

Precious Blood

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Psalter: 401:1, 4

Scripture: 1 Peter 1

Psalter: 391

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:18–19

Psalter: 280:1, 4

Psalter: 82

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

—1 Peter 1:18–19

One little creature mentioned in Proverbs 30:25–28 is the coney, often called a rock rabbit today. It is a feeble animal, the wise man says. It has no means of self-defense. Hawks and other animals of prey have immediate access to the coney when it leaves its home in the rocks. So at the slightest sign of danger, conies flee to the rocks. They burrow into the rocks so deeply that even a snake can scarcely follow them. Similarly, believers are to make their home in the Rock, Christ Jesus, to find safety.

Once, after preaching a sermon on conies, I was in Australia, where I saw conies sitting on a pile of rocks. I reached for my camera, but the conies immediately disappeared. I thought, this is the way we as Christians ought to be. We are defenseless as conies without Jesus, the rock of our salvation. We should flee to Christ at the slightest sign of danger.

Today let us consider what it means to shelter in Jesus as our Rock of salvation, how we are to do this, and why it is important to do so. Our text is 1 Peter 1:18–19, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” We will focus on two words: *precious* and *blood*, considering the centrality, cost, and capability of Christ’s blood.

The Centrality of Christ’s Blood

If something is precious, it is valuable. The Bible uses the word *precious* seventy-five times. It speaks of human life as precious. One of the captains sent to seize Elijah says, “O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be *precious* in thy sight” (2 Kings 1:13). The blood and the death of saints are called precious. Psalm 72:14 says, “*Precious* shall their blood be in his sight,” and Psalm 116:15 says, “*Precious* in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

The redemption of the soul is also precious, says Psalm 49:8. Proverbs 3:15 says wisdom is more precious than rubies. Psalm 139:17 says the thoughts and loving kindnesses of our God are precious. In 2 Peter 1:1 and 4, the apostle Peter speaks of faith and God’s promises as precious, and in 1 Peter 1:7, he describes even our trials as precious, for they refine us as gold. But most of all, the Bible speaks of Jesus as precious. He is precious in His sympathy, precious to those who believe, precious as the cornerstone of our salvation, and precious in shedding His blood. Nothing is more precious than the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Bible speaks of blood 450 times. Blood is precious, for it is the most valuable thing in our bodies. Blood is essential to life. Our bodies may be perfectly framed, but

if drained of blood, we die. The life of the flesh is in the blood, the Bible says.

Spiritually, the blood of Jesus Christ received by faith gives us spiritual life. In God's eyes, blood is sacred. Twice Hebrews 9 tells us that God cannot be approached without blood (vv. 7, 18). "Without shedding of blood [there] is no remission" of sin (Heb. 9:22). That is the primary message of the entire Bible. When Adam and Eve fell, God shed blood to clothe them and cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:21). In Genesis 4, God showed He was pleased with Abel's sacrifice, which involved sacrificial blood. Hebrews 11:4 confirms that there can be no approach to God, no fellowship with Him by faith, no enjoyment of His favor, apart from blood.

When Noah was released from the ark, the first thing he did was offer bloody sacrifices of thanksgiving to God. God's establishment of a covenant relationship with Abraham involved the slaughter of animals that were cut in two and laid in two paths. God Himself walked between the carcasses, sealing the covenant with blood. Later, in Genesis 22, Abraham and Isaac went up Mount Moriah to offer a sacrifice. Initially the sacrifice was to be Isaac, but God provided the blood of a ram instead, teaching us the great principle of substitution. As the ram took Isaac's place to appease the wrath of God, so Jesus Christ takes our place by His blood shedding.

Exodus is a blood-soaked book. In it God commands the Israelites to sprinkle their door frames with the blood of a lamb so that He might pass by their homes without killing their firstborn. Again, life is preserved by means of a substitute. Fifty days later, this lesson is reinforced when Israel reaches Sinai. God gives His law out of the covenant of grace to show His people how they should live. To ratify that covenant, sacrificial blood must be sprinkled, first on the altar, then on the book of the covenant, represent-

ing God's side of the covenant. Then it is sprinkled on the people, with the declaration, "Behold the blood of the covenant" (Exod. 24:8). We can only imagine being in that crowd as the blood of sacrifices falls upon us, and we cry out in response, "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (v. 7).

