

The Seriousness of Losing Blood

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[0 : 00] skill skill All right, if you've got a Bible, go to Exodus chapter 24.

Exodus chapter 24. We are moving right along in our series through the book of Exodus. You're not tired of it, are you? I mean, 30 weeks, you're not like tapping out saying I'm done.

I love it. And we're coming to what's a little more of the difficult part of the book of Exodus. And I love just studying God's word and just seeing how even this is continually relevant to us every single day.

And so we've been working our way essentially through God entering into a covenant with the nation of Israel that began on Mount Sinai back in Exodus chapter 19. Then last week we looked at what's known as the book of the covenant.

It's a few chapters of just a whole lot of rules. And those rules reveal the values that God has for His people, for the community of Israel.

[1 : 39] That is that God values the worship of God. And God values a community of grace that extend mercy and grace to one another. God values life.

God values the ordinary things of life. That God cares about His people and He institutes rules to be able to guard those values.

Well, here we come to Exodus chapter 24 and we're going to see this covenant that gets ratified, that gets brought to a completion. So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word.

And we're going to look at Exodus 24 verse 1 and we'll read down through verse 11. Then he said to Moses, So again, you see that covenant language.

Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning. He built an altar at the foot of the mountain with 12 pillars according to the 12 tribes of Israel.

[3 : 03] And he sent young men of the people of Israel who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in the basins.

And half the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, all these rules, which we looked at last week. And he read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do and we will be obedient.

And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people. And he said, And behold, the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.

And then Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel went up. And they saw the God of Israel. And there under his feet, as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven of clearness.

And they did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel. They beheld God. And they ate and drank. This is God's word.

[4 : 1 0] Lord, help me tonight as I preach your word. And Lord, I'm so thankful for this message that is here in Exodus 24. That points us to and reminds us of the best news in the entire world.

And that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Help us worship now as we listen to you through your word. In Jesus' name and God's people said, Amen. Amen. Y'all can be seated.

When Christy Chavez made the decision, she had no idea that it would end up saving her life. You see, she grew up in a very strict Jehovah's Witness family.

But around her late teenage years, she began to question a lot of the things that Jehovah's Witness teach, and she ultimately decided to leave that group, that church, whatever you want to call it, all together.

She went on in life to get married and to have four children. And it was during the pregnancy with her son that Christy realized how important that decision was back when she was a teenager.

[5 : 2 2] You see, due to some pregnancy complications, Christy had to have ten blood transfusions due to hemorrhaging.

After being unconscious for almost two days, she woke up and she said the thought hit her like a ton of bricks. She said, quote, if I were still a Jehovah's Witness, I'd be dead.

You see, according to Jehovah's Witness doctrine, blood transfusions are strictly prohibited. Listen to me, Faith Family. It is believed to be a sin to take someone else's blood, even if it is in a life-threatening situation.

If you take someone else's blood, according to the Jehovah's Witness doctrine, you will be shunned by your family and you will be removed from the fellowship.

Now, while Christy's decision saved her life, others have not been so fortunate. Another woman by the name of Eloise Dupas, she was a 26-year-old woman.

[6 : 3 3] She was pregnant at the same hospital as Christy. She experienced hemorrhaging as well due to a C-section, and the doctors pleaded with her on five different occasions to have a blood transfusion, and every single time she refused.

As a result, her baby was delivered healthy, but she would die within a week. All because she refused to take someone else's blood.

Now, I doubt there's many Jehovah's Witnesses here. I doubt there are. I'd be shocked if there were any. I doubt there's probably even very many here tonight who have religious convictions against blood transfusions.

But I do imagine that there are a few of you here that you get really uneasy. You get really nervous. You get flat out grossed out at the sight of someone else's blood.

Anybody willing to admit that tonight? That just grosses you out. Makes you really uneasy. You're the kind of person that you're watching a movie, and you turn your head away if it gets too bloody, too gory.

[7 : 5 0] Maybe you just are uncomfortable at the idea of giving blood. You get really anxious before a medical procedure because you know it involves blood.

