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If you have your Bibles you can turn to *1 John 1:7*. As I said earlier we're starting a new series entitled *God @ Work* both in you and then in all of us corporately.

So we're going to begin looking at some foundational issues, which may be new for some of us in the building this morning. But some of us may have gone through these foundational issues before. But maybe the foundation's cracked over time. So we want to review these, because we really want—this is 2010, right? (I almost said 2009)—2010 to really be a year that God works through us every single day as a church. But before that happens, God must work in us individually so that He can set us up as a church to be able to work through us.

GOD @ WORK IN YOU (SALVATION)

And so with that in mind, I want you to look at *1 John, chapter 1, verse 7*. (If you don't have a Bible, there's one in the pew rack in front of you. Please take that as a gift. And, if not, the big print version will be right up here on the screens as well.)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies {or cleanses} us from all sin.

1 John 1:7 (NIV)

Now, we want to talk about the blood of Jesus Christ:

- What that purpose is
- Why it is so unique (and)
- Why it is foundational

That if you are going to become a follower of Christ, that you understand the importance of the blood of Jesus.

Now I know blood can be a very gory subject. In fact today, nobody wants to be around anybody that's bleeding because of the blood-borne diseases that you can catch from folks. And if you are bleeding, you need to get medical attention because something has happened to you that is not normal. Your blood ought to stay inside of your body because it is very, very important to your body. It is the one, specialized, bodily fluid that we have that literally brings life to all of our body.

- It delivers nutrients to cells
- It takes away waste and harmful things from cells (and)
- It makes sure we have oxygen in our body

And without that your body's dead. If you don't have any blood—guess what?—you're dead.

My dad [on] Friday had double-valve replacement in his heart. He's up, talking, [and] complaining about stuff so I know he's okay. And while he was in [the hospital], I did some research on the heart, what his problem was, and I found some interesting things about our heart.

- It's only six inches in length and about four inches in diameter
- It beats 70 times per minute (except when I'm around my wife and then it doubles up); 4,200 times an hour; 100,800 times in a day; and 36,720,000 beats per year

- At each beat 2.5 ounces of blood are thrown out of it; 175 ounces a minute; 656 pounds of blood an hour; 8 tons per day
- All of the blood in the body passes through the heart every three minutes
- In 70 years it lifts about 270 million tons of blood.

Your heart's important, wouldn't you think (you know)?

At the heart of the issue for us this morning is the blood of Jesus Christ. And if we don't get that issue correct—if we don't understand properly why the blood of Jesus Christ is so important—it doesn't matter, anything else after that you're building on a faulty foundation. And so let's take a look at why the blood of Christ is so very important for us as followers of Christ.

The word *blood* is found 415 times in the Bible. You begin to understand about it when Cain kills Abel and spills his blood on the ground. And then triumphantly in the book of *Revelation*, Jesus Christ returns in a robe that is dipped in blood. What you will find, all throughout the Bible, is this scarlet thread (if you will) that runs from *Genesis* through *Revelation*. If I were to sum up the meaning of that scarlet thread and the meaning of the Bible and all of the sacrificial systems in the *Old Testament* and the shedding of the blood of Christ, that would be the verse that we're looking at this morning: "...the blood of Jesus, {Christ} his Son, cleanses us {purifies us} from all sin." [*1 John 1:7 (NIV)*]

Now I want us to understand this morning—if you're a Christ-follower or not—why that is important. Number one: this blood is different because it comes from a supernatural Person.

THE BLOOD COMES FROM A SUPERNATURAL PERSON

It's not ordinary blood. It's not the blood that runs through our veins. It is not tainted by sin in the least bit.

One of the most incredible verses in all of the Bible is found in the book of *Acts, chapter 20, verse 28*, where the Apostle Paul is talking to the Ephesian elders and he speaks about the church of God. Now listen to this, he says:

[Keep] watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought {Listen!} with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 (NIV)

So the blood of Jesus and the blood that was shed at the cross is literally the blood of God. And if it's God's blood, it is unstained, uncontaminated, innocent blood.

Every other person—other than Jesus—born into this world has been born tainted and stained with a sin nature. And if you don't think that's the case, you haven't had toddlers yet. (You know) you have not had children to see how quickly the sin nature is activated and how demanding they can be. And so we all, at birth, are born into sin. We are crafted from sinful material.

