THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

(I Peter 1:18-19)

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from you vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The Body of Christ, like the human body, has only one Brain (“the mind of Christ”), only one Breath (the Holy Spirit), only one Blood (the blood of Jesus), and only one Battle (to maintain its health, overcome its enemies, and perform its functions). To live, a body needs properly circulating blood. Every cell in every human body lives every moment at the mercy of blood.

In a contest to name the most important verses in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the winning contestant selected Leviticus 17:11 in the Old Testament and Matthew 26:28 in the New Testament. Leviticus 17:11 says, “The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life.” Matthew 26:28 contains these words of Jesus: “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” We often read from Bibles in which the words of Jesus are printed in red, but every Christian should read the entire Bible as though it were written throughout with the blood of Christ. The Scriptures make much of the blood. Nothing is more impressive and emphatic than the repeated references in the Old Testament to the blood, and the New Testament mentions the blood of Christ three times as often as the cross of Christ, and five times more frequently than the Death of Christ. It has often been said that there is a scarlet thread woven throughout the Bible. A crimson stream flows like a life-giving river from Genesis to Revelation.

Some statements about the blood are clearly symbolic. References to the Communion Cup, the “drinking” of the blood, and the “washing” in the blood represent realities that far exceed and excel their symbols. The blood of Christ is not symbolic. It is real and literal blood, referred to several times as “His own blood.”

Peter calls it “the precious blood of Christ.” Why precious? What constitutes its value?

I. EXCEPTIONAL

First, the blood of Christ is precious because it is exceptional blood. As previously stated, the Bible is full of blood. To open the Bible is like cutting a vein. From the killing of animals in the Garden of Eden to the great celebrations of the Blood of Christ in Heaven recorded in the last book of the Bible, the crimson tide rises and falls in the riverbed of Scripture. At the dedication of Solomon’s temple alone, the Bible says that 22,000 oxen were slain, and
120,000 sheep. However, the Old Testament never speaks of “precious blood.” Though millions of gallons of blood flowed from an incredible number of sacrificial animals, never once is any of that blood called “precious.” But the Bible says that one blood is special, exceptional, extraordinary, and it is specifically called “the precious blood of Christ.”

The blood of Christ is exceptional because it is the blood of a unique Person. The Bible is unanimous in its presentation of One Person as unique. If the Bible is correct, Jesus is no ordinary person! He was eternally purposed, Divinely prepared, miraculously provided, and meticulously protected. No other person could be referred to as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” but Jesus was. No other person was born of a virgin women, but Jesus was. No other person could qualitatively and effectively die for all sinful men, but Jesus did. In Jesus, His incarnate Son, God came in Person to give as Man the only blood which could make atonement for human sin.

Then the blood of Christ is exceptional because it is uniquely perfect blood. God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth (Acts 17:26). By the creation of God, human blood is one in composition. By the corruption of guilt, human blood is one in pollution. Such blood calls for judgment rather than appeasement. The blood of Christ must be distinguished from all other blood. If the blood of all humanity were shed on a cross, it would not atone for sin. If the sacrifices that have been made by all humanity from the time of Adam until now were gathered in one great sacrifice, it would not atone for one single sin.

The entire human race descended from Adam suffers from a corrupted bloodstream. The manner of sin’s transmission is mysterious, but the common bloodstream of all fallen sinners provides a clue. A virulent and fatal poison has contaminated every member of the human race — except One. And even in that One, the requirement for supernatural blood necessitated a supernatural birth. By a mysterious and miraculous conception, Jesus was protected from the corruption of sin. By means of a virgin birth, the sinless Son of God circumvented the fallen nature that is common to all men, and within His humanity was the precious blood that contained no lurking disease, no potential death, and not even the slightest taint of inherent depravity. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled by nature as well as in practice. Thus, the blood of Jesus is innocent blood (Matthew 27:4). His blood is innocent blood; all other human blood is guilty blood. His blood is pure blood; all other human blood is polluted blood. His blood is justifying blood; all other human blood is judgmental blood.

