

That Bloody Cross

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There is an incident that took place during a cruel and bloody war. A commander took an oath in the presence of his troops that he would slaughter the entire population of a certain town. When the soldiers invaded this particular town, they began to slaughter everyone they could lay their hands on. There was a man hiding in a bush, watching in horror as his fellow townspeople were put to death. He watched a number of soldiers as they broke into a house, the inmates of which they put to the sword. On leaving it, one of them dipped a cloth into a pool of blood and slashed it on the door as a token to any who might follow of what had taken place inside. As quick as his feet could carry him, the man in the bush ran away to a large house in the center of town where a number of his friends were concealed and breathlessly he told them what he had just seen. At once, it flashed upon them what to do. A goat was in the yard and immediately it was killed and its blood splashed on the door. Scarcely had they closed the door, when a band of soldiers rushed into their street but when they came to the blood-marked door, they made no attempt to enter. The sword, so they thought, had already entered therein and performed its work. Even though many innocent people around that town were slain, all within the blood-marked door were saved.

This brings to mind the biblical account of the first Passover as given by Moses in Exodus, chapter 12, where the Lord instructed Moses to speak to the congregation of Israel saying, "They shall take to them every man a lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish and the whole congregation shall kill it in the evening and ye shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood." You see, friends, the children of Israel were safe in the shelter of the blood. They were in perfect safety for the Lord had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

And when I think of Christianity today and how different it is from what it was intended to be, when I hear the so-called gospel message being proclaimed in our pulpits, there is something missing and the absence of this item is tragic. Where O where is the blood? We don't preach up the blood anymore in our land today. We have made the gospel a bloodless gospel because we never preach on sin anymore. "Why that's not politically correct. We may upset somebody if we preach on sin or mention a bloody and gory cross. Why, we may offend someone and we sure wouldn't want to do that."

But the cross on Calvary was an offense. It was a scandal. That cross on Calvary wasn't a cleaned up pristine cross but we, today, have gotten out our mop buckets and have mopped up all the blood around that cross so it can be more presentable to man. But the fact remains, that cross was a cross of gore. It had the Savior's blood all running down all over it. Ephesians tells us, "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And, again, Ephesians declares, "in whom we have redemption through his blood."

Listen friends, when you start preaching the scandal of the cross in America today, you will be an object of hatred because mankind hates that bloody cross. The crowd gathers around it and cries, "We will not have this man rule over us." So we preachers get out our mops and buckets and mop up that cross before we preach it so we won't offend anybody and the gospel of our present hour is a bloodless gospel that can't save anybody because when you remove the blood from the gospel, you may as well stick Jesus back in the ground and let him stay buried in that tomb. There is no need of a resurrected Savior without the blood because the blood of Christ is what washes my sins away.

In the book of Revelation, in chapter 1:5, it states, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Did you hear that, friend? But today, a bloody cross is not a politically correct cross. We have removed the blood from our worship in our churches. We used to sing old hymns that spoke of the blood like "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," and the other old hymn "There is Power in the Blood." But we just don't believe that anymore and when we preach, we wash the cross of all that gore and blood because it just isn't presentable to our modern-day crowd. Why, they just couldn't swallow it so we dilute the gospel and clean up that cross and omit the blood and that way, we don't have to talk about sin because man's not that bad, anyway. He doesn't need to be regenerated, he just needs to be reformed a little, cleaned up a little, so he can stay in his sins and still go to heaven. That's what we tell folks.

But that bloody cross was a scandal, friend, because divine justice had to be satisfied. The only way to reconcile sinful man back to God was through that bloody cross. You see, friends, sinful man is under the damning sentence of the law and under the wrath of God. The blood of Christ is the only way out, friend. We see this in Romans, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Listen friend, the only way to have peace with God is by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That's what Colossians tells us, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross." And in Romans it speaks of that cross and the Savior's red blood was all over it because of the blackness of sin and because of the blackness of your sin, friends, because of the blackness of my sin, friend. The Apostle Peter tells it like this, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Like those men in that town, we're safe behind that blood-marked door; like the children of Israel were safe inside that blood-marked door. So, you too, friend, you'll be safe from the wrath of God when by faith you come and stand under the shelter of that precious

blood. Are you washed in the blood and born from above? Or have you become a Christian some other way? There is no other way, friend, but to come and kneel at that bloody cross and lay down your arms. Come to that bloody cross and throw down your shotgun of rebellion and turn from your sins and surrender to a King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is a risen Lord and that's where you must take him. He sits on the right hand of God the Father and he got there by way of a bloody cross.

