

Blood

Exodus 12:1-13

Tuesday I flew to Chicago and my seat was between two obviously friendly women. Usually I don't engage with women but Peggy was an older woman who almost immediately I figured was an Irish Catholic. And Judy was chatty from the start so I would've had to work to avoid conversation with her.

Peggy made it clear right away that she was Catholic because she had her little prayer booklet out as soon as the plane started moving. As Judy and I started chatting with her, **Peggy** said, ***"I'm not just a Catholic, I'm a Cathaholic."***

I got their background – Peggy lives in Tampa and was flying to Phoenix by way of Chicago. **Judy** lives in Chicago but has a condo in Clearwater. In fact, Judy lives in Glenview, the suburb I grew up in – and she's only been there six months so I told her all the restaurants to check out.

Then, just asking about their families Peggy got a little emotional as she told us that ***her husband had just passed away six months ago*** – after a long battle with cancer. She was clearly still grieving, after being married to this man for 52 years, and having dated 4 years before that! She had lost half of herself, she said.

Judy and I tried to empathize with her – so sorry for your loss! Eventually one of them asked what I do and I shared that I'm a pastor. They asked what denomination and I told them Evangelical Free and said, "It's like the southern Baptist church, if you know those guys." Peggy immediately said, ***"Oh, I don't like the southern Baptists, they told me I'm going to hell."***

We said, "No!" And she said, "Yes. I visited one time a long time ago and as I was leaving some guy stopped me and said, 'Are you new?' I said, 'No, I'm just visiting,' and he said, 'Where do you go to church,' and I said 'St. whatever' and he said, 'Oh, you're catholic. You know you're going to hell, right?'"

Now, let me just pause the story here to say this is a story of what NOT to do... That line is not in our greeter handbook...

Anyway, this Baptist said that to her, so I told Peggy, ***"Well, don't group me with that guy, please."***

But that was a perfect setup to ask my two airplane questions. "Peggy, do you think you'd go to heaven if you died today?" "I think so, she said."

"Ok, and if you stood at the gates of heaven and God asked you, **'Peggy, why should I let you into my heaven?'** what would you say?"

She paused for a few seconds and with some emotion said, ***“Well, I’m a sinner. But I’ve confessed my sin and I believe I’ve been forgiven.”***

I was impressed and a little surprised by this answer so I pushed her to clarify – **“On what basis could God forgive you?”** She thought and thought but wasn’t sure what I was getting at. So I said, “Jesus, right? God can forgive us for our sins because Jesus died to pay for them.”

“Yes,” she said, “that’s it.” And I said, “That’s the key – ***it’s all about Jesus***. That’s what makes the difference. In the end, the only thing that matters is whether you are with Jesus – that you belong to him. Because ***He is the Judge***. And when you stand before his throne of judgment the only thing that matters is whether he comes down from the throne to stand beside you ***as your defense attorney***. Then he’ll say to the Father, ***“This one is with me.”*** and the case will be closed.

That’s all that matters. ***Do you belong to Jesus?*** Is he your defense attorney? When it comes down to it if your judgment depends on what you’ve done, or how much you’ve prayed or how sincerely you’ve repented – you’re in serious trouble and you’ll never have peace. But if you know it’s all about Jesus and what he has done for you, ***then you’ll have real peace and assurance and joy and gratitude.***

I looked over at Peggy and tears were running down her cheek. She clearly believed in Jesus and loved Him and was so grateful for all He had done for her. But the poor woman was ***confused by all this religious teaching from her church background*** – about purgatory and merit and Mary and the saints... But when you push all that aside and just focus on Jesus and all He has done, there is peace and comfort and joy. She was so grateful.

And it turned out the man she was married to for 52 years... was a Baptist. A northern Baptist but still. And here is sweet Peggy with her little prayer booklet, looking for comfort after losing her dear husband. All I did was point her to Jesus and remind her of all he had done for her – of ***the power and glory of his finished work on the cross*** – and she was moved to the heart with gratitude for his grace to her, a sinner.

