

The “A” Word

THE VAST AND RICH THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT

SUNDAYS IN LENT

KARL BARTH

- ▶ May 10, 1886 – December 10, 1968
- ▶ Swiss Reformed Theologian
- ▶ Best known for his commentary: *The Epistle to the Romans* and author of a multi-volume, unfinished work: *Church Dogmatics*
- ▶ “Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.”
- ▶ “Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the way.”
- ▶ “Faith in God's revelation has nothing to do with an ideology which glorifies the status quo.”



And that's why it will likely have to remain like that for us, ...

ANSELM AND BEYOND

- ▶ Where early Church focused on incarnation and defeat of evil (Christus Victor), Anselm (Monk and Abp of Canterbury, c.1033-1109) introduces *satisfaction* for sin / sins into model for atonement.
- ▶ While Anselm influence on atonement theology was “ambiguous at best,” later theologians turned crucifixion into a sin-offering.
- ▶ “All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world....”

ALONG COMES BARTH

- ▶ Where early Church focused on incarnation and defeat of evil (Christus Victor), Anselm (Monk and Abp of Canterbury, 1033-1109) introduces satisfaction for sin / sin-offering model for atonement.
- ▶ While Anselm influence was "the best," later theologians, influenced by him, turned crucifixion into a sin-offering.
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BARTH ON ATONEMENT

- ▶ Atonement is the center of theology because it touches on every facet of theological discourse
- ▶ Like early Church, “Barth’s atonement” is grounded in creation
- ▶ Triune God intended to share the love and unity between Father, Son and Holy Spirit from before creation with humanity
- ▶ In Jesus Christ, God has elected fellowship and participation with humanity
- ▶ Jesus the Christ is the only mediator between humanity and God and his obedience in life and death is able to undo the disobedience of sinful humanity

RECONCILING LOVE OF GOD

- ▶ The Jesus who saves us now must be the same Jesus who lived, died, and rose from the dead in first-century Palestine. Jesus is still alive and the Holy Spirit is given to the Church, what Jesus did then and there is an on-going reality. Atonement is a revelation of God's love.
- ▶ The crucifixion, resurrection and presence of Holy Spirit (Pentecost) are inseparably related.
- ▶ The doctrine of atonement does not end on the Cross nor does it bring a change in God – moving God from wrath or love or from judgment to forgiveness
- ▶ For Barth, our participation in God's love is the important part and reconciling. In the end, God might not need reconciliation but we need reconciliation with God.

A CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSION

- ▶ “God does not love us if we change, God loves us so that we can change.” ~ Richard Rohr
- ▶ Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Bishop Thomas Breidenthal & the Reverend Jane Gerdson at Bar Theology at Molly Malone’s in November 2013





WHAT'S YOUR TAKE-AWAY

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?

COMING UP

APRIL 16TH TO 30TH –

**CHRISTIAN VOCATION:
COMMUNITY, PRAYER,
AND SERVICE**

MAY 7TH TO 21ST

**THE CHURCH TEACHING
SERIES: A REPRISE**