

Washed in His Blood
July 29, 2018

I'm going to tell one of Bob Bergen's best stories this morning. Bob was a member of our church who died some six years ago. About 35 years ago, at another church, Bob and his wife were greeting the pastor as they left the church one Sunday. Bob commented to the pastor about all the people who had started wearing latex gloves. Bob's doctor wore gloves. The dentist wore gloves. The dental hygienist wore gloves. Even policemen, teachers, and firemen had started carrying disposable gloves. This was back in the early days of the AIDS virus.

Well the next Sunday as Bob was leaving the service, the pastor met him at the door to shake hands and the pastor was wearing latex gloves. According to Bob's wife, Mildred, it was one of the few times that Bob, who was a talker, was speechless.

These days lots of people who did not used to wear gloves do so. They have been taught and warned to wear the gloves for protection. They fear the AIDS virus and other diseases that are associated with blood.

Yet, for Christians the idea of blood has always carried another message, not a message of danger, but of blessing. Blood is very important to Christians. Blood is at the center of our relationship with God. If you want heaven, then you need God's declaration of a right standing with Him, a right status. You need to be declared to have righteousness. And blood is how we get that right standing with God

But not just any blood will do. The only blood that counts in our relationship with God is the blood of Jesus. That's why we've been singing about His blood this morning. It is by the blood of Jesus that God cleanses us of sin.

I have here an old shirt. It was one of my favorite dress shirts for some years... until It got a stain on it. Nothing could take the stain out once it was set in. Then it became a yard work shirt.

Clothes are not the only things that get stained. A counter top, depending on what it is made of, can get stained. Tablecloths can get stained. Furniture can get stained. Carpet and other flooring can get stained. Painted walls can get stained. But the worst thing to get stained is us. When we are stained by sin, we lose a right standing with God. And worse, we earn death for ourselves.

Romans 6:23 (NIV) For the wages (result earned) of sin is death...

Now, suppose you were invited to the White House for a party or to the next royal wedding. Would you wear something stained like this shirt? Of course not. You would not appear before the president or the queen in stained clothes. Neither would you approach God this way. And you would not approach God, **COULD NOT** approach God with the stain of sin.

Yet your sins have stained you. It is not your clothes that have become stained. It is not your skin that is stained. It is your heart, your mind, your will, your conscience, and your

soul that are stained with sin. In short, you cannot approach God in prayer because YOU are stained by sin.

Fortunately, there is something available to us to wash the stain of sin away. With what do you wash away the stain of sin? Soap won't do it. Not even that Lava stuff, with volcanic ash in it. Bleach won't do it. Acid won't do it.

What washes sin's stain away is the blood of Jesus.

We have some readers for the passages in your outline. Readers, please stand and read in turn.

(Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:19-20; Hebrews 13:12; 1 John 1:7)

What washes sin's stain away is the blood of Jesus. This truth is emphasized all through the New Testament.

But you might ask... **How does Jesus' blood cleanse me from sin?**

In order to answer that question, we must first look at the background of blood. When God first formed a relationship with the Israelites, the ancient Jews, this is what He said concerning the annual Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16:14-16, 30 (NIV)

He (Aaron, the high priest) is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been.

... on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins.

You see, God wanted to have a right relationship with His people. And, since God was the one who was sinned against, He determined the way for them to restore their relationship with Him. He chose that it be brought about with blood. **God uses blood to make atonement.**

The root of the Hebrew word, here translated as atonement means "to redeem or ransom". The meaning of atonement is "to redeem by offering a substitute."

"Throughout the Law of Moses, the life of the sacrificial animal specifically symbolized by its blood was required in exchange for the life of the worshipper."

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, by Harris, Archer, and Waltke, Volume I, page 453.

Animal sacrifices to God by the Israelites were not simply an expression of thanks for their blessings. They were a substitution of an innocent life for a guilty life. Look at the next verse in your outline.

Leviticus 17:11 (NIV) 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 one's life.

This is the reason there is so much focus on blood in the Bible. We cannot live without blood. We speak of it as the life-blood of a person, because without blood there would be no life. This is by God's design, both for life, and for atonement.

Hebrews 9:22 (NIV) ... the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

God is still using blood to bring us into a right relationship with Himself. It is the blood of Jesus, in His death on the cross, that is the basis for a right standing before God. That is why we sing of the blood, but not just any blood. It is the blood of Jesus.

Why does God accept the blood of Jesus as a worthy sacrifice?

- **Jesus was a perfect sacrifice.**

The animals that the Israelites were to use, had to be not just the best animals they had, they had to be unblemished. Any injuries disqualified the animal from being an acceptable sacrifice to God. Any sign of disease disqualified the animal. Jesus was the perfect human. Not only was he perfect in health but He was without sin.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV) For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed..., but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (Hebrews 9:14)

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT2) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Jesus had no sin and so was able to die for our sin, in our place, as an acceptable substitute for us.

- **Jesus is both God and human, the perfect priest.**

John 1:1, 14 (NIV)

In the beginning was the Word (God, the Son) , and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...

... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

As both God and human, Jesus can perfectly represent us to God and God to us. This is what a priest does. Jesus is the perfect priest, fully representing us to God and God to us.

How can Jesus' blood, offered so long ago, save me today?

The imperfect animal sacrifices had to be repeated every year.

But... Jesus' perfect sacrifice only needed to be offered one time for all of us.

Hebrews 9:6-7, 11-12 (NIV)

...the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed...

When Christ came as high priest... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but... once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, offered Himself one time for all time, one man for all people. If you put your faith in the blood of Jesus as a substitute for yourself, and turn your life over to Him as Lord, you will gain right standing with God and eternal life. Jesus paid the price, but you must accept that payment on your behalf. I urge you to do so today. You will not regret it. But if you fail to receive Jesus you will regret it on Judgment Day.