

Water, Blood, and Fire

#0083

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 15, 1968

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” Hebrews 10:19–22.

Two points to note in this wonderful scripture: First, we’re to draw near and enter into the sanctuary. Second, we need the work of cleansing done for us.

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” Hebrews 10:22.

The sanctuary speaks to us of *access*—we may draw near to God, we may enter in. It speaks to us of *cleansing*—there is a work that must be done for us in separating sin from us, without which the access is impossible. The plan of salvation makes it possible for the worse sinner in this world to come to God, provided he will be willing to be separated from sin. And the best sinner in the world, if I may use that expression, cannot find access to God if he insists on clinging to his sin. Sin and God are antagonistic. Sin hates God, and God hates sin. So in the sanctuary, we study how God separates sinners from sin and sin from sinners.

In our study this morning, I’d like to have us note especially in the court, three symbols or agencies of cleansing. We see the water in the laver. What’s it for? Cleansing. We see the bloodshed in the court, sprinkled upon the horns of the brazen altar. What’s it for? Cleansing. And we see the fire burning upon the altar. It too, is an agency of cleansing. Cleansing to the uttermost—consuming.

Now let’s look at all three of these symbols. In the water, we see an emblem that we’re quite familiar with. In the New Testament church, Christ has given us two great ordinances—baptism and the Lord’s supper preceded by the ordinance of humility. In both of these ordinances of the New Testament church, we see the same cleansing agent of water. Water baptism: What is it for?

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” Acts 22:16.

So in baptism, water represents washing away of the sins. And so in the ordinance of washing feet. You remember that the disciples had already been baptized. In fact, they were ordained ministers. They needed a work of cleansing before they could partake of the sacrament that Christ instituted that night. So Jesus passed from one to another and washed their feet as recorded in John 13:1–17. What did He do it for? He did it to *cleanse* them. So it is written that after He had washed their feet and returned to the table, He said, “Ye are clean, but not all.” Judas had not yielded. The other 11 were clean. They weren’t clean when they sat there brooding over their ambitions and frustrations and their desire to have first place. But as Jesus washed their feet, the sin and selfishness were washed from their hearts.

My point is, in both of these ordinances of the church today, in baptism and in the Lord’s supper preceded by the ordinance of humility, we have the water used as a symbol of cleansing. We use water every day in cleansing. We wash our hands before we sit down at the table. We take a bath from time to time. Again and again, God uses this to represent His work for us individually and for the church.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” Ephesians 5:25–27.

So water represents cleansing. Water in itself can never wash away sin. And whether it is the water in the laver that the priests used to wash their hands and feet before ministering in the sanctuary or at the altar, or whether it’s the water of baptism, or the water of washing feet, that water must represent to us the blood of Jesus Christ which alone can take away sins, for it is written:

“And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” 1 John 1:7.

Do we need the washing of water? Ah, yes. If we haven’t been baptized, we need that complete immersion which completely buries the past, completely cleanses that we may be accepted before God just as if we had not sinned. Then from time to time, as we sense our needy condition anew we come back to the fount of cleansing. Our feet are washed, and Jesus said to Peter, “He that is washed, that has been washed in the baptismal waters, needs only to wash his feet and is clean every whit.” (John 13:10) I’m thankful for the *initial* cleansing of baptism, and I’m thankful for the *repeated* cleansing of the ordinance of feet washing. I’m always glad that as I come to the table of the Lord that I can have that repeated cleansing that renews the baptismal vows and renews the baptismal washing. I need it before I come to the table of the Lord. Don’t you? So I’m thankful for the water—the water which cleanses.

And now the blood: The sacrifices were offered there in the court. Day by day, lambs, goats, and bullocks were sacrificed. In some cases, the blood was

carried into the sanctuary and sprinkled before the veil. In many cases, the blood was sprinkled on the horns of the brazen altar, and much of it poured out there in the place of ashes.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:13–14.

Keep in mind that the word 'purge' means to cleanse or purify. All that the blood of bulls and goat did in *type*, Jesus does in reality. The blood there accomplished a typical, a ceremonial cleansing. But in the work of Jesus, He accomplishes an *actual* cleansing.

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” 1 John 1:7.

Now, as in our imagination we see the work going on in the court, as we see those animals brought, as we see the life taken, the blood flow and the ministry of that blood, we remember that *every one* of those innocent creatures sacrificed in the service in the court represented Jesus. As John the Baptist looked at Jesus on the banks of Jordan, with the Spirit of inspiration resting upon him, he extended his hand and said:

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” John 1:29.

It is *Jesus* who is represented by every one of those substitute sacrifices. How can the blood of Jesus cleanse us?

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ...” Hebrews 13:20–21.

There are many lessons from the offering of the blood, but none appeals more to my heart than this simple but profound truth. The blood teaches us how much God loves us and how terrible sin is. His love is so great that He was willing to lay down His life for us. Sin so terrible that the cost of erasing it from the universe is the death of the Son of God. When I look upon that blood and see those horns sprinkled with those crimson drops, I remember that my sins were so great that nothing less than the death of God's dear Son could pay the price.

