

THE BLOOD-SHEDDING NO. 118

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1857
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”
Hebrews 9:22*

I WILL show you three fools. One is yonder soldier, who has been wounded on the field of battle, grievously wounded, well nigh unto death. The surgeon is by his side and the soldier asks him a question. Listen and judge of his folly. What question does he ask? Does he raise his eyes with eager anxiety and inquire if the wound be mortal, if the practitioner’s skill can suggest the means of healing, or if the remedies are within reach and the medicine at hand?

No, nothing of the sort. Strange to tell, he asks, “Can you inform me with what sword I was wounded and by what Russian I have been thus grievously mauled? I want,” he adds, “to learn every minute particular respecting the origin of my wound.” The man is delirious or his head is affected. Surely such questions at such a time are proof enough that he is bereft of his senses.

There is another fool. The storm is raging, the ship is flying impetuous before the gale, the dark scud moves swiftly overhead—the masts are creaking, the sails are torn to rags, and still the gathering tempest grows more fierce. Where is the captain? Is he busily engaged on the deck, is he manfully facing the danger, and skillfully suggesting means to avert it?

No, sir, he has retired to his cabin and there, and with studious thoughts and crazy fancies, he is speculating on the place where this storm took its rise. “It is mysterious, this wind. No one ever yet,” he says, “has been able to discover it.” And so reckless of the vessel, the lives of the passengers, and his own life, he is careful only to solve his curious questions. The man is mad, sir. Take the rudder from his hand. He is clean gone mad! If he should ever run on shore, shut him up as a hopeless lunatic.

The third fool I shall doubtless find among yourselves. You are sick and wounded with sin, you are in the storm and hurricane of Almighty vengeance, and yet the question which you would ask of me, this morning, would be, “sir, what is the origin of evil?” You are mad, sir, spiritually mad. That is not the question you would ask if you were in a sane and healthy state of mind.

Your question would be—“How can I get rid of the evil?” Not, “How did it come into the world?” but “How am I to escape from it?” Not, “How is it that hail descended from heaven upon Sodom?” but “How may I, like Lot, escape out of the city to Zoar?” Not, “How is it that I am sick?” but “Are there medicines that will heal me? Is there a physician to be found that can restore my soul to health?”

Ah! you trifle with subtleties while you neglect certainties. More questions have been asked concerning the origin of evil than upon anything else. Men have puzzled their heads and twisted their brains into knots in order to understand what men can never know—how evil came into this world and how its entrance is consistent with divine goodness.

The broad fact is this—there is evil. And your question should be, “How can I escape from the wrath to come, which is engendered of this evil?” In answering that question this verse stands right in the middle of the way (like the angel with the sword, who once stopped Balaam on the road to Barak)—“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Your real want is to know how you can be saved. If you are aware that your sin must be pardoned or punished, your question will be, “How can it be pardoned?” and then point blank in the very teeth of your inquiry, there stands out this fact—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Mark you, this is not merely a Jewish maxim. It is a world-wide and eternal truth.

It pertains not to the Hebrews only, but to the Gentiles likewise. Never in any time, never in any place, never in any person, can there be remission apart from shedding of blood. This great fact, I say, is stamped on nature. It is an essential law of God's moral government. It is one of the fundamental principles which can neither be shaken nor denied. Never can there be any exception to it.

It stands the same in every place throughout all ages—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." It was so with the Jews. They had no remission without the shedding of blood. Some things under the Jewish law might be cleansed by water or by fire, but in no case where absolute sin was concerned was there ever purification without blood—teaching this doctrine, that blood, and blood alone, must be applied for the remission of sin.

Indeed the very heathen seems to have an inkling of this fact. Do not I see their knives gory with the blood of victims? Have I not heard horrid tales of human immolations, of holocausts, of sacrifices? And what mean these, but that there lies deep in the human breast, deep as the very existence of man, this truth—"that without shedding of blood there is no remission."

