

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

by

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SERMON THREE

“THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS”

Text: Colossians 1:20. **“And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”**

There are two questions that I want to ask and try to answer here. The first one is, What does the blood of His cross mean? The second is, What does the blood of His cross secure for us?

In this first chapter of Colossians there is one of the most striking statements I have ever read in all of God’s Word on the preeminence of Christ. And to me one of the most striking things about that statement is that Paul begins it and ends it with a statement concerning the blood of the cross of Christ. For among all things in which Christ was preeminent, He was certainly preeminent in the blood of the cross. He opens that statement by saying,

“In whom we have redemption by His blood,” and closes it with the text I have just read—**“Having made peace through the blood of the cross.”**

I. WHAT DOES THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS MEAN?

The blood of the cross of Christ must be distinguished from all other blood.

- If the blood of all humanity were shed on a cross, it would not atone for one sin.
- If the sacrifices that have been made by humanity from the time of Adam until now were gathered together on one great sacrifice, it would not atone for one single sin.
- If all the good works that men have ever wrought from Adam until Christ shall come again were put together, they could not redeem one single soul, for it isn’t **“by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”**
- If all the morality that all men have ever possessed were put to the credit of one man, it would not save the soul of the sorriest little street urchin in our city tonight.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.”

1. *The Blood Of His Cross is Atoning Blood.*

It is that blood that the scripture speaks of when God says, “**Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.**”

The blood shed on Calvary’s cross is the blood that was typified in every bleeding sacrifice upon every altar from the time that Abel offered his blood sacrifice at the east of the garden in that place where God had appointed. He brought that lamb “**without spot or blemish,**” and by faith looked away to the cross of Jesus Christ.

For God has never had but one plan of salvation, and that plan, as I stated last Sunday night, was made before the foundation of the earth was laid. Men have been saved from Abel until now by the blood of Jesus Christ. One of the certain earmarks of the devil’s religion and all false religions — and all of them are of the devil — the one unmistakable earmark of them all is salvation without blood.

I care not how many nice things Mrs. Eddy may have to say about faith—and I confess that in her book called “*Science and Health*” there are some of the most beautiful things I have ever read about faith. But you may exhaust every figure of speech in every language on earth in saying beautiful things about faith, and you may exercise the power of healing—and I don’t deny the reality of Christian Science healing.

You may think that a strange statement for me to make, but I do say that it isn’t a thing in the world but psychological healing—the power of psychological suggestion is all it is, but it is real. It is effective in many cases—but if she had the power to raise the dead, when she says that the blood of Jesus Christ has no more power to atone for sin than the blood of any other man that was shed on earth, I say immediately the devil is the author of it. “**Without shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

2. *It is God’s Only Remedy For Sin.*

The meaning of the blood of the cross of Christ is that it is God’s one and only remedy for sin. It is the only remedy God has ever had. It is the only remedy God has ever offered to man. But thank God, it is the all-sufficient remedy that has the power to save “**unto the uttermost all that come to God by Him.**”

It has the same power today that it had when Jesus hung on the cross and He looked over there to that penitent thief who said, “**Remember me when you come into your kingdom,**” and Jesus said, “**Today thou shall be with me in paradise.**”

Beloved, if God has labored on any one thing in His book more than another, He has labored from Genesis to Revelation to drive home to man’s hearts the truth that men cannot be saved but one way.

There is but one way of salvation for a sinning world.

Look at that bloodline, if you will. It started back yonder in the 3rd chapter of Genesis— yes before that—in the second chapter of Genesis God gives us the first picture of Christ and His bride in the first Adam and his bride. God called Jesus the last Adam, teaching us specifically that the first Adam was a type of the last Adam. And the first Adam God is to prepare him a bride, He causes a deep sleep to fall upon him, and while that sleep is on the first Adam his side is pierced and from his heart there comes that that God takes and makes his bride. As he gives it to Adam He said, “**This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.**”

The last Adam hung upon a cross, and God caused the sleep of death to come upon Him—our Saviour, the Son of God, the last Adam, and a Roman soldier took a spear and thrust it into His heart and both blood and water came out. And out of that fountain that flows from the heart of the Son of God comes His bride, washed in His blood. God is teaching us from Genesis to Revelation that “**without shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

When God would clothe those first sinners in the garden, He took an innocent victim and took his life. God shed blood that stained red the dust of the Garden of Eden and made them clothes that should hide their nakedness.

Adam and Eve looked away from the blood stains of an innocent victim and by faith saw the “**seed of the woman**” that one day on the cross should bruise the serpents head. God didn’t say to them, “Now if you will be good and behave yourselves you will be all right.” No, God had said, “**In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,**” and die they must, and die they did. God pronounced a curse upon them for their sin. Judgment came swift and sure. God held out one hope and only one, “**The seed of the woman**” the promise of a crucified and risen Christ.

3. It Was The Giving Of Life.

The blood of the cross means the giving of the life of the Son of God for the redemption of lost men.

