

## A Perfect Redemption, p. 2

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**Bible Text:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  
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1 Thessalonians 5. Let's go back there this evening. I'm going to continue with part 2 of "Perfect Redemption." Our God is a God who is or has an all-consuming passion to glorify himself; to make known what he is and who he is and how powerful and beautiful, how wise, how holy he is, and he has an invincible love. It's just a part of his nature. His love influences and flavors, if you will, all of his other attributes but all of his other attributes help define his love. He has this great great bold choice to cast favor toward men who are fallen so low in sin and corruption that they are in an irreparable condition left to themselves. But God didn't leave them to themselves. He came for those worms. He came to redeem them and we're talking about this perfect redemption wrought by God.

Just in review real quick. We talked about I: the perfect man and the perfect plan. The plan rather, the perfect plan and the perfect man. The plan was God the Father's plan that he wanted to say for himself a people that would know God, would joy in God and love God and be an example of God's saving power for time and for eternity. When you're saved and you become part of the church, you become part of God's trophy. It's his trophy of what he can accomplish, not what a preacher can do or a slick church program can accomplish or any man or whatever, it is what God can accomplish. So God had a plan and then he had a man, his Son, Jesus Christ whom he sent to care for the children, and you know that I've been calling those children what the Bible calls them, they are the elect of God, or the chosen of God, or the called of God, or the foreknown by God, or the predestined by God. He uses a lot of phrases and there are a lot of them in the New Testament. You have to really work to get around those if you don't want to deal with this sovereign choice of God as he marked out those he would send his Son Jesus Christ to provide for them a perfect redemption.

Now II, we talked about the perfect execution of the plan by the man. Jesus did come. He was born of the virgin. He lived a holy life. He fully kept God's law. He went to that climactic event, the centerpiece event of all time and eternity, and that's the cross, and there on the cross he paid our ransom. There on the cross our debt was satisfied; the justice of God was satisfied against us. So therefore, we are redeemed, bought back out of Satan's house and the bondage of sin into God's house and the freedom and the glory of the sons of God. He perfectly executed that responsibility.

Subpoint A, we called the unlimited liability assumed and fulfilled. That is, Jesus assumed our legal responsibility before the justice and the law of God and he completely fulfilled the requirements of law in making us, freeing us, if you will, from sin and making us just and holy before the presence of God.

Now we come to the second part of the perfect execution of the plan by the man, and that is B: a limited application to the elect. A limited application to the elect. Now I want you to listen well and get the balance of all that I want to bring to you from the word of God.

Now let's go back to 1 Thessalonians 5 and this is a great text to begin talking about that there is a restriction, if you will, a limit to whom God came to redeem. 1 Thessalonians 5, beginning in verse 1,

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren [so he's writing to a restricted group, he's writing to brethren here] you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they [that's the other group, that's a separate group from the people he's writing to, the lost, the world] are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 But you [again a different subgroup, the main people he's talking to, the church], brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath [there's a particular group that has not been destined for wrath], but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for [the world? No, in consistency with all he's been saying so far] who died for us [a limited subgroup, he could have easily said the world, he could have easily said all men but he stays in the flow. He's not writing to the world, he's writing to a church.] He died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage [who? The whole world? No.] one another [the ones he died for] and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

As we talk about this limited application to the elect, let me say to you that all Christians, again and I'll talk a lot about how we use the words and how the people in the day the Scriptures were written used the words the way we use them, they used them figuratively. They used the phrase "all" the way we would use the word "all," not absolutely every person. You could say Alabama wins all their games. Well, that's true in a figure of speech but they don't win all their games. Auburn fans may have something to say about that. They do win absolutely just about all of them but not all of them, but it's a figure of speech. But when I say all Christians agree, I mean the great majority of Christians agree

together that the death of Christ is sufficient should God decree it so to save or redeem a thousand worlds full of sinners. The blood of Christ has infinite power and infinite value yet though we all agree the death of Christ and the blood of Christ is sufficient for a thousand worlds of sinners, we all agree Arminians and more Calvinist leaning people, that there is a limitation to the atonement, there is a limitation to redemption.

