

# Cleansing Through the Blood

by Andrew Murray

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*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, not just the guilt, but also the pollution of sin, through an inward operation in the heart.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:2, Zechariah 13:1, Matthew 5:8, Acts 15:9, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 10:22, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Redemption", "Cleansing"

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## Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the transformative power of the blood of Jesus in his sermon 'Cleansing Through the Blood.' He explains that while the blood brings reconciliation and pardon for sin, it also provides a deeper cleansing from the pollution of sin, which affects our inner being. Murray highlights the importance of understanding the distinction between guilt and pollution, and how true cleansing involves an inward change that allows believers to experience the fullness of God's salvation. He encourages believers to seek knowledge, desire purity, separate from unclean things, and exercise faith in the blood's power to achieve this cleansing. Ultimately, he calls for a continual reliance on the blood of Christ to maintain a pure heart and conscience.

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## Transcript

"If ye walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"-1 John i. 7

WE have already seen that the most important effect of the Blood is RECONCILIATION for sin.

The fruit of knowledge about, and faith in RECONCILIATION, is the PARDON of sin. Pardon is just a declaration of what has already taken place in heaven on the sinner's behalf, and his hearty acceptance of it.

This first effect of the Blood is not the only one. In proportion as the soul, through faith, yields itself to the Spirit of God to understand and enjoy the full power of RECONCILIATION, the Blood exerts a further power, in the imparting of the other blessings which, in Scripture, are attributed to it.

One of the first results of RECONCILIATION is CLEANSING FROM SIN. Let us see what God's Word has to say about this. CLEANSING is often spoken about, among us, as if it were no more than the pardon of sins, or the cleansing from guilt. This, however, is not so. Scripture does not speak of being CLEANSED

FROM GUILT. CLEANSING from sin means deliverance from the pollution, not from the guilt of sin. The guilt of sin concerns our relationship to God, and our responsibility to make good our misdoings,-or to bear the punishment of them. The pollution of sin, on the other hand, is the sense of defilement and impurity, which sin brings to our inner being, and it is with this that CLEANSING has to do.

It is of the greatest importance for every believer who desires to enjoy the full salvation which God has provided for him, to understand aright what the Scriptures teach about this CLEANSING.

Let us consider :

I. WHAT THE WORD CLEANSING MEANS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

II. WHAT IS THE BLESSING INDICATED BY THAT WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

III. HOW MAY WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS BLESSING?

I. CLEANSING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the service of God as ordained by the hand of Moses for Israel, there were two ceremonies to be observed by God's people in preparation for approach to Him. These were the OFFERINGS or SACRIFICES and the CLEANSINGS or PURIFICATIONS. Both were to be observed but in different manners. Both were intended to remind man how sinful he was, and how unfit to draw near to a holy God. Both were to typify the REDEMPTION by which the Lord Jesus Christ would restore to man fellowship with God. As a rule it is only the OFFERINGS which are regarded as typical of REDEMPTION through Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews, however, emphatically mentions THE CLEANSINGS as figures "for the time being in which were offered SACRIFICES and DIVERS WASHINGS" (Heb. ix. 9, 10).

If we can imagine the life of an Israelite we shall understand that the consciousness of sin, and the need for REDEMPTION, were awakened not less by the CLEANSINGS than the OFFERINGS.

We must also learn from them what the power of the Blood of Jesus actually is.

We may take one of the more important cases of CLEANSING as an illustration. If anyone was in a hut or house where a dead body lay, or if he had even touched a dead body, or bones-he was unclean for seven days. Death, as the punishment for sin, made everyone who came into association with it unclean. CLEANSING was accomplished by using the ashes of a young heifer which had been burned, as described in Numbers xix. (Compare Heb. ix. 13, 14.) These ashes, mixed with water, were sprinkled by means of a bunch of hyssop on the one who was unclean; he had then to bathe himself in water, after which he was once more ceremonially clean.

The words "UNCLEAN," "CLEANSING," "CLEAN," were used in reference to the healing of leprosy, a disease which might be described as a living death. Leviticus, chapters xiii and xiv : Here also he who was to be CLEANSED must bathe in water, having been first sprinkled with water, in which the blood of a bird, sacrificially offered, had been mixed. Seven days later he was again sprinkled with sacrificial blood.

An attentive contemplation of the laws of CLEANSING will teach us that the difference between THE CLEANSINGS and THE OFFERINGS was twofold. First: the OFFERING had definite reference to the transgression for which RECONCILIATION had to be made. CLEANSING had more to do with conditions which were not sinful in themselves, but were the result of sin, and therefore must be acknowledged by

God's holy people as defiled. Secondly: In the case of the OFFERING, nothing was done to the offerer himself. He saw the blood sprinkled on the altar or carried into the Holy Place; he must believe that this procures RECONCILIATION before God. But nothing was done to himself. In CLEANSING, on the other hand, what happened to the person was the chief thing. Defilement was something that either through internal disease, or outward touch, had come upon the man ; so the washing or sprinkling with water must take place on himself as ordained by God.