Maybe you turn your head away. You have that kind of reaction if you see someone who is wounded. Now, why is that? What is it? Listen to me, Faith.

What is it about the sight of blood that causes people, not everybody, but a lot of people to turn away? You don't feel that way if you see wine spilt on someone's shirt or fruit punch or cherry Kool-Aid.

What is it about blood that's so different? Well, that's because blood represents something very serious. It represents life and death, a very serious life and death kind of situation.

And if you're one of those people that I've been describing that gets very nervous and uncomfortable about the presence of blood, you're going to have a really hard time tonight, okay? This is going to be really unsettling for you because that's exactly what we're faced with here in Exodus 24.

[9 : 02] In fact, we're not only faced with this in Exodus 24, it's all throughout the Old Testament. You're not only going to have a problem with Exodus 24. You're not going to have a problem with the Old Testament.

You're going to have a problem with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Have you, have you all with me? Have you ever stopped and thought for just a moment as to why the Bible emphasizes so much regarding blood?

I mean, I remember, many of you didn't necessarily grow up in the heritage that I grew up in, but I grew up singing hymns with titles or lyrics like this.

There is power in the blood. There is a fountain filled with blood. What can wash away my sins? Say it if you know it. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Even y'all, you're weird. You're weird. You know why you're weird? Well, there's a lot of reasons why you're weird, but here's one of the reasons why you're weird. You gathered here tonight, and you sang words like, I plead the blood.

[10 : 10] Thank you, Jesus, for the blood applied. Do you realize how strange you are? People gathered on a Saturday night singing about how thankful they are for blood.

Don't you realize how strange this is? Why do we do that? Why is that so central to the biblical message? In fact, it's actually why a lot of people, or it's one of the reasons why people have a problem with Christianity.

There was a professor at Cornell University that once wrote a letter to Billy Graham, and this is what he told Billy Graham in the letter. Quote, Mr. Graham, you have great talent.

You are a successful minister. But if you want to continue to be successful, you are going to have to leave out preaching on blood.

It's out of date, and no enlightened man will swallow it. Close quote. Billy Graham actually said when he read that, he was more resolved to preach on the blood than he ever had been before.

[11 : 14] Why? Why? When people hear that God requires blood, it seems offensive and disgusting and gross, and indeed it is.

But listen to me tonight. There is no good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ without blood. There is no good news without blood.

Why is that? Hebrews chapter 9 verse 22 says, it says this. Notice Hebrews chapter 9. Notice the highlighted part. Without the shedding of, say it, blood, there is no, say it, forgiveness of sins.

That's exactly what's going down here in Exodus chapter 24. Exodus 24 is essentially the covenant between God and Israel being ratified, being brought to completion.

Text tells us that Moses woke up early. He built an altar with 12 pillars representing the 12 tribes of Israel. And then he makes a sacrifice. There's a sacrifice made on the altar.

[12 : 28] And Moses does something. I mean, let's be honest. There's a lot of things when we read in the Old Testament or even the New that we think, that just seems really odd. Seems really weird.

Look at what Moses does in chapter 24 and verse 6. It says, That's strange.

There is not a single person in this room that ought not be grossed out by that reality. In fact, what would you do if tonight I said, You know what? I want to do a little bit of a sermon illustration.

You know, I kind of like to use props occasionally. And I have brought a bucket of animal blood. And if you're just remaining in your seats, I'm just going to go around and just one by one, I'm going to sprinkle the blood of a goat all over you tonight.

How many of you would actually stay? And if you raise your hand, you are weird, right? You're like, yeah, just pour blood on me. Are you with me? This is strange.

[13 : 50] This is, at first appearance, seems very odd. So the question is, what does that act mean?

And it is very important and very significant for us to understand. In short, here's the summary and then I'll explain it. The summary is this. Israel, through their relationship or covenant with God, is being brought, are you listening?

Say yes. From death to life. Israel is being brought by this symbolism and this action of blood from death to life.

Let me explain. First of all, blood was a symbol in the ancient Near East of death. It was a symbol of death. Now, blood actually had a negative kind of connotation and a positive one.

