

Bloody Christianity

Christianity is nothing without the blood of Christ. The centrality of Christ's blood does not arise from a perverse fascination with all things bloody. Rather, it is an acknowledgment, as the writer to the Hebrews makes clear, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). Without the death of Christ, God's righteous wrath due to our sins cannot be placated, nor can man be forgiven his sins. The righteous and eternal Son of God had to live the life we could not live, and die the death we should have died because of our sin— Christ did this all so that we would live *for* God.

Christianity is emphatic about the death of Christ because it is emphatic about God's righteousness and man's sinfulness. Christ's death fulfills God's righteous standards while forgiving God's people of their sins.

Bloodless Christianity, however, denies these two realities. It sees God as something less than righteous who will accept the bloodless sacrifice of a Jesus that is something less than perfect. Eighty years ago, Richard Niebuhr, no friend of orthodox Christianity, described failed liberal Christianity (bloodless Christianity) this way: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross" (*Kingdom of God in America*, 193).

Bloodless Christianity offers no hope to man because it does not get to the root of man's problem: his sin and God's wrath. To believe in a "bloodless" Christianity is to deny Christianity. On the other hand, to hold to Biblical Christianity is to believe in a righteous God who offered His willing Son, Jesus Christ, as a bloody sacrifice for the forgiveness of anyone who trusts Him with his or her life, now and in eternity.

