

## The Power of the Blood (Communion)

The cross was the symbol of death.

Torture, humiliation, jeers.

Spit mingled with sweat and blood.

But that was the death that God chose for His Son.

At the cross, God's longing for mercy met God's cry for justice.

For at the cross, all of humanity met.

The priests and the Romans.

The publicans and the sinners.

The soldiers and the dreamers.

Examine this cast of characters:

The chief priests and scribes. Hypocrites. Murders.

Judas, stung by a rebuke -- gives a kiss of hypocrisy and betrayal.

Peter. Boastful about his strength of character, can't even stay awake to pray. He will deny his Lord three times before morning.

The disciples desert Him -- empty words; worthless promises.

The guards -- sadistic bullies.

Pilate a coward.

It was an "hour -- when darkness reigns."<sup>1</sup>

Pride, Greed, Anger.

Betrayal and Hypocrisy.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 22:53 (b).

Fear, Deception, and Lies.  
False Religion.  
Torture, Duplicity, Unfaithfulness.  
Hatred, Arrogance, and Murder.

That's Mankind.

Without compassion. Without conviction. Without courage.

Without hope.

Without Jesus.

Before the cross.

Before the gift.

Before He died.

For the cross changes things.

It's where God's longing for mercy met God's cry for justice.

And mercy triumphed over judgment.<sup>2</sup>

It's where God showed Mankind just how much He loved us.

It's where Jesus set the example.

Of courage.

Of self-sacrifice.

Of love.

On a hill, surrounded by dark skies and a quaking earth, a New Covenant -- a New Testament -- was given to each of us. A Covenant written not by the fingers of God, but with the blood of His Son.

"This cup represents the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."

The blood of the Messiah drips down.

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<sup>2</sup> James 2:13.

On the crowd.  
On the soldiers.  
On us.

It drips on every sinner who will ever fall down before that cross and cry out for the gift of forgiveness.

And as it drips: there is healing. There is hope. There is love.

Watch the change as Jesus walks up that hill.

Simon of Cyrene helps Him up.  
Pilate writes: "The King of the Jews."  
The women stand beneath their Lord, crying.  
A thief's heart is changed and begs pardon.  
Peter cries tears of repentance.

People are being changed. For the Cross changes things.

He dies.

The stones which can no longer keep silent proclaim The Truth through an earthquake. The heavens declare The Truth in darkness. The Temple declares The Truth as the veil between man and God is rent.

The Truth is verbalized by a crusty old Roman soldier: "Truly, this was the Son of God." Risking death and public ridicule, Joseph of Arimathea steps boldly forward to ask for His body. Nicodemus steps out of the shadows to reveal that he, too, is a believer.

Two days later, the women who cried beside Him are the first to find an empty tomb. Angels proclaim: "He has risen just as He said. Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

And from that start the change continues.

Peter proclaims the truth at Pentecost. He proclaims it again before crowds in Jerusalem, in Judea, and before a different Centurion in Samaria. Paul will boldly take the Truth to the outer parts of the earth.

From fear to courage.

From hatred to love.  
From greed to self-sacrifice.

For there is power in the blood.

The blood that drips down from the cross.

It changes us. Transforms us. Renews and remakes us -- into Children of God.

Because Jesus showed how to love, we can love.

Because Jesus served, we can serve.

Because Jesus accepted the bitter cup of pain and sacrifice -- we can, too.

He led the way.

In hope.

In courage.

In love.

At the cross.

For all of humanity meets at the cross.

All of our sins.

All of our hopes.

All of our dreams.

They're there.

Where is the Cross in your life?

A youthful faith fading like a an old photograph?

A litany you can recite but not feel?

Or, the focal point of your life? A point of commitment. A point of love.

Do you stand beside it and mock?

Do you walk away?

Or do you let the healing blood drip down upon you?

As He takes your sin and your life?

"This is my blood of the covenant. . . . Which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>3</sup>

It's the New Covenant. Written not on sacred tables of stone. But on the scared hands of a loving God. Who writes His Sacred Covenant of Love upon our hearts.

Come before the cross with all of your sins. With all of your failures. With your despair and grief.

For there is forgiveness.

And there is hope.

And there is love.

At the cross.

Where His blood drips down.

Where His love drips down.

Where mercy triumphs over Judgment.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 26:28.