

# The Blessedness of The Altar: Part Three

## "The Out-Poured Blood"

In the past two articles we have been discussing how our heart becomes the altar upon which we offer up the Lamb in our circumstances. It is important to emphasize that the view of the altar we are taking in these articles is not something external to us, such as a long kneeler set in the front of a church where people go to pray. Rather, the altar we are discussing is the one in our hearts, where we choose to let Christ live through us in the daily realities of this life. We have likened this inward altar to those in the Old Testament temple where the priests would offer up lambs and other animals as a part of their worship. Jesus Himself told us that He would raise up His Body, the true temple, in Himself through His work on the Cross (John 2:19-22). Therefore, we are now the temple towards which those Old Testament types and shadows were pointing. We are the place where the Lord Himself dwells, and our hearts can become an altar upon which He lays down His Life for others through us.

One of the blessed things at the altars that may have caused the little birds to sing in Psalm 84:3-4 is the outpoured blood. Now, in terms of the physical appearance of the Old Testament Temple, the bloody altar looked tragic. It was the place where innocent animals lost their lives. The proof of this death was that the lifeblood of the animals stained the altars, and their blood was sprinkled everywhere (Leviticus 1:5). The evidence that the animal gave its life as a sacrifice was its outpoured blood. The sacrifice's blood was sprinkled extensively in the temple. It was sprinkled upon much of the furniture, vessels of worship, as well as the people (Leviticus 8:11). Leviticus 17:11 tells us that the life is in the blood. The shedding of blood from the carcass signified the release of the sacrifice's life to give life to another. Shed blood is given blood. Poured out life is given life. Paul said the dying of the Lord Jesus works in him so that Life can work in us (I Corinthians 4:12).

### The Precious Blood of the Lamb

It is human nature to carefully guard that which we hold precious. The more precious something is the greater care we take to protect it. It is easy to give away something that we don't need or care about. We willingly cast it away without another thought. Our heart feels little loss, and our inward treasures remain intact. But that which we hold precious is very difficult to let go. If we are forced to give up our precious things, we feel robbed. If

someone demands our precious treasured things, we may feel abused, defamed, and victimized at their loss. Our definition of precious, therefore, is derived from its value to us. Yet the preciousness of the Lamb's Blood is derived from a very different principle.

II Peter 1:19 says that we were redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. What, exactly, makes the Lamb's Blood so precious? Is it that God's very Life flowed in the veins of the man Jesus Christ? Is it precious because it is holy in its DNA makeup, so very different from the blood humans have? I believe the preciousness these scriptures are referring to is the fact that the Lamb's lifeblood is **POURED OUT** and not protected from the altar. The Lamb did not protect His own life, nor count His life precious, but rather poured out His Blood to redeem us. He sought not to save His own life, but through love gave Himself to the uttermost to reach us. If the blood had remained in Emmanuel's veins, it would do nothing for us.

At the altar we see the beauty of God's Life made manifest before us as we behold Him poured out in love for others. The bloodstains representing loss and shame no longer horrify us but speak of the divine nature of God's love released selflessly to reach us in our lack and selfishness.

## **"Let Go!"**

Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. This shedding of blood requires an act of "letting go" of one's life. The fact that these animals poured out their blood on the altar symbolizes lives completely given unto death for others. Here, at the altar, the sacrifices "let go" of holding onto their life **FOR THE PURPOSE** of giving life to someone else. Now, asking us to "let go" of our lives and suffer complete loss for someone who has wronged us is simply ridiculous. We are selfish to the core apart from Jesus. Even if we do many charitable acts of sacrificial kindness, deep within we are motivated by a sickly self love that glories in our own goodness (Isaiah 64:6). **HELP!!!** Thank God that **HE PROVIDES HIS LAMB** for our altar! Only Christ in us, the Lamb of God, will let go of His Life to bless those who curse Him. His Blood was ordained unto shedding, His Life was pre-destined to be offered up, and His Divine Nature will always lay itself down for others. **HE LETS GO! WE SAY "NO"!** That is why Paul said in Colossians 1:27, it is **CHRIST IN US** Who is the hope of glory.