In a Book of bold statements, one of the boldest the Bible contains is recorded in Acts 20:28, which speaks of “the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.” It was a brilliant medical doctor who recorded these bold words, and they are quoted from the lips of the brilliant Christian theologian and statesman, the Apostle Paul. The verse clearly identifies the blood of Jesus as God’s own blood. Immediately someone will protest, “But God is a spirit, and thus He doesn’t have blood.” But God did have blood for approximately thirty-three years! Jesus was truly and fully God as well as truly and fully Man. Mysteriously, it was the blood of the God-Man which was shed for sinners on the Cross of Calvary. So the blood of Jesus was
uniquely perfect blood. Thus it was the most precious blood that ever flowed in a human body, and it was that precious blood that was shed for sinners.

When David Livingstone, the great missionary, went to Africa and tried to explain God’s plan of salvation, the Africans said to him, “But how could one man die for the whole human race?” Livingstone reached into his pocket and brought out two coins, one a common British copper penny, the other a little glittering golden sovereign. He explained that in the country he came from, the little gold coin was not as large as the penny and did not weigh as much, but it was actually worth 240 of the copper pennies. The difference in value resulted from the inherent, intrinsic difference in the two metals. So he explained that God’s holy, perfect, well-beloved Son was worth more than a whole world of guilty, lost, condemned sinners. In Matthew 10:29-31, Jesus said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” How many sparrows am I worth? How many sparrows are you worth? One human being is worth more than all the sparrows put together.

Look again at the infinite Son of God. How many finite persons is He worth? Five hundred, or five thousand, or five million? You can add generation to generation, human being to human being—and the Lord Jesus Christ is worth more than all of them put together. Get a sheet of paper and write down all the big numbers you can think of. Then add them up. You have a big, big number. Then multiply it by 10—or 100—or by a million if you like—cover many sheets of paper with the number, and after all, you still only have a finite number—there is a beginning and an end, however far it may extend. No, by adding finite things together no man has ever been able to make that which is infinite. Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16)—Deity in humanity—so that the life He gave was an infinite life, which can meet the needs of any number of finite lives.

Again, the blood of Jesus is exceptional because it has a unique purpose. The precious blood of Christ has occupied the thoughts and purposes of God forever. That blood is the seal of a Divine covenant that predates all time and never passes away. Hebrews 13:20 speaks of “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” a covenant that was unilaterally established between God and believing men.

In expressing the purpose of the blood of Jesus, we might say that it is the covering on Heaven’s door, the centerpiece of Heaven’s domain, the characteristic of Heaven’s dress (Rev. 19:11-14 and Rev. 7:13-14), and the chorus of Heaven’s delight (Rev. 5:9). Some one summarized the purpose of the blood of Jesus by poetically declaring, “Lost men sail to hell on the Dead Sea of sin, and saved people sail to Heaven on the Red Sea of the Redeemer’s blood.” His blood endears Him to us, and us to Him. Could anything be more precious than the blood of Jesus?
One of the Rockefeller reports told this amazing story. In West Africa in 1927, a blood specimen was taken from a native named Asibi, who was sick with yellow fever. A rhesus monkey which had just been received from India was inoculated with this specimen. Asibi recovered, but the monkey died of the disease. All the yellow fever vaccine manufactured since 1927, by the Rockefeller Foundation and the government and other agencies as well, derives from the original strain of virus obtained from this humble native. Carried down to the present day from one laboratory to another, through repeated cultures, and by enormous multiplication, it has offered immunity to yellow fever to millions of people in many countries. Today, when the armed forces are stationed in yellow fever areas, they are protected from the disease by vaccination from this same strain. Through the creative imagination of science, the blood of one man in West Africa has been made to serve the whole human race! In a much more sublime way, the blood of one Man in Jerusalem long ago has entered into the bloodstream of the human race to redeem sinners unto God. The blood of Jesus is precious because it is exceptional blood.

II. EFFECTUAL

Second, the blood of Christ is precious because it is effectual blood. Nothing is truer than that there is power in the blood of Jesus. The blood of Christ is so rich in its effectiveness that it touches with power every area in God’s relationship with man and man’s relationship with God. The blood of Christ is behind every deed of mercy, every expression of grace, every moment of love, and every act of forgiveness that God has shown to man since the beginning of time. Think of what the blood accomplishes for us.

