Redemption Through His Blood
Scripture: Ephesians 1:6-10
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Take your Bible, if you will, for our study this morning. And let's look together at Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1.

We have begun what will prove to be a greatly beneficial study of a marvelous word from God, the letter to the Ephesians. And we're looking at chapter 1 this morning, verses 6 to 10, discussing the theme of redemption as Paul speaks of it in this section. I remember some years ago when my wife used to collect Blue Chip Stamps and Green Stamps that every once in a while she'd hand me a pile of books and say, "We're going to the Redemption Center to redeem our stamps." And frequently she has coupons which she takes to be redeemed. And we talk a lot about redemption and the word redeemed is not an uncommon word in our vocabulary but I'm quite confident that the mass of humanity that uses the word doesn't understand its theological implication. The word redeemed and the word redemption is ... is really a very, very, vital part of the core of Christianity. And it becomes the theme of the wonder-ful text to which we draw our attention this morning, - redemption. A familiar word in our society but with an unfamiliar meaning until we turn to the Word of God.

Now before we get into a discussion of redemption, let me just remind you of where we are in the book of Ephesians because everything ought to be taught in the Bible in terms of its context, that is, it only has its ultimate meaning when it's seen in light of what is around it in the text. Paul is writing to the Ephesians. And not only to them but this proves to be a letter that went far beyond the Ephesian church. No doubt circulating among all the churches particularly those in the province of Asia Minor And Paul is writing here to define for the believing community the church as the body of Christ. His great thrust and emphasis in this particular book is to speak of the church in its broadest terminology, it is the body of Christ, it is Christ incarnate in the world. It is indwelt by the living Lord Himself. It is not an organization, it is an organism. It is Jesus in the world. That's his thrust.

And in speaking of these broad and grandiose terms of the church he doesn't use local references here. He doesn't speak about individuals in a given city or a specific congregation, this is theology, it's the theology of the church as the body of Christ. That we are not just a flock with a Shepherd. We are not just branches with a ... with a stalk in a vine. We are not just a Kingdom with a King. We are a body in metaphor, with a head who is Christ. And in that beautiful symbolism he presents to us the living organism character of the church of Jesus Christ. That we are Jesus in the world.

On Friday the reporter from CBS asked me, how I viewed the church. And I said the church today should be nothing more than Jesus Christ walking through the world doing exactly what Jesus did when He walked through the world when He was here. That's the church.

Not very complex just Jesus in the world. And that's what the book of Ephesians is saying. The church as the body of Christ and how it functions.

Now Paul is so overwhelmed and so thrilled with all of the features of this mystery of the body, this thing which was hidden and is now revealed that he begins his book by discussing how this thing as formed in the mind of God in eternity before the world began The first amazing truth about the body is that it was planned before the foundation of the world. And that he makes abundantly clear in verse 4; "He's chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." And so we can say that verses 3 to 14 are a glimpse at the eternal plan of God in forming the body.

When we get to chapter 2 we'll see some more detail about how God worked it out in history, but here we are in eternity seeing the master plan.

Now the first section that we looked at in our last study together, verses 4, 5 and the first part of verse 6, we discussed the key word in the past aspect of this plan and we said that key word was election. In other words, the whole design was predicated on God's election. He chose us in Him, He predestinated us, it says in verse 5.

And then we said the present aspect of this eternal plan was redemption. He took that elective purpose and worked it out in history through redemption and the third element is inheritance. He did it in order that we might inherit all things.

So you have in this eternal plan of the body the church, that it should be Christ in the world, an elective purpose, a redemptive plan and an ultimate inheritance. Those are the three elements.

Now we discussed the election and how that we have been chosen by God in His own sovereign will apart from us, before the world began by name He chose us before we were even in existence to plan us into His body. And I mentioned to you that that's the reason we have such value. That's the reason we have such worth because we were chosen by God before the world began to be a part of His body. So that covered the past aspect.

How did God plan to work that out? What was going to be His method to bring those elect people into that reality? To make that relationship really happen? And the word is redemption. He had to redeem us because we were in the bondage of a certain thing and we had to be purchased by God to become His own. So redemption is the key word. Let's look at verse 6; "To the praise of the glory of

His grace, through which He hath made us accepted in the beloved One in whom we have redemption," there's the key, "Through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace in which He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in Him." We'll stop right there.

