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## THE ATONEMENT

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #4

The Motive Force of the Atonement

Reading: Romans 5:1-11

My beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As our title would suggest, b&s, arising out of a correct understanding of any doctrine, there arises a manner of life. They go hand and glove together, you cannot separate one from the other, and especially is that true, of the Atonement. If we have that in perspective we will have our lives in perspective, and as an introduction to our final talk about the motive force and how the apostles saw that, I would just like to show you a few scriptures in relation to the matter that I presented in my last talk, that in coming to 'die for others' our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, was involved and that He was involved because of others.

And I want to show you how consistent that is in the scripture, that it might be a springboard for our motive force that should cause us to do likewise. Go and do likewise!

Now we sang, b&s, in our opening hymn the words of Zechariah 9, I would like you to just have a look at this with me; we sang this together, and in this prophecy of Zechariah 9, he prophesied of the day when our Lord Jesus Christ would ride that ass's colt into Jerusalem. I want you to just notice what it says about that, so in Zechariah 9 and verse 9, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass'. Now if you've got a marginal alternative, b&s, for 'having salvation', you will notice it says in the margin, saving Himself, saving Himself. And that's exactly what He did, but now comes the question, and as I say, why did He do that? That's the point, why did He do it? Does Zechariah give us a clue, b&s? Have a look at verse 11, 'As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners (plural) out of the pit wherein is no water'. So what was He doing in saving Himself? He was shedding the blood of that covenant by which His prisoners would all be released from the pit of corruption. So there it is, to save Himself, was to release them, and they could not be released until He saved Himself. And it's all in there, b&s, like that.

Let me show you another passage; in the 17th chapter of John's gospel, a wonderful expression, and you'll know when you hear these expressions, you will see the application of that principle of representation that we were talking about. So in John chapter 17 we read these lovely words of our Lord Jesus Christ as He prayed to His Father on behalf of His brethren. So He says in verse 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world (now listen b&s) And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth'. See the point of that? For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified, and so said the apostle quoting the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, 'He tasted death for every man; for He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One', see the point? Can't you see the point of that? I sanctify Myself that they might be sanctified, so He was living a life of holiness, b&s, not to commend #1 to God, but that all others might be saved, and that was the motive force that took Him to the cross, wasn't it? Isn't that why He went there? And so the apostle says, 'He's not ashamed to call them brethren, because both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One', isn't that wonderful? See the point of that?

Now, b&s, that mighty force that took Him to the cross, to die on behalf of others and in so doing to save Himself in the process, that's the motive force that drives us on. Now listen to the parable of our Lord, you all know it, a brother drew this to my attention over a cup of coffee, (I wouldn't have thought of telling you this, but he drew my attention to it). He said, 'John, here's your principle', and it is. We're all there at the right hand of our Lord at the judgment seat (hope and pray that we'll all be on the right hand) and He will say to us, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for ye visited Me when I was sick, ye clothed Me when I was naked, ye came to Me in prison'. And they will say to Him, (the righteous will say), 'Lord, when did we ever do that? 'Forasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me'. Isn't that the principle of the Atonement? You see, the righteous are not there to say and give Him a list of what they did to sanctify themselves, they were saved by what they were doing for others, isn't that the Atonement? of course, it is! That's exactly what it's all about! And they don't even know because they didn't do it with a conscious effort, that they might have credit in God's eyes; they did it, b&s, by a spontaneous reaction, because that's what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for them! Now if that is not the essence of the Atonement, I'm a thorough-going heretic! That to me is the absolute essence of our doctrine! that's the motive force that springs out of it!

