

Christ Community Covenant Church
They Why Series: Why Blood?
Pastor Dave Scherrer - January 27, 2013

Why questions . . . always a good idea. That is why we have spent this month asking the important 'why questions' of our faith.

Why blood? Well, there is a lot in the Bible about blood. The word is used 406 times in the Scriptures. By contrast grace is used 199 times, hope 174, forgive or forgiven 106 times, even the word peace is less at 337 times. Love and faith 'out point' blood but blood is a consistent theme from Genesis to Revelation.

You remember the story of Cain and Able, the sons of Adam and Eve. You can read their short sad story in Genesis 4:

The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?"⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

And the theme of blood as it pertains to saving humanity from our sinful condition has an early start in the Bible. You remember the plight of the Hebrew nation enslaved by the Egyptians. Moses, their leader, had gone to Pharaoh demanding he let the Hebrews go and the nation of Israel was struck with plagues, the last the plague of the first born.

Exodus 12:23

For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

And blood is an interesting thing:

1. The blood is the only tissue of the body that is mobile. The body produces many fluids, but the blood is literally liquid tissue. Other fluids are limited to certain areas of the body, but the blood touches every single cell in the human body.
2. There are about 5 quarts of blood in your body, a little more blood in a man than a gal. This blood travels through your body about every 20 to 40 seconds. As it does, the blood carries oxygen and nutrients to the cells of your body, bringing life as it travels. At the same time, the same blood also removes the waste products from the cells. This waste never contaminates the good things the blood carries which the body needs. Imagine, if you will, the local garbage truck picking up your trash and also delivering your meals uncovered.
3. While the red cells in the body are carrying oxygen rich hemoglobin, and nutrients to the cells, another part of the blood known as "leucocytes" or white blood cells are present to defend the body against outside invaders. When the body is injured, you may notice a swelling in the area of the injury. This is caused by blood being rushed to the injured area, blood that is rich in white blood cells. These cells have the power to kill and engulf germs and infections. As they do their job, they die in the process and are expelled from the body. All of this is going on in the blood!

Blood brings life giving oxygen and food to the body
It carries away the toxic waste to where it can be purified out of the body.
It delivers healing and kills the things that kill you. Blood is good!

Blood – A Stumbling Block?

But blood can also be a stumbling block. When I was in college, I was just starting out in my faith and I was pretty enthusiastic. I was known for my faith, not so much that I was so outspoken, but that I didn't participate in the campus life as so many others did. I was working with YFC and my life was just headed in a different direction. There was a guy across the hall that watched me and one day he walked up to me and said "I don't know that much about Christianity. I've never been to church. My biggest stumbling block is that God killed his son. I don't get this thirst for blood. That is my biggest stumbling block." Early in my faith I didn't have a good answer for him. I don't know what became of Matt. He wasn't angry, just stuck. I want to come back to this stumbling block in a little bit.

So this is the reason that we must ask ourselves the question "Why Blood?" The truth of the matter is blood and God are two sides of the same coin when it comes to the problem of death and they can't be separated. We have to make peace with this fact. The writer of Hebrews tells us so:

Hebrews 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

So . . . Why Blood? First and foremost blood means life.

Blood Means Life

God and blood are all about life. We use the term "life blood" to refer to the tonic that puts joy and purpose into our endeavors and purposes. The Bible tells us so too.

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

And we know that God is the giver of Life.

Genesis 2:7: And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life.

Last week we spoke of the Lord's Table, of the bread and the blood. These are the elements of life! In the Gospel of John 6 (v35), Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

And went on to say (v 50-51) "This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Blood means life. But it also means covenant.

Blood means Covenant

Exodus 24:8

"And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Moses gathered the people and sprinkled them, covering them. The blood symbolically covered or 'atoned' for their sin. Because God cannot look on sin, it is an affront to His holiness. The prophet writes

that our inequities have caused God to turn His eyes away. And the blood, the giving of life gives back life - God can look on us again.

