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Email: info@austin-sparks.net

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The Blood, the Cross and the Name of the Lord Jesus

by T. Austin-Sparks

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Reading: Series 1 - Luke 22:17,18,20. John 6:54,55. Col. 1:20. Heb. 9:12-14,20,22; 10:19; 11:29; 12:24. 1 Peter 1:2. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 5:9,10; 7:14,15.

Series 2 - Acts 2:38; 3:6; 4:7,12,17,30; 8:12; 16:18; 19:13-15, 1 Cor. 5:4; 6:11. Eph. 1:21,22. Phil. 2:9-11. Rom. 6:3-8.

Beloved of God, we have read a good many passages of the Word and you will have noticed that there are three distinct matters brought into view by them. They are divided into three and refer to three different things, and I have it on my heart to spend just a little time in considering these three matters; namely, the Blood, the Cross, and the Name of the Lord Jesus.

They are important matters in themselves, each one of them. I trust that we shall see something of that importance; but there is another thing related to them which is also very important, especially for the Lord's people, and that is, to discriminate between them, for there is a good deal of indiscriminate use of these words and terms, and I think that confusion or misuse very often means weakness and failure in getting through to the desired end. It is important when we go into war to know what weapons we need, and to be able to choose and intelligently use those weapons; for to be in a warfare using a certain kind of weapon which we discover is not the one that effects the end is a very embarrassing situation. And so it is important for the Lord's people to be able to understand the peculiar value and meaning of these different things which have so close a relationship to their spiritual victory. It is also very important for unsaved men and women to know the meaning of these terms, these words which are so frequently upon Christian lips: "the Blood of Jesus Christ", "the Cross of the Lord Jesus", "the Name of Jesus". We have no thought of covering the whole of that ground in this short space, we can merely introduce it and touch upon it as the Lord leads.

The Blood

We begin, then, with the Blood of Christ, about which we have read so much in the Word, and yet withal a bare fragment of what there is in the Word concerning it; and we may immediately point out that the Blood of Jesus has specifically and primarily to do with sin, and redemption unto life. I would that you would just take that statement and go to the Word of the Lord with it and investigate and inquire much more fully than we can do now, and you will see how truly that is borne out. The Blood has to do with cleansing and with redemption unto life, that is, it relates to sin and to all Satanic legal ground. When we speak of Satanic legal ground we mean this, that by nature, according to the Word of God, and according to the spiritual experience and knowledge of those who have come to the Lord Jesus, all the creation is in bondage to the Devil. You may dispute that because you do not know it experimentally and personally.

I would suggest that you turn to the Lord Jesus and you will soon discover how much you are in bondage to the Devil, for it is only a prisoner who tries to escape who discovers that he is really a prisoner. But the Word of God tells us what is true, and the spiritual experience of all who have really come to Christ proves the Word of God to be true; that the whole of the race, and of creation, by nature is now in bondage to the Devil; but the power, the authority of Satan rests upon a condition, and that condition is sin, and he has legal ground for maintaining his hold where sin is, his hold upon the race is through sin. He grips, and holds, and maintains his hold through sin. You may say that sin is the chain by which the whole race is in the power of Satan, and sin therefore is his legal ground; in so far as he has legal rights to his position, those legal rights are constituted by the condition into which man has fallen by his own sin: sin against God and obedience to Satan. The Blood, therefore, relates to sin and to all Satanic legal ground, and the words which perhaps best represent that ground are condemnation and death. It is with those words that the Apostle sums up his matchless argument through the first three chapters of his letter to the Romans, where, tracing the course of the ages, and running through all realms of life, testing and examining according to the Divine standard, he at length concludes all under sin: "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10), and he pronounces by the Spirit, the verdict, all are under condemnation and therefore all are under death; and condemnation and death are words which represent the legal ground of Satan in holding the race in bondage.

