TITLE: The Life Is In the Blood

TEXT: Lev. 17:11-12; Gen. 4:8-10; 1 Ki. 2:28-35;

Ps. 51:14; Mt. 27:15-26; Heb. 12:22-24

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about something that many people have trouble dealing with and that is blood. I have known real super moms that could deal with any foul substance known to man…. Dirty diapers, regurgitated food, vomit, mold, mildew and a host of other offensive material without batting an eye-- yet faint at even the sight of blood.

 I have known grown men, you know, the real macho type—big burley construction type of guys who would have no trouble standing up to a great adversary to protect themselves or their families, some who are outdoorsman who will cover themselves with stuff like skunk urine to camouflage their scent when hunting or trapping and who will stick their finger into the foulest smelling fish bait imaginable and not even think twice about it --but will keel over at the sight of blood.

 What is it about blood that gets the severe reaction that it often does from us?

 I mean, when you think about it, the color is ok enough.

 We wear red or blood colored clothing, drink red or blood colored juices, buy red or blood colored cars, put red or blood colored substances such as catsup on our hamburgers..

 So why is the real thing, red colored blood, so threatening to so many, if not most of us?

I think that Scripture has the answer to that question in:. **Leviticus 17:11 (NIV) 11For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.**

Did you catch that?

**11For the life of a creature is in the blood!**

Universal fact, universal principle---No blood—no life!

Could it be that whenever we see blood, whether it be a drop or a bucketful, there is something way down deep inside of us that associates it with life? That associates the lack of it with death?

**11For the life of a creature is in the blood!**

No blood ---no life..It is that simple.

 Blood is really a pretty amazing thing when you think about it..

 It is to our veins what oil is to a car engine. It is what maintains life.

What is it that happens to a gas engine when it loses its supply of oil?

 The engine will overheat and die. Oil is the life maintaining substance within the engine, just as blood is the life sustaining substance within the bodies of all living creatures.

 We see the properties of life in blood whenever we cut ourselves. We get a cut and start to bleed what is it that happens in a healthy body? The blood will start to coagulate to stop the bleeding. It is the life in the blood that is able to stop and fix a whole in the human body.

 The blood has the ability to turn into a scab to protect a wound and provide an atmosphere for the body to heal.

Someone who is dying from a lack of blood can receive a transfusion from someone who has plenty and that blood will bring life into the one whose life is threatened.

 It is kind of like blood has a mind of its own.

Did you know that blood can even speak?

Your blood can talk? And not just to the lab technician who test it.

Don’t laugh! It’s true! Blood has the ability to speak even when our tongue may not.

Maybe not in a language that we can understand but Scripture tells us that blood has the ability to cry out and be heard by God.

 **Genesis 4:8 - 10 (NIV) 8Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” 10The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.**

 Not only does God hear the blood of Cain’s slain brother crying out from the ground but God invites Cain to listen for the cry of his brothers shed blood.

**10The LORD said, Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.**

 This is the first human death on planet earth and it didn’t come about by old age. One brother rises up against another brother because of jealousy and kills him.

 And as the slain brothers blood is being spilled out onto the ground it is crying out to God.

What do you suppose it was saying?

We are not told but I have a pretty good idea.

 I believe it was saying: God! Cain did this! This is unfair! Why me! God get him! God get even for me!

 Given human nature, particularly fallen human nature, I believe that the shed blood of Abel very well may have been asking for retribution, for vengeance.

There is a terminology often used in the Bible called bloodguilt. Bloodguilt is the guilt derived from taking or being responsible for the shedding of innocent blood and taking another person’s life.

During the reign of King David, David’s commander of the army was a man named Joab.

 Joab had, for the most part, faithfully served King David through David’s reign as King over Israel, but Joab was a blood thirsty man that occasionally took things into his own hands.

 There were a couple of occasions when Joab killed what turned out to be innocent men thinking they were a threat to the King or a threat to himself. Joab was guilty for shedding innocent blood, but because he was a servant of David, the king, David was responsible for making things right. In other words, Joab’s bloodguilt could become David’s bloodguilt if David didn’t do something about it.

 Since Joab had faithfully served David for many, many years David was reluctant to bring Joab into accountability himself but passed that task on to his son Solomon when he would become King.

 David dies and Solomon becomes King in his father’s place and Solomon’s first order of business is to get the family slate clean of any potential bloodguilt that might bring about Gods judgment upon the Kingdom and upon the house of David….

**1 Kings 2:28 - 35 (NIV) 28When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar.  29King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the LORD and was beside the altar. Then Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada, “Go, strike him down!” 30So Benaiah entered the tent of the LORD and said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come out!’” But he answered, “No, I will die here.” Benaiah reported to the king, “This is how Joab answered me.” 31Then the king commanded Benaiah, “Do as he says. Strike him down and bury him, and so clear me and my father’s house of the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed.  32The LORD will repay him for the blood he shed, because without the knowledge of my father David he attacked two men and killed them with the sword. Both of them—Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel’s army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah’s army—were better men and more upright than he.  33May the guilt of their blood rest on the head of Joab and his descendants forever.**

**But on David and his descendants, his house and his throne, may there be the LORD’S peace forever.”**

**34So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck down Joab and killed him, and he was buried on his own land in the desert.**

 Years after the incident had actually occurred, the blood of two slain innocent men was still crying out to God for retribution and Solomon so feared the judgment of the Lord for bloodguilt that he had the guilty party slain so that justice would finally silence the cries of that shed blood.