Now there are two major lines of thinking throughout church history that speak of the fact that the atonement or redemption is limited. The first one is the Catholic or you might even add the Catholic/Arminian line of thinking. The Catholic or the Arminian thinking which is not our primary forefathers, by the way, they would teach that the effects, the redemption of Christ's death is limited by men. Christ died, anybody could be saved if they'll just choose to believe, but it's up to men as to how unlimited this atonement or this redemption is. They actually can govern who gets redeemed and who does not. If they believe, they would say, then the person who believes then becomes the object of God's favor and then receives the benefits of his redeeming death; that Christ's death did not actually redeem anyone, they would say, they would say that Christ's death only made man redeemable, Christ's death only put man in a redemptive possibility. It's possible. Jesus died and now it's possible but nothing for sure has happened because it's up to men to make it happen. That's Catholic doctrine. That's the more Arminian doctrine.

I look at that and I say so there's a real possibility that Jesus could have died and all could have rejected him and Jesus' death would have been a colossal failure. You would have to say that would have been a possibility if it literally is up to man as to whether or not the atonement does anything for anybody, and that's why the Catholic hierarchy came up with what they call the sacrifice of the Mass. Since Jesus' death did not secure anybody's redemption, therefore you have to come to the priests, you have to take the wafer and drink the juice, and when you come to the Catholic priest and you take the wafer and drink the juice, the wafer becomes the body of Jesus crucified for you, the drink becomes the blood of Jesus shed for you, and so Jesus dies for you again and you secure your redemption again because nothing was settled back on Calvary, it's up to you. Now in evangelical circles, far too many have drifted toward that kind of thinking. No, we don't teach a priest and we don't teach eating a wafer and drinking the juice, we just preach raise your hand, walk to the front. We give them some motion that helps get the effects of redemption applied to them.

So that's one primary line of thinking, Jesus died to make redemption possible. He didn't actually acquire or finish redemption for anyone, he just made it possible. I and our Baptist forefathers, the greatest number of them, absolutely categorically reject that notion. The Protestant Reformation and early Baptists in general would say that's not true, the Bible has an abundance of Scriptures that teach very clearly Jesus' death was not something that made things possible, Jesus' death actually accomplished what he meant for it to accomplish. He actually redeemed his children he came to redeem when he died.

Some cross verses to support this. Romans 8:1, Paul writes and says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." In other words, it's all finished. Now of course, in the Catholic and Arminian line of thinking, you can lose your

salvation. You can be condemned and get it back at again and lose it and get it back again, and of course, that's the way they kept people under their power and control when you had to jump through the hoops they said and honor them and sit under their oversight and their authority so you could make sure you got the effects of the redemption because it could be taken away. We reject that. If you know Christ Jesus, there's no condemnation left for you.

Hebrews 1:3 speaks of how Jesus made purification of sins. It's a past tense emphasis. "He made purification." He actually purified his children when he died on the cross.

Hebrews 9:12, "not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place," notice this, "once for all, having obtained," it's a finished thing, it's a past tense verb, "having obtained eternal redemption." He didn't just die to make it possible, he obtained it for the children. He didn't have to obtain it for himself, he was obtaining it for those for which he came to save.

So we hold that man cannot in any matter add to his redemption. It was procured for us and finished for us in Christ's death. It is not subjected to us but it is objective to us. In other words, the Bible speaks of Christ performing our redemption outside of us, independent from us. We are just the grateful beneficiaries of his redeeming work. He bore our sins, he purged those sins, he did not just make a down payment and leave the rest for someone else to do. Our debts are not just canceled, they are liquidated.

Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering He has perfected," past tense verb, that means he died and redeemed them and it is completed and finished, "He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." The elect children bask in a holy liberty having been freed from sin, freed from guilt, freed from condemnation, freed from death, freed from hell, freed from the grave through the redemptive finished work of Jesus Christ. That's why Fanny Crosby wrote in her song, "Perfect submission, all is at rest. I in my Savior am happy and blessed." And of course we are. Look, you can't write "Perfect submission, all is at rest," if you've got to do something to complete your redemption. Are you hearing me? There is no joy in that. There's no security in that. Why, that leads you to trembling. That leads you to run back to the church authority and say, "What do I have to do next? I don't want to lose it. I want to get it back." That's not the great doctrine of Scripture. Perfect submission, all is at rest. Why? Because when he died for me, he finished the requirements for me. I'm at rest in that.

