

*Meditations on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Today is Palm Sunday. This week is the Passion Week. Friday is Good Friday and Sunday is Easter or Resurrection Sunday.

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 Title: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for man for forgiveness of sins"  
 Text: Matthew 26:20-30  
 Theme: The fellowship of His suffering always precedes the power of His Resurrection. The cross is always before the crown. God has given to His church a means of remembering and celebrating the power of the cross as a past fact, a present reality, and a future hope.

**If I only had one opportunity to speak, is this what I would want said?**

What can **wash away my sin**?  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
 what can **make me whole again**?  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

*Oh! precious is the flow  
 That makes me white as snow;  
 No other fount I know,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

For my **pardon**, this I see,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
 For my **cleansing** this my plea,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

Nothing can for **sin atone**,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
 Naught of good that I have done,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

This is **all my hope and peace**,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
 This is **all my righteousness**,  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

Now by this I'll **overcome**—  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus,  
 Now by this I'll reach my home—  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

Glory! Glory! This I sing—  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus,  
 All my praise for this I bring—  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Refrain*

We speak of the cross without fully understanding or appreciating all that it contains for us. In the absence of the cross what hope do we have of attaining heaven's shores? On what basis will we stand when we appear before the great and terrible throne of Almighty God? Friend, if I have but one message to speak, one hope to lay hold of, one thought to pursue, and one object to fix our gaze upon, then let it be Jesus Christ as He rises triumphantly in His death, burial, and resurrection.

**The Historical Setting:**

The historical event from which we base our observance of the Lord's Table is the Jewish Passover. The Passover is a commemoration of the nation Israel's Exodus from Egypt. It is the celebration of the death angel of God passing over the first born children of Israel and killing the first born in the land of Egypt.

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and **when I see the blood, I will pass over you**, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exod. 12:13).

“For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and **when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door**, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you” (Exod. 12:23).

For the nation, it is *the* pivotal moment. And like the Jewish Passover on which the Christian Table finds its theological moorings, we as the people of God have been liberated from our bondage through the sacrificial death of God's perfect lamb.

Often we find ourselves numbly keeping the Lord's Table without actually considering the event and the reality of it. The Table is like a wedding ring. It reminds us of something that is real.

The Lord's Table is to act as a reminder of who Christ is, what He has done, and who we are in Him. The Table is not to be blindly or deafly done. It is calling out to us in the strongest language possible all that has been secured for us at the cross and beyond. God is speaking to us through the elements.

The Scripture makes reference to the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as it relates to His death in behalf of our sins. I do not believe the

Scripture in identifying both the body and blood is trying to draw too sharp of a distinction between the two. Both elements speak of His body being offered up as a sacrifice for sin.

Yet what Christ did and the manner in which it was done is non-negotiable. Christ had to die and the manner in which He died had to unfold in the exact way in which it did.

When we celebrate the Lord's Table we are making reference to the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ in behalf of His people. What is the significance of this blood for us?

We know from Hebrews 10:4 that, "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." What had to be done could only be done by means of God the Father sending His only begotten Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). Hebrews 9:22 shows us the necessity of a blood atonement, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The blood speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ in His substitution and sacrificial death. It represents everything about Him. This can be heard in Judas' statement to the religious leaders when he "betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4). The same is true with Pilate and his comments to the crowd (Matt. 27:24).

The blood of Jesus Christ is representative and identifies Him as God's champion in the carrying out and fulfiller of His eternal purpose. This is seen in Revelation 19:13, "He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God."

There are eleven statements made throughout the New Testament revelation concerning the blood of Jesus Christ. This is only a fraction of what the Table is telling us. This is to be our focus during the celebration of the Table. We are to remember right now what He has done for us.

The life and death of Jesus Christ . . .

- I. The life and death of Jesus Christ was an intentional offering not an accidental event (Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20).

"for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

The word used for "poured out" can be used two ways depending on context. For example Matthew 9:17 and Luke 5:37 speak of a bottle breaking and the liquid running out of it. There is no intent. It was an accident. This same idea

is in John 2:15 for the tables being overturned in the Temple and in Acts 1:18 when referring to the bowls of Judas gushing out.

But it is also used of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the people of God (Acts 2:17, 18, 33, 10:45). This same Holy Spirit pouring communicates to us God's love (Rom. 5:5) and the power of regeneration (Titus 3:5, 6).

