Wheelersburg Baptist Church 11/15/2026 Brad Brandt

Hebrews 9:11-15 "Redeemed By the Powerful Blood of Christ"**

Series: *"Going Deeper into The Son – An Exposition of Hebrews 7-9"*[1]

Main Idea: Hebrews 9:11-15 invites us to ponder the powerful blood of Christ from two perspectives. We'll do that together, and then take inventory with three critical questions.

I. Ponder the reality of Christ's blood (11-12a).
   - A. Christ came as a high priest.
   - B. Christ went through the tabernacle.
   - C. Christ went into the Most Holy Place.
     1. He did it once.
     2. He did it on the basis of His own blood.

II. Ponder the results of Christ's blood (12b-15).
   - A. We have redemption (12b).
   - B. We have sanctification (13-14).
     1. Christ's blood produces a clear conscience.
     2. Christ's blood rescues us from dead works.
     3. Christ's blood enables us to serve God.
   - C. We have an inheritance (15a).
     1. It's linked to God's call.
     2. It's linked to God's promise.
   - D. We have freedom (15b).
     1. He didn't set us free to do our own thing.
     2. He set us free from doing our own thing.

Make It Personal: Let's ask ourselves these questions.
1. Am I trusting in the blood of Christ?
2. Am I living in light of the blood of Christ?
3. Am I spreading the news about the blood of Christ?

Nepal trip report (October 26 through November 14)

Sermon intro: Let's turn our attention now to Hebrews 9 as we continue our series, *"Going Deeper into The Son – An Exposition of Hebrews 7-9."* Thank you Matt and Scott for taking us through the previous passages that lead up to today's text.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 9:11-15

Share story of man in Nepal who was quarantined for eight days after being with his dying loved one. He was unclean until he went through the appropriate ceremony (no salt, etc). Uncleanness is a universal reality. One billion people deal with uncleanness through ceremony and ritual (Hindus). Everyone deals with uncleanness. In America our default for dealing with uncleanness is denial. We say, "I am not unclean! I am a good person!" And so I watch ball game3s and spend the Lord's Day at family events. But this does not change the reality that I am unclean before a holy God.

Are you clean? Do you see yourself as clean in God's eyes? And if so, why? Know this. We will not serve God and others as we ought if we do not realize that we (once unclean) are now clean. And we won't serve Christ as He deserves if we don't realize that He is the One who made us clean. And His shed blood alone is the reasons.

There is a connection between *cleansing* and *serving*. We must see it. Do we serve to be cleansed? Many think so. They depend upon what they do to make themselves clean in the eyes of a holy God. No. That's the approach of religion. This is the approach of biblical Christianity. We are clean and therefore we serve and the blood of Christ is the sole reason we are clean. This is the message of Hebrews.

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[1] For a previous look at this passage, see the Hebrews series preached at WBC in 2008.

O the power of the blood of Jesus Christ! Did you ever notice how central the subject of blood is to Christianity? We sing about blood. We celebrate blood. We have a monthly service called communion that focuses on blood. The world doesn't understand this, but our hope is linked to blood, to our Savior's blood.

Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you o'er evil a victory win?
There's wonderful power in the blood.
There is power, power, wonder working power
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is power, power, wonder working power
In the precious blood of the Lamb.[2]

What is it about Christ's blood that's so powerful and life-changing? We find the answer in the text open before us today. Hebrews 9:11-15 invites us to ponder the subject of Christ's blood from two perspectives. We'll do that together, and then at the end of our time, since this isn't merely about *information* but *transformation*, we'll take inventory with three critical questions.

I. Ponder the reality of Christ's blood (11-12a).

Listen to verses 11-12 (ESV), "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come[3], then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) [12] he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."[4]

We see the *reality* of Christ's blood here. The writer begins, "When Christ came." This is historical fact, my friend. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came to earth and He came to do something with His blood. The writer here highlights three historical events, all past tense, fulfilled by Christ.