Now I don't know that there's any comparable scripture in the Bible to this one in delineating redemption unless perhaps it's Romans 3. But this is a fantastic statement of the significance of redemption, and just what it means. In order for God to bring His elect people into the inheritance that He has in the future for them He, must redeem them. He must buy them. He must purchase them. And so we look at the concept of redemption.

Now let me give you a definition so that you'll understand its meaning and then a comparison so that you can see its meaning in contrast to some other terms and then we'll look at the text itself. First of all what is redemption? Here's a theological definition. Redemption is an act of God by which He Himself pays as a ransom the price for sin which has outraged His holiness. Okay? Now -that's a theological definition. Hang on; I'll give it to you again. Redemption is an act of God by which He Himself pays as a ransom the price of human sin which has outraged His holiness. That's redemption.

Basically it is simply this, deliverance by the payment of a price. It is simply deliverance by the payment of a price. Now two words in the New Testament are used in the Greek language for the word redemption. The first one is agorazo, sometimes you have exagorazo, and the last part of the word agora, we have a little town out here called Agoura, simply means marketplace. What exagorazo means, what agorazo means is to buy out of the marketplace. To buy out of the marketplace, to purchase something, to buy something to make it yours.

But there is another word and perhaps even a stronger word and that is the word that is used here and is the word lutroo, and we also have the word apolutrosis which we translate redemption. Now that means to pay a price to free somebody from bondage. Okay.

Now you might look at it this way, in those days in this part of the world there were 6 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Buying and selling slaves was a common thing. They did it just like they bought and sold animals. But from time to time you may desire to purchase a slave for the desire of setting him free. Let's say someone you thought very highly of, or someone you loved very dearly or someone that you cared about was a slave, you could go to the owner of that slave and say -I'll give x number of dollars for this slave, you purchase the slave and you set him free. You say - I just purchased your freedom; you are no longer a slave, go free. That is lutroo, to buy somebody to set him free. And that is essentially what is the word right here, "In whom we have apolutrosis." In whom

we have the purchase which sets us free.

Redemption then is the deliverance by the payment of a price. Now I want you to hang on to that. And let me tell you something further, I'll give you a little more theology; everybody in the world is captive Okay? Everybody that comes into the world is a captive, the Bible says. We are slaves. No man is free. Every person in the world is a slave in their sinful state. And to whom are they slaves? Who is the captor? Who is the captor of every man? Listen to this, John 8:34 says, "Men are slaves to sin." Romans 6:17 says, "Men are servants to sin." Romans 7:14; "Sold under sin." Romans 8:21; "In bondage to corruption." Who then or what is the captor of men? Sin - sin.

So, sin is the captor that holds men. Now sin demands a price to be paid to release its victim. What is that price? The price or the wage of sin is ... what?...death. The price of sin is death. So in order to purchase sinners from the grasp of sin there must be death. Without, says Hebrews 9:22, the shedding of blood, which is simply a term for death, without death there is no remission of ... what? ... sin. The soul that sinneth, the Old Testament says, it shall die. All right, the wages or the price of sin is death. But Jesus redeemed us. What does it mean? He paid the price of sin to free the slave to set him free. That's the whole point of redemption. That is exactly what He did. He paid the price to set us free.

In Galatians chapter 5 and verse I it says; "For freedom Christ has set us free. Therefore stand fast and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." For freedom Christ has set us free. In Galatians 1:4; "Who gave Himself," the Lord Jesus Christ verse 3 says, "Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age." In other words, Christ has delivered us from evil. Delivered us from the yoke of bondage. Delivered us, if you look at it in the terms of Colossians 1 13, He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. If you look at Romans chapter 6, essentially the very same thought is in verse 18, it says; "Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." Free from the evil age, free from corruption, free from the yoke of bondage, free from sin. Why? By paying the price that sin demanded, that's redemption.

In Galatians again chapter 3 and verse 13 it says; "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us."

