

the
POWER

of
COMMUNION

with 40-day prayer journey



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Chapter 2

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD



Why is Communion so powerful? We've heard of wonderful testimonies surrounding Communion—people being healed, couples who were dealing with infertility taking Communion every day and getting pregnant, and of people falling out in the middle of taking Communion. They had an encounter with the Lord that was so powerful while they participated in the sacrament that their bodies could no longer stand up. That's more than just a wafer and some grape juice. That's the power of the Living God. To understand more about the power behind this, we need to go back and look at covenant. Communion is the reminder that Jesus Himself gave to us the ultimate covenant. It is the body and the blood of Jesus, shed for us.

Blue Letter Bible tells us that the Hebrew word for covenant, *beriyth*, is rooted in a word that means “to cut” or “to eat.”¹ Within the expression “cutting a covenant” itself is the graphic depiction of how a covenant was made. When two individuals

were cutting a covenant, the ritual included taking a sacrificial animal and dividing the animal into pieces. The two parties would then walk through the scattered carcass, swearing an oath of allegiance in the midst of a path of blood. Essentially, the two parties were making a public declaration that it would be preferable to be like the dismembered animal beneath their feet than to break this promise.

Each blood covenant was a promise of connection, protection, and provision. Like a marriage covenant, where two people are joined into one, the blood covenant created a bond that superseded all other realities. And this was done through the shedding of blood, a public expression that involved the most intimate aspect of life—the blood flowing through our veins. Blood carries and sustains life. Each blood covenant offered a promise that would enhance life, but it came with the potential cost of life.

LIFE IN THE BLOOD

There are doctors who offer what's called *High Resolution Blood Imaging*. In this practice, they claim to be able to take a drop of someone's blood and study it to determine a fascinating array of that individual's health issues. Using a high-powered microscope, they examine the shape of each blood cell. They look at the way that the cell is interacting with the other cells, and they search out the presence of any parasites in the blood.

Some doctors have even talked about being able to see the evidence of early trauma—such as broken bones or childhood diseases—within the blood. That is wild! Whatever your opinion is of this procedure, it confirms that we have only scratched the surface in understanding the importance of the blood that flows through our veins.²

Unless you're dealing with health issues or you get injured, your blood is probably not something you think of very often. But our blood is miraculous in all that it accomplishes for our bodies. It truly is the river of life. Blood has three main functions: to provide life, health, and protection. The red blood cells transport oxygen from the lungs to every area of the body. They also disperse nutrients and vitamins to the exact parts of the body where they are needed. Our body's very own Amazon Prime!

The white blood cells, along with lymphocytes, help to build the body's entire immune system. Each cell within the blood has a job to do, helping the body to strengthen itself and fight foreign invaders that could make us sick. Some cells build up the immune system, others help the immune system to know exactly what invaders to target. There are certain cells that remember an invasive organism so that the immune system can respond quicker the next time it encounters that same organism. There are other cells that keep the immune system under control so that it doesn't start attacking the good cells within our bodies. What a glorious army the Lord created within us, sustaining and protecting our bodies with this complex combination of blood cells!³

When we get a chance to study the intricate way our bodies were created, it gives insight into our walk with the Lord. He is so intentional. So it's no accident that blood plays such an integral role in the Bible. There is life in the blood. It's not just a catchphrase.

CULTURE OF COVENANTS

Throughout history, even in cultures that did not know Jesus, the importance of the blood has been paramount. In the ancient world, a promise that included blood was distinguished as a covenant; it was unlike any other promise you could make. Merriam-Webster defines *covenant* as “a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement; a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action.”⁴ Blood was a crucial part of this contract. By shedding blood, the covenant was an intimate profession of a lifelong promise.

In H. Clay Trumbull's fascinating book, *The Blood Covenant*, he details biblical covenants, but he also examines the tradition throughout the world. One example he finds is that of the Karen people in Burma. While retelling this account, he explains that the Karens had three levels of truce-making between tribes in that region. The first, and weakest, was eating a meal together, which simply signified that there would be peace for the moment. If the tribes wanted to symbolize a stronger truce, they would plant

a tree together. With this truce, peace would exist between the two tribes as long as the tree remained alive. But it was the third kind—the blood covenant—where the true power of the promise was found.

