



Redeemed By the Blood of Christ

Series: The Most Remarkable Run-On in Holy Writ

Ephesians 1:3-14 (7-8)

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Introduction

As we get into this text this morning, I want to remind you of what God has revealed to us so far. God has given us the big picture of His ultimate plan for us – election, predestination, adoption. We have seen the exalted position that is ours in Christ, as adopted sons and daughters of God, living before His face, loved by God with the same love with which He loves Christ and sharing in the blessings of Christ. We see that, but the question that we have to answer is how does this all become ours? That is where the concept of redemption comes in. It is the word redemption that is at the very heart of the gospel. That is vitally important to understand because we are living in a time when there has been a determined effort to deconstruct biblical Christianity and redefine it apart from its central focus on the redemptive work of Christ, apart from its focus on the cross. Today we have a Christianity being preached in mainline denominations and on TV that is a pseudo-Christianity without redemption. But the Scripture clearly teaches that at the heart of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles is a God who redeems His people. In the days before Princeton Theological Seminary spiraled into the abyss of liberalism, professor and scholar Benjamin B. Warfield spoke the following in an address delivered in Miller Chapel in 1915: “There is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than “Redeemer.” . . . [It] is a title of more intimate revelation than either “Lord” or Savior.” It gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from Him, but also to our appreciation of what it cost Him to procure this salvation for us. It is the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that He paid a mighty price for it.” That’s what we are going to look at this morning and I want to do this just by looking at this phrase by phrase. Paul writes:

In Him we have redemption...

“In Him, we have redemption,” Paul says. What does that mean? There are several words that are used in Greek that we translate as “redemption” in our Bibles -- “agorazo,” which means “to buy.” It is the word that is used in 1 Corinthians 6:19... “exagorazo” which means “to buy out of.” It is used in Galatians 3:13. Both of these words come from the word “agora” which means marketplace.

The word that is used here by Paul is so much deeper. It is the word “apolutroo” and its connotation is “to pay a ransom in order to release a person from bondage, in particular that of slavery.” In New Testament times, there were approximately six million slaves. Slave-trading was a major business and was an accepted part of society. It was very common, in fact, for a person to have a relative or friend that had been sold into slavery. A slave could be freed only if someone paid the purchase price and then declared them free. There was no way the slave could redeem himself. He was helpless and he was hopeless. And that is exactly what we were, slaves and our master was sin. And that is exactly the part that liberal false teachers and nominal believers don’t like. We have redefined sin as to mean virtually whatever we want it to be, like “not perfect, but still basically good,” or “low self-esteem” or “lack of purpose.” The primary issue in redemption is none of those things. The primary issue in redemption is that before Christ we are sinners enslaved to sin and we need someone to pay the penalty of our wickedness and set us free. Read the book of Ephesians and you see that the real problem of man is sin...(Eph 2:1-3, 12-13; 4:17-19);

How this flies in the face of modern man. We are not interested so much in redemption because we don’t see our fundamental need to be redeemed from sin. We want happiness, we want power, we want blessings, we want a good self-image, we want a satisfying purpose in life, we want success, but before we can experience any of that, what we really need is redemption from our sins. Romans 5:10 tells us **“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”** Make no mistake, the living Christ, thank God, is our strength. He does give us hope and fill us with joy. He is the conduit of every spiritual blessing and He does grant us abundant and purposeful life. By the life of Christ we are being saved. But we cannot miss that before any of that happens we must be reconciled to Him through His blood. His life is not gain for us until we are first of all delivered and saved from the guilt of our sins through His death.

The Americanized gospel is so weak because we do not preach the heart of the gospel. We preach purpose, we preach feeling good about ourselves, we preach happiness, but we forget the true root of the gospel which is the redemption that comes only in Christ’s sacrificial death for our sinfulness. We are born sinners by nature and that is all that we will ever be and all that

we will ever deserve is the fruit of our sinfulness which is death and hell, but Jesus stepped into the market place of our slavery to sin, and willingly paid our ransom price which is His perfect life for ours. Without Jesus redeeming us from the marketplace of sin, there is no salvation. None.

By His redemption we have been loosed, set free. We have been loosed away from the condemnation of the law -- we could not keep it, that we could not measure up to it, we could not make ourselves acceptable to God by it, but in Christ the law has been fulfilled and we have been loosed away from the law as our ruler and instead it is our rule for living and the expression of our love as people redeemed by Christ. We have been loosed away from the judgment of God, the wrath that hung over us, loosed from the guilt and heaviness of our sin.