So the Catholic line and the Arminian line and unfortunately way too many Baptists and evangelicals in the modern world, the main problem with Baptists and evangelicals is not that they reject this doctrine, they are just almost a-theological. They don't really have any understanding of doctrine. They know two or three little basic things they learned when they were sixth graders in Sunday school and they don't want to learn anything else, and they kind of feel like the job after I learned those two or three little basic things was for the pastor to be creative and funny and humorous and entertaining enough to get me coming back. They are just shallow. They don't want to wrestle with the whole counsel of God. That's really the problem. But anyway, the Arminian Catholic thinking

and the far too many Baptists and evangelicals today say that the atonement of Christ and the redemption of Christ is limited by whether or not man believes. There is no effect to anyone's life because man holds the key or until man turns the lock and opens it.

Now if I really believed that, if I really believed Jesus did this, Jesus just splashed out there this great possibility, he didn't get anything accomplished but it was up to men to do something to get it activated for them, if I really believed that, then I'd look for every spin, every twist, every fad, every bait and switch, everything I could find to get men to do that, whatever it was. Are you listening to me? And that's what we see in modern evangelicalism, every kind of ridiculous nonsense and superstitious hoop jump or whatever it is to get people to get in on this redemption, and you know in your heart of hearts everything about that smacks of error and falsehood and sham. I think there are some good brothers who get caught up in it, don't misunderstand me, and I think there are brothers whose hearts are right because I've been there myself, but they need to keep reading and keep studying and if they would study church history, they would find out that there were centuries and centuries and centuries and centuries of good Baptist and Protestant and Evangelical work where they did none of the shenanigans we're doing in churches today "to get people saved." Why did they do that? Because they believe this doctrine that Jesus sealed it and secured it when he died and it has a limited application to those Jesus chose, to those Jesus foreknew, to those he predestined. By contrast, we of course, hold to sovereign grace. We believe the redemption of Christ is limited not by man, it's limited only by God. Now you've got to decide, choose your limitation: sovereign man or sovereign God. That's really what it comes to.

Well, what saith the Scriptures? What does the Bible say about this? Well, remember what the angel said to Joseph recorded in Matthew 1:21? He said, "Mary's going to have a baby and he came to save his people," limited group, "from their sins." And then a very powerful passage of Scripture, I think. Let me say this to you: you've got to understand the cultural mindset of this day. When it came to religion in general, the Jewish mindset was the dominant thinking of the day even among the Gentiles. If they wanted to talk about one God who was Lord of all, now the Greeks had all kinds of demigods but when you talked about one central, authoritative God, the Jews had the corner of the market on that thought and everything about God and the Jews was that God elected Israel. Israel is God's elect. Israel is God's called. Israel is God's predestined. Israel are God's elect people. I wonder why the Arminians don't jump up and down on a table with both feet about that. Why don't they get mad that God chose Israel? It's funny, I mean, I know Arminian pastors that just get red in the face and scream and shout over it, "Israel's God's people and God chose them and we ought to support Israel." And I say amen and amen and amen, but why is that okay if you're not okay with God electing individuals unto salvation? Why is it okay for God to elect Israel?

So in the mindset of the people of the day and as the Bible writers are writing, they are writing from that perspective. That was no question that the Jews categorically without debate held God elected Israel and did not choose the Hittites, the Amorites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians or anybody else. God chose Israel. So the concept of God electing or choosing one group out of the whole was very common thinking. That's where

they started. Now in modern America, and especially in the southeast, we start at the radically opposite perspective, God has to give everybody the exact same fair shake. You know by reality that's not true. Some children grow up in homes where they have a loving Christian environment and some children grow up in homes where their parents are atheists. It just doesn't happen. We don't all get the same fair shake, so to speak. We all get more than we deserve, we get more than we deserve, we get more favor than we ought to get but it's not equal in any way, shape or fashion. God has always had an elect people. He had Israel.

So these Israelites come in here and they begin hearing about this Christ is born, Joseph hears that his wife is going to have the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and he will save his people from their sins and Joseph probably thought, "Well, I know that. Of course he's coming to save Israel from her sins." Ah, but there was a shocking shocking revelation coming and that is that God didn't just have some elect in Israel, he had some elect also among the Gentiles. Jesus said, "I've got others sheep not of this fold." The radical revelation was not election, the radical revelation that there could be some elect outside of Israel, that was the radical thought that the revelation of Jesus brought.

