

Msg #151 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“Understanding Blood”

With Randy Smith

(269) 763-2114

Preparation Ministries, Inc

PO BOX 475 OLIVET, MI 49076

preparationministries@gmail.com

(Please feel free to call, or send messages)

Web Site: <http://www.preparationministries.net>

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about blood. You know, that red stuff that flows through your veins. Blood is, of course, an important part of the body. Without blood you would die. Without blood your body wouldn't be able to get the proper nourishment, especially oxygen. Blood is also an important part of scripture right from the beginning of scripture. We know that the first reference to blood in the Bible talks about the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Actually, this was the first symbolic reference to the death of Jesus Christ. If you will notice, Abel was a keeper of animals, just as Jesus was the Good Shepherd. The offering that Abel brought to God was an offering which required the shedding of blood. However, Cain's offering of vegetables was an offering which had no blood. Sure, vegetables are alive, in the sense that grass and trees are alive, but they are not living souls, and they have no breath of life. Vegetables have no heart, and therefore vegetables don't pump blood.

But, most importantly, notice that Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God, but Cain's sacrifice was not. And, the reason that Cain's sacrifice was not accepted is because there was no blood shed. In order to be an acceptable sacrifice unto God, you must shed your blood. In other words, you must give up the life you started out with in the form of a flesh and blood person. Without giving up your initial life in the flesh, you will have no new born again life in the spirit, and therefore will have no life which will last forever.

Let me see if I can make this more clear. You probably know that the Bible tells us that in order to be saved we must be born again. By accepting Jesus Christ as Savior we become new

creatures who are no longer the same old person of the flesh that we used to be. We are now spirit, as God is spirit. Of course, even though we've become born again in spirit, we're still locked within these flesh and blood bodies until such time as Jesus returns and changes our flesh and blood bodies into new glorified bodies. However, we are born again in spirit and the life we now live is in the spirit. This is explained in 1 Peter 4:6, where it says, "Because for this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but alive according to God in the spirit." Also, Romans 8:10 says, "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." And, one more. 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 says, "Not that we are self sufficient, that we could do anything in our own selves; but our sufficiency is of God; 6 Who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the Letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

You see, we Christians are born again in spirit, and it is the spirit which causes us to be alive just as the blood caused our flesh to be alive. And, just as God is a Spirit, so are his children spirit. We are spirit as God is Spirit, but only if we have been born again. We started our lives as physical human beings of flesh and blood. And, just as Adam was created as a flesh and blood being, so we all have our first life in the body of flesh. However, because our flesh and blood body is sinful, we must get rid of it in order to come into the presence of God. And, in order to get rid of a flesh and blood body, we must die. Now, in order to die, you must remove the life of the body. And, because the life of the body is in the blood, then it is the blood that must be spilled out in order to kill the body.

Of course, the actual process is not physical death, but spiritual death. In order to put our old fleshly man to death, we will have to remove that which gives it life. It is the blood that gives life, so therefore, the blood must be removed. Once again, this is also a process for us that is symbolic, not actual. Of course, there is a time and a place for actual martyrdom, but spiritual martyrdom must take place on a daily basis.

Now, this may not seem to be all that important, but actually it is profoundly important in order to understand the mystery of God, including the actual salvation through Jesus Christ. The blood and the spirit both give life, but from different perspectives. The blood gives life to the physical man, and the spirit gives life to the spiritual man. And, because sin entered into the world through the flesh of mankind, and because the body is spotted with sin, we cannot enter into the presence of God while still in our mortal flesh. Habakkuk 1:13 says, "God cannot look on iniquity" So, if God cannot look upon sinful flesh, then it is certain that we cannot come into his presence unless we get rid of our flesh and blood bodies. As it says in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Notice that it said all have sinned. Every single one of us has sin in our flesh.

So, if sinful flesh cannot come before God, then we need to find a way to get rid of our flesh and still come into the presence of God. Of course we do this by crucifying the old man of the flesh and then living a new life in Christ. This is a two part process, and it actually begins with the two ordinances of the Christian church. The first ordinance is baptism, and the second ordinance

is communion. Both of these ordinances of the Christian church demonstrate the salvation process. Now, the first ordinance, baptism, demonstrates the concept of crucifying the old man of the flesh. The death of the old man is symbolized by burying him under the water. Then, when we rise up out of the water, this symbolizes our new resurrected life as born again creatures. However, we still need the second part of salvation, which is receiving a new body to live our lives in, and in which we can enter into the very presence of God. The second ordinance of communion demonstrates this concept of our becoming part of the body of Christ and also receiving the life of Christ. Jesus said in John 6:53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." It is by partaking of the bread of communion that we become part of Christ's body, and it is by partaking of the cup of communion that we have the blood of Jesus Christ which gives life to us by our becoming one with Christ. When we are in Christ, we then are partakers of his body. As Christ can enter into the presence of God, we also enter in to God's presence because we are in Christ. Wherever Christ goes, we go. But then, this is only true if you really have crucified the old man of the flesh. No man can live in two bodies at the same time. You are either in your own flesh and blood body, or you are born again and living in Christ. When you are part of the church, which is the body of Christ, you are alive in him.

