

Without the Shedding of Blood

Maundy Thursday

Pastor Josh Frazee

Hebrews 9:11-22

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

“The churches among us teach with complete unanimity (the Augsburg Confession doctrine) that the decree of the Council of Nicea concerning the unity of the divine essence and concerning the three persons is true and is to be believed without any doubt...Likewise, they teach that since the fall of Adam all human beings who are propagated according to nature are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence...Likewise, they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, took upon himself human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary so there might be two natures, divine and human, inseparably conjoined in the unity of one person, one Christ, truly God and truly a human, being ‘born of the Virgin Mary,’ who truly ‘suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried’ that he might reconcile the Father to us and be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of human beings (Augsburg Confession, I 1, II 1, III 1-3).” And as our Epistle text shows us, He did this through His blood.

“(W)hen Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come (these being redemption, salvation, and forgiveness), then through the greater and more perfect tent (of His body) (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and of calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” As in the Old Testament sacrifices had to be made, so, too, in the New Testament, there had to be a sacrifice of blood for sin. That’s what the Law of God demands for any and all infractions—no matter how large, and no matter how small. While some sins may not put you into jail or prison on this planet, don’t be fooled. They all—every one of them—require death for punishment. Your death. And not just your physical death, but your death for all of eternity.

Have you sinned today? Have you sinned more than once? Then you have a few eternal deaths-worth of punishment coming your way. Unless another death were to occur in your place. In the Old Testament, this occurred through the sacrificing of goats and bulls and heifers. It has been this way since the Fall into Sin. Even when Adam and Eve sinned, they were clothed by God in skins. But those skins came from animals—animals which were sacrificed so that Adam and Eve would not have been eternally condemned.

The sacrificing of animals has taken place throughout the Old Testament, but tonight and tomorrow, we are hearing again of the one great sacrifice which was made so that no more need ever be made. “For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, (sanctified in the Old Testament) for the purification of flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ” in the sacrifice we’ll be hearing about tomorrow night: His death on the cross of Calvary. That is not a question. We’re not being asked *if* it will be that much more, we’re being told that it will be.

“Therefore (Jesus) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.” Jesus’ death has already occurred, but we still continue to honor it and ponder it every day, every year, and especially every season of Lent. We ponder it because Jesus bled, not for a sin or sins that He committed or for His own sinful nature, but for our sins and our sinful natures. He bled for *your* sins and *your* sinful nature. He *died* for your sins and sinful nature.

And in that death, Jesus has redeemed you from the eternal deaths that you rightfully owed.

He died according to His own will, for no one could have taken His life if He had not willed it. So our text continues: “For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.”

God tells us in the next verses of Hebrews that most everything had to be purified with blood. Not just the people, but even the altar and the tent and the vessels. “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

Sin must not be taken lightly. Every one of them is worthy of eternal death. But so also must salvation not be taken lightly. Jesus—God Himself—bled for you rather than let you die eternally apart from Him. He willingly gave up His life—again no one could take it from Him—but He offered it in your place under the condemnation of the Law so that you might be His eternally. That’s what He willed, and because He has died, as we’ll hear again tomorrow night, His will has come into effect—for you. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.