



9. Covered by the Blood (2)

Exodus 12

We looked last week at the Passover and found many parallels between it and our own salvation in Christ. It's because their salvation was founded on the same basic principles as our own because we are looking at the words and ways of an unchanging God. We looked at four particular ones: Justice and wrath, Grace, Shed Blood and Freedom. We explored the first three last week and we are going to look at Freedom this week. Let's have a recap

◆ Justice & Wrath

We first saw God's righteous anger directed at the sin of the Egyptians. They were guilty of enslavement, violence and genocide to the Israelites. They reaped for themselves terrible plagues as a result – ending up with the most awful – the slaying of the first-born. But at the same time we noted how God was also long-suffering – the Egyptians had decades to repent.

◆ Grace

Secondly we saw how God fulfilled His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The people of Israel were God's people. Why? They certainly hardly deserved it. They took 80 years to get around to crying out to Him. Yet even though the word grace is hardly seen here – the principle is the same. God made a people His people because of His love and mercy.

◆ Shed Blood

We see the punishment over Egypt applied everywhere so that the only way the Israelites could be saved was by obeying God. The obedience God demanded from them was simple and illustrates a second scriptural principle – that it's the shedding of blood that covers God's wrath towards us. The sacrifice on Passover was propitiatory – in other words it satisfied the wrath of God and the angel of death was turned away from the houses where the blood was on the doorpost and lintels.

The message of the new covenant is the same. Christ's death on the cross was also propitiatory – scripture – and as a result, when we took that decision to spread the blood of Jesus on the doorposts and lintels of our life as it were, we testified that Jesus shed His blood for our sins so the wrath of God is turned away because of the covering of blood.

And as we come to communion this evening, the wine stands as a reminder that before the throne of God above, we have a great and perfect plea – the blood of Christ shed for us. That's why in the words of my morning service, we have the authority and status to stand tall, not by our own efforts, but pleading the blood of Christ.

◆ Freedom

Another aspect of the blood and being covered by the blood and our fourth basic principle of scripture I would like to highlight, is that of freedom. The command that night was not just to do the lamb and blood bit, but to be ready to leave. The turning away of God's wrath was one thing, but the command to follow Him out of Egypt showed something else. Because of the blood, God's favour rather than wrath was on them. And they had an opportunity to follow Him in obedience. The adversary was broken and the people could walk free from the country. The shed blood was not just about salvation, but freedom from bondage to follow Yahweh as He led them out of Egypt.

No prizes likewise for seeing the parallel in our own salvation. Accepting Christ isn't just about sins forgiven, but walking free and following Jesus. People covered by the blood are freed people. People of liberation and victory. We were reminded this morning that on Calvary a massive victory was won and it was because of that shed blood that a huge victory was achieved over the one that had us in bondage to sin and self. And as we accepted Christ and covered ourselves with the blood

we found ourselves as part of that victory.

Before we came to Christ we were in bondage to satan and to his world system whether we knew that or not and in Christ were freed from that bondage. Why? Because of the blood of Christ. Hebr 2:14 (NRSV) *Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.*

We choose to follow Jesus because through death He's destroyed satan! We are no longer slaves but free. And this communion stand as testimony to that freedom. Whenever satan come so us and accuses us of not being good enough to follow Jesus, then against that accusation we plead the blood of Christ. We are good enough to take this bread and drink this wine and boldly enter the presence of God – because of the shed blood of Christ.

The problem was for the people of Israel was that it wasn't long before they wanted to go back! It's one thing to be covered by the blood, it's another to continue to walk in the freedom God has given us. We can put ourselves back into all sorts of bondages – habitual sin, compulsions, addictions – and satan can lock us into those so we don't see the blessing in our Christian lives. Remember, he's the prowling wolf who seeks to devour us. We may be a part of the victory Jesus has won, but we're still vulnerable to the loser who still tries to inflict damage.

Yet we're people who should be free. So if we realise what satan has put us in bondage to the things we should have died to than plead the blood of Christ in these situations. He died so that we could have freedom from this sort of things – so if we have been freed from them so claim it and be free. Remember the name of Jesus and the blood of Christ are both marks of the authority that Jesus. Use them to resist satan and he will flee from you.

The blood of Christ is an immensely strong concept in the NT, but that's no surprise because shed blood is strong in the OT too. Let me give you this verse again: *1 Peter 1:18-19 says: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

What is precious about the blood of Christ? I know some Christians see the precious blood in the same way as some see the word of God – as something intrinsically holy in itself. But it's shed blood – past; once for all. So in communion we remember the blood shed – past tense. This helps us understand the term "precious blood". *1 Peter 1:18-19 says: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

But if we look at that verse more closely we see that silver and gold – things men value – are just metals and their precious nature is only given because of the value placed on them. Precious is used a few times in 1 Peter. here's a famous one: *1 Pet 2:6 For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 7 To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," (NRSV)*

Out of all the items I've spoken about recently, I think the blood is probably the most incomprehensible idea to the average unbeliever (not yet Christian). Yet was we consider the shed blood of Christ, we find it a precious thing to hang on to and affirm as believers. And to underline its preciousness, the Lord made sure we are reminded of it often because its the ground of our sonship and our freedom.

The shed blood of Christ is precious because God values it. It is through that blood His purposes are worked out in the lives of men and women who follow Jesus. It is precious to us because through it we have forgiveness and freedom and it is because of that blood that satan is disempowered, destroyed as the power of Egypt was. And we claim our authority He has given us because of that blood. Satan's power over men and women was broken by the shed blood of Christ. Satan's like Pharaoh who didn't take defeat very well and still tries to capture us and take us back into bondage. But he's lost and whenever we see our lives going into bondage again remember the blood of Christ – claim it, plead it because it's that which should cover us.

Here's some Spurgeon: *He that fights with the precious blood of Jesus fights with a weapon that will cut through soul and spirit, joints and marrow, a weapon that makes hell tremble, and makes heaven subservient, and earth obedient to the will of the men who can wield it.*
The blood of Jesus! sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death: hell itself would be dried up if that blood could operate there.
The blood of Jesus! heaven's gates are opened; bars of iron are pushed back.
The blood of Jesus! my doubts and fears flee, my troubles and disasters disappear.
The blood of Jesus! shall I not go on conquering and to conquer so long as I can plead that! In heaven this shall be the choice jewel which shall glitter upon the head of Jesus—that He gives to His people "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb."

Does that sound like you and me tonight? If we're honest with ourselves we may find ourselves trapped in our doubts and fears and problems and weaknesses. But that's not what God has intended for us. We are called to be a freed people, a victorious people, a holy nation. People covered by the blood. So let's remind ourselves of it's preciousness to us, claim it, plead it, speak it out and live as the people of God – ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven!

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