

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 31 October 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Nothing but the Blood

Hebrews 9:11-15

For as long as I can remember, I have known the words to the song “Nothing but the Blood.” Somewhere in my Sunday School years, I learned to sing the words:

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
 What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
 O, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.
 No other fount I know—nothing but the blood of Jesus.

In today’s world, the precious blood of Jesus is mocked and trampled upon. Those who talk about the blood of Jesus are relegated to the “lunatic fringe.” What, then, are Christians to do? Should we tone down our message, and not emphasise the “blood of Jesus” so much, so that people won’t think we’re crazy? God forbid! A bloodless Gospel is no Gospel at all. A bloodless Gospel cannot save anyone!

H.A. Ironside once told the true account of a signalman on an American railroad. As he was on his shift one day, he became aware that an approaching passenger train was on the wrong course, and that it was bound for a head-on collision with another passenger train at a station a few miles ahead. In those days before radio transmitters, it was the signalman’s job to run out to the tracks and signal the train to stop immediately. He grabbed his warning signal, ran to the track, and waved it wildly; but the train did not stop. It continued on, and smashed into the other train; and there were huge fatalities. When the signalman was brought to trial, it was discovered that he had, indeed, flagged down the conductor; **but his signal was not coloured red.** It had become weather-worn, and had bleached and faded to a yellowish colour. Consequently, the engineer missed the warning signal, and many lives were lost.¹

Likewise, if we who know Christ present the world with a yellow, cowardly “gospel”—if we fail to tell sinners that the shed blood of Jesus is necessary for them to be accepted by God—if we leave them with the impression that they can get to Heaven by some other way—then *their* blood will be on our hands!

In our passage from **Hebrews** that we will be examining this morning, the Apostle Paul had quite a bit to say about the blood of Jesus Christ. In fact, he lists three things that the blood of Jesus made possible for us. We *cannot* do without these three things! The title of this message is ***Nothing but the Blood.***

Read Hebrews 9:11-12.

The first thing that the blood of Christ makes possible for us is....

I. Eternal redemption (vv. 11-12)

When Jesus came into the world, He came as our High Priest. He did not *become* our High Priest *after* He had come into this world; He had already been our High Priest from eternity

¹ H. A. Ironside, *Illustrations of Bible Truth* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945), pp. 62-63.

past. That phrase “***Being come an high priest***” simply means, “Having come as high priest.” Christ was already our High Priest before He was conceived in Mary’s womb.

Now, look at what Paul says next. He says that Christ came into this world as the High Priest “***of good things to come.***” In other words, even though Christ was *already* our High Priest, He didn’t provide our atonement until that day when He was nailed to the cross. On the day when Christ shed His precious blood on the cross, the “***good things to come***” finally came! No ritual that was ever performed in the Old Testament Tabernacle could do what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. It was not the blood of “***goats and calves***” that Jesus offered up to God: it was His *own precious blood* that He offered up for our sins. The “***tabernacle***” in which Christ offered up His blood to God was not an earthly Tabernacle. As Paul says here in **verse 11**, it was a “***greater and more perfect***” tabernacle. It was a tabernacle “***not made with hands.***” It was a tabernacle “***not of this building.***” The Greek word for “building” (*ktisis*), literally means “creation.” Clearly, Paul is telling us that Christ offered up His blood to God in the *heavenly* Temple, and not in any temple in this physical creation.

So, then, what “***good things***” came about because of Christ’s blood? The first thing it brought about an **eternal redemption**. (Read verse 12 again.)

We who are saved are the objects of Christ’s redemption. *We* are the purchase of His blood!

Read 1 Peter 1:18-19.

God loved us so much that He was willing to pay the price that His own justice demanded, so that He could buy us back from sin and death. This purchase is eternally efficacious! It will never be revoked. The Father will never say, “You know, that Stephen Finley just isn’t worth it. He’s grieved Me one too many times. I’m going to take back my Son’s purchase of him, and hand him back over to Sin, Death, and Hell, and to his old master, Satan.” This will never happen, my friends. Why? Because it is an “***eternal redemption.***” It is without end!

Folks, *no one* is worthy of being redeemed! None of us deserve the salvation that Christ purchased for us. Yet, He purchased us, anyway, because He loves us! All who receive God’s gift of salvation are redeemed from sin’s power and penalty; and they are redeemed *forever*.

