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## **Anthems**

### **4 Thank You Jesus for the Blood**

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We're continuing the Anthem series. As I was processing through my notes for the messages that preceded me, I was amazed how God has lined up the core messages of each one of these building on each other. I want to share with you what I've been gleaning over the last several weeks.

The first one was "What He's done." It started with Ted. The core message that popped up to me was our hope in Christ. Then he followed up with "The Battle Belongs" – our hope in the battle. And last week was King of Kings with Travis. Our hope in the battle, the hero saves the day.

Today, we are going to look at "Thank you Jesus for the Blood." Our hope in the battle, the hero saves the day, leaves us with an attitude of gratitude.

We're going to look at a couple of different things. We're going to look at the significance of the sacrifice that was made in blood on our behalf. Then we are also going to look at the gratitude that should come out of that, and how gratitude can then influence our words, our thoughts, and our actions.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in the back corner of the 11:45 service. Yes, we've joined the 11:45ers. Here's how I would set them apart from you guys. It's more the Nascar, cage fighting group. So, the Robbins fit in great. Really, the biggest difference is the percentage of mullets in the audience.

Last week, there was a mullet in front of us. It was so majestic it was actually distracting. I offered to pay one of my kids five bucks to touch it. She was a little skittish. If you feel power leaving your mullet and you turn around and there is a Robbins' kid running off, you know they are just out there trying to make a living.

So, two weeks ago, we're in the 11:45 and I'm sitting back there and at the end of the service, I've got my eyes closed and I'm like getting emotional, which I've found, with five daughters, I'm crying more these days. It's not because I have five daughters. It's because I'm getting in touch with my emotions. I'm getting emotional. I open my eyes and I look to my left and my 13-year-old is standing next to me and she's got her hands in the air and she is sending it. When I see that, tears started rolling down my face. We finishes the song and they bring the house lights up. I'm just wiping my slobbery face, trying to clean up the mess.

I like having a beard for two reasons. Number one, I think it looks cool. Number two is there is less clean up when you have tears streaming down your face. If you see a guy who has a manly beard, it's not a manly beard, it's a tear sponge. You know the rules. The bigger the beard, the more emotional the man. So, on the way in, you probably saw this tall Scandinavian guy out there, Cameron. He's got a huge Viking beard. Very emotional.

I walked out of that and I'm just like it means so much when we study the theology of what our worship songs are saying, and it changes the game. You begin to identify the truth and the impact that it has on your life. Then when you sing out, it brings those words to life. A song becomes worship.

I want to open the message with a question for you today. What changes after you have been saved? The reason I ask that question is because I think that there have been times in all of our lives, for those of you who have placed your hope and your faith in Christ, where you are keenly aware of God's love and goodness and forgiveness in your life. And out of that, you have a proper amount of gratitude that just changes the way you live your life. Then there are times, as time passes, our gratitude can become numb. There's maybe a little bit of distance between that moment that felt emotional, and we become just a little bit hardened. My hope is that today we can reacquaint ourselves with the significance of Jesus' sacrifice and the gratitude we ought to have, having been saved.

I want to tell you a story. I ran into it about a year ago. It's the story of a guy named Colin Dowler. Colin lives at a place called Quadra Island which is a Canadian Island. It's in between Vancouver Island and the coast of Canada. He grew up looking at the coast line of Canada and he would see a mountain range with peaks that stood up tall at 7,000 feet. Those two peaks happen to be nicknamed after his legendary grandpa, Dougie Dowler, the legend of Dougie Dowler. He and his brother would always be plotting – "If that mountain is named after our grandad, we're going to have to climb it. We're going to go out and do the doog."

The day before his 41<sup>st</sup> birthday, after many failed attempts, he tells his wife he's going to climb Dougie Dowler. Reluctantly, she says yes because she didn't love the idea of him climbing by himself. She gave him the thumbs up. Colin gets on his mountain bike, rides down to the harbor, loads his mountain bike up in a boat and motors across the coast of Vancouver. The only thing at the base of the mountain was a logging camp. There was about a seven-mile stretch of road that you could ride to the base of the mountain and then things get gnarly.

For any of you who have been to the Pacific Northwest and north, you know that the woods are thick and they are gnarly. There are times where you can't even see your feet as you're walking through the bush. Dougie Dowler was known for having snow caps and when it didn't, water was pouring down it in every direction. And oh, by the way, there are grizzly bears in that territory.