In fact, in the Psalms David had cried out to God to be delivered from bloodguilt…

 **Psalms 51:14 (NIV) 14Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.**

 David knew that innocent blood cried out to God and would continue to cry out to God until retribution for that shed blood was made.

 We see another example of this at the trial and sentencing of Jesus.

 When Jesus was brought before Pilate, Pilate didn’t find any grounds for a death sentence. So He tells the Jews that had brought Jesus to him that he found no grounds to put Jesus to death….

 The Jews keep demanding that Jesus be crucified. Pilate brings forth a notorious prisoner who is guilty of insurrection and murder and gives the people a choice on which one he will release unto them.

**Matthew 27:15 - 26 (NIV) 15Now it was the governor’s custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.  16At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas.  17So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”  18For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.**

**19While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”**

**20But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21“Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered. 22“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!” 23“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” 24When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!” 25All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” 26Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.**

 Pilate was not a nice man and was certainly no friend of any Jew but there was a since of justice about him and he certainly didn’t want to be guilty of shedding innocent blood.

 So when the people wouldn’t relent and kept demanding that Jesus be crucified he symbolically washed his hands of the matter and said:

**“I am innocent of this man’s blood. It is your responsibility!”**

 What he was saying was, I don’t find this man guilty of any crime that is worthy of the death sentence. If you want him dead that bad then his blood is on your hands, not mine…

**25All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”**

What the people were saying was: let the guilt of his blood be on us and let it be on our children after us.

 Let his blood cry out to God against us. We take responsibility for the shedding of this man’s blood.

Innocent blood that has been shed has a voice.

Innocent blood that is shed cries out to God.

 Abel’s spilled blood cried out to God for retribution.

Every man, woman and child whose lifeblood has been shed in innocence have cried out the same thing…

Retribution! Vengeance! It isn’t fair God! Get them back! Make them Pay!

All except one man…

That isn’t what the shed blood of Christ cried out to God is it?

In speaking to the Church, the body of Christ, the Apostle Paul says this:

 **Hebrews 12:22 - 24 (NIV) 22But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,  23to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,  24to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.**

 Paul is speaking to those who come to Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and being birthed into the family of God….

 All those who come to Jesus, **the mediator of a new covenant.**

 A covenant that was signed and sealed with His shed blood on Calgary’s cross..

He is speaking to all of us who have embraced the Cross of Christ and come to know a blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

How does the blood of Christ speak a better word then the blood of Abel?

 The blood of Abel cried out for retribution, for vengeance, for punishment to the evil doer…

The blood of Christ cried out for forgiveness, for atonement and for restoration!

 We can actually hear what Christ shed blood was saying as it was dripping from the cross..

 The Blood was crying out: **Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!**

 The blood of Jesus cried out to God in a voice that literally shook the heavens: **It Is FINISHED!**

It is done! I have accomplished all that I have come to do..

 I have paid the price of sin! I have gained victory over death and the Grave! I have provided the way back to God!

It Is Finished! Nothing more needs to be done!

**The blood of Christ spoke a better word than the blood of Abel!**

 The blood of Abel cried out for retribution..

The Blood of Christ cried out for forgiveness.

 The Blood of Christ cried out for restoration.

 The Blood of Christ cried out for renewed relationship and fellowship with God.

I would say that is a whole lot better word then the word the blood of Abel cried out wouldn’t you?

The blood of Christ has spoken a far better word than the blood of Abel…

The blood of Christ cries out forgiveness for any transgressor who will embrace it.

The folks who were in the crowd before Pilate that day had no idea the great truth they were saying when they said: **let His blood be upon us and upon our Children.**

 That, in fact, is exactly what happened. We all became guilty of bloodguilt.

 Our sin was just as responsible for Christ shed blood as theirs.

**All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.**

 All are sinners so all are guilty….

 Christ died for sin, all sin, so we are all responsible for the blood of Christ being shed.

 We all stand under the bloodguilt of the cross..

The amazing thing is, that the way that we get out from under the weight of the crosses shame and guilt is by allowing the Blood of Christ to be upon us and allow its flow to cleanse us and wash away our sins..

 When we ask Jesus to come into our heart and become the Lord and Savior of our life, when we apply His blood, His sacrifice to our life, we are not only released from bloodguilt but we are forgiven all of our sins and adopted into His Family as a Child of God.

Our cry becomes, let His blood be upon me and let it be upon my children for the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls.

This morning, has the blood of Christ spoken to your life?

 Have you heard its cry of forgiveness, of restoration and redemption and renewed fellowship and relationship with God?

 Have you heard it cry: **Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest..**

The blood of Christ still speaks today and it still speaks a word better than Abel……

Have you heard it speak to your life and have you responded to its voice?

CLOSE Hymn #249 Just as I am