And I assert once more, that even in the hearts and consciences of my hearers there is something which will never let them believe in remission apart from a shedding of blood. This is the grand truth of Christianity and it is a truth which I will endeavor now to fix upon your memory. And may God by His grace bless it to your souls. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

First, let me show you the blood-shedding, before I begin to dwell upon the text. Is there not a special blood-shedding meant? Yes, there was a shedding of most precious blood, to which I must forthwith refer you. I shall not now tell you of massacres and murders, nor of rivers of blood of goats and rams.

There was a blood-shedding once, which did outrival all other shedding of blood by far. It was a man—a God—that shed His blood at that memorable season. Come and see it. Here is a garden dark and gloomy. The ground is crisp with the cold frost of midnight. Between those gloomy olive trees I see a man, I hear Him groan out His life in prayer.

Hearken angels, hearken men, and wonder. It is the Savior groaning out His soul! Come and see Him. Behold His brow! O heavens! Drops of blood are streaming down His face and from His body. Every pore is open and it sweats! but not the sweat of men that toil for bread. It is the sweat of one that toils for heaven—He "sweats great drops of blood"!

That is the blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. Follow that man further. They have dragged Him with sacrilegious hands from the place of His prayer and His agony, and they have taken Him to the hall of Pilate. They seat Him in a chair and mock Him. A robe of purple is put on His shoulders in mockery. And mark His brow—they have put about it a crown of thorns and the crimson drops of gore are rushing down His cheeks!

Ye angels! the drops of blood are running down His cheeks! But turn aside that purple robe for a moment. His back is bleeding. Tell me, demons who did this. They lift up the thongs, still dripping clots of gore. They scourge and tear His flesh, and make a river of blood to run down His shoulders! That is the shedding of blood without which there is no remission.

Not yet have I done—they hurry Him through the streets. They fling Him on the ground. They nail His hands and feet to the transverse wood, they hoist it in the air, they dash it into its socket, it is fixed, and there He hangs the Christ of God. Blood from His head, blood from His hands, blood from His feet! In agony unknown He bleeds away His life. In terrible throes He exhausts His soul.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." And then see! they pierce His side, and forthwith runs out blood and water. This is the shedding of blood, sinners and saints. This is the awful shedding of blood, the terrible pouring out of blood, without which for you and for the whole human race, there is no remission.

I have then, I hope, brought my text fairly out—without this shedding of blood there is no remission. Now I shall come to dwell upon it more particularly.

Why is it that this story does not make men weep? I told it ill, you say. Ay, so I did. I will take all the blame. But sirs, if it were told as ill as men could speak, were our hearts what they should be, we should bleed away our lives in sorrow.

Oh! it was a horrid murder. It was not an act of regicide. It was not the deed of a fratricide or of a parricide. It was—what shall I say?—I must make a word—a deicide. The killing of a God—the slaying of Him who became incarnate for our sins. Oh, if our hearts were but soft as iron, we must weep. If they were but tender as the marble of the mountains, we would shed great drops of grief.

But they are harder than the nether millstone. We forget the griefs of Him that died this ignominious death, we pity not His sorrows, nor do we account the interest we have in Him as though He suffered and accomplished all for us. Nevertheless, here stands the principle—“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Now, I take it, there are two things here. First, there is *a negative expressed*—“No remission without shedding of blood.” And then there is *a positive implied*, forsooth, with shedding of blood there is remission.

I. First, I say, here is A NEGATIVE EXPRESSION—there is no remission without blood—without the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is of divine authority. When I utter this sentence, I have divinity to plead. It is not a thing which you may doubt or which you may believe. It must be believed and received, otherwise you have denied the Scriptures and turned aside from God.

Some truths I utter, perhaps, have little better basis than my own reasoning and inference, which are of little enough value. But this I utter, not with quotations from God’s Word to back up my assertion, but from the lips of God Himself. Here it stands in great letters, “There is no remission.” So divine its authority.