CLEANSING was something that he could feel and experience. It brought about a change not only in his relationship to God, but in his own condition. In the OFFERING something was done FOR him; by CLEANSING something was done IN him. The OFFERING had respect to his guilt. The CLEANSING to the pollution of sin.

The same meaning of the words "CLEAN," "CLEANSING," is found elsewhere in the Old Testament. David prays in Psalm li, "CLEANSE me from my sin," "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be CLEAN." The word used by David here is that which is used most frequently for the CLEANSING of anyone who had touched a dead body. Hyssop also was used in such cases. David prayed for more than pardon. He confessed that he had been "shapen in iniquity," that his nature was sinful. He prayed that he might be made pure within. "CLEANSE me from my sin," was his prayer. He uses the same word later on when he prays, "Create in me a CLEAN heart, O God." CLEANSING is more than pardon.

In the same manner this word is used by Ezekiel, and refers to an inner condition which must be changed. This is evident from chapter xxiv. 11,13, where, speaking of uncleanness being melted out, God says "Because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged." Later on, speaking of the New Covenant (chap. xxxvi. z5), He says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be CLEAN: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I CLEANSE you."

MALACHI uses the same word, connecting it with fire (chap. iii. 3), "HE shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, he shall purify (CLEANSE) the sons of Levi."

CLEANSING by water; by blood; by fire; all typical of the CLEANSING which would take place under the New Covenant-an inner CLEANSING and deliverance from the stain of sin.

## II. THE BLESSING INDICATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BY CLEANSING.

Mention is often made in the New Testament of a clean or pure heart. Our Lord said, " Blessed are the PURE in heart" (Matt. v. 8). Paul speaks of "love out of a PURE heart" (I Tim. i. 5). He speaks also of a "PURE conscience."

Peter exhorts his readers to "love one another with a PURE heart fervently." The word CLEANSING is also used.

We read of those who are described as God's people that God purified (CLEANSED) their hearts through faith (Acts xv. 9).

That the purpose of the Lord Jesus concerning those who were His was "to purify (CLEANSE) to himself a people of his own possession" (Titus ii. i4).

As regards ourselves we read "Let us CLEANSE ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (z Cor. vii. i).

All these places teach us that CLEANSING is an inward word wrought in the heart, and that it is subsequent to pardon.

We are told in i John i. 7 that " the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin."This word CLEANSETH does not refer to the grace of PARDON received at conversion; but to the effect of grace IN God's children who walk in the light. We read, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin." That it refers to something more than pardon appears from what follows in verse 9 :-"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness." Cleansing is something that comes after pardon and is the result of it, by the inward and experimental reception of the power of the blood of Jesus in the heart of the believer.

This takes place according to the Word, first in the purifying of the conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . PURGE your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). The mention already made of the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean typifies a personal experience of the precious blood of Christ. Conscience is not only a judge to give sentence on our actions, it is also the inward voice which bears witness to our relationship to God, and to God's relationship to us. When it is CLEANSED by the blood then it bears witness that we are well pleasing to God. It is written in Hebrews x. 2, "The worshippers once PURGED should have no more conscience of sins." We receive through the Spirit an inward experience that the blood has so fully delivered us from the guilt and power of sin that we, in our regenerated nature, have escaped entirely from its dominion. Sin still dwells in our flesh, with its temptations, but it has no power to rule. The conscience is CLEANSED, there is no need for the least shadow of separation between God and us; we look up to Him in the full power of REDEMPTION. The conscience CLEANSED by the blood bears witness to nothing less than a complete redemption; the fulness of God's good-pleasure.

And if the conscience is CLEANSED so also is the HEART, of which the conscience is the centre. We read of having the heart CLEANSED from an evil conscience (Heb. x. 22). Not only must the conscience be CLEANSED but the heart also must be CLEANSED, including the understanding, and the will, with all our thoughts and desires. Through the blood, by the shedding of which Christ delivered Himself up to death, and by virtue of which He entered again into heaven, the death and resurrection of Christ are ceaselessly effectual. By this power of His death and resurrection, sinful lusts, and dispositions, are slain.

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," from original, as well as from actual sin. The blood exercises its spiritual, heavenly power in the soul. The believer in whose life the blood is fully efficacious, experiences that the old nature is hindered from manifesting its power. Through the blood, its lusts and desires are subdued and slain, and everything is so CLEANSED that the Spirit can bring forth His glorious fruit. In case of the least stumbling, the soul finds immediate CLEANSING and restoration. Even unconscious sins are rendered powerless through its efficacy.

We have noted a difference between the guilt and the pollution of sin. This is of importance for a clear understanding of the matter ; but in actual life we must ever remember that they are not thus divided. God through the blood deals with sin as a whole, Every true operation of the blood manifests its power simultaneously over the guilt and the pollution of sin. Reconciliation and cleansing always go together, and the blood is ceaselessly operative.