It was seen negatively and positively. Negatively, it was seen as death or that something's really wrong. Something's seriously broken or you've got a serious condition.

[14 : 58] I mean, think about it. Again, this will gross some of you out, but I'm just preaching the text. If you walked by a scene and you saw something like that, now those of you that are turning away, you're the one I was talking to earlier, right?

You look at that and you immediately think that's a problem. Something serious has happened. You don't just casually walk by that and go, oh, ho-hum.

You know that that's pointing you to something that's very, very serious. If blood is gushing out of your eyes or gushing out of your mouth, you don't need to be a medical professional to know that is not a good thing.

Something is wrong somewhere. Are you with me? That's what blood was a symbol of is there's a problem. There is a serious, serious problem.

And it was not only in the ancient Near East blood a sign of something that was seriously wrong or a sign of death, but it was also a sign of guilt. Blood was symbolic of guilt and sin.

[16 : 00] Notice the language from the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 59 beginning at verse 1. It says, Do you see that parallelism?

Parallelism? Your hands are defiled with blood. Your fingers with iniquity. In other words, this blood is symbolizing that you are guilty.

You have sinned. You have committed iniquity. And so you think about that imagery of blood on your hands. We even use that terminology not necessarily to mean you had actual blood on your hands.

It means you're guilty that you have done something wrong. You have done something very serious. So notice this on the screen. Blood was not just a sign of a serious condition.

It was also the sign of a serious crime. Any Shakespeare fans? Really? Only a few of you like Shakespeare? Or you just don't want to raise your hand when I call?

[17 : 28] I get it. If you know Shakespeare, you immediately likely remember the scene from Lady Macbeth. Remember when Lady Macbeth, she can't get the smell of blood off her hands?

She did not personally murder the king of Scotland, but her and her husband had put the plot together. Her husband did the deed, but she was a part of the planning of it, and so she knew she was guilty.

And so she paces the floor, she sleepwalks, and she mumbles the secrets of her heart. Out a damn spot.

Out, I say. Hell is murky. Fie, my Lord.

Fie. Fie. Fie had a wife.

[18 : 57] Where is she now? What? Will these hands ne'er be clean?

No more of that, my Lord. No more of that. You mar all with this starting.

Here's the smell of the blood still.

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. What is she struggling?

What is she struggling? That blood represents her guilt, her shame over the murder.

[20 : 11] It's this imagery of having blood on her hands. If you don't like Macbeth, how many of you remember the movie The Fisher King? Did you ever see that with Jeff Bridges?

If you've ever seen this movie, Bridges is actually, he's a New York City radio host, and one night, he makes a very sarcastic comment to a troubled listener, and he challenges him to do something.

Well, that man goes nuts, goes into a restaurant, and shoots up a bunch of people. It absolutely destroys Bridges' life. And then, he comes across and meets a homeless man, who's played by Robin Williams.

His wife was actually in the restaurant that night, and she was murdered. And when Jeff Bridges realizes this, he begins to deal with the guilt of feeling like he was responsible for the death of this man's wife.

And he tries to do everything he can to atone for his sins. He tries to get him off the street, get him in clothes, get his life back on track, but nothing he tries works.

[21 : 19] And eventually, at one point in the movie, he says this. Listen, Jeff Bridges says, Why can't I just pay the price and go home? Nothing he did to atone for his sins took the feeling of guilt away, because he had blood on his hands.

Listen, why the blood of Exodus chapter 24? Because like us, Israel has a serious problem, a deadly problem. They are guilty before God.

There are spots they cannot clean, spots they cannot remove. And the same thing is true for you and us. You and I have a serious problem. That serious problem is sin.

And there is nothing we can do to get rid of that blood. You with me? Number two, not only did blood symbolize death, but we also know in the ancient Near East, blood symbolized life.

So the negative was that it symbolized death and guilt, but positively, blood also symbolized new life. That is, long before modern science proved that blood carries the essential elements of life through the body, God told his very people this.

[22 : 35] Look at Leviticus chapter 17 and verse 11. For the life of the flesh is in the, say it, blood. And I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls.