So John 10:14 and 15, Jesus is teaching and he says, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own." Who does he know? He knows a restricted group, a limited group. "I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the," world? No, "the sheep." The sheep I know and the sheep that know me. It's a limited group. You can't make that mean anything else. And on one occasion when the Pharisees were debating with Jesus and not receiving Jesus, Jesus said, "You don't believe because you're not my sheep." He didn't say, "Because you don't believe you're not my sheep," he said, "You don't believe because you're not my sheep." It's a limited, there's a limited aspect.

John 17:9, Jesus is interceding for his followers, his disciples. What a radical thing he says here, radical from our per perspective anyway. In John 17:9, "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine." I'm not asking you to protect and care for and keep those who are unbelievers who are in the world, I ask you to take care of those you've given me out of the world. It's a limited group. It's not everyone.

Revelations 5:9, we have a picture, John gives us a picture of what the saints of God in heaven – now listen to me – the saints of God in heaven are praising Jesus for something. Now what do you think the saints of God in heaven praise Jesus for? "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are thou to take the book and to break its seals; for thou were slain, and did purchase for God with thy blood,'" that's the cross, that's redemption. Who did he purchase with his blood? "Men," and literally the Greek says, "men out of every tribe, out of every tongue, out of every people, and out of every nation." Not the whole world, a limited restricted group but from all the peoples of the world. That's all you can make that text... Not many Baptists praise God for limited atonement but the saints in heaven do. Can I get an amen? That's what that teaches. Do you know why they love it? Because on that side when you're up there in glory, you see that God did everything he

was going to do perfectly. Everyone his blood was shed for is cleansed and makes it to glory and they are praising God for it. By the way, this is what I was taught by every Baptist pastor and every Baptist professor I've ever sat under; these are clearly Baptist doctrines, we just don't deal with them, and I deal with them as I come to them in the text and that's what we ought to do. This is the first time in 38 years I just bore down and focused on these things. Now it's very interesting that the people who have died and gone to heaven praise God for his death for them and for his blood cleansing men out of every people, tongue, tribe and nation, but you know, there is no record in Scripture of people in hell praising God for dying for them. I just thought that was an interesting thought.

Now I want you to go to Ephesians 5, would you turn there? Let's go to Ephesians 5. Galatians, then right after Galatians is Ephesians. We have this section on marriage and how marriage is a powerful picture of God's salvation and God's Gospel. You ladies have been studying about that in your lessons. And notice the parallel here that Paul wants them to get of how husbands relate to their wives the way Jesus relates to his wife, his church, his bride, and notice what the wording is here. Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her," that means he died, gave himself up for her. So husbands, love all the women in town. Nope. Your wife. It's limited, just as Jesus doesn't have the same eternal favor for all the people of the world but for his bride, his elect. If you make this a universal atonement where Christ died in the same way for everybody, then the parallel would be men should love all women, but if you understand what he's saying, a husband has a unique, special, devoted, peculiar love for one woman as Jesus has a unique, special, peculiar love for one bride, his elect, his church. It's limited. You lose everything if you make it general and apply it to everybody.

Continuing on, "so that He," that's Jesus, "might sanctify her," that's his bride, "having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He," Jesus, "might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." Then verse 28, "So husbands ought also to love their own wives," you don't get to love other women. Yeah, we love all men and women in Christian love but not with a spousal love. Jesus loves only his bride in that special unique way like men are only to love their wives in a special, peculiar, particular way.

Verse 29, "for no one ever hated his own flesh," because when you're married, of course, become one flesh, husband and wife, so a man can't hate his wife, that's illogical. Now he loves his wife because they are one flesh, "but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." So Jesus does this for the church, a limited group, as a husband does it for a limited woman, his wife. It's a limited atonement. It's a limited redemption.

Verse 32, "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." He says the reason why God gave you the picture of one man devoted in love to one woman is because our God has a great love devoted for a peculiar, particular, specific group. There's a limit to it.

Revelation 19:9, the Bible says concerning the marriage supper of the Lamb, "Blessed are those who are invited," not that choose to come, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." So Jesus says, "I lay down my life for my sheep." In his high priestly prayer, he says, "I'm not praying for the world, I'm praying for a limited group," and at the marriage supper of the Lamb, there is only a limited group invited to come to it. The whole concept of a limited application is all through Scripture.