In Hebrews, and this is a great word on this, 2:14; "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself took part of the same," that is Christ became a man, God became a ma in Christ, "In order that He might destroy him that had the power of death," that is the devil, now watch, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The bondage of sin and death holds men captors, captive. And Christ comes to buy us out by paying the price, that's redemption. That's what the term means.

Now to help you get a little better grip on it, let me compare it with some other things. And by comparison you'll see its distinctiveness. There are five Greek words in the New Testament that come from the legal vocabulary. They have to do with legal things in the Roman world, a legal background. Let me share them with you and then I'll show you how they differ.

The first one is dikaiosis. Now dikaiosis is a word that means acquittal. It means acquittal in the court. When somebody was acquitted of a crime, we translate it in the Bible righte...justification, sometimes righteousness but justification. Somebody is justified.

All right, there is a second word, aphesis. That word means to cancel a debt, to cancel a debt. Sometimes it would be a lawsuit or something would be wrangling in the court and there would be a judgment that would say you don't owe that man anything the debt is cancelled, or whatever, retribution has been made, the price is paid, there's the canceling of the debt. Aphesis in its legal sense means to cancel a debt, we translate it in the Bible, are you ready, forgiveness, forgiveness.

The third word is huiothesia. And that is a word that means in the Gre...in legalese it means in the Greek world - adoption. Like a family would go to court to adopt a child. Now the Bible really uses it to speak of sonship, sonship. Becoming a son of God.

And then there is the word katallasso which legally means reconciliation. Sometimes people go to court for a divorce and they will be reconciled. Or sometimes two fighting factions will be brought into a suit and there will be reconciliation brought, about. Now it means in a courtroom reconciliation and that's exactly the way we translate it in the Bible. Paul talks about being reconciled to God.

The fifth word is apolutrosis, it means to redeem, to purchase to set free. And it is translated redemption.

Now listen and I'll show you the distinction of these words. In justification the sinner stands before God accused but he is declared righteous. In justification he stands before God accused but he is declared righteous.

In forgiveness, the second word, the sinner stands before God as a debtor and receives a cancellation of his debt.

In adoption the sinner stands before God as a stranger but he is made a...what? ... son.

In reconciliation the sinner stands before God as an enemy but he is made friend.

In redemption the sinner stands before God as a slave and he is receiving his freedom, you see.

All of those terms speak of the wondrous miracle of salvation. All of those things; justification, forgiveness, adoption, reconciliation and redemption are provided because Jesus paid the price. Do you understand that? We are accused but He bore our punishment so we can be set free. We are debtors, He paid our debt. We are strangers but He is a Son and we are in Him made sons. We are enemies but He is the friend and we in Him are friends of God. We are slaves but He has bought our freedom, you see.

All of those terms are different facets of the magnificent diamond of the doctrine of salvation. And so redemption is just one way to view the meaning of salvation. He bought us from the slavery of sin.

Now let's look at this as it unfolds in our text. We see five aspects of redemption as Paul speaks. First of all, the redeemer. Let's look together at verse 6; "Grace," would be the antecedent, "Grace through which He hath made us accepted in the beloved One in whom we have redemption." Who then is our redeemer? In whom do we have redemption? The Beloved One, that's what he says. We have been accepted in the Beloved One. You see, because we are in Christ, because by faith we are made one with Jesus, because we're His body, because we are Christ in the world, we therefore are acceptable to God in Him. And it is in Him that we have redemption. There's only one redeemer, beloved. And that’s the Beloved One.

And the reason we can be called the beloved of God is because we are in the Beloved One. He is the one in whom we have redemption. You know, the term beloved was God's special name for His Son. We don't have to worry about who the beloved here is, it's obvious. Who is the Beloved One? Listen to God Himself speak and tell you in Mark 1:11; "This is My ... what? ... Beloved Son, and Him I am ... what? ... well pleased." Again God said, "This is My beloved Son hear ye Him.