Now we come to Romans chapter 5, b&s, a moving section of Romans, which you know, in those first eleven verses, I believe is Paul's personal outpouring of his own appreciation of this doctrine. It has an unique character about it, does these first five verses in Romans. You might say in the first five verses, he rejoices in the wonderful work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it was accomplished by His heavenly Father in Him. He sees a wonderful thing in that, and then from verse 6 to verse 11, he tries his utmost to portray to his readers, the absolute gift of God's love, and chooses an absolute language which, b&s, is unsurpassed in His writings, to try and get us to see, what it

was that had driven him on this course, where he could say, 'I am crucified with Christ'. See, look, it's like this; I am crucified with Christ, you know, I live, but not me, Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me', and he went out in the world and gave himself for everybody else. There was the motive force of the Atonement, b&s, because he understood the identification principle; he understood that principle. And here in this lovely section of Romans, that comes through in a very forceful way, a very emotional way, and emotion is not, b&s, a content of the Atonement that we should discard. People say I'm emotional, I get emotionally upset; thank God I do, so did our Lord Jesus Christ! And the day when we see these things just academically as black and white letters, is a disastrous day in our lives; if this doesn't get through the veneer, into the intellect and down and sifted in the reins of the heart, b&s, we are of all men most miserable. We have to be moved and compelled in causes of action which under normal circumstances, heaven and earth combined, could not move us to do; and only the motive force of the Atonement could do that. And do you know, as Paul sets forth his appreciation of this doctrine, the first five verses, you'll notice he weaves into that the triads of faith, hope and love; look at them!

Verse 1, 'Therefore being justified by faith', verse 4, 'patience, experience and hope', and verse 5, 'and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts', and why, b&s, do we have faith, hope and love? Why are they always together? What's the point of it all? Are they just three nice little virtues that make a little rhyme or something? NO! that's our approach to God, isn't it? What is faith? It's the evidence of things not seen; we believe in the invisible because we clothe the future with substance, we see it in our eye as something absolutely tangible. What is hope? Hope says that little me can be in the kingdom! little me with all my troubles, with all my weaknesses, with the dreadful thoughts of my head, and the things I don't do for my brethren and sisters, and all the preaching I do and follow it not myself, and yet little me can get there; God can get me into the kingdom, b&s, I can be there. Hope is personal! it's you and you and you and me, can be there. Hope never says, 'I won't be in the kingdom, I'm not good enough'; hope doesn't say that. Hope springs eternal because God's strength will get us into that kingdom. And if faith leads to personal hope and personal hope is something we've got confidence in, b&s, we bow to our heavenly Father and thank Him for His love, because if His love was not directed towards us, we'd never be in that kingdom. And if you don't believe that they're our approach to God, listen to this!

When Paul spoke to the Hebrews, he says 'God is not unmindful to forget your work and labour of love', he then went on to speak about their hope unto the end, and that they had the faith like their fathers, and he went backwards, faith, hope and love, because he says, God is not unmindful to forget you, and when he was thinking about God thinking about them, he went love, hope and faith. Like in the Old Testament, when God said to Israel, that when they were in the land of their enemies, and they repented and poured their heart unto God, He said, 'I will remember my covenant with Jacob, my covenant with Isaac, and my covenant with Abraham (that's backwards) because to them it would