Perhaps you will kick at it—but remember, your rebellion is not against me, but against God. If any of you reject this truth, I shall not controvert. God forbid I should turn aside from proclaiming His Gospel to dispute with men. I have God’s irrevocable statute to plead—here it stands—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

You may believe or disbelieve many things the preacher utters. But this you disbelieve at the peril of your souls. It is God’s utterance—will you tell God to His face you do not believe it? That were impious. The negative is divine in its authority—bow yourselves to it and accept its solemn warning.

But some men will say that God’s way of saving men, by shedding of blood, is a cruel way, an unjust way, an unkind way, and all kinds of things they will say of it. Sirs, I have nothing to do with your opinion of the matter. It is so. If you have any faults to find with your Maker, fight your battles out with Him at last.

But take heed before you throw the gauntlet down. It will go ill with a worm when he fights with his Maker, and it will go ill with you when you contend with Him. The doctrine of atonement, when rightly understood and faithfully received, is delightful, for it exhibits boundless love, immeasurable goodness, and infinite truth. But to unbelievers it will always be a hated doctrine. So it must be, sirs. You hate your own mercies. You despise your own salvation. I tarry not to dispute with you—I affirm it in God’s name—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

And note how *decisive this is in its character*—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” “But sir, can’t I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? If I weep, and plead, and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?” “No remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.”

“But sir, if I never sin again and if I serve God more zealously than other men, will He not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?” “No remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.” “But sir, may I not trust that God is merciful and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?” “No,” says the text, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” None whatever.

It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here, and if they are not based in blood and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air and dreams of the night. “There is no remission,” says

the text, in positive and plain words. And yet men will be trying to get remission in fifty other ways, until their special pleading becomes as irksome to us as it is useless for them.

Sirs, do what you like, say what you please, but you are as far off remission when you have done your best, as you were when you began, except you put confidence in the shedding of our Savior's blood, and in the blood-shedding alone, for without it there is no remission.

And note again how *universal it is in its character*. "What! I may not get remission without blood-shedding?" says the king, and he comes with a crown on his head. "May not I in all my robes, with this rich ransom, get pardon without the blood-shedding?" "None," is the reply. "None."

Forthwith comes the wise man, with a number of letters after his name—"Can I not get remission by these grand titles of my learning?" "None, none." Then comes the benevolent man—"I have dispersed my money to the poor and given my bounty to feed them—shall not I get remission?" "None," says the text, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

How this puts everyone on a level! My Lord, you are no bigger than your coachman. Sir, squire, you are no better off than John who ploughs the ground. Minister, your office does not serve you with any exemption—your poorest hearer stands on the very same footing. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." No hope for the best, any more than for the worst, without this shedding of blood.

Oh! I love the Gospel, for this reason among others, because it is such a leveling Gospel. Some persons do not like a leveling Gospel. Nor would I, in some senses of the word. Let men have their rank, and their titles, and their riches, if they will. But I do like, and I am sure all good men like, to see rich and poor meet together and feel that they are on a level. The Gospel makes them so.

It says, "Put away your moneybags, they will not procure you remission. Roll up your diploma, that will not get you remission. Forget your farm and your park, they will not get you remission. Just cover up that escutcheon, that coat of arms will not get you remission. Come, you ragged beggars, filthy off-scouring of the world, penniless. Come hither, here is remission as much for you, ill-bred and ill-mannered though you be, as for the noble, the honorable, the titled, and the wealthy. All stand on a level here." The text is universal—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

Mark too, *how perpetual my text is*. Paul said, "There is no remission." I must repeat this testimony too. When thousands of years have rolled away, some minister may stand on this spot and say the same. This will never alter at all. It will always be so—in the next world as well as this—no remission without shedding of blood.

"Oh yes there is," says one, "the priest takes the shilling and he gets the soul out of purgatory." That is a mere pretence. It never was in. But without shedding of blood there is no real remission. There may be tales and fancies, but there is no true remission without the blood of propitiation. Never, though you strained yourselves in prayer. Never, though you wept yourselves away in tears. Never, though you groaned and cried till your heart-strings break.

