

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
January 10, 2016

The Blood of the Lamb

1 Peter 1:18-21

1:18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,

1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

1:20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you

1:21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.



Recently, I have seen this picture. A lamb was slaughtered, and the blood flowed from the throat. The blood became a world map as you can see. This picture describes that Jesus Christ became a lamb of sacrifice, shed his blood on the cross, and dedicated his life. The blood became the world map because it represents that people all over

the world, their sins are covered, forgiven, and purified by Jesus Christ's blood.

I showed you this picture because it describes about today's verse, which is "you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Jesus Christ is called the "Lamb of God". From the early church's hymns to contemporary ones, we praise Jesus Christ as the lamb of God. Why do we call Jesus Christ the "Lamb of God"? Also, what kind of power the blood the lamb of God shed have? Let's learn the most important thing in the Bible today.

1. The Lamb of God

First of all, let's learn why Lord Jesus is called the "Lamb of God". In the Old Testament era, people sacrificed an animal to receive a forgiveness of sin. In Rome 6:23, "For the wages of sin is dead..." So, in order to receive the forgiveness of sin, we need to provide the substitution, which takes over the sin and die with bloodshed. People carefully selected the best one from their live stock and dedicated it to God. However, no matter how perfect it was, it did not have a power to be substitute for their sins. Even someone dedicate their life, they can not take over the sins because they have their own sins. People can not save themselves. Human beings sinned against God so that it is our responsibility to pay for it. However, we do not have a power to do it. We are bounded by the sin and can not run away from it.

Therefore, God sent us his child to this world. The Son of God became a man and grew up in this world, taught people and performed

the works of the powerful God. The one who had no sin took over our sin on the cross. Like the lamb on the alter, he shed his blood and dedicated his life. God sent us Lord Jesus as the “Lamb of God”. This is the Good News and the Gospel the Bible proclaims. We have heard this Gospel over and over; however, no matter how many times we hear, it always moves our hearts because there is the love of God. The Bible says “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10).

2. The Blood of the Lamb

Next, we shall think about the power of Lamb’s blood. As the Bible tells us, the blood of the Lamb can redeem us from sin. The word “redeem,” or “redemption,” is continuously appeared in the Bible, and this has the meaning of “purchasing the slaves back.”

In old time, those who couldn’t pay their debt held forth themselves as compensation, when they had nothing to give for sale. It was contracted for some years, to work as the servant of the one they owed, in exchange of money. Moreover, people of the conquered country had to become the slaves under the enemies. Not all slaves were forced to work in the oppressive condition, yet they still had no guaranteed rights or freedom.

Likewise, people become the slaves to sin. Some people say that they are free from everything, and being indulgent, but sin actually ties them down to desire, and pull them apart from God. Alcoholic people don’t acknowledge that they are ruled in alcohol, and even insist that they can control it, saying, “I can pull over whenever I

want,” nevertheless they actually cannot stop it. This is how sin is. Even if people seemingly enjoy doing what they want, they are gradually apart from the truthful, meaningful things in fact. As we read today’s verse, “the futile ways inherited from your forefathers,” we cannot find the meaningful life and purpose of life while tied down to sin, as Jesus told in John 8:34, “Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”

Ancient slaves could be released if they paid “ransom.” Some paid by themselves saving money, others asked of friends. As you see, slaves to people can be released by silver or gold, but sin cannot release us regardless of how much silver or gold we pay. The only thing that can release us from sin is the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, more precious and valuable than silver or gold. If we had something other to redeem us from slave to sin, the Son of God didn’t need to be crucified. The blood of the “Lamb of God” can redeem us from the slaves to sin, and the ransom to purchase us back. It frees us from the slaves to sin. We are changed to the children of God, from the slaves to sin, and transferred into the meaningful, purposeful life from the futile way.

3. Forgiveness of Sin

As you see the picture, the blood once shed from the Lamb of God is prepared for all the people in the world. No one is excluded from the blood of the Lamb of God. Then, why do some people live in joy of being forgiven and released from the sins and some people still remain in the futile ways inherited from their forefathers? That’s because there is something we have to do on our side to receive the

power of the blood of the lamb. That is to ask for forgiveness with our faith. Forgiveness of sins does not come automatically from the heaven but it is given when you ask. 1 John 1:8-9 says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” To receive forgiveness of sins, we first have to acknowledge that we have sins. Next, we have to believe that God forgives our sins, cleanses us, and releases us from sins through the sacrificed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Then, we have to confess our sins in front of God. If you take the first letters of Acknowledge, Believe and Confess, it makes ABC of faith.

It sounds easy but it’s difficult to put it into action. It requires courage to sincerely apologize to anyone, either to God or to people. Often the case, we cheat things because we don’t have that courage. But if you put it into action, you will have indescribable peace. I have helped people with confession of sins, who came to me and asked me to pray together because they couldn’t do it by themselves. When we finished praying and stood up, their face totally changed. Their face was shining, receiving the forgiveness of sins. I experienced myself numerous times that God’s words are true that “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

To ask for forgiveness of sins is not a one-time thing that we do at baptism, but we should do it every day, because we need forgiveness of sins every day. Lord Jesus shed his blood on the cross only once and he is not put on the cross many times. But we repeat the Lord Supper in remembrance of the blood of Lord Jesus on the Cross. That is because to remember that the blood of Lord Jesus has a power to

forgive our sins, cleanse us and lead us into a new life. That's because we need to receive that power. Therefore, we would like to pray hard and act "ABC of faith", which is acknowledge, believe, and confess spaciously before the Lord's Supper. If we haven't done so, then we would like to take a certain amount of time and come before God during the period of Lent. We would like to appreciate the happiness to look upon our Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God during this period.

(Prayer)

Dear Heavenly Father, you chose your Son and made him a lamb of sacrifice to redeem our sins. We thank you for your great love. And because of your love, we come close to you with repentance and faith. Please give us the grace of forgiveness and power of cleansing richly. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, Amen.