A. Christ came as a high priest. Verse 11 states, "When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here." We've been learning about Christ's priesthood for several chapters now in Hebrews. Here we're told that Christ came as the high priest *of the good things that are already here.* What are these "good things"? The writer doesn't specify, but as Leon Morris suggests, "The expression is evidently a comprehensive way of summing up the blessings Christ has won for his people."[5]

So Christ came. Next…

B. Christ went through the tabernacle. The writer has in mind what happened on the Day of Atonement. On that day Israel's high priest offered a calf (a bullock) for his own sins, as well as a goat (called the 'scapegoat') which was led into the desert bearing the sins of the people (see Lev. 16:15, 21, 22). The writer of Hebrews mentions both the calf and the goat in verse 12.

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[2] Lewis Jones wrote this song at a camp meeting at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, in 1899.

[3] The manuscript evidence is divided (see NIV footnote). It can read either, "the good things that are already here," or "the good things that are to come."

[4] Verses 11-12 in the NIV84 "When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption."

[5] Leon Morris, p. 85.

In verse 13 he also mentions the ashes of a heifer. The background for the strange ritual pertaining to the offer of a red heifer is described in Numbers 19. The priests took an unblemished red heifer outside the camp, then killed and cremated it. Next they took ashes and mixed them with water to form a mixture known as "the water of cleansing" (Num, 19:9).

In Israel, if a man touched a dead body or even entered a tent in which someone had died, that person became ceremonially *unclean*. To remedy this unclean condition, the person had to be sprinkled with this watery ash solution on the third day of a seven day purification process. Gromacki explains the result, "The 'purifying of the flesh' produced a ceremonial, social, and cultural acceptance…It enabled the cleansed person to function once again within Israelite society."[6]

Our text says that when Christ came, He went *through* the tabernacle. What "tabernacle" does the writer have in mind? He says that Christ went "through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation." As we mentioned in our study in chapter 8, some think this refers to Christ's flesh or body. Others see a reference to Christ's people. But based on verse 24 the writer seems to have in mind a sanctuary in heaven, and it's there that Christ has gone for His people. He has gone *through* that perfect tabernacle, indicating there's no where else He need go. Specifically, we're told that…

C. Christ went into the Most Holy Place. That's what verse 12 stresses, "He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood." Notice carefully. *He did it once.* Not repeatedly, but *once.* And notice this. *He did it on the basis of His own blood.* Gromacki offers the reminder that animals and humans have blood, but angels and God do not.[7] Please take note of the actual wording in verse 12, especially since some interpret this to teach that Christ actually took His blood into heaven.

In the NIV we read that Christ entered heaven "*by* his own blood." The KJV also emphasizes He entered heaven "*by* his own blood." The ESV clarifies He did so "*by means of* his own blood." But the NRSV offers a different slant on the preposition (as did the RSV), stating, "He entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but *with his own blood.*"

Did you catch the difference? Christ entered the Most Holy Place *by* His blood. Or Christ entered the Most Holy Place *with* His blood. Which is it? I hope the latter reading raises a yellow flag in your mind.

To say that Christ entered heaven *with* His blood creates a problem, doesn't it? He shed His blood. Did He then retrieve the blood He shed on earth and take it to heaven with Him? That would imply that His atoning work was not completed on the cross, and that in order to finish it He had to take His blood into the heavenly sanctuary, as did the high priest into the Holy of Holies.

But that goes against the central message of the book of Hebrews. What Christ did on the cross *was* complete and sufficient. Christ needs do nothing more to solve man's sin problem. Not one thing. *Nothing*.

Let me share a story with you. Back in the early 1700s, a man named J. A. Bengel proposed a theory that when Christ died his blood was totally poured out, so that not one drop remained in his body. He also taught that Christ's blood, after it was shed, was

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[6] Robert Gromacki, p. 152.

[7] Gromacki; p. 151.

preserved from all corruption. If you want to read Bengel's argument for such assertions, I recommend a helpful section in Philip Hughes commentary (pages 329ff.).