Trumbull explains,

In this covenant the chief stands as the representative of the tribe...The ceremonies are public and solemn... Blood is drawn from the thigh of each of the covenanting parties, and mingled together. Then each dips his finger into the blood and applies it to his lips...This covenant is of the utmost force. It covers not merely an agreement, of peace, or truce, but also a promise of mutual assistance in peace and in war. It also conveys to the covenanting parties mutual tribal rites. If they are chiefs, the covenant embraces their entire tribes. If one is a private individual, his immediate family and direct descendants are included in the agreement.⁵

Life is found in the blood, and by mixing their blood together, the individuals were effectively merging their lives together. Even cultures that have no relationship with Jesus understand the value of the covenant and the importance of the blood. Trumbull goes on to explain that normally, tribes were not permitted to travel across one another's territory. To prevent this, they created a kind of organic "No Trespassing" sign by tying long grasses together across a trail. "On reaching such a signal, the usual inquiry in the

traveling party is, ‘Who is in blood-covenant with this tribe?’ If one is found, even among the lowest servants, his covenant covers the party.”⁶ The promise between two individuals, no matter what their rank, would cover the entirety of their community and give them safe passage through a foreign land.

One covenant would cover and re-identify an entire people group, allowing for their survival. There is an old sheep-farming tradition called lamb grafting. If a ewe (mother sheep) loses her baby to sickness or another tragedy, she will refuse another orphaned lamb, despite her plaintive cries after her lamb’s death. Her baby has a specific scent, and she will reject any baby that’s not her own. The farmer, however, can take the skin of her dead baby lamb and drape it over the back of the hungry orphan, covering his old smell with the familiar scent. The ewe, thinking that she is smelling her own baby, will accept the orphaned lamb and the baby will survive. Covenants are a covering for those involved. And no one has made greater covenants with His people throughout history than our God.⁷

THE PROMISE OF ABRAHAM

Abram was a wealthy man, but he had no son. What he did have, though, was a wonderful relationship with God. God had spoken throughout Abram’s life, and Abram had listened. He had left the land of his family, on God’s promise, and had even split away from his nephew, Lot. In a time period when your tribe

was your strength and security, Abram's willingness to separate himself and trust the Lord speaks volumes about his relationship with God. Each time Abram had an encounter with God and was given a promise, he built an altar, a place of remembrance. Abram grew to be an old man, and he had been hearing promises about his descendants for years. But Sarai was still barren.

Abram said, "Oh Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir" (Genesis 15:2-3 NASB).

I can imagine him thinking to himself, *Ok, I've had all of these promises about the land my future generations are going to inhabit and how my descendants will number like the sand, but I don't even have one child! Has God been talking about my legacy being left to some distant relative this whole time?*

But God knew what his heart was asking.

Then, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants

be.” Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:4-6 NASB).

This is the kindness of the Lord. Abram needed reassurance on a promise from God that he had held close to his heart. God didn’t turn His back on Abram or rebuke him for not having more faith. Instead, God just spoke to him. And, when Abram believed again, God gave Abram points for righteousness!

After that, Abram pushed for even more reassurance: “*He said, ‘O Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?’*” (Gen. 15:8 NASB). He’d just gotten points for believing God, but Abram needed a little more assurance. In response, God cut a covenant with Abram. He tells him about the future of his descendants, how they would be enslaved, but that they would return to inhabit the land. He instructs Abram to bring the animal sacrifice and cut it up. I love this about the Lord, that He so humbly inhabits human culture. His goal is always connection. There were so many ways He could have handled Abram’s insecurity and even so many ways that he could have reiterated the promise, but God chose to cut a covenant with his friend, Abram, in a way that would speak to Abram’s heart.