Jesus Christ has clearly established His willful and voluntary offering up of Himself in fulfillment of the Father's will for the securing of His people and for the benefit of all mankind.

“for this reason the Father loves Me, **because I lay down My life** so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but **I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.** This commandment I received from My Father” (John 10:17,18).

“The Father ‘gave’ the Son who was glad to be given and to give himself.”  
(Robertson's Word Pictures)

- II. The life and death of Jesus Christ establishes the New Covenant (Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25).

“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:25).

<sup>18</sup> “Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU.” <sup>21</sup> And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. <sup>22</sup> And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:18-22).

“How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).

“and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel” (Heb 12:24).

We struggle with the idea of the New Covenant or New Testament because of Jeremiah 31:31-33. Hebrews 8:8-12 quotes this passage in explaining why

Christians no longer live by Old Covenant regulations. Although I believe there is a future for the nation of Israel I do not draw too sharp of a distinction in identifying *the people of God*. Are we distinct from the believing nation of ethnic Israel? Yes, and though this is true we can still celebrate the larger group identified by “the people of God.” Regardless as to what sub-set you and I might be by dispensation, we are still a part of a larger group called *the people of God*.

As a consequence of this union with the larger group identified as *the people of God*, I believe we are participating in an aspect of the New Covenant’s inauguration. There is still a further and more direct application to the ethnic nation of Israel, but this does not rob us of what is already for us in the New Covenant’s inception because of the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

To say there is no aspect of the New Covenant that is presently activated forces us to do some invalid hermeneutical handling of passages like those relating to the Lord’s Table and in the book of Hebrews.

The New Testament is the New Covenant and the New Covenant takes precedence over the Old Covenant (i.e. The Old Testament).

- III. The life and death of Jesus Christ is the means and basis whereby God can forgive the sins’ against Him (Matt. 26:28, 1 John 1:7, Rev. 7:14).

“for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).

“but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

“I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14).

It is the message of sin’s forgiven in the blood of Jesus Christ that we are to preach in His name among all the nations. (Luke 24:47).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

It is the message that the early church took into their surrounding communities and into the world (Acts 13:38, 26:18).

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

I believe it is impossible for us to fathom the depth of our forgiveness.

- The charges against us have been dropped.
- The burden we bore has been removed.
- The alienation has been reconciled.
- The emptiness we have felt has been filled.

Yet still we look and long for more. Our ongoing emptiness is because we do not see the magnitude of the cross. May God open our eyes to the cross.

APPLICATION: (Where do we go from here?)

**What could you say to a dying person that would not enrage by its triviality?**

If I were to find you on your death bed, with but a few moments left to live, this is the message you would most want to hear. In your last few moments of dying, you will care little of this life. Your energy and focus will be on what is awaiting you in the next. Friend, in that moment the only thing that will matter is that the blood of Jesus Christ has availed for you.

ILLUSTRATION:

William Cowper (pronounced Cooper) (November 20, 1731 – April 25, 1800) was an English poet and hymnodist. One of the most popular poets of his time, Cowper changed the direction of 18th century nature poetry by writing of everyday life and scenes of the English countryside.

He suffered from periods of severe depression, and although he found refuge in a fervent evangelical Christianity, the source of his much-loved hymns, he often experienced doubt and fears that he was doomed to eternal damnation. However, his religious motivations and association with John Newton (who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace") led to much of the poetry for which he is best remembered in the popular mind.

This is one of the first hymns Cowper wrote after his first attack of temporary madness. Cowper had been promised a post as Clerk of the Journal to the House of Lords, but was dismayed upon learning he would have to undergo a public examination in the House before beginning his duties. The following article from the *North American Review*, January, 1834, describes his dilemma, and how God prevented him from destroying himself:

As the time drew nigh, his agony became more and more intense; he hoped and believed that madness would come to relieve him; he attempted also to make up his mind to commit suicide, though his conscience bore stern testimony against it; he could not by any argument persuade himself that it was right, but this desperation prevailed, and he procured from an apothecary the means of self-destruction. On the day before his public appearance was to be made, he happened to notice a letter in the newspaper, which to his disordered mind seemed like a malignant libel on himself. He immediately threw down the paper and rushed into the fields, determined to die in a ditch, but the thought struck him that he might escape from the country. With the same violence he proceeded to make hasty preparations for his flight; but while he was engaged in packing his portmanteau his mind changed, and he threw himself into a coach, ordering the man to drive to the Tower wharf, intending to throw himself into the river, and not reflecting that it would be impossible to accomplish his purpose in that public spot. On approaching the water, he found a porter seated upon some goods: he then returned to the coach and was conveyed to his lodgings at the Temple. On the way he attempted to drink the laudanum, but as often as he raised it, a convulsive agitation of his frame prevented it from reaching his lips; and thus, regretting the loss of the opportunity, but unable to avail himself of it, he arrived, half dead with anguish, at his apartment. He then shut the doors and threw himself upon the bed with the laudanum near him, trying to lash himself up to the deed; but a voice within seemed constantly to forbid it, and as often as he extended his hand to the poison, his fingers were contracted and held back by spasms.

