

Kingdom Faith Ministries

International Newsletter



Teaching God's People To Hear The Voice Of The Lord

When He Was On The Cross, You Were In His Heart

*Pastor Paul Norcross
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In the season that we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we can't help but ponder what His suffering must have been like. To think that He would do this for you and me is staggering! The landmark film *The Passion of Christ* is a notable expression of some of these sufferings. But if we knew the full extent of our Lord's anguish and pain, we would not be able to bear seeing it or even hearing it in full detail. Oh how He loves us so much!

Even today as you are reading these words, our Savior is encouraging you to draw nearer to Him, to avail yourself of the benefits of His sacrifice. He wants us to still our heart to listen to His loving words into our spirit. Hebrews 12:25 tells us that He is always speaking, and He is always knocking at the door of your heart (Revelation 3:20) to see if you will open it for Him today. He is so wanting to lead you beside His still waters, so that He can restore your soul (Psalm 23:1-3) to commune with Him at His table. This is our Savior Who relentlessly pursues those for Whom He died. He makes contact with those Who, in all their busyness of life, will pause and acknowledge Him. He will direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6), and instantly respond to your call (Jeremiah 33:3). He came to prepare a place for you in the Spirit, so that where He is right now, you can be also (John 14:1-3). Would you like to spend some time with Him right now? What, in all this life, is more important than cultivating a sweet friendship with Jesus?

The Holy Spirit is our guide. Our guide to what? To the All Truth. What is the All Truth? The All Truth is Jesus! He is the way, the truth, and the life. Holy Spirit, please guide us into a deeper relationship with our Savior today! That is why You were given as a gift to us by our Master. Show us how to enter His throne room more quickly, more confidently, more faithfully today than we ever have before, in Jesus' name, amen!

From the garden

It was in the early night after dark had fallen in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus agonized in prayer over his upcoming arrest. The disciples slept, oblivious to the anguish He was going through. The anticipation of the torture that awaited Him, and the intense effort He needed to silence His troubled soul were all lost to our Savior's dearest

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friends. Each one slumbered, though twice the Lord woke them to plead for help in prayer. But seeing our salvation, Jesus pressed in to obey. Neither the intense agony of His soul, nor the calculated estimate of the pain, would deter Him from saying, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” be done (Matthew 26:39).

And so in the distance He heard the approaching sound of many soldiers and Jewish footsteps. It was time. From about ten o’clock or so in the evening, suddenly there was no retreat. As His dear friends each began to run away from Him in fear (Mark 14:50), Jesus was spitefully arrested, manhandled, probably kicked and pushed, scorned and spit upon as He was forcibly “escorted” to Annas, one of two high priests, and father of Caiaphas (John 18:13-14). Here he was unjustly accused. This was His first trial. During this time he was struck by an officer for suggesting the high priest ask others who had heard him teach.

Because this first trial before Annas was illegally held in the middle of the night, Jesus was next sent to Caiaphas’ house at daybreak (Luke 22:66; John 18:24). Having been up all night, and already weary even before the arrest before midnight (remember – the disciples couldn’t even watch one hour with Him in prayer in the garden!), dawn found Him thrust before Caiaphas after having already been “tried” by Annas. Now before Caiaphas, He was spit upon, hit with the bony palms of the hand, and mocked in an effort to get Him to prophesy the identity of who was striking Him while blindfolded (Matthew 26:65; Luke 22:64). The Greek wording used in Luke 22:64 suggests that he was hit repeatedly in the face with a bastinado type of stick. Found guilty of blasphemy against God, the Jewish leaders sentenced Him to death.

It was still early morning. Since Jewish trials were required to be held during the day, and since the next recorded event after Caiaphas was in Pilate’s hall of judgment “early in the morning,” we thus surmise that Caiaphas’ trial was at daybreak as soon as was legally possible (perhaps about 5:30 to 6:30am during that time of year in Jerusalem). This would suggest that the trial (now His third one, and having had no sleep at all through the entire night, and having been beaten in so many different ways) before Pilate in the hall of judgment occurred around 8am or so.

In front of Pilate, exhausted and abused, Jesus was quickly discovered to be a Galilean, whereupon Pilate sent Him to see King Herod, the ruler over Galilee who was visiting Jerusalem at the time (Luke 23:1-7). How much time had elapsed? The Scripture does not record a time until the end of the second encounter with Pilate, which it says was completed at the 6th hour (noon – John 19:14). But for the sake of discussion, knowing it was yet morning, we are well within reason to presume it was about mid-morning when Herod completed questioning, and then mocking Jesus with a purple robe (Luke 23:7-11).

