

That Precious Blood

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Well, our text for this morning's message comes today from the book of 1 Peter 1 and I invite you to turn to 1 Peter 1 with me. We looked at this text last week and we're going to expand on a particular phrase found in it. 1 Peter 1:17 through 19. "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." It's that phrase "the precious blood of Christ" that we're going to focus on this morning and kind of go through Scripture to see why it is so precious, why it is that we proclaim salvation by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The word "precious" refers to something that is valuable. It refers to something that is of great worth, and Peter makes the point that the shed blood of Jesus Christ is of greater worth, it is more valuable than the things that the world esteems and holds dear, more precious than gold or silver. Charles Spurgeon in a quote that I've used many times and I'll use many times more without apology, speaks about the precious blood of Jesus Christ like this, he says, "This talking about Christ crucified is said to be archaic and not at all suitable to the refinement of this wonderful age, but our mind is made up and our foot is put down. If it be foolish to preach up atonement by blood, we will be fools, and if it be madness to stick to the old truth just as Paul delivered it, we mean to stick to it for we are persuaded that the cross of Christ which stumbles so many and is ridiculed by so many more, is still the power of God and the wisdom of God. Yes, just the old-fashioned truth, if you believe you shall be saved, that we will stick to and may God to send His blessing upon it according to His own eternal purpose."

The precious blood of Christ, that precious precious blood of such great worth. Peter is alluding to the fact in this text that Jesus Christ literally shed his literal blood when he was crucified at the cross of Calvary. There was genuine blood spilled at the cross. And in light of that, blood in Scripture becomes a shorthand reference to the totality of his atoning sacrifice and the totality of his saving work for his people. It becomes a shorthand reference to everything that the blood represents and everything that the blood accomplished, and it's when you understand what the blood accomplished on behalf of you as a Christian, you understand why it is so very very precious. It's the blood as of a lamb, Peter says there in verse 19, look at it with me, it's "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

Now we've seen in the past that in Old Testament times a lamb was the principal animal sacrifice in the Old Testament. The Jews knew from their history the idea of a lamb – watch this – the idea of a lamb being sacrificed to save a life from the judgment of God. A lamb was sacrificed to save people from the judgment of God. So going back to the time in Israel's history when Moses was about to lead them out of their slavery, as we were just reading in our Scripture reading from the book of Acts, you will remember that God instructed Israel through Moses to kill a lamb and to apply the blood to their doorposts when God was about to pass through and judge Egypt and to slay all of the firstborn of Egypt. He tells them to, "Slay a lamb, apply the blood to your doorpost, and when I see the blood, My judgment will pass over you and you will be safe and secure from the judgment that I am exercising upon the people around you."

Look, if you would, to the book of Exodus for just a moment. We're just setting background here is all we're doing. Exodus 12. And I emphasize to you that this is reporting to us what happened in time and space history. These are actual human events that literally occurred that we are reading about. This is not fiction. This is not a fable. This is not some kind of esoteric allegory that is teaching us some kind of other principle about God, this is what really happened and this is what God really said.

So we'll pick up the story in the middle with the background that I've already said in Exodus 12:12. He says this, "I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." And later on we see in verse 23 that, "the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you." So that when the blood had been applied, the people were safe. God would still execute his judgment on guilty people but the people to whom the blood was applied were safe from that judgment and he would pass over them and protect them and the sight of the blood, so to speak, was sufficient for God to spare them from the judgment that was being executed on everyone else.

Well, come into New Testament times and that has great significance for our understanding about what it means to believe in the crucified and risen Christ, but before we get to that, turn to Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53, this great prophetic passage which speaks when it was written that still future time in which our Lord would be crucified and it explains explicitly exactly what was happening at the cross several hundred years before it actually occurred. So in verse 4 in Isaiah 53, speaking prophetically of Christ when he would shed his blood on the cross, it says this, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But

the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth." At the crucifixion of Christ the fulfillment of all of the pictures of those lambs sacrificed over centuries was fulfilled. It was ingrained upon the Jewish mind, an innocent, blameless, spotless lamb is slain and his blood is used to cause the judgment of God to pass over us. Now what Scripture says is about the coming Messiah, is that he would be slain in exactly that same way. His literal blood would be shed in a way that fulfills the ultimate purpose that the lambs were only a picture of so that when Christ died on the Christ for his people, his blood was being shed as a means by which the judgment of God would pass over those who receive the benefit of his sacrifice by believing in him through faith and by faith alone.

