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

**February 28th 2024 Midweek Lenten III**

**Text: John 19:1** 0707

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

May the grace received by the shed blood of Christ, ever be a flowing fountain unto you all, that we may ever be the beloved children of our Father in heaven. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: Over the past two midweek services we have been considering the words of Jesus when He was instituting the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. He declared that the cup, that is, what is in the cup, is the blood of the New Testament. As we have seen this phrase is so deep and full of the wisdom of God that it is difficult to glean from it all that it has to offer to us. Yet, at the same time, it is simple and teaches of the core of the Gospel that the blood of Christ redeems from sin, death, and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe. As we have been studying these words of Jesus, we have alluded to the shedding of blood in the Old Testament o0f the many animals each day. In one sense that was the blood of the Old Testament, and at the same time the blood of the New Testament, and this because God accepted the blood of those animals for the people of the Old Testament only in view of the promise of the coming Messiah, which is the Gospel, the New Testament. This is heard especially from the prophets of the Old Testament. Isaiah declares in the well known 53rd chapter: *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Is. 53:5)* It is important to notice the ceremonial law themes found in Isaiah’s description of the Savior’s suffering. He states that He was wounded for our transgressions. This alludes to the transfer of the sins of the people onto the animal and the subsequent slaying of the animal before his blood and his flesh after burned upon the altar and sprinkled round about the altar, which is actually said by Isaiah about the Savior. Thus, The sacrificial spilling of the blood of Christ is in answer to that of the animals of the Old Testament. And one might ask, why does this matter to us? We are not of the Old Testament? It does not matter because we have sin paid for by the blood of animals, but it matters because it puts the Old Testament ceremonial Law into its proper context, that of the New Testament.

On Ash Wednesday, two weeks ago, we learned of the blood of the New Testament, shed by sweating, learning that the agony He was enduring and thus causing Him to sweat blood was nothing else than our sin being placed upon Him, along with the prospect of enduring the wrath of the Father because of all that sin that was placed upon Him as though it was His, and making Him the chief of sinners. Last Wednesday we saw the blood of the New Testament shed by striking, noting that it was blood shed by sinners, and blood shed for sinners, and once again we found that it was for our crimes that this blood was spilled. It might be easy to point at that man who struck Jesus and condemn him, and while this action of his does deserve condemnation, we are also responsible for it, for it was our own sin that put Him in front of that mock court, and in position to be struck. However, the greatest of last Wednesday’s text was the response of Jesus. He mildly rebuked Him, as He often does for us, though we deserve far worse. It was the great mercy and grace of Jesus Christ for sinners that was prominently displayed in that text. And yet, we could say this about each of the six instances of Christ shedding His blood for the remission of sins, each one progressively getting worse. Tonight we will, of course, continue with the theme of the blood of the New Testament, this time seeing that it was blood shed by scourging. We will do so according to our text for tonight which is found in the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John, verse one.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, dearest Father in heaven, as we view the innocent sufferings of Thy Son, we cannot but mark that miracle of time, Thine own Son, sacrificed for our sins. Indeed we also mark that His sufferings pleased Thee. Thou art pleased to bruise Him and put Him to grief. These are difficult words, hard sayings which we confess we cannot attain unto. Yet our faith sings unto Thee in thankfulness for these things, because they teach us of the grave nature of our sin, so bringing us to a deeper knowledge of it; and they teach of Thy grace and mercy toward man. O Savior, we view Thy sufferings and we are truly thankful that Thou didst willingly endure each and every one of those insults and persecutions for our sake. Great art Thou O Triune God, for Thou hast satisfied Thine own justice and in so doing hast shed abroad Thy grace to all sinful men. Grant, we beseech Thee, that each of us be true believers, and remain in that faith until we pass from this life, that we may be brought to eternal life, where we shall forever sing Thy praises and wonder concerning the great work of redemption for us unworthy creatures. Grant these things unto us, O God, for Thy glory alone. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn of the blood of the New Testament seeing that it was shed by scourging; learning that His scourging was:

