



MONA
HEIGHTS CHAPEL
FELLOWSHIP | SPIRITUAL GROWTH | SERVICE

Week of Atonement

*A week of making amends, encouraging
one another and experiencing
personal enrichment and renewal.*

January 03-10, 2021

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WHAT IS ATONEMENT?

Atonement is the act of making-up for something; giving satisfaction for wrong, loss or injury. Simply put, to atone is to make amends. In a religious sense, to atone means to pay the penalty for a wrong. The process of making amends is referred to as expiation or the act of atonement. Expiation is practiced among many religions around the world. However, the process of making amends differs - some religions practice pouring a drink liquid on the ground (libation) as an offering to a god (deity). Others sacrifice animals, food, chickens, etc., with the view that their gods would be pleased or appeased.

LEVITICUS 23: 26-32

The Lord said to Moses, The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the Lord by fire...You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come...It is a sabbath of rest for you...when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God.

MONA HEIGHTS CHAPEL & ATONEMENT

Although not mandated to practice atonement like the Jews did, we believe there are many elements of this Jewish practice from which we can benefit as a church. For the Jews it was a time of rest, fasting and renewal. The Day of Atonement was an occasion for personal and corporate cleansing. It was a season for corporate sacrifice, forgiveness and healing. With our Week of Atonement, we are seeking to capture the spirit of this Jewish practice for similar benefits to our fellowship. Exactly why are we doing this?

- for personal enrichment
- to stimulate/ignite our devotional lives
- to expose and expunge personal sin; and
- to prepare ourselves for victorious living

This year we will focus on relationships. We will study a different aspect of relationships each day of the week. For maximum benefit, read the recommended Scriptures and answer the reflective questions. We trust that by the end of the week, we will go beyond what we have learned to what we must practice. In other words, our goal is lifestyle change and not merely acquiring intellectual knowledge.

HEBREWS 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

MONDAY - MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

To suggest that I am having a relationship with someone is to suggest that we are in contact with each other – it is no different when we say we are having a relationship with God. Like with any other relationship, a relationship with God requires two-way contact – I speak, He speaks (Job 33:14)

■ God speaks through nature (Psalm 19:1-4).

- thank God for foods we eat (fish, birds, plants, etc.)

■ God speaks through history (Acts 17:26)

- consider our birth, family, residence, culture and ethnicity

■ God speaks through people (Hebrews 1:1) and circumstances

- prophets (one who speaks on God's behalf), leaders, et al.

■ God speaks through the Bible (Psalm 119:105)

- we call the Bible God's word because we hear Him as we read

■ God speaks through Jesus, His Son (Hebrews 1:2)

- a disciple is one who listens to and follows Jesus

Make some time to hear from God today. Observe His creative power in nature – the seasons, the skies, the oceans, etc.

Make some time to appreciate your heritage, your ancestry, your culture and ethnicity. Today, thank God for the people He allows to influence and speak into your life – leaders, teachers, parents, mentors, et al.

When last have you read His word, in order to hear from Him?

Try to imagine our world without Jesus. It was to the weary, Jesus said, "Come...and I will give you rest." Spend some quiet moments with Jesus today.

The other side of this relationship with God requires me to speak. But how does one speak to God?

■ We speak to God when we pray (Psalm 51:17)

■ We speak to God when we give to the needy (Matt. 25:44-45)

■ We speak to God in melody (Psalm 149:10)

■ We speak to God when we sacrifice (Romans 12:1)

Please make some time to hear from God and speak to God right now. Both you and the quality of your day will be different.

TUESDAY - MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY FAMILY

According to Psalm 68:6 “God sets the lonely in families...” One of the lessons from this verse is that my place in my family is not a mistake. Both the good and bad experiences God allowed, not to crush me, but to mold me into someone of value.

- When last have you given God thanks for the members of your family?
- When last have you asked God to use you as a source of blessing to others in your family? Read Galatians 6:10.

Far too often we look to see what we can get from members of our family. We need to remember the words of Jesus, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). St. Francis of Assisi very likely had Jesus’ words in mind when he prayed, “For it is in giving that we receive.”

Families provide tremendous opportunities to encourage. Some of these include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birthdays | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weddings | <input type="checkbox"/> Anniversaries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduations | <input type="checkbox"/> Funerals |

In his letter to young Timothy, Paul reminded him of the spiritual influence of his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5 & 3:14-15). Think for a moment, for what will I be remembered by members of my family? Have I made a significant enough contribution to be remembered by others?

Proverbs 31:10-31 tells the life-story of a noble woman. Among the many things said of her is that “Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her – many women do noble things, but you surpass them all” (Proverbs 31:28-29).

- Identify two things that you will do today that will make a difference in your family.
- Identify two influences from your family for which you are thankful.

WEDNESDAY - MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHURCH

The Church belongs to Jesus (Matthew 16:18). In addition, Jesus loves His Church and Paul calls the Church the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-25). The primary mission of the Church is to glorify God in worship. As the Church increases her loyalty to God, she develops a better perspective of others.