The lamb was a symbol of innocence and Christ, Christ, Christ was slain like the Old Testament lamb as a substitute sacrifice on behalf of his people to save them from the judgment of God. "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name given unto men by which we must be saved." His blood was shed for the sake of his people. His blood was literally shed. His blood is precious. That precious blood, that precious blood, that precious blood is our only hope of redemption. If the blood has been applied to your soul, you are safe from the judgment of God. No conditions, no qualifications to that statement. If the blood is applied to your soul, you're safe. You need not worry about purgatory. You need not worry about coming through priests or anything like that. You're safe in Christ. His sacrifice is sufficient. If the blood is not applied to your soul, then nothing you can do can help you. There is nothing that can redeem you. You are in imminent peril of eternal judgment as you draw each breath not knowing if it will be your last.

So the blood is the distinguishing mark that shows forth who will be saved and who will not and that blood is precious as a result of that. That blood is precious, first of all, because it is the blood of Christ himself. Christ is precious. The eternal Son of God in human flesh, taking on flesh so that he could shed his blood, the blood is precious by the very nature of who Christ himself is. Furthermore, the blood is precious because of the people that it saved. In Acts 20:28 it says that church elders are "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." There is an international people across ages that all belong to Christ and that group of people of which believers today are a part, that group of people are precious because they have been purchased by the blood of Christ. They are dear to Christ himself. It was for love of his people that he came and offered his blood to save them and to deliver them in the manner of which we've been speaking.

So the person of Christ makes the blood precious, the people for whom he died show that his blood is precious, and what we want to do today is we want to just take a look at exactly what the blood accomplishes for those who believe. What exactly did Calvary accomplish for the people of Christ? What was it that he did, what was it that he fulfilled, what is the aftermath of the cross? What are the enduring effects of the blood for all of these people, countless numbers saved by the shed blood of Jesus Christ? What did it do

for them? I think that you will be surprised by seeing how much Scripture attributes to the shed blood of Christ.

And we're doing a couple of things today here in what we're about to see. We're kind of doing a theological survey of the shed blood of Christ and we're going to speak in theological terms without apology for that, but also we're doing something else, we're going to have another message next week on the blood in addition to this one, and at the end of that message, we will celebrate the Lord's Table, and part of what we're doing with these messages last week, this week and next week, is we are preparing our hearts for that remembrance of the Lord's sacrifice on our behalf. The Bible tells us, the Bible warns us not to come to the Table in an unworthy manner. Don't come in a hasty, thoughtless way. Well, we want to want to honor that and we want to take the time to contemplate the blood of Christ, the symbol of which we will hold in our hands a week from today, and as we do, we're going to have a better appreciation of exactly what the blood has accomplished on our behalf as a result of what we see here today.

There are seven points that we're going to make, all of them expressing a reality that Christ accomplished when he shed his precious blood on behalf of his people. If you are in Christ, what we are about to describe are the things that belong to you, purchased on your behalf by a worthy Savior whose blood is precious. So we're going to go through these things, I'll mention a term, I'll define it, I'll show you a Scripture verse and we'll move on. Each one of these seven points is a worthy topic for at least one message on its own, if not multiple messages of its own, and so we realize that we are hitting these things quickly and not at all exhausting everything that could be said. I want you to see the panorama. We're going up to the top of spiritual Mount Everest today and we're going to look out with a clear vista at the whole sweep of what is before us, of what is laid before us, and we're going to try to take in something of the overwhelming majesty of what Christ has done on our behalf. So that's what we're going to do today.

