

Audio Sermon: (1 Peter - Part 15): The Precious Blood, Our Only Hope

by A.W. Tozer

We are set free from the sinner's way of life through the precious blood of Christ, which is precious because of what it means to God, and because of what it did for men.

Duration: 32:45

Scripture: John 1:29, Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 1:18-19

Topics: "Christ's Sacrifice", "Redemption Through Blood"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the preciousness of the blood of Jesus Christ as the ultimate redemption for humanity, highlighting the moral release and freedom it provides from the foolish ways of life inherited from tradition and fallen human tendencies. The speaker urges repentance and humility in approaching communion, reflecting on the significance of Christ's sacrifice and the eternal impact of His blood.

Transcript

Before I speak, lest I forget it afterward, I want to make this announcement. This I make without previously consulting the board, but I know the board well enough, and all of you well enough, to know that you would concur in all this. You know about our students who were injured, four of them on their way here from Nyack.

And up to now, young Cliff Westergren is still in the hospital, and will be for some time, with crushed pelvis and other injuries. Little Mary Thomas, I say little, she always seemed to me like a child. I used to buy her ice cream when she was this high.

She's a young lady now. Also was injured. And the pastor in Ashton, the Alliance pastor, a young man with a small church, and I suppose not too much money, took them in and wouldn't hear anything but what they were to stay there at his place, and took care of them.

And he even took a little offering on the Wednesday night service. I appreciate this a lot, and I know you do. Now, here's what I know the board will want to do, Mr. Lorell, who has our fund for such things.

And that will be to find out who might be of those four in a little financial jam and help them out. Particularly Cliff, who is the worst off of all. And then I think also that as a little love offering and appreciation from this church to the Ashland Alliance Church in Ashland, Ohio, we want to send Reverend Mr. Winkler and his

family, his big family.

If it were nobody but Brother Winkler, it would be a big family. But I think we from this church ought to send them a little gift of appreciation. Don't you think so? They've been so good to our youngsters when they got caught in that nasty accident there and had no place to go, they took them in.

Now, that's just that much. The details will be taken care of by Mr. Lorell and the board, and we won't bother you with it. But I know that when the offering is taken, and the usual offering, which we call it after a communion service, that you will give with that in mind.

We don't ask for large amounts, of course, but we just ask that you keep that in mind and you'll be knowing, at least in this instance, where your love gifts are going. Now, in the book of 1 Peter, it so happens in the will of God, this communion service has a text. The text next in for consideration.

It is verses 18 and 19 of 1 Peter 1. I'll break in here with the word forasmuch. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition and from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Last Sunday night I spoke on the text Behold the Lamb of God.

After the service, very few people knew anything about it, but a fine young Irishman, I assume he's Irish, he's got an Irish name, surely, came down, and two or three of us took him in the side room and he gave his heart to our Lord Jesus. And a New Year's Eve meeting here told me with joy in his face that it was going to be a wonderfully different year for him. There were also present two young men who are Iraqi, that is, they're from the country of Iraq.

They were Muslims. They liked it here. They went to the young people's rally and they at least were prayed with.

Mr. William Allen, who would pray with anybody you know from the Pope down. He cares for nobody. He serves God with enthusiasm.

So he got these boys down and he has good reason to think that at least one of them was saved, having been touched and affected, according to what these brethren tell me, simply by the thought of the Lamb of God. Behold the Lamb of God. Now, we come to this text, for as much as ye are not redeemed, we're not redeemed with productive things, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Peter here carries through this beautiful symbolism that of Jesus Christ as a lamb, a sacrificed lamb. Let us notice briefly what is here. He says, ye were redeemed.

And of course, as you know, redeemed means loosed. It means loosed, not in the sense that you would loose a man who was bound to a post or loose a horse that was hitched, but loosed in the legal sense of being freed from legal bondage, in the sense that a slave is loosed, legally declared free. And he said, you are loosed from the vain conversation.

Those who insist so religiously on the text and letter and syllables of the King James Version ought to listen sometime to some of us preachers trying to untangle King James translation for modern listeners. Vain conversation. Neither word there means what it means now.

Vain means foolish, and conversation means a manner of life. So what Peter said is, for as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your foolish way of life. Now, this foolish way of life is a way of life that is morally foolish.

It is the sinner's way of life, bluntly. The sinner's way of life. But God calls it a foolish way, empty.

And it is foolish for about five reasons that I want to give you. The sinner's way is foolish because it neglects to give God his proper place. Now, any way of life, any attitude, any political philosophy, any moral philosophy or speculative philosophy, any kind of thinking that anybody does in any sphere of human thought or life, any standard of morals adopted or followed by any people, however loosely, that does not give God his proper place is declared by the Lord God himself to be foolish and empty.

