

Holiness Imputed

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus and its role in our sanctification and relationship with God.

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18, John 3:16, Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 13:12, James 4:7, 1 Peter 1:18, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Blood Of Christ", "Sanctification"

Description

James Blaine Chapman preaches on the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of trusting in Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness and sanctification of sins. He illustrates the significance of the blood of Jesus through the story of an old man's dying moments and the symbolism of the Tabernacle's holy of holies. Chapman explains how the Bible and the blood of Jesus work together in our sanctification, highlighting that only through the merits of Christ's blood can we find purity and pardon. He concludes by encouraging believers to tap into the riches of God's mercy and grace, emphasizing the honor it brings to God when we receive His abundant blessings.

Transcript

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7).

An old man lay dying. Those who had lately visited had discoursed on the fact that he had been a Christian for sixty years, and that he had preached the gospel for fifty years. But he came to the valley of the shadow a little more quickly than was expected, and the moment found him alone except for his little granddaughter. As the old man's eyes grew dim, he asked the child to bring the Bible and read to him. She read from the first chapter of First John, and when she came to this seventh verse her grandfather stopped her, and said, "Child, read that again." She read it again. Then he asked her to take his old, stiffening fingers and place them on the words of the book while she quoted to him the text. At the finish, he said, "Tell them all that I died, not trusting in sixty years of Christian living or fifty years of preaching the gospel, but believing that 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' "

We are all aware that it is not necessary for us fully to understand the mysteries of redemption in order to be partakers of the benefits of redemption. But when we read, as we did in the text previously, that we are to be sanctified by the Word, and now today we come with the idea that we are to be sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 13:12), at once our reason calls for some explanation. We know that we are not to be sanctified by the Word and then by the blood in just the same sense. But what is the difference?

Well, reverting for a moment to the previous thesis: it is the Word of God, the Bible, that instruments holiness for us. This it does by telling us of our need for it, explaining the terms upon which it is to be obtained, and exhorting and encouraging us to meet those terms and find the goal for which our souls seek. In this sense, true holiness is Bible holiness, as distinguished from any sort of holiness that may be otherwise proposed, or proposed in any manner not in harmony with the Bible. The Bible is "the man of our counsel," our "way-bill from earth to glory," "our chart and compass," and our dependable source of faith and life. If any speak otherwise than the Word of God reveals, it is because there is no light in him. In this sense of authoritative revelation, the Bible is the sole instrument in our sanctification.

In the old Tabernacle, and later in the Temple at Jerusalem, there were two main compartments. The first was an oblong room (in the Tabernacle) approximately fifteen feet by thirty feet. This was called "the holy place" and here the priests ministered every day. But the other room was a cube, fifteen feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. This was called "the holy of holies," and into this the high priest alone entered, and he only once during the year -- on the Great Day of Atonement.

Among other things, the Tabernacle represented approach to God, and to this idea the symbolism was adapted. Entrance into the holiest place was an extremely delicate matter, and for such entrance special preparation was always made. When the high priest finally went in, he wore a garment on the lower border of which tiny bells of gold alternated with needlework representing pomegranates. As the high priest moved about, the bells continually rang, and thus the people waiting outside were told that the priest yet lived. If the bells ceased to ring, this was the signal that the priest had failed to make proper provision for his entrance, and that judgment had fallen upon him and he was dead.

The principal requirement for this entrance into the intimate, symbolic presence of God, was the blood of the sacrifices -- one for the priest himself, and one for the people -- which the priest was always careful to take with him. The priest acknowledged his own sins and the sins of the people and, acknowledging himself and them to be worthy of death, he offered the blood of the innocent sacrifices as a substitute for the penalty due. This blood was called atonement, and it was a type of the blood of Jesus, which we must always bring in plea when we seek to enter into the presence of God.

Now in speaking of the place of the blood of Jesus in connection with our pleas for pardon for sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness, we are accustomed to speaking of this Blood as our merit. And in speaking of Christ in all His redemptive relation to us and all men, we call Him our Substitute or our Redeemer. By this we mean that the blows that fell upon Him, the sinless One, are offered to God as a substitute for the judgments which by right and justice should come upon us.

It is not necessary that we should suppose, as some literalists have attempted to do, that Jesus suffered to the full all we and all the world was due to suffer. It is enough that we should be assured that what He suffered, including the shedding of His infinitely precious blood, which is the symbol of His death for us, is acceptable with God, who by accepting this can be just and still be the Justifier of the penitent sinner.