When the Apostle Peter speaks of Jesus "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," that speaks of a sacrifice for sin. Jesus was the Lamb without blemish and without spot who was sacrificed for us upon that cross at Calvary. His shed blood stayed the sword of divine judgment for everyone who, by faith, takes shelter in it. When the soldiers came to that blood-marked door, they kept on going and slaughtered the rest of the town but those inside that blood-marked door were safe. And there was a slaughter going on in Egypt that night and there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead, but the children of Israel were safe in that shelter of blood for the Lord said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." And when God the Father sees you under the blood of his dear Son, his wrath will pass over you, friend.

The true gospel has blood in it. O Great God, I'm thankful for that bloody cross. O Lord, Jesus, where would I be today without that bloody cross? But today's modern gospel gets out its mop bucket and cleans it all up, mops up all the gore and blood by that cross and remains silent about the demands that Christ has on a man that comes savingly to him, that when a man gets saved, something happens: self is dethroned and another is enthroned there and that other is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you don't receive him as Lord, you haven't received him, friend. That bloody cross is a scandal. It upsets wicked man because wicked man does not want to throw down his shotgun of rebellion and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ with all his claims and rights on that man. You start preaching the Lordship of Christ and repentance and a bloody cross and they will surely throw bricks at you today in America. You preach up the Lordship of Jesus Christ and call sin "black" and hell "hot" and call sinful man "a rebel" and "an enemy against a holy God," and you'll have the deacons mad at you. They will be standing on the steps of the platform when you get through preaching. They'll be waiting for you and they will grab you by your ear and/or escort you out the door because American Christianity doesn't want to hear about a bloody cross because of sin; American Christianity doesn't want to hear about the demands of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. No sir, they will reject you and your message.

But if you get out your mop bucket and clean up the gospel a little and omit some offensive things, then more people can swallow it and fill our churches and pay our bills. And our churches are filled with individuals who know nothing of surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They rest on a foundation of self-righteousness and sit on the throne of their heart and rule there and drink iniquity like water because they are like that verse found in the book of Proverbs which declares, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes and yet is not washed from their filthiness." They are church members in good standing but they've never been washed in the blood.

In our verse today, the Apostle Peter declares that a Christian is one who is dead to sin and who lives in righteousness but I fear many today that fill our pews and name the name of Christ are not dead *to sin* but dead *in sin*. They are not washed in the blood because they were fed a bloodless gospel that never warned them to flee from the wrath to come, that never warned them that they who die in their sins will go to a terrible place called hell, that unless you repent, you will all likewise perish, that you must be born-again. But, today, we've gotten out our mop buckets and mopped up the duty of repentance and the necessity of regeneration. Why, there is no need when there is no blood.

Let me tell you what happened on that bloody cross, friend. The Prince of Glory died there for sinful man. Redemption took place there. Peter tells us "you were not redeemed with silver and gold" and a mopped up gospel of our day, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

You see, friends, when the early church preached the gospel, they were honest with men. They warned men about hell. They preached a Living Lord who reigns on a throne. They preached a scandalous cross that was an offense, that had blood all over it because of sin. They didn't clean up the gospel to make it more presentable to sinful man. They told men the truth. They warned men to flee from the wrath to come. There God was the God of the Bible, a God who must punish sin.

The Apostle Paul preached up that blood. In Colossians we read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even to forgiveness of sins." Paul knew how to be honest with men and warn them. "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." But, today, we have with our modern gospel removed the teeth from it. We've taken the terror out of it and the scandal of the cross out of it. We've mopped up around Calvary to such a degree that you could sit there and have your lunch, it's so pristine and pleasant. Just come to Jesus. Walk an aisle with a silly grin on your face and agree to a few facts about the death of Christ and you can join the church, stay in your sins and go to heaven some day because you were told about a sparkling clean cross that has no demands and no cost of discipleship.

But there is only one way to heaven, friend, and that is by way of a bloody cross on which the Savior died and unless you come to God by way of that cross and get under that blood and throw down your shotgun of rebellion and submit to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ on your life and obey his commands, you will die in your sins and fall into the regions of hell for all eternity. That bloody cross is where Jesus gave himself for me and it's a scandal to man, an offense because where there is a cross, there is always a crucifixion and to be a believer means to live a crucified life. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Thank you Jesus for that bloody cross. I've been lost without it.

It is time, friends, in this great land of ours that has fallen to such low levels to preach that message once again. It's time to put the blood back into the gospel, friend, even if they will hang you for it. There is power in that blood.