The foundation and power of God's covenant is in sacrificial blood. Only by blood can God and man be brought into covenant fellowship. That is reinforced by God's prescriptions to Israel on how to worship Him. Blood is central to worship. The first thing visible to an Israelite who approached the tabernacle or temple was the altar of burnt offering. That is where the sprinkling of blood continued without ceasing from morning to evening. The worshiper would see blood upon the altar, on the sides of the altar, and flowing around the altar. When the priest entered the Holy Place, the most conspicuous piece of sacred furniture was the golden altar of incense, which was repeatedly sprinkled with blood.

The Holy of Holies was unapproachable without blood. Once a year, the High Priest entered that sacred place walking backwards, sprinkling blood behind him and then on the altar seven times. He was required to do that before he could finally turn to face the holy God of Israel who dwelt in the *shekinah* cloud above the mercy seat, asking Him to turn away His wrath from the sins of the people. The message is clear: Israel cannot worship God without blood. Blood is at the center of biblical worship.

Wherever you look in the Old Testament—be it at the birth of a child, in the highest festival, or in the deepest repentance—the way to life and fellowship with God is through blood. Genesis 2 and Ezekiel 18:30 indicate the wages of sin are death. Substitutionary, bloody sacrifice is the only way to escape death.

The New Testament also teaches this. When John

spoke of Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). When Jesus spoke of Himself, He said His death on the cross was the reason He came into the world. His bloody death was the necessary condition of the redemption that He came to bring. He linked the salvation of sinners to His own blood shedding. His death gave birth to life. That is what we must focus on when we speak of the precious blood of Christ. The expression “blood of Christ” is not intended to mean something crass or crude but to serve as a synonym for the gospel, for redemption, and for the salvation of sinners. The blood of Jesus is a synonym for His suffering and obedience that satisfied the justice of God so that He could justify those who believe in Jesus.

Jesus repeatedly taught that His blood must be believably and experientially received if we are to be saved. He said, “Except ye drink my blood, ye have no life in you.” “He that drinketh my blood hath everlasting life.” “My blood is drink indeed.” “He that drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him” (cf. John 6). When He instituted the Lord’s Supper, Jesus said, “This cup is the new testament in my blood that is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it” (cf. Matt. 26:28). So Jesus confirmed the teaching of the Old Testament offerings that we can live only through death, in this case the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and by experientially receiving that death as a substitute for our own.

Paul’s epistles underscore the centrality of Christ’s blood. Paul repeatedly uses such expressions as “being now justified in his blood,” “faith in his blood,” “the blood of his cross,” “redemption through his blood,” and “made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

The author of Hebrews repeatedly speaks of Christ’s blood. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place,

having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12). “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?” (v. 14). And Hebrews 12:24 says that you are come “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Peter, too, reminds his readers that they were elect “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:2). And John declares that “the blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). He even writes of seeing Christ’s blood in heaven. He saw a Lamb slain on the throne and heard the elders sing before Him, “Thou art worthy;...for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood” (Rev. 5:9). John describes the redeemed as those who “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). He says the redeemed overcame Satan “by the blood of the Lamb” (12:11).

From the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, from the closing of the gates of Eden to the opening of the gates of the heavenly Zion, blood runs through Scripture, uniting all. Substitutionary blood gloriously restores what sin destroyed. Through His blood, the second Adam undid what the first Adam did, and so He reconciles sinners to God.

In Germany, there is one particular church building where a beautiful lamb is carved in stone above its entrance. A man at work on the steeple of the church once lost his footing and plunged to the ground below. A flock of sheep happened to be grazing there, and the fall of the man was broken by a lamb. The lamb was killed, but the man’s life was saved. Out of gratitude, he cut into the stone over the doors of the church the lamb that saved

his life. So, too, you and I, friends, are fallen in Adam and prone to sin. But if we become believers, we are saved from the penalty of sin and death by Christ, God's lamb, who is without blemish and without spot. He rescues us from danger by interposing His precious blood.