It is written, “**The life is in the blood.**” When Jesus Christ poured out His blood on the cross He was giving “**himself a ransom for many**”; He was making His “**soul an offering for sin.**”

We put—I started to say too much emphasis on the physical sufferings of Christ on the cross, but I suppose we couldn’t put too much emphasis upon it—But in our emphasis on His physical suffering we fail to realize that the greatest agony of our Lord was soul-agony. It is written, “**He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.**” When the Lord entered Gethsemane’s garden, we hear Him say, “**My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.**” Remember when you see “**His sweat, as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground**” that His soul is being made an offering for sin.

The blood of the cross is the Son of God giving Himself in the work of redemption, it is atoning blood. It is saving blood. “**For the life is in the blood.**” It is the blood without the shedding of which there is no remission.

II. What Has The Blood Of His Cross Secured?

1. *Justification.*

“Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

The blood of Christ secures for us justification. Many people think that justification is simply having been pardoned from our sins. That is what our holiness brethren believe. They believe that it takes another work of grace to complete salvation and to rid the sinner of his Adamic nature. But if you study the meaning of justification, you will find that it means a great deal more than mere pardon.

You might pardon a sinner and he would still be guilty, for if he were ever guilty, he is still guilty when pardoned.

Here’s a man in the penitentiary. His friends appeal to the governor for pardon. The governor having the power to pardon, issues the pardon and the man is set free from the penitentiary walls and his citizenship is restored. But, if he were ever guilty of the crime with which he was charged, he is still just as guilty after he left the penitentiary as he was the day he walked in.

But when God justifies a sinner—Hear me!—I cannot understand it—I frankly confess that I will never be able to understand until I am at home with God—but God says that when a sinner is justified he is restored to innocency in the sight of God, and now he stands before God *as though he had never sinned in his life.*

Like Naaman when he dips himself in the river Jordan at the command of the prophet – his flesh was eaten with that loathsome disease of leprosy – but when, in obedience to the command of God he dips himself into the Jordan the seventh time, he was not merely healed. For the flesh had dropped off his hands and other parts of his body, and if he had been healed merely, it would have left the scars there.

But God said when he came up the seventh time that his flesh was like that of a little child—there was not a trace of the disease, not a scar or a blemish on him where the loathsome disease had fastened itself. When God justifies a sinner he is every whit whole. There is not a trace of even a blemish left. His standing before God is perfect.

“We are justified from all things which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

2. *Propitiation.*

Not only does the blood of the cross secure justification, but it secures propitiation for us.

I John 2:2 says, **“and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”**

The word propitiation means *atonement, or a covering*. We spoke of that last Sunday night so I merely touch upon it tonight. But let me just say this, for it will bear repeating, — In the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross there was a covering wrought by which God covers the sinner's sinfulness. So David said, **“Blessed is that man whose sins are covered and to whom God imputeth no iniquity.”**

- At the cost of life God made a covering for the first sinners in the Garden of Eden.
- At the cost of the life of the Son of God there is a robe of righteousness provided for all sinners.

That is what John saw in that great company mentioned in the seventh chapter of the Revelation, **“of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed in white robes.”** The angel said, **“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

3. *Redemption.*

Another thing that is secured by the blood of the cross is redemption from sin. Redemption is not only from sin, but the redemption of the sinner. I said a moment ago that in the salvation that was wrought on Calvary's cross it was more than merely the paying of a price for sin. It was paying the price for the sinner for we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. I think that no human mind will ever be able to fathom the meaning of redemption, for God says we are **“sold under sin”** —in literal slavery.

Paul said, **“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof . . . Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his slaves ye are?”**

You hear people talking about being free. Sometimes people imagine that to go on in sin and turn their backs on God is the way to be free. I have many people tell me, “I am not going to tie myself down. I am not going to deny myself of all the good things in life. I am going to be free and do as I please.”

Well, look around you tonight, friend. Look at the poor old drunkard in the gutter. One day he said, “I am going to be free. I will take a drink when I please—it's nobody's business but mine.”

Is he free? No. He's one of the most wretched and miserable of slaves.

Look at that moral libertine. He said one day, “I am going to take my fling. I am going to be free.” But look at him. Is he free? No. One of the most terrible slaveries is the slavery and bondage of the moral corruption of the libertine.

Look at that poor girl yonder selling her body and soul, tramping the streets, lost to the world, to home and loved ones. Back yonder somewhere she said, “I am going to be free.” No, she isn't free. She is at the devil's mill—a slave of the devil, slave in body, mind and soul.

Sin makes you a slave. If you want to be free, there is only one way, “**Him whom the Son shall make free is free indeed.**” Every sinner is a slave—a bond servant, “**Sold under sin,**” belongs to the devil. He has a title-deed to every sinner on earth tonight.

Like old man Black, of Childress, Texas, seventy-two years old. He was so crippled by sin that he had to go on crutches or in a wheel chair. He came to our meeting one night and was saved. When he came to be baptized he was so crippled that it took two men to get him into the baptistry. We had to lift him bodily in and out of the baptistry. We carried him into the pastor’s study to dress. I was helping to take off those wet clothes, and while I was down on my knees lacing his shoes, he said to me, “Brother Hankins, the devil had a mortgage on my soul and was about to foreclose on me.”