And that is what's wrong with us in our time. Foolish way of life. People around us are foolish.

The men who went out and got themselves hepped up during the holiday and then the next day suffered with big heads, they weren't so bad as they were just foolish. It's foolish to treat your body like that. It's foolish.

They were doing a morally foolish thing because they did not take God into that consideration. No man who had God before his mind would ever swill poison, liquor down his throat. So what people do, it's foolish.

Some of us in our efforts at evangelism try to make sinners out of everybody in the sense that we make everybody to be vicious and low and wicked. That's not true. There are sinners who will certainly perish and spend their eternity in hell who are nevertheless courteous, kind, friendly gentlemen.

You consider it a privilege to live next door to them if you want a little home someplace. Good neighbors. But they're living without a thought of God in their minds.

Their way is a foolish way of life because it is a godless way of life. It's not always a morally low way of life for there are all levels of wickedness. But it is a way that doesn't take God into consideration.

The Bible says it's foolish. And it ignores reason really. It ignores reason for righteousness always has reason on its side.

You can remember that. That was one of the teachings of Plato. That every man reasonably wanted to do the right thing only that men made mistakes in deciding what the right thing was.

That was one of the basic tenets of the great Greek thinker. But we ignore reason. The average man, he was thinking, of course, of the finer thinking people.

But the great masses of us, we don't think too much. But reason is always on the side of righteousness. When it comes to whether I should do it this way or do it that way, and the first way is wrong and the second way is right, reason is always on the side of right.

It's always illogical to do a wrong thing. And Peter says that it's a foolish, illogical way to live because it ignores God and it ignores reason. And it disregards the moral lessons of history.

It disregards the lessons that history teaches. History has been pictured as an old fellow with an old-fashioned quill pen writing lessons. Well, even though history is not always accurate, I think it was

Napoleon, wasn't it, or Voltaire that said that history was a lot of lies agreed upon.

But that was a cynic's statement. The truth is there's a lot we can learn from history. And one thing we can learn from history is that it's always better to be righteous and it's always worse to be evil and that to live without a thought of God before our minds, ignoring moral reason, is a fool's way of life.

History teaches that. All kinds of history teaches that. And then the sinner's way of life is foolish because it assumes that there is no final reckoning.

It's like the man who plunges into debt and on into debt and on into debt, blissfully unaware or refusing to consider that someday he's going to have to pay up. It's like the man or woman who dances into the gray dawn and then stuck themselves up with liquor and all other stimulants and work and then go and dance on into the next dawn and beat themselves and abuse themselves and keep that up and continue to keep it up and fill themselves full of narcotics and all sorts of drugs to keep going. They're having fun, but they're fools because they're not considering that there's a day of reckoning.

There'll be a time when angry Mother Nature will say, pay up! And the sinner's way is foolish because he does not believe there's a final reckoning or if he believes it. He foolishly disregards it and assumes that he is just going to be able to peter out and shuffle off this mortal coil without giving a reckoning, an accounting. He's not.

And the way of the sinner is a foolish way because it assumes that man is a one-world being. If there's anything to which I am committed, it is that man lives on two planes, this world and the world above, the physical and the spiritual, the natural and the divine. Man is not made for one world only, he's made for two.

He's made for this world now and the next world later. And the sinner's way of life is, at least takes for granted, assumes or seems to assume one would gather that the way sinners live, they don't expect to be another world they're going to have to face. This is all.

And they joke about this world being so terrible because you don't get out of it alive. And that's all very funny but all very tragic when you consider that there is another world but sinners act as if there wasn't. Christian is wise because he's taken that second world into consideration.

He's wise because he's taken into account the fact that he must make a reckoning. He's wise because he has taken into account the lessons of history, the moral lessons of history. He's not ignored reason or ignored God but he's given God his right place.

He allows himself to be chastened with the memories and knowledge of how others lived and what they paid for wrong living. Now it says here that this way of life is received by tradition from our fathers. And the power of this way of life over us is twofold or the power derives from two sources.

One is that it comes to us with the approval of the ages. What our fathers did we're inclined to think is all right. I remember when I was a very young preacher, very young.

I was preaching in the state of West Virginia up in the country. And I hate tobacco now as much as I did then but I have sense enough to know that it's only a pimple on the body of morality and is not itself basic so I don't preach against tobacco though I hate it. But those days I did.

That is, I attacked anything I thought didn't look good and tobacco was one. And I used to really tell them that they were dirty if they used it and couldn't be Christians. And do you know their response to that kind of preaching? It was this, white-faced anger.

Do you mean to tell me that my old father who smoked and chewed until he died and my grandmother who was a Christian and chewed, smoked a clay pipe until she died, you mean to tell me that they perished? They were sanctifying the ways of their parents. And they were on the cool end of a hot stick, that is, smoking, because they liked the taste of it and because it was received by tradition from their fathers. It was sanctified by generation after generation of incense burners.