It is the blood of Christ that saves us from the penalty of sin. It liberates us, rescues us, purchases us, and sets us free from the fearful bondage to sin. We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Romans 5:9 says that we are “now justified by His blood.” Hebrews 9:12 says that Jesus “entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Jesus did not merely pay the price for sin, He also paid the price for the sinner. Jesus not only paid for my sins, He actually purchased me. The Bible says that every person on earth is “sold under sin,” and is in literal slavery. Romans 6:16 says, “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves as servants to obey, his slaves ye are?” John 8:34 says, “Whoever commits sin is the bondslave of sin.” Redemption is a commercial term. You might hear this term in a pawn shop. You go there and pawn an article for a certain amount of money. The pawnbroker gives you a ticket, and you can’t get the article again unless you redeem it. Here is an exact picture of what Jesus did for me. I was sold under sin and in slavery to the devil—I was helpless in the devil’s pawn shop. But Jesus Christ paid the price of His own blood and bought me from the devil’s pawn shop and set me free. My sins have been totally paid for, I have been purchased unto God—and I will never be put up for sale again!

An old man attended an evangelistic crusade one night. He was badly crippled by sin, but one night, the Holy Spirit drew him to Christ and saved him. When he was baptized, two men had to lower him into the water. The pastor asked him if he would give a word of personal
testimony, and he responded. In the course of a wonderful testimony, he said, “The devil had a mortgage on my soul and was about to foreclose on me.” In less than three months, this man was in eternity. Yes, the devil had a mortgage on his soul and was within three months of the date of foreclosure. But Jesus had already gone into the slave market and paid off that mortgage, and when the slave accepted Christ’s payment for him, he was set free!

It is always interesting to watch the widely varying responses that are made by fleshly men when this glorious truth is presented. “Gross!” some will say. “Ridiculous!” others will say. “Hallelujah!” the believer will say. Consider the seriousness of the neutral or negative response. Either God made a fatal mistake in His choice of means and method (the blood of Jesus), or we make a fatal mistake in supposing that we do not need the blood of Christ or that we can redeem ourselves without Divine help. Does the mistake rest on God’s side, or ours? The grossness is not in the blood, but in myself. But I cannot realize the preciousness of the blood until I have realized the perverseness of my sins. Where there is no conviction of sin—conviction amounting to the very anguish of the lost in hell—there can be no felt need of so extreme a remedy as the outpouring of the blood of Christ. Ridiculous? It is rather ridiculous to disbelieve God and think you can cover your deadly sins with the salve of morality, reformation or indifference! As for me, I say “hallelujah” for the blood of Jesus. I owe all to Christ and His blood. There is nothing truly mine but my mountainous and hateful sins. I could not even reckon a debt so immense as that created by my sins. But Jesus came to my cell in the great debtor’s prison, loosed my bond, paid my debt, and ransomed me with His blood. The precious blood of Christ saves us from the penalty of our sins.

The blood of Christ secures our access to the Presence of God. Ephesians 2:13 says that “now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Jesus has “made peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. 1:20). Hebrews 10:19 tells us that we are entitled to “have boldness to enter into the holiest (the Presence of God in heaven) by the blood of Jesus.” And Hebrews 4:16 says that we may “come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

There is an old legend about the magic gates of a kingdom that refused to move to all who tried to open them. But an old law said that if one drop of royal blood touched them, they would fly open at once. What a picture of heaven’s gates, opened to both sinners and saints by the blood of Jesus!

If heaven has a currency, a medium of exchange, a money, it will be the ransom-money of the blood of Christ. And there will be no inflation or deflation of its value. “It shall never lose its power.” And all negotiations in heaven for either saints or sinners are made by the precious blood of Christ.

