

**Free by the Blood**

**Revelation 1.5-6**

**Series: Blood Wonder**

**February 7, 2021**

**The Village Church at Shell Point**

I. Introduction

A. I don't know how she was doing it

1. I was shocked
  - a. But there we were last week, together, watching an episode of Swamp People on the History Channel
2. How I managed to get the channel off of HGTV, I'm not sure
  - a. But we were watching Swamp People, and even Jean was fully engaged, in rapt attention

B. Background

1. A number of years ago our son Matthew was living in Nashville
  - a. He had just completed college and was living in an apartment with a friend
  - b. But he had a medical issue – not the subject of this illustration, he'll be happy to note
  - c. And he required some assistance due to the nature of the procedure
  - d. And so Mama Jean was off to the rescue
2. Jean flew into Nashville, and the plan was to land on the couch in the living room of Matt's apartment
  - a. Where she would stay for a week or so, taking care of this medical matter
3. Now Matthew knew that would be a problem
  - a. So he picked her up from the airport
  - b. And took her out to dinner
  - c. And while he was at dinner he broke the news to her
4. The news was that she would have to share her living room abode with a red tailed boa constrictor
  - a. The snake was the pet of his roommate, JG
  - b. He assured her that this was not going to be a problem
  - c. That the boa constrictor was kept in a secure terrarium
  - d. And that JG would make sure he was well fed with the frozen mice kept for his precious creature in the freezer
5. Nevertheless, Matthew knew that this would be unsettling for his dear mother
  - a. That Jean would not appreciate sleeping in a room knowing that the roving eyes of a predator were fixed on the new houseguest
  - b. So he felt he needed, at least, to warn her
6. Of all of earth's creatures, snakes are clearly among Jean's least favorite
  - a. No amount of theologizing about them being God's creation will change her mind

C. Fast forward to last week

1. There we were watching Swamp People
  - a. And it was a show about snakes
  - b. I was stunned that she was watching it
2. The episode that we were watching – and what got me to land on it while I was flipping channels – was about Florida
3. Swamp People is basically a show about people living in the Louisiana swamps
  - a. But they had been invited to come to Florida
  - b. To the Everglades
  - c. To help catch Burmese Pythons
4. Pythons have become a serious problem for the Everglades
  - a. Released as pets or escaped from zoos as a result of hurricanes, they have infested the Everglades
  - b. They have no natural predator
  - c. They lay as many as 50 eggs a year
  - d. And they prey on animals which are native to the Everglades
  - e. Upsetting the ecosystem in the process
5. So there is a growing, concerted effort to catch as many of them as possible
  - a. So the Swamp People were invited to Florida
6. And catch them they did
  - a. Big snakes!
  - b. Some 12-15 feet long
  - c. Weighing up to 130-150 pounds
  - d. And they were doing it with their bare hands!
7. If ever we met a python in real life – not on TV – we would run as fast as we could away from them
  - a. But these people were actually chasing the pythons through the swamp lands of the northern Everglades
  - b. Trying to wear them out
  - c. And then they would grab them behind their heads and stuff them into bags
  - d. We were transfixed
8. And Jean was actually watching it with me!
  - a. I couldn't believe it
- D. Like boa constrictors, pythons kill their prey by squeezing the life out them
  1. They suffocate them
    - a. They catch them, wrap themselves around them, gradually constrict them
    - b. They squeeze them, and as the unfortunate animal exhales they squeeze a bit more
    - c. And more, and more
    - d. Until the animal has no more breath
- E. And while even thinking about these creatures and their practices gives us the willies

1. It serves as an effective illustration of the way sin grips us
    - a. The way sin entangles us
    - b. The way sin wrings the life out of us
  2. Anthony Carter: Like a great snake – a python or anaconda – sin wraps itself around us and slowly entangles and strangles us. The more we struggle against it in our strength, the more we find ourselves entangled in it. It beats us into submission, locking us into servitude that is hard and inextricable. It is an enslaver of the worst kind. It is no respecter of persons. The young and old, the rich and poor alike are all under its sway.
  3. Carter: Sin has a power unparalleled on earth. It is more destructive than an atomic bomb; more menacing than a terrorist plot; more ruinous than a plague of locusts; more devastating than ten tsunamis; and more horrible and scary than bogey-men.
    - a. And I would add, than a dozen pythons
- F. We immediately think of examples of how sin entraps and captivates people
1. Sexual perversion and addiction cast an increasingly demonic grip on people in our nation
    - a. Normally we think of men, but we would be wrong to draw that conclusion; women can also be ensnared
    - b. And today's internet contributes to the infestation of this dreaded addiction much like the pythons' infestation of the Everglades
  2. Drugs and alcohol continue to cast their addictive spell over young and old alike
    - a. Dragging many into a cess-pool of despair and degradation
  3. But those are just the obvious ones; almost any sin can be addictive in character, squeezing the life out of its victim
  4. Story of three pastors who would get together in an accountability group and share intimately their frustrations, temptations – and confess their sins to one another
    - a. On one occasion they were together, confessing their sins to each other
    - b. One said, "You know brothers, I need you to pray for me. I have a terrible problem with lust. I can't look at an attractive woman without my mind going off in all kinds of illicit directions. I need to confess that to you. Will you pray for me?"
    - c. A second one said, "Of course, brother, we will pray for you. And I too have something to confess. I have been having a terrible problem with alcohol. I just can't control my drinking. I seem to manage to find a way to hide it, but it's become an increasing problem. Will you pray for me?"
    - d. The first pastor assured him that they would pray for him as well.
    - e. Then there was silence; they waited to see if the third man had something to confess as well, but he was saying nothing
    - f. Finally, one of the pastors said to him, "Now brother, do you have anything to share with us?"

