

**Trifling with Subtleties While Neglecting Certainties**  
*“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”*  
 Hebrews 9:15-22

I received the title of my message from a statement Charles Haddon Spurgeon made in an 1857 message where he describes three fools. The first is the ship’s captain who, in the middle of a storm that is wrecking his ship, is in his cabin below deck reading up on the different kinds of storms in the Atlantic. The second is a wounded soldier who questions the medic about the type of weapon that wounded him rather than the abilities of the medic to heal. The third is the sinner who considers the universe and the reason for the existence of evil, but does nothing to find healing within for his own sin (Hebrews 9:22).

**I. The Hebrews’ worship of God was based on the shedding of blood.**

Under the first covenant of Law, Moses took the blood of the sacrificial animals and sprinkled the “books of law,” the people and all the vessels in the Tabernacle (vs. 19-20). Why sprinkle with blood? Blood is the symbol of death. From the beginning, the Law prescribed that the wages of sin is death. When a Hebrew came to worship in the courtyard He saw blood and death, reminding him of his sin. We come to worship today in nice, immaculately clean, beautiful buildings. The Hebrews saw blood. On the white robes of the priests there was blood. On the ground and in basins there was blood. On the curtains and the vessels of the Tabernacle/Temple there was blood. The blood was everywhere. *“All things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.”*

**II. The blood of the covenant was the seal of the agreement between God and man.**

The ancient manner in which agreements were sealed gave them the name “blood covenants.” We get our term “blood brothers” from loyalty that comes through a common sharing of blood. When blood was shed in the sealing of an agreement the breaking of that agreement meant death. (Turn to Genesis 15.) God entered into an agreement with Abram and sealed it through sacrifice. So too, the Old Testament agreement between God and the Hebrews was sealed through blood. The Law agreement between God and the Hebrews was an “if you...then I” conditional agreement. If they violated the Law, the Hebrews perished. However, God allowed for the taking of another life (the substitutionary sacrifice) to represent the coming Sacrifice who would take away our sins.

**III. The unconditional New Covenant between God and His people is sealed with the blood of Christ.**

The promises of the New Covenant are manifold, but let me repeat some mentioned in Hebrews.

1. The ability to draw very near and close to the Father through faith in Christ (Hebrews 7:19).
2. The cleansing of the conscience from dead works to serve the Living God (Hebrews 9:14).
3. The guarantee that I will never be cut off from the goodness and mercy of God (Hebrews 7:25).
4. The promise that I will find abundant grace from God in my time of need (Hebrews 4:16).
5. The promise of an eternal inheritance, earned by Christ and given to me (Hebrews 9:15).

All these promises are sealed by the death of Jesus Christ. There may be times when I think my faith is weak, but it is His shed blood that guarantees my part in the New Agreement with God. It is my sin and His righteousness. It is my failure and His obedience. It is my judgment, His rewards.

When we come to the Lord’s Table it is a reminder of the New Agreement that we have with God. We are adopted into His family by faith in Christ and all the promises of God are ours through Him. So as we begin this New Year I challenge you to recognize the past and all its failures is sprinkled with the blood of the Son. My faith is in Christ’s work on behalf of sinners in the New Covenant.