

# If Any Man Speak

*By J. Shannon (Shan) Jackson*

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One of life's grandest blessings is our ability to discuss with others. Speech, when correctly used, is of essential benefit. Used incorrectly, talk can do much harm. The difference between the two is often in the speaker's attitude and motive. The tongue is a "little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12:34). Christians must consider attitude in their speech and guard their words.

We all should be impressed with the awesome power of the tongue. Improperly used, James says, the tongue can defile the whole body (James 3:6). Properly used speech can do much good. "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). Consider the proper use of language.

In teaching truth, we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Here is the caveat. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Jesus tells his disciples to "go and teach all nations" but their teaching is to be the things he "commanded them" (Matthew 28:19).

In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul tells Timothy to "preach the word." He warns, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

A proper use for human speech is “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). There is also occasion for sealed lips and answering not a word (See John 19:9). In worship of God, acceptable worship must be “in spirit and in truth” – correct in attitude and correct in action. The Bible names five acts of worship – singing, praying, teaching, communion, and giving. Singing, praying, and teaching require speech. “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Bringing our feelings into sweet harmony with the words of a song, a public prayer, or the presentation of God’s word shows our love for a loving God.

In confession of Jesus, there are also five steps that bring salvation. The New Testament tells us to hear God’s truth, believe it, repent of our unholy life, confess Jesus as Lord, and submit to water baptism. It is the acceptance and obedience of these steps that puts us “in Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27).

Confession of Jesus as the resurrected son of God is to be verbal. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10).

In defense of truth: Many problems facing the church today stem from our unwillingness to defend God’s truth. A Christian is to be ready always to teach the truth and protect it. We fear and studiously avoid controversy to the disgrace of the gospel and our own shame. Argument for the sake of argument is infamy, but argument in defense of truth is honorable and necessary. We forget Jesus was a brilliant debater.

Paul said that “in the defense and confirmation of the gospel” we are “partakers of grace” (Phil. 1:7). Our knowledge enables us to approve the things that are excellent (and therefore

disapprove things that are contrary to truth) that we may be “void of offence unto the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10). We must be “bold to speak the word of God without fear... set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:14, 16).

“Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4). Yes, our speech is very serious business. Jesus said, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). Watch your mouth and pay attention to your words. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:1, 7). What you say can condemn you! What you ought to say, but fail to speak, also can condemn you! Happy is silence in the face of slander and injustice.

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## The Blood Of Christ

*Neal Pollard*

The topic above should cause one's mind to focus on some precise areas. Naturally, the blood of Christ implies thoughts of the “incarnation” of Christ (that Christ took on the form of man, while all God, and, thus, had blood coursing through His veins; Philippians 2:8). The blood of Christ further educes from one's thoughts the atonement Christ made for all mankind through the shedding of His blood at the cross (cf. Hebrews 9:12-14). The blood of Christ also elicits reflection

upon the suffering and death of the sinless man from Nazareth (1 Peter 2:24). And on one might reflect.

The phrase, the blood of Christ, appears verbatim in the New Testament in four verses. With each reference one finds important lessons about the function and significance of His blood. Christ's blood is central in the Father's plan of salvation and life within His favor. What does the blood of Christ bring to needy man?

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Redemption (1 Peter 1:19)**

In 1 Peter 1, one sees the inspired apostle speaking to persecuted (1), predestined (2), purified (2), and pliant (2) people of God. What would cause a Christian to suffer wrong for doing right? What would cause a Christian to search out from the scriptures the terms of election, accept the terms of pardon, and follow the terms of Christian living? Simply, an understanding of redemption.

Perhaps the verse most loved and quoted is John 3:16. Yet, so bekown and familiar, this verse is sorely misunderstood and underapplied. Jesus, the speaker of the words recorded in this verse, foretells the act of redemption. With His divine foreknowledge, Christ understood that the gift of the Father's only begotten Son (Himself) meant the shedding of His blood at Calvary. The purpose of that shed blood, He knew, was to redeem the lost race of man from the power and hopelessness of sin. Paul says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5). By inspiration, Paul reinforces this with Titus (Titus 2:14).

# **The Blood OF Christ Brings Removal (Hebrews 9:14)**

The King James Version uses, in this verse, the word “purge” in translating the effect of the blood of Christ upon the conscience of one to whom that blood is applied. Purge means “to purify, especially of sin, guilt, or defilement” (The American Heritage Concise Dictionary, 1994). Thayer shows the original word translated “purge” in this verse means “free from the guilt of sin” (The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, 312). Clearly, the Spirit-guided writer of Hebrews speaks of the effect of the applied blood of the Savior. The audience of Hebrews, of which modern man is a part, needs some agent to remove the guilt of sin (dead works) from their lives. The blood of Christ is that agent. For the agent to be effective (to do the job it was intended to do), one must come in contact with it. Where does one come in contact with the blood?

