvation. It is hard to admit we were inaccurate about the Bible. However, I pray that we all allow for growth in receiving a fuller truth from God’s Word. This is what happened to me in seminary, time and time again.

My mother told me when I was a boy that God said people would not live more than 120 years after the Great Flood. She showed me the passage in the Bible in Genesis 6:3. That was good enough for me. That is what I believed. Obviously, I did not read more of the Bible, and my mother, as well intended as she was, did not read too much more of Genesis concerning people’s life spans.

Obviously, from reading a few more chapters in Genesis, we see that people do live longer than 120 years after the Great Flood. In a fuller biblical context, we see that from the time God approached Noah to the time of the flood event took into account 120 years. What biblical evidence do we have?

We read in 1 Peter 3:20 that God waited patiently before He flooded the earth in judgement over people’s evil lives. Genesis 5:32 gives a statement of fact that Noah was 500 years old when he had Shem, Ham and Japheth. Then the next verses are Genesis 6:1-7 that gives the concern God has for the evil people in the creation. From that point, there isn’t any time frame given to account for how long God waited to talk to Noah chronicled in verse 8. Peter 3:20 states that God was patient. Again, there wasn’t any timeframe given. Genesis 6:10 states for the second time that Noah “became” the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This context lends to the fact that Noah’s sons were born sometime “after” God first talked to Noah. Genesis 7:6,11 tells us Noah was 600 years old when the flood came.

There isn’t any doubt that at least one-hundred years passed from the time Noah fathered three sons to the time of the flood. Due to the text detailing twice Noah’s fatherhood, there seems to be twenty years short of 120. However, this text does not say that at the time of their births is the same time God “first” recognized/came to Noah. From these passages, we see that a time of 120 years can be counted. Besides, the evidence for people living longer than 120 years after the flood is irrefutable. Therefore, Genesis 6:3 does not establish 120 life-span after the flood. The more weighted application of Genesis 6:3 is referring to God setting a 120-year time until He brought judgement and flooded the earth.

I had sympathy for my mother’s good intention, but biblical textual facts are just that, biblical textual facts.

**Genesis 5:30-6:3**

30 Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

31 So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

32 Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**Genesis 6:1** Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless, his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

The Genesis text then accounts that mankind has turned evil due to the Nephilim being on the earth. We do not have enough time to discuss the Nephilim. Sticking to the 120 years issue, we see that Abraham in Genesis 25:7 lived to be 175 years old. In addition:

Genesis 35:28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.

Genesis 47:28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.

Genesis 11:11-32

11 and Shem (Noah’s son) lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

12 Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah;

13 and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

14 Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber;

15 and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

16 Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg;

17 and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

18 Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu;

19 and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug;

21 and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

22 Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor;

23 and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah;

25 and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

26 Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

27 Now these are *the records of* the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.

28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

29 Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

30 Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

32 The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

**Genesis 6:4-6**

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

5 Then the LORD saw (Hebrew “raah”) that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Strong’s 07200>** רָאָה *raah* )906b( **Meaning:** *to see*

6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

There are parts of the Bible that we do not understand. For example, there are historical dating issues. These are because of our lack of understanding of the different calendar systems applied. An example is in how days and nights were counted as applied to the number of days Jesus was in the tomb or was He crucified on or before the Passover? These are numerous and, with earnest study in language, history, and culture contexts, there comes an explanation.

**The correct way to read the Bible** is to prepare through prayer first. We must be in the right spiritual condition. We need to have sought forgiveness from God and our neighbor. A heart that is harboring hard feelings is challenged to correctly receive truth from God’s Word. In the reality the fallen human conditions demand, we are in constant thought with God. We are called to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Here are some scriptural guidelines for prayer.

**Luke 18:1** Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

**Ephesians 6:18** With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

**Romans 12:12** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

**Colossians 4:2** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

**1 Chronicles 16:11** Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.

**Matthew 7:7** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

**Luke 21:36** "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**1 Timothy 2:8** Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

**Here is another misconception that has been taught over the years. “God cannot look upon sin.”**

This is typically taught in association with Jesus’s words from the Cross recorded in Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Many of us know that this is a direct quote from Psalm 22:1. First, let us look at where the verse is people referenced to support God’s refusal or inability to look upon sin.

**Habakkuk 1:13** (NAS)

*Your* eyes are too pure to approve (raah) evil,

And You cannot look (nabat) on wickedness *with favor.*

Why do You look (nabat) *with favor* On those who deal treacherously**?**

Why are You silent when the wicked [Babylon] swallow up

Those more righteous [Jews] than they?