The blood of Christ sterilizes us from the pollution of sin. The problem of ongoing sin in the life of a believer is a serious problem indeed. Most people have an extremely shallow conception of sin and forgiveness. Suppose a young man wrongs his father. He simply says,
“Dad, I know I did wrong, and I am sorry; forgive me.” And the father replies, “That’s all right, son, I forgive you.” And shallow-minded, self-centered, sentimental human beings think that God’s forgiveness is as simple and easy as man’s. But God has infinite problems to face when He forgives that no wronged human father has to face. When sin is committed, the two primary factors are God’s holiness and God’s justice. Sin is both an attitude and an act, and it is always committed in reference to God. It is fleshly rebellion against God, and it is committed against the holy character of God, and it is a criminal offence against the justice of God. God cannot arbitrarily forgive sins and remain God. If He compromises with a single sin, He loses His character and the moral foundation of the universe collapses. God must have a ground on which to stand in order to be both “just and the justifier” of sinners, and the only ground upon which this is possible is the blood of Jesus Christ. So God had to go a long way to bring holiness and the sinner together in peace and fellowship.

The problem of cleansing away the daily sins of a believer in Christ is no less serious. A “blood bank” is a storehouse for blood taken from healthy individuals for future use in the treatment of injured or sick persons. One Man gave all His sinless blood on the Cross of Calvary (God’s “Blood Bank”), and the New Birth Certificate gives the born-again one unlimited use of the continuous cleansing of that blood. The life of that blood is unabated; its power is undiminished; its merit is consistent and its value is forever unchanging.

“Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved to sin no more.”

There is a well-worn story about the devil confronting Martin Luther with a long list of his sins. After considering the list Luther asked, “Is that all?” “No!” said the devil, “There are many more.” “Put them down,” said Luther. The devil sneeringly added more sins to the long list. The great reformer said, “Is that all you can think of?” “Yes, now what?” said the devil. “Now,” said Luther, “write beneath them all, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sin.’” (I John 1:7). Later, Luther wrote, “The best way to clean out a dunghill is to run the River Elbe through it, and the best way to clean sin out of a person is to run the crimson river of Calvary’s blood through it.”

“He breaks the power of canceled sin; He sets the captive free;
His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me.”

In the ancient mythological story of the labors of Hercules, the king of Elis was a man named Augeus. He was famed for his 3,000 oxen, including twelve white bulls. One of Hercules’ twelve herculean tasks was to clean out “the Augean stables,” which had not been cleansed for years. Imagine the filth in a stable that had been occupied by 3,000 oxen, and had not been cleaned out in years! In mythical fashion Hercules accomplished the feat by rerouting two rivers through the stables. John Donne, the great Christian poet, picked up the myth to illustrate the cleansing accomplished by the blood of Christ. He wrote,
“Lord, I confess that You alone are able
To purify this Augean stable.
If the seas were all water, and the land all soap,
If Jesus’ blood wash me not, There is for me no hope.”

But note the incredible coverage I have through the blood of Christ. “The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth (present tense, ‘goes on cleansing’) us from all sin.” Frances Havergal said, “Christians seem to regularly limit the cleansing power of the precious blood of Christ. Think again of the grand simplicity of ‘cleanseth us from all sin.’ ‘All’ is all. We may trust Him to totally cleanse us from the stain of past sins, and we may trust Him with equal confidence to cleanse us from all present defilement; yes, all! If we don’t believe and receive it, we are looking at our own frailty and failure more than at His omnipotence. Think of that blessed present tense, ‘goes on cleansing.’ It is a continual present, always a present tense. This is not a mere coming to the fountain to be cleansed, but a remaining in the fountain, so that it goes on cleansing.” Andrew Bonar said, “I can hardly believe that man is a Christian who does not every day betake himself to the atoning work of Christ. If you can do without the blood you are a backslider.”

The blood of Christ is precious! It is precious indeed! It saves us from the penalty of sin. It secures our access to the Presence of God. It sustains our fellowship with the Person of God and with the people of God. It sterilizes us from the deadly pollution of sin. It strengthens us with overcoming power (see Rev. 12:11). And it will stimulate our praise in heaven. How precious is Christ’s effectual blood!

III. ESSENTIAL

Finally, the blood of Christ is precious because it is essential blood. There are many eternal issues in man and in man’s relationship with God which make the blood of Christ indispensable in man’s experience. One crucial issue is that of eternal destiny. Someone said, “If damnation were not a reality, redemption would not be a necessity.” If there were no blight of sin in man, the blood of the Savior would not be necessary. But just as there is a certain kind of highway that is marked in red on a road map, so the highway to heaven is a red road, red with the blood of Jesus.

