**Midweek Lenten Theme: Blood of the New Testament.**

**March 20th 2024 Midweek Lenten VI**

**Text: John 19:30-37** 0712

**Theme: Blood of the New Testament: Shed by Piercing.**

May the Lord Jesus Christ grant unto you all the glorious redemption from sin, death, and the devil through faith in His blood. Amen. Dear friends in Christ: Having now come to our final Wednesday evening worship service of this blessed Lenten season, we reflect once again on the things we have learned during our series of sermons regarding the blood of the New Testament. We have learned of the blood shed by Christ in various different ways which was poured out for the remission of sins. Jesus’ blood was shed by sweating, striking, scourging, crowning, and crucifying. Each one was done in payment for the sins of world, and each one was accomplished by the grace of God in the Savior, Jesus Christ. During the course of this Lenten season we have also been reading the book of the Song of Solomon. On the surface the book written by king Solomon appears to be a love letter between him and one of his many lovers, but it is actually a prophetic exchange between Christ and the Church, which is indeed a love letter, but a pure one, a holy one, one which is supernal and unrivalled amongst men. It is a type of love not comprehended or found between husband and wife, parent and child, friend and friend. We have no parallel with which to compare it, for it is of a much greater degree than any love that we might know. And yet in another sense we do know of it, at least partially, for we are of the Church through faith, and are therefore among those who speak to Christ in such a loving way. Jesus told His disciples the night He was betrayed: *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)* The greatest love that can be shown, according to the Son of God who does not lie, is for One to lay down His life for His friends. This is the very thing that Jesus did for His Church on earth, yea truly for all men, and it is the manifestation of the love that Christ has for His bride, the Church. It so great that Jesus Christ willingly underwent death, indeed the death of His body, but more importantly eternal death. He shed His life to redeem His beloved from the bondage she was in, bondage to sin, to death, and to the devil. And despite our many fornications and works of adultery against Him, He accomplished our pardon, He forgives us, He does not put us away, but He remains by our side, loves us, leads us, and guides us to be with Him for eternity. Further He purifies His bride, and makes her clean, washing away all those adulteries and fornications and re-makes her as a chaste virgin, pure and undefiled. The Song of Solomon is the telling of the passion of Christ from a different perspective, from the perspective of love, from the perspective of marriage and purity.

We have also been reading portions of the book of Hebrews, which is again nothing else than the doctrine of redemption, shown and directly tied to the High Priestly office of the Old Testament, which was made for the remission of sins through the shed blood of animals, accepted only in view of the perfect sacrifice made by Jesus, who was to come. Thus the book of Hebrews look at the sacrifice of Christ from the ceremonial Law aspect of the Old Testament, but is speaking of the same thing as the Song of Solomon, and the harmony of the Passion History that we have been hearing, which shows the shedding of the blood of the New Testament, our theme for the Midweek services. Tonight our theme takes a slight shift, for though blood is shed in our text, it is shed in a different manner than previously. According to our text then we will see the blood of the New Testament shed by piercing. Our text for this evening is found in the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John beginning at verse thirty.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O most glorious and gracious Lord, who art our Bridegroom, and whose love is declared by the giving of Thy life in exchange for our life, whose blood dost cleanse us and make us white as snow, we pray unto Thee that we would not forget all Thy wonderful works in our behalf. Lord, Thou dost know, and we confess and acknowledge unto Thee, that we are not worthy of Thy love unto us, for we have played the harlot and have not been faithful unto Thee. Yet we thank Thee eternally that Thou hast not rejected us, Thou hast not put us away and condemned us, but hast loved us and given Thyself to make us clean and pure again. Teach us, O Beloved, teach us to love Thee as Thou hast loved us. Bestow upon us Thy Spirit that we may never again commit fornication with other gods, nor throw away Thy dying love to us, but being betrothed to Thee alone, keep ourselves only to Thee. Grant us remembrance of Thy shed blood for the remission of our sins, and, according to Thy promise, to be wed to Thee in bliss, and dwell with Thee eternally. O Savior grant that that day would come quickly, but if Thou dost will that we should remain for a time, give us strength and hope by faith through Thy Word in Thy blood and sacrifice, and bring us safely home soon to dwell with Thee eternally. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn of the blood of the New Testament shed by piercing, learning first of the:

1. **Finished redemption.** We read verse thirty of our text: **read verses here.** Last Wednesday we witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus, the nailing of His hands and feet to the cross which caused His blood to be shed in payment for your sins and my sins, and here the same shedding is ongoing. Those nails still pierced through His hands and feet, and the blood continued to pour forth. Yet what we here witness in this time-stopping event, is the cry that peals aloud, as our hymn says, that “It is finished.” What an announcement, worthy to be published in every newspaper and cited in every television program until the end of time. And yet so few hear it, and fewer still proclaim it, and yet it is the greatest of all announcements that have ever been proclaimed on the earth. The redemption was finished, all had been accomplished, there was no sin left, no debt unpaid, no more work to be done. And because there was no more left to pay, Jesus gave up the ghost. It is noteworthy how Jesus’ death is described. Throughout Scripture the Holy Ghost uses the term ‘and he died,’ when describing the death of man, but when Jesus’ death is described a different term is used. The reason for this is that Jesus’ death was voluntary, His life was not taken, but His life was GIVEN. He deliberately gave His spirit into the Father’s hands at the moment when sin had been paid for. *“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:17-18)* This is important for the love Christ demonstrates to us in dying for our sins is made even greater when we come to the realization that His death was intentional. He WENT to the cross, He was not BROUGHT to the cross. Think of the difference. If He was forced to the cross against His will, then the love demonstrated is a coerced love, He would have been coerced to die. But if He goes willingly, and Lays down His life in sacrifice, and does so intentionally, then His is a willing love, a love which is undeniable and of such greatness that it is beyond comprehension. This is what we witness when we observe Lent each year, it is the greatest love which has ever been offered to you. It is greater than the love your parents have for you, it is greater than the love your spouse or best friend has for you, it is greater than your brothers and sisters have for you. How then can we ever go through the season of Lent without the greatest of joy, knowing that what we see playing out before our eyes and told in our ears is the greatest love story ever told!

What Jesus says in our text, those three short words, verify the complete and full redemption of all mankind. Many have surmised and taught, and still teach, that the sacrifice of Christ was not for everyone, or that it was only for sins before He had died, or other such nonsense. However, these words put away all of those false doctrines, for Christ finished redemption not just for some, but for all, and Christ did not just die for sins before He came, but for all sin of all time committed by all people. These are facts, confirmed by these words of Jesus from the cross. Thus is the blood of the New Testament, shed by piercing, working our finished redemption, and that redemption is:

1. **Poured out upon the earth.** We read verses thirty one through thirty seven of our text: **read verses here.** Now as we have seen Jesus made the proclamation that the work of redemption was finished and then He died. After He had died, the chief priests requested that Jesus and the two others crucified with Him, be removed from the cross for that Sabbath day was an high day our text says. Let us turn to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 21, reading verses 22-23: **read passages here.** Despite the fact that the chief priests had entirely rejected the faith of God and rejected the Messiah, they outwardly wanted to keep their appearance of righteousness, and so demanded that Pilate would remove the bodies off the crosses so as not to break the command in Leviticus. They wanted their façade to remain in the eyes of the people, so that their false doctrine could continue to be force fed to the ignorant. Thus Pilate commands that their legs should be broken so that they can no longer lift themselves up on the cross and breathe, so that they would suffocate. Yet when they came to Jesus they found that He was already dead. This was a surprise to the soldiers and to Pilate, as we would hear later, for death would often take days for those on the cross, unless their legs were broken. Thus they need not break Jesus’ legs, but a soldier possibly thinking that Jesu was faking, took and spear and pierced His side and blood and water came out and poured onto the ground. Now we know that Jesus had finished redemption and so the blood here pouring from His side we know was not in further payment for sin, and so what was it for? And further why was it detailed in Scripture, as it is by John? Well that is why I stated earlier that we have begun to shift in our them. Indeed this was blood shed, but not in further payment for sin. Rather, this shedding of blood was a sign that the fountain of Jesus blood was poured out upon earth for the remission of sin, and further that His blood is given in both the water and the blood, in both the Sacraments. It was the final pouring out of Jesus’ blood upon this earth, and thus it is for us to see that fountain which is talked about in Scripture and in many of our beloved hymns is here shown. Now it is important to note the final verse of our text, for when we turn to the book of Exodus we read: *“In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” (Ex. 12:46)* This is one of the portions of the commands concerning the Passover Lamb, that it shall be pure, slain, and no bones broken. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, whose blood is painted on the lintels of our hearts so that death shall not come upon us, but shall pass over us when judgment comes.

Here we have come to the penultimate service during the Lenten midweek services, to finally culminate on Good Friday. Let us continue to humbly remember our Lord’s passion and death. May the Lord bless us as we study these things, and keep us in the faith, so that when He comes to take His Bride we may among those who are wed to Him for eternity and be taken to His home, and there to eternally dwell and praise His gracious name. Amen.