**Habakkuk 1:13 (KJV)**

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold (raah) evil,

and canst not look on iniquity:

wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously,

and holdest thy tongue

when the wicked devoureth the man

that is more righteous than he**?**

**Strong’s <05027>** נָבַט *nabat* )613c(

**Meaning:** *to look* **Origin:** a prim. root

**Usage:** beheld(1), behold(1), beholds(2), consider(2), depend(1), depended(1), gaze(1), gazed(1), look(34), look down(2), looked(11), looks(4), observe(1), observed(1), pay attention(1), regard(2), see(3).

Habakkuk is writing about the Babylonian invasion and conquest of Judah in about 600 B.C. Babylon is the evil referenced that God allows to invade Judah. Most of the Jews were living evil lives themselves, at that time, and God allowed them to be taken into captivity and the Temple destroyed.

The prophet Habakkuk is writing to describe his view of God, and in turn, represents the limited understanding fallen man has of God. In the context of the setting, Habakkuk is the one who states that God cannot look upon, approve, behold evil. However, the next sentence (in the NAS) is a question. The KJV translates one sentence by the use of a colon for the verse. The prophet obviously sees God looking upon evil and wonders why God is not dealing with them. The answer is straightforward. God sees the evil of the Jews and allows evil of the Babylonians to be used as judgment upon Judah.

Once again, people only read half the verse or half the paragraph.

Is there a verse to specifically state that God looks upon evil? Yes. Genesis 6:4-6

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

5 Then the LORD saw (Hebrew “raah”) that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Strong’s 07200>** רָאָה *raah* )906b( **Meaning:** *to see*

6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

**Reading Psalm 22 leaves no doubt that Jesus is quoting the first line to draw attention to the whole Psalm. The details of the crucifixion are undeniable.**

**Psalm 22**

For the choir director; upon Aijeleth Hashshahar. A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

(Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)

2 O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;

And by night, but I have no rest.

3 Yet You are holy,

O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

4 In You our fathers trusted;

They trusted and You delivered them.

5 To You they cried out and were delivered;

In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,

A reproach of men and despised by the people.

7 All who see me sneer at me;

They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,

8 "Commit yourself to the LORD;

let Him deliver him;

Let Him rescue him,

because He delights in him."

**Matthew 27:39** And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads

**Mark 15:29** Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

**Luke 23:35** And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."

9 Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;

You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts.

10 Upon You I was cast from birth;

You have been my God from my mother's womb.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near;

For there is none to help.

12 Many bulls have surrounded me;

Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

13 They open wide their mouth at me,

As a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,

And all my bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,

And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;

And You lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded me;

A band of evildoers has encompassed me;

They pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones.

They look, they stare at me;

18 They divide my garments among them,

And for my clothing they cast lots.

**Mat 27:35** And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

**Luke 23:33** When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

**John 19:23** Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.

**Mark 15:24** And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take.

**John 19:37** And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

19 **But** You, O LORD, be not far off;

O You my help, hasten to my assistance.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword,

My only life from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth;

From the horns of the wild oxen **You answer me.**

22 I will tell of Your name to my brethren;

In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

**Hebrews 2:11-12** (NAU)

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."

**Matthew 28:10** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him;

All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,

And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.

24 **For He has not**

**despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;**

**Nor has He hidden His face from him;**

**But when he cried to Him for help,**

**He heard.**

**Hebrews 5:7-10**

7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death,

and He was heard because of His piety.

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

9 And having been made perfect,

He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

25 From You comes my praise in the great assembly;

I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.

26 The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;

Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.

Let your heart live forever!

**John 6:51** "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,

And all the families of the nations will worship before You.

**Revelations 15:4** "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S

And He rules over the nations.

**Matthew 6:13** And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

29 All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,

All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,

Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

**Phi 2:10** so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

30 Posterity will serve Him;

It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation.

**Psalm 23:1** A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

The teaching that God abandoned Jesus on the Cross is not supported in Scripture. This stems from man’s philosophy with a reach to use Habakkuk 1:13. We have already reviewed the correct context of this verse and found it lacking to support that God could not look upon sin or that He abandoned Jesus for a second in order for Jesus to pay the price for our sins. The whole purpose of the incarnation was to live with sin, be in the presence of sin and defeat sin. This is our model. The Word became flesh to be with us (John 1:14).

We must not forget the Trinity. God does not abandon himself on the Cross. Jesus said that He and the Father are one.

**John 10:30** "I and the Father are one."

**Jn. 17:11** "I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We *are*.

**John 17:21** (NAU) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, arein Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

AMEN