

“Christ’s Blood Shed – For You”

“Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” This language of covenant – or testament (as in, “last will and testament”) – is promise language. When Jesus speaks of the “covenant” – He is speaking of God’s promise. But what promise specifically?

Here the reading from Hebrews is helpful – for there Jesus is spoken of as “the mediator of a new covenant.” Jesus is the Great High Priest – the Mediator – the one who goes into God’s presence on behalf of His people.

At Mt. Sinai, no one would have dared to go up onto the mountain to stand in the presence of the Lord as thunder and lightning and a thick cloud and fire descended on the mountain, “and the whole mountain trembled greatly.” And yet, having been sprinkled by the blood of the covenant – “Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up ... they beheld God, and ate and drank.”

In the Old Testament, no high priest would dare to go behind the veil in the Temple in Jerusalem – into the Holy of Holies, to stand in the presence of God – without the blood of the lamb. A sinner cannot stand in the presence of the holy and sinless God and live!

“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” – but with the shedding of blood – Moses could come up on Mt. Sinai and the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies. Not because they were bold and courageous men – not because they were worthy – but because God promised that with the shedding of the blood, their sins are forgiven. And so in faith – they dared to enter into the presence of the Lord.

With the blood of goats and bulls, God promised to forgive sins. If I might put it catechetically – How can the blood of goats and bulls do such great things? It’s not the blood, but the Lord’s promise. The blood, in and of itself, is simple blood. But with the Word of God (with His promise), it is the very means by which God wipes away their sin – the means by which God makes the sinner to be holy in His sight.

But why blood? That doesn't sound very sanitary. It seems kind of gross – especially when Moses is throwing it against the altar and sprinkling the people with it. But it is blood for a reason. Blood is connected to life. “The life is in the blood,” the Scriptures say.

But blood is not supposed to be seen – it's not supposed to be on the outside of you. God created it to be inside of you. So when we see blood – when blood is shed – it gets our attention. Blood means death.

With the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial animals in the Old Testament – God was preaching His Law and His Gospel to His people. “The wages of sin is death.” Look, see this blood? This is what your sin has done. When you handed over the lamb to the priest at the temple, and heard the awful sound it made, and the smells, as it was sacrificed – God was saying, “you did this” – “you are responsible for this.”

Yet, at the same time, with the same animal and the same sacrifice, God was preaching His Gospel – the good news that YOUR blood isn't being shed – but that of another. A substitute has died in your place. And with it, God's promise – with this blood, I forgive all YOUR sin.

God's people of old lived by faith in God's Word – trusting the death of another in their place – trusting God's grace which accepts the blood and death of a substitute, on their behalf.

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest ... He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of HIS OWN blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, sheds His “holy, precious blood” – for you. God Himself takes your place in death. God's own Son is the Sacrifice – He is the Mediator of the NEW covenant. God promises, that with the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ – your sins are forgiven.

On the night when Jesus was betrayed, the Lamb of God was handed over to be sacrificed. When Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him, they all asked, one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”

Just as the Old Testament lambs were handed over to be sacrificed – so your sin hands over the Lamb of God to be sacrificed. “Is it I, Lord?” we say – and the answer is yes. The word for “betray” is literally “to hand over” – and that is what our sin has done – with it we have handed our Lord over to be sacrifice.

Dearly beloved, the Lord’s Supper is the last will and testament of our Lord, Jesus Christ – a promise that is put into effect when the testator dies. Now that He has died, no one can change His Word. “WITHOUT the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” – but WITH Jesus, there is forgiveness – “for you.”

Through faith in Christ Jesus you dare, even now, to enter into the presence of the holy and sinless God – for He Himself invites you to eat and to drink with Him. Here is My Body, given into death “for you.” Here is My Blood, shed upon the Cross of Calvary “for you.” Here is the forgiveness of all your sins – and where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation – for you. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.