Are you resting in Christ's atoning blood for salvation? Do you believe that God's justice is satisfied only by means of that blood? Do you value the blood of God's Son as highly as your heavenly Father does? Do you realize that all peace and holiness and hope of heaven are bound up in the atoning blood of Immanuel? Or are you a Christian in name only, taking this blood for granted, seeing little or no beauty in Christ and His atoning sacrifice? You do not meditate about Christ's blood. You do not treasure it. You do not realize, as Octavius Winslow says, that "there is no acceptance for the sinner, no cleansing for the guilty, no pardon for the penitent, no sanctification for the believer, but in the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God."

Let us pray for grace to know and experience more fully the power of Christ's blood. Ask Christ to open your understanding of the efficacy of His blood, to grasp its necessity, to embrace its satisfaction, and to receive its beauty. Trust Christ to give you deeper insight into His blood, that you may think of His blood as God thinks of it. Trust the eternal High Priest to work out in you the merits of His blood so that you may abide in the sanctuary of God's presence. Ask for grace to draw nearer to God to meditate more on His blood shedding, that His blood may become spirit, life, power, and truth to you.

The Cost of Christ's Blood

The Bible speaks not only of the centrality of Christ's blood but also of the cost of His blood. Though salvation is free to us, we must never forget its costliness to God. It cost the Father the death of His own Son. It cost the Son

suffering and death. It cost the Spirit the constant work of applying the blood of the Son to sinners.

God had only one Son, and He gave that Son for people who rebelled against Him. He gave the best He had for the worst He could find. Oh, what a price the triune God paid in the blood shedding of Immanuel! When we think of the blood of Jesus, we should think not only of His circumcision as an infant and His sufferings throughout thirty-three years, but especially of the last days of His life when he endured unspeakable suffering in Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha, experiencing the essence of hell.

In Gethsemane, Christ's blood exuded from the pores of His skin as He crawled on the ground like a worm and cried out, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39). Jesus was torn by the grief of being separated from His three best friends, who slept while He agonized with God. He also began to experience God's abandonment and wrath against sin. The death He began to taste was God's unmitigated hatred of our sins, dear believer. Our sins sank Christ to the ground. Our sins made Him crawl in agony. Our sins made Him cry out, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38). Our sins spilled His blood in Gethsemane.

Gabbatha involved more blood shedding. Christ's enemies crowned Him with thorns, which pierced his skull. When I was in Israel a few years ago, a tour guide let me cut a snippet of a thorn-bush branch. I put it in my wife's knapsack, but it kept pricking through. Merely touching it drew blood, so we eventually threw the branch away. Imagine making a circlet of these thorns, then smashing it down into our Savior's skull. Blood must have gushed from the top of His head. These thorns were the price of our sins.

Next, soldiers fixed Jesus to a post and began scourging Him with a device we can best describe as a mop

intermixed with oxtail bones. They hit Him as many as forty times, each time catching flesh with the bones and leaving wounds that wept rivulets of blood. Bleeding from His head and His back, Jesus then had to carry His cross to Golgotha—all because of our sins.

At Golgotha, Jesus was put on a cross beam, and nails were pounded into His hands and feet. Our sins, dear believer, put Him there.

The cross was lifted and put into the ground. Reportedly there is no pain worse than when the cross hits the bottom of the dug hole. Pain screeches through the body hung on the cross, the flesh tears, and more blood is shed. Jesus then hung there for six long hours. After three hours of unspeakable pain, He entered the abyss of unanswered prayer (Ps. 22:1–2) and unmitigated shame, when God the Father “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus experienced something far worse than physical suffering in the last three hours of His life. He felt the agony of being abandoned by His Father. The cry of dereliction, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” was pressed from Him in the agony of separation. In the midst of darkness, when His Father turned from Him; when heaven, earth, and hell rejected Him; Jesus Christ suffered alone for your sins and mine. In this hour of horror, Immanuel poured out His soul in the bloody death on the cross.