Now let's go to the powerful picture of the Old Testament of Christ's sacrificial work for his children. What's the powerful picture in the Old Testament of Christ's sacrificial work? It's the sacrificial system of Israel and the Bible taught that if you had certain sins or certain failures or certain unclean things that happened in your life, you could go to the priest and the Levitical law told you what sacrifice to bring and when you brought that sacrifice to the priest, he sacrificed it on your behalf, redemption or atonement was made for you. Limited to you. On the Passover every year, every family in Israel was to pick out a spotless lamb and they would bring that spotless lamb to the temple and the priest would take that spotless lamb and it was sacrificed on the altar for your family, not anybody else. It was limited. On the great day of atonement, the priest took a goat and he sacrificed one of the goats and he took some of the blood and he went into the Holy of Holies, the only time, one time of the year he could go into the Holy of Holies. Tradition says they put a rope on him in case he went in there unclean and God killed him. And he sprinkled the blood in their symbolizing the atonement, the redeeming of the nation of Israel, the atonement for their sins. Now why didn't he sprinkle blood for the Egyptians and the Babylonians and the Hittites and all the other peoples of the world? No, it was limited to Israel. Every sacrificial type in the Old Testament has a limited application of its effectual atoning and redeeming work. That's why I'm telling you the whole mindset of people of this day was that God comes for his elect. It's very clear throughout the Scripture.

Colossians 1:21 and 22, "And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach."

Hebrews 2:17 speaking of Jesus, "Therefore, He had to be made like," who? The world? No, "His brethren," he had to be made like the people he came to save, his brethren, "in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation," that's his death, propitiation remember means a covering, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people," a particular group, a limited group.

Hebrews 9:15, "For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called," who is going to get the benefits of this death? "Those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." It's limited. Now folks, if the Bible is just crystal-clear and Jesus died the same way for everybody, you just would not have all these verses, and trust me, there are many many more. You wouldn't have to typology of the Old Testament sacrificial system being limited. You wouldn't have the illustration of husbands and wives and a wife's love is

limited and him saying that's the way Jesus loves his church. You just wouldn't have all that. That would just be a glaring contradiction.

"Pastor, what about all the texts that do say that Jesus died for all men? What about some texts that say Jesus did die for the world?" Let me give you three things on that, alright? Three things on those texts and I'll be honest, some of them are challenging, but a closer examination, I'm convinced, shows that they are not teaching a universal atonement because listen to me, friend, you've got to be careful here, when you start throwing that around, you haven't thought through what you're saying because if Jesus died the same way for everybody, he has purchased the redemption of everybody and obtained eternal life for everybody, and that's Universalism. That means everybody is going to heaven. Nobody will perish. I guess the folks in hell right now feel bad about that doctrine. It didn't work for them.

But three thoughts about those texts that seem to imply that Jesus died for all men. 1. Thought 1: the words "all" or "world" or similar words like that are used throughout Scripture as a figure of speech when they, in reality, have a more restrictive meaning. So it's often just a figure of speech. They were not unlike us, when we say, "Boy, everybody is saying this." Oh, they are? That's one of my common things in staff meetings, "Pastor, everybody is saying that." Wait, what do you mean everybody is saying that? Who? "Well, John said it." Well, that wasn't everybody, it's a figure of speech.

Romans 5:18, as a matter of fact, I think it's going to be on the screen but let's turn there together because I've got to show you another verse right beside it. Romans 5:18, look at Romans 5:18, "So then as through one transgression," that was our father Adam back in the garden of Eden, he transgressed there, "there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness," that's the act of Jesus, "there resulted justification of life to all men." What are we going to do with that, "there resulted justification of life to all men"? Well, first of all, are you sure you want to hang your hat on that? Are you sure you want to become a Universalist and say Jesus has granted justification now, think about that, that's the finished work right there, Jesus rose for our justification; you want to claim that Jesus has justified all men and it's settled and done? Well, what's the context say? You always look at the context. Is there clarification in the context? I think there is, look at verse 17. Who is he referring to in verse 17? "For if by the transgression of the one," that's our father Adam, "death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." So who are these "all"? It's those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.