Colossians chapter 1 says that we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. It's the same concept. Christ is the beloved of God. Christ is the beloved One. And as the beloved of God, He is the recipient of all that God has to give out of His love. And the only way that we can ever receive it is as we are in the beloved One, you see. Actually, if you want to get technical, there's only one individual in the entire universe, as far as we're concerned from our vantage point, who is the recipient of all the goodness of God and that is Christ and we, as we are in Christ, and only as we are in Christ, become able to receive those good things. "Thou art My beloved Son.

So, Christ is the beloved of the Father. It is by Him because it is in Hi that we are redeemed. We are one with Him. You see, the Son is accepted by the Father and if the Son is accepted by the Father and we are in the Son, we are accepted by the Father. Incredible thought.

Think of it this way. Christ wants us to have every good thing. And the Father loves the Son. And since the Father loves the Son, the Father will grant to the Son of His love the things the Son desires. And the thing the Son desires is that we have every good thing. And so they are ours in Him. And that's why verse 3 says; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies," and then what's the last two words? "In Christ." Because we are in Him we are :accepted. Because we are in Him we are blessed. Apart from us, dead ones, God blesses us for Christ's sake. You see? Because we're in Him.

Someone once wrote; "Near, so very near to God, nearer I couldn't be, for in the person of His Son I am just as near as He.

Dear, so very dear to God, dearer I couldn't be, for in the person of His Son I am just as dear as He."

He's right. There's no difference. We, in Him, are accepted. Look at the word accepted. Literally it's the word graced and it would read this way; By grace we have been graced. He graced us, is what the Greek says-. He graced us. It's like dunking us in a big vat of grace. We've been graced. We could say to each other instead of. I since we've lost the term born-again to a movement, and we don't know what it means anymore, we might start saying Have you been graced? That's the idea. Grace by which He graced us.

So God can say of every Christian, listen to this, God can say of every Christian, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Isn't that great? You say - "You mean me? You mean me?"

Yes, in Christ, this is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

You see, Christ paid the price, bought us out, made us one with Himself. He is the redeemer. And there's no other redeemer, only He.

Second, not only do we see the redeemer but the redeemed. Who are the redeemed? Who are ... well, it's very clear. It's the us and the we. The us of verse 6 and the we of verse 7. Us accepted, we have redemption. You say -Yeah, that's good, that's a pronoun but what's the antecedent, who's the us and who's the we?

Oh, I want you to meet the redeemed. Boy, they are really, they are really something. Let me introduce them to you. Are you ready? Turn with me to chapter 2 verse 1, here's the us and the we. "And you," and by the way, it's the us, the we, and the you, "And you who were dead in trespasses and sin." That's the first thing about the us, the we and the you. We were rotten sinners. Just want to get that clear at the beginning. And there's some more about us, verse 2, "In which in time passed you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, that's Satan. So, so far, the us, the we and the you

are dead in trespasses and sin, walking according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power if the air, who's Satan, the one who works in the children of disobedience, beyond that they happen to be guided by the lust of the flesh, the desires of the mind and the flesh, and are, by nature, the children of wrath. That's the us, the we and the you.

Not a real scintillating group, frankly. In case you need a further definition, you could look down at verse 11; "We are the heathen," some of the Bibles translate it Gentiles, heathen. And then you could look at verse 12, what it says; "We are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world." That's the us, the we and the you.

If that isn't enough to give you the point, look at verse 17 of chapter 4.

Seventeen of chapter 4 says; "That we are the ones who walk in the vanity of our minds."

Verse 18 says; "Having the understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart, past feeling, given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." That's us, folks. There we are. The lewd, the greedy, the blind, the ignorant the alienated, the darkened, the vain, strangers, no hope, without God, on and on, evil, following Satan, that's us. Nice bunch, wouldn't you like to hang around them? That's us, the redeemed God has chosen to redeem sinners, that's the point.

Titus 2 14; "Who gave Himself for us," now watch, "That He might redeem us from all iniquity." We are the iniquities, that's who we are. -That He might purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works." He has redeemed sinners, people. Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous but ... what? ... sinners to repentance." You see, it's not until a person recognizes his sin that he seeks to be bought out of the slave market. And that he offers himself to Jesus to receive the gift. The redeemed are the we, the us and the you; the sinners. Incredible. Unbelievable.