And Paul means for us to know that there is only one redeemer. One, and His name is Jesus Christ, the beloved of God, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Jesus, the one and only. At the heart and center of the gospel stands the truth that there is no salvation at all apart from Jesus Christ. The fullness of Christianity is found in Christ and what redeems us is His blood—not His ideas, His concepts, His philosophies, His teachings, His miracles, His power or His blessings but His blood. We are redeemed

Through His blood...

Through His blood. Now a lot of people don't like this. There are theologians who discount the need for Christ's blood to save. We now have hymnals with all of the references to blood removed from the hymns. We have new translations of the Bible that remove references to the blood of Christ. People don't want to think about it, it's sticky, messy and graphic. They don't want to think about a Savior hanging on a cross with blood streaming down His body. It's not refined enough. It's too barbaric, too raw. But it is God's bloody gospel.

In contrast to the modern sensitivity gospel, Paul writes of the blood of Christ a lot. In Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Col 1:19-20; Eph 2:13. Peter in 1 Pet 1:18-19. Writer of Hebrews in Heb 9:12. John in Rev 1:5-6. Why all this talk about blood? Because according to Hebrews 9:22, "**without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.**" Our separation from God cannot be bridged in any other way. The wages of sin is death because it offends against God's glorious, beautiful, holy, resplendent majesty. The wages of sin is death because God's glory is weighty and infinite and we have fallen short of it. He wages of sin is death because God is worthy of all honor, worship and praise and we have dishonored Him. When we do not value and honor God's glory as we should, when we sin, we are guilty before Him and payment is required. To say that no payment is required is to say that God's glory really doesn't matter. God, who is jealous for His

glory and for His name, would have declared Himself to be weightless and worthless if he would have chosen to save sinful humans without demanding a just payment for sin. God declared the wages of sin to be death. Obedience brings life and sin brings death and the good news of redemption is that God does not punish believers, His church, His adopted children, for our own sin but punishes His own Son in our place so that we might be redeemed. Redemption required the blood of Jesus Christ. Blood he willingly shed.

The blood of Christ is the **“blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mat 26:28 ESV)** and it was the “offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” for our sin (Heb. 10:10). The Old Testament sacrifices never actually cleansed the Israelites from sin. The sacrifices were symbolic; they could not actually cleanse from sin. The blood of lambs and bulls and goats couldn’t do it. It couldn’t be the blood of sinful men. No amount of blood from the veins of sinners could atone for a single transgression of God’s law. The blood had to be the blood of an infinitely worthy sacrifice. Perfect blood. Unblemished blood. Spotless blood. Precious blood. God’s own blood. That is why Jesus had to take on humanity and shed His blood to redeem sinners. God’s just wrath against us is only satisfied by the sinless, perfect sacrifice, the pouring out of His own Son’s blood to turn away His judgment. It is precious blood. Charles Spurgeon said, **“There is none other plan by which sinners can be made at one with God, except by Jesus’ precious blood. I may make sacrifices; I may mortify my body; I may be baptized; I may receive sacraments; I may pray until my knees grow hard with kneeling; I may read devout words until I know them by heart; I may celebrate masses; I may worship in one language or in fifty languages; but I can never be at one with God, except by blood; and that blood, the precious blood of Christ.”**

The Godhead's pardon of our sin is not cheap. It's priceless. It's infinite. It's amazing. The death of Christ cost the Father more than it cost Him to create the entire universe. It cost Him the price of personal pain of separation from His own eternal Son. It cost Jesus His shed blood. This kind of pardon flows not just from His grace, but from the riches of His grace. It is by the unfathomable riches of God's grace that you and I can today enjoy a full, perfect, irreversible forgiveness that lasts from now to eternity. Paul means for us to see that God has given His Son for us so that we may have

The forgiveness of trespasses...

God redeems us to forgive us. Now I want you to see something here that is very important, okay? In this verse we read that we have the **forgiveness of trespasses**. What are trespasses? Trespasses are the individual acts of sin that we commit because we have a sin nature. We have forgiveness, not just in the abstract, but every single transgression. Christ, by His blood,

took the punishment for our sin – not just the root but all of the individual acts of sin, the specific, shameful, wanton, disgraceful sins -- sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these -- of which we are well aware – all of them are forgiven through the blood of Christ.