The high priests and all other officials had to have been captivated with intrigue and glee as the morning’s events unfolded. At each trial before every official inquest, the religious leaders vehemently accused Jesus, and took every opportunity to portray our innocent Savior as a dangerous, seditious criminal. Now perhaps it is late morning, and Jesus is again back in front of Pilate (Matthew 27:19-26; Luke 23:11-25; John 18:28-19:16). Pilate does not want to convict Jesus, having found no fault in Him. Even Pilate’s wife sent word of her dream to her husband, telling him to have nothing to do with Jesus. Pilate has Jesus brutally scourged and mocked as a king, hoping the Jews would relent and be satisfied with scourging as punishment instead of death (John 19:1-7), but when presented to them, the religious leaders became all the more incensed. Continued questioning from Pilate, as recorded in John 19:8-12, added to his desire to release Jesus. Jesus’ own words convinced Pilate that He was at least very remarkable, and fully innocent of crime, and perhaps even indeed not of this world.

Verse John 19:14 in this section gives a critical timeline benchmark which is crucial to this discussion.

John 19:13-14

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

*And it was the preparation of the passover, **and about the sixth hour**: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

The sixth hour is, in Hebrew reckoning of the day, the sixth hour past daybreak. In other words, it was about noontime. At noon, Pilate condemned Jesus after desperately trying to avoid passing judgment. Thus he washed his hands to symbolize (without validity) his hoped-for lack of culpability in the conviction, and gave Jesus over **at noon time, the sixth hour of the day** to be worked over by the Praetorium guard. These were Romans, a cohort “band”

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consisting of approximately 600 soldiers.¹ They were not only distinguished as fierce warriors amidst Rome's most troublesome of lands (Jerusalem), but possessing them were perhaps the most vicious evil spirits that the devil could assemble in one place. Jesus is the devil's arch enemy. Every vile, evil spirit of masochistic, sadistic, homosexual perversion would have been used against Jesus at this time. It was noon time, and the next event recorded which has a definite mention of a timetable occurs in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:25 **at the third hour of the day**, when Jesus was finally led out to be crucified.

Why are these time benchmarks significant? Because from the condemnation, sentencing, and turning over of Jesus by Pilate to the Praetorian Guard at noon (the 6th hour) until the next day's 3rd hour (9am) leading of Jesus out to be crucified, the Praetorian Guard had Jesus at their mercy. This was a period of about 21 hours! It would have been filled with horrendous torture!

Romans typically scourged and beat prisoners they were going to execute by crucifixion in order to eliminate all resistance to the nailing process at the cross. The idea was to torture and break the victim so completely that there would remain no capacity to justify oneself, no ability to continue proclaiming the cause for which sedition, political or religious heresy had been charged. The authorities wanted no grandstanding of the criminal's words to get to the ears of the people during the public march from prison to the site of execution, and thus they scourged each victim into horrific humility.

But in Jesus' case, there was far more merciless intent. Satan was having his day, and He would be relentless. It was during this 21 hour time period with the Praetorian Guard that all the facial hair on Jesus' beard would have been ripped off, as prophesied in Isaiah 50:6. It would have been during this time that the other prophecies of Isaiah would have been administered – rendering his form completely unrecognizable (Isaiah 52:14).

By the time that Pilate washed his hands and condemned Jesus to die after having already scourged His back to bloody pulp, it had been about fourteen hours (from 10pm arrest in the garden to noon the next day). But now from noon's (the 6th hour) condemnation from Pilate until the next 3rd hour (9am) at which the crucifixion occurred, there was yet all afternoon of torture at the hands of the Guard, and then all evening past midnight -- the murderous, malicious evil continued. And finally from midnight through morning until the 3rd hour when finally Jesus was dragged out to Calvary – a total of about 35 hours of continuous trials and torture had elapsed **before** the actual cross. Now physically incapable of carrying the cross, the Biblical record states that they compelled one Simon of Cyrene to bear it for Him. Adding in the six hours on the cross (from the 3rd hour to the 9th hour), Jesus' total time as our sacrificial lamb would have been exactly (or just over) forty hours.

Can you imagine what He really went through during these hours? Can you imagine how many times He would have died while His flesh was being ripped off his back, buttocks, and legs with each stroke of the bone and metal-encrusted scourge whips? What about the violations to every organ and orifice in his body? The continuous pain and suffering for your sins and mine – can we really even imagine the horror? How many brutal punches did He receive to His kidneys, for example? How many times were his joints pulled from their sockets? The Scriptures declare that no bone would be broken in His body, but that still leaves multiple and hideous injuries gleefully inflicted by evil spirits operating in over 600 soldiers for over 21 hours. I am convicted in tears at the degree of His suffering for me. How He loved us then! How he loves us right now, today!

