

2014_03_05 Midweek Passion 1
Ascension Lutheran Church, Batavia IL
Pastor David Pfeiffer

The Blood of Christ in the Book of Hebrews:
1 – THE BLOOD WE SHARE
Hebrews 2:10–18
INI

Grace to you from Him who is our Great High Priest, who mediates a New Covenant in His own blood, and peace to you in His blood, a blood which cleanses us from all sin (Hebrews 1:1–2) Amen.

The first in our series of texts dealing with the blood of Christ in the book of Hebrews comes from

Hebrews 2:10–18

¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying:

*“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”*

¹³ And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

God has spoken to us by His Son.

In the name of our faithful High Priest who is both the Pioneer and Completion of our salvation, dear brothers and sisters in Him,

1. human sharing in flesh and blood, blood being the closest of all ties

There is a saying: "Blood is thicker than water." Family is the closest bond we as human beings experience. Family ties take us through good times and bad times. It takes us through times of joy and tough times. Together, as one, a family shares joys; and together, as one a family shares troubles. Blood is thicker than water and it ties us together as human beings.

Together we share the joys. When dad gets a promotion at work, the family gets to enjoy the benefits together. When a child graduates high school, we invite family to celebrate together. Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries – Families share common joys.

Likewise, as family, together we share sorrows. As a family, we are moved to visit a relative who is sick and in the hospital. As a family, an argument in the home affects all who live there. As a family, a funeral gathers us together in common sorrow and mourning.

But this solidarity in sorrow goes much deeper. There is a common sorrow has affected and infected us all. It is not just an activity or a momentary experience, it is a condition. There is a condition which infects our common blood and that condition is sin. We share it – through common blood, common ancestry, common humanity – we share a heritage that traces itself all the way back to Adam, to that first sin, to that common blood we share.

And it is in this condition, that the devil exerts his sway over us. As it says in v.14, "he has the power of death." He has a power which literally holds us in "slavery;" a common bondage that all mankind has fallen under. And it is so much deeper than physical death. It is a condition and power that goes to the depths of the human heart.

Think of the ways the devil exerts his power over each of us. Satan is the accuser – his work is to accuse you – the believer, the Christian. He does not need waste time with the unbeliever, for the unbeliever is already his. No, he comes for you, to tempt you; to tempts you toward bitterness and anger and resentment – "Do you realize what they've done to you? Do you realize what God has done to you? Do you realize what you could do for yourself?" And then he accuses – for he knows that you will rightly realize that your response has been sinful. And so he accuses you. He speaks in your ear these haunting accusations – "look at what you've done! Do you realize what you've been thinking? That anger, that resentment." And we have no choice but to agree – yes, he's right. That was me; those were my thoughts; I did that. And he doesn't stop there, he

goes further. He's tempted, he's accused, and now he condemns: "You can't be a Christian. A Christian would never do that. A Christian would never think that." And now he wields his power: the fear of death. "God has rejected you. You cannot be saved. 'The wages of sin is death,' which means you are mine. You will face my death, you will face my condemnation." And it begins to take hold, deep within, death is already working – a spiritual death and fear that begins to impact the way we live. From temptation, to accusation, to condemnation – the devil has the power of death.

As a family we share blood. We share sorrows. We all share it down to the first drop. In that first blood we share the common source of sin. In Adam, all have died.

2. Jesus became our high priest by sharing in blood and flesh together with us.

There was no closer bond that Jesus could share; there was no closer unity that our Lord could choose than to share flesh and blood. v.10 – It was fitting. Literally, it was fitting that the Pioneer of our salvation reach his goal through suffering. The sense here is that Jesus is the originator, the pioneer of our salvation. And that beginning always has a goal; a goal – salvation and glory for us all. But for that goal to be reached, our pioneer, our captain must suffer. He must share in our suffering. This was fitting, appropriate, and the right way for Jesus to bring us to glory. Jesus shared in suffering. And how would He do this? ... by means of incarnation. That is, he shares in our common blood, He becomes common flesh.

