

# The Blood of Jesus: Its Centrality and Its Power

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[ 0 : 00 ] First John and our text this morning is chapter 7, verse 7 rather. First John 1 verse 7, 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.

Well it's wonderful to be in fellowship with you and I bring greetings from the community of Broad Bay, minister in the congregation of Bach which is just north of our capital town, Stornoway. And if you haven't been to the Outer Hebrides, you haven't lived. So if you can please make your way north and discover the beauty of the Outer Hebrides, although I have to say I have, I'd forgotten just how beautiful Edinburgh is on an autumn morning walking from Derrick's home through the meadows to get here. It was wonderful.

It was therapeutic in lots of ways. Well let's turn to first John 1 verse 7 and the words the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. We're going to focus on the blood of Jesus and we're going to do so under two headings, its centrality and its power. Well let's begin by focusing on the centrality of the blood and we're going to do so with a broad brush. Let me begin by referring to Napoleon. History has it that Napoleon with his military officers, picture it if you will, they're sitting around him. Napoleon has a large map of the world on a table and Napoleon puts his finger on a kingdom colored red and

Napoleon says with gritted teeth and with more than a measure of frustration, if it were not for that red spot, I could conquer the world. That red spot was of course the British Isles. Picture this if you will, Satan, he has his own map of the world before his demonic court and in a similar vein Satan too puts his finger on a spot stained red with the blood of Jesus and he too says if it were not for that red spot, I could conquer the world. Well that red spot is Calvary's cross where the precious blood of Jesus was shed to save, to cleanse you and I, to free us from Satan's snare and his grip and his power. So it's Communion Sunday and it's Destination Golgotha and it's against the backdrop of

Calvary that we are going to focus on him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood to quote the words of Revelation 1.5. On Communion Sunday we gravitate, do we not, towards the shed blood of Jesus? Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. John tells us here that we have fellowship with one another and the blood. Notice the centrality factor in the words of John. This is John's great point of emphasis and the blood and it's our point of emphasis too isn't it? Because Christ's great communion clause highlights this. Do this in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Drink it in remembrance of me. Perhaps we need to be reminded this morning in the words of Billy Graham the American evangelist that whilst sin is the great clogger, the blood of Christ is the great cleanser.

[ 5 : 05 ] And that of course is the Apostle Paul's great point of emphasis. It's a recurring emphasis isn't it? In his letters across the New Testament Ephesians 1 begins with that great statement.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Romans 5.9 it's all about justification. But it's also all about the blood of Jesus.

We have been justified by his blood, Paul says. So we have come this morning to the Lord's Supper. We have come to commemorate. We have also come to celebrate. We come with Crosby's great redemption song as we contemplate the shed blood of Jesus and we too can sing in our hearts redeemed how I love to proclaim it. We are here to proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So we sing a redemption song redeemed how I love to proclaim it redeemed by the blood of the Lamb redeemed through his infinite mercy his child and forever I am. I want to say to you this morning against this the back cloth of 1st John 7 that the blood of Jesus is pivotal. It is central to our confession of faith in Jesus Christ because we are bound together in our table fellowship here this morning by virtue of his shed blood just as it was for the ancient people of Israel. So it is for us. This

is our Passover moment.

Remember back in Exodus 12 it's the eve of the Passover and one can only imagine how these words would have resonated with the Israel of God as they find themselves at this pivotal milestone in their history. God speaks and God says when I see the blood I will pass over you. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. Notice the blood the blood shall be a sign it is the distinguishing mark is the common denominator for the people of Israel it is the trait it is central isn't it to the narrative as you read through the book of Exodus question. What does God see this morning on the doorposts on the lintels of your heart and my heart is the lintel of your heart the doorpost of your heart is it blood smeared is it blood stained with the blood of our sinless sin bearer Jesus because our fellowship here on this communion Sunday is not to be belittled because our fellowship is blood bought our fellowship is blood sprinkled fellowship means a lot to John doesn't it he he refers to fellowship time and again it's the language of joint participation it's that sense of a sharing community it's also the language of a business partnership some say that John here is reflecting on his early days when he and his brother James were shareholders in the family fishing business they had fellowship together in business they had a sharing partnership this combined input a team working with one another it is family