During these final hours, a sense of sin dominated Jesus’ consciousness to a frightening degree. In Gethsemane and in the first and last words on the cross, Jesus called on God as His Father. But then He cried, “Eli, eli”—“my God, my God.” In that awful moment, He felt sin even more intensely than His Sonship. Jesus felt less like the Beloved in whom God is well pleased, and more

like the chief of sinners who was cursed as vile, foul, and repulsive.

Isaac Ambrose, a great Puritan author, says we should follow the trail of Christ's blood all the way to the cross and through the next six hours, reminding ourselves wherever we see blood that this was done for *our sins*. Oh, what a price our sins have cost the precious Savior! Every sin I still commit is another injury to this precious Savior. How His precious blood ought to teach us to hate sin and never to trivialize grace because it is free. Let us heed Paul's warning not to abound in sin because we are saved by grace. We must remember what our sin cost the Lord Jesus Christ. He had no comfort at Golgotha. When Jesus most needed encouragement at Golgotha, no voice from heaven cried, "This is my beloved Son." When He most needed reassurance, no one said, "I am well pleased." No dove descended from heaven to symbolize peace; no angel was sent to strengthen Him; no "well done, thou good and faithful servant" resounded in His ears. He was in a far country, hanging alone in the naked flame of His Father's wrath.

The women who supported Jesus throughout His ministry were silent. The terrified disciples were a long way off. Jesus walked the way of suffering alone in darkness. Not a ray of light came to Him; only the Father's displeasure. Instead of love, there was wrath. Instead of affection, there was coldness. Instead of support, there was opposition. The Son's cries did not bring the Father back. God the Father so distanced Himself from the Son that eventually the Father disappeared. The Son cried out, "My God—why?" He kept pursuing the Father, yet the Father chose to retreat. No amount of pursuit would catch up with the Father. Jesus was alone. Deserted. Forsaken.

Every detail of this abandonment shouts to us, "This is what God thinks of our sin!" Every detail declares the

irrationality, heinousness, and dread nature of sin. Jesus' suffering at Golgotha is the essence of what God thinks of sin. It is the price the God-man has to pay for sin. Oh, what a costly price is the shedding of His precious blood!

Consider also the value of Christ's precious blood. It does what no one else's blood can do—not the blood of believers, or of animals, or of angels. Christ's blood alone could offer satisfaction for sin. His precious blood is *intrinsically* valuable. The divine Son suffered as perfect man, shedding His blood, which is of infinite value. Christ is the tabernacle of the Deity; in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. He is the perfect image of the Father. His blood is precious to the Father for He is Jehovah's favorite, His only begotten Son. His blood is precious in the Father's eternal plan, not only because of God's parental affection for His Son, but because the Father views the salvation of His elect as fully and forever secured by that blood. That blood is precious to the Father, precious to every pardoned sinner on earth, and precious to every glorified soul before the throne. There is nothing more precious in this world than Christ's blood.

The Capability of Christ's Blood

Jesus' blood is precious also because of what it accomplishes. Christ's blood, dear believers, procures inexpressibly great and precious blessings for us. Consider the following:

1. Christ's blood accomplishes *full-orbed redemption* for us. Peter says Christ's blood is precious because it redeems us. It buys us back from the way of sin. It is our ransom price. You have been redeemed, dear believer, not with silver or gold or mere tradition, but with the precious blood of Christ.

- You are redeemed to be set free from the slavery of sin. By Christ's blood, the chains of sin have been broken and have fallen from you. You are set free in the Lord to serve God, free from the meaningless life of the unredeemed, and free from spiritual bondage. You have the spirit of adoption whereby you cry, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:14–16). By Christ's blood, you may kill sin and enter into the very family of God as Christ's brother or sister.
- You are redeemed to be set free from the curse of the law. By His precious blood, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," says Galatians 3:13. By blood, we are freed from the penalty and dreadful thundering of the law. We can now read the law with gratitude.
- You are redeemed to be set free from the enslaving power of Satan. By His blood and death, Christ destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14b).
- You are redeemed to be set free from the bondage of everlasting death. By Christ's blood, we who are believers are set free from the chains that bind us to future doom. Death loses its sting and becomes a passageway to life eternal (Rev. 21:1–9).