Many seem to think that the blood is there, so that if we have sinned again, we can turn again to it to be cleansed. But this is not so. Just as a fountain flows always, and always purifies what is placed in it or

under its stream, so it is with this Fountain, opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii. i). The eternal power of life of the Eternal Spirit works through the blood. Through Him the heart can abide always under the flow, and CLEANSING of the Blood.

In the Old Testament CLEANSING was necessary for each sin. In the New Testament CLEANSING depends on Him who ever lives to intercede. When faith sees and desires and lays hold of this fact, the heart can abide every moment under the protecting and CLEANSING tower of the blood.

### III. HOW MAY WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS BLESSING?

Everyone who through faith obtains a share in the atoning merit of the blood of Christ, has a share also in its CLEANSING efficacy. But the experience of its power to cleanse, is, for several reasons, sadly imperfect. It is therefore of great importance to understand what the conditions are for the full enjoyment of this glorious blessing.

i. First of all knowledge is necessary. Many think that pardon of sin is all that we receive through the blood. They ask for and so obtain nothing more.

It is a blessed thing to begin to see that the Holy Spirit of God has a special purpose in making use of different words in Scripture concerning the effects of the blood. Then we begin to inquire about their special meaning. Let everyone who truly longs to know what the Lord desires to teach us by this one word CLEANSING, attentively compare all the places in Scripture where the word is used, where CLEANSING is spoken of. He will soon feel that there is more promised to the believer than the removal of guilt. He will begin to understand that CLEANSING through washing can take away stain, and although he cannot fully explain in what way this takes place, he will, however, be convinced that he may expect a blessed inward operation of the CLEANSING away of the effects of sin, by the blood. Knowledge of this FACT is the first condition of experiencing it.

ii. Secondly:-There must be desire.

It is to be feared that our Christianity is only too pleased to postpone to a future life the experience of the Beatitude which our Lord intended for our earthly life:-"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It is not sufficiently recognised that PURITY OF HEART is a characteristic of every child of God, because it is the necessary condition of fellowship with Him, of the enjoyment of His salvation. There is too little inner longing to be really in all things, at all times, well pleasing to the Lord. Sin and the stain of sin trouble us too little.

God's Word comes to us with the promise of blessing which ought to awaken all our desires. Believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. If you learn how to yield yourself up aright to its operation it can do great things in you. Should you not every hour desire to experience its glorious cleansing efficacy? To be preserved, in spite of your depraved nature, from the many stains for which your conscience is constantly accusing you? May your desires be awakened to long for this blessing. Put God to the test to work out in you what He as the Faithful One has promised:-CLEANSING from all unrighteousness.

iii. The third condition is a willingness to separate yourself from every thing that is unclean. Through sin everything in our nature, and in the world, is defiled. CLEANSING cannot take place where there is not an entire separation from, and giving up of everything unclean. "Touch not the unclean thing" is God's

command to His chosen ones. I must recognise that all the things surrounding me are unclean.

My friends, my possessions, my spirit, must all be surrendered that I may be CLEANSED in each relationship by the precious blood, and that all the activities of my spirit, soul, and being, may experience a thorough CLEANSING.

He who will keep back anything however small cannot obtain the full blessing. He who is willing to pay the full price so as to have his whole being baptised by the blood is on the way to understand fully this word, The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

iv. The last condition is exercising faith in the power of the blood. It is not as if we, through our faith, bestow its efficacy upon the blood. No, the blood ever retains its power and efficacy, but our unbelief closes our hearts, and hinders its operation, Faith is simply the removal of that hindrance, the setting open of our hearts, for the divine power by which the living Lord will bestow His blood.

Yes, let us believe that there is CLEANSING through the blood.

You have perhaps seen a spring in the midst of a patch of grass. From the much travelled road that runs by that patch, dust is constantly falling over the grass that grows by the side of the road, but where the water from the spring falls in refreshing and cleansing spray, there is no sign of dust, everything is green and fresh. So the precious blood of Christ carries on its blessed work without ceasing in the soul of the believer, who by faith appropriates it. He who by faith commits himself to the Lord, and believes that this can and will take place, it will be given to him.

The heavenly, spiritual effect of the blood can be really experienced every moment. Its power is such that I can always abide in the fountain, always dwell in the wounds of my Lord.

Believer, come, I entreat of you, put it to the proof how the blood of Jesus can cleanse your heart from all sin.

You know with what joy a weary traveller would bathe in a fresh stream, plunging into the water to experience its cooling, and cleansing, and strengthening effect. Lift up your eyes and see by faith how ceaselessly a stream flows from heaven above to earth beneath. It is the blessed Spirit's influence, through whom the power of the blood of Jesus flows earthwards over souls, to heal and to purify them. Oh! place yourself in this stream, simply believe that the words, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," have a divine meaning, deeper, wider, than you have ever imagined. Believe that it is the Lord Jesus Himself who will cleanse you in His blood, and fulfil His promise in power in you. And reckon on the cleansing from sin by His blood, as a blessing, in the daily enjoyment of which you can confidently abide.

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