

# THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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## There is Power in the Blood

Dan Huff

*There is Power in the Blood.* How many times have we sung that song? For me, it has been numerous. How often do you think about the words of that song and what they mean in your life?

*What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15).*

Paul encourages and admonishes us to sing with our spirit and understanding – using our intellect, our minds, and putting our innermost being, the core of who we are, in our singing. I realize the words in most of our songs are words of men, but most have their roots in the Word of God. We teach and admonish one another when we sing spiritual songs praising the Father (**Colossians 3:16-17**).

The words are there to edify and teach. Do we just hear the words, or are we listening? Do we just let the words roll off our tongues without a second thought? Or are we engaging our brains, considering the words and what they mean to us?

There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ! What does that mean? How does that work? God revealed to Noah and the world that life is in the blood (**Genesis 9:4**). *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient...” (Isaiah 1:18 -19a).*

Those of you who have tried to remove blood stains from clothing know it is very difficult to do. Here is the wisdom and power of God: the blood of Jesus can wash sins that are as red as crimson, that a soul should be as white as wool. If they be like scarlet, He can make them as white as snow!

Zechariah speaks of a day when a fountain would be open, made available to wash sin and uncleanness (**Zechariah 13:1**). God was preparing and revealing His plan and will for man; He made it known, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little (**Isaiah 28:10**).

The inspired writer writes that under the Old Covenant the blood of bulls and goats were required by God. But why? To

show us our need for Jesus:

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14-15).*

There is power to live! Live, not according to the old man, but as a new man, to serve God appropriately in newness of the Spirit (**Ephesians 4:20-24; Galatians 2:20; Romans 7:6**). The power of a transformed life!

There is power in the blood of Christ to wash away my sins (**Revelation 1:5; 7:14**). Power to escape the dangers and

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corruption that leads to death (**Romans 6:23**). Justification and salvation from wrath are through His blood (**Romans 5:9**). Redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood (**Ephesians 1:7**). He purchased the church with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**).

How does this happen? We come in contact with the blood of Christ by faith (**John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6**). That faith is a trust and confidence in the Gospel of Christ, and prompts our response to His commands. Where did Jesus give His blood? Was it not in His death?

Consider the Apostle Paul’s teaching,

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we*

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also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin (**Romans 6:3-7**).

Please note we are:

- Baptized into His death (verse 3).
- Buried with Him through baptism into death (verse 4).
- United together (with Him) (verse 5).

Christ, in essence, says, "I will meet you in the watery grave of baptism," setting one free from the chains of sin and the burden of guilt for our iniquity. We can have a clean conscience before God. Baptism is our answer to God, for we have obeyed His commands (**1 Peter 3:21**). Paul continues in **Romans 6:11-14**, describing what results is death to sin, but being alive in service to God through Jesus Christ. "*For sin shall not have dominion over you*" (**verse 14**). There is power over sin. Christians should reign over their bodies and desires.

All of this is available to you! Faithful Ananias brought this message to Saul of Tarsus, who had been fasting and praying for three days (**Acts 9:9, 11**). It is as true today as it was then.

*"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord!"* (**Acts 22:16**).

Have you called on the Lord to wash away your sins in baptism? If not, why not? What are you waiting for? How may we assist you? There is power in the blood of Jesus!

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## Weaning Ourselves

Kevin Crittenden

I am writing this article at the beginning of 2023, a time when we make resolutions to improve the quality of our lives. Many of these resolutions have to do with our physical well-being – e.g., diet, exercise, and plastic surgery. But what about our SPIRITUAL well-being? Do we give much thought to that?

The anonymous writer of Hebrews was certainly concerned

about the lack of spiritual progress he saw in the churches. And the problem was NOT with the teachers.

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil* (**Hebrews 5:11-14**).

Ouch! I think the author was somewhat miffed at those people who had been in the church long enough to know the basic truths of Christianity **but then willfully stopped learning!** He wanted to build on that elementary foundation but couldn't because those people weren't prepared. You can't teach Algebra II to somebody that hasn't mastered Algebra I.

We think of stunted growth or arrested development in our bodies as a tragedy, whether physical or emotional – like achondroplasia, Rett syndrome, phobias or debilitating depression. But what about arrested spiritual growth? Is that not also a tragedy?

Just before the verses already quoted, the author of Hebrews wrote this about Jesus:

*Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek* (**Hebrews 5:8-10**).

The author mentions Melchizedek in verse 10 and is about to compare Christ's ministry with Melchizedek's but sadly remembers that many of his hearers have not grown enough spiritually to "get it." Therefore, he takes a detour starting in verse 11, and issues a warning to the spiritually immature, saying, "We have much to say about this [i.e., the way Melchizedek prefigures Christ], but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn."

Do you think that the author felt like he was essentially wasting his time on trying to teach people who weren't ready? Certainly, he says in verse 11, "*you no longer try to understand*" which makes it seem like those people weren't **incapable** of understanding, just **unwilling** to put in the effort.

If the author could see our churches today, would he have the same concerns?