It was essential that the blood of Jesus be poured out in history. Hebrews 9:22 says, “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.” “No remission”! No forgiveness of sins! No payment of sin’s incalculable debt! No satisfaction of the demanding justice of God! The blood of Christ is not something you can do without.

One may reply, “But is God’s heart so hard that He is not moved to extend mercy when He sees a sinner in tears? May I not weep and prevail upon God through many tears to forgive me?” The answer is no! God says nothing about remission through tears.

“Could my tears forever flow, Could my zeal no languor know,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.”

It is a matter of revealed fact that no substitute can replace the blood of Christ if man is to have acceptance with God. And no amount of preference or prejudice or pride will bend this rule. “Without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.” The shed blood of Christ is not an additive that we can conveniently put with our church membership, baptism, good works, human religion, or anything else. It is Christ’s shed blood alone that saves sinners. To add anything to it is to say in essence that Christ’s blood is not sufficient.

“I must needs go home by the way of the cross, There’s no other way but this.
I shall never get sight of the gates of light, If the way of the cross I miss.
The way of the cross leads home, The way of the cross leads home;
It is sweet to know as I onward go, The way of the cross leads home.”

It is essential that the blood of Jesus be put on the sinner’s heart and the sinner’s record — by faith. The Apostle Peter used a peculiar phrase in the introduction of his first epistle in the New Testament. He writes to those who are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Peter wrote these words to “the strangers scattered abroad,” a reference to Jews displaced out of Israel and scattered like seeds over the world. But the displaced Jew reminds him of their bondage in Egypt centuries ago, and this in turn reminds him of their release from Egypt through the Passover episode centuries before.

The story is recorded in Exodus 12 in your Bible. The Jews were to kill an innocent lamb and sprinkle its blood on the doors of their homes. God’s promise to them was, “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague (of death) shall not be upon you when I smite the land of Egypt.” One thing only kept the destroyer away from the house of the Israelite—the applied blood of an innocent lamb.

Today, the prince of darkness is at each sinner’s gate, and he has easy access to the unprotected sinner’s life. Death also waits his time at the gate. Also, the curse of the Almighty God threatens each sinner. And there is absolutely no shield against their destructive invasions — except the blood of Christ. It will be to our eternal blessing if we receive the blood of Christ, but it will be to our eternal peril if we reject or neglect the blood of Christ.

A German officer was badly wounded in World War II. Medics and medications were readily at hand to treat him, but there was a problem. They were British! The officer said defiantly, “I would rather die than be transfused with British blood.” And he did!

Go back to Egypt and watch the proceedings at the Jewish homes. God had said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” If they had put beautiful jewels on the side posts of the doors, or sparkling diamonds, they would not have kept the death angel away. If rubies gleamed like red flames from every door, if diamonds had glistened like tiny suns from every side post, if silver and gold had lined every door, the death angel would still have killed the occupant. Only the blood
made the death angel pass by. God did not say, “When I see your good works—how you have prayed, and wept, and groaned, I will pass over you,” but “when I see the blood.” It was not their good resolutions, their tears, their prayers, their works, their faith, that saved them; it was the blood. It was not the blood and something else—the blood and our estimate of it, the blood and our thoughts about it, the blood and our feelings—but the blood by itself. God is infinitely satisfied with it, and if you have shown your satisfaction by totally trusting Christ, there can be no further cause of controversy between you and Him. It is God’s estimate of the blood, not of you or your faith, that counts. And God did not say, “When you see the blood, I will pass over you.” It is not our estimation of the value of Christ’s blood, but God’s appreciation of it, which is our security. Horatius Bonar struck the right note clearly when he wrote:

> “On merit not my own I stand; On doings which I have not done;  
> Merit beyond what I can claim, Doings more perfect than my own.  
> Upon a life I did not live, Upon a death I did not die,  
> Upon Another’s Life, and Another’s Death, I stake my whole eternity.”