When Jesus established the Table as a sacrament of remembrance, he did it with life in mind not death. He was making a new agreement, a new promise, a new covenant. If He had meant His "blood" to be a symbol of His death, He might have said, "This is the blood of my death." But what He actually said was, "This cup is the *New Covenant* in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). The bread which is His body and the cup which is his blood form the elements of a covenant that God will not break. A covenant of life!

The disciple John reminds us of this covenant of God (**1 John 1:7**) when he writes:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Our response to the offer of God is our lives. This is what we give in return. He doesn't want our blood in exchange for His; He wants our lives so that we might be truly alive!

God Doesn't Want Blood

Isaiah 1:11, 15

"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

What He wants is for us to respond with a personal brokenness and repentance and a trust in Him for our lives.

Psalms 51:16-17

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Focus on Life - Not Death

I have said before we live in a culture of death. It is all around us. We lived it in 2012. Terrible fires, the horrible death of little Jessica just blocks from where our new church home may someday be built, the shootings in Aurora. Innocent life taken. Death celebrated in film, novel, video games and music.

I personally believe that legalized abortion in the defense of words like 'choice' and 'reproductive health' is a terrible stain on our country. In the forty years that we have been choosing to abort the unborn as a matter of personal preference, 55 million innocent lives have been lost in this country alone. Ten times more than Hitler's holocaust and for the most part we shake our heads sadly and stay on the sidelines. We live in a culture of death and God has asked us as Christians to proclaim life and confront death where we see it. God wants us to be about life!

Romans 5:9-11

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, ***how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!***

Hebrews 9:14

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, ***so that we may serve the living God!***

1 Peter 1:18-20

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ **but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.**

Wrapping up let me get back to the argument of my college friend. There is a difference between the taking of innocent life and the giving of innocent life. Abortion is the taking of innocent life. All of us have been impacted directly and indirectly by this sad truth. And God says to us, "Seek my face, seek my forgiveness, turn from your wicked ways and I will heal you. I will heal the deep wounds of your soul and your mind and your heart."

You see the Son of God was not an unwilling sacrifice led to the alter kicking a screaming about the injustice of it all. No, in his own words, he laid down his life willingly for his friends. His judge Pilate on the day Jesus was crucified said to Jesus, "Don't you know that I have the power of life and death over you?" Jesus said, "You have no power over me." Jesus knows what Pilate did not. This was God's choice – the Father, Son and Spirit agreeing that Jesus' death would be an act of ultimate love:

John 18:17-18

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

John Wilbur Chapman 19-20th century evangelism in a 1922 sermon:

My friend, Dr. Geo. F. Pentecost (English evangelist to India and pastor) was determined to climb Pike's Peak alone. His friends said to him, "You cannot do it without a guide who knows the way." But Dr. Pentecost said, "I know that I can climb it alone." So he started off. They told him that at a certain curve in the mountain there was a hut, open to any traveler, if by any chance he should miss his way going up. He was getting along very well, when suddenly a snowstorm overtook him. Without warning the blinding snow covered him and he began to drift. He staggered and fell, and then there came to him the warnings of his friends. He had practically given himself up to die, when he realized, as he lay upon the ground, that his hands were touching some dry twigs. It came to him that if he could start a fire he might still escape. He felt in his pocket for matches, and found one. But the wind was blowing a perfect gale. I heard Dr. Pentecost say that he took that single match and, shielding it in his hands from the snow, started to strike it, but he was afraid and he put it back into his pocket again. Finally, in his desperation, he got up closer under the shadow of a rock and struck the match, shielding the little flame as best he could, and touching it to the dry twigs. The fire was started and his life was saved. There was just that one little thing between him and death. What a blessing that he did not treat it carelessly. Tonight I am standing here to say that there is just one thing, between you and judgment, and that one thing is the precious blood of Christ. I beg you not to treat it carelessly.

Prayer
Benediction