If you have received God’s gift of salvation, then Paul’s message here in **verse 12** should fill you with joy and assurance. Let’s look more closely on **verse 12**, and see what other gems of truth we can find. (Read verse 12.) You’ll notice that Paul said, “***By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place.***” If Christ entered “***once***” into the Holy Place, then the implication is that *He didn’t come back out*. The Old Testament high priests went in and out of the Tabernacle, year after year, with animal blood, which “covered” the people’s sins symbolically. Yet, Christ went *once* into the *heavenly* Temple, with His *own* blood (which *really* takes away sin): and He hasn’t come out. This means that His work of Redemption is finished. There is no more price to be paid! If even *one* sin could make you lose your salvation, then Christ would have to *leave* His throne in His heavenly Temple, go back down to the “place of sacrifice,” and shed His blood again for your sins, so that you could get your salvation back! Has that ever happened? No; and it never will! Christ died for our sin once;

and having presented His blood to the Father, He is now seated on His throne, as our High Priest and Advocate. This means that your salvation is eternally secure!

Please notice, also, *where* Christ entered. Paul says that He entered once into the “**holy place.**” Now, this is interesting. We know that the Holy Place was the first of the two rooms of the Tabernacle; and it represents the Christian life, and fellowship with God. Yet, Paul doesn’t say anything about Jesus’ entering the *Holy of Holies*. Why not? Didn’t Jesus enter the heavenly Holy of Holies to present His blood as the ransom for our sins? Yes, He did. Why didn’t Paul mention it, then? Did he forget? Did he get the two rooms of the Tabernacle mixed up? Not on your life! You see, Paul is making a point. His point is that *there is no wall of separation* between the Christian’s life and God’s presence. **That barrier was removed when Christ died on the cross!** That figurative “veil” that separated us from God’s immediate presence was torn asunder. The Christian is in God’s presence *all the time!* We who are saved are not *physically* seated in Heaven yet; but as far as God is concerned, we who are saved are *already seated* in Heaven! The “Holy Place” of the Christian life has become “The Holy of Holies”--the place of God’s presence!

Read Ephesians 2:4-7.

In God’s sight, those who are saved are as good as “in Heaven” already. He has “***made us sit together in heavenly places.***” Our reservation in Heaven is so sure, that it is as though we were already there. Yet, even this is not Paul’s whole point. The point is that right now, in this lifetime on earth, *Christ dwells in us*. He lives in the “temple of our bodies.” We, as Christians, are in His presence all the time!

Now, Old Testament believers certainly had the promise that God was *with* them. Old Testament saints were constantly expressing their confidence that God was with them; and *God* assured them that He was with them. David wrote, “***The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.***” Isaiah wrote, “***Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.***” Though God was in His lofty place in Heaven, He condescended to dwell “with” those on earth who humbled themselves before Him, and who trusted in Him. Old Testament saints knew that they were accepted by God.

Yet, the big question was “How? *How* can God accept me?” Old Testament saints knew that the Saviour was coming one day; but He hadn’t come yet. *They* had never seen Him. Therefore, they struggled with the thought, “*How* can I approach God’s seat?” **Job** expressed this struggle as he spoke with his friends, Zophar, Eliphaz, and Bildad. Let’s take a look.

Read Job 9:1-2, 30-35.

Read Job 23:1-7.

Do you see the importance of Job’s question in **Job 9:2**? He asked, “***How shall a man be just with God?***” Job didn’t doubt that God justified sinners who placed their faith in Him; he simply couldn’t understand *how*. He lamented the fact that there was, seemingly, no

“*daysman*” who might “*lay his hand*” upon both him and God, and bring them together. The word “*daysman*” is translated from the Hebrew word *mokikh*, which means “mediator.” The Mediator, Jesus Christ, was coming to earth one day; but He hadn’t come *yet*. Job was wondering, “Where is He? If I knew where He is, I would go to Him!” Job knew that he didn’t deserve to go before God’s seat. That is why he said, “*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat.*” In the midst of Job’s sore trials, and in the misery of his grief, he sensed, more keenly than ever before, that “The way has not yet been opened for me to approach God’s seat freely, without fear or reserve.” He knew that the Mediator had not yet come. He was confident that God *was* before him, and behind him, and on his right hand and his left hand. He knew that God was at work in his trial, to refine him, and to bring him forth as gold; yet, he didn’t sense that he had the freedom to come before God’s throne with his sore complaints. Why? Because Christ had not yet come to earth to open the throne room of God; and the *Holy Spirit did not yet indwell believers*.

What a contrast to the privileges that we have today! The throne room *has* been opened to us through Jesus’ atoning death; and His presence couldn’t be nearer. He is not merely *with* us, or *by* us; He is *in* us. We are in His presence all the time, because He dwells in us!

Read John 14:16-23.

Brethren, do you realise what a wonderful promise this is? We who are saved are in God’s presence all the time. God views us as though we were already seated in His heavenly Temple; and until the day when we *will* be seated there, He dwells *in* us, in the temple of our bodies!

This is a wonderful truth; but at the same time, it is a *sobering* truth. This means, Christian, that your body is *not* your own. God *does* care what you do in your “temple.” Are you glorifying God in the temple of your body, and offering spiritual sacrifices? Or is there impurity in your temple? Are you taking impure things into your eye gate? Are you eating the leavened bread of sin, instead of the unleavened bread of Christ and His Word? If so, cleanse your temple! Christ’s blood has redeemed you! Live your life the way a redeemed person should live.