have been Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but when God went back to them, it was Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. And so there's your link between God and man, faith, hope and love, and God thinks that way and we think this way, God's love starts it! It starts with our faith and we meet there, b&s, and that's the wonder of it all, we meet Him on the basis of those three principles; it's absolutely incredible, 'God first loved us' and we first had faith in Him and with that faith we go towards that love and our hope and join with Him, and God is love. That's the approach we've got, and that's how Paul puts it here. And he joined those triads of grace with other words; he said, 'we've got peace with God. PEACE, b&s, there are two brands of peace. Peace can mean a cessation of hostilities, like Russia and America, they're at peace but they're not at biblical peace. Biblical peace means 'to be at one', we're at one with God; Isaiah the prophet said, 'peace, peace, to him that's near and to him that's afar off'. So there are people near to God, the Jews, and there are people afar off from God, the Gentiles; peace, peace, to him that is near and to him that's afar off, so Paul says, 'He is our peace, having broken down the middle wall of partition between us and of twain have made one new man', a beautiful type of peace, isn't it, b&s? When He rode into Jerusalem He said, 'if only you knew the things that belong onto your peace'; Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, what's that? Jerusalem's peace is a special brand of peace, the first time we ever hear about Jerusalem is in Genesis 14 and it is called 'Salem' peace, what peculiar brand of peace was that? because there was found Melchizadek, first king of righteousness and after that king of peace. And so Jesus was able to encapsulate all that when He said, 'my peace I leave with you; not as the world giveth give I unto you, my peace', and that peace is on the basis of righteousness, so the apostle says, 'we're made righteous by faith'. Not that we are righteous, but God has deemed us so because of our faith, so we're at peace. That's the brand of peace we need, b&s, a quiet confident assurance that because of the righteousness of Christ, based upon the recognition in the first incidence of the righteousness of God, we have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. And says the apostle, we've got access; we are introduced to an exalted personage, Jesus Christ our Lord has introduced us into the presence of Almighty God, and we are there by grace, says the apostle, we have access into this grace wherein we stand. It's like being in a standing position, waiting for the time, b&s, when we will sit down in the kingdom of our heavenly Father. That's where we are today, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; that's a hope yet, we're going to be clothed upon with divine nature, and we stand in hope of the glory of God, and Paul had taught, did he not? in the earlier chapter, that 'all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God'. But see, now, we have peace with God because we've been made righteous by faith; sins are no longer accounted unto us by our faith, and therefore, we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, from which all have fallen short! So the apostle expounds his section in that way.

Now he says, this glorious hope, b&s, we might wait for it, it might be something in the future, but it's all in the process of starting already; that's the beautiful point he makes. It starts with tribulations; he says in verse 3, 'And not only so, but we glory (or boast) in tribulations', why do we? Because we know something he says, 'we glory in tribulations also, knowing' knowing what? that tribulation worketh patience'. You see, b&s, a lot of people think like this, they come into the truth, it's a glowing and a burning light to them;

they have all sorts of idealistic views and aspirations. That's fine, that's what they should have, but they have no root in themselves, and when tribulations come, they count that as a reverse, they see that as a backwards step. They understand that as being some punishment from God, indicating that He's displeased with them. Paul saw it as the beginning of the end; he saw it as an absolute necessity because he points out that by tribulation it works patience and patience, experience. Now you think about that, b&s, they're not several virtues unconnected; you've got to put a hyphen between all them. Because you see this is how it goes, we have tribulations, we don't understand what it's all about, but we will be patient about it, knowing that there is a purpose in it. And so we're patient maybe for a long time, but in the end because of our faith and our patience, it works out right and we've learned by experience what God is trying to do. Isn't that your experience? isn't that mine? maybe we become impatient to learn later on, much to our disgusted self, that if we had have been patient we might have understood better what it was all about. But that's the reason we have the tribulation, we accept it with patience, waiting to see what it's all about, and in the end we see what it's all about and we've experienced that!

Now what does that do? From one experience to another leads one to the belief, God's with me! And I pray to God and I say to God, 'get me through this trial, help me in these endeavours, I've got no strength to do it; and I've always got to say in my prayers to God, in all honesty, 'you've never let me down yet'. It's true! you know, b&s, it's true, I'm still here, we're still going, and I don't know why, I can't understand it, but it's true! So experience has taught us that; and if experience teaches that, we continue to build that personal hope. We think, 'well, we're through that crisis', it's not simply a crisis of someone else's making, we made it ourselves, it's our own problem, our own deserved problem, but we got through it; God must be with me! He's got to be working with me! as our hope builds upon hope, and that hope says the apostle, won't be ashamed. It will not be ashamed and he uses a Greek word there, b&s, the RSV says 'it won't be disappointed', and he uses that same word earlier in this epistle when he quoted the 28th chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of a foundation stone, a sure foundation, and 'he that puts his trust in that Stone, says Isaiah, will never make haste' (he won't need to be ashamed). He that puts his confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the foundation stone of that temple, will never be disappointed.

