

*In Nomine Jesu*

## THE BLOOD THAT PARDONS

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Our sermon for this first (@ CLC), second (@ Faith) Wednesday of Lent is taken from our inspired readings. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our thoughts as they are now centered through these words of God recorded in the letter *To (the) Hebrews*:

*Indeed, one may say, almost all things with blood continue to be cleansed according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood, forgiveness does not continue to happen.*<sup>1</sup>

Those words are summed up in a hymn we will sing soon:

*Christ, the heav' nly Lamb, Takes all our sins away; A sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they.*<sup>2</sup>

Those words will soon call us to recognize that it is through Jesus' blood alone that all our sins may be taken away. They declare that the life-giving blood of Jesus is God's chosen means by which sinners are declared guiltless in His Presence. Jesus' blood cleanses them, you, before Him, Jesus' blood takes your guilt away. That God did for you with the water and Word of Holy Baptism. That God continues to do for you through His Word of Holy Absolution. That God does in you as you receive His life in His Holy Supper. In other words, through God's chosen means of grace, Jesus' blood comes to you as the blood that pardons.

There is a lot of Old Covenant background to the Hebrews texts used in this Lenten series. To help you grasp those, you have had bulletin and

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hebrews* 9:22.

<sup>2</sup> Watts, Isaac. "Not All the Blood of Beasts," *Lutheran Service Book #431*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 2006.

other announcements concerning this year's series. We preachers pray that you have spent time already hearing and reading the Hebrews texts.

If not, I call you to repent of such sloth in preparing to receive the Word of God. Know that Jesus knew you would have times wherein you neglected the Word. He shed His blood into death to bring you forgiveness for that! Return again to the Living Word of grace. Hear it as it again declares God's truth across the ages:

*Indeed, one may say, almost all things with blood continue to be cleansed according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood, forgiveness does not continue to happen.* <sup>3</sup>

Behind, and under that passage lies the Word of God given to God's people through Moses. Therein, some 1,500 years before *The Letter to the Hebrews* was written and preached, God called His people to remember that the *life of the flesh is in the blood*. The life of the sacrifices God had given to His chosen people for pouring out, *upon the altar for making atonement for their souls. For the blood by reason of the life in it is that which makes atonement.* <sup>4</sup> All of that, and more, is the structure from which today's readings were assembled.

It is a reality that the pastors and vicar who are preaching this Lenten series on *The Blood that... Pardons... Gives Access... is Shared... Sanctifies... Bespeaks...* could spend a good hour or more in their sermons simply establishing biblical groundwork for each week's chosen Hebrews reading. Yet, we are living in an era of the Church where congregations will not be content to listen to the detailed sermons of our LCMS forefathers. That age

---

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 17:11a.

of 45- to 90-minute sermons is long gone.

That having been said, in this time of the Church we who preach discover ourselves called to proclaim the full convicting, killing and condemning of the Law, as well as the acquitting, enlivening and atoning of the Gospel in weekly sermons that are just 15 to 20 minutes long! That shortening of sermon delivery time from that used just a century ago leaves little to doubt about research that shows that biblical literacy in our day is low in many Christian congregations.<sup>5</sup>

How would you rate your biblical understanding of texts such as the Letter to the Hebrews, which appears to be a 44 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-minute sermon itself? Rejoice that it declares that the Incarnate Word, Jesus, spent hours on a cross, shedding His blood into death. That He did in order to forgive you of all your sins, including those of neglecting His Word.

Unlike all the Old Testament quotes or underlying texts cited by the composer of the sermon to the Hebrews (there are at least eight for today's periscope – cutting from Scripture), preachers today are driven to cut way down on sermon background information. That means that the hearers of the Word need to come to the Lord's services prepared and ready to hear the Word of the Lord. Because they care for you, congregational bulletin preparers provide you with each week's texts ahead of time. Sunday, Festival, and Feasts texts are listed in *Lutheran Service Book*, pages xiv to xxiii in Roman numerals. With those resources available, and the expectation for sermon lengths in this era, we need to quickly get to the

---

<sup>5</sup> Internet. <https://www.barna.com/research/the-bible-in-america-6-year-trends/> Accessed February 20, 2018.

point of a text, as has been done today. We need to reinforce it often. This we do now. Hear again God's Word:

*Indeed, one may say, according to the Law almost all things with blood continue to be cleansed, and without the shedding of blood there is no continuing forgiveness.* <sup>6</sup>

Those words are part of today's text that is the one that the other men who will stand, or have stood, before you this season desired least to proclaim to you. Everyone else, in reverse order of seniority in LCMS preaching, chose their texts from the Letter to the Hebrews. (Know that I am "funning you" a bit, the other preachers just wanted to proclaim texts with biblical concepts about the blood of Jesus that you don't hear about as much)! So, they left scraps like this for us to hear today!