Christ’s blood has made eternal redemption possible. However, it has also made possible...

II. A clean conscience (vv. 13-14)

(Read verses 13 and 14.) In verse 13, Paul mentions two things which were used, in Old Testament times, for ritual purification. They were “*the blood of bulls and of goats,*” and the “*ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.*” In order to worship in the Tabernacle, the children of Israel had to be cleansed, symbolically, with these things.

Now, we’ve talked a lot about the blood of bulls and goats. We know that the blood of bulls and goats was a picture of the precious blood of Christ, which would one day be shed for our sins. Yet, what is this about the “*ashes of an heifer*”? What was that all about?

Well, for sake of time, I am not going to read the Old Testament passage where the ashes are mentioned; but I would encourage you, on your own time, to read **Numbers 19**. In this passage, God gave Israel His regulations concerning ceremonial cleansing. The children of Israel were commanded to slay a healthy red heifer, and to burn its body to ashes. The ashes were to be stored in a ceremonially clean place; and any time someone touched a dead body, a bone, or a grave, or went into a tent where there was a corpse, he was considered to be “unclean.” It didn’t matter if the dead body that he had touched was that of a stranger, or of a loved one: if he touched a body, he was “unclean.” Anyone who was “unclean” had to be ceremonially purified of his “uncleanness” with the ashes of the heifer. The ashes were mixed with water; and this ash-water mixture was sprinkled on that person, and on every object in his home, over a period of seven days. Until those seven days were over, the unclean person could not touch any clean person, nor enter into the Tabernacle precincts, on pain of death!

Now, as New Testament believers, we can look back at these things, and easily recognise the spiritual object lesson. The **ashes** from the slaying and burning of the red heifer picture the fact that **Christ** went through the fire of judgment for us. The **water** is a picture of **God’s Word**, and of the **Holy Spirit**. Thus, the ashes of the heifer *mixed* in the water pictures the cleansing of our conscience. When the “water” of God’s Word, and the Holy Spirit, is applied to the Christian, he is convicted of His sin; and he remembers that Christ’s sacrifice has satisfied his guilt. **He then confesses his sin; and his conscience is cleansed.**

Of course, the ashes of the red heifer couldn’t actually cleanse anyone’s conscience of sin. It was entirely outward and physical, and symbolic. It was a *picture* of spiritual cleansing. It was good for the “*purifying of the flesh*,” as Paul said in **verse 13**. In other words, it was good for outward, ceremonial “purification” of the body. It made a person ceremonially acceptable to go to the Temple. However, it didn’t wash away sin, or cleanse the conscience.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is the true, spotless Sacrifice for sin. The lambs, goats, doves, bulls, and heifers that were sacrificed in the Old Testament were *physically* spotless and without blemish; but Jesus Christ was spotless and without blemish in His *character*. He was sinless, and therefore acceptable to God. His blood doesn’t merely *cover* sin; it *removes* sin; and it purges a guilty conscience. **(Read verse 14 again.)**

I still remember what it felt like on the day when I received Christ as my Saviour. I felt *clean*! I have felt this way many times in my daily Christian life, as well. Every time I am convicted of my sin by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, I am reminded, once again, of Christ’s sacrifice. I am reminded that Christ died for that sin; and I ask Him for forgiveness and cleansing. When I get up from my knees, I *know* that I am cleansed, and back in good fellowship with God. How can I be sure of this? Because I know that my Saviour went through the fire of God’s judgment in my place, in order to make this cleansing possible!

Now, there is one more thing I’d like to point out. Paul says that Christ purges our conscience from “*dead works*.” Does this mean that our good works are *useless*? Yes; but it means even more than that. If our good works were merely *useless*, why would we need to be *cleansed* from them? If you need to be cleansed from something, it means that that thing is dirty!

What Paul is saying is that trying to work your way into Heaven is sinful and loathsome to God! Trying to earn or to keep your salvation is, in itself, a damning sin—just like lying, or adultery, or murder. Why? Because attempting to earn your salvation by your own good works is prideful, self-willed rejection of *God's* way of salvation! **Isaiah 64:6** says, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”* **Titus 3:5** says, *“Not by works of righteousnesses which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”* **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, *“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.”*

The blood of Jesus Christ brings about a clean conscience. This doesn't mean there won't be “scars” and lasting consequences from the sinful choices that you have made; but you *can* have a clean conscience before God. As David said, there is nothing like the “blessedness” of knowing that your *“iniquities are forgiven,”* and that your *“sins are covered.”*

Now, there is one more thing that is made possible by the blood of Jesus. It is...