Continue to look at that Jewish household. The people within might have been in different mental conditions that night. Imagine one crying out in despair, “I obeyed, but how can such unreasonable means as blood on my door possibly save me?” This one is most certainly saved, for God wasn’t looking at the weakness or strength of his faith, or at the degree of his doubts, but at the applied blood. Imagine another saying, “But I don’t deserve to be delivered, and especially when I am compared to some of my neighbors.” Man is forever imagining that God spares sinners on the basis of their worth or merit, but it is not so. God does not inquire as to who lives in the house, but only if there is blood on the doorposts. Or imagine that one within the house forgets that the blood has been applied to the doorpost. Fear and trembling may possess him, but he is still safe. Here is the strange case of a man who despairs though he is in no danger whatever. How many weak believers like this have been in the household of faith throughout the history of the church! But they are still safe if the blood has been applied.

In the Passover story, the blood was applied by a hyssop branch (Exodus 12:22). The hyssop plant was common, small, and apparently insignificant. But that weak little branch was the means of applying the mighty and essential blood of redemption. You see, dear friend, you don’t need great faith like a cedar; little faith is enough. Imagine a threatened person in the household that night. He doesn’t look at the destroying angel, nor on the dead bodies of the slain, nor upon himself, nor upon his sins, nor upon the weakness or strength of his faith. He directs his calm gaze to the blood upon his door and rests his mind and heart on the clear promise of God.

> “This is all my hope and peace, Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
> This is all my righteousness, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

Two final words. One, a word of warning. Let me frame the warning in an illustration. Christopher Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus is a renowned exploration of the great theme of man’s moral battle and his eternal destiny—and how he stupidly gambles over it. In the story, Dr. Faustus had surrendered his soul in exchange for twenty-five years of magical powers. He gave up his
relationship with the one true God, for the chance to be served for twenty-five years by the gods of power, riches, and success.

The closing scene is vivid and sober. The twenty-years have passed; remember, the “pleasures of sin” last only “for a season”(Hebrews 11:25). Mephistopheles (Satan) comes to take Dr. Faustus away. The Doctor doesn’t want to go (!). Satan begins to drag him away. Faustus cries out, “Oh, that I were a tear, that I might drown myself in the ocean and lose myself.” In one version of the play, a light comes on in a corner of the stage. 

There the observer see the figure of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross—and blood is falling from His wounds. Dr. Faustus points tragically to the bloody figure on the cross and cries, “And to think, a drop, a half a drop, would have spared my soul from this.” The scene fades with the voices of the chorus saying in unison, “Cut was the branch that might have been.” Then, an eternity, an eternity, an ETERNITY of remorse. Dear friend, be sure that you have applied at heaven’s throne by faith for the blood of Christ, and that you have applied that blood to your heart by faith.

The last word, a word of worship. Another illustration. Late one evening the phone rang in a California home. “Mrs. Otto,” a voice said, “Did you give a pint of blood to the Red Cross last December 14th?” Hesitating a moment, Mrs. Otto recalled the situation. The speaker identified himself as a public relations officer at a nearby military hospital. “I’m sorry to call so late, but a patient has just arrived who wants to meet you.” Mrs. Otto learned that her pint of blood, flown to a battle area in the Orient, had saved this soldier’s life. Said the caller, “He wants to thank you, but he leaves early in the morning for the East Coast.” A stunned Mrs. Otto made her way to the hospital. She learned that rarely did a soldier ever meet the person whose blood saved his life. Most blood donations were mixed plasma, but her particular pint of blood had gone into an individual container labeled with the donor’s name. Just before her blood had reached the battle area, the injured sergeant had been fighting for his life. Trapped by the enemy, he was covering the withdrawal of his group when fifteen slugs hit him in the left leg. Medical corpsmen carried him to a makeshift field-hospital where his leg was amputated. When he regained consciousness, a doctor handed him the tag from a blood container. “It was this woman’s blood which saved your life, Sergeant!” Clutching the bag, the soldier muttered through clenched teeth, “Maybe some day I can thank her for saving my life.” As the sergeant recounted the story to his benefactor, he wept unashamedly. Mrs. Otto wept too.