The thought carried on to our sanctification requires no further elucidation, for the merit of this precious Blood is so great that we may make it our plea for purity as well as for pardon. In fact, through the merits of this precious Blood, holiness of heart and life has been imputed to our account, wanting only our accepting the conditions which our estate requires that it shall be our actual possession, as it is now our potential possession.

This is in explanation of how the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin, and how that by suffering without the gate Jesus provides for the sanctification of His people.

It is usually necessary for us to see in contrasts, in order that we shall see clearly. When we read that we are to be sanctified through the truth, we must think of the Bible in contrast with human reasonings and in contrast with false or insufficient theories. Now when we think of the blood of Jesus as the meritorious cause of our sanctification, we must think of the blood of Jesus in contrast with noble birth, high station, natural morality, good and worthy works, and every other thing that one might bring as a price in his hand when he would enter into the holy of holies of God's spiritual presence. And of these -- and all of these taken together are of no worth -- only the blood of Jesus can wash away our sins or make us whole again.

These things are in explanation of our words when we sing, "Step out on the promise; get under the blood," or, "The blood will never lose its power."

A young newspaper columnist is said to have called on a famous banker to ask for an explanation of money. The banker made such explanations as he could, and when he paused the nervous young man arose, saying, "I thank you very much. I understand it all perfectly." But the banker replied, "Then you are a wonder. I have been in the banking business, and have been thinking and talking money all this time, and I still do not understand very much about it."

There is one thing we all know about money, and that is that money is good for barter only when there is agreement as to its value in terms of commodities. In foreign travel, it is usually necessary to get your money "changed" every time you enter a new country, for one country does not carry on its business in the currency of other countries. That is what makes foreign exchange go up or down. If the goods of a certain country are needed by other countries, then the currency of the country having the goods goes high in terms of the countries who want the goods. In this there is at least a dim picture of the blood of Jesus. This precious Blood is the currency of heaven, and it is the only currency that will buy anything heaven has to offer earth. There is no use for us to offer any other. "In my hand no price I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling."

The merits of this precious Blood are available to us all, and that takes away the fear that might otherwise come from the consideration that the Blood is all that will be accepted. This Blood avails for the Jew and for the Gentile, for the people who are near and for those who are afar off. There are none so good that they do not need it, and none so bad that it will not suffice.

Also this Blood is as deep-reaching as it is wide-reaching. There is no stain of sin that its merits will not wash away. They tell us now that the scarlet colors are the most clinging, and that in manufacturing fine paper out of old rags they sometimes choose to retain some tinge of the scarlet colors, since it is commercially unprofitable to bleach them entirely. But the ancient prophet chose these very colors to represent sin, and called out in challenge, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

No power is given us by which to know the depths of the love and wisdom of God which drew redemption's plan, nor yet the love that brought it down to man. The limit for words is reached in the Master's own phrase, "God so loved." Nor is there any unit by which we may compute the value of Jesus' blood in the sight of God. It is enough for us to know that this Blood has been set to our account, for whom it was shed, and that against it we may draw for all our needs against the guilt and defilement of sin, and

that it is sufficient for all this and more.

We shall not pass from this theme without saying that the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus is potential, rather than applied, until we come to God in faith for the application of its efficacy to our own hearts.

There is the story of a family that lived in continual penury in the rough hills of a Southern state; sometimes they lived in sheer and actual want. The thin soil of the clay ridges would not produce enough to enable the family to live in comfort. But after the children had grown to maturity, and had gone out to homes of their own, the old parents had continued to follow their hard-pressed existence almost to the end of their allotted years. Then, suddenly, it was discovered that there were rich oil deposits under the thin soil of the old farm. The family had really been rich all the time, if only they had tapped their resources. And it is like that with us. The riches of God's mercy and grace are ours even now, though for want of tapping them many of us live in spiritual beggary and useless destitution.

Our fathers used to say, "It does not enrich God to withhold, nor impoverish Him to pour out." And what is more, it honors Him for us to receive. It is told of Alexander that he sent word to a tradesman to whom the army had become indebted that he should submit his bill. But when the bill came it called for the payment of thirty talents of gold, a sum so fabulous that Alexander's steward refused to make payment. But when the matter came to Alexander's attention, he ordered the bill paid, and commended the tradesman, saying, "This man proves by the very size of his bill that he acknowledges me as the conqueror of the world." Likewise, our abundant God is pleased when we come to Him with large requests. At such times He may ask, as once He did before, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" But He will never say us nay on account of the size of our asking, seeing that by this very means we testify to our faith in His unlimited power and goodness.

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