And they didn't want me to say a word about it. Not for their sakes but because it seemed to be reflecting on the tradition of their fathers. Well I've learned better, that's only one more thing and I preach Christ now.

But anyway, I gave that as an illustration. People will justify anything if Daddy did it. And he says, you've received this way of life by tradition from your father.

And then the second source that this way of life stems from or where it gets its power from is that it accords with the fallen tendencies of the human heart. Whatever accords with the fallen tendencies of the human heart, you always do without much trouble. You remember the little old song they used to sing a couple or three years ago, everybody was singing it, you couldn't get into a restaurant or sit down anywhere, but somebody would come on singing about the grandfather who lived to be 83 doing what comes naturally.

Well if you do what comes naturally, brother, you'll be doing the way of the flesh, you'll be doing that which, of course, outside of the normal bodily functions, which is not considered here neither by the Holy Ghost nor certainly not by me. For there's a certain basic physical naturalness that even our Lord Jesus Christ had, and it's perfectly natural to eat, it's perfectly natural to sleep and so on. But I'm talking about a moral kind of life that stems out of the fallen nature and that it's easy to do.

It's easy for a child to lie. I remember my first lie just as, and remember how easy it was and how it got me out of a jam. It was Christmas, and my poor mother, God bless her memory, she tried to always get at least something, nothing but a popcorn ball, something for us.

And this time somebody dug up a Barlow knife, maybe some of you others do, but I got a Barlow knife, and I thought that were wonderful. Then when time came to go back to school, they surrounded me and asked me what I got for Christmas. And I felt chagrined to tell them a Barlow knife and nothing else.

So I used that imagination that people tell me I have, and I fixed myself up the nicest bunch of Christmas presents you ever heard of. And I got out of an embarrassing position by telling a lie. Now that came naturally, brother.

I didn't have to work on that. All I had to do was just open my mouth, and nature took its course. And because we have these fallen tendencies, the foolish way of life is easy for us.

It's always hard to teach a child to be good. Let him alone, and he won't be good. You say, but my little darling is good naturally.

Oh, you're going to be fooled one of these days. Your disillusionment is coming, Papa. Your little darling is one of Adam's wild breeds.

And if you don't teach him to be good, he'll never be good. You don't teach him to wash, he'd be so dirty you'd have to fumigate him once a week. And if you don't teach him to tell the truth, he'll lie to music.

We're all alike in things like that. And the reason our children are good is because you're good, and you're teaching them to be good. Don't get it wrong.

They didn't inherit any goodness. You taught them that. That's your credit, not theirs.

And they, in turn, by the grace of God, may teach the next generation to be good. But you've got to teach people to be good. They'll be bad without teaching, because we receive it from our fathers, by tradition.

And it accords with the fallen tendencies of our heart. The honest businessman who conducts his affairs in an honest way is doing what he's learned to do. It would be the natural thing for him to reach out and rake in whatever he could get his hands on.

He's been trained and taught by religion and morals to be a little different. Now it says here, from this way of life, we are set free. We are redeemed.

A Christian has been delivered from this way of life, from the moral magnitude, from the entanglements. The best illustration I ever heard on this was given years ago in my hearing. It told about, in midwinter, the Niagara River.

Sheep had died. I used to see sheep die in great numbers when I was a boy on the farm. One thing or another, they'll get sick, and they'll die in great numbers.

Well, some of them had died upstream in Niagara, and they'd either fallen in or been thrown into the Niagara River. And it was very cold, very cold, but the tempestuous Niagara wasn't frozen. And it was carrying these dead sheep over the falls.

And they said that the bald eagles would gather and dive down and ride these carcasses and tear at their flesh. They said one great old eagle, one after the other, she'd fly upstream, and she'd get down on one and tear with her talons and pull with her great sharp beak and get herself a mouthful of meat and gulp it. And then when it was about to go over the falls, she'd leap up gracefully on her broad wings and circle back and do the same thing over again.

But it was getting colder. Somebody tells the story of seeing this eagle. Make one mistake.

She rode a little too long the last time, and her talons froze into the wool. And when she, confident in her self-assurance, spread her great broad wings and to take into the air, her talons were frozen into the wool of the sheep, and she plunged over to her death, along with the carcass she'd been feeding on. Somebody could have come and entangled her talons from the wool.

It would have been a kind of redemption. A release, that's what it means. A moral release in our case.

And that God has provided a moral release from the tradition of our fathers. The foolish way of life that we see all around about us. And it's been done by an act of God in redemption, involving the payment of a ransom for its moral.

It's not a physical captivity, though it has physical implications for sinners, but it has its legal and moral aspects. So the ransom price had to be a moral ransom price. It had to be the blood of a holy one, holy enough for God to accept.

