

In Christ - Redeemed

Everyone likes a good old redemption story. We like movies where a person who appears defeated ends up the champion. We like when someone who has failed get things turned around and gets back to where they were, maybe even better.

Have you ever thought about why people like redemption stories? Do you think maybe it could be a longing of their own heart? Maybe it's a cry of their spirit or reflection of their own experience in life.....

Redemption is a basic need for all of creation!

This week we'll be looking at Ephesians 1:7-8. If you remember, the previous message in this series was "Chosen" about God choosing us for Himself in Christ before the universe was even created. God has always wanted you and He still does today!

Now we move from the Father's election to the Son's redemption.

Ephesians 1:7-8 (NKJV)

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence

Redemption.....it's one of the spiritual blessings that Paul speaks of in v3. Each and every person on the face of the earth has a need for redemption.

Redemption takes place when a ransom is paid to free someone from captivity. Captive is exactly what you are if you are not "in Christ". You are born a slave to sin because of the fall of man that began with Adam sinning in the garden of Eden.

Without Christ, you are a slave of the law, including the 10 commandments which none of us can perfectly obey on our own.

James 2:10 (NKJV)

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

We've all already blown this one. We can't even get past the first one "Do not have other gods besides me". We let all kinds of things become god in our lives. Anything you let rule over you is your god. Anything you worship is your god. We've all blown it.....it you stumble in any one point of the law you are guilty of the entire thing.

I've got to tell you something today.....God doesn't owe you anything! There is nothing that He "has to do" for you. He has a law, you violated it. He would be perfectly just in leaving it right there and declaring you guilty as charged.....and He would still be good.

I know, you might think "in what universe is that good?", He is just, He is righteous. This means He is fair and He is right in all He does.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God in His goodness, sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross, in your place. He took the penalty for your sin upon His shoulders.....so that you could have eternal life IN HIM.

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)

7 **In Him we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

It's only available in Him, in Jesus. Jesus is not just where redemption comes from but He is also where redemption lives, it's not just found in Him but remains in Him. If you are redeemed then you are free.....Freedom reigns in Christ

John 8:36 (NKJV)

36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Free from what? The law.....sin.....satan.....this evil world

Freedom given by Christ and in Christ is the only true freedom. If you have been redeemed then you should know this feeling. If you've never experience this freedom then today is your day!

In Christ you HAVE redemption through His blood. You possess it....you continually have redemption.....you have and are still having it! Redemption is an amazing blessing....

Henrietta Mears ~ *"Redemption is the most glorious work of God. It is far greater than His work of creation. He spoke a word and worlds were formed, but it cost Him the life of His beloved Son to redeem the world."*

Let's look at redemption this way.....how many of you in this room have a TV? Ok....so do you find it to be something useful? With a tv you can find entertainment and information. It's a really useful thing to many people.

Let's say you really need some cash, something big came up, you are short and you are in a pinch. So you pawn your TV. No matter how many channels you had no matter how

many movies you owned, the TV at this point is of no use to you in it's current state at the pawn shop.

UNTIL, you paid the money to redeem it back from the pawn shop. Then at this point the TV returns to its usefulness.

Every man born is sold into slavery to Sin and in this natural state (in Adam) was useless to God for the purposes He designed us to fulfill. But Jesus' blood paid the necessary redemption price to restore us to usefulness.

The redemption of mankind reflects the goodness and the love of God. He could have said "forget them, I'll leave them to die and go create something better somewhere else". Just like you could leave that TV at the pawn shop and go buy another, but if you love that tv another just won't due.

God loves you, and another just won't due. There is no one that can take your place in God's heart. He created YOU. He loves YOU. He sent His Son to die for you, so that you could be redeemed, freed from the law of sin and death, rid of guilt and shame, called into something greater!

If you give your life to Jesus, you will be redeemed, but there's more.....you will be forgiven! This is another spiritual blessing! Redemption frees you from sin's power so it can no longer rule over you but forgiveness is where God gives you a clean slate, you sins no longer hang over your head!

Isaiah 43:25 (AMP)

25 "I, only I, am He who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake,
And I will not remember your sins.

Psalms 103:12 (NKJV)

12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

What an amazing God! You see at the heart of this universe there is a heart, the heart of God. God is love. And He's not like us (we are supposed to be like Him), His love is unfailing, relentless....His love breaks the chains of bondage, sets the captive free, heals the broken heart, redeems, and forgives!

That is the heart of God. He is FOR you not against you. Today whatever you are facing in life, know that God is for you, He wants what's best for you. He wants you as His own, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit in relationship with Him. This is all available because of His love, through a thing called grace.

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of His grace**

People think that when we are not redeemed and forgiven, that God is mean, but it's you and I that broke the rules, you and I who have sinned. BUT GOD, in His amazing love offers us grace.

Grace is undeserved favor. A free gift that is not deserved or earned.

You can't earn grace, if grace can be earned it is no longer grace!

This is the avenue that God uses to offer salvation to all who would follow Jesus. The free gift of redemption, forgiveness, salvation. All you have to do is believe it and receive it.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Grace means we can do nothing to make ourselves right with God or to keep ourselves right with God. It's not about works....

If you add anything to grace to create a formula for salvation, you will boast in that thing

We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone

Do you believe that God has enough grace for you? Do you know that He even has enough for the worst of sinners? (maybe that's still you)

We are redeemed and forgiven according to the RICHES of His grace! And He made these riches of grace abound toward us! (those who are in Christ).

There are things in nature that we marvel at. Wonderful things skillfully crafted by God. Things like Niagara Falls where every minute about 200,000 tons of water plunge into the Niagara River from 12 stories high with a sound like thunder as if it is applauding the generous nature of God.

God could have used less water, He could have made the falls lower, but this is a God of abundance, He tends to do things above the ordinary. And like the falls, the riches of His grace abound toward us, this means we have grace to an exceeding measure, something above the ordinary!

Other translations say that God **lavished** His grace on us. He gave it in great amounts....I don't know about you but I'm sure glad about that. I'm not a saver. I've had to train myself and exercise self control to save money. Had grace just been given in small measure like an eyedropper worth, about 10 mL....I would have used it all up.

But God's grace is abundant, the Greek word for lavished actually means to exceed some number, measure, rank, or need, over and above. Grace superabounds, it's considerably more than what is expected or needed.

Ephesians 1:7-8 (NKJV)

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This superabundance of grace, at the moment of redemption received, includes all wisdom and insight.

At the moment grace is received and you are saved by faith in Jesus, there is a radical change that happens in your heart and mind. Wisdom and understanding come.

You gain understanding of the reality of things such as spiritual life and death, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time.....wisdom concerning the things of God!

You KNOW Him! Jesus becomes more than this legend or story and truly becomes Lord and Savior of your life. It has to be more than something you say, there must be a changing of the heart. A knowing in your spirit. A decision to follow Jesus.....daily!

John 10:27-28 (NKJV)

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Salvation by grace results in a life of following Christ, obeying His commands.

Obedience is always the product of salvation, not the cause of salvation

Salvation empowers us TO live for God.

When God saves a person, He enlightens them. He gives His children wisdom and insight

2 Corinthians 4:6 (HCSB)

6 For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

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