Anyone of us would have died long before making it to the cross, yet our Savior willed Himself to stay alive until the price was paid in full. He only needed to die via shedding of His blood to be our Savior from sin. This already would have happened at the hands of the guards in the common hall. Yet He willed to stay alive through all those hours of pre-execution torture because only at the tree could our curses be overcome. We learn from Galatians that He had to be hung on the tree (the cross) to legally overcome our curses. Had Jesus died before the tree of Calvary during the torture by the guards, we would still have had salvation. His perfect, shed blood accomplishes this. But we would not have gained the ability to overcome our curses, a primary weapon of satan even today.² From a legal standpoint, only

¹ E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, footnote at Matthew 27:27.

² Most Christians tend to be oblivious to the effect of curses, and they assume they have all been paid for once and for all. But just like our healing was paid for on the cross (Matthew 8:17), we must continue to walk in and claim our deliverance from curses as

crucifixion on a tree could break the legality of curses used by satan against God's people (Galatians 3:13) on a regular basis. Jesus had to do more than die just anywhere. He had to die on a tree in order to complete the full measure of our deliverance. It took every ounce of our Savior's physical and mental effort to even get to the cross in order to declare "it is finished."

How precious is our Savior's blood! How dearly He looked to the day when God's people could be free from the enemy's grip! How deeply He loved us even in our desperately sinful state of separation from God! How he longed to make us one with Him and the Father! How could any man but Him utter in His final pain-wracked moments, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?"

In this celebration time of the resurrection of our dear Savior, our Brother, and our Friend, Jesus Christ, we cannot help but be in awe of His love to go through what He did for us.

...that they may be one, even as we are one³

Embedded deep within every soul is the desire to be one with our heavenly Father. We are created for His glory, and through intimate fellowship with Him, the urgent craving of our heart for oneness with our Creator becomes satisfied. The quest for recognition, the search for meaning, and the longing for purpose drives every soul, but finds no fulfillment until each one embraces the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Master Architect of our purpose.

Pause and acknowledge Him. He is in our next breath. He stirs the chords of joy and peace with each sip from His cup. There is life beyond our eyes, and fulfillment of all human desire beyond our consciousness. It rests in the Spirit of the Living God, Who reaches out to all who will pause and consider that His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts deeper than our thoughts. We become still to know Him. We quiet ourselves to address Him. We linger, listening for His whispered replies. We labor to enter His rest, ever accessible when we walk in the coolness of the day with Him.

There is no limit to His universe. There is no boundary that constrains Him. He created us for fellowship with Him, but left each of us to seek Him out by faith. How He longs for us to draw near! How He searches the world over for each ripening heart, ready for the Master's harvest. He is One. He broods over each precious soul, awaiting the fruit of years of patient labor, and continual investment of His love.

Quietly beside the still waters, He restores our soul.⁴ He heals every disease, and strengthens every heart. He quickens our spirit, awaiting our willingness to tune our hearts to the frequency of His. He sustains, uplifts, and romances all who let down their nets in obedience to His counsel. "Do you love Me?" He inquires again and again. "Will you linger and converse with Me, and let me share My heart?" Daily searching the earth for perfect hearts,⁵ His is an invitation that only calcified hearts can ignore – ones that are hardened by sin, by contrary doctrinal walls, by deeply buried roots of mistrust, or merely by neglect to spend time with the One we are to love above all else.

Lovers are lost in each other. So too is the Lord lost in us, if we let Him. Is life too important to stop what you are doing this day, to spend an hour with Him? With penetrating love, He asks each soul directly, honestly, yearningly --

...could ye not watch with me one hour?

With you in His deep love,

Paul & Rita Norcross

we encounter them, just like we must do for our healing whenever we encounter sickness. See *Turning Curses To Blessings*, by Pastor Carl Fox, available in the bookstore on the Kingdom Faith Ministries website for more details on dealing with curses.

³ This section adapted from *Five Keys To Deeper Intimacy* by Pastor Paul Norcross, available from the Kingdom Faith Ministries Bookstore, or e-mail us directly at kingdom8@juno.com.

