

God, there is the desire to worship him burning in us. Luke 24:53 says that the disciples, once experienced the risen Christ, “stayed continually at the temple, praising God.” You and I are invited to the holy place of worship, where God is enthroned, and this excites the hearts of the forgiven souls.

Second, you and I will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Verse 12 says, “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.’” In the Old Covenant, God gave Israel the tablets of stone, on which the Ten Commandments were written. They were written on the tablets of stone, so that we may know what God desires from us in our lives. But, in the New Covenant, 2 Corinthians 3:3 says, God writes not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (c.f. Jeremiah 31:31-34). In other words, he will not simply tell us what to do, like in the Old Covenant, but now he’s going to move our hearts to follow his will from willing hearts (c.f. Ezekiel 36:26-27). Now, how is he going to move our hearts? Paul says, By the Spirit of the living God. Romans 8:5 (NIV) says, “Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds on what the Spirit desires... and the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” The Bible says that the Holy Spirit has desires for us (c.f. Galatians 5:17) and hence the Spirit is called “a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). In today’s reading, verse 17 says, “Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.” This same fire came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability” (Acts 2:1-4). What a wonderful promise is being fulfilled for all of us through the New Covenant! He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Two thousand years since the birth of the church, we still celebrate the day of Pentecost, because God is still birthing a new church through the New Covenant. He welcomes anyone who wants to put his trust in his Son Jesus Christ, and his blood will purify our conscience and move us to follow and obey him through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to our God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ who gives us victory through the blood of the New Covenant!

The Blood of the Covenant

Exodus 24:1-18

Rev. John Park

As the Apostles who paved the way as pioneers in the New Covenant, verse 1 in today’s reading says that priests and elders were called forward. Moses, however, was supposed to be the only person who should come near the Lord. In the New Covenant and in the Old Covenant there is only one mediator. Like Jesus in the New Covenant, Moses is acting as the mediator: a broker who connects the two parties and helps in the process of creating and laying out terms of agreement. In verse 3, Moses reads all the terms that God wishes to include in this agreement: “Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, ‘All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.’ And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord” (Vs. 3-4a). For any agreement and contract, both parties need to be willing to honour and follow the terms of agreement. In both the Old Covenant and New Covenant, you and I need to have willing hearts to follow and obey him. Conversely, it is also true that whoever is willing to follow and obey him is welcomed into the Covenant with him. Let me ask you a question: Do you have a willing heart to follow and obey him?

In order for the Covenant to be made, it says Moses sent young men to make burnt offerings and offerings of well-being (also called fellowship offerings). You would normally expect leaders and elders to offer these offerings on their people’s behalf, but here Moses chose young men to do these instead. I believe there is a reason for this. Young people are the ones who will determine the future of Israel. They are the ones who will actually carry out the duties and works involved in the Covenant. If there is anyone who needs to understand and own this Covenant, it must be young people.

They offered two kinds of offering to God: burnt offering and fellowship offering; there are five different kinds of offerings and there is a good reason why they offered these two specific offerings. A burnt offering serves two purposes for the giver. First, it serves as atonement for the sins of the giver (c.f. Leviticus 17:4). As you see the sacrifice of an animal, you understand the consequence and penalty of our sins. The justice that demands penalty for our sins is satisfied by the blood that is shed and sprinkled on the altar. The Bible says, “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22). We know, however, that the blood and sacrifice of animals alone cannot satisfy the justice of God. They were a

mere shadow of what was to come, the blood and sacrifice of Jesus the Son of God. “Very truly, I tell you,” Jesus says, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). He died and shed his blood, so that God may receive us as his fruit. Hebrews says, “For if the blood of bulls sanctifies those who have been defiled, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!” (9:13-14). When you come into the saving faith in Jesus Christ, his blood will cleanse you and blot out your sins. God will no longer remember the past you regret, but he will see you as the beautiful fruit that Jesus bears through his blood.

Not only your past is wiped clean, a burnt offering also means that you are given an opportunity to commit yourself to God. The Hebrew word for ‘burnt offering’ is *Olah* and it means “Ascend” or “Upward”; as the aroma of a burnt sacrifice goes upward, you offer your heart to serve and follow him. God finds such aroma along with your heart pleasing to him. He’s going to help you; he’s going to help you keep the dedication you made true in the rest of your life. This is why Jesus ascended to the Father. After Jesus offered himself as atonement for our sins, he then ascended to the Father and presented himself as a pleasing aroma. He carried in his resurrected body the faith and dedication of saints and this was pleasing to the Father. He gave us a gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit (c.f. Ephesians 4:8). This is why Jesus says, “It is your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 17:7). The Holy Spirit will be our Advocate, our Helper, to help us do what we dedicated our hearts to when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and gave our lives to him.

The young people also gave a fellowship offering. In Hebrew, ‘fellowship offering’ is a combined word of *zebach*, sacrifice, and *shelem*, peace. In other words, the sacrifice was given to establish peace with God. Likewise, the Apostle Paul says “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Jesus offered himself and shed his blood so that we may have peace or fellowship with God (c.f. Colossians 1:20). Now, there are two things that are unique about this fellowship offering. First, it is a voluntary offering; in other words, you only give this fellowship offering when you feel led. You see, this is a different kind of commitment compared to the dedication the giver shows in a burnt offering. In a burnt offering, you are required to offer a sacrifice for atonement of your sins and you are required to commit yourself to Him. But, here in a fellowship offering, you willingly commit yourself to God. You and I know there is a difference between you coming to worship the Father because you are supposed to do so and coming to worship him

because you want to do so. Or we give weekly to the church, because we are called to support the work of the church; but, there are also special offerings we give, because we feel led voluntarily. Moses felt it was important to give young people an opportunity to make this voluntary commitment to God, and I believe it is true in every generation. What a young person dedicates to in his youth will shape the future of that person. What a group of young people dedicates in their youth will shape the future of that community.

Second, a fellowship offering is the only offering in which the givers are allowed to eat the sacrifice with priests (c.f. Leviticus 7:15-18). In other offerings, only the priests were allowed to eat the sacrifice, but in a fellowship offering, the givers were invited to join this feast, so to speak. I believe this was so crucial for the young people, because this gave them an opportunity to have a fellowship time with priests, apart from other age groups, and talk about their commitments. Jesus’ disciples needed the time of a meal fellowship with Jesus, apart from everyone else, to talk about what kind of life they are going to live.

Moses, then, took the blood from the offerings, and it was the blood that sealed the Covenant between God and his people. Likewise, Jesus shed his blood and it was his blood that sealed the New Covenant. In the Last Supper with the disciples, Jesus took the cup, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). Hebrews says, “Jesus entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption” (9:12). Like Moses, who sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the people of the Covenant, you and I are called to appear before Jesus and be sprinkled by his blood, so that you and I may be sealed as the children of God in the New Covenant.

When we come into the saving faith in Jesus Christ and are sprinkled by his blood, we will receive two benefits. First, you and I will be invited to heavenly worship. The leaders of Israel were invited to come up the mountain. Verse 10 says, “They went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.” God offers the same worship to the people of the New Covenant. Revelation 5 says, “At once I was in the Spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! In front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal” (c.f. 5:1-6). When we come into the Covenant relationship with