



Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 19

The Precious Blood of Christ

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 1st March, 1987**

Text: *"The precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1. 19).*

This is the most important, the most sacred of all themes. Some things may matter, some things may be important: this is vital. If you and I have an interest in the blood of Christ, we shall get to heaven. If we have no interest in the blood of Christ, then we shall get to hell. You remember that solemn word the Lord Jesus spoke to Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

This verse, and the whole of this chapter, send us back to the passover night, the time of Israel's redemption from the land of Egypt. You remember that a lamb had to be taken, and that lamb had to be without blemish and without spot. And then that lamb was to be slain, its blood had to be shed, and the blood of that lamb was to be applied to the lintels and the doorposts of the house, for that night the destroying angel was to pass through all the land of Egypt. Where the blood of the lamb was sprinkled, there was life. Where there was no blood, then there was death. Of course, in a sense there was death in every house in Egypt – either the death of the firstborn or the death of the lamb in the place of the firstborn. For Israel had to realise that though "the Lord doth put a difference between Israel and the Egyptians," it was of grace, not of debt; that Israel was guilty like Egypt. The great difference on the passover night between Israel and the Egyptians was the blood of the lamb, and in the last great day when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the eternal difference between the righteous and the wicked will be the blood of Christ.

Now you see, that was a very solemn night in Egypt, very solemn as the destroying angel passed through the land. But there was complete safety under the shed, sprinkled blood. It was sheltering blood. All those were safe who were beneath it. "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." There must have been different feelings when midnight came, when the solemn hour arrived. There must have been some Israelites who were

more confident than others. Some may have believed God. Some may have felt complete confidence. Others must have been full of fear. But the point was this: to be beneath the blood. This is the sacred, solemn allusion here: “Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

When we speak of the blood of Christ, we mean His death, His death on the cross. By the blood of Christ we means His life poured out in death. So whenever we come to this sacred theme, we need to come with much reverence and humility and godly fear. “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” No subject more solemn! First of all we think of Him who shed that precious blood, the Man Christ Jesus. O!

“Behold a scene of matchless grace,
'Tis Jesus in the sinner's place.”

And we remember that though a real Man, He is true, almighty God. O this is the mystery of it, that He who hangs bleeding, dying on yonder cross is the Lord of all worlds, the Creator of all things.

Then we remember where that precious blood was shed. First of all in Gethsemane, before any human hand touched Him, as the sword of divine justice began to pierce His heart, He shed “as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.” Then in the judgment hall Gabbatha, the cruel scourging. And then at Calvary. May we by faith be led to Calvary.

“Conduct, blest Guide, Thy sinner-train
To Calvary, where the Lamb was slain,
And with us there abide.”

The cruel crown of thorns upon His head! The nails in His hands and feet! The spear that pierced His side! His precious blood freely flowed at Calvary as there He hung and bled and died. Now we are to remember this. May we ever be kept from speaking of the precious blood of Christ just as a mere doctrine, as a legal transaction between the eternal Father and His eternal Son. May we never forget “how dear that great salvation cost which comes to us so free.” O remember the bitter agonies, the awful sufferings of Gethsemane and Calvary when this precious blood was shed. Remember the greatness of His dying love, that “having loved His own

which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” O remember His willingness to die.

“It were an easy part
For Him the cross to fly;
But love to sinners fills His heart,
And makes Him choose to die.”

Now remember these things. Never forget Gethsemane. Never forget Calvary. O that precious blood that flowed!

“See! from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

Beloved friends, if you get a glimpse of it by faith tonight, it will break your heart, when you realise that this was for sinners. And if you have the Holy Ghost’s witness that it was for you, then this will break your heart.

“The precious blood of Christ.” I want to speak of some of the wonderful accomplishments of the precious blood.

“He took the dying traitor’s place,
And suffered in his stead;
For man (O miracle of grace!)
For man the Saviour bled.”

“The precious blood of Christ.” First of all, this was the fulfilment of all the shadows of the ceremonial law. Under the law man’s sin, ruin and guilt were clearly taught. There was the constant emphasis on it, and also the emphasis that “without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins.” So year by year, O the multitude of bulls and goats and calves and lambs that were sacrificed and their blood shed! Many a faithful Israelite by faith looked forward to Calvary. We think of him (Lev. 1. 1-4) who under an awful sense of guilt brought his offering to the priest and saw the lamb slain. He saw it bleed; he saw it die, and he placed his hand upon its head as he confessed his sin. He wanted to be identified with it. Ceremonially he laid all his sin on the head of that dying lamb. Many a faithful Israelite looked beyond the shadow to Calvary. But it was “not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.” But Christ, coming in the fulness of time, “by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are

sanctified.” His precious blood availed to make an atonement, to put away sin. All the types and shadows of the ceremonial law were fulfilled. So to signify its abolition the thick veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And now in that wonderful fulfilment of every type, every shadow, it is this: “If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