At this time one of the inmates of the place came in, but he concealed his agitation, and as soon as he was left alone, a change came over him, and so detestable did the deed appear, that he threw away the laudanum and dashed the vial to pieces. The rest of the day was spent in heavy insensibility, and at night he slept as usual; but on waking at three in the morning, he took his penknife and lay with his weight upon it, the point toward his heart. It was broken and would not penetrate. At day break he arose, and passing a strong garter around his neck, fastened it to the frame of his bed: this gave way with his weight, but on securing it to the door, he was more successful, and remained suspended till he had lost all consciousness of existence. After a time the garter broke and he fell to the floor, so that his life was saved; but the conflict had been greater than his reason could endure. He felt for himself a contempt not to be expressed or imagined; whenever he went into the street, it

seemed as if every eye flashed upon him with indignation and scorn; he felt as if he had offended God so deeply that his guilt could never be forgiven, and his whole heart was filled with tumultuous pangs of despair. Madness was not far off, or rather madness was already come.

After recovering, Cowper came to realize how God can erase the stain of any sin.

**There is a Fountain**

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.  
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;  
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.  
Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away;  
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.  
Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;  
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.  
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;  
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save,  
When this poor lispng, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.  
Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave;  
When this poor lispng, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared, unworthy though I be,  
For me a blood bought free reward, a golden harp for me!  
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years, and formed by power divine,  
To sound in God the Father's ears no other name but Thine.

**How have I applied (or can I apply) this passage/idea to my life?**

1. This part of the worship service is specifically accenting the Lord's death and the consequences of that death for His people. In another sense it is no different than our singing, our listening, our fellowship, and our giving or whatever other aspect we bring to the worship service. It is all an expression of our individual and corporate worship of God. Its purpose is for us to focus on Him.

2. Am I seeing my sin in light of His cross? What do I find so important in my sin that I would hold so firmly to it? Am I ready to give my sin up?
3. If I do not know Jesus Christ as my Savior, will I believe in Him today?
4. How can I carry the gospel with me on a daily basis?

**How would a man, woman, married, single, youth, senior, seeker, etc. apply it?**

- As a young person does the blood of Jesus Christ matter to you?

What difference does this truth make for you? You go to school and you fail miserably in your homework. You are neither the best looking nor the most talented or athletic. You're misunderstood by your parents and your peers make you the brunt of their jokes. No one seems to understand who you are and what your fears consist of. You fear God and believe there is a great day of terror awaiting you. Friend, the blood of Jesus Christ has made a way for you to triumph in your adversity.

- As a married couple does the blood of Jesus Christ matter to you?

Your spouse is an absolute nincompoop. They have no social graces, their self-centered and egotistical. They care about nothing and no one but themselves and their activity. They do not consider you and your needs. They mismanage money and they would rather talk to their friends, then to you. They drive you completely insane and your sense of self-worth and acceptance has long since vanished. Friend, the blood of Jesus Christ has made a way for you to triumph in your adversity.

- As a single adult does the blood of Jesus Christ matter to you?

You find yourself alone and without hope. You despair of ever finding that special someone. You are uncertain about the present and see nothing but darkness and dread as to the future. Your job is a dead end and you have no lasting or real friends. Friend, the blood of Jesus Christ has made a way for you to triumph in your adversity.

If Jesus Christ did not die in your behalf, then what you think is your immediate concerns are nothing but vanishing vapors and wisps of nothingness. If Jesus Christ did not die in your behalf, then you will spend an eternity in a place filled with the gnashing of teeth, the consuming fires of unquenchable flame, and where the worm will never die. When you put your immediate concerns against the backdrop of eternity, then the blood of Jesus Christ rises in majesty above your pressing needs and towers over the temporal by flashing before us its inherent power.