You mean, God should have looked around the world and picked out some really good people. Well, He would have had a problem, there weren't any. Because the Bible says, "All have ... what? ... sinned and come shout of God's glory." So He redeemed sinners. We are the chosen o God. We who have responded by faith to that elective purpose of God in the time before the world began, we are the ones accepted in the Father's love. We are the ones who because we are in Christ are said to be the sons of God in whom He is well pleased My dear ones, if that doesn't give you a sense of self-worth, nothing ever will.

So, we see the redeemer and the redeemed. And thirdly, the redemptive price. That's in verse 7, the redemptive price. It says in whom we have redemption through ... what? ... His blood. That was the price. How did it happen? What was the price to buy us out o the slave market of sin? What was the

price to take us back and set us free? How was that bondage broken? How was that price paid?

Well, it is very clear. "The wages of sin is death." The price was death, somebody had to die. And Jesus did. "In whom we have redemption through His blood." Christ's blood, Jesus' blood. And let me say this to you again; this is simply a metonym for His death. Jesus couldn't just cut Himself and bleed on somebody and redeem them. This is simply a way of saying that He poured out His life, you see. Speaking of a sacrificial, substitutionary, violent death for sin. It's ... it's just a way of saying it. The point is - a life poured out. It implies substitution.

The New Testament says, for example, He gave His blood. The New Testament also says He gave His soul. The New Testament says He gave His life. And the New Testament says He gave Himself. It all means the very same thing ... He died for us, He was a substitute on the cross for us, we should be there, we should have been there. We should die. We should pay the price. We should be able to do that on our own. That's what it would be ... that's what would be pure justice, but God's justice is mingled with His mercy. So God provided a substitute. And the substitute was Jesus. And His blood and His death actually, now get it, actually made redemption. The blood of bulls and goats, through all the sacrificial system were simply symbolic and typical, His death was actual, it did it. For by one offering He perfected forever them that are sanctified. Oh, by His blood poured out He paid the price and He offers us the purchase price to buy us back from the slave market of sin and turn us loose and set us free.

Boy, Ill tell you, when I think about that it's no wonder that Peter said what he said in I Peter 1:18; "For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers but with the precious blood of Christ." No wonder he thought it was precious, huh?

And I understand why all that singing is going on in Revelation chapter 5, it says in Revelation chapter 5 verse 9; "They sang a new song." And what did the song say? It said, "Thou art worthy to take the scroll and open its seals for Thou was slain and has redeemed to God by Thy blood those out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and has made us unto our God a kingdom of priests and we shall reign on the earth." And, man, when that song is sung in Revelation 5, the angelic chorus gets up off their angelic seats and begins to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." No wonder they sing. No wonder Peter said it was precious blood. He paid the price. The blood of Jesus Christ paid the price for the sin and the sins of the slaves, bought them out of the captive...captive hold of sin and set them free as liberated sons of God. And in their freedom they are in Union with Jesus Christ so that they become one in Christ and so that every good thing which the Father gives the Son becomes theirs in the Son. The blood of Jesus...indication of His sacrificial substitutionary death frees us from the guilt of sin, the condemnation of sin, the power of sin, the penalty of sin and someday even the presence of sin.

So the redeemer, the redeemed, the redemptive price. Fourth, Paul talks about the redemptive results. What does it mean to be redeemed? What are the results?

He presents two areas of results. First of all in verse 7; the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. In whom we have redemption through His blood which means the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, forgiveness. Oh, man, that's a fabulous word. An absolutely thrilling word. With so much meaning and so much richness that no way in one sermon could we ever, ever possibly talk about it. Jesus said when He was teaching the people to keep His supper, He said, "This is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sin," Matthew 26:28, that's part of it. That's the redemptive result, forgiveness. I don't know about you, but it's nice to be forgiven, isn't it? Oh, what a ... what an inheritance, forgiveness.