Jesus shed His blood when He died (John 19:34). Paul writes “that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3). One cannot literally go over to Jerusalem to a hill called Mt. Calvary and find the man Jesus bleeding to death on a cross. Furthermore, because one cannot do this, one cannot in some literal way reach up to Him and take some of His shed blood and apply it to himself. Thus, there is no literal, physical way for today’s man or woman to contact the actual, shed blood of our Lord.

Yet, Revelation 1:5 reveals that Christ, on His cross, washed us from our sins in His shed blood. God would not allow His Son to shed His life-blood and then provide no means for mankind to contact that blood in some way. And, there is a way and only one way. In identical terminology, Acts 22:16 says that baptism washes away sins. In summation, Christ shed His blood in His death. We are buried with Christ in baptism. Christ washed our sins with His blood. We wash away our sins

in the act of baptism. The blood of Christ and baptism, inseparably joined, remove the sins of those who recognize and submit to the authority of Christ in being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Return (Ephesians 2:13)**

At the creation of man, there was no need for means whereby man could return to a right relationship with Jehovah. The idea in Ephesians 2 that, specifically here, the Gentiles were “far off” implies the need to return. How could they come back to God? Paul stresses the fact that Christ’s blood was the only means whereby reconciliation could be made. Thus, Paul penned the glorious fact that Christ “made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself” (Colossians 1:20). As if an inseparable gulf was crossed by Adam and Eve through their sinning at Eden, that gap of sin separated man from God (cf. Isaiah 59:1,2; Note: This is not to suggest that all inherit Adam’s sin— the false idea of Hereditary Depravity – but rather that through Adam sin entered the world, Romans 5:17, and, consequently, all have sinned, Romans 3:23). Not with acts of goodness or meritorious works could man ever earn his salvation (Titus 3:5). Yet, there are conditions that God expects man to meet in order to have past sins forgiven and the restoration of a right relationship with the Father (Titus 2:12; Hebrews 5:9; Ephesians 2:8). By shedding His blood, Christ paved a road of return (i.e., the “narrow road” of Matthew 7:13,14) to take us back to God. There was no access before and without Him and after sin was in the world (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6). How did Christ effect this return with His blood?

He took the first, old covenant God made with Moses and Israel out of the way by dying on the cross (Ephesians 2:12,14-15). He placed all believers in the faith into one body [the

church](Ephesians 2:14,15,16; 4:4). He provided the message of reconciliation in commissioning the preached word to all men (Ephesians 2:17; Acts 1:8). He opened the avenue of prayer by His death on the cross, encouraging petitioning the Father to enhance our relationship with Him (Ephesians 2:18). He sets aside a place in the Kingdom [the church] for all the faithful obedient into which all spiritual blessings flow (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1:3; Matthew 16:18-19). To all who obey the commandments of God relative to entrance into His church, reconciliation and return to God are provided.

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Remembrance (1 Corinthians 10:16)**

As Eden shows the importance God stressed in mankind before the cross to anticipate that great event, this verse shows the importance God stresses in mankind after the cross remembering it. Those washed in the blood of Christ, contacted in baptism, are added to the church (Acts 2:41-47). Therein, those added [Christians] are governed by the Word of God in worship and conduct. A vital part of New Testament worship is the weekly participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Why has God authorized that Christians do so, and with such frequency?

The answer is "communion." In connection with the Lord's Supper, this word is translated "communion" only once in the New Testament. Yet, the original word from which it is translated is koininia, among the most recognized of all Greek words even among those who have little knowledge of that language. Most often, koininia is translated "fellowship." "Fellowship" is also employed by the inspired New Testament writers to make reference to the "Memorial Feast." The apostles and early Christians continued steadfastly in the fellowship of the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). The fellowship of the Lord's Supper was not to be defiled by the presence of idolatry at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:20), but rather the

communion was to be exclusively with the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul stresses that there is communion. That fellowship is with the blood of Christ, which suggests a multitude of things. First, the blood of Christ places one into the one body (the church— Colossians 1:18)(Acts 20:28). Therefore, the fellowship of the Lord's Supper involves corporate (collective) activity. Together, children of God are drawn closer to one another remembering the Savior whose blood purchased them from sin. This communion, then, is a means of expressing encouragement and thanksgiving together as the redeemed. The Lord's Supper cannot, then, have significance to those not members of the body as there is no celebration and fellowship with Christians. Also, the Lord's Supper provides a communion between the individual Christian and his Lord. Thus, Paul instructs each to "examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28). None other can obey the command of self-examination and remembrance for another in the Lord's Supper or in any spiritual matter. Yet, the Lord's Supper is special because of both the sharing with others and the individual responsibility. As an institution, the Lord's Supper is, in both regards, a crucial means whereby Christians remember the sacrifice, suffering, and death of Christ in shedding His blood on the tree.

The blood of Christ purchased man's pardon (1 Peter 1:19). The blood of Christ purges man's conscience (Hebrews 9:14). The blood of Christ propels man closer to God (Ephesians 2:13). The blood of Christ provides recollection of atonement (1 Corinthians 10:16). His blood was important in prophecy (Isaiah 53:3-5). His blood was important in physicality (John 19:34). His blood is important in perusal (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:28).