Never in this world, nor in that which is to come, can the forgiveness of sins be procured on any other ground than redemption by the blood of Christ. And never can the conscience be cleansed but by faith in that sacrifice. The fact is, beloved, there is no use for you to satisfy your hearts with anything less than what satisfied God the Father—without the shedding of blood nothing would appease His justice—and without the application of that same blood, nothing can purge your consciences.

II. But as there is no remission without blood-shedding, IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE IS REMISSION WITH IT.

Mark it well, this remission is a present fact. The blood having already been shed, the remission is already obtained. I took you to the garden of Gethsemane and the mount of Calvary to see the blood-shedding. I might now conduct you to another garden and another mount to show you the grand proof of the remission.

Another garden, did I say? Yes, it is a garden, fraught with many pleasing and even triumphant reminiscences. Aside from the haunts of this busy world, in it was a new sepulchre, hewn out of a rock

where Joseph of Arimathea thought his own poor body would presently be laid. But there they laid Jesus after His crucifixion.

He had stood surety for His people and the law had demanded His blood—death had held Him with a strong grasp. And that tomb was, as it were, the dungeon of His captivity, when, as the good shepherd, He laid down His life for the sheep.

Why, then, do I see in that garden an open, untenanted grave? I will tell you. The debts are paid, the sins are cancelled, the remission is obtained. How, think you? That great Shepherd of the sheep has been brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant and in Him also we have obtained redemption through His blood. There, beloved, is the first proof.

Do you ask further evidence? I will take you to Mount Olivet. You shall behold Jesus there with His hands raised like the High Priest of old to bless His people—and while He is blessing them, He ascends—the clouds receiving Him out of their sight. But why, you ask, oh why has He thus ascended and whither is He gone?

Behold He enters, not into the holy place made with hands, but He enters into heaven itself with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Now, therefore, we have boldness to draw near by the blood of Christ. The remission is obtained, here is proof the second. Oh believer, what springs of comfort are there here for you.

And now let me commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, “Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God. God is merciful and He will never damn a man forever.”

When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, “Oh! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone, for I have been thinking if God be merciful, God is just too. And what if, instead of being merciful to me, He should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God. Tell me how to be saved!”

Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers—that God could be just and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. “Ah!” said he, “Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that. I can rest on that. I cannot rest on anything else.” And it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ.

Meet a Muslim. He never had his sins forgiven. He does not say so. Meet an Infidel. He never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a Legalist. He says, “I hope they will be forgiven,” but he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this—that Christ, and Christ alone, must save by the shedding of His blood.

Let me tell a story to show how Christ saves souls. Mr. Whitefield had a brother who had been like him, an earnest Christian, but he had backslidden. He went far from the ways of godliness. And one afternoon, after he had been recovered from his backsliding, he was sitting in a room in a chapel house. He had heard his brother preaching the day before and his poor conscience had been cut to the very quick.

Said Whitefield’s brother, when he was at tea, “I am a lost man” and he groaned and cried, and could neither eat nor drink. Said Lady Huntingdon, who sat opposite, “What did you say, Mr. Whitefield?” “Madam,” said he, “I said, ‘I am a lost man.’” “I’m glad of it,” said she, “I’m glad of it.” “Your ladyship, how can you say so? It is cruel to say you are glad that I am a lost man.”

“I repeat it, sir,” she said, “I am heartily glad of it.” He looked at her, more and more astonished at her barbarity. “I am glad of it,” said she, “because it is written, ‘The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.’” With the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, “What a precious Scripture. And how is it that it comes with such force to me? Oh! madam,” said he, “madam, I bless God for that. Then He will save me. I trust my soul in His hands. He has forgiven me.”

He went outside the house, felt ill, fell upon the ground, and expired. I may have a lost man here this morning. As I cannot say much, I will leave you, good people. You do not want anything.

Have I got a lost man here? Lost man! Lost woman! Where are you? Do you feel yourself to be lost? I am so glad of it, for there is remission by the blood-shedding. O sinner, are there tears in your eyes? Look through them. Do you see that man in the garden? That man sweats drops of blood for you. Do you see that man on the cross? That man was nailed there for you.