I’ll tell you about Judy at the end – but Peggy needed the clear truth of the gospel ***to feel the power of the blood of the Lamb***. When pressed I believe her faith really is in Jesus to forgive her and save her. She had applied the blood of the Lamb to the doorposts of her heart. And deep down she knew it was enough. ***It was all about the blood***. There is safety there, under the blood. You are marked by the blood as belonging to the Lord. The blood doesn’t just protect you it cleanses you and feeds you.

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

Today we come to ***the story of the Passover*** – and this wonderful Biblical word: ***BLOOD***. This is a vital concept in Scripture and a powerful picture of the gospel. In our passage we’ll see four blessings of the blood of the lamb.

[Four Blessings of the Blood of the Lamb](#)

1. Identification – it marks us as God’s children
2. Protection – it shelters us from God’s wrath
3. Purification – it cleanses us from sin
4. Satisfaction – it fills and strengthens us

Peggy had the challenge of not being crystal clear about the gospel, so she didn’t have the full assurance of faith that the believer in Jesus should have. If you have put your faith in Jesus then you are **marked** by the blood of the lamb – identified as a child of God and **protected** by the blood from his wrath. The story of the Exodus shows us that God’s deliverance is not just about covering sin, it’s about **DELIVERANCE from sin**. This is a gospel account about the power of God to save. He doesn’t cover sin, He cleanses it from our hearts and lives! And the people didn’t just apply the blood to their doors, they ate the lamb. And this became an annual feast – **the Lamb was their food** – a reminder of God’s power and presence to sustain them every day.

First, the blood was an identity marker.

1. Identification – *the blood marks us as God’s children.*

“The blood shall be *a sign for you*, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”
Exodus 12:13

We’ve seen this over and over in Genesis and now in Exodus – **God is so CONCRETE**. There is nothing fuzzy or vague about how to be saved. The Destroyer was coming to Egypt to strike down every firstborn male – both human and animal. **The only way to protect your firstborn was to bring your family into the house and slaughter a healthy one year old lamb**. Take the blood of the lamb and brush it onto the doorposts and lintel of your front door. If the blood of a lamb is there, the destroying angel will pass over you and spare your oldest son. If no blood is there, your oldest son and firstborn of every animal will die. Period.

Very simple. Very clear. **The blood was a marker**. It was a SIGN to designate who belonged to God and who did not. You are in a house that is marked by the blood of the lamb or you are not. “The blood shall be a SIGN for you.”

Here is another example of **the COVENANT God made with Abraham** and confirmed with a SIGN that was bloody. Look back in Exodus 6.

1. Identification – *the blood marks us as God’s children.*

“*I also established my covenant with them* to give them the land of Canaan... I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel... **and I have remembered my covenant.**” Exodus 6:4-5

God made solemn vows – covenant promises to Abraham and his coming family. Now, 400 years later, as God’s people suffer in slavery in Egypt, God remembers His covenant and acts to fulfill it. Since Abraham was circumcised and had circumcised all of the men and boys in his clan, Israelite

men had been marked as belonging to God generation after generation. The blood was a SIGN of identification.

And don't miss this – non-Jews COULD receive the mark and become children of God. It was rare, but it was possible and was God's desire.

Non-Jews could become God's children by being mark with the Blood

"If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, *let all his males be circumcised*. Then he may come near and keep it; *he shall be as a native of the land*. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it." Exodus 12:48

You'll see throughout the Torah, the Law, ***God's concern for the FOREIGNER and ALIEN*** – that His people welcome and accept such God-fearing Gentiles. Look at the genealogy of Jesus and you will find **Rahab** the Canaanite prostitute and **Ruth** the Moabite widow – two women who not only converted to Judaism but who are NAMED in the line of blessing that led from Abraham to Jesus!

One more point about identification. The function of marking GOD's CHILDREN by blood ***simultaneously accomplishes a SEPARATION***. If some are marked as belonging to God, others who are not marked are exposed as NOT belonging to God.

