

## The Power of the Blood – Lent 3

*Leviticus 17:1-14; Psalm 32; 1 Peter 1:13-21; Mark 14:22-25*

*For you know it was not with perishable things that you were redeemed... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1: 18-19*

Last week we explored the background Bible verses that gave understanding about the need for blood to be shed to bring about atonement and reconciliation. The Hebrew animal sacrifices in the OT gave a symbol, or a picture of what would be the Ultimate Sacrifice. We learnt from the OT that after sin entered the world, God required the blood sacrifice of animals for the atonement of sins.

In our OT reading today Leviticus 17: 11 it says:

*For the life of a creature is in the blood and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for ones life. Again in verse 14 because the life of every creature is in its blood...*

How is it that in blood alone there is power that is not in anything else?

The answer is in the verse we just had: *the life of every creature is in its blood.* And this helps us understand the value of the Blood of Jesus.

Because the life is in the blood, the value of the blood corresponds to the value of the life that carries it. Leviticus 4:3, 14, 27 shows some of the scale of value of the lives of different animals: *the life of a sheep or goat is of less value than the life of an ox ...* Clearly the life of a human is more valuable than that of sheep and oxen. So with that thought in mind how would we value the life of the One who offered Himself on The Cross? *For the life of a creature is in the blood.*

Who can tell the value or the power of the Blood of Jesus?

Jesus' Blood was of infinite value because it carried Jesus' life. In that blood, dwelt the life of the holy Son of God. As our verse from 1 Peter reminds us it is imperishable. What Jesus offered in His blood was something that could not be corrupted, could not perish, wash off or wear out. There was no 'use-by date'.

What was offered was without blemish, pure, making it complete, everlasting, never needing to be repeated.

We are on holy ground when we talk about the Blood of Jesus.

The power of the Blood in its diverse effects is nothing less than the eternal power of God. In Lent and through Holy Week I encourage us to not miss any of our services – they are part of a whole package and I desire none to miss the blessings and gift of them.

With the Lenten season and the Passion of Jesus we have key symbols and concepts that avail for us more than just a historic remembrance. They point to aspects of what Christ's suffering, death and resurrection achieved and continues to achieve in the present time to forgive sins, to overcome evil, to protect us, to heal and to cleanse.

The Cross is one of these symbols, signs. It is the place where death was defeated and evil overcome. It is the place of salvation and reconciliation. Hence we can take to the cross in prayer our confession of sins knowing that forgiveness that has already been granted there. We have the assurance of our salvation when we look at the Cross because we see it is the place where Jesus atoned for our iniquities.

Another sign of what we receive in faith from Easter is the empty tomb. It is the place of the resurrection where we let the victory over sin and death avail for us and assures us that we are now adopted children of God, inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven and much, much more.

So too understanding the place of the Blood of Jesus and what it achieved for us that first Easter, leads to knowing the ways it avails for us in our daily lives. That knowledge helps us apply it to our lives.

The great impact of the Blood, and the power of it for our salvation, lies in the fact that it was offered to God on the altar for redemption. It was not offered in any old way for any old purpose. It was offered intentionally – for redemption – our redemption. 1 Peter 1 we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The

blood carries the power of redemption. We can pray, plead the blood of Jesus into situations for the power of redemption to flow, to avail.

The Blood avails powerfully for God as it was deemed to be acceptable to pay for our redemption and because of the value of whose Blood was offered in our place.

In discovering the power of the Blood we see that as it avails powerfully with God, it avails over the devil, and it avails powerfully with humans for whose sake it was shed.

Not only does it cleanse us from sin, but also the word *redeemed* reminds us that we have been emancipated from slavery to sin.

In Australia we understand emancipation fairly well in the context of our history. Convicts who were emancipated had a fresh start and made a new life for themselves in this country and their descendants are now emancipated people too.

When each of us chooses to believe in Jesus and repent of our sins we are immediately emancipated. But if we go back to sin we put ourselves back into slavery again and dishonour what Jesus did for us. That's why Paul says to flee from sin and cut off the parts that cause us to sin.

The word *redemption* includes everything God does for a sinner from the pardon of sin to the full deliverance of the body by resurrection (Rom 8: 23-4). In our Psalm today, Psalm 32 most translations for verse 1 say: "*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*" Our sins have been covered by the precious Blood of Jesus. Just like the Israelites had the covering of the blood by painting it on the doorframes at the time of the Exodus. There is power in the Blood to cover our mistakes, our sins, and our thoughtlessness. More than once I have prayed for Jesus' blood to cover something I wished I hadn't said to someone and they afterwards told me that they hadn't remembered it at all.