But when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He was innocent. He was innocent of a crime and He was innocent of all sin.

Now, it is possible for a person to be innocent of a crime but be guilty of a sin. For example:

- It's not a crime to gossip, but it is a sin to gossip.
- It's not a crime to be sexually immoral, but it is a sin to be sexually immoral.
- It's not a crime to rob God of His tithes and offerings, but it is a sin to rob God of His tithes and offerings.

You could be guilty of one, but not guilty of the other.

But Jesus was innocent of both. In fact when Jesus died on the cross, He prayed this prayer: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." [Luke 23:34 (NKJV)] You never heard Jesus pray this prayer though: Father, forgive Me because I don't know what I am doing. He has never done anything for which to be forgiven. In fact *Hebrews, chapter 4, verses 15 and 16*, tell us this:

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet {Ready?} was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16 (NIV)

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

In other words: Jesus never knew sin, never committed sin, but became a sin offering for us—a substitution for us. So He takes our sin and when we trust and believe in Him, His blood cleanses us and we receive His righteousness. It's called *substitutionary atonement*: somebody in the place of another covering over and cleansing their sin.

I love what John Stott says about this—a contemporary theologian; very smart guy—listen to what he says. The reason He could die for my sin is because He didn't have to die for His, so Stott comments on this:

The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. {Now listen to this!} For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God... {When we sin we basically substitute ourselves for God and do whatever we want to do aside from God.} ...the essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man. Man asserts himself against God, and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man {alone}.

John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 1986

Whew! Somebody ought to say amen there! God substituted Himself for us [because] we could not pay for our sin. And our blood is tainted and running through with the DNA of a sinful world. And Jesus, the most innocent person—not guilty of crime; not guilty of sin—sheds the very blood of God, substituted for us. That’s a great way to start off the New Year.

First Peter puts it like this:

¹⁸ [For] you know that it was not with perishable things [such as] silver or gold that you were redeemed from [the empty] way of life handed down [to you from] your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without [blemish] or defect.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV)

That word *precious* literally means rare—rare. In other words: it’s of high-quality; valuable. Now, the value of something is determined by a couple of things: supply and demand. In other words: there’s a very little bit of it so it is really, really precious. And there is no other blood that could be found like the blood of Jesus. It is the most rare quantity ever. Only Jesus could shed the blood of God, which He did for us. Secondly, is its rarity. When something is rare, it has a high price on it.

A few years ago I was watching the *Antique Road Show* and they told the story about a person who had a letter. They didn’t understand who the letter was from or (really) who wrote it. But when it was looked at it, it was the handwriting of Mark Twain. That little, tiny letter sold for over \$45,000 because to find an original, hand-written letter from Mark Twain is a very, very rare thing.

Well the blood of Jesus Christ is the only blood of that kind in the history of the entire world because His blood was innocent blood. Not only did Jesus have to die, but Jesus had to shed His blood. So it’s not just the fact that Jesus died, but the form of His death is very important.

I heard a liberal seminary professor say—rather, read—he said this: Jesus Christ could have fallen down a hill, could have broken His neck, and accomplished the same thing that He did on the cross of Calvary. I would tell you: that’s heresy. If Jesus didn’t shed His blood, then we are still in our sin. If Jesus would have been killed any other way—other than shedding His blood and willingly giving Himself as a sacrifice for sin—you and I would be doing an exercise in futility this morning; because Jesus had to shed His blood.

What does the Bible say? *Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 22*: “and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.” Why is it when you look in the *Old Testament*, sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice, so much so that there had to be shifts of priests going in on days of sacrifice. If you had an aerial view of where Israel did its wilderness wonderings, you could find giant (as it were) lakes, that no longer existed but big dark spots there, where they sacrificed animal upon animal upon animal. But yet that never took away their sin—never. But God was building up: somebody has to pay.

Second thing I want you to know is:

THE BLOOD CLEANSSES WITH SUPERNATURAL POWER

Supernatural power—our verse goes on to say, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us” [*1 John 1:7 (NKJV)*] or “purifies us” [*NIV*]. It doesn’t say has cleansed us. It doesn’t say will cleanse us. It says specifically cleanses us—present-tense verb. The blood of Jesus Christ continuously—always—keeps on, without any exception, cleansing us from our sin. Every day you need to be cleansed. Every day I need to be cleansed. The blood is available to do the job.

