

Lenten Midweek Series 2021  
The Blessings in the Blood of Christ  
The Blood of Christ Speaks  
Genesis 4:1-16  
Hebrews 12:18-29

We are a verbal people. There is a reason for that. Words mean something to us, at least they used to. Words are presently being mangled – gender is but one example. Some folks want to change reality because reality doesn't particularly suit them. But reality is a stubborn thing. Christianity has a high regard for reality. Christianity is keenly interested in truth and proclaiming that truth, attempting to align our lives with the truth, speaking well of truth, and advising others as to the benefit of both learning and loving the truth.

We are a verbal people. Words have meaning. That is why we have dictionaries, so that we may learn to communicate properly using the words at our disposal. If you asked me how I was doing and I replied: “bat fire hydrants on the moon dispense grievous turtle snow with sleep ladders forever” you would likely call 9-1-1 on my behalf and maybe yours. We are a verbal people. We teach our little ones to speak as early as we can. Say “Ma-Ma.” Do you know when it is that a bride and groom are officially married? It's when the pastor speaks it: “I now *pronounce* you husband and wife.” We bless and we curse; words have meaning. It's one thing to think something unflattering about your spouse and their line of thought during an argument, it's quite another thing to say it. How many of y'all have ever said something that got you in trouble? How many of y'all have ever said something that you couldn't unsay?

Do you know what words a suspect/perpetrator never forgets? We find the defendant... guilty. How about a defendant who knows his guilt, who knows how much blood is on his hands, who knows that everyone in the courtroom sees the blood and yet hears these words: “We find the defendant... innocent.” I know, none of our courtrooms uses that word – innocent – they all say “not guilty.” We'll get to that in just a moment but let's first consider Cain. Cain was a murderer and he knew it. It was a religious crime. Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain. Abel was a believer. Cain was not. The only way a sacrifice is pleasing to God is if it is offered in faith... faith in His Son. There is no other kind of faith. OT or NT, only faith in the Son of God saves one from death, saves one from judgment, saves one from hell. The Holy Spirit creates faith by the power of the Word and the only faith that the Holy Spirit creates is faith in the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the eternal Son of God. In the OT they looked forward to His coming. In the NT we look back on His arrival, but it makes no difference – looking forward or looking back, only His blood, only faith in His blood saves.

So, there's Abel, believer, offering a sacrifice in faith which pleases God. And Cain knows it. And there is Cain, unbeliever, who offers a sacrifice that does not please God, and that too is obvious which in turn makes Cain angry, murderously angry. He can't kill God but Cain can kill his brother and in anger that is exactly what Cain does. Murder; it didn't take long for man to learn how to kill man. Abel's blood speaks. Abel's blood speaks distinctly, unmistakably, forcefully. Abel's blood speaks to God. God hears this blood and He, in turn, informs Cain: “The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). Abel's blood should not be in the ground. It should be in his body. In his body, Abel's blood would not

be crying for anything. But Cain spilled it and now Abel's blood cries for justice, cries for vengeance, cries for recompense. Abel's murderer is cursed: "And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:11-12).

Sinful man is a fugitive and wanderer on the earth. God has spoken: "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). God has spoken: "None is righteous, no, not one;" "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery" (Romans 3:10, 15-16). What sins have you committed that cry out to heaven for justice? I shudder to think of my own sordid history, the gravity of my failures, the calamity that could be brought down on my head. Jesus said that if one looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28). Sin is in the heart as well as the actions. Anger or hatred of your brother... it is as though your brother's blood is already on the ground, crying out to God. Supporting abortion, by supporting those politicians or other entities that kill the unborn, you are guilty of spilling your brother's blood and it cries out from the ground for justice, for vengeance. The mark of Cain is on us all. Repent. Repent of this murderous madness and flee for refuge to the blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

A better word; you need a better word and there is only One who speaks it for you. We are a verbal people because God speaks. We are a verbal people because God spoke and by the power of His Word, He created the heavens and the earth. We are a verbal people because the eternal Son of God is the Word made flesh. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. He speaks and it is so. He said to the paralytic, "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven" and by the force of that declaration, the paralytic was absolutely, completely, unequivocally and delightfully forgiven. Jesus spoke that Word of forgiveness because His blood speaks. Father, forgive them. He spoke that Word as He was dying on the cross and His blood enacted His petition. Forgiveness. You need that more than you need breath, more than you need a vaccine, more than you need a place to lay your head tonight. Forgiveness. His blood speaks it; distinctly, unmistakably, forcefully.

The Son of God became man to water the earth with His most holy blood. The ground received it much the same at the ground received Abel's blood. But Christ's blood speaks a better word, Christ blood speaks on your behalf. Christ's blood speaks a blessing that you can't find anywhere else. You see, He took your curse, the curse that all men deserve because of the wickedness in their hearts. "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). Cursed with our sin, Jesus hangs condemned. Not just as a criminal under Roman law; He was condemned by the Father Almighty. Why? Because all of your sin was located on Him. A huge penalty; He stood for us all. A huge penalty and only He could pay – a huge penalty and He wills to pay it. To save you. To take away your punishment. To bring you home to your heavenly Father; that you not be a fugitive and a wanderer; that at the end of your days you have a soft place to lay your head.

His blood speaks. A wondrous word, a definitive word, a truthful and enduring and dynamic word. Salvation for him! Salvation for her! My righteousness is given to him. My innocence is given to her. Now – the speaking is always now, present tense verb. In heaven and in our

Divine Service – Christ’s blood speaks for you. His blood tells you who you are; loved of God and precious to Him. Christ’s blood speaks for you – blessing and pardon and divine approval – His blood speaks and marvel of marvel – we get to drink this blessing, we get to drink this pardon, we get to drink this divine approval. He yields His strength to us when we drink His most holy blood. We are a verbal people. Christ the King’s blood speaks and we are blessed.