Israel in the Old Testament understood this. You know, when they had the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, the day of national atonement for sin, there were two goats that were used by the high priest. The blood of one goat was sprinkled on the altar. The other goat, the other goat...the priest went up to that goat and put hands on that goat's head, and as it were, he laid all the peoples sins on the head of that goat. He confessed the people's sins on the head of that goat. And that goat was then taken out and sent into the wilderness where it could never find its way back again, it symbolized the taking of sin and sending it away where it would never ever be seen again. Beloved, that is exactly the word used here for forgiveness. It is the Greek word aphiemi which means to send away, never to return. Our sins, then, have been sent away never to return. Isn't that incredible?

Now listen to me, remember where we are in chapter I, all of this was happening in the mind of God before the world began. Your sins and mine were already in God's mind totally forgiven before the world was ever created. What a thought.

And some Christians go around so depressed because they think God's going to just, you know, really hold everything against them. No, the goat was sent away so were your sins. God looked down the corridors of time, to put it in anthropomorphic terms, looked down the corridor of time, He saw you and your sins, He saw that Jesus would die for your sin, He chose you to call to Himself and at that point in His mind He dismissed your sin from His thoughts forever. Before you were ever born.

Let me show you something, in Psalm 103, 1 like to talk about this subject, it's close to home. You don't have to look it up, just kind of listen, you can jot it down, Psalm 103:12, here's how far that goat went, are you ready for this? "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Anybody know how many miles that is? The east from the west? Infinity, isn't it. It has to be.

Let me tell you another one, Isaiah 44:22, that's Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 44:22, this is good, it says this; "I have blotted out like a thick cloud thou ... thy transgressions and like a cloud thy sins for I have redeemed thee." See? In redemption is forgiveness, blotted out, forgotten, removed, sent away. And then I love, especially love Micah 7:18 "Who is a God like unto thee, who pardons iniquity, passes by the transgression of the remnant of delights in mercy," now his heritage retains not his anger forever, verse 19; He will turn again, He will have compassion on us, He will subdue our iniquities, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of.. what? ... the sea." They are in the depths of the sea. As far as infinity, in opposite directions, they are gone they are aphiemi, they are sent away never to come back again. All of this in the mind of God before the world began was already done.

Richard the Third in Shakespeare says; "My conscience hath a thousand several tongues and every tongue brings in its several tale and every tale condemns me." It's not true of the Christian.

When Jesus comes into our lives He says to us what He said to that terrible scarred woman who was caught in the act of adultery, "Woman, neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." And Paul says; "There is therefore now in Christ no ... what? ... condemnation." Forgiven, sent away, dismissed.

You say - But I don't deserve it. That's not the point. Of course, you don't deserve it, neither do I. It's through His blood. Now some behaviorists want to come along and tell us that we can't be blamed for our sin. We are the victim of genes or circumstance or mothers or fathers or whatever. It's not your fault. But you know, that doesn't work because it's not ... it's bad enough to have guilt for your sin then when you blame your mother you've got guilt for blaming your mother and you're deeper in a hole. It doesn't make sense. Something deep in the human conscience doesn't believe the behaviorist's lie.

So, what does the gospel do? It walks up and says - Hey you, you're guilty, not your mother, not your father, not anybody - you. Not your genes, not your circumstances - you are a sinner.

Oh.... I don't know if I can handle that. Oh, you can handle it because have a provision for you. There is One who has paid the price to forgive every single sin and remove guilt totally. Christ set us free. And by the way, forgiveness is complete. My little children, He's forgiven you all your trespasses for His name sake, I John 2:12.

Ephesians 4:32; "Be ye tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Colossians 2:13; "He's forgiven you all your trespasses."

People think - Well, you know, it only ... when I was saved they were all forgiven but since then, man, I've got to struggle to keep the slate clean.

No. They were all forgiven before you were ever born. When Jesus died on the cross they were all there. When God had it in His mind before the world began, it was all there it was all taken care of, it was all finished. And it's just what Jesus said to Peter, "If you've once had a bath, all you need each day is just kind of wash your feet off a little bit when they get dusty." And as you walk through the world and day to day you sin the Holy Spirit does a little dusting work, just to keep you clean. And that's what I John 1:9; 'He is faithful and just to keep on cleansing us," see. It's constant - constant - constant.