“The precious blood of Christ.” Then this precious blood sealed and ratified the eternal covenant. From all eternity the covenant of grace was made between God the Father and His beloved Son. In Jesus, the Father undertook to bless all His chosen, the condition of the covenant being the perfect obedience of His dear Son even unto death. Now as we come to the Old Testament, we have many glimpses of the covenant of grace. We also read of various covenants. And whenever there was a covenant made, it was ratified with blood. There was the sacrifice, blood was shed, and solemnly the covenant was ratified. And yet we do not read anything about the sealing, the ratifying of the eternal covenant. Surely these animal sacrifices were not sufficient to ratify that covenant ordered in all things and sure. But then we read that the Lord Jesus Himself, the same night in which He was betrayed, took the cup and He said, “This cup is the new testament (covenant) in My blood; drink ye all of it.” And then He went forth to Gethsemane and Calvary to seal that covenant with His blood, in His death to do all that was needful for the salvation of His people, so that every new covenant blessing could flow freely to guilty sinners through His death. In the wilderness the rock was smitten and water gushed forth from the rock. When at Calvary the Rock of Ages was smitten and His precious blood flowed from Calvary, from the cross every new covenant blessing freely flowed for the chief of sinners.

“The precious blood of Christ.” This precious blood was the ransom price that was paid. Of course, a ransom is a price that is laid down in order that redemption might be accomplished. For instance, many years ago a beloved king of this country was captured in war by the French, and he was kept in prison. So dearly loved was he that our nation raised the tremendous ransom price that was demanded for his freedom and when that ransom price was paid, then King Richard was freed, he was

restored. Redemption is to set free by the payment of a price. That price is the ransom. Now the precious blood of Christ was the ransom price paid for the redemption of sinners, that by it they might be set free from sin's guilt, sin's condemnation, sin's power, sin's eternal penalty. Of course, the old divines used to debate to whom the ransom was paid. Some wrongly thought it was paid to Satan. The ransom price of the Redeemer's blood was never paid to Satan. The ransom was paid to the holy law of God, to divine justice, that it might be satisfied, because justice demands the payment of a debt. But justice will never demand two payments of the same debt. Now the Lord Jesus in shedding His precious blood laid down His life a ransom. The debt was paid, and now justice is on the sinner's side. The law of God is satisfied, and divine justice will never demand two payments of the same debt. It is a legal redemption. It is on law grounds as well as gospel grounds that the sinner is free.

“The precious blood of Christ” opened up a way to heaven. In its fullest sense the holiest of all in the tabernacle, in the temple, represented heaven. But that thick veil of the temple spoke of no entry, no access. Nothing unholy, nothing defiled can ever enter. The high priest of Israel can only enter once a year and then not without blood. But when the Lord Jesus shed His precious blood and died, when He cried with a loud voice, “It is finished!” then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying this, that a new and living way is now opened up into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, a new and living way into heaven itself. If you and I ever come to heaven, this must be the way.

“Is He a Way? He leads to God;
The path is drawn in lines of blood.”

“The precious blood of Christ.” Then, you see, in the precious blood of Christ there was the opening of the fountain for sin and for uncleanness, that fountain that washes away the vilest of sins, the deepest of stains. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” O this precious blood has lost none of its efficacy, none of its power. It has the same virtue tonight as when the Redeemer hung bleeding, dying on the cross. A fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, where sinners conscious of their guilt, sinners feeling their unworthiness, sinners ruined and defiled are welcome to wash and be

clean. There is salvation in the precious blood of Christ. There is heaven in the precious blood of Christ.

But I want to come to this. What does the blood of Christ mean to you and me? Is it precious to us, precious in the sacred experience of it, or precious in the desire for it? Tell me, what does the blood of Christ mean tonight to you and me? O how many of you are there who see a sweet attraction in the blood of Christ? It is everything to you. It is the sweetest of all themes. It is the most sacred of all themes to you. “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” And above everything else, precious in His precious, sin-atonement blood. It is cleansing blood. It is redeeming blood. It is sheltering blood. It is atoning blood. And to every sinner saved by grace it is precious blood. Our hymnwriter says, “Invaluable blood.”

But you see, it is the work of the Holy Ghost to make the blood of Christ precious, to make it attractive. What is it that makes the blood of Christ so attractive, so precious? It is a deep felt sense of our need of it. Born again of the Holy Ghost, we realise our sin, our defilement, our guilt. We need to be washed, to be made clean. We need to be fitted, to be prepared for heaven. We cannot do without the precious blood. We see nothing between ourselves and a lost eternity but the blood of Christ. So the work of the Holy Ghost is to bring us here, to seek an interest in the Redeemer’s blood. Why? Because we are sinful, because we are guilty, because we are lost, because we need that complete cleansing, because we need something to be done for us that we can never do for ourselves, because all our tears, our repentance can never wash away one sin, one spot, because all that we can do or attempt to do can never merit heaven. It must be entirely on the ground of the work of Christ, His finished work when He shed His precious blood.