It’s clear that Abram was familiar with blood covenants—in just the previous chapter, he had been warned about his nephew’s kidnapping by a few men whom the Bible describes as allies of Abram (see Gen. 14:13). These men had cut a covenant with Abram, so they were under obligation to protect him and his family by reporting the abduction. Abram understood

covenants. So I imagine that, when God suggested making a covenant with him, it would have felt very meaningful. When it came time to walk through the cut sacrifice, though, only God passed through. *“It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces”* (Gen. 15:17 NASB). Normally, both parties involved in the covenant would walk through, but this was a God-initiated promise to Abram. God passed through on His own, putting the weight of the covenant behind His words. Abram would have a child, he would leave a legacy, and God would care for His descendants. Whether they accessed the fullness of His blessing—by following God’s way or not—was their choice, but His part of the promise would stand. Soon after this covenant was cut, Isaac was born, and God changed Abram’s name to Abraham.

THE NEW BLOOD COVENANT

Jesus Christ shed His blood to cut a New Covenant with His creation. To forever bridge the divide of sin that had put a chasm between man and God, He initiated a New Covenant that was prophesied by Jeremiah.

“Behold, days are coming” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be

their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33 NASB).

This New Covenant at once echoed and fulfilled the promises made to Abram. Instead of coming to earth as smoke and fire, God sent His Son to come to earth in human flesh to walk with us. Instead of a sacrificial animal, torn into two to signify the covenant, God offered His own Son—the spotless Lamb—whose body would be broken as the greatest sacrifice.

We are Abraham’s promise fulfilled. Scripture says that, through our faith, we have become Abraham’s descendants—as numerous as the stars in the sky and blessed by the Lord. “*And if you belong to Christ [are in Him Who is Abraham’s Seed], then you are Abraham’s offspring and [spiritual] heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29 AMPC).* We are “*heirs according to promise.*” We are the ones God was telling him about thousands of years ago, the ones that would inherit the promises and blessings of the Lord. We are the ones for whom God is a shield and a great rewarder (see Gen. 15:1). The Lord changed Abram’s name to Abraham, the father of a multitude, but He also changed our names:

No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what His master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15 NASB).

We have access to God in a way that Abraham, the man who was called the friend of God, had only dreamed about.

After Jesus' blood was spilled for the New Covenant, we became not only heirs of Abraham, but also co-heirs with Christ. We share in the inheritance of Jesus.

So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God (1 Corinthians 3:21-23 NASB).

What Jesus did for all of mankind on the cross was unconditional. He will never go back or change His mind. Accessing the fullness of the blessing of this covenant, though, is our choice entirely.

When we take Communion, we are reminding ourselves of His sacrifice and the personal, unprecedented ways this New Covenant affects every area of our lives. "...*He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood"* (Luke 22:20 NASB). The blood that was shed was a covenant promise for all of eternity. Nothing would be the same. The blood of Jesus paid for everything. It washed us white as snow, so we could enter the presence of the Lord without an intermediary and without fear. The blood of Jesus gave us freedom and authority. Hell has been defeated for all eternity. And now we get to boldly release Heaven on earth.

THE DEVIL'S PULPIT

Henry Gruver, a powerful intercessor, shares a story of a trip he made into Wales to pray and release the Kingdom. The Lord had directed him to pray over several different high places, including a spot called, "The Devil's Pulpit." Devil's Pulpit was actually a rock slab that jutted out of a large and beautiful mountain. Henry climbed up the mountain to pray.

When I first came to that place known as the Devil's Pulpit, I stood in that naturally carved stone overlooking the valley and town below, and started reading the Word of God aloud over it. I read about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then I began praising God and rejoicing. I took dominion over the devil there, with the intention of taking back that area. I didn't like the idea of any place being called the Devil's Pulpit. The devil shouldn't have a public place from which to preach.