So what does this forgiveness of trespasses look like? First there is what is called eternal forgiveness, or the idea that every believer is eternally forgiven the moment that He comes to God through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We stand before God justified, with every trespass forgiven and standing before God under the covering of Christ's blood as if we had never committed a sin. We are completely clean, eternally covered by the blood of Jesus Christ our redeemer, all of our sins, past, present and future – forever dealt with by our redeemer on the cross. This is the doctrine of expiation. Christ bore our sins away never to be seen again.

Lev 16 illustrates this in the explanation of the rituals of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) in the OT. In contrast to the goats described there, Jesus Christ would not only be the perfect *sacrificial lamb*, but He would also be the perfect *scapegoat*. He would not only *redeem* His people with His blood, but He would also *remove* their sin forever. Praise God! Jesus Christ is the true scapegoat and God calls you to come and lay your hand on his thorn-crowned head by faith and confess your sin and find forgiveness. Have you done it? We are eternally forgiven, but even more...

We have available to us restorative forgiveness. The moment that I was forgiven of my past and my life as a child of the devil ended, at that moment my life as a child to God began. When I fail and sin, I come to Him not to beg the forgiveness of redemption because that was settled at the cross, I come to confess my sin and be cleansed and to have my fellowship and communion with Him, which is damaged and broken by my sin, restored and renewed. 1 John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** That doesn't mean that our sins have no harmful effect. They have a profound effect on our growth, joy, peace, usefulness, and ability to have intimate and rich communion with the Father. But God makes a way for our communion to be restored, through confession and restoration. This is a forgiveness that is

According to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us...

And this forgiveness that God offers abounds toward us according to the riches of His grace. What does that mean? D. Martyn Lloyd Jones says, “The riches of God's grace are inexhaustible, and although the saints of the centuries have been drinking out of this fountain,

it is as full as it was at the beginning. Millions yet will drink of it, but it will be still bubbling up to the surface.” Millions have drunk and millions more will drink, but not one drop is missing from the fountain; because His wealth is inexhaustible, it is never depleted. Our minds cannot comprehend of an eternal fountain or a God who can give but never be diminished, but that is, indeed, what God does for us.

Redemption means that God owns us

God owns us. He has redeemed our **minds** from foolish speculations, false ideas of truth, from worthless reasoning. (Phil. 4:8) He has redeemed our **emotions**. We waste our emotions on the most foolish things. We give our hearts away so easily. We give our hearts to ungodly people, to the pursuit of sensual pleasures, to useless pastimes. We are passionate about such foolish things. God redeems those emotions for Himself. He redeems our emotions and causes us to be fierce for the gospel and to be passionate about His glory. God redeems us to give us the heart of Jesus Christ, to be passionate about worship, to be passionate about the church, about human souls, about reaching the lost, to be passionate about caring for other believers and spurring one another on to godliness. Before we are believers, our emotions are all over the place, one cause to another, but Jesus streamlines it all and gives direction to them.

He has redeemed our **will**. Before we are saved we live according to our own limited view of things. We are trapped by our sinful perspective and do everything from a selfish motive, and there is a way that seems right unto man and it ends in death. But when God redeems us, He redeems our will and the blinders come off. We realize that our will and our ambitions are so earthly, so temporal, so shortsighted. He begins to align our will with His own and in doing so, we begin to see that it is only in His will that we are made free. God redeems our **pursuits**, the goal of our lives is not to accumulate things, not to live 80 years and die, not to be the biggest, baddest or best. Achievement is not fulfillment; but when Christ comes in there is fullness of joy. You see, in our natural humanity we are essentially useless for the purpose for which

He has redeemed our **body**. No longer are our bodies to be used and defamed. Our bodies were made for honorable things, for worshipful things. Your body is to be presented as a living sacrifice. You have been redeemed for good works which God has prepared beforehand that you should walk in them.

He has redeemed our **relationships**. No longer do people exist for our use, for us to manipulate to our own ends; instead we exist to serve them, to love them, to care for them, to minister to them, to instruct them, to point them to God and His glory and invite them to join us on this journey of joy. We don't pursue sinful endeavors together, but we pursue God together forever.

He has redeemed our **talents, skills, and gifts**. Not to build our kingdom but to build His. He redeems the failures of our past and restores to use the years that the canker of sin has eaten. And there is so much more that His redemption means, that He will reveal unto you as you listen.

Beloved, the point is this: Redemption is the core of the gospel. It is the heart of the good news. It is the center of our faith. The redemption that is ours in Jesus Christ absolutely transforms us and powerfully affects our lives.

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