Two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus Christ climbed the steps to Calvary, which was God’s Blood Bank. There He freely gave every drop of His own blood so that your great need could be covered by His blood. Have you expressed thanks for the greatest blood donor of all, the Lord Jesus Christ?
Supplemental Quotes and Illustration about The Blood of Christ

Some years ago a statue which had been erected in India to the memory of Queen Victoria was found to be shamefully defaced with a coat of coal tar. The authorities used every endeavor to discover the perpetrator of the indignity, but without success. An attempt was made to cleanse the figure of the great queen, but all efforts were found to be ineffective. The coal tar seemed to be one with the metal of the statue, and removal seemed impossible. At last, after many Europeans had tried in vain to remove the ugly substance and stains from the statue, and Indian man offered his services, and promised, with the aid of a special fluid he had concocted, to restore the beauty of the statue. He was allowed to experiment on the statue, with the result that the coal tar was entirely removed and the monument restored to its former condition. As there was but one man who could remove the stain from that statue, so there is but One Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can take away the stain of sin from the human heart — from your heart and my heart. But He is fully able to purify us from all the contamination and defilement that sin has cast upon us. And just as the man employed a special fluid in cleansing the statue, God employs a “special fluid,” the blood of His own dear Son, to “cleanse us from all sin” (I John 1:7). (Louis Albert Banks, The Sinner and His Friends, pp. 31-32).

We know of two other times when Jesus shed His blood — at His circumcision and in the Garden of Gethsemane, but no atonement for sin is ever attributed to these. Only as He became a curse hanging on the accursed Tree and shed His blood there do we have atonement for human sin and cleansing of our own personal sins. He “. . . made peace through the blood of His cross . . .” (Colossians 1:20). Nothing less than His blood could have accomplished all the requirements of atonement, and His blood was of such infinite value that nothing more was required (see Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7). (Adapted from Robert Lightner, The Death Christ Died, pp. 21, 43).

Imagine an enormous tube snaking southward from Canada through the Amazon delta, plunging into oceans only to surface at every inhabited island, shooting out eastward through every jungle, plain, and desert in Africa, forking near Egypt to join all of Europe and Russia as well as the entire Middle East and Asia — a pipeline so global and pervasive that it links every person worldwide. Inside that tube an endless plenitude of treasures floats along on rafts: mangoes, coconuts, asparagus, and produce from every continent; watches, calculators, and cameras; gems and minerals; forty-nine brands of cereals; all styles and sizes of clothing; the contents of entire shopping centers. Four billion people have access: at a moment of need or want, they simply reach into the tube and seize whatever product suits them. Somewhere far down the pipeline a replacement is manufactured and inserted.

Such a pipeline exists inside each one of us, servicing not four billion but one hundred trillion cells in the human body. An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surges past our cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in the fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reactions. In addition, that same pipeline ferries away refuse, exhaust gases, and worn-out chemicals. In the interest of economical transport, the body dissolves its vital substances into a fluid (much as coal is shipped
more efficiently through a slurry pipeline than by truck or train). Five or six quarts of this all-purpose fluid suffice for the body’s hundred trillion cells.

A speck of blood the size of this letter “o” contains 5,000,000 red cells, 300,000 platelets and 7,000 white cells. The fluid is actually an ocean stocked with living matter. Red cells alone, if removed from a single person and laid side by side, would carpet an area of 3,500 square yards.

Sixty thousand miles of blood vessels link every living cell; even the blood vessels themselves are fed by blood vessels. The blood’s pell-mell journey through these vessels, even to the extremity of the big toe, lasts a mere twenty seconds. An average red cell endures the cycle of loading, unloading, and jostling through the body for a half million round trips over four months.

The components of this circulatory system cooperate to accomplish a simple goal: nourishing and cleansing each living cell. Every cell in every body lives at the mercy of blood. (Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, In His Image, pp. 55, 56, 57, 58, 59).

Some years ago an epidemic of measles struck Vellore and one of my daughters had a severe attack. We knew she would recover, but our other infant daughter, Estelle, was dangerously vulnerable because of her age. When the pediatrician explained our need for convalescent serum, word went around Vellore that the Brands need the “blood of an overcomer.” We did not actually use those words, but we called for someone who had contracted measles and had overcome it. Serum from such a person would protect our little girl.

