

CLEANSING THROUGH THE BLOOD

1 John 1:7

Introduction: The blood of Jesus Christ makes it possible for believers to have eternal life and in having eternal life, one must be right with God. One must have his/her sins taken care of, pardoned. Pardon is just a declaration of what has already taken place in heaven on the believer's (sinner's) behalf and his/her sincere acceptance of it. The blood of Christ does many wonderful things and one of the first results of being reconciled to God is being cleansed from sin. Some have the idea that cleansing is no more than just a pardon of sins or the cleansing from guilt. This is not so. No where does the Scripture speak of being cleansed from guilt. Cleansing from sin means deliverance from the pollution, not from the guilt of sin. Therefore it is important for every believer who really wants to enjoy the full salvation which God has provided for him/her to understand rightly what the scriptures teach about "cleansing."

I. CLEANSING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. There were two ceremonies to be observed by God's people in preparation for approaching Him.
 - Offerings or Sacrifices and the Cleansings or Purifications. Both were to be observed but in different manners. Both were intended to remind the people how sinful they were and how unfit to draw near to a holy God. Both were to typify the "redemption" by which the Lord Jesus Christ would restore to man fellowship with God.
 - If we can imagine the life of an Israelite we shall understand that the consciousness of sin and the need for redemption were awakened no less by the cleansings than the offerings.
 - We must also learn from them what the power of the blood of Jesus actually is.
 - We may take one of the more important cases of cleansing as an illustration. If anyone was in a house or hut where a dead body lay, or if he/she had ever touched a dead body or bones, he/she was unclean for seven days. Death, as the punishment for sin, made everyone who came into association with it unclean.
 - Cleansing was accomplished by using the ashes of a young heifer which had been burned, as described in *Numbers 19 - Hebrews 9:13-14*. These ashes, mixed with water were sprinkled by means of a bunch of hyssop on the one who was unclean. He/she then had to bath him/herself in water, after which he/she was once more ceremonially clean.
 - The words "unclean, cleansing, clean" were used in reference to the healing of leprosy, a disease which might be described as a living death. (*Leviticus 13, 14*)
2. The teaching of the laws of cleansing will teach us that the difference between the cleansings and the offerings was twofold - First, the offering had definite reference to the transgression for which reconciliation had to be made. Cleansing had more to do with conditions which were not sinful in themselves, but were the result of sin, and therefore must be acknowledged by God's holy people as defiled.
 - Second - in the case of the offering, nothing was done to the offerer himself. He saw the blood sprinkled on the altar or carried into the Holy Place. He must believe that this procures reconciliation before God. Yet nothing was done to himself. In cleansing however, what happened to the person was the chief thing.
 - Cleansing was something that the person could feel and experience. It brought about a change not only in his relationship to God, but in his own condition.

- In the offering, something was done FOR him, by cleansing, something was done IN him.

II. THE BLESSING INDICATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BY CLEANSING

1. **"...Blessed are the pure in heart..." "...love out of a pure heart..." (Matthew 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:5)**
 - A clean and pure heart is often mentioned in the New Testament.
 - Peter exhorts his readers to **"...love one another with a pure heart..."** The word "cleansing" is also used.
 - We read of those who are described as God's people that God purified (cleansed) their hearts through faith. (**Acts 15:9**)
 - That the purpose of the Lord Jesus concerning those who were His was **"...to purify to Himself a people of His own possession..." (Titus 2:14)**
 - All these places teach us that "cleansing" is an inward work wrought in the heart and that it is to pardon.
 - **"...the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin..." (1 John 1:7)**
 - This word "cleanseth" does not refer to the grace of pardon received at conversion, but to the effect of grace in God's children who walk in the light. **"...If we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin..."**
2. All this takes place according to the Word. First in the purifying of the conscience. **"...how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God..." (Hebrews 9:14)**
 - Already the mention of the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean typifies a personal experience of the blood of Christ has been made.
 - Conscience is not only a judge to give sentence on our actions, it is also the inward voice which bears witness to our relationship to God and to God's relationship to us.
 - **"...the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins..." (Hebrews 10:2)**
 - We receive through the Spirit an inward experience that the blood has so fully delivered us from the guilt and power of sin that we, in our regenerated nature have escaped entirely from its dominion.
 - If the conscience is cleansed, so also is the heart, of which the conscience is the center. We read of having the heart cleansed from an evil conscience. (**Hebrews 10:22**). Not only must the conscience be cleansed but the heart must be cleansed, including the understanding and the will with all our thoughts and desires.
3. **"...The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin..."** - From original sin as well as from actual sin.
 - In the Old Testament, cleansing was necessary for each, every sin. In the New Testament, cleansing depends on HIM who ever lives to intercede.

III. HOW MAY WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS BLESSING?

1. Everyone who through faith obtains a share in the atoning merit of the blood of Christ has a share also in its cleansing. However the experience of its power to cleanse is for several reasons, sadly imperfect. It is therefore of great importance to understand what the conditions are for the full enjoyment of this blessing.

2. First of all, knowledge is necessary. Many think that pardon of sin is all that we receive through the blood. They ask for and so obtain nothing more.
 - If you will study the scriptures where the Holy Spirit has used different words concerning blood, you will begin to understand that there are a lot more to cleansing than the removal of guilt.
3. Secondly, there must be desire. It is to be feared that our Christianity is only to please to postpone to a future life the experience of the Beatitude which our Lord intended for our earthly life -

"...blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God..."

 - It is not sufficiently recognized that purity of heart is a characteristic of every child of God because it is the necessary condition of fellowship of Him, of the enjoyment of His salvation.
 - There is too little inner longing to be really in all things at all times, well pleasing to the Lord.
 - God's Word comes to us with the promise of blessing which ought to waken all our desires.
 - Believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. If you learn how to yield yourself up right to His operation He can do great things in you.
4. Thirdly, there must be a willingness to separate yourself from everything that is wrong.
 - Friends, possessions, one's spirit, all must be surrendered that one can be cleansed in each relationship by the precious blood.
 - He who will keep back anything however small, cannot obtain the full blessing.
5. Fourthly, there is the exercising faith in the power of the blood. It is not as if we, through our faith, bestow its effects upon the blood, No, the blood ever retains its power and effects, but our unbelief closes our hearts and hinders its operation.

CONCLUSION:

1. YES! Let us believe that there is cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ.
2. The heavenly, spiritual effect of the blood can be really experienced every moment. Its power is such that one can always abide in the fountain, always dwell in the scars/wounds of the Lord.
3. Believer, put it to the proof how the blood of Jesus can release your heart from all sins.
4. Lost one, put it to the test and see how it can save you from your sins.

(Preached by my father in 1969)