

(Hebrews - Part 27): The Blood of Infinite Value

by A.W. Tozer

The blood of Jesus Christ is of infinite value and is efficacious in ending sin, guaranteeing reconciliation and pardon to those who believe in him.

Duration: 31:28

Scripture: Leviticus 17:11, Matthew 26:28, John 3:16, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:22, 1 Peter 1:18-19

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of standing back from a painting to understand the passage being discussed. He emphasizes that sin leads to death and that when a person dies, they no longer sin. To save the forfeited man, blood is offered as a sacrifice. The speaker also highlights the immediate reconciliation and fellowship between God and the forgiven sinner. This reconciliation is made possible through the blood of the New Testament and the death of Jesus Christ, who serves as the mediator of a new covenant.

Transcript

Now, the best way to understand some paintings is to stand back from them quite a little way in order that you might see them in perspective. If you stand too close to a great painting, you'll see only the details and you'll see them out of proportion, enlarged, and because of a spoiled and distorted proportion, you will not see the beauty of the painting. Maybe you will not even understand the meaning of the painting at all.

Now, the best way to treat this passage which I have read is to treat it like a painting back from which you stand at considerable distance. Let's do that this day. Let's stand back from this passage and not take every verse or every phrase of it, but let's stand back and gaze in wandering faith and see what emerges.

Now, from this, several things emerge, and I hope that you'll get a hold of it. I remember a woman wrote me a letter one time. I pitied her.

I really did. I was sorry for her. She said, Dear Editor, the trouble with your magazine is your editorials are too heavy.

She said, I am a mother. I have three or four. She told me how many.

She knew I don't. She said, I have so many babies, and they're all little, and I work all day. And I fall exhausted at night.

Then I pick up The Lion's Witness, and I turn to your editorial, and she said, I don't want to read anything heavy. It makes me think I want something that you don't have to think. She said, Now, just in case you think that I'm stupid, I'm the daughter of a Ph.D., a doctor of philosophy.

Of course, she could have taken after a mother. But anyhow, she said, I am the daughter of a Ph.D., but I just want you to know it's too heavy. Well, I don't know what you're going to do with anybody like that, except to remind them that Jesus said that there's going to be a day when he's coming, and when he comes, watch out lest the cares of this life overwhelm you and you be taken unaware.

Nobody ought to be so busy that they can't do a little bit of thinking on holy things in the course of the day. And here we have a number of things, and I hope that the cares of this life and the busyness of living won't prevent you from latching hold of this, holding hard onto it. One thing I notice from a little distance as we look at this is the mysterious relation between blood and life.

Lecture 5 The Meaning of Calvary 2 Now, that is found in the Old Testament too. It says here in the seventeenth of Leviticus, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth within you, thy gate, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among this people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that make an atonement for the soul.

Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten, he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for the life thereof.

Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof. Whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. Now there we have the Old Testament groundwork laid for this, and it was carried all through the life and religion of Israel, that there was a mysterious relation between blood and life, so that blood was considered to be mysterious and sacred, and never eaten in Israel.

Second thing I notice here is the mysterious relation between death and sin. We don't know what death is, we're awed, we don't know, but we know that it's not cessation of existence. You've heard the word annihilation used, haven't you? Jehovah's Witnesses and Seven-Day Adventists and other groups teach what they call annihilation.

Now, the word annihilation means, of course, to beat back out of existence. There is no such thing in nature as annihilation, and I don't know why we should introduce it into the Kingdom of God when it's not found anywhere. There is such a thing as calling something out of nothing in creation.

But there is no such thing known in the scripture as calling something back into nothing. God made all that is out of nothing, but he never made nothing out of anything that is. You'll never find anywhere in the Bible where God reverses the process of creation.

You can think that, but you can't find it. You can take a match and strike it. You don't smoke, so you don't use matches, but strike one.

You use electricity in your stove, so you don't use them there. But get ahold of one and strike it, and it will burn to ashes. Then let it cool, and you can pinch it in your finger and hardly find it at all.

Wash your finger a bit and everything's gone. But it hasn't been annihilated. Several things have happened to that match.

That match, oxygen has mixed with it, and it's been burnt, to put it simply, and gone to ashes, and its form has been changed, but part of it has gone up in gases, part of it has gone up in smoke, and part of it is in the ash, but it's not gone back out of being. It's still around somewhere, but they say, they tell us, that death is annihilation, that the soul that God created suddenly ceases to be. They say they use the illustration of a candle burning or anything burning up.

No such thing in the Bible as annihilation. There's only such a thing as a change of form. A mother holds a baby in her arms, it's a little, warm, laughing, pleasant, chuckling little thing, and there it is, it's a baby.

Then two weeks later, she may hold that same baby in her arms, crying and sobbing frantically, that it's just died in her arms. Then they lay it away and bring it back the next day and lay it in their little home, as white as marble and looking like a little angel, but dead. What's happened to it? Annihilation? No.

A change of form is all. Something has changed radically. There has been a change in the form of existence, and in this case, a shocking and heart-breaking change, but it's only been the change, that's all.

The soul that was there, the intelligence that was there, laughing and crying and chuckling and trying to talk, that little intelligence was not annihilated any more than that body was annihilated. They will lay that body away and it will be rolled around, as the poet said, in earth's dire, and it will change with rocks and hills and trees and finally go back to dust again, but it will not be annihilated. It will change its form, but not cease to be.

So there is a mysterious relation between death and sin, and we know that there are two forms of death. We know there is physical death and we know there is spiritual death. This is denied also by the annihilationists.

They say there is no such thing, the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. They say that that meant something else, it didn't mean the man died. Well, the simple fact is, Adam died the day he ate, and Eve died the day she ate.

Because, you see, death isn't annihilation or cessation of existence, it's a changed relationship and a different form of existence. When Satan fell and said, I will arise and put my throne above the throne of God, God cast him down and broke him off from heaven, and he ceased to have fellowship with the Eternal God who had created him. And Satan died, but he didn't cease to be, he's still around.

And Paul's classic example is, she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. So the death there is a spiritual death, it's not a physical death. And there is the woman that was not annihilated while she lived in pleasure, she was simply cut off from God and her form of existence was such that it was not related to God.

And we know also about death that it's one of sin's fearful consequences. In the book of Romans, the fifth chapter, we're taught this very carefully, that sin came into the world and death by sin. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

That's the Bible. So there's a mysterious relation between death and sin. Then we learn that God's way of dealing with death and sin is very simple.

God terminates sin in death. When a man is so bad, we had in the city of Chicago some, well, he was all over the Middle West, but he ended up in Chicago some years back, a man by the name of John Dillinger. Well, now John Dillinger was the most wanted man, the most feared criminal, and you know about it.

He was a terrible man, and I think I've passed by the Bejeweled Theater where he was finally killed by the FBI men, shot to death when he tried to shoot them. He was a terrible man, and in the newspapers, gruesome as they are, had a picture of John Dillinger. They used to have him before the courts or in the hands of police or with a gun in his hand.

They had him showing all different ways, and always he had that cynical, sarcastic look on his face, never frowning, always smiling, that cynical smile. He was a sinning man. But the last picture they showed of him, he'd stop sinning.

They showed him lying flat with his toes up, the sheet over him. He was dead, dead, completely and fully dead. Sin ends in death.

When men die, they don't sin anymore. And that is God's way of ending sin, in death. And life touched with sin is a forfeited life, and if it continues, it will die.

The soul that sins shall die. So to save the forfeited man, blood is offered. Blood, which is life.

I say that the way to end sin is to end the life of the man who is doing the sinning. The robber can't rob anymore when he's dead. The wife-beater can't beat his wife anymore when he's dead.

The drunkard can't drink anymore when he's dead. So there must be the death, says the scriptures. There must be blood, says the scriptures, because blood and life have a mysterious relationship, and sin and death have a mysterious relationship.

And so when blood is poured out, life is poured out, and sin ends. And because blood indicates the termination of life, the acts of sin are pardoned, because the blood that was poured out was the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of infinite value. Keep that in mind, the blood of infinite value.

I never like to reduce to the common market terms anything as sacred as atonement of the blood of Christ, and I admit I shrink a little when I hear men talk about Christ paying our debts. I believe he did, but it's just a little bit physical. I don't quite like to think of God redeeming us as I might redeem a cow or a horse down here when the horse show is on.

There's something holier and higher and sweeter and more beautiful than that, and yet it's fear, all right. Did God through Jesus Christ's blood redeem mankind back? And the scripture teaches us that the sacrifices of bulls and goats, the pouring out of blood of bulls and goats, they were ceremonial and efficacious on earth. But it teaches us that Christ's death was efficacious actually.

If I'm using an expression there that's not familiar to the young people, let me say to you that efficacious just means that it works, that's all. If it works, it's efficacious. You get in in the morning and start your car to go off to school or to work, and you press down or turn the little key, and there's a discouraged, feeble humming sound, and the engine doesn't start, it means your battery is not efficacious, it doesn't work.

Or something else in there is wrong. But if it hums off the way it does in the radio ads and goes singing along, you'll know that your battery and everything in there, spark plugs and timer and distributor, have all been efficacious. That's all it means it works.

And so when we say the blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious, we mean that it is effective, that it works. And while it was on earth it was efficacious for a time, temporarily, ceremonially on the earth. But the scripture explains that the blood of a bull or a goat or a pigeon offered on an altar in Jerusalem was only temporary, just for the time, efficacious only for the fellowship of physical Israel.

But that when Jesus Christ went to the cross and gave his blood and poured it out and terminated his life there, that it was efficacious actually. And that it works not only among the people of Israel while they lived on earth, but it works forever and forever. He hath obtained eternal redemption for us.

So Christ's death was efficacious actually, not in symbol but in fact. And the blood of Christ establishes that a holy life was terminated, brought to an end. The blood was poured out and the blood and the life were one.

And when the blood was poured out, the life was terminated. And because this was vicarious. Now there's another word I suppose we ought to explain for any tired mothers that have had a hard time of it.

We ought to explain that vicarious means one for another, you know. Vicarious. Suppose this man over here gets a, I don't know, he won't of course, but suppose he would get a notice from Ottawa saying that in 1958 you didn't pay your income tax.

Well now I know that he'd break out in sweat because I've gotten one or two little things on the matter of two dollars and I never like it. You know I made a mistake in adding or something. And I never like to get any bills or any notifications.

They're so gentle and so terrible. Well suppose he got a letter like that from Ottawa, no stamp on it, went free. And he found he owed a thousand dollars to Ottawa for income tax that year.

Well sir, that would be something for a preacher to get. You admit that, all right. It'd be something for a preacher to get.

But now supposing that I have with all of my money, suppose that I walked up and said to him and called him by the affectionate title, name I call him Bob, I'd say, Bob I'll take care of that, I haven't, the bigger family is yours, and I got a thousand, I'll let you have. And I'd hand it to him and say, now you don't owe it, it's yours, send it in. And he'd send it in, that would be vicarious.

That would be one doing it for another. That would be paying another's debt. That would be standing in the middle and taking the responsibility.

Well I think I can think of a better illustration than that. Talk about a thousand dollars is unrealistic. So we'll tell about the way they did, and I suppose they've done it in many countries, but I happen to know they did it during the Civil War.

A man named John Wilkins got a little notice from the government, and the notice said, dear Mr. Wilkins, your neighbors and friends have decided that you are to honor them by serving in United States Army. Oh I got one once, it's so loving, you know, and signed Uncle Sam. And he had a family and he didn't want to

go, so he knew a neighbor who had a hired man, and the hired man was single and bummed around and didn't have any responsibilities, and his name was Bill.

So he goes to Bill and says, Bill, I have been drafted. You know, that's what that is, after you get under all the flowers and verbiage, that you're drafted. Your friends and neighbors have decided that you are to have the honor of serving them, and that means you're drafted.

Well, he goes and says, Bill, I've been drafted and I have 12 children, and my wife isn't strong, and I feel I just can't go. Could you go for me? Oh sure, he'd say, I might as well be serving in the Army somewhere else, so he'd go. They allowed that then.

During the two wars that followed, they didn't allow it. Everybody was for himself. But in the Civil War they did, and you could go vicariously.

That is, you went for another. Well, now all that will work out all right, supposing that everybody came home well. But suppose that this fellow Bill is down there somewhere, and the Tennessee minute man draws a bead on him, shoves the cud over to the other side of his cheek to get comfortable, and puts a bullet through his head.

Well, now the man back home, what did they call him, Mr. Wilkins? He's still alive. But Bill lies buried in Tennessee's red mud. One has died for the other, that's vicarious.

And that's at the very foundation of the Christian faith, that the one who was innocent died for the one who was guilty. And that he came to me and said, I didn't go to him, I wouldn't have thought of it, but he came to me and said, I'll die for you. And so he died for me, and his life was terminated in the pouring out of his blood, nor that mine might be saved.

That's the teaching of the Bible. Don't you ever let anybody take that out of your mind. Don't let anybody edit that or water it down, or try to make it more acceptable to philosophy or art.

Let it stand in its naked and awful and wonderful beauty. Christ died, and in dying he died vicariously. And therefore the justice of God is satisfied.

God holds nothing against anybody anymore who believes in Jesus Christ. And the power of death is broken for all who identify themselves with Christ. It says he is the mediator of a new covenant.

Now, since we're doing a little defining, I don't know how you like this defining business. Sometimes people won't come back after a man does a little defining, but if you don't define, nobody will know what we mean. So it's just a question of half a dozen to one and six to the other.

But let's look at the word mediator. What does that mean? Well, that word mediate, if you've studied Latin, you know what it means. It means to come in between.

A mediator is somebody, you hear it if there is a strike on, say at the Royal York, and there is a union here and a Royal York here, somebody comes in between who hasn't any axe to grind on either side. That's the theory. And he is a mediator between the two, and he tries to bring together the Royal York and the union.

Or it might be John L. Lewis and the government down across the line, whichever it is. It's an attempt to get reconciliation by coming in between. That's where we get our word immediate, meaning nothing in between.

Mediate means something in between. And a mediator is one who stands in between. So Christ is the mediator.

Now, the New Testament, the word New Testament, of course, applies to a book. But it applies to the book because it contains the New Testament. And a testament is a will, a contract which is made.

And the contract is a will, and the contract guarantees a number of things. It guarantees reconciliation, that's the first thing. We are reconciled to God.

My God has reconciled his pardoning voice. I hear he owns me for his child. I need no longer fear.

It guarantees pardon, it guarantees reinstatement in the household of God. Do you remember in the Old Testament when David and his son, one of his sons, I've forgotten, dad and I, I hear somebody, they had a little trouble, David and his son. But the father forgave the son, but he never invited him to his house again.

He forgave him, but never invited him to come home. Now, that kind of pardon wouldn't be worth anything at all. When the prodigal son left and went away, he believed his father pardoned him back there, but decided to go back and test it.

He said, I'll go back and see, I'll go back and throw myself on my father's mercy and I'll say I'm no good father, just make me a servant. He went back and his father ran to meeting, threw his arms around his neck and said, kill the fatted cat, let's have roast beef and mashed potatoes and gravy, and let's have a meal. He said, make it the biggest thing you've got.

And the boy stood there, didn't know first how to take it. Then he turned and said, get him a new robe, get a ring for his finger, clean him up and let's celebrate. You know what he did to the older brother, he came and insulted him about it.

He said, he's getting more attention than I ever got in my life and I never did anything but stay around the house and slave. He said, look at this fellow, this rascal of a brother of mine. Quite natural.

That's the way brothers talk about each other, and especially brothers like that. But what happened here, the father took the young son to his heart. He didn't say, I'll forgive you, boy, but sleet in the barn.

He took him in. Now, reconciliation is followed immediately by reconciliation. When God pardons a sinner because of a life laid down, he immediately receives that sinner to his bosom and calls him, my child, and he gives him the spirit of the son, saying, my father.

And so there's fellowship there between the father and the son. Now, this is secured by the blood of the New Testament. How God bestows a fabulous legacy through the death of the tested.

Now, I notice here, looking at it from a distance, I notice that a will to be effective has to, the man who makes the will has to die. As long as he's alive, it's no good. I remember that in the city of Chicago, an old medical doctor called me into his house.