So that moral price was paid. And it says it was not silver nor gold. I were a slave in a market somewhere in Arabia or in the Old South, and I were worth \$200 or \$500, depending upon my age and size and ability.

Someone might come with a pocket full of gold and buy me and then set me free. But free with money, silver and gold. But when your bondage is not physical but moral, you can't buy off moral slaves with money.

So Peter says you were redeemed not with silver nor gold, but with precious blood. Brethren, we are free this morning if we are freed by blood most precious. This blood of the Lamb is precious.

Because of what it means to God, and because of what it means and meant to our Lord Jesus Christ, the deathless man who volunteered to die. And of what it means and what it did for men. Peter calls it precious, and God doesn't use words carelessly.

He called the blood of the Lamb precious. And it's precious because of what it did for men. Two men were traveling.

Two men, one of whom I knew, or at least I heard him. I was near to him as a young fellow. They were traveling through the mountain and they were overcome by what they call in our West an Nor'westerner.

One of those sudden, terrible storms. The temperature plunges to zero or below and the blizzard begins and the wind is high. A man, however well clothed, can simply die in that, just die.

Gets sleepy, wants to rest, never wakes up. That's well known. These two men were traveling together.

Temperature had suddenly plunged. It was becoming so cold that it was brutal now, and dangerous. So they found themselves a little shelter by a rock, or a little depression in the rock.

And they looked at each other and said, a few hours of this, friend, and we're finished. Yes, the other one said, we're finished. We can't stand this.

We'll be found dead here in the morning. Well, one said, do you suppose we could start a fire? The other one said, let's try it. So they hurried around with their numb fingers and got a hold of some sticks and then dug some leaves from the last fall out from under the overhanging rock.

Got themselves a few little shavings. Then they went to their matches. Very few and very precious.

One after the other, blew out in the breeze. They gathered around, cupped their hands, did all that woodmen do and the swift wind blew out one after the other. The last match was gone and no fire.

One of them said, do you suppose that we could find a match somewhere in our clothing? So they searched. Nothing in this pocket. Reckless.

Nothing in this one. Nothing here. Each one, searched, nothing.

Finally, in the, what do you call this, hem, of one of the coats, a fellow felt a little hard thing, not very long. He said, I wonder. Ripped it with a knife, cut it.

It was a match about a third as long as a match would be, but it had a head on it. He said, I held this little match, head, with a third of the match still on it, broken match, up. And I said, Bill, do you know the most precious thing in the world? Yes, he said, that match.

He said, if it holds and catches, we live. If it fails to catch, we die. So they redoubled their efforts.

Struck it. Carefully, it leaped up. The ragged edge of a dead leaf caught, and then another, and then another, and then the shavings, and then the sticks, and then the wood.

Pretty soon they had a beautiful fire. Searchers had found them, days later found them well, because that precious little thing had held it. Brethren, everything had been tried.

To save you and me from death, everything had been tried. Every kind of sacrifice, every kind of ascetic practice, self-immolation, everything had been tried, everything blew out in the morning. But a man walked in Galilee, and he had in his veins only a small amount of blood.

I should have checked on how much blood we had. Somebody tell me? A quart, two quarts, three quarts? I don't know. Not much.

The average size human being, possibly a gallon, wasn't much in the great pool of human blood. But brethren, if that didn't work, we died. But it worked.

It worked. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin, for as much as we know, that we are redeemed, not with silver nor gold, but with that precious blood of Jesus Christ. I wonder how many of us know how precious their blood is that we celebrate today.

I don't wish to browbeat you or take a superior attitude and lecture. I walked onto this platform this morning almost painfully conscious of how unworthy I am to talk about this precious blood or to have any share in holy communion. But it's only by the preciousness of the blood that any of us are able or worthy to be considered at all by that kind eye of God.

And it's only that knowledge that gives me courage to officiate at a communion service or to talk about this holy blood. So I do not say you should repent. I say we should repent.

Pastor, associate pastor, we should approach this morning in broken humility, tenderness of humility, and think about that precious blood. If it had failed us, we'd have died. But God raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand.

And with that precious blood he sprinkled it on the judgment seat. And that judgment seat is a mercy seat now. He didn't fail us.

It's precious. Let's approach with brokenness of humility and we'll find in the communion as our fathers used to say the medicine of immortality. God, we pray thy blessing upon us.

O Lamb of God, we love thee so we would with thee thy journey go. We pray thou will help us this morning hurt and humbled by our own unworthiness. The knowledge and haunting memories of sins committed in the past but by thy grace the moment we have no wish to sin.

We wish only to love thee and live as we should. So please help us now for Jesus' sake. Brethren, we'll now gather while we sing.

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