Now let me give you some good news and let me give you some bad news. If you give your life to Christ today—if you are cleansed from your sin, you will be saved today—you will be clean before the eyes of God. But let me tell you: you will go out of this building and you will commit another sin and you will become dirty again. So let me give you the good news on that. Whenever you sin, the blood of Jesus is there to cleanse you from your sin.

Now some of you have been believers for awhile. Some of you have drifted away from God. In fact you are back in church now because: Hey it’s a New Year and I’m going to try to get right with God. You can’t try to get right with God. God will get you right with Him. All you need to tell God is that: I’ve drifted away. I’ve got this sin in my life. I can’t believe the things that I have done. And God Himself will say: It didn’t shock Me, because I knew you before you were born and My blood is going to constantly and continuously cleanse you from your sin.

So, whatever it is that’s in your mind this morning that tells you “I am not right with God,” take it to the blood of Jesus Christ and have it cleansed. Well you don’t know what I’ve done—don’t want to know. God knows and He said the only way to overcome this thing is through the supernatural power that is in the blood of Jesus Christ. So—

- Think an impure thought: the blood of Jesus cleanses you.
- Tell a lie: the blood of Jesus cleanses you.
- Steal, rob, cheat, gossip (whatever it is): the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you.

I don’t know about you, but during the holidays (for some reason), we end up getting lots of food and lots of products on our shelves and on our counters and a bunch of stuff in the refrigerator. (You know) you start digging through that and all of a sudden there’s something back there that (maybe) is expired. There’s nothing worse than having a nice plate of chocolate chip cookies, warm [and] chewy—not the crispy ones, I don’t like those. So if you make them for me, they have to be real soft. I’ve got a rule: I don’t eat sweets without milk. There’s nothing worse than taking a bite out of one of those beautiful manna-things that God has provided for us and then throwing down sour milk because it’s expired. Now, you go through your refrigerator, you take away—you wouldn’t eat something that said: this expired a year ago, this expired 10 years ago—you’d take that out and you’d throw it away, because you would get sick.

Well let me tell you something about the blood of Jesus Christ: it is just as fresh, it is just as strong, it is just as powerful, and it has its cleansing element still [as] active in it as it did 2000 years ago when the first drop hit the ground of this earth when Jesus Christ was crucified.

The blood of Jesus purifies/cleanses you no matter what you have done. The blood of Jesus Christ with supernatural power cleanses you. But let me give you a word of caution this morning.

The only person who ever gets clean is the person who admits he's dirty. You've got to admit you're dirty.

I don't know what happens to young men sometimes but it happened to me when I was in junior high. Somehow I didn't think I ever got dirty. I didn't need to shower, I didn't need to bathe. But, upon the insistence of my mother and a very sharp belt, I made sure I got a bath. I couldn't understand it: when I got out of the bath tub there was a ring all around that bath tub, because I was dirty. But I would never admit I was dirty.

Many of us just don't understand how dirty we are because of sin.

- Our thoughts are tainted because of sin
- Our actions are tainted because of sin
- Our hearts are tainted because of sin
- Our minds are tainted because of sin

If you are sitting here this morning and you've got unconfessed sin in your life that you are keeping away from God, it's because you're a sinner. Somehow in your mind you can't connect the dots. If you're trying to hide something from God, you're a sinner; because you can't hide anything from God. That's the twistedness of sin: God's not going to find [out]. He knew about it before you did it.

The only way that you can be forgiven is to be cleansed. If you want God to forgive you, you've got to let God cleanse you. God doesn't forgive without cleansing.

Here's the difference between you and I when it comes to sin [and God]: when I see sin and I commit sin I want to cover it. But when God sees sin, He wants to cleanse it. He wants to totally deal [with it.] I want to hide it so nobody sees it, knows about it, and God can't see it. It started way back in *Genesis*. But God sees it and He wants to deal with it. He wants to cleanse it.