And that's the apostle's warning here; that is his exhortation to us, b&s, and so when we get to that hope, he says, because 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us'. We haven't got the Holy Spirit in the form that the apostle had it, b&s, but we've got it in the form of that which he carried around with him, we've got that! And it is just as effective, the spirit gifts were given for special purposes, the special purposes are gone, but the common need of us all remains, and so the Spirit Word remains; and that Spirit Word, what does it do? What does it do for you? I know what it does for me, and you get down over that Word at times, and when you spend a few hours on it and you think about the principles of God and you work them out, and you work your way through the scriptures, perhaps you started with an academic exercise, perhaps you were doing a bible class or an exhortation somewhere or an

exposition, and you went to the desk with that reason; but you didn't finish with that reason. And you fall over your desk quite often as I do, (and I'm not ashamed to admit it; absolutely in tears because I can hardly believe what I've read) and I think of the wonder of it all, and it's just as if God opened your heart and poured His love into a vessel that couldn't contain it. It just can't contain it, that's the words that Paul uses, 'the love of God is shed abroad', it absolutely overflows, and how does it overflow? Because it reaches the bottom of your heart and flows back, and you feel you've got to respond to that. That's the purpose of the Atonement, b&s, that's where it's all going, and that's what happened to the apostle. And so he talks about this overflowing response to the love of God. 'God first loved us', pours into our heart and because He was the One who first loved us when we didn't love Him, we respond back to that because it's too big to contain, and that's the figure that the apostle Paul uses here.

And then he tries, b&s, and does a very good job at that, he tries his hardest, to give us the depth and the breadth of that love, in words which I think are unsurpassed in his epistles in this respect. Now he says in verse 6, and here's the quality of that love, he says, 'When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly'. You know that's a short verse in scripture but every word of that is chosen. Without strength, the RV says 'weak', RSV says 'helpless' and when we were weak and helpless, b&s, and you must have felt like that; I know I can think of several times in my life, when I just despaired, would I ever be able to continue on, not just because of physical weakness, I'm an emotional person, I cannot take worry, and there have been times when I've been beyond myself, and got to a point where I just wanted to die, because that was the easy way to go. And you just have to fling yourself on God, and just say, 'I am weak, do something', and when they got to that point, who died? He doesn't say, b&s, Jesus died, he said Christ died. And you know, the apostle deliberately uses at times, the name without the title, Jesus without the Christ, and at other times, he uses the title without the name, Christ without Jesus. Here it's Christ; who died? The Messiah died, that's who died; but who did He die for? He didn't die simply for weak people, says the apostle, he didn't simply die for sinners, he chooses a stronger word, b&s. Do you see what he is trying to tell us? THE DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE. Messiah died for who? THE UNGODLY; you can't get a stronger word than that! It's the strongest term used in the New Testament for 'sinners'.

So when we were absolutely devoid of strength, the greatest personage ever, died for the worst, that's his point. And when did He do it? Paul says (listen!) in due time; when was that? Some people say, b&s, ah' well, that means according to the time of the prophecies, the 70 weeks, the 490 years, yes, that's true, but that's not what he means, true as it is. What was the due time? The longsuffering of God waits, b&s, what for? For you to be righteous? for me to be righteous? NO, the due time was when the people of Israel had reached the point of the most ungodly time of their life, and it was then that Christ died. Jesus said to them, 'fill up the measure of your fathers'; do you see the point? if God waited in the world to see some spark of virtue in human nature, before He moved to save it, we would have an eternal waiting. He went the other way in order to demonstrate His true love, He waited until it got to its worst stage. The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, in Abraham's time, 'Abraham, your seed shall be a

stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they will serve them for 400 years, and in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full'. And when Moses took it up in the 9th chapter of Deuteronomy, he says, 'when you come into the Land don't say, that for thy righteousness you inherit this Land but for the wickedness of these people, as He hath sworn unto Abraham'. And so when Israel came into the Land it's not because they were righteous, it was because the others were abjectly wicked'. AND IN DUE TIME, God sent His Son, the Messiah, the exalted personage, to die for the worst at the worst time in history. That's the implication in that verse; if it's not, b&s, let Paul fill it out for you.

