

Accessing God's Power

Part 3 – The Power of the Blood of Jesus

ILLUS – A workman was repairing a stained-glass window when the pastor came along, so they went outside together to admire the workmanship. “That looks very good, but isn’t that piece a bit loose?” asked the pastor. Just as he finished saying it, a piece of glass dislodged, fell out of the window, and cut the workman’s ear off. “Aughh”, screamed the workman. “I’ve lost my ear.” Immediately the pastor remembered the way Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant, and how the Lord had healed him, and he thought, “This is it! This is it! This is my moment. I was born for such a time as this. I can be a man of faith and power.” He bent down and picked up the ear, held it out to the workman and asked, “Is this your ear?” “No! That’s not mine!” the workman yelled. “Mine had a pencil behind it.”

So often, we look for the kind of power that works miracles, does signs and wonders, and brings blessing, but we don’t use the power that is available to us every single day.

There is tremendous power that God has put at our disposal.

This is our third message in our series Accessing God’s Power.

So far we’ve looked at the power of the name of Jesus and the power of praise and worship.

In this study, we’re looking at something which is right at the foundation of the Christian faith: The Power of the Blood of Jesus.

We’re going to look at three things the Scriptures teach us are achieved by the precious blood of Jesus.

1. Cleansing

Stains can be a real problem.

If you’ve ever dropped something down your front while you’re eating, you know exactly what I’m talking about.

We’ve got a book at home called How To Clean Practically Anything, and it’s got a whole chapter devoted to stain removal.

Detailed instructions tell you how to remove stains caused by acids, alkalis, glues, blood, antiperspirants, pens, BBQ sauce, bird droppings, beetroot juice, beer – the list is huge.

How can you deal with all these stains?

You need a complicated kit containing lemon juice, ammonia, vinegar, glycerine, methylated spirits, soda water, turps, salt, borax, and a gazillion other items.

But there is a stain so deep that absolutely nothing on that list can remove it.

It’s a spiritual stain – the stain that sin leaves on the human soul.

But thanks to God He has made available to us the universe’s most powerful stain remover to deal with it – the blood of Jesus.

Rev 1:5-6 ... To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (6) ... to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

He cleansed us from the stain of sin by washing us in His own blood.

Of course, all stain removers need to be used according to the manufacturer's instructions, and the blood of Jesus is no exception.

So how does this whole thing work?

There are two kinds of sin that the blood of Jesus deals with powerfully.

Both kinds of sin are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, but the blood is activated differently in each case.

The first is known sin; sins in our lives that we are aware of.

When we become conscious that we have committed a sin, how can we appropriate the cleansing power of the blood?

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isn't that so simple?

To confess means to admit it, take responsibility for it, no excuses, no ifs, no buts, no blaming someone else for what we've done.

The blood of Jesus cleanses sin, but it doesn't cleanse excuses.

Our problem is our tendency to try to cover up.

ILLUS – I saw a postcard once. It had two goldfish in a bowl. One is looking out at the world and whistling innocently. The other says, "Don't try to hide it. I can see the bubbles."

Covering up achieves nothing; but confession brings cleansing.

ILLUS – They reckon that one of the tests for potential paratroopers is a psychological evaluation where they ask you, "If you're looking out from a high-rise building, do you ever have the desire to jump?" Apparently the correct answer is yes. That's the kind of person they're looking for. But most of us feel just a little bit uneasy.

So you might be a bit like me, that when you hear of a guy slinging a tightrope between two high-rise buildings, it makes your mind boggle and your spine tingle.

I just don't get it; thirty metres is a long way to fall, and people don't bounce.

If I were a tightrope walker, I would think that the risks are so high that I would need a very important piece of equipment – a safety net.

Just in case I fall.

That's exactly what God has done for us.

ILLUS – Imagine if salvation worked like this: I give my life to the Lord, and God says to me, "I forgive you for all your past sins." And I say, "Thank you so much, Lord. That's a great relief." Then God says, "However, if you ever sin again, you go straight to hell."

What hope would there be for any of us?

But God in His grace has provided for us a safety net, the blood of Jesus.

So that if we fall, if we sin in any way, we can have access to ongoing cleansing.

But here's a problem.

That deals with the sin that we are aware of: What about the stuff that we're not aware of?

You can't confess something you're not aware of.

ILLUS – Sin is like icebergs – great big masses of frozen fresh water floating in a salty sea. The largest iceberg ever, was discovered in 1956, and was 333 km by 100 km.¹ And the specific gravity of an iceberg is such that 6/7 (85.7%) of the iceberg is below the water level. So guess what? The most dangerous part of an iceberg is unseen.

Sin is like that.

Human nature is such that it is so riddled with sin, but most of it we are not aware of till the Holy Spirit puts His finger on it.

How can you deal with something you're not aware of?

How can you be cleansed of something that you can't even confess because you are unaware of it?