You can't miss this in the story of the Passover. Ten times Moses pleads with Pharaoh to let God's people go. ***10 times Pharaoh hardens his heart***. Judgment was promised. Salvation was offered but rejected. Look how clearly this is stated in chapter 4 as Moses speaks to Pharaoh:

The blood that identifies also separates those who are God's from those who are not

"Thus says the Lord, *Israel is my firstborn son*, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, *I will kill your firstborn son*." Exodus 4:22-23

Pharaoh had nine plagues – nine dramatic punishments from God – **to repent and save his oldest son**. But over and over he hardened his heart and the consequences increased. Any of the Egyptians could have saved their firstborns had they gotten a lamb and applied its blood to their house. There is no evidence that any of them did but that they all followed their King and also hardened their hearts.

How often do we do the same thing? God invites us to be forgiven and free. He calls us to repent but we resist, we delay – we harden our hearts.

Brother, sister, friend, **have you been marked by the blood of the lamb?** Have you fixed your faith in the spotless lamb of God whose blood can bring you into the family of God? Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Passover Lamb – Jesus – has been sacrificed. Have you applied his blood to the doorposts of your heart?

The first blessing of the blood is that it marks you – it identifies you as God's child. We've got three more! Second, it PROTECTS.

2. Protection - Jesus' blood shelters us from God's wrath –

“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.” 12:23

Here is why this annual Jewish festival is called **The Passover**. God warned everyone that **judgment was coming**. The Destroying Angel would fly over Egypt and kill every firstborn son and animal. God promised to punish sin and He always keeps His promise. But when God pours out His wrath He also provides a way of salvation. When there is a flood of judgment there is an ark of salvation.

What makes the difference? Who is marked by the blood? Those who have the blood covering their home are sheltered from the Destroyer.

That tenth plague was devastating. **But the Red Sea was still coming**. Even after this terrible night of judgment in which every firstborn son who wasn't marked with blood died, the fighting men of Egypt could have saved themselves had they yielded to the supremacy of the LORD and just let Israel go. But by pursuing Israel to the Red Sea and through it, all of Pharaoh's army was destroyed.

Those judgments represent **the final separation** of those who are protected by Jesus' blood from those who are not. All people are sinners by nature and by choice and therefore are, according to Ephesians 2, **“children of wrath.”** All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. God has promised to punish sin and He WILL punish sin. God cannot allow sin, evil, iniquity, selfishness and pride into His glorious presence – so on that great Day of Judgment all sin will finally and eternally fall under the all-consuming wrath of God.

God's wrath is pictured in **Isaiah** as **a steaming goblet of boiling fury**. **Revelation** shows **seven bowls of God's righteous anger** being poured out to consume the whole earth and punish all sinners upon it. The day of judgment is coming. God's wrath will soon be poured full strength on all the earth. It is EXACTLY **like the days of Noah**. We see sin and violence growing, but people are increasingly hardened to it and increasingly ignore our pleas to come to Jesus – the ark – for salvation.

But the floodgates will soon burst open – not of water this time but of fire. The question is not whether God's wrath will fall but whether you will be PROTECTED from it. And there is only one covering, only one shelter – the blood of the Lamb. If you are marked by the blood and thereby BELONG TO Jesus, you are protected and the Destroying angel will pass over you. **“There is NO CONDEMNATION for those who are IN CHRIST JESUS.”**

Are you IN Christ Jesus? Do you belong to Him? Is Jesus YOUR defense attorney? Or do you plan to represent yourself. I recently heard a quote from President Lincoln – **“Anyone who chooses to represent himself has a FOOL for a client.”** This is even more true of your eternity. If you choose to represent yourself before the judgment seat of God you have a fool for a client. Translation – YOU are that fool. Jesus' blood is available to all who will come to Him in faith – “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!”

A shelter is available. Why won't you come in?

