

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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The Precious Blood

Circumstances make things precious. The value of certain articles is increased and enhanced by the situation surrounding it. Extreme hunger makes bread precious; thirst makes water precious; poverty makes wealth precious. A person cannot truly appreciate the value of a thing until he has a real need for it.

All men have sinned (Romans 3:23), and therefore are in a state of condemnation (Romans 5:18; 8:1). This is what makes the blood of Christ so precious—because it is only through His blood that man can escape an otherwise hopeless state. Thus, the circumstances of man's condition render the blood of Christ of inestimable value—it is "precious."

Christ's blood is precious because of its redeeming power. "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not . . . with silver or gold . . . but with precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). From this passage we learn that it is out of the question for man to be able to purchase his redemption with riches. Furthermore, the Hebrew writer tells us that it cannot be effected with the blood of animals (Hebrews 10:4), but only through Christ's blood (Hebrews 9:11-12). This is because His blood, and it alone, has purchasing power; thus, Paul tells the Ephesian elders to "feed the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). This is why the blood of Christ is "precious"—it only possesses the value necessitated to negotiate man's redemption with God.

Christ's blood is also precious because of its cleansing power. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). "For if the blood of bulls and goats . . . sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14). Only the blood of Christ can affect the purity of man before God and, therefore, provide man's fellowship with God.

The value of the blood of Christ may again be seen when we contemplate its pacifying power. "For it was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:19-20). His blood brought peace between Jew and Gentile. "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were afar off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). His blood reconciles man to God—man who has broken God's law and stands with a conscience pricked with guilt.

The precious worth of Christ's blood is manifested by the boldness with which the Christian is supplied. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:19-20). It makes it possible for us to be sons of God, and therefore approach Him as ones expecting an inheritance, we "who in times past were no people, but are now the people of God" (1 Peter 2:10).

The preciousness of His blood is demonstrated in its overcoming power. "And they overcame him because of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11). Yea, through His precious blood, and it alone, can we overcome the power of Satan and his kingdom, the world—and even the fear of death. With what assurance may we sing, "There Is Power In The Blood!"

Finally then, the tremendous worth of the Savior's blood may be viewed in its song-inspiring power, which leads creatures in heaven to "sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

Sing on, ye joyful pilgrims! "Oh, now I see the crimson wave, the fountain deep and wide. Jesus my Lord, mighty to save, points to His wounded side. The stream I see from Calvary, I plunge, and O, it cleanseth me; O praise the Lord, it cleanseth me, the precious blood it cleanseth me!"

- Brent Lewis, via The Preceptor, March, 1966

Has the Glory Departed?

What's in Your Heart?

The Ark of the Covenant in Israel was symbolic. It represented the presence of the glory of God, was kept in the center of the Israelite camp, and symbolized the covenant of

Jesus Christ. It was important to keep it protected from enemies. When the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant, the glory had departed from Israel.

In 1 Samuel 4, the story is told of the death of Eli, one of Eli's sons (Phineas), and Phineas' wife, about to die in childbirth. Of all the bad news, hearing that the Ark of the Covenant was taken away was so bad that just before she died, she named her boy "Ichabod," which means "the glory has departed."

She could bear the death of her father-in-law, her husband, and herself, but the worst news was that the Philistines took the glory of God's presence. We have the valuable treasure inside our hearts in the gospel of Christ. We have a better covenant with better blessings and promises. But has the world successfully captured our glory in Christ? Have we allowed the world to come in and rob our hearts? Has the glory and the treasures of the gospel now become so small and insignificant, fading away into the distance?

Will our children learn from us that "the glory has departed?" Or, will we recapture the meaning of the cross and Jesus' resurrection? Will we "carry about in the body" (image of carrying about the Ark of the Covenant) the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that none of the bad things in life can even come close to touching our real treasure in the heart?

What are you carrying in your heart? Has the world taken the glory of Christ away from your heart? Has the glory departed? Would Christ label you "Ichabod?" Isn't this the time for the church of Christ to shine because the glory is still exciting and illuminating our hearts? What is in your heart? If the glory of Christ is gone, we must recapture it. We will be gathering around the real glory, Jesus, this morning. Will you be there? Or are you another case of Ichabod?

- Terry Wane Benton

Clippings . . .

Jesus Christ has bought us with His blood, but, alas, He has not had His money's worth! He paid for ALL, and He has had but a fragment of our energy, time and earnings. By an act of consecration, let us ask Him to forgive the robbery of the past, and let us profess our desire to be henceforth utterly and only for Him - His slaves, owning no master other than Himself.

- F.B. Meyer (1847-1929)

The New Self!

The person who is converted to Christ through belief in His gospel puts off something and puts on something else. Paul wrote,

"you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him-- ... So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." (Colossians 3:9-10, 12-14).

The spiritual "new self" is put on when the old man dies to sin (Romans 6:6; Galatians 5:24). Paul reminded the Galatian Christians, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:27). Being so clothed, Christians are to "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11). This means, as Paul explained,

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." (Romans 6:12-13).

As you can see, this change results in a different lifestyle. However the person has lived in the past, the lack of self-control, the uncontrolled passions of the flesh, the bad attitudes and dark deeds have all been forsaken. Furthermore, and equally important in this renewal, the Christian develops virtues (2 Peter 1:5-7) and displays the fruit of the Spirit in attitude and conduct (Galatians 5:22-23). He loves and serves others (1 Thessalonians 3:12), just as Christ has taught and demonstrated.

This spiritual renewal is a continuous process (1 Timothy 4:15) because no disciple becomes full grown immediately (cf. Hebrews 5:14; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). It requires development, continuing action to improve and reach maturity (cf. Ephesians 4:13, 16). This renewal was "to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." The purpose of this true knowledge is to help Christians become like Christ. May we never forget that truth! We must know what Christ is like before we can develop His traits (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). By understanding the one who has created us, we can continue to transform into His image (Romans 12:2).

And so, the message is, "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Ephesians 4:24). Are you continuing to be a new person in Christ?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Many persons tune out the voice of conscience when money begins to talk!"
 - * "The worst type of indigestion is that which comes from having to eat your own words!"
 - * "The true measure of your effectiveness is not just what you do, but also what others do because of what you have done!"
 - * "Patience, forbearance and understanding are companions to contentment!"
 - * "There's many a failure who'd quickly advance—if someone would give him a kick in the can't!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)