- g. He hesitated, and then finally said, “Well, I guess so. I’m a gossip and I can’t wait to get out of here and talk to somebody.”
- G. So don’t think if it’s not sexual addiction, or substance abuse, that you haven’t been captivated by sin
  - 1. What is your “besetting sin” (Hebrews 12.1)
  - 2. What has been that sin that has been squeezing the life out of you?

## II. All of Jesus Frees

- A. Text
  - 1. Revelation 1:5–6 (ESV) — 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- B. Jesus has freed us from our sins by his blood
  - 1. Series – Blood Wonder
    - a. Been considering all that the scripture teaches concerning what the blood of Jesus – the death of Jesus for us – accomplishes
    - b. Purchased
    - c. Wrath has been removed
    - d. Justified
    - e. Brought near
    - f. Peace
    - g. Cleansed
    - h. Sanctified
    - i. Elect
    - j. Ransomed
  - 2. Today – Freed by the Blood
    - a. Only the blood of Jesus can free us from the constricting, addicting, suffocating power of sin
  - 3. With sin so powerful, vicious and addictive, it requires all of Jesus in order to free us
    - a. And you might say, “Of course it requires all of Jesus”
    - b. But what do we mean when we say “all of Jesus”
- C. The Offices Required
  - 1. The text mentions what theologians refer to as the three mediatorial offices of Jesus
    - a. Prophet
    - b. Priest
    - c. King
  - 2. OT Israel – three God-ordained offices were to govern relations between God and His people
    - a. Prophet – speaks for God to the people
    - b. Priest – represents the people to God
    - c. King – rules for God over the people

3. Jesus is “the faithful witness”
  - a. He is the prophet, speaking for God
4. Jesus is “the firstborn of the dead”
  - a. In His incarnation, He has become our representative
  - b. He is our priest; indeed – our Great High Priest
5. Jesus is “the ruler of the kings of the earth”
  - a. He is our King; indeed, literally, the King of kings
6. So this text, which declares that Jesus has freed us from our sins by His blood
  - a. Has done so by being our prophet; our priest; and our king
  - b. All of Jesus, every dimension of His mediatorial work, is necessary to free us from our sin

D. **The Prophet Declares Freedom**

1. Even in the OT, the prophets declared the sinfulness of humanity
  - a. **Isaiah 1:4** (ESV) — 4 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.
2. And the prophets promised forgiveness of sin under the condition of genuine repentance
  - a. **Isaiah 1:18** (ESV) — 18 “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”
  - b. **Isaiah 40:1–2** (ESV) — 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.
3. Jesus has done all this and more!
  - a. Jesus is the prophet who declares our freedom from sin
  - b. He not only declares the Word – He *is* the Word! (**John 1.1**)
  - c. He is the Word of God incarnate
4. He came into the world because of sin
  - a. **Matthew 1:21** (ESV) — 21 “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
5. He proclaimed the need to repent and believe
  - a. **Mark 1:15** (ESV) — 15 ... “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
6. And He proclaimed our forgiveness and freedom from sin
  - a. **Colossians 1:13–14** (ESV) — 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
7. Freedom from sin requires the prophet’s declaration of salvation through faith and repentance