You say - That means God accepts me. That's right, God accepts you. He accepts you in the beloved one not on the basis of your good looks or your mind or your works but on the basis of His plan from before the foundation of the world. There are no second class Christians. We're all in Christ, as Christ, beloved sons, totally forgiven. And if you can't forgive yourself you've got a God complex.

You're saying - The reason I can't forgive myself ... I know God forgives me but I know some things He doesn't know. You can't say that.

Or else, you can say - Well I'm actually a higher standard. You...you've got a real problem. You think you're God. Why should you remember what He forgot? Before the foundation of the world? You know that? Whew, that's exciting.

And that's why you're accepted. And if He accepts you - accept yourself. You know, you imagine somebody coming up to me and saying I'm a personal friend of the president.

Oh, you are? That's very nice. A personal friend of the vice president, secretary of state, governor, mayor, and list about 50 famous people. I would say to him - That's wonderful. However, I am a personal friend of the Almighty God of the universe. Furthermore, He thinks I am fantastic. Do you realize that right now He is up there preparing a place for me so that when I leave here I'll be dwelling with Him forever? Additionally, He has granted to me all good things as much as I need for whenever I need of all that He possesses. And not only that, we talk about it every day.

You know you get to think like that and you're going to realize that you're not half bad. If God cared that much to bring you that close to Him, you're something worth something. I can't stand Christians who go around bad mouthing themselves. You forget who you are. God sees everything in stark naked reality and says In spite of it all, I'm satisfied with you because I'm satisfied with My Son and you're in Him, see. And I forgive you everything from before the foundation of the world for as long as you live. Whew!

It reminds me, I think it was Philip Bliss, jack would remember, who wrote; "I'm so glad that our Father in heaven tells of the love in the book. He has given, wonderful things in the Bible I see, but this is the dearest - that Jesus loves me."

And I think the last verse; "Oh, if there's only one song I can sing, when in His beauty I see the great King, this shall my song in eternity be, Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me."

I mean, if He can accept me, I can accept me. That gives us our sense of worth. I'm worth something. I matter to God. And if I matter to God I matter to me and to you and everybody has that value. Man, you can ... you know, getting self worth and having a firm self image isn't a matter of playing games with psychology, it's a matter of knowing what God has done for you in Christ. That's the first thing - forgiveness.

The second thing, well let me go back. I can't leave that yet. I've got to talk about one other thing. The end of verse 7.

You say - But how much forgiveness, I don't know if He's got enough to go around?

Oh yeah, "According to the riches of His grace." Now watch that phrase according to. It's all grace, just remember that. Grace is an undeserved favor. It's all grace based on His love. But He always gives us according to His riches. How rich is He? He's rich, believe me. Unspeakable riches, right? There aren't any words, so there's no sense in trying to describe it. He has enough and more than enough. He has infinite grace. So, He always gives us forgiveness according to ... The Bible doesn't say out of, it says according to. And that's a ... that's a relative rather than an absolute.

Like for example, if I go to a rich man, he's a millionaire. And I say - Oh, I have a need for $25,000 for a wonderful project I would like to do, oh, it's so important to me. Would you mind supporting this project? My brother, I'd be happy to. And he writes me out a check for $25.00. I say - $25.00? This is out of your riches.

I go to another rich man. I say - Rich man, I need $25,000 for this wonderful project for the Lord's work. He sits down and writes me a check - $30,000. He says - There's an extra five in case you need some more. Oh; you gave me according to your riches. See the difference? When God gives He doesn't give out of He gives... what?...according to. Always in abundance.

Forgiveness according to His riches. As rich as He is that's how forgiving He is.

All right, now the second one. The first result - forgiveness.

The second one is wisdom and prudence, verse 8. "In which He's abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Again, whenever God does something He abounds. I mean, He doesn't just hand stuff out in little tiny increments. He dumps it on you. He abounds, superabundantly. In two things; wisdom and prudence.

Now this is the positive side, the negative side - forgiveness. The positive side - wisdom and prudence. He forgave us and now He gives us His plan. Let me distinguish these words. He made to overflow; the verb means to overflow, to superabound. The first word, wisdom, is sophia, it has to do with wisdom in eternal things like life and death and God and man and sin and eternity and time. It's theological.