'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die', he says. Who would die for a righteous man? well, nobody would. Well, who's a righteous man? What sort of a man is that? for he's the sort of individual described here by the apostle, who has a bearing and a dignity. He's a man of great self control, he's admired and people stand in awe of him; they see him as a man who has his life in order, and whilst they may stand in awe of him, nobody would die for him. For a righteous man! Just bear in mind that the Messiah died for the ungodly! Well, says Paul, 'perhaps for a good man some would die'; what does he mean by a good man? The word indicates, b&s, a benevolent man, a kindly man, not like the austere, self-disciplined, upright, righteous man, but now a more kindly disposed, happy, jovial, benevolent man who bestows kindnesses on everybody. 'You might die for him', says the apostle, but you'd have to dare to die. It would have to be a daring act, a compulsive act; you'd have to take a breath to do it, because if you breathed twice, you'd change your mind. So you might die for a man like that but you'd have to dare to do it! B&S, can't you see what he's getting at? 'while we were yet sinners Christ died for us', and he's measuring time not as a daring compulsive act, but for centuries for thousands of years, from the foundation of the world, the Lamb was slain, b&s, and who knows in the finite minds that we have, how much time before that, in the mind of the Father, who knows in the mind of the Father the scene of Golgotha was there, as it was an absolute reality, thousands of years before it happened. God didn't dare to offer His Son with an compulsive act, He measured that off by centuries! I tell you, b&s, Paul is doing his utmost to tell us, that that's the love that hit the bottom of his heart, and just came gushing back in a response to God, because of what He'd done.

You know, we sometimes emasculate the principle of love by the very exposition of the Greek word, as if it had nothing to do with an emotional response, and it's got everything to do with it. Sure it's based upon the intelligence, absolutely rooted and founded in doctrine, but if it doesn't spill over, b&s, in a response from the heart, it's cold and merciless, it's no good. But here's how the apostle saw it, and he saw the wonderful thing that God had done for us.

And so he says in verse 8 that, 'God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'. While we were yet sinners, in other words, we were neither righteous nor benevolent and He stilled died for us, and it was the Messiah that died, for the ungodly. Now, that's the hard part, that was the more difficult part, the rest, b&s, is relatively easy. The difficulty is over, the cross is behind Him! Much more, see

the point in verse 9? 'Much more than being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life', and twice in those verses, much more, much more. Look what happens, b&s! If God can say to you and I that we are reconciled by the brutal murder of His Son, as a sacrifice on the cross, that Romans and Jews murdered Him, and yet we saw in that an act of love. By the foreknowledge of God we see it differently, but they murdered Him and if God was able through that act, b&s, to reconcile us, isn't that the most hard part? MUCH MORE he says, LOOK WHAT HE'LL DO WITH HIS LIFE!

Look what He'll do with His life! And if in our prayers to God, there is a reflection in our lives of our Lord Jesus Christ, there's your Mediator. 'Forasmuch as God sees Christ in you and me' He will accept us. Of course, He will! because there is His Son next to Him, b&s, glorious in life; and if He reconciled us by the man on the cross, what will He do, if we approach God in the reflected image of Jesus Christ, a risen Christ. Ahhh, look, much more is Paul's words; the difficult part is behind Him. And so we're justified by His blood, he said, and saved by His life.