- a. And Jesus is that prophet
- E. **The Priest Delivers Freedom**
1. While the prophet declares freedom, the priest delivers freedom
  2. In the OT the priest offered sacrifices for sins
    - a. The priest was the mediator between God and His sinful people
    - b. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat
    - c. **Leviticus 16:16** (ESV) — 16 Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins...
    - d. The High Priest did this year after year – repeated because the blood of bulls and goats can never, in the final analysis, take away the sins of God’s morally culpable human beings made in His image
    - e. That would require a perfect human sacrifice
  3. But Jesus was that perfect human sacrifice
    - a. He not only *offered* the sacrifice for human sin
    - b. He *was* that sacrifice
    - c. The once and for all sacrifice
  4. **Hebrews 9:11–14** (ESV) — 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 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 serve the living God.
    - a. Our Great High Priest delivers freedom by His own sacrifice
  5. **Hebrews 2:14–15** (ESV) — 14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
    - a. We have freedom because Jesus is our Priest – our Great High Priest
- F. **The King Secures Freedom**
1. In the OT the king existed to secure the peace, prosperity and welfare of the nation of Israel
    - a. The great prototype of the king of Israel was David
    - b. David acted as God’s vice-regent over Israel
    - c. **2 Samuel 8:15** (ESV) — 15 So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people.
    - d. God was the true king – David was the kingly mediator

2. And it was a king in the line of David that would be the expected Messiah King
    - a. Jesus fulfilled that promise – He would be the Davidic king
    - b. Amazingly, He was said to be the son of David
    - c. And yet He was David’s Lord!
    - d. **Matthew 22:42–45** (ESV) — 42 saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” 43 He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet” ’? 45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”
  3. In our text He is said to be the “ruler of the kings on earth”
    - a. **Revelation 19:16** (ESV) — 16 ... King of kings and Lord of lords.
  4. David’s rule of justice and righteousness was just a pale approximation, a mere aspiration, of Jesus’ reign and rule
    - a. Jesus rules with perfect justice, perfect equity
    - b. He fights our battles for us
    - c. He brings the authority over evil that we do not have in and of ourselves
    - d. We can never say that our temptations are too strong when we have the King of kings reigning and ruling
  5. Sin can never reign over us again because Jesus Christ is King
    - a. **Romans 6:12–14** (ESV) — 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.
- G. All of Jesus is necessary to free us from our sin
1. He is our prophet – declaring our freedom
  2. He is our priest – delivering our freedom through His blood
  3. He is our king – securing our freedom

### III. **The Love of Jesus Frees**

- A. But what drives Jesus to do this great work for us?
  1. What is His motivation?
  2. What captivates His heart in such a way as to deliver freedom from our awful enemy?
- B. Simply this – love!
  1. **Revelation 1:5** (ESV) — 5 ... Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ...
  2. He loves us!
    - a. Present tense verb

- b. He loved us enough to come and offer Himself as our sacrifice, and to take upon Himself the wrath of God that we so rightfully deserved
  - c. But He still loves us!
  - d. Even while He reigns and rules in our behalf – He is still motivated by love
- C. It is love that compelled Him to speak as the Word – to declare freedom for us captives
  - 1. It is love that drew Him through Gethsemane, through His trial, through His suffering, all the way to the cross on our behalf
  - 2. And it is love in this very moment that drives His kingly reign, drives His intercession on our behalf
- D. Jesus knows you better than you know yourself
  - 1. And He loves you more than you love yourself!

#### IV. **A Community of Freedom**

- A. One final thought – but it is a glorious thought!
- B. **Revelation 1:5–6** (ESV) — 5 ... Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father...
- C. All of Jesus – Prophet, Priest, and King – by His love has freed us from the entangling, constricting, suffocating effects of sin
  - 1. And He has put us into a community
  - 2. And what a community it is!
    - a. A community of prophets, priests and kings!
    - b. “Made us a kingdom, priests to his God”
- D. We are **Christ’s little prophets** – witnessing to the saving power of the blood of Christ
  - 1. We are **Christ’s little priests** – standing in the gap as intercessors for our brothers and sisters under distress and assault from the enemy
  - 2. And we are **Christ’s little kings** – acting with the authority of the King of kings in withstanding the pretensions of the deposed prince of the power of the air
- E. Sadly, we do not always act like such a community
  - 1. But we must take courage from the cross, from the blood of Jesus
    - a. Because His blood has freed us from the clutches of sin
    - b. And He has made us into a new community
    - c. A community of power and grace
    - d. A prophetic community
    - e. A priestly community – we are all priests!
    - f. A kingly community
- F. Anthony Carter:
  - 1. In Christ, we are freed from sin, and now grace reigns in righteousness.



2. Consequently, because we are now a royal priesthood, we live like peasants when we wallow in the sin of this world.
3. The blood of Christ has freed us from the mire and murkiness of our sin.
4. We are free from the tyranny of the world's standards;
  - a. free from the black hole of the ungodly expectations of others;
  - b. free from the guilt of all our past transgressions and infidelities;
  - c. free from the world's sinful standard of what a successful woman or man is;
  - d. free to be men and women of God;
  - e. free to serve Christ with our whole hearts;
  - f. free to be different;
  - g. free to live for Jesus at every turn and at whatever cost;
  - h. free to die for Jesus;
  - i. and free to live again in Jesus.