

Second, Cowper adds that because of Jesus' blood shed on the cross, we can "be saved to sin no more..." (v. 3) Once we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, His Spirit comes into our lives and He begins to change us. Don't get me wrong. God doesn't force us to grow in Christlikeness. It's still our choice. Our spiritual growth is not something we do to earn our salvation. Before Christ came in to our lives, we always leaned toward sin. But now we can choose to tap into His indwelling power and begin to live Godly lives. I think this is what Cowper is getting at in verse 3 when he says, "Redeeming love has been my theme and will be 'til I die."

The same is true of our walk with God. Can we be saved more than we were the first day of our salvation? No. But can we grow in salvation? Can we become more and more like Jesus? Yes! With His power we can learn to say "No" to sin and temptation. Our salvation is both a done deal and a daily development. Because Jesus' sacrifice was indeed the perfect sacrifice, we no longer sacrifice animals.

Many of us have a hard time admitting our need for the cleansing blood of Jesus. In God's eyes we are all sinners and deserving of judgment. However, because of Jesus' blood shed on the cross, we can lose all our guilty stain. And, because of Jesus' blood shed on the cross, we can be saved to sin no more.

As we come to the Lord's Table and partake His bread and cup, we remember His body and blood and His sacrifice for our sins. As we remember this, as we receive His body and blood during the communion, please remember that it is our call to partake His body and blood with others. In other words, it is our tasks to invite our family members, friends, or neighbors to Jesus, so they can lose all their guilty stain and be saved as well. Let us give thanks for Jesus' saving grace for us by His blood and remember that it is our commission to invite our friends and neighbors to Jesus.

August 13, 2017

Great Hymns of the Faith

There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood

Hebrews 9:11-25, 28

Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended a large community church. When he came home his wife asked him how it was. "Well," the farmer said, "It was good. But, they did something different. They sang praise songs instead of hymns." "Praise choruses," said his wife, "What are those?" The farmer said, "Well, they are sort of like hymns, only different." His wife asked, "In what way? What's the difference?" The farmer said, "Well, it's like this. If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn.' Well, that would be a hymn. But, if I were to say to you, 'Martha, Martha, Martha, Oh Martha, Martha, Martha, the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows the white cows, the black and white cows, the Cows, Cows, Cows are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, the Corn, Corn, Corn.' Then if I repeat the whole thing two or three times, well, that would be a praise chorus."

The next weekend, the farmer's nephew, a young, new Christian from the city came to visit and attended his uncle's small country church. He went home and his mother asked him how it was. "Well," said the young man, "It was good. But they did something different. They sang hymns instead of praise choruses." "Hymns," asked his mother, "What are those?" The young man said, "They are sort of like praise songs, only different." His mother asked, "Well, what's the difference?" The young man said, "Well, it's like this - If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' - well, that would be a praise chorus. But, if, on the other hand, I were to say to you: 'Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry. Inclined thine ear to the words of my mouth; Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by...to the righteous and glorious truth. For the way of the animals who can explain? There in their heads is no shadow of sense! Harkenest they in God's sun or His rain, unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced. They all my mild Chilliwack sweet

corn have chewed. So look to that bright shining day by and by, where all foul corruptions of earth are reborn, where no vicious animals make my soul cry. And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.'

Which one do you like? hymns? or praise songs? I think some of you prefer to sing old hymns, while others prefer to sing contemporary praise songs. I like blended and diverse music during our worship service. I am so grateful that our church has a blended worship service.

This morning I would like to think of one of the great hymns. Today's hymn, *'There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood,'* was written by William Cowper. He was Pastor's Kid. Cowper's mother was descended from British royalty. Her family's wealth made it possible to have a large library in their home. Mrs. Cowper used it to expose William to the best poetry and literature of the day. As they spent together in the family library, Cowper became very close to his mother. When she died giving birth to one of his siblings he was deeply affected. Cowper developed an extreme depression. The loss and sorrow of his mother's death plagued him all his life. In fact, as a young man he became so ill emotionally, that he attempted suicide three times. And because of this he was confined in a facility for the mentally ill called St. Albans. While he was there, his brother visited him regularly. Through those visits his brother eventually led William to embrace a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Shortly after that Cowper was discharged and he began his career as a poet living in Cambridge.

Cowper was inspired to write this hymn from Zechariah 13:1, *"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity."* This verse prophesies Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. I would like to explore important Biblical truths from Cowper's hymn.

First, because of Jesus' blood shed on the cross, we can *"lose ALL our guilty stains."* (v. 1) Blood was a key symbol in the Jewish

sacrificial system. In Leviticus 17:11, God says, *"It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."* God organized this sacrifice as a way to wash away the stain of our sin. In order to pay for human's sin, an innocent animal had to be killed. In fact, this was symbolic. Killing animals didn't really atone for sin. It didn't actually make us pure. Hebrews 10:4 says, *"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* So all those animal sacrifices were merely foreshadowing the blood that would be shed by the one true and perfect sacrifice. Only a perfect human could really pay the price for our sins.

Jesus was and is the sinless, innocent Lamb of God, who died on the cross in our place. As Cowper put it in his hymn, the actual price of our redemption was blood *"...drawn from Immanuel's veins."* (v. 1) Today's text, Hebrews 9:11-12 says, *"Jesus came as High Priest of this better system which we now have. He once and for all took blood into that inner room, the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; but it was not the blood of goats and calves. No, He took His own blood and with it He, by Himself, made sure of our eternal salvation."*

In our body blood takes oxygen and other supplies to cells and removes waste and impurities from those same cells. Blood literally cleans out the filth from our body. Blood can purify our bodily system. Likewise, the blood of Jesus can get rid of our soul's filth and shame.

Cowper says in his old hymn, *"...sinners plunged beneath that flood can indeed lose all their guilty stains."* (v. 1) Because of Jesus' blood we can be pure in God's eyes. When we ask Jesus to forgive us, when we put our faith in Him, we can be cleansed of all our sin, all our faults and failures and all our sins of commission and omission. In short, we get credit for His righteousness and for His sinless sacrifice. When we put our faith in Him, we can be forgiven and washed clean.