First of all, what did the precious blood of Christ accomplish for us? It accomplished justification. It accomplished justification and here's a definition of justification for you. Understanding that God is a judge and there is a legal relationship that people have before God, he's either going to judge them for their sins or he will be a judge that acquits them of their sins. We are all, in a sense, standing in the courtroom of God and the question is what is the judge going to do for us. If you've ever been in a federal court in the United States system, some of them are rather imposing. Tall paneled walls and high ceilings and the judge sitting up on the bench somewhat remote and removed from the litigants and from the audience that are in the courtroom. It's an imposing scene. Well, multiply that by infinity and picture yourself in the courtroom of God and he summons you, as it were, to come and appear before him. What will happen to you then is the question.

Well, justification is precious because it is a judicial declaration by God that his people are found righteous in his sight. In justification, God declares a guilty sinner, and that's all of us, we are all guilty, all of us like sheep have gone astray, we just read that, none of us are innocent in our own right. We are guilty, we are lawbreakers, we have fallen short

of the glory of God. We have hated. We have lusted. We have stolen. We have lied. We have coveted. And that's just the second table of the law, leaving alone the fact that we have not lived life fully to the glory of God. We're guilty before him. What's God going to do with us if something isn't done on our behalf, on your behalf, my friends? Well, in justification God declares a guilty sinner to be pardoned of all of his sins. Further, he accepts us as righteous in his sight. God declares the guilty sinner, there is a double declaration that takes place. He looks at the guilt, he looks at your guilt and says, "I forgive you of all of it." Then he looks at you in a second aspect, two sides of the same coin, and looking at his Son, looking at his perfect Son, he then looks at his people and says, "I declare you to be found righteous in My sight." Stunning that in such great love God would give such a great gift to people who have utterly no claim on it.

So he declares a guilty sinner to be pardoned of all of his sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight. Scripture says that this is a gift that is received by faith alone. We don't work for it. We couldn't work for it. You have to go as a humble repentant sinner and ask Christ to save you on the basis of his shed blood. And do you know what? Every sinner that goes to Christ sincerely like that finds that he keeps his promise. No one has gone to Christ earnestly for forgiveness of sin and found himself rejected. Jesus said, "Everyone who comes to Me, I will never cast them out." That's how great and how gracious and how receptive he is to unworthy sinners who come to him for mercy.

Well, the question is what's the basis for that justification? What is the ground of it? Upon what does that justification stand? Look over at Romans 5 with me. Romans 5 and you can see here in the fullness of the passage that I'm going to read, you can see how it talks about the death of Christ and that that gives you a context for understanding that blood is a shorthand reference to the totality of his work on the cross. So in Romans 5:6 it says, "while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Keep reading, verse 9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood," or you could read it "in His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Justification, pardon of sin, declaration of righteousness found in the blood of Christ. Justification is possible only because Christ shed his blood like a lamb at the cross as a substitute for his people, as a substitute for everyone who believes in him.

Wouldn't it be fitting for me at this time to ask whether you've believed in Christ like that? Have you come to him as a guilty sinner asking for salvation as a free gift that you don't deserve? Have you come to him like that? Salvation, justification is found by faith alone, in Christ alone, and its basis is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Do you see why that blood is so precious? To have instantly credited to your account a full pardon and the full righteousness of God based on something that Christ did for you, nothing that you did, an immediate pardon of all of your guilt and an immediate assurance that there has been a final declaration by God on your behalf in his courtroom, "I find you righteous based on the shed blood of Christ. I declare you to be righteous. I am the judge. My word is final," God says. "I declare you righteous based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ." And all of a

sudden there is no fear of the wrath of God. You are permanently delivered from any threat of the wrath of God. Isn't the price that secured that judgment declaration on your behalf precious? It's the shed blood of Christ. Justification is in his blood.

