



Around the Word
Bible Study
 Lent, 2016

The Blood of Christ
 Hebrews 9:15-22

**Christ, our Advocate
 and Redeemer:**

"I will glory not because I am righteous but because I am redeemed; I will glory not because I am free from sins but because my sins are forgiven me. I will not glory because I have done good nor because someone has done good to me but because Christ is my advocate with the Father and because the blood of Christ has been shed for me."

—St. Ambrose of Milan

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Session 3: "The Blood That Pardons"

Sin must be atoned for. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds in that, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account," (Heb. 4:13). Jesus Himself says, "that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned," (Matt 12:36-37). In these and other passages, Scripture brings to light the transgression into which we are born and the transgression we continue to commit, and highlights the demand that we be held accountable for it all. How do we who believe in salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone deal with these very biblical truths which seem to place the emphasis upon our need to give account for our sins? We repent and confess that we are in need of atonement; pardon. We look not to ourselves for the remedy, nor to any earthly power or authority. We do not seek merely a high priest to offer sacrifices for our sins as did those in the Old Testament. We (just like they) need a priest who can bring our sin (and all sin) to an end. Hebrews 7:27 calls to mind what it means that Jesus is our priest: "He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself."

Opening: Psalm 43

¹Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
 against an ungodly | people,*
 from the deceitful and unjust man
 de- | liver me!

²**For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
 why have you re- | jected me?***

**Why do I go about mourning
 because of the oppression of the | enemy?***

³Send out your light and your truth;
 let them | lead me;*
 let them bring me to your holy hill
 and to your | dwelling!

⁴**Then I will go to the altar of God,
 to God my ex- | ceeding joy,*
 and I will praise you with the lyre,
 O | God, my God.**

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you in turmoil with- | in me?*

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
 my salvation | and my God.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
 and to the Holy | Spirit;
 as it was in the be- | ginning,*
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read Hebrews 9:15-22

v.15: ¹⁵Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may

receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

How do Paul's words in Colossians 1:19-20 echo the theme of this verse?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-6 (especially v. 5) in light of these verses. How does Christ serving as mediator between us and God serve to inform our prayers?

v.16-17: ¹⁶For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

Where does Christ give his last will and testament (covenant) to His disciples? What is it? (see Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:25)

In the *Small Catechism*, Luther answers the question, "What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?" (with respect to the Lord's Supper) by saying, "We are told in the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sin." By these words the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation."

What is the purpose behind the testament Jesus leaves His disciples? What event puts this testament into effect? How does this help to emphasize who and what should be the center and focus of our reading of Scripture?

Read, review, or skim chapters 13-17 of St. John's Gospel. How do Jesus' words to his disciples (John 13-16) and His prayer to the Father (John 17) help to expand on the "will and testament" Jesus leaves for His disciples?

Taking all of the above together, how does the theme "The Blood that Pardons" come into play?

v.18-20: ¹⁸Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."

Read Exodus 24:1-11. What does the blood from the sacrifice allow Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the Elders to do that would otherwise have been impossible? What part did the blood play in allowing this to happen? How does this point forward to the pardon given in the blood of Christ?

The above verses from Hebrews 9 reference Exodus 24 which was already referenced earlier in this study. Read Leviticus 14:49-52, Numbers 19:18-19, and Psalm 51:7. With what activity does hyssop always seem to be associated?

Read through Psalm 51, especially verses 1, 10, & 11. Read also John 13:1-20 and note that Jesus performs this task and speaks these words in anticipation of His death on the cross. Finally, read Colossians 1:15-23, paying especially close attention to verses 19-22. With all of this in mind, what does being made clean have to do with being pardoned?

Read Genesis 9:8-17, especially verses 11 and 15. How does the flood account foreshadow the cleansing we are given in Christ, and how is this covenant God made with Noah foundational for our atonement?

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The Blood of Christ Hebrews 9:15-22

v.21-22: ²¹And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²²Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Read the account of Jesus' crucifixion in John 19. How does verse 34 in particular help connect the pardoning act of Jesus' death on the cross with the cleansing we receive by His blood?

Read Revelation 7:9-14. How is this vision of St. John already a present reality for us even as we wait for the fulfillment of all

things when Jesus returns? How can this vision be connected to Christ's shedding of blood and the forgiveness of sins, and the gifts in Christ we receive in Holy Baptism?

Read 1 John 2:1-2. What does Jesus' being our advocate have to do with our being cleansed and pardoned? Read the remainder of this chapter in 1 John. Against what danger is John warning His readers? How is it easy to forget the pardon for our sins in this life? Where would



John point us in those times?

Read John 20:24-31, noting especially verse 27. Notice that the marks of Christ's crucifixion are still present on his resurrected body. Read also Revelation 5:6, and notice that the lamb is standing even though it is doing so "even as it had been slain." Finally, notice the illustration included with this study as Christ is displaying His wounds to The Father. How do the ever-present wounds of Christ's crucifixion serve as the sign and seal of Christ's advocacy on our behalf? How do they testify to our pardon, redemption, and reconciliation to God?

Closing: Before the Throne of God Above (LSB, 574)

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