But the second word is prudence and it's phronesis in the Greek and it means - it simply means insight into earthly things, day to day living.

Now, as a Christian we not only have forgiveness, that takes care of the negative, but positively God gives us the equipment to understand Him and to walk through the world on a day to day basis. Isn't that super? Wisdom and insight. So that we have all ... we're not just pie in the sky, spinning off great theological truth, we know how to put it into work.

So by wonderful grace, He forgives our sin. And then He dumps into our minds and pours through our hands and feet and mouths principles for spiritual living in the midst of a world like ours. Spiritual discernment, we are the wisest. God has taken us into His confidence.

Listen, God thinks so highly of you, beloved, as a Christian that He has given you the secrets of the universe.

Andre Maurois, the French philosopher, said; "The universe is indifferent. Who created it? Why are we on this puny mud heap, spinning in infinite space? I have not the slightest idea and I'm convinced that nobody else does either.-

Well, I may not have an IQ like him but I'll tell you one thing - I know the truth. Because what He has chosen to hide from the wise and the prudent of the world He has chosen to reveal to t e babes. Right? Jesus said that. And, by the way, if there's anything you don't know, you can get it real quick because James 1 says; "If any man lack wisdom let him... what? ... ask of God who gives to all men liberally and holds nothing back." I'm telling you, people, not only has He taken care of the sin problem but He's opened up to us the concept of His truth and how to live it in the world. That's the result f redemption. I mean, that's real freedom.

Lastly, the redemptive reason. Why did He do it all? What's the intention of it? What's the purpose?

Verse 9; "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will." That's right! He told us this mystery of the church, and the body, and all these fantastic things, "According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself," He did it on His own with His own desires in mind, for Himself. But why did He do this? Why this incredible revelation? Why this amazing reality of salvation and redemption?

"In order that in the dispensation of the fullness of times," and beloved, that means the millennial kingdom and right on out into eternity, when time is filled up, when the end comes, when the kingdom arrives, and eternity comes, the new heaven and the new earth ultimately of course was seen there; "He will gather together in one all things in Christ which are in heaven and which are in earth even in Him."

Listen, God is redeeming in order that He might gather everything to Himself. That will be the day when Paul said to the Philippians; "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, whether they be on earth, in heaven or under the earth." Christ will gather the universe into unity. Right now the universe is splintered, it is scattered, It is splattered, it is divided. Satan rules, demons rule and the fight is on between God and the holy angels but sometime demons and Satan are cast into the pit, in the Kingdom time, then released for a little time for their final fling and then they are sent to the pit forever, the bottomless pit. And God will call all things into one in Christ and there will be incredible and eternal unity in Him; all things redeemed.

Why is He redeeming us? To make us a part of the final goal of history, to bring all things to Himself.

And the rebels - purged out, dismissed from His presence. That's the purpose.

Macbeth said that; "History is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

Wrong, that's wrong. God has an absolutely, clear, wonderful purpose, the completion of history, everything comes together, you begin to see it in His millennial Kingdom, ultimately in the new heavens and the new earth, all things one in Christ.

Are you redeemed? If you are - I hope you're thankful. All that God could possibly give He has given to you. He planned it in the past. He worked it out in the present in order that you might experience the fullness of it in the future. And it's all yours through faith in Jesus Christ.

Anybody who comes to Jesus Christ receives this gift of redemption. That's the gift we offer to you this morning. Let's pray.

While your heads are bowed for just a moment, Jesus Christ wants to set you free. And He wants to keep you free and make you a part of this wonderful plan. It's up to you to let Him do that. He offers you a gift and a gift is something you just take you don't earn, you just take it, by simply, in your own heart, saying - Christ, I want to take the gift, I accept the fact that You died for me, You paid the price to set me free. You can enter into that eternal life, that incredible existence, that plan which He has prepared.

Father, thank You for our fellowship this morning, for these good people. Good because they're in Christ who is good. Blessed because they're in the Blessed One. Beloved, because they're in the Beloved One. Father, multiply their fruitfulness. Multiply their joy and use them mightily in days ahead. Bring us together tonight as we share about Your table and remember the cross where the price was paid. Thank You for being with us this morning, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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