Well, secondly, we have to keep moving here, secondly, we find redemption. We find redemption by the blood of Christ. Go back to 1 Peter with me, if you would. As I explained last week, redemption is a word that comes from the old slave markets. The freedom of a slave could be purchased with a price that was paid and that paid price was called the redemption cost of that slave, and that is Peter's point in 1 Peter 1:18. You were a slave to sin, a slave to Satan. You had no will of your own that was strong enough to escape from the chains of that bondage. You were in chains to your own sin, some of you still are. You are in chains to Satan who holds people captive and blinds them to the gospel and supernaturally hinders them from coming to Christ. You were in slavery and what was the price paid that delivered you from that awful condition of spiritual slavery? Peter says in verse 18, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers." It wasn't anything earthly. Think of the highest earthly treasure, it had no power to deliver you from the awful state that you found yourself in. If you had all of the world at your disposal, if you were king of the world and everything belonged to you, it couldn't do a single thing, it couldn't do anything to deliver you from this awful slavery to sin and to Satan. Well, how much more the rest of us that are just middling around in life with whatever possessions we have? If the whole world isn't enough, nothing that you have to bring to God is enough to deliver your soul from that kind of bondage and slavery. It took something outside of this world to accomplish your redemption and the redemption of anyone. It wasn't with silver or gold, the highest things of earth. It was not that. Well, if all of these things that we consider so precious aren't enough, you mean, whatever it was that redeemed you must be of higher value, of greater worth, more precious, and that's what Peter says in verse 19. The utter simplicity of his words representing the torments of Christ physical, and more importantly spiritual, at the cross, you were redeemed, verse 19, "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

If you have been delivered from the penalty and the power and one day the presence of sin, if you've been delivered and the power of sin has been broken and you are not facing the penalty of sin, understand that what delivered you, what redeemed you was the precious blood of Christ. In Ephesians 1:7 it says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Redemption through the precious blood of Christ. Justification, redemption, and we're hardly started. Those two things alone would be more than enough to occupy our time for days on end but there's so much more.

Number 3 today: reconciliation. Reconciliation. Reconciliation is a term that means that two parties that have been in dispute with one another are now brought together in harmony. Two parties previously in dispute with one another are brought together in harmony and Scripture says, Romans 1:18, that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." John 3 says that those who do not believe, the wrath of God abides upon them. Ephesians 2:1 through 3 talk about

how we are dead in sin, dominated by the devil and doomed to suffer the wrath of God. You can look it up later. We are separated from God by our sin so that he does not hear, Isaiah says. We're under the cloud of his wrath. There is hostility between God and the sinner. The Psalms say that God suffers indignation against sinners every day. There is hostility between God and the sinner, God righteously viewing them with wrath for their rebellion against their Maker, the sinner unrighteously in hostility against the God that he does not want to reign over him. You're born into that condition and that remains your condition unless you're born again.

So there is this hostility between the sovereign, holy, holy, holy God and these rebels among men of which we are all born into. One aspect, one perspective on viewing salvation is the fact that it brings reconciliation into that hopelessly desperate situation. My friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, it was the precious blood that brought you together in harmony with a holy God. It was not anything that you did. It was nothing that you did. It could not have been anything that you did. A polluted stream only puts forth polluted water, and your lives, your hearts were polluted with sin and it was all you could bring forth. Nothing that a polluted life can do can bring anything clean to God, let alone something that is sufficient to wash away his own sins. It's the precious blood alone that brings us together with a holy God.

Turn to the book of Colossians. Just after the books of Ephesians and Philippians, you'll find the little book of Colossians tucked in there, Paul having written Colossians at basically the same time in his imprisonment that he wrote Ephesians, so there's a lot of parallels of thought and structure between those two letters. This is so so precious and you see not only the emphasis on the precious blood but on the goodness of God, the love of God toward unworthy sinners to do something like this.

Colossians 1:19, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness," of deity, that is, "to dwell in Him," in Christ, that is, all the fullness of deity dwelt in Christ. What was the outcome of that fullness being in him? Verse 20, "and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." Beloved, that's not talking about a subjective feeling of peace, "You know, I feel so peaceful after listening to that song," or whatever. No, this is talking about an objective peace. This is as though a peace treaty has been signed between previously warring parties so that the conflict is over.

