

## **A Study of the Book of Hebrews**

### ***Jesus is Better***

#### **Sermon # 15**

#### **“Nothing But the Blood”**

#### **Hebrews 9:12-28**

Hebrews 9:22 states, *“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

*“Today many look with revulsion on the shedding of blood that formed such an essential feature of the Old Testament religion. They consider with equal horror the New Testament’s teaching concerning Christ’s blood. They shudder with abhorrence at many of the gospel hymns that emphasize the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Those who thus scorn the shed blood have their eyes blinded both to God’s blazing holiness and to the dreadful, ...nature of sin. Sin is a radical and terrible reality that calls for a radical and terrible cure.”* [John Philips. Exploring Hebrews. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992) p. 118]

The world may not like to think or hear about blood, but the writer of Hebrews tells us that it is only the blood of Christ that can cleanse us from our sins.

Kent Hughes maintains that, *“During the thousand plus years of the Old Covenant, there were more than a million animal sacrifices. So considering that each bull spilled a gallon or two of blood and each goat a quart, the Old Covenant truly rested on a sea of blood.”* [R. Kent Hughes. Hebrews: An Anchor For the Soul. Vol 1 (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993) pp. 233-234]

Yet as we learned last time in chapter eight, none of those thousands of animal sacrifices ever really gained forgiveness for sins. The sacrifices of the Old Testament could temporarily cover sins but they looked forward to a future fulfillment. For the sins to be forgiven there needed to be a new covenant relationship that fulfilled what was foreshadowed and promised by the Old Covenant.

We are given in these verses the only effective remedy for sin.

First, It Is A Remedy Effecting The Conscience. (vv. 11-14). *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying*

*of the flesh, (14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

The blood of animals was able to purify the flesh of an unclean person. But the blood of Christ is able to purge the conscience from dead works (i.e., sin) to serve the living God. The animal sacrifices could not do this. For the daily and annual sacrifices constantly reminded them of sin (Heb 10:3). Therefore Christ not only removes the "legal" guilt of sin, but also the "inward" (or emotional) guilt of sin!

It Is A Remedy Effecting The Conscience and ...

Secondly, It Is A Remedy Offering Forgiveness. (vv. 15-22)

Verse fifteen says *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."*

The word that is twice translated in verse fifteen as "covenant" (*diatheke*) is also used twice in verses sixteen and seventeen, but there it is translated "testament." It is actually the same word in all four locations and the reason for the two different translations are that in verse fifteen the word is used *religiously* (hence covenant) and *legally* in verse sixteen and seventeen and thus translated "testament" or "will."

Two important truths

- A Will Demands A Death (vv. 16-17)

*"For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (17) For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives."*

"Testament" could be translated *will*. If you have made a will and you are still alive, your will does nothing for anyone. It doesn't operate until you die. Now the reference here is to a will that was made by a man who died. He couldn't save anyone as long as He lived. It is not the *life* of Christ as exemplary as it was that saves – it is the *death* of Christ which saves you.

- Forgiveness Demands Blood (vv. 18-22)

*"Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. (19) For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, (20) saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." (21) Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry."*

The writer of Hebrews quoting from the book of Exodus (24:5-8) tells us that the Old Covenant was instituted with blood. From Exodus and Hebrews we understand that everything of significance was literally soaked in blood – half on the altar and half on the people and the scroll. It was not a pretty sight – the altar, the people and the book dripped with blood. The two great institutions of the Old Testament, the law and the tabernacle were both inaugurated with blood.

From this lavish use of blood used in inaugurating the two great institutions of the Old Testament we are given the principle found in verse twenty-two, *"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission."* The Old Testament (Covenant) emphasizes this dependence on blood for two important reasons.

- First, to emphasize the seriousness of sin!

The Bible takes sin very seriously, more so than perhaps any other religion. Sin alienates us from the presence of God. Sin is rooted in the heart of man. Sin cannot be removed by any self-help program. No other religion has any viable help to offer for the removal of sin.

"At a great parliament of religions, held in Chicago many years ago, practically every known religion was represented.

During one session, Dr. Joseph Cook, of Boston, suddenly rose and said: *'Gentlemen, I beg to introduce to you a woman with a great sorrow. Bloodstains are on her hands, and nothing she has tried will remove them. The blood is that of murder. She has been driven to desperation in her distress. Is there anything in your religion that will remove her sin and give her peace?'* A hush fell upon the gathering. Not one of the company replied.

Raising his eyes heavenwards, Dr. Cook then cried out. *'John can you tell this woman how to get rid of her awful sin?'* The great preacher waited as if listening for a reply. Suddenly he cried, *'Listen John speaks; 'The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7).*

Not a soul broke the silence; the representatives of Eastern religions and Western cults sat dumb. In the face of human need, the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone could meet the need. The sin of race demanded the blood of Calvary.”  
[Paul Lee Tan. Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations. (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Pub., 1979) #479]

- The second reason is the costliness of forgiveness.

Sin leads to death and the payment for sin cannot be denied. Death is the payment. It will be either Christ life and his payment or ours! As the great old hymn states;

*"What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

Oh! precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*For my pardon, this I see,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
For my cleansing this my plea,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*Nothing can for sin atone,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
Naught of good that I have done,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*This is all my hope and peace,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
This is all my righteousness,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*Now by this I'll overcome —  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,  
Now by this I'll reach my home —  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

Glory! Glory! This I sing —  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,

All my praise for this I bring —  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”[*Words & Music: Robert Lowry*, in *Gospel Music*,  
by *William Doane* and Robert Lowry (New York: Biglow & Main, 1876).

It Is A Remedy Offering Forgiveness and....

Third, It Is A Remedy Not Needing Repetition. (vv. 23-28) *"Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (24) For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; (25) not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another — (26) He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (27) And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,(28) so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."*

Therefore today we can put it very simply: there is just one of two places for your sin —either your sin is on you, or it is on Christ. If you have not accepted the sacrifice of Christ, if you are not trusting Him as your redeemer, then there is nothing ahead of you but the judgment of the Great White Throne. No one who appears there is going to be saved, but everyone will be given a fair chance to present their works and discover that God was right all along. And I have news for you: God is always right. So today if your sin is on you, there is nothing that can remove it but the death of Christ.

Conclusion

“On Wednesday, January 13, 1982, an Air Florida Boeing 737 jet left the National Airport in Washington, D.C., during severely cold weather. Moments later it hit the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and crashed into the icy waters of the Potomac River. The tragic accident took lives of seventy-eight passengers and crew.

Immediately after the crash six passengers held to a piece of the plane, trying to stay afloat in the icy water. Helicopters from the Coast Guard and Park Police came to rescue these survivors. They lowered a lifesaving ring. One of the men caught the ring and five times handed it to his companions. All five made it safely into the helicopter.

As the helicopter returned for a final trip to rescue this man, he disappeared beneath the water. The survivors did not even know his name. He gave his life that they might live. His was an effective but costly sacrifice.”

[Thomas D. Lea. Holman New Testament Commentary. Hebrews and James. (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1999) p. 173]