Thinking that he was done with his assignment from the Lord, Henry started to make his way down the mountain. But the Holy Spirit stopped him and told him to go back up. He obeyed, not knowing why, but he described a powerful peace blanketing him. Henry climbed up higher on the mountain and, suddenly, he found himself looking down into a natural amphitheater surrounded by a dense bank of trees. As he began to explore the area, he started to feel the darkness of the place and understand

that his assignment there was not yet done. “Then the winds began to whip up around and about me, and as I watched, what had been a beautiful, calm, peaceful May morning, was now being overtaken by a great storm and howling winds.” Henry felt the eeriness of the moment, as the winds thrashed the giant trees around him.

He made his way down the amphitheater to the bottom where, in the center of the depression, there was a stone altar standing in the middle of a circle of charred and blackened dirt. On top of the charcoal, slate slabs had been laid. “Now remember, people in the occult like to walk over hot coals. They walk through the fire because it gives them faith, they say, to have stronger belief in their god. That is a satanic counterfeit of God’s word, which says we can walk through the fire and not be burned (Isaiah 43:2).” As Henry began to realize what this location had been used for, he stepped onto the slate slabs. There were no flames underneath them, but “as I began to walk on those slate stones, my feet actually became as hot as fire. I reached down and held my hand just above the slate, and didn’t feel any heat at all...I thought, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do here?’”

Henry felt like the Lord told him to start making declarations over the land. “When we are remitting sins, and claiming back the land, God wants His Word spoken over that land.” The devil had used this ground for long enough. It was time to reclaim the entire mountaintop for Kingdom purposes. As he walked throughout the amphitheater, he declared the sovereignty of the Lord over that land and began remitting the sins of all who had come there for satanic purposes. Henry felt like

the Lord asked him to climb up on the altar to speak His words out over the land.

As the wind was howling through the trees, I stood on that big stone altar and cried out, turning and facing the north, the south, the east, and the west. The declaration took form as I opened my mouth, and let it be known that from this time forth things would be different. Anyone entering this area intending to commit any act, deed or gesture to Lucifer—the god of this world—would come face to face with the power of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

It wasn't until several years later that Henry received confirmation of what he had experienced in the spirit up on the mountaintop. He was introduced to a satanist high priest, and while the man was grilling him about why he would walk and pray over the land, recognizing the spirit in the man, Henry told him the story of The Devil's Pulpit. Suddenly, the man's countenance changed. He couldn't believe that Henry had been allowed in that place. It wasn't until Henry described every detail of the amphitheater—down to the color of paint on the stones—that the priest believed him. “So, you're the one! You're the one! You're dangerous!” It was my turn to interrupt him, ‘No, Stop right there. I'm not the one; and I'm not dangerous. I stay under the covering of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the One Who is dangerous to you.’” With a renewed concern, the man

asked for Henry to take a map and point out all of the mountains in Wales where he had been praying. Suddenly, it hit the priest. Shaking, he said, “You took out all our high places, all over this country. Every year we were losing high places and we didn’t know who was doing it.”⁸

FOREVER CHANGED BY HIS BLOOD

Once, I went out to my son’s property to walk and take Communion. They live out on 15 acres, so it’s a peaceful place to think and pray. While I was meditating on Communion and all that Jesus went through on the cross, a thought popped into my head: “Every time you take Communion, you remind the devil of his failure.” There is power in the victorious blood of Jesus. That power was not just for the salvation of our souls at Calvary; that power is for right now. Romans says that “*the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death*” (Rom. 8:2 NASB). The blood of Jesus wiped out the power of sin and the judgment that leads to death. Forever. God took back dominion over the earth and kicked out everything that was once ruled by darkness. As heirs with Christ, we have that same authority through Jesus. And when I take Communion, I am not only aligning myself back up with my true identity as a daughter of God, I am also reminding the devil that he lost. The devil has to watch as I celebrate the resurrection power of Jesus.

The New Covenant has been cut, once and forever. Never again would we have to slice a cow on a hill to walk through it as a sacrifice. Never again would the priest have to go into the Holy of Holies, not sure if he would come out alive, in order to rectify the sins of the people for another year. There was a shift in the atmosphere with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It changed everything forever. We take his blood, represented in the wine, as a beautiful memorial of what Jesus did. By His blood, we can be saved, healed, and delivered.