Verse 21, "although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." It's as though Christ looked at us in our rebellion, in the filth, in the shame and the guilt of our sin, he lovingly throws his robe of righteousness around us, having purchased us with his precious blood, and then he brings us to a holy God, he walks, as it were, into the throne room of an offended God and the Father looks at what Christ has done, looks on that sinner clothed in the righteousness of Christ and says, "The war is over. Reconciliation. Peace. Welcome to the family, my child." Scripture speaks of us as the children of God. Look at 1 John 3.

Well, the price to bring such a great reconciliation, such a humanly impossible reconciliation, the price of that was the precious blood of Christ. No one, no one is at peace with God unless they come by the precious blood of Christ, but the one who comes by the blood of Christ is fully reconciled. There is full harmony. All of the sins of the past in God's account are forgotten so that there is no longer any barrier between you and a holy God. Reconciliation has taken place.

So justification, redemption, reconciliation, fourthly, we find this wonderful term: forgiveness. This wonderful term forgiveness and these terms overlap in their significance but it gives us great clarity when we study the different aspects distinctly. Forgiveness is a term that means that God has pardoned our sins. Forgiveness means that God has pardoned our sins. What does that mean? I always like to reduce it to things that are simple enough for a child to understand when I talk about this. Forgiveness means that God no longer holds our sins against us. Our account is clean before him. He does not hold our sins against us. Our account is clean before him and instead of viewing us in the perspective of our sins, he views us instead in light of the righteousness of Christ. He views us in light of the precious blood of Christ shed on our behalf.

Look over at the book of Hebrews, turn to the right in your Bibles in Hebrews 9. In verse 22 it says, "according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. That's the negative way of stating it. Well, what is the positive side of saying it? What is the positive way to express the nature of forgiveness? We read on in Hebrews 10 beginning in verse 17, he says, "'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin." In other words, nothing more needs to be done. It is an abominable fiction that the Roman Catholic Church practices when they pretend to re-sacrifice Christ at every Mass that they celebrate. No. There's one sacrifice of Christ. His blood is so precious that one time it was shed and that was sufficient to forgive all of the sins of everyone who would ever believe in him. You rob the cross of its preciousness when you practice such fiction. That's why Catholics have to come out of the Catholic Church if they are to truly believe in Christ. You believe in Christ and he will lead you out of the Catholic Church because the core of what salvation is is contrary to what they teach and practice. You cannot reconcile the two and if you take away the Mass from Catholic theology, the whole stinking system collapses. In part, it collapses because it cannot offer anything like the precious blood of Christ.

So we keep reading in Hebrews 10:19, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus," he had just been talking about forgiveness, he had just been saying that God will remember our sins and lawless deeds no more and he says what purchases that forgiveness for us and gives us a boldness to go into the presence of God is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Verse 20, "by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed

with pure water." Forgiveness, beloved, means that all of your sins have been pardoned and God no longer holds them against you. What that means is that you are now free to enter into the presence of God with boldness, with confidence, knowing that he receives you well, he welcomes you completely, and that he is not going to raise up against you your sins as a reason that you are separated from him. No, the separation was removed. There is reconciliation. There is forgiveness. There is redemption. There is justification. And if this is God's perspective on you as you approach him, then there is no barrier to fellowship with him at all.

Do you know what I think that is? I think it's precious. I think that's highly valuable. I think that's something of great worth, that the blood of Christ did that for me, the guilty one. Guilty objectively before God and the blood of Christ sufficient to cleanse my guilty conscience from all of my sins knowing that God has cleansed me, God accepts me, and beloved, that's not just for me, that's for everyone like you who has believed in Christ. And those of you that have not and are resisting the Spirit, that are objecting to the Spirit of God, you're like the kid standing outside a candy store with your nose pressed against the window and all of that goodness is separated to you by your own unbelief. God brought you here today if that's you. God brought you here today that he promises pardon to everyone who comes to him in repentant faith to his Son and says, "I've heard of Your precious blood shed for sinners like me. Take me, save me like I've heard spoken of from Your word." And the door to all of those spiritual riches are open to you freely, gladly by the hand of a loving God, freely, gladly by the nail-pierced hands of a loving Savior who came to save sinners just like you.