1. **To satisfy sinners.** We read our text: **read verse here.** Our text is very short and doesn’t seem to hold much to us as it stands on its own. However, what we find here is one of the most intriguing aspects of all the passion history. After the Chief Priests had passed sentence on Jesus, as a blasphemer, they then brought Him in chains to Pontius Pilate, for only he had the power to pass a death sentence upon any person in that region. So the first things we notice is that both Jews and Gentiles participated in the sufferings of Christ. The Jews delivered Him to Pilate, and Pilate, out of an abundance of caution with uprisings in His region, finally succumbed to the pressure of the Jews. However before he actually passed the sentence of crucifixion, Pilate thought to satisfy the blood-lust of the Jewish multitude by having Jesus scourged. Pilate knew that Jesus had been delivered for envy, and he sought to release Jesus, but he was less concerned with justice and more concerned with keeping the peace. Now we do not know just how severe the scourging of Jesus was at the hands of Pilate, or more accurately at the hands of his soldiers, but seeing as how the Jews desired the crucifixion of Jesus, it was likely severe to satisfy them while not having to actually kill Him. For this reason and the fact that Jesus was suffering for the sins of every person of all time, it was likely to be very brutal. Whatever the case, Pilate sent Jesus to be scourged. Now often when we think of scourging we generally think of the whip which was a leather straps with knots at the end to add some sting when used on the back of a person. However, the Roman type of scourging consisted in hook like pieces of metal tied to the end of the leather straps, to actually remove flesh with each swing. So it was designed to be the most brutal way of carrying out a scourging.

Our focus though is to see that this was done to satisfy the blood lust of sinful men, in our text that of the Jews, the soldiers, and even Pilate. Yet, we are not excluded from this dear Christians. For though we were not present, once again it was our sin that sent Him to the whipping post. In the portion of Isaiah 53 read earlier, we heard that with His stripes we are healed. Isaiah is referring to the scourging here seen. Each and every time the metal dug into His flesh we may safely point to our sin and exclaim: “that was because of me.” “I am the reason that blood came pouring out of His back.” And while guilt is here seen, what shines forth most of all from our text is that thereby we are healed. Sin was being paid for, sin that should cause our damnation, but does not. Now truly our voices were there that day; we were there crying for His crucifixion; we were there trying to appease the crowd and ordering His scourging, and our hands brought down the scourge onto His flesh. There is no denying this truth without also denying our own sins, or the massive amount of guilt due to our sin. His blood was pilled to satisfy us, to make full the blood-guiltiness of our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. Turning again to Isaiah we hear: *“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” (Is. 50:6)* We must once again point out that Jesus willingly went to face these things. In the garden of Gethsemane the Father had made known to Jesus that His will was that Jesus drink the cup of wrath in behalf of mankind, and Jesus went from thence with His face set like a flint, and willingly endured each of these including giving His own back to those who swung the scourge, giving His back to the scourge of our sin. Thus is the blood of the New Testament shed by scourging, shed to satisfy sinners, and:

1. **Shed to satisfy the Father.** We read our text: **read verse here.** As we said to God in the prayer earlier, the knowledge that God the Father desired the suffering of His Son is entirely antithetical to our flesh and our human nature. We have a very tough time wrapping our minds around this idea. Yet it is clearly taught in Scripture: *“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” (Is. 53:10-11)* What satisfaction did the suffering and death of Christ bring to the Father? Why would it please Him? Here is where our flesh chafes. God was pleased, because therein the price for sin was paid, and man did not have to pay it, and could thus be saved. And here too, is where the Gospel is found, and is therefore the reason our flesh cannot apprehend it, because the natural man cannot receive it. You see the Father was satisfied with sufferings of Christ, because His suffering and death satisfied His eternal justice. As the scourge landed on His back, Jesus was satisfying this justice. Now the justice of God is rooted in the Law, for the Law, according to God’s own design, said that *“In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die,”* and God when giving His Gospel did not just suddenly decide that our sin was no big deal and He would just forget about it and take us to heaven anyway. Rather those words stood even after the giving of the Gospel, but all sin was heaped upon the shoulders of Christ, and He bearing them willingly went to suffer for each one the penalty due. In so doing, Christ satisfied justice, and justified the ungodly to save them. Sin was no longer to be punished in us because it was punished in Christ, and this is received by faith alone. This we heard Paul declare in our Epistle lesson from this past Sunday: *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:21-26)* Notice how Paul declares faith in His blood as the reason He is the propitiation for sin. His blood is key, for there is no remission of sin where no blood is shed. Here it is shed by the scourging of the Romans at the insistence of the Jews. And it is here that we witness the ongoing work of shedding His blood for the remission of our sins. May we never lose sight of these things, and may our faith take hold of them even though our flesh cannot. May our hearts glorify and worship Him for these things forever and ever. *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” (2 Cor. 9:15)* Amen.