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Blood is thicker than water. He took on the closest of ties: Jesus became our blood-brother. The OT idea of family was spoken of in terms of flesh and blood. Flesh – which is shared through birth or marriage (one flesh). And blood as an even closer bond – the very traits that we inherit and the means of sharing a common father. So in order to reach the goal of salvation, our pioneer shared in a common father with us, he became a descendant of Adam; born of Mary, Jesus shared in blood with us.

This made it possible for Him to be tempted, to suffer, and to die. This made it possible for him to face the temptations of the devil, the accusations of the devil, and the condemnation for our sins. The temptations that we have been tempted with; the suffering and sorrow that we have suffered and sorrowed; the death that we should have died – He faced for us. This is how He destroyed the devil. You see, once atonement is made, once condemnation has been carried out, once the death has been

died – the devil has lost his power. He shared in blood with us that he might suffer and die for us.

3. As high priest, Jesus shares with us his atoning blood, so that we receive the benefits of a common Heavenly Father: the brotherhood, God's blessings as fellow priests, sons of God

Now we can begin to understand Jesus as our Great High Priest. In the Old Testament, to be a priest was to be consecrated for service in the tabernacle. That meant that as a priest, you were privileged to enter God's holy presence. The worship services in the OT were always designed to bridge the gap between our common sinfulness and God's holiness. So the priest served as a mediator between God and the people, between heaven and earth. The priest was sanctified, that is – made holy – that he might enter God's holy presence in the divine service. His calling was to mediate atonement and holiness.

Firstly, the priest would mediate from the people to God. He would represent the people in offering a sacrifice to God. This was the sacrifice of atonement or as v.17 translates: "propitiation." The priest would sacrifice an animal, sprinkle its blood, and offer it on an altar for burning, thereby, making atonement on behalf of the people. Secondly, the priest would then mediate God to the people. He would represent God in offering the blessings of God's grace, forgiveness, and holiness to the people.

*17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*

Jesus is our high priest. He has shared in all our troubles, our sins, our sorrows that he might be faithful in His work as high priest. He has firstly gone to God on our behalf. The cross would be that place of atonement, the altar upon which He would lay Himself; the place where all of our sins would become His. He shared our sorrows and death. In one way or another, sin has scarred us all – some more than others. Jesus shares it all: the temptations, accusations, condemnations. He has offered Himself as the sacrifice of atonement. As John writes: "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). This is what it means for Him to be faithful – He was faithful in service toward God on behalf of the people.

Secondly, as high priest, Jesus represents God to us. His is merciful. That is, He brings God's mercy to us and all the blessings of His atonement. Jesus has been made whole,

healed, and alive in His resurrection. He now mediates these blessings to you. He represents God by bestowing the Father's blessings: forgiveness, grace, and holiness. In this He is a merciful High Priest – He is merciful on behalf of God toward the people.

Now the devil is silenced. And you are freed you from bondage. Your death has been died in Jesus and the devil can no longer say: "you are not a Christian;" he cannot hold your thoughts or past actions against you. Christ has been faithful in making atonement and is merciful in giving the blessings of that atonement to you. And here is where he mediates these blessings from God. Here is where His blood is proclaimed and forgiveness is given. Here His blood is sprinkled, in the wine that we drink, we share His blood, His atonement, and His brotherhood.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one [origin], for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

The priesthood was always a brotherhood, it was passed on by lineage, by belonging to the tribe of the Levites. It was a flesh and blood heritage. As brothers in Christ, we share in his blood now and all of the benefits of His atonement. As High Priest, he sanctifies us – that is "makes you holy." He sanctifies you to share in His priesthood, His brotherhood. And what that means is that we are of one common source – Jesus together with us as a son of Adam, and us together with Jesus as children of the heavenly Father. This makes us a family bonded with the closest of ties.

There is a saying: "Blood is thicker than water." Family is the closest bond we as human beings experience. As a family we share blood. Through the good times and the tough times, we share blood. And as a heavenly family, we share something even stronger than the blood ties we share on earth. We share the blood of God's own Son, a heritage that is incorruptible. We all share it down to the last life-giving drop. *1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

He has shared our sorrows so that we now can share His joys.

Amen.