The First Need of the Sinner

The initial need and appeal of the unsaved sinner is to the Blood of the Lord Jesus. *"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission"*. The unsaved sinner, knowing it or not knowing it, is truly in bondage to the Devil, imprisoned by Satan. The Blood of Jesus Christ relates to condemnation and death unto life; and what the unsaved sinner has to come to as the very first ground of hope is a recognition of the meaning and value of the Blood of Jesus Christ. We shall never get through to God apart from that. We may struggle to break through, to break away, we may adopt Christian practices and Christian ideals, we may associate ourselves with Christians, we may pass off as Christians amongst them, and perhaps before the world, but this one thing is settled beyond any question or doubt or shakeableness, that in the sight of God no one ever comes out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the Son of God's love except by the way of the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. To ignore that, to overlook that, to fail to see, recognize, accept that means, whatever else may follow, in the sight of God the thing has not been done which makes us a child of God and delivers us from the kingdom of Satan. Oh, it is so necessary, forgive the strength of emphasis, it is so necessary that we should not be deceived, that we should be in a true position that we should have no assumption about this, that ours should not be an assumed relationship to God, but that it should be upon God's foundation, God's basis, for only as it is so are we accepted in the Beloved One, the Lord Jesus,

and are brought into fellowship with God. The initial need and appeal of the unsaved sinner is to the Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, as shed for the remission of sins, by which our redemption has been made, has been secured for us.

*'Redeemed by the precious
blood of Jesus,
Nothing else could ever save my soul'.*

Now that is simple Gospel. It is where everything begins in relationship to God.

The Believer's Conflict with the Accuser

And then the conflict of the saved sinner necessitates the Blood, because the conflict of the saved sinner is so very truly with Satan; not now as his master, his lord; not now as the one to whom he is in captivity, but as the one who would get him back into captivity. Satan must therefore get him back on to a ground where for him the basis of escape has been overlooked, forfeited, let go. I mean this: that the conflict of the saved sinner is very largely with Satan as the Accuser. He is called the Accuser of the brethren - *"for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night"* (Rev. 12:10). He watches their movements, he seeks to cause them to move in some way that is not wholly according to the will and the mind of the Lord, to prompt a wrong movement, to provoke to a wrong word, to stir up a wrong feeling:

*'Christian, dost thou feel them,
How they work within,
Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin?'*

and then when you slip, you make the mistake, you stumble in the way, he immediately pounces upon you to accuse you of sin and to bring you under condemnation, to bring upon you a sense of condemnation, to smother you with it and make you feel you have grieved the Lord, and the Lord has forsaken you, the Lord has withdrawn from you, to make you conscious of being out of fellowship with God. And so as the Accuser he is trying to make us sin and then he will pounce upon us with condemnation to drag us back into his grip: and the saved sinner needs the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus as an instrument with which to meet the enemy as the Accuser. Don't ever believe, beloved, that if you slip, if you make a mistake, if you stumble in the way, if you grieve the Lord, that that necessarily severs you from God, that that necessarily means that the Lord forsakes you. What might be the consequences of your willfully, consciously being in the way of sin, violating the will of God, I would not care to follow out; there is no doubt that you would get into darkness, very much into the power of Satan, you would lose the joy of your salvation. Whether you would lose your salvation ultimately or not is not a question for us at this moment, but you would lose all the joy and delight and pleasure of your salvation by persisting in sin. But I am not dealing with persistent sin, I am dealing with the slip, the mistake, the fault, the failure which the enemy immediately having himself brought about, quickly snaps up, takes advantage of, and makes the occasion of accusing us, seeking to bring us under condemnation.

The means to deal with that is the Blood of the Lord Jesus, and the Blood of the Lord Jesus can deal with that instantly. The argument to take to Satan is not: 'I am not a sinner; I have not made a mistake; I have not gone wrong'. We know we have. The answer is, that in that precious Blood, as we turn to the Lord and confess our failure, humbly repentantly, acknowledge our mistake before the Lord and grieve in exercise of heart that we should have so failed, the Blood of Jesus Christ goes on

in its mighty efficacy cleansing from all sin. It stands us in stead to take that ground from the enemy immediately. But remember, you must use your weapon. You must know your weapon, and you must have faith in your weapon; faith in that precious Blood. And faith in the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus is our shield which receives the fiery darts of the Wicked One, and is impervious to them. Oh, the inflamed darts of the Wicked One are so often the darts of accusation and condemnation, and we have a shield of faith given to us by God, but it is faith in the virtue and efficacy of the precious Blood of Jesus, even when we have stumbled and slipped. Victory over the enemy, having been given initially through the Blood, is now maintained by reason of faith in that Blood in the hour of accusation. And so the saved sinner's conflict is very largely with the Accuser who is seeking to bring back on to the old ground of condemnation and death, and deliverance continuously from him, as initially, is by that justification which we have through His Blood; no condemnation; faith in the Blood of the Lord Jesus. It is in this sense that the Blood is a weapon.