The old man didn’t know how much truth he was telling in that statement, for in less than three months he was in eternity. Yes, the devil had a mortgage on his soul and was in just three months of the date of foreclosure. Redemption means that Christ went into that slave market and paid that mortgage off, and set the slaves free.

Redemption is a commercial term. It is a term we use in the pawn shop. We go there and pawn an article for a certain amount of money. The pawnbroker gives us a ticket, and we can’t get the article again until we redeem it.

That is exactly what Jesus did. I was sold under sin and slavery to the devil. I was in the devil’s pawn shop. Jesus Christ with the price of His own blood entered the devil’s pawn shop and laid down the price of my redemption when he poured out His soul on Calvary. Redemption means that we have been bought out of the devil’s pawn shop never to go back again.

4. Forgiveness.

Another thing that is secured by the blood of His cross is the forgiveness of our sins.

For many years I had a shallow conception of what the Bible meant by the forgiveness of sins. I thought it was like I had wronged my father, and had come to him and said, “Dad, I know I did you wrong, and I am sorry; forgive me.” And my father would say, “Son that is all right, I forgive you.”

But that isn’t what it means, because God has much more of a problem to face than my father when he forgives sins. For there is God’s holiness, and God’s justice involved in my sin. God cannot arbitrarily forgive sins and be just and holy—God must not compromise with sin. And so God cannot arbitrarily forgive sin without destroying His holiness and justice.

God must have a ground on which to stand and be “**just and the justifier of the ungodly**” and the only ground upon which this is possible is the blood of Jesus Christ.

But forgiveness of sins means more than that. It means that sin must be put away. Sin has come between men and God. Sin is rebellion against God, an insult to the holiness of God.

Sin is trampling God's holiness, justice, mercy and grace under my feet, and God has to go a long way to bring holiness and the sinner together in peace and fellowship. In order to do it, sin must be put out of the way. That is what John meant when he said, "**Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.**"

When John said that he, he went back to the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement two goats were brought before the high priest. He placed his hand upon their heads and confessed the sins of the people. One goat was taken by the hand of the high priest; its blood was caught, hot and red from his heart and sprinkled on the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people.

But this is only one half of the operation.

That day the high priest laid his hand upon the head of the other goat. The sins of the people were confessed and laid upon the head of another victim. This one, instead of being slain, is turned over to a trusted servant.

I see that servant lead that goat out yonder across the desert. I can see Israel's people as they watch the goat disappear in the distance. Their sins have been laid upon the scapegoat, and he is being taken away.

On and on they go across the trackless desert out to the back side of the desert where the goat will never find its way back home, where no eye will ever see him again, and he is turned loose. The servant makes his way back to Jerusalem alone and Israel's sins have been borne away.

That goat that went away typifies our Saviour—the Lamb of God, bearing away our sins.

O see it, sinner! Forgiveness not only means that I have been pardoned but that my sin has been removed as far as the east is from the west." . . . "**I will put them behind my back and remember them against you no more forever.**"

O hear God say, "**I will bury them in the depths of the sea,**"—Never, never, never more to find their way back. "**We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.**"

5. Peace.

The blood of the cross secures peace for us. "**And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself**" (Colossians 1:20).

This does not mean merely that we have peace with God. It means that and more.

It means a God-given peace that takes hold of the soul, that undergirds the life, that fills the heart, that puts one's feet on a rock—gives peace of mind, of heart and of soul—"**peace that passeth all understanding.**"

You can say what you will, but the human heart has never found peace anywhere else.

I shall never forget when I was in a meeting in Childress, Texas.

One night the church secretary brought a young married woman to the altar after everybody else had gone home. Mrs. Hankins and I, along with this secretary and others, knelt at the front seat to pray with this young woman.

After a while the Power of the Holy Spirit wrought mighty conviction in that heart and she fell on her knees and began to cry to God. Tears began to rain down her cheeks as she cried to God for mercy. "O God, have mercy on my soul," she cried.

After a while I said, "Tell Jesus that you will trust Him, receive Him and believe on Him."

And she cried, "O Jesus, I will accept you, come into my heart."

Then she broke down and began weeping again.

I said, "Has He saved you?"

She said, "I don't know." And still she wept.

I prayed this simple little prayer. "Lord, help her to know, help her to realize that you have saved her. For there has never come a person to Jesus with sincerity of heart and soul that wasn't saved."

We waited quietly and directly she raised up her head and began to praise God. She said, "O! I am saved—I am saved."

I said, "How do you know you are saved?"

She said, "Because there is such a sweet peace in my heart. I didn't know there was anything on earth like it."

Over and over she said it as she sat there and smiled and laughed and wept for joy.

No, friends, there isn't anything like it. That is why Jesus said, "**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.**" Yes, truly, "**not as the world giveth,**" for the world has nothing like it to give. You will find it alone in the blood of His cross.

~ end of sermon 3 ~

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