

Recently I donated blood for the first time. The screening process prior to the blood draw I found to be quite interesting. The questioning was nothing short of appalling. The questions seemed offensive. There were multiple questions asking if I had engaged in any immoral, unnatural, illicit, or promiscuous activity in the recent past. The references were horrific. Other questions asked involved any recent alcohol or drug use. They weren't concerned if I'd had a big mac or eaten at a Chinese buffet recently. The questioning was to make certain that my blood had not been contaminated. There is an element of purity when donating blood, so that is valuable to the recipient.

As the blood was being drawn, I immediately started reflecting on the questions and the value of purity in the blood. Life is in the blood, that is the whole reason for donating. We know that life is in the blood.

There were 2 life events that have always stuck with me regarding this fact. The first was while Dana was in open heart surgery. I remember the nurse coming in and casually stating that "she is off the pump". I really didn't know what that meant at the time. I came to understand that her heart had started beating again and was circulating the life-giving blood, instead of an artificial pump doing the work. The second event was a few years ago when my father-in-law was bleeding internally, severely enough that the chaplain was sent in. It took 13 units of blood before the bleeding was controlled. That blood was pure and life giving, although it would have been from 13 different donors.

You can probably see where I am going with this as we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus during this time in our service. The blood – the power in the blood – the life in the blood – the purity of the blood- and the purification by the blood. Remember the hymn, "Have you been washed in the blood"?

Blood was necessary for purification and forgiveness of sins, but not just any type of blood. It had to be pure blood, sinless blood, blood from a perfect lamb, the Lamb of God.

Under the old law, there were many laws forbidding the same perverse, immoral, and illicit activity that I was questioned about. Why would God make such laws? ... it was for his children's good, to maintain purity. The same sinful activities are forbidden under the new covenant as well, a better covenant, made possible by the pure blood of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:22

22 And almost all things are cleansed with blood, according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

It had to be the right blood type, compatible, the blood from animals was not sufficient.

Hebrews 9:13-14

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the

eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Not only did it need to be the right type, but it had to be pure

1 Peter 1:18-19

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

So, as we contemplate this eternal life-giving blood, we understand Jesus' words as he established this time of remembrance with these words:

Luke 22:19-20

¹⁹ And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰ And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in My blood.

Let's pray together:

Our Father in Heaven, we thank you today for your Son, for Jesus who lived a perfect and sinless life while on earth. We are thankful that because of his purity, he was the perfect sacrifice, and his shed blood was the perfect and acceptable sacrifice to provide forgiveness for my sin. Please bless this time that we partake of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine and forgive us our sins.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.