NOTES

1. *Blue Letter Bible*, s.v. “beriyth,” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H1285&t=KJV>.
2. “The Hilu Institute Clinic Visit Summary,” Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine, accessed November 14, 2018, <https://www.faim.org/the-hilu-institute>.
3. Carl Bianco, “How Blood Works,” HowStuff Works, April 01, 2000, <https://health.howstuffworks.com/human-body/systems/circulatory/blood.htm>.
4. *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “covenant,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant>.
5. H. Clay Trumball, *The Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite and Its Bearing on Scripture* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1885), 313-314.
6. *Ibid.*, 315.
7. A. Richard Cobb, “Grafting: A Lamb Saving Management Tool,” *Sheep & Goats*, November 7, 2007, <http://livestocktrail.illinois.edu/sheepnet/paperDisplay.cfm?ContentID=9831>.

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD

8. Henry and Judith Gruver, *Cross-Wise, A Prayer Walker's Manual* (Woodbine, IA: Joyful Sound Ministries, Inc., 2006), http://www.pdxprays.com/uploads/3/9/1/6/39160377/prayer_walking_handbook_-_henry_gruver.pdf.



THE 40 DAY PRAYER JOURNEY

Welcome to the *40 Day Prayer Journey*. Each prayer acts as a prompt and a guide for your own communion with God. After praying the prayer provided for you, we recommend using the writing space to commit to paper the words that the Holy Spirit puts in your heart or perhaps writing out your own, personalized communion prayer or reflections. Our hope and prayer is that your journaling will increase your sensitivity to God's voice and deepen your relationship with Him. May your life be forever transformed and your relationship with the Holy Spirit strengthened through the power of communion.





Father, I long to encounter You in a tangible way today. As I hold the elements of communion in my hands, help me to be physically, mentally, and spiritually aware of Your presence.

This is Your body, broken for me.

This is Your blood, poured out for me.


Thank You, Jesus, for all that You've done!





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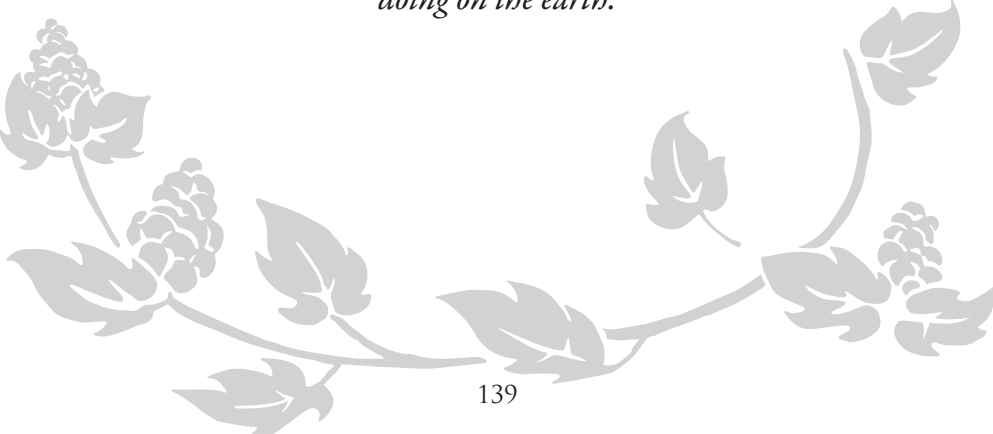
Holy Spirit, as I take communion today, bring to mind someone whom You would have me pray for. I want to partner with You to intercede on behalf of my loved ones. Increase my sensitivity to Your voice and Your prompting as I pray.

I take Your body, resting in the assurance that You are the bread of life for every single person.

I take Your blood, pleading Your blood over the lives and hearts of those individuals You brought to mind.

Father, I trust that You are working Your plan for redemption in every person You brought to mind.

I say “yes” and “amen” to everything You are doing on the earth.





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