III. The New Covenant (v. 15)

(**Read verse 15.**) Paul starts this verse by saying, *“And for this cause.”* The phrase *“For this cause”* is just another way of saying “Because.” Paul is saying, *“Because Christ shed His blood for us, He was able to be the ‘mediator of the new testament.’”* This is the third thing that Christ's blood has made possible—the New Covenant (or Testament).

Now, we've already learned quite a bit about the New Covenant in the last couple chapters of **Hebrews**; and we've seen that there were two main promises in the New Covenant.

First, there was the **physical, material** promise to Israel. God promised Israel, in the New Covenant, that they will one day dwell in complete peace and safety in the Promised Land, and that they will be exalted above the nations of the earth. This will happen when Christ sits down on His throne in Jerusalem, and reigns as King of all the earth for 1,000 years.

Secondly, there is the **spiritual promise**. The spiritual promise of the New Covenant is that of forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This promise extends not only to Israel, but to *all mankind*.

The spiritual part of the New Covenant is what Paul is focusing on, here. God's promises concerning the future Kingdom age are certainly glorious. (I'm looking forward to ruling and reigning with Christ here on earth some day!) However, the Kingdom promises are nothing compared to the promise of salvation! If there were no salvation for us, then every other promise that God has given to Israel (and to all of us) would be null and void. Salvation is *the* most important promise that God has given us! It is the promise that Jesus made when He told the disciples at the Last Supper, *“Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”* (**Matthew 26:28**).

Now, let's look at **verse 15** again. (**Read Hebrews 9:15.**) According to this verse, Christ has, through His death, made possible the *“redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.”* What does Paul mean by *“the first testament”*? He is saying that the

forgiveness of sins extends not just to us, but to those who lived in Old Testament times, under the “first covenant.” Christ’s blood flows *backward and forward* in history. His blood extends to those who lived *before* the cross, and to all who will live *after* the cross. Old Testament believers were saved the same way that we are saved today—by the blood of Jesus.

You know, there are some people who actually believe that saints in Old Testament times were saved by works, and that people who are living today, under the New Covenant, are saved by faith. This is blasphemy! Christ’s blood was shed for those who lived in the Old Testament, as well as for those who are living in this New Testament age. If believers were saved by *works* in Old Testament times, then Christ’s blood wasn’t needed in order to save them. This means that they would have something to boast about! But if, as this verse says, Christ’s blood redeems *every* person who has ever lived, then no one in history has any reason to say, “Look how good I am!” It is *only* by the blood of Jesus that we are saved!

Now, this brings us to the last part of **verse 15**. We mustn’t overlook this! There is one word, in particular, that I wish to point out. Do you see that word “might”? Paul says that Christ did all this so that **“they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”** The word **“might”** means “to be able to” do something. In other words, receiving the eternal inheritance of salvation is *possible*; but not everyone who is called to receive it *will* receive it. Why not? Because God will not *force* anyone to take it. We must *choose* to receive it.

This leads to an important question: Who are those who are “called” to salvation? To whom is salvation offered? It’s offered to *anyone who will receive it*. In the very last words of the Bible, Jesus made an open invitation to all mankind. He said, **“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”** Jesus is calling *all men* to salvation. No one, no matter how sinful and vile he may be, is excluded. God sincerely offers salvation to everyone. The question, then, is: “Who will *answer* the call?” Let’s look at one more Scripture for the answer.

Read Matthew 22:1-14.

In this parable, only those who responded to the king’s call to the wedding, *and* who were clothed with the proper wedding garment, were the “chosen.” *Everyone*, both Jew and Gentile, was called; but only those who *came* to the feast *in the proper way* were “chosen.”

The question is not, “*Are you called?*” *Everyone* is called to salvation. The question is, “*Have you responded* to God’s call for salvation?” Only those who have answered that call, and who have put on the robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness, are the “chosen.” Those whom God has “chosen” are those who “chose” to receive God’s Son. Those who are chosen are those who have *received* the promise of eternal inheritance, by faith in Christ. The New Covenant is beautiful; but its most wonderful promise—the promise of salvation—will not be realised unless *you* put your trust in the blood of Jesus, and nothing else. It cannot be “Jesus *plus* works.” I cannot be “the blood of Jesus *plus* my best efforts at righteousness.” Nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash away sin.

Conclusion: Which are *you* trusting to get you to Heaven—the blood of Jesus, or yourself? If you are trusting in your own righteousness, you are not saved! If you have never admitted to God that you are unable to save yourself, and asked Him to save you from all your sin, then *please* do so today!

Christian, this message is for you, too. You've learned sound doctrine today; but how will you apply it to your life? If you leave here *knowing* rich truth about redemption, yet harbouring sin in your heart, you are grieving your Redeemer. If you have unconfessed sin in your heart, come to Christ for cleansing today! The blood of Jesus saved you; and it will purge your conscience today, if you will but ask.