So in verse 17 he's got a restricted group, those who receive the abundance of grace; in verse 18, he says the word "all," so I would say in proper biblical exegesis you've got to define the "all" by the restrictive claims of the verse preceding it, if not you've got two contradictions. That makes perfect sense if you hold that the "all" of 18 is a figure of speech that has a more restrictive understanding, and the restrictive understanding comes out clearly in the preceding verse where he says, "No, I'm referring to those who receive

the abundance of grace." He could have said to the whole world there but he says, "No, it's a more restrictive group."

Now look at Hebrews 2, another troublesome verse that the Arminians would fire at us and say, "Hey, this doesn't teach that Christ's atonement only affects the elect." Hebrews 2, look at verse 9, for "we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Well there you go. He tasted death for everyone. Now is that a figure of speech with a more restrictive sense or did Jesus literally actually taste death for all men, women, children, whoever it was whoever lived on the face of the earth? Well, first of all, I'd say if that's really what the text is meaning, then no man would ever face death, they would just go into eternal life when they died if he actually literally tasted death for them. You see, you get into a trap here if you start getting into Arminian thinking. Well, okay, he didn't really taste death, he just offered people victory from death. That's not what that says. He took it for them. He put it in his mouth. He chewed it up. He swallowed it and he eliminated it. He expiated death and took it out of our way.

When he says that phrase, how does he say it again, he might taste death for everyone, is there more of an understanding here? Well, let's look at the context. Look at verse 10, "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory," not every man, he brings many to glory, that's more restrictive. Verse 11, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified," those who are sanctified is a restrictive group, a limited group, "are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying," verse 12, "I will proclaim Your name to my," who? "Brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.' And again, 'I will put my trust in Him.' And again, 'Behold, I and the children whom God has given me.'" There you go, very restrictive. These are the children whom God has given me. So the "every man" of the earlier verse is qualified and amplified and defined by the following context. It's more of a limited group.

That's the way I would interpret those texts. You can disagree, that's fine, and by the way, these are not points to have arguments over or break fellowship over, amen? I have people in my family who don't quite hold to this point but they're coming along. We're working on it. But think about some verses where it's obvious the words "all" or "every," in this case the word "world" doesn't mean every person in the world. Listen to these. Just listen, you don't have time to look them up.

Revelation 2:9, Satan deceives the whole world. Well, there are lots of believers who are not deceived by Satan. That doesn't mean literally every single person but he is the predominant influencer of the whole world but not every single person.

1 John 5:19, "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Well, the great majority of the world does but the church doesn't. The redeemed don't lie under the power of the evil one. Generally that's true of the whole world but it's not every single person.

1 John 4:14, Jesus is the "Savior of the world." Are you sure you want to hang your hat on that and say that means every single person? Well, then every single person is redeemed and going to heaven. That's Universalism. No, it means he can save all people all over the world.

1 John 3:13, Jesus said, "Don't be surprised when the world hates you." Does that mean every single person who is not saved is going to always hate you if you're a Christian? No, the Bible actually teaches that God can make all men to be at peace with us at times. It doesn't mean every single person, it's a figurative phrase. It has a more restrictive meaning. It doesn't mean every single person.

John 21:25, John said, "If there were books written that contained all the miracles Jesus did, that even the world itself couldn't contain the books." Now do you think John really meant if you stacked all the books written of all that Jesus did in his three years of earthly ministry, the world couldn't hold it? No, what John is saying is there are so many things he did, it's as if the world couldn't hold them all. Now God can do that many wonderful works but he did limit himself to one finite body, you understand, for a three year period. It's a figure of speech that has a more restrictive sense.

In John 12:19, the Pharisees are frustrated about the way Jesus is gaining in popularity and they say, "the whole world has gone after Him." They didn't mean every single person but they meant a whole bunch of them are. It looked like the whole world to those Pharisees.

Folks, I could give you many many many more of the way the Bible writers of this day used these terms the way we use them today in a figurative sense but not in an absolute sense. So sometimes if not many times when you run across that phrase, "Jesus died for the whole world," it likely has a meaning that's more restrictive and not every single person everywhere.

That's my first thought. These words properly understood in their context often have and should have, most of the time, a more restrictive sense. 2. When the Bible says "all men" or "everywhere" or "all" it often means Jews and Gentiles because remember, in the Jewish mindset there was one thing crystal clear settled forever, "We're God's people and then there's everybody else." We're the world, us. We're the end-all of end-all and then there's everybody else. The greatest shock to Israel was that there could be people other than Jews that could be saved by their Jewish Messiah. That was what would shock them. There were two categories of people in the Jewish mindset of the day, there were Jews and everybody else.