Here's the solution:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

To walk in the light is to be obedient to the truth God has already revealed.

If we are obedient to the things God has already shown us, according to this verse two things will happen.

One, we will have fellowship with other Christians.

The natural result of walking in the light is that Christians want to be with other Christians.

If a Christian doesn't want to be with other Christians, it's evidence that they aren't walking in the light.

The second thing that happens is that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, including the stuff we're not even aware of yet.

So the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin that we know about when we confess it.

And it cleanses us from sin that we aren't aware of as we walk in the light.

So the first great benefit of the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing.

2. Access to God's presence

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Wow! Bold access to the very throne of God.

I wonder if we can appreciate what that means, the magnitude of what God is offering us?

ILLUS – Because when I was thinking about this, I was reminded of the time in the book of Esther when Mordecai was encouraging her to petition King Ahasuerus. Her response was, "I can't do that! The king has but one law. Anyone who goes into the inner court of the king without being invited must be put to death, unless the king holds out the golden sceptre to them."

And even though she was the queen that law applied to Esther.

The king was completely unapproachable except by invitation.

But God is no ordinary earthly king: He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, Creator and Master of the universe.

So how approachable is He?

According to Ex 33:20, no one can see God and live.

His presence is too holy.

Nobody was allowed to touch the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of God.

When the Ark was being transported to Jerusalem and began to tip, Uzzah stretched out his hand to steady it and was immediately struck dead.

When the Ark of the Covenant was finally in the Holiest Place in the temple, nobody could go in and see it except the high priest once a year.

God's presence was regarded as very holy, and access into God's presence was extremely limited.

But the moment Jesus died, the curtain cordoning off the Holiest Place was torn in two “from top to bottom”. (Mk 15:38)

The blood of Jesus had bought for us free access into the holy presence of God.

Heb 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...

3. Redemption

Eph 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

This is how redemption used to work under the Law of Moses. (Ex 21:28-30)

ILLUS – A man is dragged before the judge. The accuser says, “This man’s ox gored my son to death.” The judge replies, “That’s a fairly simple matter. The ox shall be destroyed.” The accuser: “No, it’s not that simple. He’s been warned before that his ox is dangerous.” “Are there any witnesses to this?” “Yes, I’ve warned him too”, says a witness. “So have I”, says another. “Then the matter is still very simple. The ox shall be destroyed, and this man shall be stoned to death. Take him away and execute him.” “Wait, wait, wait,” the owner of the ox cries out. “I’ve got money. I’ve got gold. I can pay. Just spare my life.”

So they work out a deal, and the man pays a sum of money in exchange for his life.

That act of paying a price in exchange for your life is what we call redemption.

His life was forfeit, and he bought it back.

But why in the world would I need to be redeemed?

1 John 5:19 ... the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Rom 6 tells us we were slaves to the power of sin.

Rom 8:15 says we were in bondage and had a spirit of bondage.

This whole world is enslaved to the evil one, and our lives are forfeit.

Except the blood of Jesus paid the full price to redeem us.

Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

You might ask, “What’s so special about the blood of Jesus? How can the blood of one man pay the price to redeem the whole world?”

ILLUS – Imagine a bank robbery and everything has gone wrong. The robbers have about a dozen hostages they are threatening to execute. A public-spirited citizen walks past, notices the plight of all the hostages, and calls out to the robbers, “Don’t harm them. Take me instead. You release them and take my life in exchange”. The abductors respond, “Why would we want to exchange twelve hostages for one? You volunteering to die? Fine, we’ll release one person and take you, but you can’t swap your life for all of them. You’re just another human.”

Value for value. One life for one life.

This same principle is taught in the Old Testament and it’s called the law of talion.

Exodus 21:23-25 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, (24) eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, (25) burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

It’s a spiritual principle that you can only be compensated by the same amount as your loss.

ILLUS – But let’s go back to our siege. Imagine that the man offering to swap places with the hostages suddenly identifies himself as the President of the United States. What do you think would be the response of the abductors now? Do you think that they would be willing to swap their twelve hostages for the President of the United States? Of course they would! The reason is that the President is of far more value to them than twelve ordinary citizens.

This same principle carries over into the spiritual realm.

If Jesus were just a human, He would be able to give His life for only one other person.

As a sinless perfect human, He would have to choose which sinner He would give His life for.

One life for one life, value for value, the law of talion.

But because He is fully human and fully divine, that makes Him worth infinitely more than an ordinary human being.

His infinite value means that He could die for everybody – all the sinners who ever lived or will live.

So the third thing that the blood of Jesus has accomplished for us is redemption.

His blood has bought and paid for us and released us from bondage.

The blood of Jesus Christ has awesome power. If you need to know today that you have been cleansed of all sin, totally forgiven, you can.

You can put your trust in the blood of Jesus, it never fails.

You can have instant access into God's presence through the blood.

And we have redemption through the blood.

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica