

# Hyssop - and the Passover

by George Warnock

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*The sermon emphasizes the significance of humility and the universal availability of redemption through the blood of Christ, using the example of hyssop as a symbol of our need to stoop low before God.*

**Scripture:** Luke 18:14

**Topics:** "Passover Redemption", "Christ's Sacrifice"

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## Description

George Warnock delves into the significance of applying the blood of the Passover lamb with hyssop, emphasizing that no one is excluded from God's grace regardless of their shortcomings or background. He explains the three-fold connotation of redemption in the New Testament, highlighting that true freedom comes from becoming obedient servants of the One who purchased and set us free. Warnock stresses the eternal significance of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and the continual availability of His blood for repentance, humility, and contrition.

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## Transcript

"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin..." (Exodus 12:22).

We are all familiar with the story of the Passover, and particularly with the phrase: "When I see the Blood, I will pass over you." And honoring the Blood of the Lamb that was slain has been throughout the generations of the Church the key to our Redemption.

But how was the blood to be applied? "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop..." A temple would be built of Cedar in the centuries that lay ahead: cedar that was cut from the lofty mountains of Lebanon, shaped and fitted together for boards and timbers and beams, But the humble little hyssop that could make boast of greatness or of strength would become, in the purposes of God, the instrument in the hands of the elders of Israel for the applying of the blood of the passover lamb.

Why the hyssop? Because it was so insignificant and ordinary... and easily within the reach of all. God would have us to know that no man is excluded from His grace because of what he lacks in himself. Nor is he excused because of what he lacks by nature; or because of environment, upbringing, background, social stature, weakness, poverty, or ignorance. We might accuse ourselves because of these things, or excuse ourselves for our lack of them. But God would have us to know that... if there be in the standards of men such distinctions that would make some to be superior to others, then if he would know the

covering of the Blood he must apply the Blood by the same token as his lowly brother. He must use the "hyssop." It is just a lowly shrub. It is a bitter herb, and is known to have certain medicinal properties. It has purplish flowers--beautiful in its own right... low growing, and fragrant... if one would stoop low enough to appreciate it. But the use of the hyssop was not optional. There could be no distinction here; nor could there be any standard that would cause certain exclusions. It had to be hyssop because we must know that in the sight of God there is no act of the will, no refinement of character, no manner of good works or appearances before God that would ensure the covering of the Blood on our behalf. The hyssop would speak of that humiliation and abasement of the human will before God--a bitter medicine as far as the sickly human heart is concerned--but fragrant and beautiful in the sight of God as He stoops low to heal the broken and the contrite heart.

The Church has always made much of Redemption by the Blood of Christ, and rightly so. Where we have failed is in the emphasis of the fulness of the meaning of Redemption. The word "redemption" in the New Testament carries with it a three-fold connotation. Its simple meaning is: we were "bought with a price." The Greek word is "agorazo"... "purchased at the market-place." A second word like it is prefaced with the preposition "ex" (exagorazo) and means "purchased out of and away from the market-place." Here is the picture. A slave is on the auction block at the market-place. Another man, out of mercy, lays down the redemptive money. He has bought the slave for himself by paying the price. He could, if he so desired, put the man up for auction again, and sell him to the highest bidder. But he takes him "away from" the marketplace. because now he is no longer to be offered for sale. He purchased the slave for himself, and he will not be resold. He is taken "away from" the place of sale. But there is still another word for redemption, and it is "lutroo," and it means, "to set free by paying a price." Again here is the picture. The slave is bought with a price... he is taken away from the market-place... and then the man who purchased him turns to his slave and says, "Now you are mine; I have bought you for myself; but I really bought you that I might set you free. I take away the chains from your hands and your feet, and I set you free."

The man was redeemed with a price, taken from the auction mart, and then released. (There is one further step that the liberated man can take... and should take. And unless he takes this step he will remain in a certain kind of bondage all his days, a bondage to "self." And this step is outlined in Exodus 21:2-6... the liberated slave chooses to become the lifelong slave of the man who bought him. He submits himself to his master that just set him free, allows his "ear" to be bored through with an awl. and he becomes his master's slave forever.) O that we might learn with that liberated slave in Israel, that the only true freedom we shall ever enjoy is that freedom which comes to us when we become forever the captive and obedient servants of the One who purchased us and then set us FREE. O that we might have our ears pierced to hear only what He says, and to have one purpose only in life to pursue: "Lo I come to do Thy will. O God."

There is much made in evangelical Christianity today about the once-for-all aspects of our redemption. And certainly His offering was a once-for-all sacrifice. But once-for-all does not mean something that happened in the past and therefore remains a thing of the past. God's once-for-alls have eternal significance. God's once-for-alls are eternally present. Jesus suffered once-for-all, but 60 or more years later John on Patmos saw the "Lamb, as it had been slain." It was not a mere fact of history. It was an act of eternal consequence. Today His blood is just as real and factual as the day lie hung on the Cross while the blood flowed down from His head, His side, His hands, and His feet. The blood was not lost in the stony grounds of Calvary's hill, but in God it actually entered in behind the veil in that eternal realm. We do not imply anything mystical here, as if the blood was literally soaked up from the ground and preserved in any natural sort of way. He shed His blood, and it soaked the ground under His feet... but in God it is an

eternal thing, and remains (as it shall throughout eternity) the covering of those who would seek a hiding place from the wrath and justice of a holy God.

And just as the Blood abides, so it remains for you and I to apply that Blood to the heart with the hyssop of repentance, of humility, of brokenness, and of a contrite heart. This is readily available to all of us: it is right there at our feet, if we would but stoop low and lay hold upon it. Jesus tells the story of two men who went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican, But the Pharisee prayed thus "with himself..." His prayers never got off the ground, because of the Pharisee's proud heart: "I thank thee Lord that I am not as other men..." and then he went on to tell the Lord all about the evil that men commit, as if to divert God' s attention away from his own heart, But the publican didn't even have the courage to look God in the face, but with bowed heart and face he smote upon his breast and cried, "God be merciful to me the sinner..." "I tell you," said Jesus, "that this man went down to his house JUSTIFIED rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

The blood of Christ avails for sinner and believer alike. And how many Christians there are who have known the covering of the blood, and have been redeemed, but have not known the fulness of redemption because of wrong attitudes, wrong motives, and wrong thoughts about God or about certain of God's people. Sometimes the simplest act of obedience unto the will of God can be the hyssop in our hands that will bring into our lives the full benefits of His redemption, and the releasing of our spirits into the freedom of His love and grace. Hyssop is a bitter herb, but it has medicinal qualities. And as we stoop low at His feet, like the publican in the temple, or the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears... God Himself stoops low and smells a sweet fragrance; and the erring one, bowed down with guilt and fear, arises to walk in newness of life, and to send forth the fragrance of redemptive grace unto others. That is why David prayed:

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-warnock/hyssop-and-the-passover/>

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