He parks his boat. The one thing he realizes as he is getting all his gear and loading up on his mountain bike is he forgot to bring a can of bear spray. He rides into the lumber camp and the cook happens to be sitting out on the porch. He stops and says hello. The cook asks him if there is anything else he needs and he's like, "Yes, actually, if you could spare some bear spray, I would greatly appreciate it." The cook grabs him a brand-new can of bear spray. Colin jumps on his bike, and he starts riding up the mountain.

He rides all the way to the end of the logging road, gets off his bike, and begins to hike up Mt. Dougie Dowler.

As he's hiking, it's super wet and the rocks are very slick. He gets up about halfway and decides he has to abort the mission because it was too sketchy, especially being by himself. He makes his way back down through the bush to his mountain bike. He gets on his mountain bike and begins cruising down the road. He goes a couple of miles down the road and as he comes around the corner, he sees a grizzly bear standing right in the middle of the road. It was a tall, skinny, mangy looking thing. Later, he said it was measured, nose to foot, at nine feet tall.

He stops his bike, and he says he has about 100 feet between him and the bear. He's just praying to himself, "Please walk into the bush. He stands there and the bear wags his head and looks at him as if he's thinking about what to do. The bear starts towards him. Colin, of course, is getting panicky. He swings his leg off of his bike and puts the bike between him and the bear. He gets out a hiking pole and extends it as far as it will go. The bear keeps moving towards him and it comes to Colin's side. Colin kind of shifts to the side and puts the bike between him and the bear. The bear looks at him, wags his head again, and keeps on walking by. He said the bear's rump was close enough for him to touch. He's thinking to himself, *My brother is never going to believe this story*. As he's thinking that, all of a sudden, the bear pulled a 180. The bear is looking at him. He turns around with the bike in front of him and he takes his hiking pole. He puts that hiking pole right in the middle of the bear's forehead. He said that for a moment, they had a standoff. Then all of the sudden, the bear rolls his head and bites onto Colin's hiking pole. They are caught in a tug of war and then the bear rips the pole out of Colin's hand and throws the hiking pole into the ditch.

The only thing standing between them is Colin's bike. The bear begins to advance. The next thing he knows is the bear grabs onto Colin's side, bites him right on the flank and picks him up and begins walking away with him. As he's dangling there, he's hopeless, he's got nothing to protect himself. He's thinking *the only thing I can do is try to gouge his eyes*. He could reach one of the bear's eyes. He reaches up and with all his might, he shoves his thumb into the bear's eye and the bear starts freaking out. He said it was just like a blur of hair and woods and the next thing he knew, he was in the bush on the ground and the bear in on top of his legs.

The bear begins to bite his legs. He sinks in his bite, shakes his head and Colin is sitting there. As you guys have heard and maybe some have experienced, in near death moments, time begins to stand still. He's thinking through *what an idiot I am to come out here and risk my life all by myself...* So, he's thinking about his family, he's processing through this. He thinks, *I'm dead. I'm going to die out here*.

In his line of thinking, all of a sudden, he realized his dad had given him a gift not long before he left. As he described it, he said this is the only gift he could remember his dad ever giving him outside of Christmas and his birthday. He had given him a pocket knife. He reaches down to his pocket and pulls out a pocket knife, opens it up... Colin is a little guy. He weighs about 125 pounds. He says with all of his might, he hauls off and stabs this bear in the neck. The bear stands up, pulls the knife out of his neck, looks at Colin, and blood starts pouring out of the bear's neck.

This was Colin's epic moment. He said, "We're both bleeding now, bear." The bear gets off of him, walks away. The next thing he knows the bear disappears in the bush.

He's laying there, his legs are mangled. He says he takes off his sleeve and ties it around the leg that was in the worst shape as best he could, and he crawled to his bike out of the bush. He managed to get up on his bike. One leg was completely useless, so he used his good leg. He didn't have any clips. He would push down and put his foot underneath the pedal and pull up. He had about a mile to go up to crest the hill before he could start coasting down. So, just with the human will to survive, he pushes down and pulls up, pushes down and pulls up, for a mile until he reaches the crest. Then he goes cruising down into the loggers' camp. He goes down to the loggers' camp and literally crashes on the steps to the porch where he saw the cook. The men come out and they find him and he's an absolute mess. Of course, he's bleeding profusely. They said with the gash in his back they could see his internal organs. They thought for sure he was going to die.

Those loggers start tying tourniquets. They call Life Flight. Life flights comes, they pick him up and as they are flying out, he had bled out so much they give him blood on the life flight as they are going to the hospital. The next thing he knows, Colin wakes up and he's in the hospital with all his loved ones around. The doctor tells them, "Had we not given him a blood transfusion, he would have died." He's sitting there in the room...

