

Guilt is an emotion we will all be familiar with, but what are we to do with it? Is it something good which we should listen to? Or is it something bad, a problem which should just be ignored? Or is it a problem which needs to be dealt with, and if so, how should we deal with our guilt?

This last question is the question facing the Israelites in our bible passage for today, where they are not only encouraged to realise their guilt before the Holy God, but also to rejoice in the provision he makes for forgiveness of that guilt... the guilt offering.

### **1. Our problem: We stand guilty before the holy God**

We may face the temptation to ignore or play down our guilt, or perhaps try to deal with it ourselves, but the first thing God teaches us in this passage, is that we stand guilty before Him because of the way disregard Him, His commands and those made in His image.

This is the first thing, but thankfully it doesn't end there...

### **2. Our response: When we can, we are to do all we can, to repair any damage**

The second thing to realise is that our behaviour not only damages our relationship with God, but also with those whom we sin against. And whilst we cannot 'earn' our forgiveness from God, we are encouraged to do all we can to repair the relationship with our neighbour whom we have wronged, by paying back what we took from them.

But we are also to give back more! This is a helpful picture of real repentance... where we do not only show remorse, but demonstrate a change in behaviour... a change from wanting to take from others, to wanting to be generous towards others (Zacchaeus is a great example of this in Luke 19:8-9).

But when it comes to our guilt being forgiven by God... only the guilt offering will do...

### **3. God's solution: Receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ... THE guilt offering**

It is clear from Leviticus 5:16,18 and 6:7 that forgiveness is guaranteed if a guilt offering is sacrificed. Therefore, if we want our guilt before God to be forgiven, then we need a guilt offering too.

But whilst in Leviticus this was to be a male ram without defect, the prophet Isaiah helps us understand that the ultimate, perfect, once for all time, guilt offering is Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53v10). Only through trusting in Jesus' death can we receive complete forgiveness by God.