Now there are plenty of you in this room this morning that have little children. Did you get ready for a special event or church or whatever? And you dress them up and you give them a bath and you clean them and here's the last thing you say: Don't get dirty. Don't get dirty. What's the first thing they do? They find dirt, especially if they're boys. [You say:] Don't step in the puddle. They'll find one, go out of their way, and jump up and down in the puddle. I watched Zack's kids do that the other day—filthy little animals sometimes you know?

Can you imagine getting your kid ready for church and saying: Look, don't get dirty?—and they go outside and they start playing in the mud and messing around. They smell like sweaty animals when they come in and they've got dirty all over them.

You say: What did I tell you? I told you not to go out there. I told you not to get dirty. I can't believe you.

[Kid says:] I'm so sorry, Mommy; please don't spank me. I won't do it again I promise.

[You say:] All right then get inside that bathroom, take off those clothes, wash yourself, and put new clothes on.

And they stay there and look at you. Somehow the dirt got in their ears and they can't hear you anymore.

[You say:] No, I said go and take those clothes off and wash yourself and put clean clothes on.

[Kid says:] No, I like being dirty. I like this way. I don't want to take a bath. I like the mud.

You see the little boy wants to be forgiven so he's not punished. But he doesn't want to be clean. He doesn't want to be clean.

Let me tell you what some of our problems are. We want to be forgiven so bad things don't happen to us. But we don't want to be cleansed from our sin. But you can't be forgiven if you are not cleansed. God accepts those who have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ—by faith have trusted Him. You can have forgiveness or you can have filth, but you can't have both—period.

I don't know if you've ever done a lot of night-time stuff, especially on the ocean. But I was reading where the officer of the deck—the officer of the night who was on the deck—usually stands at the bridge of the ship and makes sure everything is going well and the ship is running fine and there's no danger of running into anything or any ships coming close by. At night to maximize their night vision they put red lens-covers over the light.

If you've ever gone vermin hunting, you know what that is. So you can still see, nobody is blinded, and you can still see what's going on. The problem with that is: if you've ever tried to read anything with a red lens-cover on it and it's written in red, you can't see it, you can't make it out.

So anytime the officer on the deck would get something [in writing], it had to be in black ink because red ink he couldn't see.

Let me give you some good news. When the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from our sin it is as if God puts on red lenses and looks down at us and doesn't see sin, but sees the power-cleansing of His Son, the Lord Jesus, that is done in our life and He sees not our sin. It's cleansed away.

Third thing I want you to know this morning:

THE BLOOD COMPLETES A SUPERNATURAL PURPOSE

The blood completes a supernatural purpose. The verse says: "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us" —purifies us—"from all sin." [*1 John 1:7 (NKJV)*] Now listen. Hear this next statement. Dial in, because we're almost done, but you need to listen to this next statement. You ready? **With God a person who is only partially clean is totally dirty.** A person who's only partially clean is totally dirty.

Some of you have dogs and cats and animals. You wouldn't let him in [the house] if two paws were clean but the back ones weren't. You wouldn't do that. You'd say: We're going to knock that dirt off because you may be partially clean, but you're not all the way clean.

And so the shed blood of Jesus Christ isn't something that we add to what we are doing to prove to God that we are worthy. The blood of Jesus Christ alone cleanses us from all our sin.

Now, some people have the idea that being a believer and a follower of Christ—being saved, having salvation—is on the installment plan. Like when you bought a house or you bought a car, you put a big down payment on it. And then you started paying out month after month after month. And the interest charge, for years and years and years and years you pay on until one day (hopefully) you pay the thing off. Salvation isn't like that.

Some people think: Okay, I need the blood of Jesus, but I still need to do good and be religious and keep the Ten Commandments. I've got some good news for you. When Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross He paid off the entire mortgage.

Now if somebody came up to you and said: Look, I want to pay off your entire mortgage. Wouldn't you say?—Thank you very much. Or would you say?—Okay, but I still want to keep paying on it. [Pantomimes sound and universal sign for “crazy” with finger circling at temple.] Something's off. Something's not right. So here is God saying: I will totally cleanse, pardon you, wash away all your guilt from sin, and all you have to do is to just trust and believe. And you say: Yeah, but I still want to work real hard for it. It doesn't work that way.

