

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## The Blood and the Cross

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### Introduction

We use words many times without thinking about their meaning. Words become overused to the point that we don't really know what they mean. We know how to use them in the right context, which makes it sound like we know the meaning whether we do or not. The blood of Jesus is just such a phrase. It is misused frequently in Pentecostal circles. Have you ever heard the phrase "plead the blood"? Where did we come up with that? It is not in the scriptures. The closest thing to this phraseology is in Revelation 12:9-11 where the saints overcame the accuser of the brethren by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb. This is the only true form of "pleading the blood". We testify to what the blood of the Lamb has done for us and this testimony is used specifically to overcome the Accuser.

### The Blood of Jesus

What is the purpose of the blood? Who is it for—us or God? Most people would say us, but it is actually for God. The blood is an atonement. It is what God sees instead of our sin. Therefore, its primary purpose is for God—to satisfy His justice and righteousness.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'  
(Leviticus 17:11 NASB)

Leviticus 16:30 tells us that the blood cleanses us before God. We are made pure before Him. Its purpose is to provide justification before God.

Our old nature is not cleansed or made righteous by the blood. His provision for our old nature is the cross of Jesus. The blood and the cross are not interchangeable. We sometimes treat them as if they are, but they are not. The blood takes care of our heavenly needs—righteousness and justification. The cross is God's methodology for our daily walk—the putting to death of the old man.

We need to understand the use of God's provision for us. If we understand this properly we will take away half the enemy's weapons against us. If we are sick and the Doctor gives us a treatment regimen that is designed for a different disease than the one that we have, it doesn't do us much good. The treatment is true for the proper disease but not for others. It is the same with God's provision—the blood of Christ is for certain things and the cross of Christ is for other things. If we need to treat something with the cross, it doesn't mean that the blood is not true. It just means that we are trying to treat the wrong thing with it—that is not what it was designed for.

The Blood has covered our sin. The Blood justifies us before God. We can declare to the enemy that we stand under the Blood. God sees the Blood not my sin; there is no condemnation because God sees the Blood.

So, you see, the Blood is for God to see and for us to use to overcome the accuser. The Blood is a spiritual weapon to be used against the work of the enemy. The cross is for our daily walk; it is a weapon against the flesh.

While the blood justifies us before God, if we are dealing with a “cross” issue, the blood is not what is effective—we need the cross. It is inappropriate to pray, “O Lord, by your blood don't let me sin tomorrow.” It is appropriate to pray, “My old nature has been crucified with Christ, I will not yield to temptation. Strengthen me, Lord, in the inner man.” Do you see the difference between the two?

## The Cross of Christ

The blood deals with our sins—what we have done. The cross deals with the body of sin—who we are—the son of Adam. The only thing that can be done with the old nature is to crucify it. You can't clean it up, send it to church, make it good, or do anything else with it except crucify it. That's why we receive a new nature in Christ and we are to live by the new nature.

We need to understand three expressions of the cross:

1. The *word* of the cross
2. The *work* of the cross
3. The *way* of the cross.

The word of the cross is the preaching about the cross. The work of the cross is what Jesus accomplished when He hung on the cross. The way of the cross is the daily application of the cross to our lives. It takes the power of the Spirit to reveal the work of the cross and it takes the power of the Spirit to apply the way of the cross to our walk.

The work of the cross is a one-time event—a crises event. From then on we reckon the deed done. Our old man was crucified with Christ—it is done—the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. ([Galatians 2:20 NASB](#))

The way of the cross is the application of the work of the cross on a real-time basis—a daily

lifestyle that incorporates the work of the cross. In our lives the old nature is reckoned dead. The work of the cross is for the old man—the way of the cross is for the new man.

Jesus said that we should deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow Him. This is a three-step process. It begins with us denying ourselves. Many people think of this as taking up their cross; but, Jesus said deny ourselves first and then take up the cross (*Luke 9:23*). What is the difference between these two?

Denying ourselves does not kill the flesh. A good moral person can deny the urge to steal because he is a good moral person. It doesn't have anything to do with God. Taking up our cross always involves death—the death of the flesh. This always involves God.

We have all heard the scripture preached about the cross being the power of God; in most cases, we have not rightly divided the word of Truth.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ([1 Corinthians 1:18 NASB](#))

This is not a scripture for the lost. The preaching of the cross is not for the lost—they consider it foolishness. The preaching of the cross is for us *who are being saved!* Read this scripture carefully—that's what it says—the word of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved! To those that are perishing (the lost), it is foolishness—they laugh at it.

Then, what is the power of God to the lost? The Gospel! (See [What is the Gospel?](#)) The lost need to hear that Jesus came, died (shed His blood for atonement), was buried, rose and revived, and is now Lord of all. It is through the Gospel that the Holy Spirit woos the lost.

Why is the Cross the power of God to us who are saved? Because, the power to be transformed into the image of Christ lies in the Cross not in the Blood. Songs and messages about the Cross are not (or shouldn't be) *salvation messages*—rather they should be *overcoming messages!* We overcome in our daily walk by the Cross not the Blood.

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