You know, b&s, blood is a symbol of life, and yet they're the opposites; justified by His blood is a negative expression, saved by His life is a positive expression. And brethren say, 'blood is a symbol of sin's flesh', others say, 'it's a symbol of a dedicated life', they're both right! absolutely both right. And in the Law of Moses it was beautifully done when God told the children of Israel, 'you mustn't eat blood; I don't want you to eat it' and He told them that for a reason. I WANT THAT BLOOD, I WANT IT! Now there are two kinds of blood, there was the blood, He said, which men got when they caught, when they catcheth any wild animal, and the blood which they caught, they poured into the dust, because it was the blood of a wild animal, and unclean animal, unacceptable in sacrifice. That's the life of all flesh! and when He described that blood in Leviticus 17, He says, 'for the life of all flesh is in the blood'; all flesh of things that they'd caught in the wild game hunt, and it was poured into the dust. But He then said, 'but the life of the flesh which came from the sacrificial animals, I HAVE GIVEN TO YOU, to make an atonement for your souls'. So there was blood that men caught and there was blood that God gave; one was the blood of wild animals and the other one was the blood of sacrificial animals. One was poured into the dust, and the other one was put on the altar; one was unclean and the other one was, in the words of Peter, precious blood. And our Lord Jesus Christ came to manifest both kinds of lives, and in His death, He poured out that soul unto death, the flesh, because all flesh was grass, and He was part of all flesh, and that was poured out into nothing. It died, it was obliterated, the diabolos was dead. But God took His life which man had never caught, and gave that life in a positive sense, that all who would have life, might identify with it, and that was precious blood. The life of the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was God made flesh in the sense of the manifestation of the Father, and there in the Son was seen all that the Father is, and so we might be justified by His blood (negative) but we are saved by His life (positive).

It's absolutely beautiful, b&s, absolutely beautiful, and so says the apostle in verse 11, 'And not only so, but we joy (it's a great and wonderful rejoicing) we joy in God through



our Lord Jesus Christ (and now comes the full name and title, in its fullness; because here it's all completed). The whole thing is caught up in that, and so Peter can say on the day of Pentecost, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, that same Jesus hath God made both Lord and Christ'. And they said, 'what are we going to do?' 'Be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ' (and he put it together) and there it was the Atonement, all expressed in that lovely name and title, Jesus the man, He who will be our Saviour, representing us in all our weakness, and having accomplished in Himself all our needs; God made Him Lord of all, and 'christed' Him, anointed Him with the power because His life was worth anointing; it was positive and took Him unto Himself, and proved for all to see and gave assurance unto all men, that the Atonement was completed, because there He is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Paul says, 'lets rejoice in that, b&s, by whom we have now, now, now, received the atonement'. No hope in that, no future waiting for that, b&s, it's done! It's all over and what the apostle is saying there, not that we're saved. We don't believe with the Pentecostals, 'once saved always saved'; that's nonsense. But I'll tell you what he does mean, b&s, there's nothing you can do or I can do, to either add to or diminish from that sacrifice. There is NOTHING! Whatever was done that day, was complete; we've now received the atonement, what remains in doubt, is whether we respond to that. That's the issue! So works can neither add to, works cannot take away from, the wonderful work. IT IS DONE! and because we cannot work any more to what He did, all we've got to do is RESPOND. See the point! So let us respond, b&s, let us respond together, and in the few short hours, days or weeks that we've got left (and they're only going to be short) may it be as a result of our study day here at Hamilton, and when we go back today, we may feel a bond between you and ourselves, and may we hear of your endeavours, and you may hear of ours, that having learnt the principle, that we may from this day onwards, learn that our individual responsibility is each other.

That is the principle that Jesus Christ would have us to learn. We could do no more for God and for Him than that; because that's exactly what they did together. And that I believe, b&s, is the motive force of the Atonement, and as far as we're concerned we should have therefore, a new perspective, if we haven't had it before, (and I think you have) but we should renew that perspective. We should renew it in the sense of that balance, we should be like that, sacrificing for one another! knowing this, that if we bear one another's burdens, we will fulfil the Law of Christ.