There is power in the Blood of Jesus to wash us clean, to purify us. 1 John 1:7 *If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.* Purifies us from all sin. This is

ongoing. It is in the present tense. It is a way to live daily – walk in the light, repent of sin and receive the gift of being purified through the Blood of Jesus.

Does anything else have the power to do this?

Nothing else had, or ever will have, the power to cleanse us from sin.

The shedding of His Blood was the culmination of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The atoning efficacy of those sufferings was in that shed Blood. “*poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*” Therefore, it is most important that each of us should not be satisfied with just mere acceptance of the truth that each of us is redeemed by the Blood, but we should also press on to a fuller knowledge of what is meant by those words and learn what we can about what the Blood does for each of us.

Do we believe that His shed blood applies to our souls? Think on this for a minute. Do I believe that Jesus’ shed blood applies to my soul?

For God makes no exception, if it applies for one it applies for all. No matter how moral we are, or good a life we live, or how generous we are, amiable or patriotic or how hard we work for God – none of these things cleanse us from sin. Paul in his letter to Hebrews chap 9 (v22) says that without the shedding of the blood there is no remission, ie no forgiveness, of sins. Sin will not be cleansed by anything less potent than the Blood of He whom God sent to be a propitiation for it.

Isn't this a relief?

That there is only one way for sin to be pardoned?

We don't have to strive at finding or earning ways.

Why should we ever seek another or try to work for our pardon? Besides being a waste of time it is also an insult to Jesus who offered so much for our atonement. We must be wary of ever treating too lightly our pardon, our cleansing. When we realise the impact of not needing to earn our salvation, that it already has been done once and for all, and is freely offered to us, **surely it is great cause for rejoicing?**

The Blood of Jesus also has the power to heal.

Remember the words: 'By His stripes you are healed'? Or *by His wounds we are healed*. Isaiah 53:5b when we pray for people to be healed we can plead the Blood of Jesus on their behalf.

The Blood of Jesus has power to protect us from evil too. The Blood of Jesus has almighty power over the kingdom of darkness, and hell beneath; and over the kingdom of heaven, and its glory above. Where the Blood is the resurrection power of God gives entrance into eternal life. The Blood has made a complete end to all the power of death, and hell: its effects surpass all human thought. Revelation 12: 11 shows that those who entered into their salvation had overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony and not loving their own lives so much as to shrink from death. The blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus, enabled them to not only survive but to overcome! The blood of Jesus has power to protect and to enable us to overcome - To overcome temptation, to overcome things that test our faith, to overcome everything that sets itself up against the kingdom of God.

I once met a retired missionary who told me about a time on a Pacific Island where there was a situation when a doctor's child died in an area with a strong evil presence. The missionary said they learnt to pray the protection of the Blood of Jesus in the presence of evil and they saw that power when a similar situation arose again. It was quite a dramatic testimony and in some ways similar to the Israelites putting the blood on the doorposts to avoid disaster.

I've mentioned three areas where the power of the Blood avails to cleanse us, to heal us and to protect us. The Blood of Christ indeed cleanses, reconciles, purifies, sanctifies, heals, gives us union with God, and gives us power to overcome.

So ...

### **How does the power of the Blood work?**

The answer is, just as it is everywhere in the kingdom of God, **it is through faith.**

The power of the Blood of Christ is utilised by our faith in it. Faith is largely dependent on knowledge. If our knowledge of what can be accomplished by the

Blood is imperfect, our faith expects little, and the more powerful effects of the Blood are impossible.

The Scriptures have a lot to say on the Blood. As we seek to find out what the Scriptures teach about the Blood, we shall see that faith in the Blood, even as we understand it now, can produce in us greater results than we have yet known, and in the future ceaseless blessing. The Book of Hebrews is a good place to start, especially in chapters 9, 10, 11, & 13.

Two areas for activating our faith in the power of the blood are:

Firstly grasping through faith in the Blood of Jesus the assurance of the pardon for our sins. We choose to believe and thank Jesus for His blood paying for our sins.

Secondly we utilise the power of the Blood by partnering with The Holy Spirit. We can ask & seek the Spirit's teaching and understanding. In 1 John 5:8 we are told that *three bear witness on earth: the spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are one*. The water refers to baptism and repentance and the laying aside of sin. The blood refers to the redemption in Christ. The Spirit supplies power to the water and the blood. The blood and the spirit bear testimony together. Where the Blood is honoured in faith or preaching, there the Spirit works; and where the Spirit works we are led to the Blood. These *three bear witness on earth*.

And we bear witness to the power of the Blood when we appropriate it by faith and pray for the results of what has already been achieved through Jesus shedding His Blood to avail in our current crises, needs, longings and in every situation.

Let us pray: