

THE CLEANSING BLOOD OF CHRIST

1 Peter 1:17-25

Introduction

You may have heard this story before, but it bears repeating:

[From Illy] ... SAVED FROM WHAT?

Theologian Emery Bancroft wrote, "Some years ago a Parliament of Religion was held in Chicago, in connection with the World's Fair. At that Parliament the great ethnic faiths of the world were represented. One by one the leading men arose and spoke for Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and [Islam]. Then Dr. Joseph Cook of Boston, who had been chosen to represent Christianity, arose to speak. 'Here is Lady Macbeth's hand,' he said, 'stained with the foul murder of Duncan. See her as she perambulates through the halls and corridors of her palatial home, stopping to cry, "Out [cursed] spot! Out I say! Will these hands ne'er be clean?"' Then turning to those seated on the platform, he said, 'Can any of you who are so anxious to propagate your religious systems offer any cleansing efficacy for the sin and guilt of Lady Macbeth's crime?' There was an oppressive silence... Only the blood of Christ ... can purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

"There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

In our Scripture passage today, the Apostle Peter speaks of the powerful ministry and efficacy of the blood of Christ. Before we come to the table of the Lord today to partake of the bread and the cup, which remind us of the body and blood of our Lord, I would like to take a few moments to study the words of Peter and let God's Word challenge our hearts to prepare us for the Lord's Supper.

There are two pictures given in this passage, each beginning with a command, supported by the rationale, followed up by an explanation.

Redeemed by His Blood

Go through vv. 17-21, esp vv. 18-19.

v. 17 - the command - live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

v. 18 - the rationale - redemption

1 Cor. 6:19-20 – "You are not your own; you were bought with a price."

→ Illustration - boy and his sailboat

Once there was a little boy who built a sailboat. He built the sail and had it all fixed up, tarred and painted. He took it to the lake and pushed it in hoping it would sail. Sure enough a wisp of breeze filled the little sail and it billowed and went rippling along the waves. Suddenly before the little boy knew it, the boat was out of his reach, even though he waded in fast and tried to grab it. As he watched it float away, he hoped maybe the breeze would shift and it would come sailing back to him. Instead he watched it go farther and farther until it was gone. When he went home crying, his mother asked, "What's wrong, didn't it work?" And he said, "It worked too well."

Some time later, the little boy was downtown and walked past a pawnshop. There in the window he saw the boat. It was unmistakably his, so he went in and said to the proprietor, "That's my boat." He walked to the window, picked it up and started to leave with it. The owner of the shop said, "Wait a minute, Sonny. That's my boat. I bought it from someone." The boy said, "No, it's my boat. I made it. See." And he showed him the little scratches and the marks where he hammered and filed. The man said, "I'm sorry, Sonny. If you want it, you have to buy it." The poor little guy didn't have any money, but he worked hard and saved his pennies. Finally, one day he had enough money. He went in and bought the little boat. As he left the store holding the boat close to him, he was heard saying, "You're my boat. You're twice my boat. First you're my boat 'cause I made you and second you're my boat 'cause I bought you!"

(Jesus the Savior, I.H. Marshall, IVP, 1990, p. 239ff)

You, too, belong to God. He made you, but you became separated from Him through disobedience and have been sold into slavery. But God has paid the redemption price, and it was not paid with corruptible things, but with the blood of His own son, Jesus Christ. And so if you have received His forgiveness and cleansing, you once again belong to Him.

But all of this is made possible by the blood of Christ. Note the description of Christ in vv. 20-21. Read verses.

Born Again by the Spirit of God

There is another important analogy made in these verses. Go through vv. 22-23.

v. 22 - the command - love one another with a pure heart

v. 23 - the rationale - you were born again of imperishable seed - make the analogy of the seed - conception takes place by the planting of a

seed - results in birth. That seed is corrupted with a sinful nature passed down from Adam. It is a corrupt seed.

But the new birth results from the planting of a seed that is not corrupt. That seed is Jesus Christ, who is planted within us by the Spirit of God. This conception and new birth takes place through the ministry of the living and enduring word of God.

Again note the description given in vv. 24-25 - read verses.

Conclusion

And so the blood of Christ and the Word of God work together to first of all pay the necessary price to redeem us, to buy us out of slavery to sin, and then to give us a new birth, not like our first birth, but a spiritual birth, conceived by an incorruptible seed; a birth by which we gain spiritual life and are reconciled to God.

Application questions -

- Are you born again? Do you have assurance of the new birth in your life?
- If I were to ask you when you were born again, could you tell me? It is not something that you just kind of slide into. It is a birth; it happens at a specific point. Do you know beyond any doubt that it has happened in your life?

My greatest fear - judgment - not being clear enough. The Bible makes it very clear that the new birth is not something that happens automatically to those who are born into the church family.

John 1:12-13 "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

You may have been brought up in the church, you may have attended camp, you may have been baptized, but none of these things guarantee the new birth. Maybe you're unsure - you thought you were a Christian, but you don't have any real foundation on which to stand - this could be your hour of decision. You can say right now, no matter what has happened in the past, right now I want to settle my account

with God. Then you can mark down in your Bible this date – August 7, 2016 and when doubts come and Satan tries to get you to question the reality of your faith you can point back to this date and say with assurance, I know I am a Christian, because on Aug. 7, 2016 I confessed my sin to God, and asked Him to forgive me and come into my life, and that day I was born again.

Lead into communion – Jesus Christ himself gave us this special service to remind us of his blood that was shed to redeem us, to buy us out of the slave market of sin.

Go to 1 Cor. 11:23ff