It is the blood that makes atonement by the life. In other words, no blood, no life.

You know this. Blood is a sign of a serious problem, but blood is also a sign of life. And that is why blood and life often are equated together.

It's why blood is so important to living. Now, this really hits home to me. This is actually personal for me. I think a lot of you know this. Some of you may not know this.

But a few years ago, my mom got up in the middle of the night. She went to the restroom. And my dad, you know, he's 86 years old.

[23 : 33] He couldn't hear a dump truck if it drove through this room right now, right? He's bad of hearing. Well, my mom is in the bathroom, and she has an ulcer, which she didn't know she had, erupt.

And my mother is laying on the bathroom floor bleeding out. My dad, by the grace of God, heard her fall, rushed my mom to the hospital, to the emergency room, where they gave her five pints of blood to keep her alive.

And that blood literally saved my mom's life. It's why I'm actually a big advocate for blood donation. I donate every single time.

As soon as I become available to donate again, I am in the chair looking away, you know. But I am giving blood. Why? Because I experienced firsthand in my own family with my mom how blood actually is life-giving.

It is why the very slogan of the Red Cross is this. Give blood, give life. But in the ancient Near East, listen, blood was not just a sign of physical life, like in Leviticus 17 talks about, but it was also the sign, a requirement of spiritual life.

[24 : 54] Look back at Leviticus 17, 11, and notice the other phrase. Not only that the life of the flesh is in the blood, but look at the last phrase.

For it is the blood that makes, say it, atonement by the life. In other words, the sacrificing of this animal's life in place of the life of the other person satisfies God's payment for sin.

Romans 6, 23, look at it here. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal, say it, life.

Blood is not just a sign of a serious problem, sin and death. It is also a sign of spiritual life. Now put it all together, and what does Exodus 24 teach us?

What does this act of blood, of sprinkling this blood on the people, what does it represent? Here it is, listen. In this bloody sacrifice, we see both the serious problem of Israel's guilt and sin, and we see their atonement for that guilt and sin by the giving of new life as a nation.

[26 : 19] Y'all with me? That's what's happening here. It is a picture of their death and a picture of their life. And this bloody sacrifice, this act of sprinkling blood on the people of Israel, is a foreshadowing of you and I.

It has everything to do with every one of us that's in this room this evening. How? Because it is a picture of and a foreshadowing of, shocker, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How so? Notice what the author of Hebrews does. In fact, the author of Hebrews loves the book of Exodus. He quotes it a lot. In fact, he quotes this exact passage, Exodus 24, in Hebrews chapter 9.

Look at Hebrews 9 and verse 19. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, that is, when he read to them the book of the covenant, like Exodus 24 says, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop.

And what did he do? He sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you. That's a direct quote from Exodus 24.

[27 : 40] And in the same way, he sprinkled with blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law, almost everything was purified with what?

Blood. And this is the verse I read earlier. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Now, notice what the author ties that to.

If you're not excited, I'm excited for you, because this is what it says. For it is the blood, for if the blood of bulls and goats and the sprinkling of defiled persons with ashes of a heifer sanctify the purification of the flesh, well, how much more the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Are you kidding me? If that blood did that in Exodus 24, how much more the perfect Lamb of God in Jesus Christ?

If that blood did that for that people, imagine what the blood of Jesus would do for you. That is exactly what the author of Hebrews says.

[28 : 57] This blood of the covenant in Exodus 24 is pointing you to the blood of the gospel. Writer of Hebrews takes Exodus 24 and directly connects it to Jesus.

The big difference, of course, as the author mentions, is the blood of animals could never take away sins of humans. Instead, what we are left in is our guilt and sin.

That is why they had to do it over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again. But the good news of Jesus is he offers his own blood once and for all to cleanse you forever.

The blood of the covenant. The blood of the new covenant that is seen in Jesus Christ. Listen, God is the ultimate blood donor.

He's the ultimate blood donor. Because he, think about this, think about this. Like, again, I told you last week when we went through all the rules that it's hard to understand them all, but one of the principles in place is that God is taking things that the other nations did and he's telling Israel to do it in a different way because he wants them to be what?