This is what *Hebrews 10:11* through *14* says—going back to the *Old Testament*, remember all those sacrifices they had to do?

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again... which {by the way} can never take away sins. {That's why they had to continuously do it.} ¹² But when this priest {speaking about Jesus} had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ... ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Hebrews 10:11-12, 14 (NIV)

All the sacrifices never took away sin. Just constantly reminded them: I'm always sinning. I always need cleansing. I'm always having to make a sacrifice. Once you come to Jesus to quote Him: "It is finished." [*John 19:30*] The last words Jesus said when He died: It's done. It's finished, which literally means: it's paid in full.

- You don't spell grace; you don't spell salvation: d-o-n-t—don't. In other words: if I take some things out of my life and I don't do some things, then I'll be saved. Not true.
- You don't spell salvation or grace: d-o—if I do some things and if I give my money or I go on mission trips or read my Bible and pray [then] God's going to accept me.
- You don't spell it d-o-n-t. You don't spell it d-o. You spell it d-o-n-e. It's finished. It's done. It's all because of Jesus and nothing that we ever do or don't do.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us—purifies us—from all our sin.

The most important Jewish holiday and feast in all of the Bible—still to this day—is the day of Passover. When they would remember back in Egypt—when they were slaves before God—the last thing God did before He took them out of Egypt and took them into the Promised Land was

that He sent the death angel and took the life of every first born of every family, including the Hebrews, unless found on their door posts (on the top and on the sides) the blood of a Passover lamb—a sacrificial lamb, one that took the place of that family. Then the death angel would pass over that home and go to the next one.

Well, think with me for a moment. As the death angel passed through Egypt and he comes to a Hebrew home and in that Hebrew home you've got people with tears—

- Just crying because of what's going on (and)
- Crying because of their sin (and)
- Crying out to God

—but there is no blood. Then what's going to happen? That Hebrew family is going to be visited by death on that first-born child—no blood on the doors.

Well, what if you go there and you have seen in that the death angel comes to that family and they are remorseful for all the bad things that they have done but there is no blood on the door posts, death is going to visit that family.

But what if they go to the household and here's somebody that has great faith in that household and they believe in Jehovah God, but there's no blood on the door posts of that household, death is going to come to that family.

The only way it doesn't come is if there is blood on the household. And the only way that we are passed over—our sins are not reckoned or counted against us and our sin is cleansed—is if there has been blood applied to our account. The only way:

- Not religion
- Not acts of righteousness
- Not faith
- Not tears
- Not remorse

—but trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ. And then finally:

SALVATION IS THROUGH CHRIST ALONE

Salvation is through—I'm going to say that again: There is no other name given to men under Heaven whereby we must be saved. [*Acts 4:12* (paraphrased)]

- There is no other way
- There is no other religion
- There is no other path to God

All paths lead to hell but one, and it is stained with the blood of Jesus Christ—period. Period! There will never be another way.

Now we live in a pluralistic society that is always/constantly politically correct and not trying to offend anybody. Let me do you a favor and offend you out of here. Jesus Christ is the only Savior in this world. And if you don't trust that, walking out of here isn't going to change it. Walking into hell one day will open your eyes and it's going to be too late. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only thing that cleanses us from our sin.

There was a university sign that I read in *Time* magazine one time—it said:

It is OK for you to be right.

It is not OK for you to think someone else is wrong.

unknown state university sign

The only sin today seems to be telling somebody that they are wrong in their spiritual beliefs.

Jesus came, and talked to the Pharisees—His people, the Pharisees and scribes are the religious people (of the Jewish people)—the most religious elite of the day, and here's what He said, "...if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." [*John 8:24 (NKJV)*] You will die in your sins.

I'm going to tell you, for years I was a very religious little boy:

- Believed in God
- Went to Catholic mass
- Was an altar boy
- I had confirmation
- ...communion
- ...baptism

[I] had it all, but did not have the blood of Jesus to cleanse me from my sin. But the day that I did, I became a brand-new person.

Listen! There's a great gap between us and God. So we need God to bridge the gap. We need Him to be sinless. We need Him to substitute and sacrifice for us. We need Him to build the bridge back to Heaven. Anything less than God is building a bridge that doesn't quite close the gap.