You see in Rev. 12:11 we are told that: *"They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb"*. Now the Revised Version being more accurate should be noted in its peculiar value. The Authorized Version reads: *"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb"*. The suggestion is of using the Blood of the Lamb as a kind of weapon with which to slay the enemy; it is a sort of objective thing with which you meet the enemy. If you look more closely you have two things. Firstly, the enemy in Rev. 12 as the Accuser: *"The accuser of our brethren is cast down"*. The Accuser of the brethren is there, it is the enemy in that form. The other thing is: *"They overcame him BECAUSE of the blood of the Lamb"*. That does not necessarily mean that they took up the Blood of the Lamb as some kind of weapon with which to smite him, but they stood upon the ground of that Blood, and the Accuser lost his power. The Blood has to do with sin all the time, and what the enemy is out to do is to bring us under a sense of sin, and thus to defeat and destroy us; but if we are standing on the value and meaning of the precious Blood, and refuse to forsake that ground, the Accuser is cast down from his high place, he is overcome, and we overcome, not by some objective conflict with the Blood, but because we in our hearts stand and refuse to move from the ground of justification through His Blood. *"They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb"*.

Now a further step. The Blood is one with the Life. We know that quite well. In the Old Testament from Lev. 17 we gather very implicitly that, *"the life is in the blood and the blood is the life"*, and from John 6, which we have read, that same thing comes in: *"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life"*. So that the Blood is one with the Life, and that means that initially, through the Blood our faith in the Blood of the Lord Jesus, our acceptance of its meaning and value in relation to our sin - the Life is given. The Divine Life, Eternal Life, is given through the Blood of the Lord Jesus. Now both the Blood and the Life speak of the holiness of the Lord, and therefore of cleansing from sin. If sin is fallen into and not instantly repented of, confessed before the Lord and put right, there is an arrest upon the Life. The Life receives a check, and if the Life and the Blood and the Blood and the Life go together, that means that sin allowed, sin not confessed and repented of, checks the Life and the Blood is suspended in its operation of cleansing and we stand touched, spotted, blemished.

And so John, in the passage read, says: *"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"*. There the tense in the Greek is 'keeps on cleansing', but there is an 'if': *"If we walk..."*. What is it to walk? To go on. If we go on in the light; yes, there may be some dark thing touch us, we may touch a dark thing, we may fail, we may slip, go wrong, but that can be instantly put right before the Lord, and we can go on by putting it right away, we can go on in the light and the Blood of Jesus Christ God's Son goes on cleansing. You arrest the operation of the Life and the operation of the Blood if you willfully harbour sin. If the Holy Spirit shows you wrong and you do not confess it and put it right, if you do not bring it back to the Blood, you have arrested the Divine operation, and you stand there. *"If we walk..."* So

that in failure, confession is necessary, confession to the Lord, and a putting right away is necessary if the Life is to flow. And the Life can only flow as we recognize that that Life is a holy Life, and it cannot go on in its course alongside of sin. The holy Life of the Lord as represented by His incorruptible Blood cannot go hand in hand with known sin: it cannot! Many of us know that in experience.

The Cross

Then the Cross. Of course it was in the Cross that the Blood was shed, and the Blood is related to the Cross and the Cross to the Blood, but doctrinally in the New Testament the Cross has its own specific meaning, and as we have seen from the passage read in Romans 6, to which others could be added such as Colossians 2 and elsewhere, the Cross has to do with the flesh and the natural man; and the position to which the Cross brings us is this: not only have our sins been dealt with, but we have been dealt with, and we have been crucified together with Christ. Now you can have contradictions if you are not careful - and there are plenty of contradictions about in this way. There may have been constant failure and breakdown and going wrong, and seeking of forgiveness and cleansing, and then not getting very much beyond that; that may repeat itself again and again and life becomes a matter of failing and regretting, sinning and repenting, going wrong and being sorry for it, and this can stretch out through all your days; up and down, one day in victory, the next in defeat; and so it goes on until in many cases it comes to an acute crisis where the individual says: 'Well the Christian life is a tremendously strenuous business; it seems nothing but coming to the Lord and asking to be forgiven, going wrong and repenting; there is very little victory in it'. That is not as the Lord would have it and the secret is very largely here, that we have never recognized that in the Cross of the Lord Jesus we have been set aside as to our nature. We have not accepted that position with all that it means, all its implications, all its content, that from that time onward it is no longer I.