[30 : 18] A holy nation. A kingdom of priests. In other words, you're going to do things differently than the way the nations did. Well, do you know most of the nations in the ancient Near East...

Hold on, I'm making a point here, okay? Is most of the nations in the ancient Near East, when they would offer a blood sacrifice to their gods, guess what they had to offer?

Their own blood. Their own blood. They would cut themselves and offer up their blood to their gods. Do you know what God does not ask Israel to do?

To offer up their own blood. Do you know what he does instead? He provides a sacrifice, a substitute, and he uses that blood until the coming of Jesus when God no longer asks for the blood of animals, he now offers his own.

God doesn't ask you for your blood. God doesn't ask you for the blood of an animal. God in Jesus Christ offers his own blood as a sacrifice for you.

[31 : 35] That's the best news in the world. That's the bloody gospel. And it is all over the New Testament.

I'm almost done. That's your 45-minute warning. 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter chapter 1. Knowing that you were ransomed from your feudal ways. Come on, get happy, faith family. Get excited about the gospel.

Ways inherited from your forefathers. Not with perishable things like silver or gold. No, no, no. You were ransomed with what? The precious blood of Christ.

Like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 5 or verse 7. In him we have redemption through his blood.

The forgiveness of our trespasses according to his riches in grace. John 6.53. Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat my flesh, the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

[32 : 36] And Jesus explains how you eat his flesh and how you drink his blood. How do you do that? You trust him. You believe in him. Faith is the partaking of Christ.

Acts chapter 20 verse 28. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock of God in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. To care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood.

Hebrews 12.22. And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word.

Can you handle one more? Sure you can. Revelation 12 verse 11. And they have conquered him. How? By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb. Amen. I read about a man named James Harrison.

[33 : 48] He actually got the nickname The Man with a Golden Arm. And the reason is is when James was 14 years old, he had a medical procedure and a major surgery and blood donation, like I shared about my mom, blood donation saved his life.

And so he decided that he was going to become a blood donor. Here's the interesting thing. What they discovered early on as he was donating his own blood is that they discovered that he, in his blood, had a disease-fighting antibody.

An antibody that actually helps pregnant women whose blood attacks their unborn baby's blood cells, which can lead to brain damage and even lead to the death of the baby.

When James learned that he had this antibody in his blood, he pledged to be a lifelong donor for the next 60 years of his life.

According to the Red Cross, James has actually helped save the lives of more than 2.4 million babies.

[35 : 04] Isn't that awesome? In fact, the Red Cross said this, quote, Every bag of blood is precious, but James' blood is particularly extraordinary.

His blood actually saves lives. Oh, my friend. Oh, my dear church.

If James' blood saves lives, imagine what Jesus' blood can do. There is power, power, wonder, working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Faith family, we sing that unapologetically. We declare that unapologetically.

Our hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ. And I declare to you this evening that if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, His blood is enough for you.

[36 : 15] It is enough to show you how serious your sin is. It is enough to reveal to you your guilt. But it is enough, even though you have blood on your hands, it is enough to give you new and eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Abundant life. Eternal life. His blood has the power to save you forever. And that is because, faith family, the covenant between God and you, are you listening, has been ratified forever.

Today you can be free. Today you can be forgiven. Today you can pass from death to life. Here is all you have to do. By faith, receive someone else's blood.

And all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray together. Lord God, I thank you so much for the blood of Jesus. Oh, that is something that people may find gross.

That may be something that people say you ought to stop preaching about. Not here. Not here. We will continue to proclaim the best news in the world, and that is through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

[37 : 39] Our sin is paid for, and we are forgiven forever through the once and for all sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will sing that.

We will preach that. We will declare that, for that is the hope of our eternal life. And as we come now to a time of communion, we are particularly reminded of this as we will look to the juice, this symbolism of His blood upon the cross for us.

This ultimate act of covenant ratification that Exodus 24 points us to. And so this evening, I pray that this would be a time of reflection on all that Jesus has done for us in washing away our sin for good.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.