It was no use finding somebody who had conquered chicken pox or had recovered from a broken leg. Such people, though healthy, could not give the specific help we needed to overcome measles. We needed someone who had experiences measles and had defeated that disease. We located such a person, withdrew some of his blood, let the cells settle out, and injected the convalescent serum. Equipped with “borrowed” antibodies, our daughter fought off the disease successfully. The serum gave her body enough time to manufacture her own antibodies. She overcame measles not by her own resistance or vitality, but as a result of a battle that had taken place previously within someone else.

The blood of Jesus Christ is the blood of an Overcomer. It is as if He went out of His way to expose Himself to temptation, to encounter the stress and strain you and I will meet — to gain wise blood for our benefit. By His blood we are redeemed, forgiven, made clean. (Paul Brand, In His Image, pp. 94-95)

In C. S. Lewis’ The Great Divorce, one big ghost (a lost person) meets a solid spirit (a saved person) who was a bloody murderer, though now a forgiven one. The face of this solid spirit made the dreamer “want to dance, it was so established in its youthfulness.” The big ghost ironically declares: “Well, I’m damned.” He claims he only want his rights, his just desserts, only what he has earned and deserved. “I’m not asking for anybody’s bleeding charity.” The grand paradox of the Christian faith is laid out here, as the forgiven spirit responds: “Then do. At once. Ask for the Bleeding Charity. Everything here is for the asking and nothing can be bought.”
Sadly, however, the big ghost grumbles and refuses to join the bloody fellowship: “I’d rather be damned than go along with you.” His wish is granted. (C. S. Lewis, The Great Divorce, 72)

In another Lewis fantasy, one from the Chronicles of Narnia, The Silver Chair, Eustace, Jill, and Aslan weep over dead King Caspian. After Aslan’s paw is pierced by a thorn and his blood splashes on the dead body, the dead king is restored to life; “his sunken cheeks grew young and fresh, and the wrinkles were smoothed, and his eyes opened, and his eyes and lips both laughed, and suddenly he leaped up and stood before them — a very young man, or a boy.” (Lewis, The Silver Chair, 412)

Revelation 12:11 says, “They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb.” Here is power to resist the conspiracies of hell, the works of the devil. The legions of darkness are confounded by the blood of Christ. It bewildered them at Calvary, and it will break their stratagems today! (Jack Hayford, The Visitor, 109).

When I read the Bible, I keep seeing red. Red as in the color of blood. Red as in the color of sin. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isa. 1:18). It’s a good thing red is not the only color in the Bible. White is a color, too. White is the absence of sin. It is a heart without blemish, pure as new snow. It’s hard to believe that white is the color of my heart, and yours, through Christ. It’s not a simple thing, though. White was bought at the price of red. God may accommodate pastels, but it seems He’s mostly into primary colors. Primarily red. (John Fischer, On a Hill Too Far Away, pp. 30, 39, 41).

Martin Luther lived during the sixteenth century. An Augustinian monk, Luther was a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. In spite of his greatness and his monumental contribution to history, Luther was easily given to melancholy and depression. In one of his periods of depression, Luther said he seemed to see a hideous form listing his sins on the wall of his room. The list was long and terrible. Luther saw his sinful words, sinful deeds, open sins and secret sins — sins of omission and commission. Luther said there seemed to be no end to the list. Powerless to stop the hand that wrote on and on, Luther bowed his head and called upon the Savior. When he looked up, Luther said, the writer paused and gazed at him. “You have forgotten something,” Luther said. “And what have I forgotten?” Satan asked. “Take your pen and write one thing more,” Luther commanded. “Write: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’” At the mention of the blood of Jesus the demonic visitor disappeared, and the wall upon which it had been writing was perfectly clean. (J. B. Fowler, Living Illustrations, 19)

After Napoleon and his troops had run roughshod over Europe, they paused to celebrate their victories. Calling his generals together, Napoleon showed them a map of the world. Pointing to England, which was represented by a red dot on the map, Napoleon said to his generals, “If it were not for that red spot, we could conquer the world.” Napoleon spoke prophetically, for that red spot became the English Duke of Wellington and Waterloo, Belgium, where Wellington defeated Napoleon and his army. The Cross of Christ on Calvary is God’s holy, red spot in history. And Satan knows that were it not for that red dot on Calvary, he could
have conquered everything. But because of that red spot, Satan’s doom is sealed. (Fowler, Living Illustrations, 34)