"I have been crucified with Christ," said the Apostle, "nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me". It is not to choose our own way, our own will, our own desire, to make our own program for life, to project our own schemes for the future; but to have nothing whatever out from ourselves from our will, mind, desire; but that everything now is from the Lord. When we have come to accept that position, that in Christ's crucifixion we were crucified, in His burial we were buried, then raised together with Him, we receive into our hearts the Holy Spirit of Christ for the purpose and object of governing our lives, directing our course, choosing our way. *"No longer I... One died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again"*, and that in the power and energy of the indwelling Spirit. Now that is a very utter, comprehensive, thorough-going thing and the Cross means that. It does not mean that after that we shall not fail; we may make mistakes, but there the Blood applied, but what so many of us have had to learn, and so many more have yet to learn is that the Cross has its own peculiar value. The Cross does not cleanse from sin, the Cross crucifies the flesh.

Now you can have a great deal of phraseology about the Blood, and be always talking about the Blood, and know little of the Cross. The flesh may be there very much in evidence while all the time speaking about the Blood. The basic thing is necessary, the Cross. *"Our old man was crucified with Christ"*. Do you see the difference? What is the good of your going out to meet the Devil with the Blood if your flesh has not been dealt with by the Cross? He will come in the back door and with all your phraseology about the Blood, he will beat you every time if you have not come to that deep work of the Cross where the natural man has been dealt with. So many are preaching the Blood, have much phraseology of the Blood, and yet the flesh is rampant in their lives; the 'I' is very much in

evidence. You may preach the Blood and still be a very self-assertive person with pride, arrogance, ambition and all that kind of thing. Well, the Cross deals with the man; the Blood with the sin.

The Name

Now one word about the Name, and here also there is a good deal of confusion. Many people plead the Blood when they ought to use the Name. It is the Name which is the mighty thing against the enemy for the believer *mainly in the matter of service*. The Name goes beyond the Blood, in this sense (do not misunderstand that) that *the Name has to do with the authority of Christ over the enemy*. The Blood takes the enemy's ground away from accusation and condemnation. The Name of the Lord Jesus is the mighty thing by which the authority of Satan in every realm is dealt with. Oh, you want something more than to have sin put out of the way. You need to be in a position of authority over the works of the enemy, not merely in your own life but all around in situations, as he comes up everywhere on this earth. And so it is in the Name that that power is found. The Name represents the authority of Christ - and *in Christ* - over the enemy. Acts 16 is a classic instance. What you have there, as you will recall, is Paul, who stood in all the virtue of the precious Blood in relation to sin in his own life; Paul, who stood in the fulness of the meaning of the Cross as to having nothing of himself, but all of Christ - oh, he was in a strong position, a well-crucified man, standing by faith on "no condemnation" ground through the Blood - and now finding the enemy busy at work outside, looking to the Lord for His moment, His time for dealing with the situation, not rushing in from himself, but after "many days", waiting for the Lord's time, then in the Name of Jesus Christ commanding this Satanic work to cease. Paul stood in a position by the Cross and the Blood and the Name, this three-fold strength, but he dealt with the thing in the Name, he did not plead the Blood for it.

We sometimes see the work of the Devil objectively and we begin to plead the Blood. That has got to be appropriated, we have to see that that has been applied to our own hearts or else he will turn upon us. Paul did not plead the Blood against the enemy, he came in the Name. There were others, sons of Sceva who did not stand on the ground of the Cross. who were not standing in the virtue of the Blood, but held a mere formula, saying, "*We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth*", and the demon turned round upon these presumptuous men and answered, "*Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?*" and these sons of Sceva had the scare of their lives. They discovered that there is nothing in a mere formula, but there is something, there is everything in standing on the ground of the Cross, in the virtue of the Blood, bringing us into the authority of the Name. And the Name has that objective value of authority over the enemy. "*God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow*", etc. "*He raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*" (Eph. 1:20,21). The Name represents the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. And so the Blood cuts us off from sin, the Cross cuts us off from ourselves, the Name brings us into union with an exalted, enthroned, authoritative Lord.

Now I trust that we have got some of our difficulties straightened out, at any rate, we are seeing a little more clearly the peculiar value of each of these things and we shall not confuse them; and we shall see how that mighty and precious Name carries with it all the honour and glory of our Christ, and that if He is to be honoured and glorified in us it must be that sin is dealt with, we are set aside, and Christ is pre-eminent, enthroned, predominant in all things for us.