*Indeed, one may say, according to the Law almost all things with blood continue to be cleansed, and without the shedding of blood there is no continuing forgiveness.* <sup>7</sup>

Thank the Lord they left that wonderful Good News for us! Oh, what a beautiful scrap of grace it holds for me and you. You see, all truly evangelical (of the Gospel) preachers want to believe that all you Lutherans know that your forgiveness is blood-bought through the death of Jesus. We hope that you Christians know and believe that God's forgiveness is given to you by Him as His free gifts through water, Word, bread and wine. So, since you know all that, they left it for this senior preacher to proclaim to you *the old Gospel, salvation by grace alone through Christ, the Son of God, whose blood cleanses us from all sins.*<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

<sup>7</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

<sup>8</sup> Dau, W.H.T. ed. *Ebenezer. Reviews of the Work of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of a Century.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922, 285.

That having been said, in many congregations, Jesus' sin-pardoning blood is not only often put into the background or entirely forgotten, but is often despised, yea, even, vilified as "blood theology," unworthy of being believed by the modern educated and refined person of this century.<sup>9</sup> It seems that people in some churches prefer to hear of *Christ our model, the most perfect man, to imitate, such brings happiness and bliss here and hereafter.*<sup>10</sup>

Does that sound like that which you've heard from those who don't want preachers to spend so much time on declaring the Blood that Pardons? Would it surprise you to hear that but 19 of the 91 words before that question were written in 1922?

Faithful preachers then were decrying the proclamation of Christ not as the One Who shed His blood to pardon our sins, but as a good man to emulate, *to follow His footsteps, to conquer sin, to lead a holy life, to love God and our neighbor, and in this way to work out our salvation... the end result of such preaching is death, eternal death.*<sup>11</sup>

We pray that such is preaching is not heard in our congregations. We desire to hear of the Christ of the Scripture. He is the one whom the 3/4 of an hour sermon to the Hebrews declares. That proclamation declares the Christ Who shed His blood to cleanse us from all sins, to declare us, you, right with the Father. Hear again of Him whose blood grants you pardon, the Christ of the Word of God:

*Then, on account of this, Mediator (of a) New Covenant He remains – since (a) death had occurred for (the) redemption of the ones who had transgressed the first Covenant – for the Promise they may*

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

*have received, that is for the ones having been called to the eternal inheritance.*<sup>12</sup>

Christ Jesus offered Himself spotless to God. He gave His own blood to wash your conscience pure from works such as following Him as your example in trying work out your salvation. He became the One who stands between you and the Holy Father. His blood covers over all the sins you committed, and still fall into, that violate His First Covenant, that which was summed up in Words engraved in stone. He shed His blood to grant you the Promise of the eternal inheritance. That His death put into effect for you. The sermon to the Hebrews continues:

*For where there is a covenant, death of necessity must be proved of the one who made the covenant; for a covenant by men's death has been established, since it does not continue to be established when the one remains living who made the covenant.*<sup>13</sup>

Who died that God's New Covenant might be established? Jesus: you got it! Our Hebrews sermon continues:

*Wherefore, not even the first covenant without blood had been inaugurated; for when every command was spoken according to the Law by Moses to all the people, he, having taken the blood of the calves [and the goats], with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and certainly with it the Book and all the people were sprinkled, saying,*

*"This is the blood of the Covenant which He commanded to us, the God."*

*And, the tent and also all the vessels of the public service by the blood likewise were sprinkled.*<sup>14</sup>

Here the sermon establishes that God put His covenant with Moses and the Israelites into effect with the sprinkling of blood. Remember, in

---

<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 9:15.

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 9:16-17.

<sup>14</sup> Hebrews 9:18-21.

that blood is the life of the flesh, as we heard earlier. He commanded Moses to read the Word, and then to use the elements of the Old Covenant cleansing rites to cast the blood upon the altar and the people. They would bear the spots of the blood all their days (there was no Stain Stick or Shout back them). They could look upon the blood stains, and know the price of their redemption from sin and all transgression.

Having done all that, Moses then spoke to them words that were used by Jesus in establishing His New Covenant. That is why the Mark reading was put into our ears today. He who is greater than Moses did more that sprinkle blood of bulls and goats upon His blood-bought people. He gives His own blood, the life-giving Promise of the eternal inheritance, into their, into your, mouths to bring you forgiveness and strengthening until you receive the completed Promise – eternal life in a New Heavens and earth. Our sermon from Hebrews concludes with our theme text:

*Indeed, one may say, almost all things with blood continue to be cleansed according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood, forgiveness does not continue to happen.* <sup>15</sup>

Forgiveness continues to happen through the shedding of blood. In the New Covenant era, it is not given through the blood of calves and goats, but through the precious blood of Jesus. His is the blood that cleanses you from all the uncleanness that sin brings. Each and every transgression of the Law you commit continues to be pardoned by the Blood of Jesus. That is why we are freed to soon sing,

*Believing, we rejoice to see the curse removed, We bless the*

---

<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

*Lamb with cheerful voice And sing His bleeding love.*<sup>16</sup>

**The peace which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Lent I and II Wednesday (A sermon in The Blood, Lenten series)

Psalm 43:1-5; Hebrews 9:15-22; Mark 14:21a, 22-23

February 21, 2018 @ Catalina Lutheran Church

February 28, 2018 @ Faith Lutheran Church and School

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

***Soli Deo Gloria***

---

<sup>16</sup> Watts, Isaac. "Not All the Blood of Beasts," *Lutheran Service Book #431*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 2006.