

## *The Most Precious Liquid In The World*

Hebrews 9:11-22, 10:1-7

March 24, 2024

Please open your Bibles to Hebrews 9. Pew Bible. This morning we're going to talk about the most precious liquid in the world. Say liquid. It's not gold, because it's not normally a liquid. Mercury used to be very expensive, but not so much anymore. Certain perfumes can be very expensive. According to Town and Country Magazine in an article entitled, 12 Expensive Perfumes That Are Worth Every Cent, we find among them Haute Luxe which goes for only \$1,000 an ounce while Amaffi Power For Women is \$2,800 an ounce. Nancy-don't get your hopes up. We'll have to stick with stump water.

I have lived all my life without any of these perfumes or liquid gold but water is so valuable we can't live without it but for 3 days. Thankfully it's very abundant and not very expensive. But the liquid we're talking about this morning is something without which you can't live 3 minutes and each of us have about 8 pints of it coursing through some 60,000 miles of pipelines or vessels in our bodies. Say blood.

But obviously we must keep it where it belongs inside those veins. Blood is essential for life and whenever there is an injury, direct pressure must be applied to keep it from leaving the body because if too much of it does, the person will die. The Red Cross calls blood the gift of life and with good reason. Some of you have given several gallons over the years. Thank you. They especially are in need of the blood type of most pessimists, which is of course, B negative. I tried to give blood once but they asked so many questions. Whose blood is it? Where did you get it? Why is it in a bucket? Never again.

Some people faint at the sight of blood while others get queezy. My brother Jimmie once caught a big ole snapping turtle and we had heard how good turtle soup was. The only problem is, how do you kill a turtle? As we worked on doing that with a hatchet, my nephew Beecher, who was about 6 at the time yelled out, "It's not a pretty sight!" And it wasn't. And the soup wasn't worth it either.

I must tell you today that the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was not a pretty sight either. Just the opposite. There was a lot of blood and an image from which we want to hide our faces, as Isaiah prophesied. But we cannot celebrate the resurrection unless there's first a death. Too often we jump to Easter morning skipping clean over the cross like going directly to Boardwalk without passing go. No, we **must** pass the cross for the blood that poured out there that day was and is the most precious liquid in the universe, bar none!

The Bible itself is a pretty bloody book. The word blood is used over 400 times and God made it clear in the Old Testament that blood must be shed for every single sin committed. You couldn't pay cash to excuse it, you couldn't work it off, you couldn't do penance, or anything else except sacrifice some kind of animal and pour out its blood. In Lev 17:11 God tells us, "For the life of a creature is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you to make **atonement** for yourselves on the altar; it is the **blood** that makes atonement for one's life." Whenever a person sins, he or something else must die and its blood must be shed.

Blood is the currency of forgiveness. It is the only substance legal tender for pardon. When I went into East Berlin in 1982, I had to use East German Marks to make all my purchases. They wouldn't take US dollars, West German Marks or Russian rubles. And God requires blood for the payment of our sins. It's His universe, His kingdom, and His currency. And He Himself lives by His own rules and has done so from the beginning. When Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, in mercy, God Himself killed an animal to make clothes from its skin to cover their nakedness and their sin. Their own work of fig leaves wouldn't do it. The first recorded death was to pay for the sin of the first humans.

Laster on, when God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they had to smear blood on their doorposts and lentils. Red paint wouldn't save them. God knows the difference. Gold coins wouldn't do it. It had to be blood. God said, "When I see the **blood**, I will pass over you." When God gave the Ten Commandments and His laws to the people, that Old Covenant was sealed with blood. Whenever priests were consecrated for service, they put ram's blood on their earlobes, thumbs, and big toes. Blood had to be sprinkled on the altar and on all the priests before they could serve in God's presence. It was, so to speak, a real bloodbath.

In Lev 4, whenever the Israelites sinned, the leaders were to lay their hands on the head of a young bull transferring their guilt to the animal which would then be slaughtered. Vs 16 "Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull's blood into the Tent of Meeting. 17 He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the Lord seven times in front of the curtain. 18 He is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the Lord in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting." Lev 16 describes how the High Priest could only enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement one time each year with blood. Even most pagan cultures required blood sacrifices with a inborn understanding that blood was the necessary ingredient to appease their gods.

We could go on and on but I think you get the picture. The tabernacle and later the Temple were bloody places of worship. Some of you are probably thinking, "Please stop! This turns my stomach! I didn't grow up in a taxidermy shop like you did!" So

did you bring your goat, lamb or heifer this morning? And if not, why not? Why aren't we still slitting throats and pouring out blood in our churches today? We have the same God and we're still sinning.