Christ's blood was given to buy us back from sin, the law, Satan, and death. Redemption is a magnificent exhibition of divine glory. By means of Christ's blood, God glorifies His holy attributes in saving the lost; sin is pardoned, not bypassed. Justice is magnified and iniquity is punished. Mercy and love triumph in harmony with righteousness. God proves He is inexorably just and One who lavishes love upon sinners. Truly, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

2. Christ's blood accomplishes *complete atonement* for us. By Christ's blood, we become one with God again. Christ gave His blood as our atonement price.

- That atonement covers all kinds of sin. Atoning sacrifices under the law made no provision for willful, reckless, presumptuous sins. But Christ's blood atones for all sins and blasphemies, Scripture says.
- That atonement covers all kinds of sinners. Even chief sinners are covered, says 1 Timothy 1:15. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (cf. Heb. 10:11–14). Christ is the propitiation for our sins. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5b).

*Now freed from sin, I walk at large;
The Savior's blood's my full discharge,
At His dear feet my soul I'll lay
A sinner saved, and homage pay.*

The blood of Christ is precious to us because it is the blood of our great High Priest, Shepherd, Friend, Elder Brother, Kinsman, and Redeemer, in whom all salvation is to be found (Acts 4:12).

3. Christ's blood *justifies and cleanses* us. Paul said to the Romans: “Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:9). God makes the unjust just through Jesus' blood.

Christ literally died in our place, dear believers. We are justified through His active obedience to the law and His passive obedience in paying for our sin. When we receive this gospel by faith, as the Heidelberg Catechism says, God regards us as never having committed sin (Q. 60).

Christ's blood is precious because unspeakable peace flows out of our justification in Christ (Rom. 5:1). We

experience peace with God, peace with Christ, peace with the Holy Spirit, peace with those around us, and even peace with nature. Heaven and earth seem to meet and kiss each other.

John says, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). That may seem strange to us, since blood stains clothing. But instead of staining us with filth, the blood of Christ washes out the stain of sin. Instead of defiling our souls, it washes them white as snow. You who have felt this cleansing power know what I mean. You once felt as black as the outer darkness of hell, but in the moment when Christ’s blood was applied to you, your soul felt washed white as heaven. Your soiled life was made clean, for sin disappears as soon as Christ’s blood falls on the conscience. Divine pardon purges us of all the stains of accumulated years. You know the truth of the promise: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. 1:18b).

*There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

4. Christ’s blood *sanctifies* us. Through the process of sanctification, we are made holy to serve God. Blood separated the Israelites from the Egyptians. Likewise, Christ’s blood calls us to separate from the world’s sin, the world’s religion, the world’s sense of goodness, and the world’s vileness. The more we rely on Christ’s blood, the more we will be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Let us pray with Charles Spurgeon, “Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, burn up the love of the world! Let Thy death be the death of my sin. Let Thy life be the life of everything that is gracious, heavenly, eternal!”

- Precious blood provides a *melting power*. Nothing can melt the soul like the blood of Christ. Nothing is so humbling as that He “loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). When our souls melt by the Spirit’s powerful application of Christ’s blood, we can understand Zechariah 12:10, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.” Often we complain that our hearts are hard, but seldom do we realize that nothing can melt them like the blood of Jesus.

*Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone,
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,
Soon dissolves a heart of stone.*

- Precious blood provides *pacifying power*. In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, John Bunyan says the law is like a maid sweeping dust in the chamber of the soul until the dust of sin clouds the soul and threatens to choke its spiritual life. Only the precious blood of Christ can remove the dust, clean the room, and quiet the soul. Christ’s blood is soothing balm for a sin-distressed conscience.
- Precious blood provides *invigorating power*. Just as the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper provide us with spiritual nourishment, so the blood of Jesus nourishes our faith, offers us hope, gives us joy, and makes us sing. There is no cordial for the heart like the blood of Jesus. “Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved,” God says (Song of Sol. 5:1b). No wine makes glad the heart so much as that which flows from the sacred cup of Christ’s substitution. To meditate on Christ’s atoning sacrifice is the surest path to comfort.