Do I want to repeat that which it cost—the breaking of His heart? Do I want to continue in that which brings grief and pain to His soul? Oh, no. So looking upon the cross, seeing the blood flow, I discern more and more of the hateful character of

sin, the terrible cost of sin that loosens the hold of sin upon the heart. And there is no sin, dear friends, no matter how habit-forming it may be, but what can be loosened by the application of the blood of Christ. So it is written:

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” Isaiah 1:18.

I’m thankful for the *cleansing* power of the blood of Christ. Isn’t God wonderful to give His life in Christ to wash away those sins from us? And as with the water so with the blood. We need repeated applications of the cleansing agents. One alone will not suffice. Day by day, the blood was sprinkled. Day by day, the blood must be sprinkled for us and upon us. Day by day, we must gain a deeper insight into the mysteries of redemption. Thus, day by day, sin will become more hateful to us.

No wonder He invites us to come to the sanctuary and there join in the services. Nothing we can do can atone for sin, but nothing that the Priest can do can take our sins away unless we share in His service, unless we share in the experience which He has provided. We must be purified by the blood of sprinkling. The blood must be dropped upon *us*. We must sense the awful character of sin, the great price of our redemption until we love Him so much that we would not offend Him by one single act till we hate sin so much that we would not want again to defile our hands or hearts by participation in it. That love for *Him* will grow as we see the blood flow. That hatred for sin will grow as we see what it has cost at Calvary.

And so it is written:

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross” *The Desire of Ages*, page 83.

Now, that third agency: the fire. The fire upon the altar of burnt offering was kindled by God Himself. There, parts of the sacrifices that had been slain were placed upon the altar and were consumed. Let's get a picture of this work:

“And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his

own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD" Leviticus 1:1–9.

The offering must be voluntary. As the man put his hand upon the lamb or goat or bullock, he was saying, "This is me." This is to be accepted in my behalf. This is to represent me. This is to die for me. It shall be accepted for him. The animal was separated, it says, "unto his parts." There was a washing of water, and then administration of the blood, and then, finally, these various parts placed on the altar were burnt in the fire until they were consumed. Thus in this sacrifice, each one of the three agencies of cleansing were used—the water, the blood, and the fire. God sought through these three agencies to make plain to Israel how important the work of cleansing is, and how thorough it must be and the provision that God had made to do it. Speaking directly of this figure, the apostle Paul says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"
Romans 12:1.

Isaac was placed upon the altar there on Mount Moriah. That young man was *literally* there on the altar. Paul tells us to present our bodies a living sacrifice. It might be helpful for us for a few moments to think about presenting our bodies upon the altar, *piece by piece*. As we read there in Leviticus, the sacrificed animal was separated into its parts. God wanted Israel to get the picture of deliberate, thorough, methodical, *consecration* of the life to God—piece by piece, part by part.

Here are my hands. Shall they go on the altar? Well, if my hands are laid on the altar, I won't be slapping anyone, will I? No. There are some letters that a consecrated hand could never write. There are some pieces that consecrated fingers could never play on the musical instrument. And we could go on through the many, many things that our hands are invited to do from day to day.

But, my friends, this work of consecration is not just negative. It *is* negative. Again and again, the voice from Sinai thunders in our ears, "Thou shalt not." *Never* be lulled to sleep by this tranquilizer that comes from the Devil's pharmaceutical

house, which complains about negative commands. There are plenty of them in the Ten Commandments. They have their place. But the negatives are to clear the way so the positives may be carried out. And our hands were not made to be idle. As we place them in our imagination upon the altar, we recall Paul's words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living* sacrifice."

Isaac mounted the altar and was bound, *expecting* to be consumed. But instead of giving his life in sacrifice upon an altar, he gave the rest of his life to service in God's cause. That's the way God wants to use our hands. Is there work for us to do? Oh, yes. You nurses, up at the sanitarium, how much of nursing is a ministry of the hand? Isn't it true? Nearly everything's done with your hands. The bathing of the patient, the hydrotherapy treatments, the bringing of the water to drink, the charting of what has been done, and so on and on. And oh how soothing to a tired patient in pain is the stroke of a loving hand. Oh friends, there's work enough to keep our hands busy. What do you say?

And then in the home, think of the toiling mother from morning to night using her hands in ministry. She's preparing the food, washing the dishes, sweeping the floors, helping the little ones with all their many needs. Hands, hands, hands. I beseech you—present your hands to Jesus. Place them on the altar. If He wills that you shall be a martyr, all right. If He is willing rather that those hands shall be used for His service, how wonderful.

Shall we put our feet on the altar? Oh, yes. And you can let your imagination run through the many things that feet do. I remember when I was a little fellow in Sabbath School, we sang a song:

"Little feet be careful
Where you take me to;
Anything for Jesus
Only let me do."

Those feet are consecrated feet; they've been bought with the blood of Jesus, and I've placed them upon the altar.