It wasn't a house, really, it was a palace and really an art gallery, because he collected art from all over the world, great statues from Rome and all the rest. And he said, now, I don't like the United States government, and I don't like their way of taking away your money. And he said, if I give it away, nobody will have to pay tax on it.

So he said, I want to give away to some certain worthy institutions, Moody Bible Institute and the Alliance Church and other places, I want to give away. And he named a large sum of money. He said, now, it's going to be given on these terms.

It's going to be given on the terms that when I die, your church gets so much money, and it was, I won't say how much, but it was up there. And he said, now, the pastor gets one-third of that, or else the will is in doubt. He said, you'll get one-third if you're still there, or your successor, that's the way it read, Dr. A. W. Closer, or his successor.

He signed it, called a few of us down to the Continental National Bank, took us down to one of the vaults, locked the doors and made a speech, told us what he was going to do, and then said, I thought maybe you'd like to handle some money. So he turned \$70,000 in cash loose on us and went around the circle, and he picked it up and held it, set it down, and I had \$70,000 at one time. It was just mine, just a little while.

It never belongs to anybody but a little while, but that's another story. And we all went around and signed for the thing. And then he just kept right on living, you know.

He kept right on living. And I used to kind of get impatient, and one day I said to the Lord, Now, Lord, I've been thinking about this old man. And I said, I'm sure you're not going to let me have any of that money, because I've been worried about why he had such longevity.

And I said, I'm sure that as a discipline to your child, I'll never get a dime. So when I left Chicago, he was still living. And right after I left Chicago, he died, and the will became effective.

And my successor, who had only been there a few months, picked up the big check. Now, God's good to me. If I hadn't thought of it, I'd have gotten it.

But the very fact that I was carnal enough to think of it, the Lord knew I didn't deserve it, so he didn't give it to me. That's right. But the covenant, as long as the Lord Jesus lived and until he died, that covenant couldn't be effective.

The will wasn't in effect until somebody died, and then when our Lord died, it became instantly effective. There was pardon, reinstatement and eternal life, those, I say, those are the marvelous and fabulous legacies left to his people at the death of the testator. But here is an odd thing.

No man ever died in order to make his will valid, and then came back to act as the, what do you call it, executive? Never. Nobody ever did that. When a man died, somebody else has to act.

I made a will. My son told me what to say, he's a lawyer, told me what to say, and then he forgot about it. So I made the will and then sent it to him.

And he said, Say, that was a beautiful piece of work you did there. He said, I didn't know you knew how to write in such legal terms. And I said, Well, I just wrote down what you told me.

Have you forgot? He had. But it was nicely done. He did it.

And the will says that he is to be the executive. But I won't go back and say, Just a minute here, Bud. We call him Bud, though he's got some other names.

Just a minute, Bud. I didn't mean this, I meant this. No, no.

I'll be over there holding the lily. And he will handle it. He is the executor.

Now, here is where Jesus Christ did everything upside down and backwards, gloriously made fools of everything and everybody in order to save anybody that would. He did it just backwards, wonderfully. Nobody ever did this before.

So he died to release the terms of the will to all of his people, and rose again to administer it. Isn't that beautiful? He didn't turn this over to the angel Gabriel. He said, I'll be back, I'll do it.

I'll rise again the third day, and he did. So Christ lives to carry out all the terms of his will to his people. Brethren, I don't know how you like this, but I think this is utterly wonderful.

I don't think it's good preaching, but I think it is preaching about something utterly wonderful. I believe we Christians ought to stick to this and see to it that nobody can ever get us to change our naota, or to change our mind about our thing. All the liberals and the ecumenists and all the rest in all the wide world couldn't get me to change my mind about this, because this is my hope for this world and the next.

And it's your hope, and it's their hope if they only knew it. So thank God for the New Testament blood, and for the New Testament Lord who shed that blood vicariously for his people, and who now lives to administer the terms of the will, giving pardon and reconciliation and reinstatement and eternal life and immortality to all that he has named in the will. And he's named in the will, whosoever believeth on him.

Amen.

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