Oh! if I could be nailed on a cross this morning for you all, I know what you would do—you would fall down and kiss my feet, and weep that I should have to die for you. But sinner, lost sinner, Jesus died for you—for you. And if He died for you, you cannot be lost—Christ died in vain for no one. Are you, then, a sinner? Are you convicted of sin because you believe not in Christ? I have authority to preach to you. Believe in His name and you cannot be lost.

Do you say you are no sinner? Then I do not know that Christ died for you. Do you say that you have no sins to repent of? Then I have no Christ to preach to you. He did not come to save the righteous—He came to save the wicked. Are you wicked? Do you feel it? Are you lost? Do you know? Are you sinful? Will you confess it?

Sinner! if Jesus were here this morning, He would put out His bleeding hands and say, “Sinner, I died for you, will you believe Me?” He is not here in person—He has sent His servant to tell you. Won’t you believe Him?

“Oh!” but you say, “I am such a sinner.” “Ah!” says He, “that is just why I died for you, because you are a sinner.” “But” you say, “I do not deserve it.” “Ah!” says He, “that is just why I did it.” Say you, “I have hated Him.” “But,” says He, “I have always loved you.” “But Lord, I have spit on Your minister and scorned Your Word.” “It is all forgiven,” says He, “all washed away by the blood which did run from My side. Only believe Me. That is all I ask. And that I will give you. I will help you to believe.” “Ah!” says one, “but I do not want a Savior.” Sir, I have nothing to say to you except this—“The wrath to come! the wrath to come!”

But there is one who says, “Sir, you do not mean what you say! Do you mean to preach to the most wicked men or women in the place?” I mean what I say. There she is! She is a harlot, she has led many into sin and many into hell. There she is. Her own friends have turned her out of doors. Her father called her a good-for-nothing hussy and said she could never come to the house again. Woman! Do you repent? Do you feel yourself to be guilty? Christ died to save you and you shall be saved.

There he is. I can see him. He was drunk. He has been drunk very often. Not many nights ago I heard his voice in the street, as he went home at a late hour on Saturday night, disturbing everybody. And he beat his wife too. He has broken the Sabbath. And as to swearing, if oaths are like soot, his throat must want sweeping bad enough, for he has cursed God often. Do you feel yourself to be guilty, my hearer? Do you hate your sins and are you willing to forsake them? Then I bless God for you. Christ died for you. Believe!

I had a letter a few days ago from a young man who heard that during this week I was going to a certain town. He said, “Sir, when you come, do preach a sermon that will fit me, for do you know, sir, I have heard it said that we must all think ourselves to be the wickedest people in the world, or else we cannot be saved. I try to think so, but I cannot, because I have not been the wickedest. I want to think so, but I cannot. I want to be saved, but I do not know how to repent enough.”

Now, if I have the pleasure of seeing him, I shall tell him, God does not require a man to think himself the wickedest in the world, because that would sometimes be to think a falsehood, there are some men who are not so wicked as others are. What God requires is this—that a man should say, “I know more of myself than I do of other people. I know little about them, and from what I see of myself, not of my actions, but of my heart, I do think there can be few worse than I am. They may be more guilty openly, but then I have had more light, more privileges, more opportunities, more warnings, and therefore I am still guiltier.”

I do not want you to bring your brother with you and say, “I am more wicked than he is.” I want you to come and say, “Father, I have sinned.” You have nothing to do with your brother William—whether he has sinned more or less. Your cry should be, “Father, I have sinned.” You have nothing to do with

your cousin Jane, whether or not she has rebelled more than you. Your business is to cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!” That is all. Do you feel yourselves lost? Again, I say, —

“Come and welcome, sinner, come!”

To conclude. There is not a sinner in this place, who knows himself to be lost and ruined, who may not have all his sins forgiven and “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” You may, though black as hell, be white as heaven this very instant. I know ’tis only by a desperate struggle that faith takes hold of the promise, but the very moment a sinner believes, that conflict is past. It is his first victory and a blessed one.

Let this verse be the language of your heart—adopt it and make it your own—

***“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
In Christ’s kind arms I fall;
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”***

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.