What about our eyes? Shall we put them on the altar? Yes. I think that would take care of the TV problem. What do you say? Oh, yes. A consecrated eye will look only at that which Jesus would look at. If Jesus were a guest in our home, we would want to present while *He* was there only that which would please Him. Is He a guest in our home? I trust so. These eyes are dedicated to Him.

So with our reading: books, magazines. So with what we look at from day to day. Going down the highway even the billboards have much that's not advertising Heaven. How much we need to pray the prayer of David:

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken
Thou me in Thy way" Psalm 119:37.

Our eyes are on the altar. They're on the altar.

What about our ears? Yes. That would take care of the radio, wouldn't it? It might cause us to turn off some programs. And it might be if a neighborhood gossip is starting to tell us some juicy tale. We might say, "Wait a minute, please. My ears are not for that." Oh, but they might get offended. I think if it's done in a kind way, they might get help. What do you say? Our ears have been placed upon the altar. They've been touched with the blood of sprinkling.

Well, you can go through the whole body, my friends. From head to foot, inside and out. I know this, friend: if a man's lungs have been placed upon the altar, they'll never be poisoned with tobacco that gives him lung cancer. If a man's stomach has been placed upon the altar, it'll never be poisoned with liquor or these other poisons that inflame the lining of the stomach and passing on into the bloodstream, harden the liver, weaken the heart and do their damage all through. Yes, from head to foot, inside and outside, we're to be placed upon the altar.

Let's go a little farther than merely these bodies. What about our property? Is it a good thing to put it on the altar? Our automobiles, our houses, our furniture? *Everything* we have, on the altar.

Someone says, "I thought that what went on the altar was burned up—consumed."

Everything in us and around us is going to be consumed one way or the other. We're either going to be used up in the service of self or used up in the service of Jesus. When we leave this world, whether to Heaven or the lake of fire, we shall not take with us a single house or a single automobile. Even these bodies will either be consumed in the lake of fire or if we're faithful, we shall receive immortal bodies that will *never* know the weariness and decay of these present bodies. I repeat: We're either going to be used up ourselves and all we have in *this* world or else we're going to be used up in the service of Christ. So if our property gets consumed in the service of Jesus, isn't that better than having it burnt up in the fires of the last day?

You know we're told about Noah, that as he preached and built that ark, it took him 120 years. But the time finally came when he walked into that ark and got ready. Seven days later it started to rain. Do you know how much of Noah's property was destroyed in the flood? Not a bit. We're told by Inspiration *all* that he had he invested in the Ark. Isn't that wonderful? Have you ever thought of the *faith* it must have taken, and the sacrifice involved in selling the last thing he had, in drawing the last bit of money he had in the bank out, and spending it for some nails or some paint or whatever it took to finish that ark? Wasn't that was an act of faith? Wasn't that an act of sacrifice?

It's one thing, friends, to give our surplus, and that's good. But Noah gave not merely his surplus; he gave *all* he had. The sacrifice was completely consumed. And I'm sure that as the lightning flashed and the thunder roared and the rain fell and the floods rose, Noah was so thankful that all that he had was invested in the Ark. What do you say?

How will it be with you, my friend? As the storms of the last day come, and even now we hear the rumblings of the approaching thunder, where will your assets be?

You can have them *consumed* upon the altar in God's work, or you can witness their destruction while you weep futile tears when it's forever too late. Let's put ourselves and our all upon the altar. And when we do that, God may say, as in the case of Isaac on Mount Moriah, "Well, you have given everything. Instead of burning you up right now, I want to use you. I want you to be a living witness, a living sacrifice."

But the time to make the surrender is before we know what God's going to do with us. Never try to bargain with God. Place everything right there on the altar.

And even if God wants to use us, there is so much in our lives and characters that need to be changed, that needs to come out. And what an agency fire is in cleansing, in cauterizing. One of the ways they deal with skin cancers is to operate on them with electric cauterizing. That's a cleansing by fire, isn't it?

Are you willing to pray the prayer, "Refining fire, go through my life?"

Turn over to the third chapter of Malachi. I want you to see something interesting there. This is in close connection with the sanctuary service as you'll note from the first verse:

"...The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple" Malachi 3:1.

This is speaking specifically of the coming of Jesus to the Most Holy Place in 1844. Now notice the second verse:

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire... And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" Malachi 3:2-3.

Placed there by the Creator, there is pure gold in every one of us. But oh, what a mass of dross. Are we willing to have the refiner's fire purge out all the dross, all the selfishness, all the pride, all the worldly ambition so that nothing but pure gold can be left?

Well, there are the three agencies: The water that washes, the blood that purifies, the fire that refines, we need them all, friends. We need the blessed work that they represent.

"One thing I of the Lord desire!
For all my paths have miry been,
Be it by water or by fire,
O make me clean, O make me clean."

So wash me, Thou, without, within,
Or purge with fire, if that must be;
No matter how, if only sin
Die out in me, die out in me."

Is that your prayer this morning? We may not know what we ask, but we can choose that to be our prayer, and God will answer from day to day, taking us through the experiences that will purge from us the last trace of sin, until looking upon us the Savior shall see His own image reflected fully.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org