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

**March 13th 2024 Midweek Lenten V**

**Text: John 19:2-3, 16-18** 0710

**Theme: Blood of the New Testament: Shed by Crowning and Crucifying.**

May the cleansing blood of Christ ever be a flowing fountain of forgiveness and salvation. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: Since Ash Wednesday we have been studying the deep and edifying topic of the Blood of the New Testament. I am sorry that last Wednesday’s service had to be cancelled due to my poor health recently. However, tonight we will look at both last week’s text and theme as well as this week’s. Five weeks ago we began this series by looking at Jesus, the blood of the New Testament, shedding His blood by sweating. We noted that the agony He experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane was the result not of some mysterious medical condition, but because the weight and guilt of our sin had begun to be punished in Him. In other words all of God’s wrath begun to be inflicted on the Son of God, manifest into human flesh for that very purpose. The next week we looked at the blood of the New Testament shed by striking, inflicted by a nameless and ambitious man who served in the court of Caiaphas, who looked to impress his master by silencing Jesus who had only answered a direct question by the High Priest. What we found from our study was that while the deed of that man was indeed grievous, our focus is not to be on high mindedly condemning him, but rather we are to be focused on condemning ourselves, for it was our sin which caused Him to be struck in such a manner, and to be brought before the High Priest at all to be put on trial. Now it is necessary to continually speak of our sin being the true cause not to make us sad or despair because of our sin, but to give us true and lasting joy in the forgiveness of those same sins by the shed blood of Christ, and that knowledge prevents despair and rather gives hope and uplifts the soul of those who have received that very thing through faith. Now two weeks ago we heard of the blood of the New Testament shed by scourging, learning that His blood was given and shed to satisfy sinners and to satisfy the Father. Each and every time the scourge was brought down upon His back we can safely and accurately say that it was our sin which brought it down upon Him. Pilate had passed sentence that Jesus was to be scourged hoping to satisfy the blood lust of the Jewish multitude without having to execute Jesus. Further, and more importantly, this scourging was necessary to satisfy the wrath of the Father upon Him, because He had become the Chief of sinners, and as we had seen the prophet Isaiah declare, that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He had put Him to grief.

Tonight we will continue with our theme, the blood of the New Testament, and combining last week’s theme with this week’s theme, we will see that His blood was shed by crowning and by crucifying. It is necessary first for us to take a moment and note the depth and wisdom of God, as given to us in Scripture, and this is the very thing that is presented to us in the passion of Christ, and of His blood given and shed for the remission of sins. Think on the fact that long before, thousands of years before, the blood of the New Testament was taught and presented to mankind by the blood of the Old Testament, that of bulls and of goats, and that the blood of those animals was only accepted by God as payment for sins in view of the blood that Christ would shed some thousand years later! When we come to grips with these things, we must, as Christians, be in awe of God’s wisdom, power, and glory in providing a sacrifice to deal with the multitude of sin that mankind has committed without having to damn them all. It is with these things in mind that we will look at our text for this evening which is found in the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John beginning at verse two.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O Lord God most holy, we are truly in awe of the wondrous work of our redemption, and we therefore worship and praise Thy holy name. We ask Thee to bless us with wisdom as we study Thy great work, the offering of the blood of the New Testament; cause us to be edified and filled with hope that our sins, too, have been entirely and freely forgiven. O Jesus, teach us this day of Thy crowning in Thy humility, and find therein that Thou wast crowned with our sin and our shame, and that the blood which did stream down Thy holy face being poured in payment for sin. Teach us also that having had all sin laid upon Thy head, as the scapegoat, Thou wast led away bearing this load to be put to death outside the city, in the place of death, shame, cursing, and bitterness. Help us to keep in our remembrance Tine atoning sacrifice. Prevent us from complaint and bitterness when we suffer pain or sadness, persecution or even martyrdom. For Thine own sake, O Lord, grant us true faith and a godly life, that we may not be as those who have denied the redemption of their souls, but rather that we should be and remain Thy children all our days, and dwell with Thee in everlasting righteousness and joy. In Thy name we ask all these things. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn of the blood of the New Testament, shed by crowning and crucifying, seeing first that Jesus was:

1. **Crowned with sin.** We read verses two and three of our text: **read verses here.** The first portion of our text shows what took place after Jesus had been scourged, and before Pilate had passed the sentence of death. The Roman soldiers, hoping to have some fun with their criminal before returning Him to Pilate, decide that since He is accused of being the King of the Jews, that they would make Him a crown, and not just any crown, one fitting of such a shameful and despised Man, one made of thorns. It was an act of spite, meant to shame Him, meant to pay Him feigned homage. They had no real intention of actually worshipping Him, nor of giving Him glory, but sought only to cause more suffering, more pain, more agony. Yet at the same time this crown, made from a thorny bush, was the most fitting and perfect crown which could have been worn, for it was fitting of the Chief of sinners, one who bore the entirety of man’s sin upon His head. We hear in the Psalms: *“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” (Ps. 22:6)* This crown is befitting a worm, yea, less than a worm, and it crowned the head of the Son of God Himself, though it was not rightfully His crown. Yet is was fitting for Him because He came not in exaltation, but in humility and to give His life as a ransom for sinners, and free them from their bondage. The crown, though all too real, is also symbolic of the crowning of His head with the agony sin brought with it, which is the true agony, that of His soul, as we have already seen in the Garden of Gethsemane. During His humiliation Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He came as a servant of man, to give His life, to save our life, our eternal life. Now the blood trickled down His face, pouring from His pierced brow, and that blood was the precious blood of Christ, of such value that the shedding of it was of infinite value, of more value than the blood of every man, woman, and child who has ever lived until the end of time. Thus, while the soldiers may have mocked Him, and feigned worship of Hiim; we look on this scene and see something else entirely. We see our Savior, in His deep humility, wearing the crown that we should have rightly worn and endured. He patiently suffered the eternal agony of body and soul that we should have suffered, because it was not His own sin, but ours that was laid upon His head. This is the glory of what we have the privilege of studying and hearing during the Lenten season, and it is the grace of God in giving His own son for our redemption. May we never forget what we here witness. Thus is the blood of the New Testament shed by crowning, crowning with sin. Let us now see secondly, the blood of the New Testament shed by crucifying, for the sin He was crowned with was:
2. **Carried into the wilderness of death.** We read verses sixteen through eighteen of our text: **read verses here.** Tying back into our original them, which directly links the Old and New Testaments, we hear in the book of Leviticus, when the High Priest was to make atonement for the people: *“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” (Lev. 16:21-22)* It is astounding that about a thousand years intervened between this command given by God to Moses and Aaron, and the two portions of text for our sermon this evening. Both describe the same act, one performed upon a goat, and one performed by Christ; but both were done for the remission of sin, and both done because of the blood shed by Christ. Now just as Aaron had done to the goat in putting the sins of the people on him, the Father does to Christ, and puts the sins of all people on His head, as we have just seen in the crown. The goat being sent away to bear those wins into the wilderness, so Christ does. He takes those sins upon His own head and bears them out into Calvary, called the place of a skull or the place of death, the wilderness not inhabited, meaning with no life.

Now our text also makes the astounding statement that Pilate delivered Jesus to them to be crucified, referring not to the soldiers who would do the actual act, but to those who cried for His crucifixion, namely the Jews, the chief priest including the high priest. Thus, just like in Aaron’s day the High Priest would carry out the deed of sending the goat to the wilderness, in Christ’s case the wilderness of sin and death, to bear the sins of the people away. Finally our text declares quite plainly that they crucified Jesus. This simple word conveys a great deal to us, as it was intended to by the Holy Spirit. The word crucifixion means to affix to a cross, meaning to nail to a wooden cross. And it is where we get our word ‘excruciating’ from. It had been designed by the Romans for the purpose of inflicting as much pain as possible. However, the true pain of Jesus’ crucifixion was once again the sins He had borne into the wilderness to carry away into a lifeless land, meaning into eternal death, into eternal torment and suffering in the fires of hell itself. We are now beginning to arrive at the crescendo of the passion history as well as our Lenten theme. Here Jesus blood pours forth from His hands, feet, and head, where He had been pierced through. It was the blood payment necessary to purchase redemption for us, and we cannot go from here without noting these gracious works of Christ in our behalf, which we will actually receive, graciously, when we partake of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper when we eat of His body and drink of His blood for the remission of sins. What a gracious act indeed!

Let us then, dear Christians, remember our Savior’s passion, His crowning and His crucifixion, which thereby purchased for us salvation free and full. May we go from this moment onward and treasure in our hearts what we have learned this Lenten season, and will continue to learn, that we may ever give true worship and praise to Christ who willingly allowed Himself to be crowned with thorns and to be crucified for your sins and my sins. Let us give thanks unto God for this unspeakable gift. Amen.