Yet Bengel took it further. What happened to the incorruptible blood that Jesus shed? Hughes explains, "Bengel rejects the opinion that at the resurrection it was somehow restored to the vascular system of Christ's body, maintaining rather that at the ascension the blood that had been shed was carried by Christ, in separation from his body, into the heavenly sanctuary."[8]

But it doesn't stop there. It was Bengel's conviction, explains Hughes, "that the blood of Christ now forever separated from his risen and glorified body remains eternally the blood that was shed."[9] Bengel cites Revelation 1:14 as proof, where the head of the risen and glorified Christ is described as *white*, and some have linked this *whiteness* to Christ's supposed *bloodlessness*.

So if Christ's blood isn't in His glorified body, and if it's instead separate from Him in heaven, the question is why. The reason, says Bengel, is because Christ's blood is being repeatedly sprinkled in heaven for the removal of sin.[10]

Now why am I taking time to address what a man named Bengel taught three hundred years ago? Because Bengel wasn't the last preacher to propose fanciful ideas about the blood of Christ. You may recall the scene in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* where Mary is seen on her knees with a towel scrubbing Jesus' blood from the pavement (soaking it up?). That's not in the Bible. The Bible doesn't say that Mary did that. Why then does the movie? I don't know.

But I do know this. Since Satan cannot undo the *fact* of Calvary, he's intent on doing everything he can to distort the *significance* of it. If he can get us to run down rabbit trails, even rabbit trails about the blood, then he's succeeded in distracting us from coming to grips with the real significance of the blood.

Why did Jesus shed His blood? What did He accomplish by it? That brings us to our second point. We've considered the reality of Christ's blood. Now let's ponder the results.

II. Ponder the results of Christ's blood (12b-15).

The writer of Hebrews identifies four lasting results.

A. We have redemption (12b). Listen to the end of verse 12 (NIV), "…but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, *having obtained eternal redemption*."

Let's address a fundamental question at this point. What does the writer mean when he refers to *the blood of Christ*? I've benefited from Leon Morris's explanation: "'The blood of Christ' means Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin…The word 'blood' points to death. In this context 'blood' is not death in general but death seen as a sacrifice. Christ offered himself in sacrifice to God."[11]

You need to realize that there are people who call themselves "Christian" who not only disagree with that statement, but despise it. They want a bloodless cross. It's an offense to their civilized, intelligent minds, this notion that God would require His Son to

[8] Philip Hughes, p. 329.
[9] Hughes, p. 331.
[10] Hughes, p. 332.
[11] Leon Morris, p. 86.

die such a horrible, bloody death. "We're good people. Why would we need a bloody sacrifice?!"

That's a good question. Why do we need it? Our verse tells us. It says He entered heaven by means of His blood, *having obtained eternal redemption.* That's why He came to earth and shed His blood, to obtain eternal redemption.

The term 'redemption' *(lutrosin)* comes from the slave market. To set a slave free a price had to be paid, the redemption price. The term also carries the idea of *ransom*. If my child was kidnapped, the ransom would be the price I would have to pay to secure her freedom.

Because of Adam's sin, we entered the world as slaves to sin, and sin is a cruel taskmaster. But Christ came to secure our redemption. The price He paid? His own blood.

B. We have sanctification (13-14). Here is verses 13-14 in the ESV, "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, [14] how much more will 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."[12]

Under the old covenant God graciously provided the Jews with a temporary solution for sin and holiness. By killing goats, bulls, and heifers, by means of the *blood* of these creatures, a sinner could be sanctified and become outwardly clean. But it didn't last. As we saw last week, the old covenant provision couldn't go far enough, nor deep enough, nor last long enough. It merely did what God intended it to do, to point to Christ!

Take in the beauty of verse 14. *How much more then*—the old covenant was good, but this is so much superior! *Will the blood of Christ*—the blood of Christ can do what the blood of animals could not do. *Who through the eternal Spirit*—that's interesting; did you realize that Holy Spirit was involved in Christ's atoning work? It was *through the Spirit* that Christ offered Himself.