Now some of you may have been led by faith to Gethsemane and to Calvary. Some of you may have had the sweet assurance, the Spirit’s witness of your interest in the precious blood as you have drawn near and felt His dying love in your heart, the sacred, softening, sanctifying effect. You have come into it. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” Now some of you may have a sweet hope that the Lord has quickened you into life, begun a good work with

you, taught you by His Spirit, and yet if made honest, you cannot say that that experience is yours. But I would say this: seek after it and do not be satisfied without it. You know, there is a very sweet, simple, solemn word. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” – this is it – “and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And then, you see, there is this: “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

But whatever stage of experience is ours, if our religion is real, there will be three points in our experience concerning the precious blood of Christ. Let me very simply bring them before you and may you be able to answer before God how you stand concerning them.

Now the first is this. If your religion and mine is real, then the precious blood of Christ will be our only plea. Now beloved friends, I have no plea apart from the blood of Christ. As a sinner I can find no plea in myself, no plea in my profession, no plea in my preaching. My only plea must be in the Redeemer’s blood. We must pray. We have so many things to pray for. O but what is our plea, in prayer, as we venture before a holy God and ourselves sinful and defiled? We have no plea but this, the precious blood of Christ. Now what plea can we have as we have to do with God, as we have to have dealings with Him? God is holy. We are sinful and defiled. What ground of acceptance can we have? What is our plea as we venture nigh? O we can have no other plea but the precious blood. It is like that man who was so sunk in guilt. He could not speak a word and someone said, “Plead the blood; plead the blood.” No sinner ever pleaded the blood of Christ in vain. No sinner ever ventured for mercy, for pardon, for acceptance pleading the blood of Christ and was cast out. O beloved, can you say this, “My only, all-availing plea, for all my hope is there”? The precious blood of Christ, the sinner’s only plea.

Now the second thing is this. If your religion and mine is real, then the precious blood of Christ will be the foundation of our hope, the only foundation of our hope. Tell me, what is your hope, your hope of being saved, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation? What hope have you? O you see, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, we feel that ours is a hopeless case, and such it must be apart from the riches of God’s grace made known in the death of the Lord Jesus. But in that beautiful hymn on

the sufferings and blood-shedding and death of the Lord Jesus we have this conclusion:

“Here we have a firm foundation;
Here’s the refuge of the lost,”

O what a foundation it is! “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.” Of course, you may say, “Surely the foundation is the Lord Jesus Himself.” Well, it is. But it is not the Lord Jesus just in His teaching. That would not do. And it is not the Lord Jesus just in His example. That would not do. It is the Lord Jesus in His work of redemption, the Lord Jesus in His atoning sacrifice, the Lord Jesus in His death, the Lord Jesus in His precious blood.

*“Here we have a firm foundation;
Here’s the refuge of the lost.”*

Can you say, “My hope, my only hope is in the blood of Christ shed for sinners”? You may not be able to say, “It was shed for me.” You may not have the sweet assurance of an interest in it, but can you from an honest heart, as a sinner, say, “My hope, my only hope is in the blood of Christ”?

“The precious blood of Christ.” So first of all, if your religion and mine is real, it will be your only plea. And then secondly, it will be your only hope, your only foundation. And then thirdly, it will be your only way of getting to heaven. That great multitude safely landed in heaven, they all came there on the same ground. Not one of them ever deserved it. Not one of them ever merited it. They all came there through the blood of Christ. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes” – that is, the robes of their profession, stained and dyed with sin – “and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore” – on no other ground – “therefore are they before the throne.” There is not a sinner who ever came to heaven in any other way. They all were landed safely in heaven as sinners saved by grace and redeemed by precious blood. And if you enquire the way, “Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.” This is the only way to heaven, with the blood of Christ your only hope, your only plea. The precious blood of Christ. Because if you religion is real, you will not take heaven for granted. You will feel it solemn to be a sinner. You will feel it

solemn that you have to die. And yet you will be brought here, to see by faith that there is a way for the vilest of sinners even from earth to heaven, and that way is the precious blood of Christ. O the wonder of it, that heaven is that holy, happy place. Nothing that defileth can ever enter in. But all who have entered in are those who were defiled by sin. But then to see the wonders of the blood of Christ in making that complete atonement, to wash away the vilest of sins, that the chief of sinners through the blood of Christ might find a way to heaven.

Well, beloved friends, what does it mean to you? “What think ye of Christ?” What think ye of His precious blood? That is the reason that in the Book of the Revelation there is so much concerning the blood of Christ. Many things in the Revelation we find hard to understand. But one thing is clear: the great theme of the Book of the Revelation is the Lamb once slain and the blood He shed, and this is also the great theme of heaven itself. So we have a little glimpse of the redeemed in heaven, those who are safely landed. And we find that this sacred theme, the most important of all themes, is their theme. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” “The precious blood of Christ.” And to all eternity they sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God by His blood.” “The precious blood of Christ.”