Let me explain this in a little more detail. We know from the scriptures that there is only one person, one seed, that the promises of Abraham would come to. That seed, says the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:16, is Christ. Jesus Christ is the seed, the one single seed of Abraham, and therefore Jesus is the way for all men to enter into salvation. We enter into salvation because we are in Christ, not just that we know who Christ is. That's why the Bible refers to us as members of Christ's body. He is the head of the body and we are the members of that body. Christ is that seed of Abraham in which many nations would be blessed. Now, think carefully about this. This is important. You see, it is in Christ that all nations of the earth are blessed. And we, ourselves, cannot gain access to God except by two important things. We must first crucify our old man of the flesh because it is spotted with sin. Then, we must be born again in the spirit in order to become part of the body of Christ. Christians know very well that we are the church, the body of Christ. However, Christians don't usually realize the complete perspective of this. No human has a body that is perfectly sinless. It is only Jesus Christ that has a perfectly sinless body. And, although we first become born again in spirit, we still cannot enter into God's presence in our old bodies. Therefore, we must become part of Christ's body because he, Christ, is the only one that has no spot of sin. Christ, because of his perfect righteousness, is the only one who has been flesh and blood and can still enter into the very presence of God. Therefore, there is only one possible way that we also can have a body and enter into God's presence, and this is by being in Christ.

God is a spirit. But Christ is the physical form, the image, of God. We, by becoming part of Christ's body, are also able to abide as one with God. The Bible promises us that when we become born again the Holy Spirit of God will be given to those who ask for it. Then, Jesus Christ the Son, and God the Father, will also come into us and make their abode in us.

In communion, we partake of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The bread that we eat symbolizes the body of Christ. Therefore, by partaking of the body of Christ we become part of Christ. Then, the cup that we drink symbolizes the blood of Christ. And, because it is the blood that gives life to the body, we not only become part of Christ's body, but we also have life through his blood. When we drink the cup, we are representing that we are receiving life, but only life that is in Christ.

It is absolutely important for Christians to realize that Jesus Christ is the one and only person to whom the promises of Abraham were given. And, because there is no other seed to whom the promises were made, therefore we must be partakers of Christ's body in order to enter into God's presence. We can't enter into his presence in our own bodies, because they are sinful. It is only Christ's body that is an accepted body to God, and this is because it was only Christ who was perfect and had no sin.

Now, I know this may seem confusing, but let me summarize what I've been saying. We are sinners. Our flesh and blood bodies cannot enter into the presence of God because of sin. God cannot look upon sin. So, we must pour out our blood, which is our own life, and be born again into new life. The life we are born again into is life in the spirit, which is in Jesus Christ. Baptism symbolizes the first step of this process by demonstrating the death and burial of our old man and also the resurrection into our new born again spirit life. Life for us, after baptism, is in the Spirit. And, in order to become part of God, we must become part of Christ's body. We partake of Christ's body through the ordinance of communion when we eat the bread, and we partake of Christ's blood through the ordinance of communion when we drink the cup.

It is baptism and communion which are the two symbols of a Christian life. Both the baptism and communion are demonstrations of our intent. Baptism just demonstrates our intent to crucify the old man and to live again by the Spirit of God. The actual accomplishment of crucifying our old man of the flesh and living our life by the influence of the Holy Spirit comes as a daily life experience. Each day we crucify the flesh by dying to ourselves, thus carrying out the actual work of what our baptism symbolized. Each day we die out to self a little more, demonstrating to God that we truly have chosen to give up our old ways in exchange for the heavenly things of God. As we live out our lives, we continue to partake of the holy communion. We eat the bread because it symbolizes our continued desire to be a part of the body of Christ. He is the head of the body, and we are members of that body. We also drink the cup because it symbolizes our recognition that we have life in the body of Christ through his blood.