Listen to what the Bible says in *Hebrews, chapter 7*:

²⁶ Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. {That's who Jesus is.} ... ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak {Old Testament}; but the oath {God's Word}, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Hebrews 7:26, 28 (NIV)

Listen to what Jesus Christ says—this is what Jesus said, Who died on the cross for us—*John 14:6 [NIV]*: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Listen, math—like all other truth—reminds us there's one way to be right and many ways to be wrong. Isn't it? I don't care how many answers you put under one-plus-one, if it doesn't equal two, it's not the right answer.

I don't care what you do to get into Heaven:

- How holy you might be
- How many prayers you say
- How dedicated you may be to your religion

If you do not come through the blood of Jesus Christ, you won't make it. Jesus did shed His blood. He did die. And only His blood can cleanse us from all of our sin.

What are you trusting in today? What is your hope? Is it because you're good?—you're not. There's none good. No one is good, the Bible says,

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

Is it because you're a Baptist? I know lots of them that don't know Jesus. Is it because you're a deacon or you're a minister somewhere? Is it because you're holding onto that little bit of righteousness that makes you good enough or better than somebody else? All of our righteousness is like filthy rags, the Bible says [*Isaiah 64:6* (paraphrased)]. Jesus said: Don't bring me that, bring me the blood. Bring me the cleansing agent of the blood of Jesus Christ and all of your sin, though it would be scarlet, I will make it white as snow—white as snow. [*Isaiah 1:18* (paraphrased)]

I was watching a reality show a couple years ago. It was about a group of climbers who were descending off of one of the high peaks in the Swiss Alps. And as they were descending, the first man in line lost his foothold and slipped over the edge. Following him were two more. The remainder of the party gripped in, threw their ice picks on, dug in with their cleats and held, waiting for the rope to finally go taut and rest. And they knew—this had happened before—they would save it because they had Alpine rope, the type of rope that does not break. But when the rope ran its length, the cord snapped in two, and within seconds the screaming climbers fell to their deaths some 4,000 feet below.

Man! They were just shocked. They just stayed there [and] remained on the ice for about 30 minutes. This is *Alpine Club* rope. This is not supposed to happen. We had the best material. We had the best tools. This is the finest rope. It's guaranteed not to break. For 30 minutes they began making the descent until they got all the way to the bottom. And when they got down to the bottom, they looked at the rope; and as they looked at the broken end of the rope they saw that it wasn't *Alpine Club* rope. In the middle of *Alpine Club* rope there is a red thread that goes all the way through the middle to identify this is the rope that is guaranteed not to break. That was imitation—bogus—rope. And it cost the life of three climbers.

What's your rope of hope this morning? If it isn't the blood of Jesus Christ, it is false hope and it's going to break one day. And your descent isn't going to be 4,000 but it's going to be in the most miserable place called hell that you don't want to go to—that Jesus paid the price that we don't have to go to.

What is your rope of hope? Would you bow your heads with me and close your eyes? Let me ask you this morning: Have you really ever trusted in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse you from your sin?

- Not that you have faith that there is a God above
- Not that you aren't religious and you try to do the best that you can
- Not that you don't read the Bible
- Not that you don't try to help people

But have you ever trusted the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse you from your sin? If you haven't, you have not been cleansed from your sin. And I'm going to pray a very simple prayer. And when I do, I'm going to ask you to pray that aloud inside of your heart and you repeat to Jesus the very words that I'm saying. And in your heart you tell Him these things. And the prayer goes like this:

Dear Jesus, I believe You died for me. I believe You shed Your blood for me. I ask You to cleanse me with Your blood from my sin. Thank You for dying in my place so that I don't have to; for taking the penalty of sin so I don't have to. I ask You, Jesus, to help me live for You now from this moment forward.

And if you're here this morning and you're a believer and you've kind of drifted away and you've found yourself with a lot of sin in your life; as we continue this prayer, you pray this one:

Dear God, cleanse me from my sin, cut the ropes that hold me back, take these things out of my heart and mind that clutter my thoughts; and by Your blood perfect me this morning, purify me, and cleanse me. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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**To them God has chosen to make known among the
Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is
Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

Colossians 1:27
(New International Version)

Legend:

(words in parentheses) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[words in square brackets] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{words in curly brackets within indented quote} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*