Yes, Christ *offered Himself*, says our text—His blood was not taken from Him, for He offered it, as He did His life, willingly. *Unblemished*—a lamb with defects was disqualified, but there were no defects with the perfect Lamb of God. He offered Himself unblemished *to God*—note His ransom payment was not made to the devil, as some teach. It was divine justice that required satisfaction, and that's what Christ satisfied as He died in the place of sinners.

And that brings us to the question… What practical effect does the blood of Christ produce for redeemed sinners like us? Our writer mentions three such effects relating to our sanctification.

1. Christ's blood produces a clear conscience. "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ…cleanse our consciences…"

Did you know that ever since 1811 (when someone who had defrauded the government anonymously sent $5 to Washington D.C.) the U.S. Treasury has operated a *Conscience Fund*? Since that time almost $3.5 million has been received from guilt-ridden citizens.[13]

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[12] NIV "The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!"

[13] Swindoll, *The Quest For Character*, Multnomah, p. 70.

I read that the Conscience Fund, set up for people who have cheated on taxes or stolen from the government, brought in $12,252.55 one year recently. One person gave $5,370. One gave $7.65.

"Who knows," Cooper said of the smaller gift. "Maybe the person became Christian and had to make things right. That happens a lot. We get letters from people all the time saying they stole a stapler or something in 1965."

One note read, "Dear Internal Revenue Service, I have not been able to sleep at night because I cheated on last year's income tax. Enclosed find a cashier's check for $1,000. If I still can't sleep, I'll send you the balance."[14]

Leo Tolstoy said, "The antagonism between life and conscience may be removed in two ways: By a change of life or by a change of conscience."[15] How do you change your conscience? The fact is, a troubled conscience is a good thing. It's God's warning signal that we're not on good terms with Him, and an invitation to get right with Him.

I'm thankful to be able to share with you that I don't lay awake any more at night in morbid preoccupation with the fact that I've missed God's mark. Indeed, I have missed God's mark, but Christ took my penalty and removed my guilt. For Christ's sake God has declared me to be righteous in His sight. But that's not all. On top of that, Christ's blood has cleansed my conscience.

I'm forgiven, because You were forsaken.
I'm accepted, You were condemned.
I'm alive and well. Your Spirit lives within me.
Because You died and rose again!

Yes, Christ's blood produces a *clear conscience*! But there's a second effect…

2. Christ's blood rescues us from dead works. "*From acts that lead to death*," that's what His blood has cleansed our consciences from. Raymond Brown explains, "They [these 'acts that lead to death'] probably refer to man's futile attempts to secure by his puny efforts his own present satisfaction and ultimate salvation."[16] That's what a lot of people are trusting in, their own good works. But they're dead works, for they cannot save a sinner (Eph. 2:8-9). What's more…

3. Christ's blood enables us to serve God. His blood cleanses our consciences *from* something and *for* someone. *From* acts that lead to death, and *for* the service of God. Don't miss that final phrase in verse 14. It's why Christ shed His blood for us, "so that we may serve the Living God!"

Let that sink in. When your conscience is clean and clear, and you know the reason it's clean and clear is because Christ's blood made it that way, then you *want to serve God*. You don't have to twist the arm of the person who's thinking about Christ's blood to get him or her to serve God.

In verse 15 we discover a third lasting result of Christ's blood. Not only do we have redemption and sanctification, but…

C. We have an inheritance (15a). Listen to verse 15, first in the ESV, "Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant."

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[14] Dave Philipps, "Would You Tip the IRS?"
http://www.gazette.com/articles/fund_7690___article.html/people_tax.html

[15] Source unknown

[16] Raymond Brown, p. 159.

Here is the NIV84, "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance…"

As we'll see in greater detail next time, the Lord willing, there's actually a play on the double meaning of the Greek term *diatheke*. In verse 15 it's translated "covenant," whereas in verse 16 the same word is translated "a will."

Because of what Christ accomplished in the past, we have something to look forward to in the future. We have *an inheritance*, and it's linked to two things.