Judy, on the plane, was stuck on this very point. **She doesn't like religion because of how EXCLUSIVE it is** – rules and lines drawn to keep people out. Why can't we all just get along and

agree that all religions are basically the same and everyone is fine? Can't we be INCLUSIVE and tolerant of everyone?

Well... the problem is that ***the Bible is a profoundly EXCLUSIVE book***, like all religions, including the modern religion of INCLUSIVITY. What I shared with Judy is that God has offered the free gift of salvation to everyone by sending Jesus to live and teach and die and rise again – the gift is available. ***But you have to receive it.*** Jesus' death does not apply to you – his blood cannot apply itself to you.

Think of it in **the original Passover**. Your family had to ***kill a lamb***. No uncle or cousin or friend could do it for you. YOUR FAMILY had to kill a lamb and apply its blood to YOUR HOUSE. And you had to stay in that house.

The same thing is true with Jesus. His blood is available to mark and protect you – but YOU have to receive that gift and apply His blood to your heart.

But notice another layer of this identification, separation and protection. By saving His people and destroying those who refused His provision, ***God was demonstrating His all-surpassing supremacy over all other gods.***

Remember we saw this with the tower of Babel – which was not a building project but a WORSHIP project. **God is at WAR with all other gods.** He will not share His glory with anything or anyone. God is the ONE TRUE GOD and there IS no other God beside Him.

God's primary purpose in all of history is to prove His absolute supremacy.

“On all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments; I am the Lord... And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”
Exodus 12:12-13

You will not understand the stories in the Bible or the wrath of God in general if you don't get this point. ***God is at war with all pretenders for His throne*** – including you and me when we try to take that coveted seat of supremacy. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.” “God opposes the proud.”

This is God's ultimate agenda in history and in your life – **to be GLORIFIED**. Over and over in this section of Scripture you hear this refrain:

God's primary purpose in all of history is to prove His absolute supremacy.

“So that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God... so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth... What signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.” Exodus 8:10; 9:14; 10:2

This is the primary message of the Bible. There is ONE LORD and there is no one like Him – and His name is JESUS. All of the stories, all of the miracles, all of the JUDGMENT and wrath is to this one purpose – ***to magnify the supremacy of God over all other Gods.***

This is one of the clearest places in Scripture we see this – with ten plagues on the ten most prominent gods of Egypt. See the church blog for a couple of links to details on the gods God humiliated. But just look at three examples:

1. **Osiris was a prominent god in Egypt and the Nile was his bloodstream.** Blood-stream. The Nile WAS the life, the lifeblood, of Egypt. So for God to turn the Nile into blood and thereby kill everything in it was a profound judgment on Osiris.
2. **Re was the god of the sun.** So for total darkness to fall on Egypt for three days was a crushing blow to the worship of the sun.
3. And **Pharaoh himself was seen as the son of God** – divine in his own right. So for the son of Pharaoh to be killed – the heir to the throne – and the divine Pharaoh was powerless to stop it – was a mighty and profound judgment.

Ok, we have to move faster for the last two – but they are important points here. The blood of the lamb identifies us as God’s children; it protects us from God’s wrath. Third, the blood PURIFIES us from the controlling power of sin!

3. Purification – Jesus’ blood cleanses us from the controlling power of sin

“I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and **I will deliver you from slavery to them**, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God,” 6:6-7

The Passover we continue to celebrate in the Lord’s Supper every month is part of the larger story of **the Exodus** – how God delivered the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt. This is obvious, but notice that after the angel of death passed over and spared the people of Israel, the story wasn’t over. The people were still slaves in Egypt.

Granted, Pharaoh finally agreed to let them go, but just a few minutes later he would go back on that and send his army in pursuit.

Here is the point: God not only protected His people from His wrath, He delivered them from their slavery. In the same way, **the blood of Jesus not only SAVES US it also SETS US FREE!** Apart from Jesus everyone is a slave to sin – they are controlled by the desires that war within them. What they all need is not just to have their sin PAID FOR but to be released from its controlling power.

