

Mondovi: Our Savior's & Gilmanton United Methodist Churches
11.3. 2024, 24th Sunday after Pentecost, All Saints Sunday, Rev. Hyuntae Kim, Ph.D.

The Efficacy of Christ' Blood

Hebrews 9:11-14.

Let's pray: Lord, we thank You for the gift of Jesus and the power of His blood. Open our hearts today to understand and embrace Your truth. May we draw closer to You and live in Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today, let's reconsider the prayer of confession we offer in worship each week. If our repentance truly focuses on Jesus Christ, who cleanses us, then it is well-directed repentance. True repentance isn't about fixating on our faults alone; instead, it's about turning our gaze away from our old view of the world and ourselves to fixing it on the Savior. When we redirect our hearts toward Jesus, we find hope.

Previously, I mentioned that Hebrews takes our faith to a new level. I hope that by meditating deeply on the book of Hebrews, each of us will move closer to Jesus, finding deeper love and intimacy with Him. Hebrews 9 speaks extensively about the blood of Jesus Christ. I hope today's message helps you to newly appreciate the amazing power of Christ's blood. If you've ever felt that your sins might be too great for Jesus to cleanse or wondered if He could really use someone like you, I pray today's message brings you comfort and hope. Jesus' blood is as powerful as ever and has two primary effects: it justifies us by cleansing us from sin, and it sanctifies us so we can serve God.

To understand the message in Hebrews 9, we need to look at the regulations in Leviticus 16. The author of Hebrews tells us that Christ has fulfilled the role of the high priest described in Leviticus 16. "Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come," which are spiritual righteousness and eternal life (NKJV). When the passage says that Christ came "with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands," it means Christ's own body. Think about the tabernacle built by human hands in the Old Testament days. It symbolizes the body of Christ to come. His body was not of this creation because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, not by natural lineage. Jesus, as fully human and fully God, is without sin. His body is our spiritual food, and His blood is our spiritual drink.

Verse 12 says, "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." The

sanctuary Jesus entered was not made by human hands. It was heaven itself. He entered it through His own body.

In the Old Testament, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, once a year, offering a sacrifice for his sins and those of the people. Though there were daily sacrifices, the Day of Atonement was essential because there were sins overlooked or unaddressed throughout the year that needed atonement. In this way, Jesus, as our High Priest, made a great atonement that covered a multitude of sins.

The purpose of the atonement is not simply to cleanse and save us by forgiving our sins, but to make us more holy so that we may share in God's glory. Imagine you want to serve a delicious meal, but the dish is dirty; you would need to wash it first. Simply cleaning the dish is not the ultimate goal; the dish achieves its purpose when filled with the meal. Likewise, Jesus' purpose in atoning for us with His blood was not only to cleanse but also to fill us with God's glory.

Let's examine what kind of atonement was achieved by Jesus' blood. Priests would enter the Holy Place, but not the Most Holy Place, where the High Priest alone entered once a year on the Day of Atonement, but not without blood.

The high priest first killed a calf on the altar for his own sins and those of his household. His need to atone for his own sins foreshadowed Christ, who, although sinless, took our sins upon Himself and died as if they were His own.

For the people's sins, the high priest killed a goat. While the blood of the calf and goat was being collected, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place with a censer and incense. He placed it on the Ark of the Covenant and burned incense. The smoke would have been so thick that you would not have been able to see the Mercy Seat above the Ark of the Covenant. The censer and incense symbolize prayer, the intercession of Jesus, who intercedes so that our sins are invisible to God. He interceded for us during His 33 years on earth, even on the cross. He is still interceding for us today.

After filling the Most Holy Place with smoke, the high priest sprinkled the blood once toward the people and seven times before the Ark. The one-time sprinkling represents

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Christ's one sacrifice, while the seven times symbolizes completeness. Jesus' single sacrifice covers all sins.

The high priest came out of the Most Holy Place again and went back in with the blood of the goat to make atonement for the sins of the people. The blood of the goat was sprinkled once in front of the Ark of the Covenant and then seven times on top. The blood of Jesus gradually moved from the people to the Ark of the Covenant, from the Ark of the Covenant to the mercy seat of God, bringing us closer and closer to God's throne of grace. Seven times means that full redemption, full salvation, full sanctification, and full reconciliation have been accomplished. So Christ Jesus has become our mercy seat, and we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

Afterward, the high priest went outside of the holy place, mixed the blood of the calf and goat, and applied it to the four horns of the altar, then sprinkled the altar seven times. This pattern of one and seven was repeated throughout the ritual. The altar horn has become a "horn of salvation" and a "horn of power," which is Jesus' name that is accessible to everyone. Whoever calls on his name will receive the power of salvation.

Unlike other high priests, Christ entered the Most Holy Place once for all with His own blood. Jesus' blood covers all ages and times, so how much more does it "free us from all those dead-end efforts to make ourselves respectable, so that we can live all out for God"? (The Message).

The heavenly tabernacle is Christ Himself. His body is God's holy temple. When He was in heaven, and when He came to earth, He was the temple alone, but after He was united with us through His redemptive work, we became His house. When Jesus died on the cross, His body was torn, and so was the veil leading to the Most Holy Place. Through His body, He entered the heavenly Most Holy Place, taking us with Him by the sprinkling of His blood. This heavenly tabernacle, being built by all saints, is also called the New Jerusalem.

Why is the Most Holy Place so important? It is the place of the closest intimacy with God. Not just anyone can go there. Only the holy are allowed in there. By the sprinkling of Jesus' blood, we are now permitted entry.

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The purpose of Jesus' blood isn't only forgiveness and salvation; ultimately, it is to fill us with His glory. As the bride of Christ, the Most Holy Place is the bridal chamber where the groom and bride unite.

The Bible's first mention of bloodshed had nothing to do with sin but was to create a bride. When God put Adam into a deep sleep, He took a rib, likely drawing blood, which symbolizes Christ's sacrifice to create His bride. Christ's blood not only atones for sin but creates us as His bride.

When we polish our shoes or a car, we initially remove dirt, but we also aim to make it shine. Likewise, God's holiness doesn't stop at cleansing us of sin but beautifies us as a radiant bride. The blood of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, continually cleanses our consciences so that we might serve the living God. It transforms us into holy vessels, honoring God with our lives.

The path to the Most Holy Place is open through the torn body of Christ. Wherever you are—working in the kitchen, plowing a field, or sitting at a desk—you can enter the Most Holy Place by calling on the name of Jesus. Seek intimate fellowship at the throne of grace, and may your life bring glory to God as holy vessels that have been sprinkled with His blood. Amen.

Let's pray: Lord Jesus, thank You for the incredible gift of Your blood that purifies us, bringing us into intimate fellowship with the Father. May the truth of Your sacrifice transform our lives, filling us with a deeper love and desire to serve You. Help us to walk boldly into Your presence, empowered by the cleansing You have provided. As we go forth, may we reflect Your glory in all we do. Keep us close, Lord, and let Your light shine through us. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.