For example, Romans 3:23, we know that verse well, don't we? "All have sinned." Well, in that context, that literally does mean every single person but it means more than that. If you read the context of Romans 3, Paul is making the argument that the Jews who believe you are God's chosen people, who believe Jesus just came for you, the Jews and the rest of the world, all Jews and Gentiles are under sin. We're all in the same boat to which all good, faithful, orthodox Jews would bristle, they wouldn't bristle, they'd kill you over it.

Ask Jesus. If you violated their doctrine of their exclusive identity as God's covenant chosen people, you were in trouble. So this was radical that God had people all over the world outside of Israel that he was actually saving. So it meant the Jews and the Gentiles.

2 Corinthians 5:19. Let's look that one up. 2 Corinthians 5:19, look over there with me. I want to hear your Bibles rustling. 2 Corinthians 5:19. It's as if all of a sudden my Bible doesn't have a 2 Corinthians 5 but there it is. In 2 Corinthians 5:19, the apostle is writing to the church at Corinth and he says, "namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." Now do you want to hang your hat on that and say, "That's it. He is reconciling every single person who has ever lived." You know that's not true. If he reconciles, then they're saved and it's done, they're all going to heaven. It's a figure of speech. "Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

So does that mean absolutely everyone is being reconciled? No, let's look at another verse. Let's look at verse 16. What is the context of what Paul is saying. Verse 16 before he gets to, of course, verse 19, "Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh." What is he saying? We don't recognize anyone because they are of any particular blood heritage. It just doesn't matter if Abraham is your forefather, it just doesn't matter if you're of the blood lineage of Israel, you're under sin and all the rest of the world is under sin. It's all God reconciling men from everywhere. That's what this means, Jews and Gentiles. Not that he's reconciling every single person because he's not. Look around the Shoals area, do you know how many people are in church tonight? Probably most of the reconciled ones are. He isn't reconciling everybody.

So it can be a figure of speech and have a more restrictive application when he says "all" or "everyone" or "the world." He can be referring to Jews and Gentiles. Then there is a third thought of why we have verses that look like Jesus' atoning redemptive work applies to all men and that is that there is a sense, I believe, and I can't really give you a lot of strong Scripture here, there is a sense where Jesus' death does have benefits and blessings to all mankind in the sense that through his death the Scripture speaks of him purchasing back the rights over all the earth. He didn't just redeem man, he redeemed creation too. So there is a sense of blessing and goodness now that Jesus is ruling and reigning and his kingdom and his authority mediates over all now in a way after his death that it did not before his death and we're just waiting for the culmination of the ages when he finally purges the world of all sin and evil and he literally reigns on planet earth.

So there are benefits and blessings and I would even go as far to say that Jesus' death is for all men in the sense that Jesus' death has an atoning temporal effect for all mankind. That is, why doesn't God come and consume all of us immediately and throw all into hell who are not saved immediately? I believe it's because in Jesus' death there is a temporal benefit, a temporal atonement, if you will, but it's only temporal. The eternal redeeming work of the cross applies only to the elect but there are temporal blessings for every man. So in that sense, the Bible could say Jesus died for all. There are effects and blessings from his death that affect all mankind.

Now as we wrap up here, I'm glad we did this on Sunday night because this is a little more like a seminary classroom except I'm preaching. So the question – listen to me, think with me for a moment, use your brains. Think, there is so little competition. The question is not are there benefits and blessings of Christ's death for all men, for the whole world? Yes. I believe there are temporal blessings and benefits for all men, not eternal, that's only for the elect but, yes, there are some temporal blessings and benefits. The question is not does Christ have a great love for all men, does Christ favor all men with more favor than they deserve, and will Christ save every single person who will repent and believe? Yes, he will. It's just that I'm convinced based on Scripture and I'm not dogmatic about it, I'm a bulldogmatic about it, that no one on their own will turn to Christ in repentance and faith. But if they would, he'll take them so don't you go out there and say pastor says some men can't come to Jesus. You listen to me, anybody who senses the weight of their sin and wants to cry out to Jesus in faith, God will save them. Then when you get back of it and turn around and look at it from God's perspective, it was God who called them, who predestined them, who foreknew them, who elected them, and who drew them by the Spirit, and that's next week's session, by the way, when we come to repentance and faith individually. How does that work in this sovereign grace. We'll talk about that next week.