5. Christ's blood *preserves and assures us*, and *makes us victorious*.

- Christ's blood provides *confirming power*. Jesus' blood is the blood of the new covenant. The blood of Jesus is like His last will and testament. It is the great seal of His testament. His covenant blood confirms and assures us of our salvation.
- Christ's blood provides *intercessory power*. Christ sprinkles His precious blood within the Holy of Holies in the heaven of heavens.

*The wounds of Christ for us
Incessantly do plead.*

Christ pleads, by His precious blood, with continual, personal intercession. He lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

- Christ's blood provides *victorious power*. As Revelation 12:11 says, "They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb." Those who cling to the blood of Jesus have a weapon that makes hell tremble, heaven subservient, and earth obedient. Sin dies at the presence of Christ's blood; doubts and fears flee. Heaven opens its gates by that blood. Hell would lose its grip if that blood could operate there. Truly, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us by giving His own blood.

There is no victory without conflict, but there is true victory through faith in the blood of the Lamb. Oh, what glorious victory we have now and forever through the blood of the Lamb!

6. Christ's blood *opens heaven* for us. By Christ's blood:

- *We are made fit for heaven*. By Christ's blood, we are brought into agreement with His will. We learn to delight

in His fellowship, and, through Him, to delight also in fellowship with the saints. Christ's blood binds us together. Speaking of Jew and Gentile, Paul said: "He hath made both one through the blood of Christ." What eternal, worldwide union is possible when we meet at the foot of the cross!

When we look away from Christ's precious blood, however, we quickly find ourselves in darkness. An elderly minister, Hugh McPhail, was on his deathbed. Unable to look to Christ's blood, he feared that he would die as a castaway. Friends attempted to comfort him in vain. Finally, one night, he had a dream. He heard music and saw the Old Testament saints walking to heaven waving palm branches of victory and singing God's praises. As the gates of heaven opened, McPhail was asked, "Can you go in with Abraham, Jacob, and David—all of whom fell into serious sins?" "No, Lord," McPhail responded, "I am a far greater sinner than they are."

Next, the New Testament saints passed by. McPhail could not follow Peter, who had denied Christ, and Thomas, who had doubted Christ. The Church Fathers came next, then the Reformers, the Puritans, and the Covenanters. McPhail could not go with any of them. Suddenly, he saw believers from his own congregation approaching. Though he well knew their faults and sins, he couldn't go in with them, either, saying, "I am a greater sinner than them all."

Finally, he saw a figure walking alone to the celestial gates. "Who is he, Lord?" McPhail cried out. He was told, "This is Manasseh, who filled the streets of Jerusalem with the blood of the saints from one end to the other, but he too is going in by the blood of Jesus. Can't you go in with him?"

McPhail then awoke from his dream. He realized that he had been looking to himself for fitness rather than to

the blood of Christ. He called for his wife and asked her to invite his friends to visit him again so he could tell them, “There is room and fitness in the blood of Jesus also for me to go in to the heavenly gates of glory.”

We too must learn that no sinner is too old, too hard, or too sinful to find entrance into heaven by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God teach us to sing:

*And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

- *We enter heaven.* Christ is our only altar, our only sacrifice, and our only entrance into heaven. When He comes again, the trumpet will sound, the dead will rise, and everyone will surround the great white throne. There, where God sees Christ’s blood, He will pass by in avenging justice. Sheltered under Christ’s blood, believers will be washed from every stain of sin. Not a drop of divine wrath will fall upon them. They will be part of the heavenly choir that sings, “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” (Rev. 1:5–6). Oh, the joy of that moment when we find Christ to be all in all!

- *We enjoy the benefits of heaven.* Christ’s blood is our passport to worship, service, and fellowship in the celestial city, where there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more night, no more death, no more curse, and, best of all, no more sin.