Here at the altar we can discover the wonder of having Christ living in us. We can experientially know that what I could not do, Jesus in me will do. Paul experienced the miracle of the Lamb living through him. Before Paul was converted he was hauling people

to slaughter, filled with a spirit of murder. After Christ began forming in him, Paul was found dying daily to minister the Life of this gospel to everyone (I Corinthians 15:31). Our heart will be devoid of the “Eternal Spirit” of the thing until we allow God’s Lamb to be the offering in us (Hebrews 9:14). It is not just what we do, but the spirit in which we do it (I Corinthians 13:3). Let us shed old ideas and ways of trying to force ourselves to do things that are not in us to do. May we open up to letting the Lamb of God onto the altar of our hearts where He will make us willing as He fills us with His love and selfless nature (Philippians 2:7-8).

## What A Waste?

The blood poured out at the altar is for others. It may seem a waste to not bottle every drop, but it was “let go of” so someone could be forgiven and blessed. We want to “hold on” to issues, hurts, thoughts and grudges – but the Life of Jesus in us wants to shed those things in love and release the Spirit of the Lamb instead. He wants us to let His Lifeblood flow forth through us to others in forgiveness, grace and mercy. God wants our hearts to become an altar bearing the precious Lamb Who is ever giving of Himself to bless others.

Jesus told His disciples the key to understanding what it would be like to live as His altar when He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). To selfish humanity that statement sounds insane! But those who have tasted the Lamb and partaken of His nature know those words are true beyond our wildest dreams. Nothing compares to knowing the Lord in the intimacy of bearing His great love from within. It is better than protecting the preciousness of this life. It is eternal Life itself, flowing through our veins in this life, even as it will in the life to come. Because Christ is our life, NOW we can experience the wonder of living by the Divine Nature... even in our trials and daily frustrations. May we not seek to save our lives, but be vessels of the preciousness of the Lamb that sweetly and lovingly gives Himself for others. Glory to God BY JESUS CHRIST... IN HIS Church... worlds without end (Ephesians 3:21). AMEN!

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*(Conclusion on following page)*

## Conclusion

In conclusion we may ask ourselves a few questions, “Are the inner chambers of our hearts sealed shut from the sacrifice Lamb? Are we afraid that if we let Him in too deep He will constrain us to join Him in allowing His Life to flow out and be given for others? What is more precious to me, a life lived that protects itself from loss and pain, or union into the Lamb that communes in the wonder of God’s life pouring itself out in love for others?” Jim Elliot, a missionary who died to bring the gospel to people in Ecuador said, “One life to live, twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last”. Jesus said if you seek to save in this life you will lose, but if we lose our lives we gain eternal Life both now and forever (Luke 17:33). May our eyes be opened even wider to the blessedness of the altar and the wonder of His great love.

## A Prayer

Lord, your Blood covers our sins. Because you gave yourself for us on the Cross we are forgiven. Lord, every drop of your Blood was given because of love. Your motive was love. Thank you that your Blood legally propitiated for our sins before the Father and did a great legal work; but it was your great love that gave that Blood. God, open our hearts to know the nature of the Blood that we might partake of the spirit in which it was given. May we truly come to know you, and in knowing you may we see the love in which we are covered and cover one another in that same spirit. We choose to cast aside our fears and our issues. We choose to come to the table of the Lord and partake of your Life. May your Blood flow through your entire Body from member to member, bringing cleansing, covering, love and wholeness (I John 1:7).

Will I stand in the gap  
for my brother?  
Will I pour out my soul for his life?  
Will I empty my thoughts  
of critical judgments  
and allow the Lamb to cover  
others in deep sacrifice?