My friends, if you walk out with no other thought today than this, it should be that that shed blood of Christ is precious. It's valuable. It's of great worth. And that's why we speak of him in sacred tones. That's why we speak of him in holy terms. That's why we reverence him. That's why we lift him up, is he is worthy and his blood is worthy, and his blood has accomplished so much on our behalf. That's why we never make it a matter of jesting or humor or crude jokes, and even more, why we would never let his name pass through our lives in a profane way. It's too precious. It's too sacred. It is set apart to be honored with the deepest part of who we are. It's that valuable. It reorients your heart to the entire way that you think about Christ, the way that you think about yourself, and the way that you speak about him, and the way that you treasure him and worship him. It's so precious that it captivates all of the highest and deepest affections of your heart. That's what it means to be a Christian. You trust Christ like that and you view him with that kind of love and reverence. And if you don't think that way about Christ, something is wrong with you. Something is wrong with you. You need to do some business with God in prayer because this is precious. "Are you kidding me, justification, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, and you say there are three more to go, you're not done yet? Then this is incalculably valuable. This is incalculably great." Yeah, that's it. That's the point. It's precious.

Number 5: holiness. Holiness. This is a term that can have two different meanings in biblical usage. We are using it in this sense this morning, holiness in this context means that God has set us apart for himself. He has set us apart for himself. The Old Testament

would talk about holy utensils that are used in the temple, in the tabernacle. Well, they're not holy because they're morally pure, they're physical objects. They have no moral account. Rather what it means is these have been set aside for use in the presence of God. Well, when it comes to us, God has set us apart as believers for himself and this vile contemptible world into which we were born, this vile contemptible world that is at hostility with God and manifests its utter depravity in ever increasing ways, it seems like it accelerates from month to month, we have been set apart from that world unto Christ himself. We no longer belong to this world, rather we belong to Christ himself. And beloved, being so wonderfully delivered from the world, being set apart from it even while we live in it, well, what is it that made that possible? What is it that sets us apart? Scripture teaches us that it is – are you getting the theme here – it is the precious blood of Christ that has done that for us. It is the precious blood of Christ which confers that holy position upon us.

You should still be in the book of Hebrews, turn to chapter 13 with me. Hebrews 13:12 says this, "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood," sanctify, holy, to set them apart, "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." Do you see the separation, the imagery of separation? You're going out to Christ. You're leaving one realm behind and going to Christ and what did that for you was the blood of Christ.

Verse 14, "For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come." Yeah, we're walking through this world and we live in it but it's not our home, it's not our destination, it's not our source, it's not our origin. Our origin as believers was found in God's pre-eternal purpose when he elected us to this marvelous salvation before the beginning of time and the blood of Christ makes that real in our experience when the Spirit gives us new life. Holiness, we're set apart by the blood of Christ. That's precious. That's highly valuable.

Sixthly: purification. Purification. One of the ugly aspects about sin is the way that it defiles us. It makes us unclean. It makes us dirty and those who are not in Christ, that's their condition, it's a condition of uncleanness. Yet even for the believer when we stumble into sin, there is a defiling effect that it has on us. We feel it in our minds. We feel it in our conscience. You feel it when you feel reluctant to open your Bible because you're conscious of what you've done, what you've thought, what you've said, "How could God receive me?" You're conscious of that. Well, what Scripture tells us is that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all of that unrighteousness, all of that defilement. It makes us clean. It purifies us.