So the question is not are there blessings and benefits that affect all men in the world? Yes. The question is not does God have a great love for all men and will save any and all who will repent and believe? Yes, he will. Here's the question and based on the emphatic, redundant, clear statements of Scripture, here are the questions. Whom did Christ redeem when he died? For whom did he purge of sin when he died? For whom did he cleanse of guilt when he died? Whose place did he take when he was the substitutionary sacrifice? That's what a sacrifice is, it takes the place of another. Whose place did he take when he died? Did he actually complete redemption when he died? Those are the questions and you're only left with one conclusion, "I'm the good shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep, those whom I foreknew before the foundation of the world."

Brothers and sisters, I am repulsed by any concept that our perfect, precious Lord Jesus Christ, we are talking about a perfect redemption here, that his death on the cross was some sloppy effort that hopefully would get some folks saved. I'm repulsed that the great majority of people in the Bible Belt don't even go to church anymore yet Jesus died for them and redeemed them and reclaimed them and has given them new life. No, he hasn't because if he had, they would live like it because he saves no one that he doesn't change. Don't you tell me he's done his perfect work in them when they don't care enough to even come to God's house on Sunday. The cross is not some sloppy, roll the dice thing, maybe we can talk enough people into getting saved so Jesus will feel good about dying for everybody. Blasphemy! Error! Unsound doctrine! False doctrine and heresy! That's just not what the Bible teaches. I'm telling you, my Lord Jesus has the highest of dignity, the highest of omniscience and power and wisdom and goodness, and when he died, he secured his children. It's not a sloppy event, hopefully someone will like it and get saved. No, it was a perfect particular redemption fully successful and finished. The redemption of Christ is perfect for the Redeemer is perfect. That's why in that powerful description in Isaiah 53 where it talks about him suffering and dying and being rejected and then the

promise of the Father says, "But He will see His offspring." When he dies, he purchases his children, his offspring. Every single one of them, he will keep and he will save.

Now if Christ died for all people exactly the same way, he died to redeem every single person and then millions perish and go to hell, then Jesus has failed. Don't tell me the righteous, holy, perfect Lord Jesus died to accomplish something that didn't happen. But if all for whom he died are indeed saved and will inherit eternal life, then Christ indeed is successful as Savior, and he did what he said he would do, he did what he said he did when he said in John 6:39, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

In conclusion, let's remind ourselves that the work of redemption is not shared by us, the work of redemption is not your faith plus the Catholic priest and the Catholic sacrament, the work of redemption is not Jesus plus some hoop jump you do or go through, those are the effects of redemption. Your faith is the effects of redemption. By the way, the Baptist faith and message, we'll look at this next week, the Baptist faith and message clearly points out that your regeneration comes first and then your repentance and faith comes next. Your Baptist forefathers have been writing this down in confessions of faith for years and the great majority of Baptists would scoff at it. It's because there has been such poor preaching that the saints of God don't know the truth. But Jesus alone hung in darkness on the cross. It was a physical darkness. It was a spiritual darkness. There by himself, the Son of God, the Incarnate Son of God to the exclusion of God the Father and exclusion of God the Holy Spirit, to the exclusion of angels and of men, finished my redemption. There is no indication that demons and devils with there. I know there have been some songs sung about demons and devils were there, but I'm telling you, there was nobody there but Jesus and the Father's wrath against him.

This redeeming work is the work of God's Son and God's Son alone. He is the only one qualified to be a Redeemer. He is the only one commissioned by the Father to be the Redeemer. He is the one and only faithful high priest who always lives to make intercession for his children. He alone became sin. He alone shed his precious blood, as the Bible says, knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from a futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb, unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. He alone ascended into heaven. He alone entered the one true holy place in heaven and he obtained eternal redemption for us. Hugh Martin said, "The atonement is one solitary, matchless, divine transaction never to be repeated, never to be equaled, never to be approached." He finished the work for those he came to save. That is perfect redemption. Praise his name. An old songwriter said, "He saw me plunged in deep despair, and flew to my relief. For me he bore the dreadful cross, and carried all my grief." And he did.