John is saying and so we assemble here in gospel fellowship in the name of our kinsman Redeemer our elder brother we are family because we meet in the name of Jesus and our praise it's a joyful gospel anthem of praise isn't it we sing in conjunction with angel voices here today as we sing worthy is the lamb who was slain and we dovetail the words of revelation five and seven and we too say to our Lord and Savior with your blood you purchased you redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation do we not have a snapshot of that here this morning it strikes me that we have an international makeup to our fellowship together and yet we are one in Christ Jesus one in him I want us to notice that the sensuality of the cross and blood atonement go together much has been said in the recent past about blood atonement but for good reason because the Bible has much to say about it here's another question how's your Bible reading plan going do you like the book of Leviticus it's great when you begin isn't it Genesis Exodus it's going swimmingly and then bang we hit the book of Leviticus and we think what is this all about sometimes if we're honest it's more like Genesis Exodus numbers and then Joshua we've missed out Leviticus and you turn on we give them a wide berth we don't really get it so you know we we think I'll get back to Leviticus later on really we've read from Leviticus this morning and we've read from what I consider to be one of my favorite passages in the Bible

[12:01] Leviticus 17:11 and the language is similar isn't it to the language that John uses for it is the blood that makes atonement when you actually start to go through the book of Leviticus with a fine tooth comb you make some interesting discoveries you will find reference to blood atonement some 86 times in the book of Leviticus the message is that without it we cannot be saved that is the point that the writer to the Hebrews makes in Hebrews 9:22 without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness so let's grapple with the sacrificial system of Leviticus and discover that it's pointing us of course to Jesus to our atoning sacrifice it finds its fulfillment in him blood atonement blood is mentioned some 460 times in your Bible it is the great redemption dynamic Jesus spoke no less than 14 times on the significance of the shedding of his own blood why is that well to quote another writer sins contamination requires the saviors cleansing we all know that sin putrefies John tells us that the blood of Jesus purifies and as you and I grasp and reflect on the centrality of his blood shed for my sins so I'm increasingly assured of my sins forgiven let me share with you an anecdote that I read some time ago about a Christian doctor who lived in a small Scottish town I think somewhere around the borders he was a good man he was particularly lenient with his patients and when his patients had difficulty in paying their doctors fees this Christian doctor would write in red ink across the record of their indebtedness just one word in red ink forgiven this was a frequent occurrence in fact his casebook had very few pages where he's led red letters did not appear but the good man died and his legal executors thought in their wisdom that the doctors he state would be greatly benefited if some of the forgiven debts could be collected so they started dishing out applications to the poor patients and every application was unsuccessful so the executors decided to take legal proceedings to recover the debts so it was the judge's call and history hazard that the judge examined the casebook and when he saw the word forgiven in red ink cancelling every single entry this was his conclusion there is no court in the land that could enforce payment of these accounts marked forgiven case dismissed as we have