First, it's linked to God's call. Who receives the inheritance? "Those *who are called*." Raymond Brown explains, "In the New Testament the call is something far more than invitation, though the term is used in the gospels to describe an invitation to a wedding reception or private dinner. It also figures in Greek and New Testament literature as the summons to a law court. In other words, when interpreting the word 'call', the invitation idea perfectly conveys the concept of generosity, but the idea of summons must also be present. It is God who calls and not simply a benevolent host."[17]

The fact that Christ shed His blood for sinners does not mean that every sinner is now heading for heaven. That's universalism, and that's foreign to the Bible. Those who will enjoy God's inheritance are those who have heard God's call and, by His grace, responded to that call by repenting and trusting in Christ. God is the author of salvation from beginning to end. But not only is our inheritance linked to God's call. Also…

Second, it's linked to God's promise. The called will receive *the promised* eternal inheritance. Unlike today's stock market, there's nothing uncertain about the believer's inheritance. It's as sure as the promise of God, and He cannot lie!

But there's still more! In addition to redemption, sanctification, and an inheritance, because of Christ's shed blood we who know Him have…

D. We have freedom (15b). Here's the NIV, "…now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."

There's lots of talk about freedom these days, so it's important that we define our terms carefully. Yes, in Christ we have freedom, but know this.

He didn't set us free to do our own thing. In fact, to the contrary, *He set us free from doing our own thing.* That's what sin is, going *our own way.* And Christ set us free from that. He died as a ransom to set us free from sin. I like the way John Calvin puts it, "We are not cleansed by Christ so that we can immerse ourselves continually in fresh dirt, but in order that our purity may serve the glory of God."[18]

We've pondered both the reality and the results of Christ's blood. Now it's time to take inventory.

<u>Make It Personal: Let's ask ourselves these questions.</u>

1. Am I trusting in the blood of Christ? The fact that Christ shed His blood to pay for sins is just that, a *fact*. The question is, are you trusting in what He did? Have you put your trust in Him and in the merit of the blood He shed? O sinner, it matters not how great yours may be. The power of His blood is greater! Trust in Christ and God will redeem you, sanctify you, give you an inheritance, and set you free to serve Him!

2. Am I living in light of the blood of Christ? Perhaps a simple story will help us grasp this point…

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[17] Raymond Brown, p. 163.

[18] John Calvin, p. 122.

A little boy was visiting his grandparents and given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target. As he came back to Grandma's back yard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead. The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you, Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck!" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing. After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck. "I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."[19]

Brothers and sisters in Christ, some of us are living as slaves though we are free. The blood of Christ has set us free. God no longer sees us as His enemy, as we once were, but as His dear children. Our problem is that we're not living in light of the blood of Christ. We don't think about it on a daily basis. I urge you to memorize verses about the cross and review them daily. I've found it so helpful to sing songs about the cross as I begin my day, and I recommend the practice to you. Don't just *believe* in the cross. *Live in light of it!*

3. Am I spreading the news about the blood of Christ? All around us are people who need to hear that there's power in the blood, wonder working power! Let's tell them!

Closing Song: #195 *"Nothing But the Blood"* (all four verses)

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[19] Told by Steven Cole, taken from www.sermonillustrations.com

Refrain: O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Community Group Discussion:

1. The subject of blood is central to Christianity. We read about blood in the Bible in many places. We sing songs about blood. We have a monthly service called communion that focuses on blood. And this emphasis on blood is often controversial, in the world, and even in Christian circles. How so?

2. After discussing question one, take time to read today's text, Hebrews 9:11-15. What stands out most to you from this passage?

3. What contrast does the writer make regarding blood in verses 11-12? Why is he making this contrast?

4. In verses 12b-15, we learn that the shedding of Christ's blood produces four results. What is the first result in verse 12a? The second result in verses 13-14? The third result in verse 15a? The fourth result in verse 15b? What must we do to experience these results?

5. Respond to the statement. *He didn't set us free to do our own thing. He set us free from doing our own thing.* What does that mean and what are some implications of it?

6. As we've done in previous weeks, allow the truth of this passage to guide you in a time of meaningful prayer. Have different people lead the group in prayers of praise and petition in light of the blood of Christ.