I listened to a podcast of this story. Colin could give you very little of the details because he just got so emotional when he was describing his hospital room. But here is one quote that I pulled from him. He said, "I have never felt that before. I don't know how to describe it, how actually loved we are."

Some of you might be familiar with this setting with a loved one that's died or perhaps a near death experience. Stephanie Watson was talking to me back stage about the encounter that she had with all of her family gathered around her mom as her mom was breathing her last breath. Leading up to that, they had spent seven hours in that room. She said, "I didn't want it to end." There was no animosity, there was no sibling rivalry or drama. It was just them speaking words of life and gratitude over their mom that had loved them for a lifetime.

I share this story with you just to reacquaint you with the perspective that you have when you've been saved. It's with this perspective that I want to jump into the second verse of this song that we are looking at today – Thank You Jesus for the Blood. Here's what it says.

So You made a way  
Across the great divide  
Left behind Heaven's throne  
To build it here inside.  
And there at the cross  
You paid the debt I owed  
Broke my chains, freed my soul  
For the first time I had hope.

We are going to look at a couple passages today. We're going to spend a little time in Galatians. We're going to spend a lot of time in Hebrews. And we are going to look at a couple references in 1 Peter to get an understanding of gratitude in view of our redemption through Jesus's blood. Let's start in Galatians 4. Paul writes to the Galatian church. ***4 What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.***

A couple of things I want to point out in this text. The first one is when you read through a text and you see multiple references, you know that the author is trying to bring your attention to an important point. So, we see twice, "Under the law," "Under the law." To help us understand that, how many of you love a good western, an old western? There are very few people in the world that love westerns more than Robbie Robbins, my dad, and Earl Robbins, my grandpa. I grew up sitting on Grandpa Robbins' lap, watching the classic western with the Duke, Clint Eastwood, and every version of Tomb Stone.

The story line in every one of those westerns is always the same. You have a western frontier town that's getting a little bit out of control. There's lawlessness. People are getting bullied... until a character who represents justice rises up, puts the badge on their chest, and they lay down the law. Well, that story is not original with the westerns. It actually originated in God's word, the story of man's redemption. An interesting point that I want to lay out today is that according to God's design, according to his authorship, he gave man free will. With that freedom, there is something about his design that allows us to experience and to understand a part of his character that we wouldn't otherwise be able to if we were just puppets in the hand of the grand puppeteer.

If we didn't have free will, this probably wouldn't be such a mess, it would be a lot cleaner story line. But that's not God's design. He gave man free will and according to the story in this book, man chose rebellion and made a mess of things. In fact, rebellion and lawlessness was unleashed to the point where when God surveyed the whole earth, he said, "This is a mess. We need to start over." He picks out one righteous family in Noah, he sets them apart, and he rinses the table and starts over. Shortly after Noah, he raises up a man of justice, a man named Moses. Through Moses, God established the law. The law was put in place so we would know right from wrong, and we would know the weight of our sin or our rebellion in God's eyes.

We see that under the law, you and I stand guilty before a just God. But in God's divine authorship, he also wrote into the story a story of redemption. A love story to welcome us back into his family, no strings attached. In that Galatians' passage, the word is redeemed.

We are going to do a little Greek study. The New Testament was written in Greek. Greek was a great language because it was extremely precise. If we want to get a precise understanding what the author is trying to say, we look at the Greek, and then we can see a definition that is set apart.

This word for redemption comes from the root word *agorazo*, which means *to buy, purchase, or acquire as property from a slave market*.

The word used in Galatians by Paul is *exagorazo*, which means *bought from the slave market never to go back again*. It's to rescue and to set free. The reason I share the root word with you is that I want to illustrate the difference, how this is set apart. Bought from the slave market never to go back again. Galatians 4 says this in Verse 7 - ***Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*** So as part of God's story, it's not just that you have been redeemed, that you've been made right, that you've been picked up and put back on your feet. No. There's more extravagance to this story in that not only did he put you back on your feet, he welcomed you into his family as an heir of the King. From the bottom of the barrel to the throne room is what redemption looks like for those who place their trust in Jesus.

Let's look at the chorus now.

Thank you Jesus for the blood applied  
Thank you Jesus, it has washed me white  
Thank you Jesus, You have saved my life  
Brought me from the darkness into glorious light

I think a really important question for us to answer this morning in this conversation is why redemption required Christ's blood. If you step back and you're not a Christian or you're new to the faith, you hear Christians singing about blood, talking about blood, drinking blood and you're like *this is weird*. I want to understand what is the significance of blood? The author of Hebrews writes in Hebrews 9: 22 and he makes a very profound statement. It says, ***In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.***

What's the significance of blood? What was it that saved Colin Dowel's life? It was a blood transfusion. So, we understand from a physical sense that the life is in the blood. And if the blood leaves me, so does life. Well, not only in the physical sense is that true, but there is also a parallel in the spiritual sense that's also true.