Recently, I was preaching in Northern Ireland about how God’s people will one day enter into glory with un-

stained souls and perfect bodies. I said death will be like a wheelchair that will roll us into the presence of our Savior where wheelchairs will no longer be needed. Afterwards, an elderly lady, walking with two canes, approached me. Slowly raising one cane she said, “I won’t need this up there.” She smiled as she lifted the other cane. “I won’t need this one, either,” she said. Redeemed from every infirmity by the blood of Christ, we will rejoice in singing the Lamb’s praises. Oh, happy day, when our mortality puts on immortality, our corruption incorruption, and we are forever with the Lord!

- *We find subject matter for heaven.* Christ’s blood provides the subject matter of praise and song in heaven, even by great sinners, such as Adam, Manasseh, and Saul of Tarsus. As Revelation 5:9–10 says, “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Let us finish with three points of application:

First, let us remember that *Christ’s precious blood is all-powerful*. It does not fail to release all whom Christ intends to release. Christ paid the ransom for many slaves. His blood was not a mere deposit or part of the ransom, leaving the sinner to pay the balance. No, He paid it in full, and He always gets what He paid for. Yet, He did not pay for every slave, for if He had, then everyone would be saved. Though He offers His blood to all, He sovereignly and justly passes some by, leaving them in their hell-deserving state.

Second, let us remember that *Christ’s precious blood is motivated by love*. Christ’s blood is precious not only

because it is worth much, but also because He loves much. When you say to a dear one, “my dear, precious daughter,” or “my dear, precious spouse,” you are reflecting not on the person’s *value*, but on *love*. Value Christ’s blood for love’s sake.

Oh, dear believers, let us stop living below our privileges in Christ’s blood. Let us stop hugging the chains of sin. The Lord of glory toiled, bled, and died to tear those chains asunder so that we could know the powerful freedom of being sons and daughters in Christ.

Third, let us remember that *no sin is worse than despising Christ’s precious blood*. If you do not know Jesus, you are despising His sacrificial blood. You are missing what life is all about. Oh, stop rejecting this blood, which is still being offered to you today! Hear these words of God: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).

I read recently about a shepherd boy who brought his sheep to a cave one evening because of a ferocious storm. The next morning, he saw that the central viaduct of a bridge was washed away by the storm. Knowing that a train was coming, the boy tore his way through the bushes. Bruised and breathless, he reached the track just in time to wave down the train. The conductor, however, waved the boy away and kept the train going. The boy fell onto the tracks. The conductor hit the brakes just in time to keep the train from falling into the abyss. The people on the train were later dismayed to see the mangled body of the shepherd boy.

One passenger finally broke the silence and said, “That boy died for us. He saved our lives.”

Likewise, Jesus Christ throws Himself across the tracks

of sinners' lives to save them from sin. Why do you wave away His loving warnings? Why do you reject the only gospel that can save you? Will you rush over a crucified Jesus and once more deny His precious blood?

I do not know the enormity of your sin, but I know you may still be saved by the precious blood of Jesus. Ask for grace to repent of your wretched unbelief. Cast all your sins upon Jesus, believe in Him, and surrender to Him as Lord. Believe that our precious Savior gave His precious blood for even the greatest of sinners that they might be saved.

Let us, by the Spirit's grace, be like the conies and flee to the Rock of Ages. Let us also exhort others to flee to the Rock. Let us rely on Christ's blood and rejoice in it, saying with Joseph Irons:

*What sacred fountain yonder spring
Up from the throne of God,
And all new covenant blessings brings?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.*

*What mighty sum paid all my debt,
When I a bondman stood,
And has my soul at freedom set?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.*

*What stream is that which sweeps away
My sins just like a flood,
Nor lets one guilty blemish stay?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.*

*What voice is that which speaks for me
In heaven's high court for good,
And from the curse has set me free?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.*

1 Peter 1:18–19

*What theme, my soul, shall best employ
Thy harp before thy God,
And make all heaven to ring with joy?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.*