Like Church with the big C, the local church belongs to Jesus. It is in the local church one finds community – a worshiping community, a caring community, an evangelistic community.

At Mona Heights Chapel, we have a vision: “to be a growing family of strong Christian believers, committed to worship, evangelism, discipleship and social outreach.”

Whereas the Holy Spirit gives abilities to believers (1 Cor. 12:1-11), the local church affirms those abilities and provides opportunities for the exercise of those abilities. How has the Holy Spirit enabled you to serve in the local church? Are you active in the areas for which you were enabled?

The local church is not a religious club, guided by our constitution. The local church should be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was leaving earth, He said the Holy Spirit will guide in His absence (John 16:5-16). It is the Holy Spirit who makes us aware of ministry opportunities. The Holy Spirit is our link to divine power.

At MHC we are also committed to evangelism. We provide financial support to others engaged in evangelism. We use our pulpit to encourage and challenge believers to be effective witnesses. For years we have provided opportunities for youth evangelism and social outreach, with the view that many would come to know Jesus Christ. These are few of what Jesus had in mind in Matthew 28:16-20.

- How has the local church helped you to be a better person?
- How have you helped the local church to be a better community?

THURSDAY - MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBORS

Whenever we use the word neighbor, we think of someone who lives in our community or neighborhood. What really connects us is proximity, not familiarity.

Jesus taught that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Luke 10:25-37). Could Jesus be referring to someone who lives in close proximity to me? By the answer Jesus gave to the lawyer who approached Him, Jesus had something different in mind.

Jesus clearly suggested that being neighborly had more to do with behavior than proximity. Being neighborly implies being helpful, friendly, agreeable, hospitable, pleasant and generous.

Today, all of these traits are embodied in a good neighbor.

In telling the story of what it means to be neighborly, Jesus introduced an unusual character – a Samaritan. The person who would be the least likely to be neighborly. Isn't it true, it is more likely to be generous and hospitable to persons like ourselves? Persons who match our profile. For many of us, the Samaritan would not qualify – different ethnicity, different upbringing or probably different lifestyle choices.

Do you know anyone like that? Someone marginalized because of ethnicity or social status? You may have been conditioned to believe that such persons should be avoided. Jesus says, stop that display of prejudice. Like you, such persons were also made in the image of God. Like you, God ordained that such persons should share your space and history.

Neighbors provide opportunities to be neighborly. Opportunities to share mangoes, recipes, lifestyles and faith. Neighbors are persons God has placed within your sphere of influence. Agreed, some of these persons are in my neighbor-hood, but some are also at work and in the least expected places.

- Identify two persons within your sphere of influence, who can benefit from your neighborly touch today.

FRIDAY - MY RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-CHRISTIANS

A non-Christian is someone who does not share my faith, or has not made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Such persons are among family members, friends and colleagues. Do you have friends in this group of persons? Have you ever considered building intentional relationships with non-Christians?

Non-Christians are eager to witness authentic Christianity and provide Christians with amazing opportunities. They often sharpen our thinking with their questions (1 Peter 3:15). They provide us with opportunities to show compassion. We should use every occasion to honor and compliment, when such is due.

Non-Christians should be viewed as friends to be won to Christ, not as fire-wood for hell. Remember, more are won to Christ by what is caught, rather than what is taught. We believe it was St. Francis of Assisi who was credited with this quotation; "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words."

In using the images of salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), Jesus was teaching that that which is less can significantly change that which is more. The same can be said about Christians in a non-Christian world. We are never in the majority, but that should not affect our potency.

Our attitude to the non-Christian should always be one of friendship and winsomeness as expressed in this song:

*Lord, lay some soul upon my heart,
And love that soul through me;
And may I bravely do my part
To win that soul for Thee.*

- When last have you prayed for a non-Christian friend?
- Become intentional and genuinely befriend a non-Christian.
- Discuss things of mutual interest.
- Seek to earn the right to share your faith.
- Remember, you might be planting or even watering, but it is only God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).
- Suggested Reading – Acts 17:16-34

SATURDAY

On Saturday, January 09, 2021, the church will meet for prayer. The following items will guide our time of prayer. This activity will be coordinated by the Intercessory Prayer Group.

Unconfessed sin in my own life

Divine wisdom and power to live victoriously

Opportunities to influence someone else for good

Opportunities to lead/care someone to Christ

Ministry opportunities at Mona Heights Chapel

Members of the Leadership Team

The elderly, for less demanding ministry opportunities

The Corbins

- shepherding
- preaching
- counselling
- hospitality
- administration
- mentoring

Church Elders under the leadership of Dr Brendan Bain

Deacons and deaconesses

Ministries in the church

Administrative Staff

Students – from kindergarten to higher education

Missionaries we support

Adult children caring for parents

Qualitative and numerical growth at MHC

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