⁴ Psalm 23:2-3

⁵ 2 Chronicles 16:9

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*The Blood of the Lamb*⁶

1. **The Power Is In The Blood**

- **Gen 3: 21** – God’s 1st step to help Adam/Eve after they had sinned was to provide clothing.
 - Why? Protection = both spiritual and physical
 - What? 1. Physical clothing (animal skins)
2. Spiritual (blood shed from animal skins)

- **Levit 17:11** – the life (soul life = *nephesh*) is in the blood.
 - Blood carries authority in life –
 - Lev 17:11 – life is in the blood
 - Ex 12:7, 12, 13, 23 – the destroyer passes over when he sees the blood
 - Heb 9:18-22 – there is no remission of sins without the blood (remission = *freedom*; (figuratively) *pardon*: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission).
 - Rev 19:13 – Jesus is clothed in blood

 - Blood carries authority in death – Gen 4: 10- 12; 9:6; Rom 3:15

2. **The Victory Is In The Blood**

- Rev 12:11 - *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*
- Not Just Any Blood will do it - Perfect Blood is needed – Heb 9:25; 10:4; I Pet 1:19
- What Jesus’ blood does:
 1. It is the means of purchase/ownership by God – Acts 20:28; Rom 3:25
 2. We are justified by His blood (just as if we had never sinned) – Rom 5:9
 3. We are redeemed by His blood – Eph 1:7; Col 1:14
 4. We are made near by His blood – Eph 2:13
 5. Our peace comes by His blood – Col 1:20
 6. We are reconciled (to bring back together what has been separated) by His blood – Col 1:20
 7. The power of death is destroyed by His blood – Heb 2:14
 8. We are protected by His blood (priest could enter Holy of Holies) – Heb 9:7, 12-14
 9. We have boldness through His blood – Heb 10:19
 10. Our New Covenant is by His blood – Heb 13:12; 12:24 – Jesus is mediator of
 11. We are sanctified (sep apart and made holy) by His blood – Heb 13:12, I Pet 1:2
 12. We are cleansed from sin by His blood – I Jn 1:7; Rev 1:5
 13. We are made one by His blood – Acts 17:26

3. **How The Blood is Applied**

- Rom 3:25; Heb 11:28 – through faith, just like our healing, deliverance from curses, etc.
- Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; I Cor 11:25-27; I Cor 10:16 – Communion wine is participation in His blood

⁶ This study guide on the blood of Jesus Christ is published on the Kingdom Faith Ministries Int’l website. See the School of Ministry tab when you visit the site, and look for the notes from Pastor Paul’s *Living Free* seminar.

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- John 6:53-56 – drink His blood daily, eat His flesh. These refer to the earlier analogy in this chapter regarding gathering the Bread of Life daily as manna for the day. This means that we are to have conversations with Him daily. This is further illuminated in I John 1: 3-7.

I John 1:3-7

*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

*If we say that we have **fellowship** with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship** one with another, **and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son** cleanseth us from all sin.*

The benefits of the blood in these Scriptures are in the context of the fellowship which we keep with the Lord and thereby with the Father. In essence, the application of the blood is through the fellowship it affords. It is not in an Old Testament sense of "applying the blood" as on the lintels and doorposts (even though we often make it analogous to the lintels and doorposts of the heart), nor "pleading the blood" as in a declaration of faith and authority in the name of Jesus Christ (which is a lot more New Testament in character). But the blood is more literally enabled by the fellowship we keep with God and with His Son, Jesus Christ. The cleansing of sin through the blood is for a purpose: fellowship. And all the power of our ability to live and move and have our being in Him is wrapped up in the ongoing work of His blood. Thus the essence of faith in His blood, is actively living the relationship which it purchased.

There are so many wonderful books about the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. But I must say that nearly every book which I have read so far tends to focus on spiritualizing Old Testament understanding of the blood in order to upgrade it to work by faith in the New Testament. In each such attempt, though full of good learning, there is a missing piece. It is this: the fullest New Testament application of the blood occurs through the fellowship that we keep with Jesus Christ and with the Father according to John 6 and I John 1: 5-9. This is new revelation to the church for this generation. Others are hearing it in other places – it is not exclusive to this author, but it is a revelation for this day and hour to increase the utilization of the power of the blood of the Lamb.

2. Conclusion

When the church gets a good grip on their personal fellowship with Jesus Christ, they will also gain both power over the enemy, and divine favor, like they have never seen before. What we have perceived formerly from Old Testament shadows about the blood will become a far more powerful and exquisite reality to the church. To gain an exit visa from the common experience of Christian wilderness wandering, we must learn to hear and obey the voice of the Lord, and gather our conversations with Him as daily manna from heaven. Christ's blood is the ink on our visa, and it provides both the legal authority and the access to our promised land of spiritual blessing. But the benefits of that blood are received not so much through the pleading of our souls, but through daily pillow talks with our First Love.

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