Remember, sin is not just bad choices we make, as if it is a residue on our skin. **Sin is a power WITHIN US** and it is a growing power. Even as believers, sin can grow in our hearts and minds if we don’t use the means of grace God has given us to restrain it and gain victory over it.

Because, brothers and sisters,

3. Purification – Jesus’ blood cleanses us from the controlling power of sin

“The law of the Spirit of life **has set you free in Christ Jesus** from the law of sin and death.”
Romans 8:2

The blood of Jesus does not just cover your sin, it conquers your sin. Jesus died and rose again to set us free from both the penalty and POWER of sin. One day even the presence of sin will be removed. But for now, as those who are no longer IN SIN but are now IN CHRIST, the blood of Jesus has set us free from the controlling power of sin!

3. Purification – Jesus’ blood cleanses us from the controlling power of sin

“If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

When we confess our sins God is faithful and just not only to forgive our sins but to **PURIFY us from all unrighteousness**. The blood that saves is a blood that cleanses. God is not content just covering your sin, He is committed to washing us clean. This process continues throughout our lives but when we see Jesus He will complete that purification process and **we will be LIKE HIM** when we see Him face to face!

One more blessing of the blood. It marks us, protects us, releases us and it fills us!

4. **Satisfaction – Jesus’ blood fills us with God’s life and power**

“On the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb... They shall eat the flesh that night... It is the Lord’s Passover.” 12:3,8,11

Think of this family – bringing a cute little **one year old lamb** into your house for five days and then killing it at twilight on the 5th day. Use its blood to save you from the Destroyer. But the lamb isn’t done giving you its blessings. **You go on to EAT IT.**

Every single year from Moses until Jesus – 1,500 years – the Jews observed this **festival of the Passover** and the Feast of Unleavened bread. When Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him into Jerusalem to find a room it was so that he could celebrate the Passover with his followers.

And when Jesus broke the bread and passed it around and then lifted the cup **he was not just giving his disciples SYMBOLS he was giving them LIFE**. He was saying – from now on THIS IS YOUR FOOD. Depend on ME; Feed on ME. As Jesus said, “my body is real food; my blood is real drink.” If you don’t take me in – as it were – you have no part in me.

Do you feel the truth of this? The blood of the lamb IDENTIFIES us as God’s children. It PROTECTS us from God’s wrath. It PURIFIES us and it SATISFIES us.

On the plane **Peggy, the Cathaholic**, believed in Jesus but did not know the full POWER of the blood of Jesus. She did not realize and had not been taught that the blood of the lamb was enough. Being reminded of the finished work of Christ and encouraged to fix her trust in that, she felt a peace she had not often known.

On the other side of me, **Judy wanted to believe in a gospel of INCLUSIVITY** – that everyone is fine and all religions are sort of pointing at the same thing. At one point she said “there is no afterlife” and a few minutes later she said, “well, if there is a heaven most everyone will go there.”

She struggled to believe in a God who would choose not to save everyone but would send so many people to hell. What I told her was that God went to infinite lengths to save everyone who wants to be saved. How much farther could God have gone than to send prophet after prophet and finally His only Son to live and preach and die and rise again?

I told her the GIFT of salvation is available for everyone – but it doesn’t apply automatically – you have to receive the gift. **God will not force heaven on anyone but has opened the way to heaven for everyone.** “EVERYONE who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!”

And the way of salvation stands open because of the blood of the Lamb. **Have YOU received the gift?** Have you taken the pure Lamb of God into the home of your heart? Have you applied His blood to the doorposts of your heart? Have you committed your heart and life to Jesus? He stands ready to forgive you and start purifying you. **Christ alone can protect you** from the coming wrath by marking you as His own.

You don't need to face the judgment alone. Jesus stands ready to be your defense attorney. Don't be a fool and try to represent yourself. Let the blood of Jesus cover you, set you free, fill you with love and power and begin to change you more and more into the image of your Savior.

Let's pray.