Now, please don't miss this one very significant concept. The new life we now live as born again spirit Christians is only life because it is in Christ's body. Our existence as the church, the body of Christ, allows us entrance into the very throne room of God. But it is only by being in Christ that this is possible. There is no other body on the face this earth that can qualify as being righteous. Christ was the only flesh and blood person on the face of planet Earth who ever lived a perfect life. Therefore, it is only Christ who can gain entrance into the very presence of God, and gain that entrance in bodily form. This is why we must be in Christ. The promise to

Abraham was only to Abraham's one single seed, not many seeds. And, that seed is Christ. And, because Jesus Christ is the only seed to whom the promised blessing could come, then he is the only one who can receive the promised blessing. Therefore, the only way anyone else can receive the blessings of God is by being in Christ. When we become part of the body of Christ, we become inheritors of the blessing. As Romans 8:17 says, "We become joint heirs with Christ." This means that as Christ inherits the blessing of God, all those who are part of Christ's body also inherit the blessing. We inherit the blessing of God as joint heirs with Christ only because we are joined to Christ. Because we are one with Christ, we therefore inherit the blessing with Christ.

However, there is a catch. Or, should we say, an "if" clause concerning the promise to Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. Many times the Bible refers to God speaking a word of promise, but includes the little two letter word, if. And concerning the promise of God that we can inherit his blessings through the seed of Abraham, there is also an "if" clause. Let me refer once again to Romans 8:17. I just explained that this verse tells us that we will become joint heirs with Christ. Let me read verses 16 and 17 of Romans, chapter 8, and listen closely and see if you can catch what the little two letter word, if, is saying. Here goes. It says, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Well, did you hear it? Did you hear the little two letter word, if? Actually, the word, if, is found in these verses twice. Yes, the verses do tell us that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. However, notice that it also says that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ only if we are children of God. In addition, we are joint heirs with Christ, but only if we suffer with him. That's what these verses say. You see, we are only going to inherit the promises of Abraham and receive the blessings of God if we suffer with Christ. If we don't suffer with Christ, then of course we aren't going to be joint heirs with him. The promises of God are yea and amen, however, God didn't promise that every person would be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. He only promised that this would happen if we suffer with Christ. This promise is also yea and amen because the promises of God are true, but you have to take the whole word of God and not just part of it. In order to inherit the blessings of God we must suffer with Christ. If we are part of the body of Christ, we only become part of the body if we enter into his suffering with him.

As Jesus Christ poured out his blood for us, we must also pour out our blood. And, as Jesus Christ went to Calvary and died on the cross, so must we take up our cross and follow him. And please, don't expect to carry your cross to Calvary just so you can revel in the delights of this world. The only thing that takes anyone to Calvary is a desire for the heavenly things of God. If your desire is to shop until you drop, then you didn't end up at Calvary, you ended up at the neighborhood mall.

In the Old Testament, the Children of Israel were to bring an animal as a sin offering, and, the animal had to meet the stringent requirements of God. First, the animal had to be completely perfect. It could not have any blemishes whatsoever. When the animal was killed, its blood was shed, and poured out onto the ground at the base of the altar prior to burning it on the altar. This is an important point to remember. By pouring the blood onto the ground, it signified that the life of that animal was being completely rejected. The blood was not used for anything, and no one drank the blood or used it for cooking. God told the Children of Israel that the blood could not be eaten because the life was in the blood. You see, when the blood was poured out onto the ground, this meant that the life of the sacrifice was forfeited and covered in burial by the dust of the ground. The animal was only useful as a sacrifice when the life had been poured out.

Now, the altar which was used for burning the sacrifices had a bronze grate upon which the sacrifice was burned. As the sacrifice burned, its ashes filtered down through the grate of the altar and onto the ground beneath. Now, please, think about this. What I would like you to realize is that in order for the sacrifice to end up under the altar, it not only had to die and have its blood poured out into the dust of the ground, but then the body of the sacrifice had to be consumed by the fire of God. This is important. In other words, it had to be purified by fire. Every acceptable sacrifice became ashes under the altar.

Now, consider Revelation 6:9-11, which refers to souls, found under the altar. Notice especially that verse 11 tells us that souls which are found under the altar are given white robes. Therefore, if you are going to become a Christian, then you must become a living sacrifice. You must take up your cross and follow Jesus to Calvary. If you do, then you will die daily to the ways of your flesh. You will give up your fleshly body which has its life through your own blood, and you will become an acceptable sacrifice unto God. When the purifying fire of God cleanses you, you will end up under the altar. This is how Christians will gain white robes of righteousness. Of course, this is only symbolic. But what the Bible is trying to tell us through this scriptural symbolism is that the actual process of dying out to your flesh and giving up your own lifeblood in order to become part of Christ's body and alive through his blood is by a transformation of both your mind and your heart. If you truly are transformed, you will demonstrate it by dying out to the flesh each and every day. However, if you do not die daily, you will not end up under the altar of God, and therefore, you will not receive a white robe.