And the Apostle John made this point very clear in his first epistle. Turn to 1 John with me, 1 John 1. Here he is speaking to Christians and while our sin does not reverse the verdict of justification that God has previously rendered on our behalf, it doesn't reverse our redemption, there is this defiling sense. David prayed in Psalm 51, "Purify me with hyssop and I'll be clean. Wash me so that I will be whiter than snow." He wanted his inner man to be renewed with a sense of the cleansing that comes from being right with

God. And what John is saying in this first chapter is that believers have a source of cleansing, of washing, of purification that comes, and where does it come from? What is the basis of it? It's the precious blood of Christ.

Verse 7, "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The underlying original grammar there has a picture of a lifestyle of confession, a repeated pattern that when you sin, you confess it to God. You don't hide it. You don't cover it up. You go to him and you make it plain. You agree with him, "Lord, what I've done, what I've said, what I've thought was wrong. It was sinful and I ask You to forgive me." Well, understand that the cleansing that flows from that has an operating agent found in the precious blood of Christ. It is the blood of Christ that is the basis upon which God can cleanse you, renew forgiveness with you, and that the blood of Christ has that satisfying impact on your conscience so that your conscience can be made clean and you no longer are bound by those feelings of guilt because you understand that your guilt has been addressed permanently, perfectly in an ongoing way by the shed precious blood of Jesus. And I think that when you stumble into sin as a Christian and you feel the remorse over that, I think that the agent that allows you to confess and you can walk away with a sense of restoration and renewal and a restoration of subjective peace in your heart, I think that whatever would allow that to happen in your heart and in your spiritual life, whatever allows that to happen, whatever makes that operative, it must be something of great worth. It must be something precious and it is, it's the precious blood of Christ. All of these benefits to us.

One last one. I got ahead of myself and used this term before. Number 7: sanctification. Sanctification. Here we are using the term sanctification in this sense, it means that spiritual growth, that progressive spiritual growth over time, an ongoing expansion of the separation from sin in your life toward the pursuit of practical righteousness. Not perfect in this life. Sanctification is not perfect in this life, in this sense, but there is a growth in grace, there is a growth in righteousness. Sin becomes increasingly distasteful to you. Maybe at the start of your Christian life there was still an attraction to sin, but as you go on it starts to dawn on you as the sun rises in the morning, it starts to rise in your heart an understanding that, "What I used to love, I hate. I don't want that anymore. I want to live righteously instead. Sin doesn't hold the same attraction to me." That's the sense in which we are talking about sanctification, and I understand by sad personal experience that it may seem at times like your sanctification is just an elusive dream because of your remaining corruption and the besetting sins that you deal with that come back and bite you again and again. I was out mowing yesterday and the cicadas in my face, oh, just so repulsive. Swatting it away. And our remaining corruption and sin like that, "This again? This again?" Swatting it away. Understand, beloved, that it is the blood of Jesus Christ that gives you power and gives you ultimate victory over all of that and guarantees the ultimate victory even in the midst of the series of stumbles that you go through.

Look at the book of Revelation. This is a nice place to end up, you end up in the last book of the Bible here. Revelation 1. John says in verse 4, "Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood." By his blood. Chapter 7, verse 14, he says, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And finally chapter 12, verse 11, speaking of the way that believers overcome the great accuser, verse 11, "they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

My friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, what the blood of Christ has done for us is remarkable. It is precious. It is of exceedingly great worth. It is of infinite value. Justification. Redemption. Reconciliation. Forgiveness. Holiness. Purification. Sanctification. What the blood of Christ has done for us is precious. It is that precious blood that is the basis of the totality of everything that we hold dear and everything upon which our eternal hope and rest depends upon. Are you washed in the precious blood of the Lamb? He is received by grace through faith alone, and it is in Christ alone, and his blood that makes that offer of salvation possible is precious and it's sufficient.

Let's pray.

Our dear Lord, sometimes fewer words are better, sometimes less is more. With that in mind, dear Lord Jesus, we simply say thank You for Your precious shed blood and for the love by which you went to Calvary on our behalf. May each one find their rest in Your precious blood. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.