How many of us today think, “We’ve gone over all this before; I already know all this?” How many of us today think, “This teacher is uninspiring; I can’t learn anything from him?” How many of us today respond to different thoughts and interpretations with, “Well, that’s not what I was taught,” and stop listening?

Are we driven more by maintaining traditions than spiritual seeking, like the Judaizers in the early churches that insisted on maintaining Mosaic dietary restrictions and circumcision to be saved? The fact is, truth heard but not internalized and maintained will be lost to the hearer.

Jesus talks about this attitude in Matthew:

*Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables:*

**“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.**

*In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:*

**“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.**

*For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them’ (Matthew 13:12-15).*

Back at the beginning of **chapter 6** in **Hebrews**, the author mentions the basics that form the scaffolding of Christianity. And now he wants to build on that scaffolding.

*Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so (Hebrews 6:-1-3).*

Putting his money where his mouth is, the author says, “Let’s not rehash the basics again – it’s time to move on to territory that you ought to have been covering already. Put down that milk bottle, then, and sit at the adult’s table like a big boy.”

Some people today call themselves Christians but haven’t really grasped the concept. A case in point concerns the evangelist D. L. Moody. Some of you might have heard of him.

As the account goes, Moody was once approached by a

stumbling drunk on the street who slurred, “Mr. Moody, I’m one of your converts.” To which Moody replied, “You must be because you’re certainly not one of the Lord’s!

Christianity has basics, yes, but those basics, when **incorporated in our being**, stir a desire to know more about the Scriptures – not just to memorize more facts, not just to keep them in our head – but to ponder them in our hearts and allow them to inform our lives. Facts are finite, but the connections, concepts, the wonderment of it all create a lifelong desire to develop more deeply as a Christian.

*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God (Psalm 42:1).*

Bon appetit!

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## Glory to God!

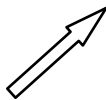
The brethren in **Kirkville, MO** rejoiced when **Elyse Salter** was baptized for the remission of her sins on March 26.

The **Rock Creek Church of Christ, Ottawa, KS**, praised God when **Brette Tharp** and **Bretley Madden** were baptized in the name of Christ. The brethren also gladly welcomed **Sheridan Barnes** as a member of the congregation.

## Blessed Are the Dead

**E.** Carolyn Rankin, 88, of Gardner, KS, passed away November 25, 2022. Carolyn was born September 24, 1934 to **Chester Arthur** and **Elma Violet (Hermon) Hoffine** on a farm northeast of Gardner. She was a life-long Gardner area resident. Carolyn married **T. Harold “Bunnee” Rankin** on May 14, 1954 in rural Gardner. She was a partner in her husband’s home construction business and helped manage their rental properties for many years. Carolyn was a seamstress and enjoyed painting, she took a number of classes at the Kansas City Art Institute in 1952-53. Carolyn was a member of the **Gardner Church of Christ**. She loved her family and friends and will be dearly missed. Carolyn was preceded in death by her husband, her parents and brother. She is survived by her

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three children, eight grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and her sister and brother-in-law.

**Betty Darlene James** left this earth to be with her savior on Wednesday, January 25. Darlene (as she was known by her friends) was born on a farm near Lucerne, Missouri, on November 26, 1934, to **John Hartley** and **Velma (Collins) Vorreiter**. She married **Hobart L. James** on May 25, 1952, at the Powersville Christian Church, Powersville, MO. After her marriage to Hobart, they lived in Washington, D.C. for approximately 3½ years and worked at the Pentagon. They moved back to Missouri after Hobart's tour of duty was over and they purchased Hobart's grandfather Charley James' farm southeast of Lucerne and began a farming career. To this union two children were born: **Marla (Robert) Head** of Pollock, MO, and **Marty (Paula) James** of Boonville, MO. After meeting Hobart, Darlene was baptized into Christ and at the time of her death was a member of the **Pollock Church of Christ**. Darlene was a devoted homemaker and loved to work with her garden and flowers. She kept her home immaculate and was a great cook. Darlene was preceded in death by her husband who died October 2, 1994. She is survived by her two children, five grandchildren, three great grandchildren, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Nadene Ruth Kelley**, age 87, a resident of Braymer, MO, passed away on Wednesday, April 5. Nadene was born the daughter of **Russell** and **Clastene (Culling) Goll** on August 18, 1935, in Braymer, MO. She was a 1953 graduate of Braymer High School. She was a homemaker and later worked for Leroy's Market in Braymer. Nadene was a member of the **Braymer Church of Christ**. She enjoyed crocheting, needlepoint, knitting, jigsaw puzzles, playing solitaire on her tablet, and cooking. Most of all, Nadene loved spending time with her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Survivors include three sons, eight grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, one brother two sisters-in-law, and

several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings.

## *Special Meetings*

### **2023 Meetings**

- May 27-28.....Murray Road, Lee's Summit, MO  
June 10-11.....Vandalia, IA  
July 3-7.....Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO  
July 23-28....Summer Meeting, Smart Road, Greenwood, MO  
September 2-3.....Labor Day Meeting, Pleasant Hill, IA  
October 6-8.....Fall Campout, Unionville, MO

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