an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness again I quote Billy Graham the American evangelist he once said that when God forgives us and purifies us of our sin he also forgets it forgiveness results in God dropping the charges against us we can only say that we can only embrace that by appreciating the centrality of the shed blood of Jesus Jesus Christ the Son of God we too can say I live by faith and the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me can you say that this morning let's move on so much for the centrality of the blood of Jesus let's focus on the power of this blood I want us to notice that John is particularly he's explicit if you like his he's very plain he's frank he tells us that the shed blood of Jesus completely cleanses it leaves no stains no marks no spots no blots behind John is telling us and no uncertain terms that it's cleansing properties completely decontaminate and purify perhaps if you've got I don't know something like Domestos there are other brands I'm not an expert but what I do find intriguing is that when you when you look at a product like that you know a disinfectant you're told that it that it that it may deter it may hinder it may hamper bacteria to the tune of some ninety nine point nine percent and you think wow I can all but cleanse you know my kitchen my bathroom my toilet whatever but can you see what that tells us is that there is a complex world out there of micro germs it's the zero point one percent tiny single cells that can't be seen that can't be wiped out can't be cleansed but John is not going for the ninety nine point nine percent John is telling us here that the blood of Jesus erases the blood of Jesus removes the blood of Jesus it's the delete button that John is drawing our attention to because Calvary covers it all no micro germ of sin is left exposed John is telling us that Calvary is complete it's whole we are cleansed you will notice here from all sin and the really what he's saying in the Greek tongue if you like and is is that each and every sin without exception is cleansed the whole everything is language is absolute you know one of the best definitions I've heard of the Bible what is the Bible define the Bible and it's the words of Donald Barnhouse if you've read if you read your daily bread sometimes find a little gem at the foot of the page this is how Donald Barnhouse defines the Bible the Bible is a record of man's complete ruin in sin and God's complete remedy in Christ and so it is we are focusing on Jesus the Jesus of Matthew's gospel the Jesus we are introduced to as we turn the first couple of pages of Matthew's gospel account who is Jesus the angel makes it very clear that he will save his people from their sins Jesus came into this world let's get back to the fundamentals Jesus came into our sin sick world to save sinners his root is designated his destination is Calvary why to shed his blood because we can't save ourselves from sin and its consequences there's a book called throw out 50 things written by Gail blank perhaps you've read it a Gail blank is apparently a world class motivator whose vision is to empower men and women to live truly exceptional lives what's intriguing about Gail's approach is that she outlines in her book throw out 50 things she outlines four rules for disengagement to help people clear the clutter from their lives and it goes like this this is the first rule this is one of 50 if it weighs you down if it clogs you up or just makes you feel bad about yourself throw it away give it away sell it let it go move on get rid of life plaque I write if life was as simple as that but what John is reminding is off here and indeed as you as you engage with the Bible we are told the very opposite of what Gail blanks philosophy is all about we are told that no matter how good how moral how upright we might see ourselves this morning we just cannot eliminate we cannot decontaminate we cannot detox the sinful toxins that are that are deep within the deepest recesses of my heart there is a sinful nature and grained within me and I can only speak for myself but I know that only Jesus has the power to cleanse me by what means by his shed blood a sacrifice that paid in full God's penalty for sin well isn't that good news you know sometimes you buy a revolutionary oven cleaner and you think this is it this is the this is the definitive cleaner that's going to clean my oven once and for all it's going to remove the toughest stains you think the grease and the grime and the guns but very often these things come with a disclaimer you've got to read the small print sometimes you know the guarantees we have in life aren't worth the paper they're written on unless we read the small print the reality is that it may not remove every single minute minuscule microscopic food stain that's been cemented on for years may not do that but there are no disclaimers here you know in the words of Lewis Jones you know we too can say that is power that is power that is wonder working power in the precious blood of the lamb so why do we come to Calvary why do we focus on the centrality of the blood and its power because we come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide because we we have come to appreciate in a greater measure that there is power there is power there is wonder working power in the precious blood of the lamb let me tell you about Stan Stan had been receiving ongoing medical treatment for a life threatening disease for a whole year one day he left the clinic and the smile on Stan's face was a powerful testimony to the good

news that he had just received from his doctor he shared with his friends that at his annual checkup his doctor had announced that the test results all pointed to one thing Stan said his doctor you are totally clean what a difference two words can make to Stan totally clean meant every trace of the disease that had threatened his life only months before had been wiped from his body John in a similar vein is telling us that the blood of Jesus cleanses us have we grasped that in the recent past will we embrace this great truth here on this communion Sunday will we stand shoulder to shoulder with Peter when he says that we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without spot without blemish without defect friends we commemorate but we celebrate the shed blood of the man of Soros who came ruined sinners to reclaim bearing shame and scuffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood guilty vile and helpless we spotless lamb of God was he can it be some of us asking that question this morning might it be that some of us are struggling might it be that sin is an issue in our lives might it be that we're lacking assurance can his blood cleanse me yes without leaving any stains yes can his shed blood seal my pardon it's a resounding yes no stone is left unturned I want to finish by reminding each and every one of us that the thought behind the word to cleanse here to purify is well it conveys continuous action and other words Jesus keeps on washing as clean as we seek forgiveness Calvary covers it all my sin in the past present future all under the blood of Jesus that does not give me a license to sin that does not give me a warrant to devalue my sin John is writing this so that we may not sin but the reality is that we do sin and John says if anyone does and we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous he is the propitiation for our sins our atoning sacrifice he for me Amen.