To find out why, please follow along as we read from Heb 9:11-22 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 **How much more**, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. 16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 19 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. 20 He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." 21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. 22 In fact, the law requires that nearly **everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

Blood is the only currency God accepts for payment of sin! It is the only substance that is legal tender for our forgiveness. And instead of requiring us to pour out our own, Jesus poured out His for us! And everyone said? That's why we're not slaughtering animals in here today and splashing blood everywhere. Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, was slaughtered for us and His blood was splashed everywhere it needed to be to atone for our sins. As the choir sang this morning, this Lamb is worthy! But His crucifixion was a very bloody event and for our sakes it had to be in order to pay our debt of sin and to set us free.

The author of Hebrews goes on to explain that even the Old Testament sacrifices were only a holdover until Jesus could come and be our perfect sacrifice. Heb 10:1-7 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual

reminder of sins, 4 because it is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. 7 Then I said, 'Here I am — it is written about me in the scroll — I have come to do your will, O God.'" And He did do God's will! And He used the body that God prepared for Him to go to the altar of the cross and pour out His blood for you and me.

This is what Jesus meant in the upper room in Matt 26:27 when He took the cup, gave thanks and said, "Drink from it, **all of you**. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out **for many** for the forgiveness of sins." In Luke 22:20 Jesus calls it cup of the new covenant in His blood, which is poured out for **you**. There is no other way, only the blood of Christ will wash away your sin! As we sang a few Sundays ago, nothing but the blood! There's Power in the blood! The blood of Jesus is mentioned in Scripture three times more than the cross of Jesus and five times more than the death of Jesus. Some publishers have gone through hymns and replaced the word blood because it offends some people. Sorry about your sensitivity. You can cancel the word if it you like, but without blood, there is no remission, no forgiveness of sins, period! 1 John 1:7 assures us that "the blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from **all** sin."

I'm so thankful we have an empty cross, amen? He is risen! But we do have a cross! A wonderful cross. And we must never forget the blood that was shed on that wonderful cross! For the cross did nothing by itself, but Jesus' blood that was poured out there paid for your sin, set you free, and ransomed your soul from everlasting Hell to everlasting life.

On Wednesday of this past week, Sister Christie Coulson was taking their dog, Ellie outside when the wind slammed the screen door. When it did, it scared Ellie who took off and jumped a fence, only she didn't clear it and got her back feet caught and was hanging upside down. Christie went to free her but Ellie saw her as a threat and bit her in both hands requiring a trip to the ER. It was and still is very painful. But it reminds me what Jesus did for us. Because of our own fear and sin, we ran from God and tried to jump the fence of judgment to gain our own freedom. But none of us made it. We got caught and were hanging there helplessly until Jesus came along to free us. We turned on him and not only bit both His hands, but drove nails through His feet as well. We whipped and pierced and ridiculed and crucified the One who set us free. If she had never come, Ellie would have perished there. And if Jesus had never come, so would we!

There are monuments in Washington DC that remind us of what great men and women did to found our nation. It's good to visit those monuments every so often to remember their great sacrifices. They pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, and some lost all three so you and I can be free today! How much more important

it is for you and I to visit the cross of Jesus Christ that we might remember how Jesus lost His all that you and I might have all.

And so I want to invite you to come by this memorial of the cross today and see again the blood that was poured out there for you and me. Come and see. Survey this wondrous cross with me. See His blood dripping from the fresh holes in His nail pierced hands and in His feet. See it matted in His hair from the thorns gouging deep into His scalp. See it dripping from His lacerated back from the whippings you and I deserved. See it pouring out from His pierced side. See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. It's not a pretty sight. But it's a saving sight! It's a loving sight. It's a forgiving sight. And it's an eternal sight! We need to gaze upon it regularly lest we forget the price He paid to free us.

Although He struggled to breathe, which was common for victims of crucifixion, according to an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association in April of 1986 written by several doctors on the physical death of Jesus, they identified the cause of His death as being primarily hypovolemic shock which is the severe loss of blood. This type of shock can cause many organs to shut down and bring death fairly quickly. The life is in the blood and when the blood leaves the body, life leaves the body. Jesus wasn't executed by lethal injection or the electric chair or suffocation. He was **crucified** in a flood of blood to atone, to pay for your sins and mine. Behold the most precious liquid in the world dripping from His cross.

Even though the thought may repulse you, I encourage you to come close enough to His cross today that some of His blood may drip on you. Allow His blood to wash away **your** sin and **your** guilt. Let that cleansing flow wash over you in a bloodbath. It's either His blood now, or yours later throughout all eternity. Though millions have come, there's still room for you. Come and smear His blood over the doorposts of your life, apply it to your heart that you might be saved.

If you've never made your first trip to DC, go to see those memorials, but more importantly, make your first trip to the cross of Christ. And you can do that today right here right now. And if you have, come to His table today to drink again the symbol and reminder of His blood until He comes. Jesus said that unless we drink His blood we have no life in us. Take the cup from the hand of the One who freed you. It indeed holds the most precious liquid in all the world.