Here's what the writer of Hebrews says in 10: 11-12. ***By this will, we have been sanctified...*** Sanctified means to be set apart. ***...through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all time.*** Now, we are going to enter into a little bit of context. It says, ***Every priest stands daily ministering and offering...*** So, underneath the Old Testament law that God established through his man of justice, Moses, there was a priest or priests that were appointed to offer sacrifices for the sins on behalf of the people of Israel. And the way that sacrificial system worked is when the people were in sin, they would bring something that was valuable to them, a perfect unblemished lamb. They would bring that lamb, which represented great value in their culture, to the priest and the priest would sacrifice that lamb. And the blood that was shed on behalf of that lamb would cover the sins that were committed by the people of God. The problem with the Old Testament system was that the next time a person committed sin, they would have to bring another sacrifice. So, the priests were constantly spilling blood, shedding blood,

sacrifices were being made. And every single time, it was reinforcing man's need for an ultimate sacrifice. It was a foreshadowing of the anointed one, the Messiah, the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind for all time. He is coming. So, in the Old Testament law, we look forward to Jesus. Jesus said, "I didn't come to abolish the law, but rather I came to fulfill the law." The author continues. ***Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*** It could forgive it in the moment, but the cost of sin would remain. But he, Jesus, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time sat down at the right hand of God.

In 1 Peter 1: 18-19, Peter says, ***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 ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

I was trying to build out a point following this. As I was trying to build out this point, I was trying to come up with a descriptor, a word that could describe the cost paid in our redemption story. I even got the thesaurus out. I was trying to find the word to accurately describe the cost. I could not find one. Here is something that I came upon. *Infinite, incomparable, beyond measure, incalculable, inestimable.* I just can't come up with a word that aptly describes it.

Hebrews 10: 18 says this, ***And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.***

Whatever the word is, the sacrifice was immense enough to cover all sins for all mankind, for all time. In Peter's words, the precious blood of Christ.

My question for you today is How does Christ's redemption change you? What's your response?

I peeled through the scriptures, and I looked for the response of others, people who had a life-changing interaction with Jesus. **The disciples**, many of them were fishermen. When he walked up to them and said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," they dropped their nets and they followed him.

He came up to the **Samaritan woman** at the well. After a conversation with him that was life-changing, she ran back to her town and she told the people in the city, "Come, see the man who told me all the things that I have done. This is not the Christ, is it?"

**Zacchaeus**, a man who was looked down on in his culture for betraying their people. Zacchaeus was called down out of the tree by Jesus and he proclaims, "Look, Lord, here and now, I give half my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

**Mary Magdalene**, who was tormented by seven demons and was freed by Jesus, so great was her commitment that she served him all the way to the grave. She was one of the few disciples that was with him at the crucifixion, and she was honored to be the first one who showed up to find his tomb empty. She ran back and proclaimed to the other disciples that he had risen.

**Nicodemus** was a man of high standing in the Sanhedrin. He was a man who spent his entire life to build up his treasure, his notoriety, and his voice in their community. Being a secret follower of Jesus, he and Joseph of Arimathea arranged to obtain the body of Jesus and he purchased 100 pounds of spices and according to Jewish custom, buried Jesus, forsaking his worldly gain and expressed his love and devotion.

So, what do you do? How do you let Christ's redemption change you? There is a passage I haven't been able to get off of recently – Revelation 12: 11. I'll just give you a snapshot of the eschatology or the end times around it, but this passage is John speaking about the height of the tribulation. At this time, Satan, the accuser, is finally cast out of heaven where he'd taken up the ear of the king sitting on the throne, making accusations against the brethren. He is thrown out of heaven and he makes war with men. This passage speaks of their victory over Satan. And they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb, because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life, even unto death.

For those of you who have given your heart to Christ, you have been covered by the blood of the lamb. Satan has no power over you when you walk in the power of that forgiveness. But you see what the believers, in the end times, they didn't stop there. There were two more things they did. One was that they spoke the word of their testimony. I give you that charge today that you would be fearless in the town square, in your community, in your home, in one-on-one conversations. And finally, they did not love their life even unto death as Paul writes in Philippians 1: 11. He says, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." I think it's time for us to take up the banner of the church and begin to live that way.