

Our Great Redeemer

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From a human perspective salvation is completely impossible. There is no way that you or I can save our own souls. We have sinned. We have broken the Law of God. We have brought guilt and condemnation down upon our heads. Any meaningful look at the Law of God would expose your sin to you. There is no such thing as a good person. There is no person that has not told a lie. There is no person that has not somehow looked askance with his eyes. There is no person that has loved the Lord our God with all of his heart, soul, strength, and mind for every moment of every waking day and given God the glory, and the honor, and the thanks that He deserves. As we come to the Word of God, as we read it seriously and earnestly, we see that we have fallen so far short that our souls are utterly irredeemable, and the effort to try to earn God's favor back with the things that we do, with religious activities or being good to our fellow man, only digs us in a deeper hole, because as you do that, beloved, as a man or as a woman or as a child seeks to develop favor with God by the works of their own hands, they're only making matters worse. They are only compounding their sin with those efforts, because they are rejecting the one true way of salvation that God has declared. That there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved than the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And to say that, to approach God as though you could make yourself good enough for Him, is a total statement of indescribable pride and is a total failure to recognize God for the great holiness that is intrinsically His. And so, we are just really really lost and shattered before a holy God, and the sad thing about it is that most people don't even realize how desperate the situation is. If you're a Christian today, you did not save yourself, and that humbles us before a holy God. We come as beggars before the table of grace. Scripture says that "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Beloved, it is only those that have thoroughly, knowingly, gladly declared their own spiritual bankruptcy that are in a position to receive Christ and to enter into eternal life. There is nothing about us by which we could be saved. We were hopelessly lost.

Now, Scripture describes that lostness with a number of different metaphors. It describes us as being dead in sin, for one, and that's a familiar one, but the Bible also describes us in this term. Jesus said in John 8:34 that "everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin." The Bible teaches that the sin that overcomes us enslaves us. That's from 2 Peter chapter 2. We're slaves in our natural condition. We are slaves to sin. Sin owns you, if you're not

a Christian. Slaves have no freedom. They do what their master tells them to do. They don't have the capacity to get out from under that bondage. And so, as the Bible describes us as slaves of sin in our unsaved condition, it is telling us that there is a power that is greater than us that owns us, and that we do not have the capacity to escape. That imagery of slavery is a description of the total inability of man to accomplish spiritual good, to do anything to save his own soul. It is a statement of the hopelessness of the human condition. A slave to sin.

Now, if you're not a Christian here this morning, and some of you are not, understand what that means for you as you look in the mirror morning by morning. What the Bible is saying is that sin, the principle of sin, owns you. You are a slave to a power greater than yourself, and you don't have the ability to break the chains that bind you. The picture of the unsaved man is bleak. Sin owns him. Death awaits him. He cannot save himself. Eternal judgment will destroy him. And when you think about particular manifestations of sin in the unsaved person, the truth of the matter is that the unsaved man loves his darkness. He would not have Christ deliver him. As he is in chains to his sin, he kisses the chains that bind him. He kisses the chains that enslave him. Oh, what a miserable, desperate condition the human race is in. Collectively and individually the Scriptures teach the slavery of man to sin. We were all in that position. Today's passage shows us how we were delivered.

Look at Titus chapter 2 beginning in verse 11. We'll pick it up in verse 11, but we're going to focus on the last two verses of 11 through 15. It's evident, in light of what Scripture says about our enslavement to sin, that we could not save ourselves. That if we were going to be delivered, someone else had to come and break the chains and set us free. No one can boast, the Scripture says. God forbid that I should boast in my salvation except in our Lord Jesus Christ. This passage shows us why that must be the case. Titus chapter 2 verse 11.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

So the focus here in what we're about to see is our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 14. "Who," and so verse 14 is describing Christ and describing what He did.

14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

This passage answers the question that should be preeminent on the mind of every unsaved man and should be the reflection of every one of us that are truly in Christ. How is it that Christ delivered us from our spiritual slavery? How is it that an unsaved man can find deliverance from his miserable condition? How does that happen? What is the

provision for that? If it can't come from what we do, if it can't come even from our own tears of sorrow over our wrongdoing, how is it that we find deliverance from our spiritual slavery? Speaking now to Christians, how is it that Christ set us free from that bondage that we were in to sin? And I just want to pause there for a moment, both for the sake of my own self-reflection, as much as I can do that while I'm speaking to you, and also for your own self-reflection. Look back on your life before Christ. If you are a Christian, you will look back, and you will see yes, you were in bondage to sin. You were dead to the things of Scripture. You were dead to the things of Christ. Some of you were enslaved to chemical substances. Some of you were enslaved to immorality of a physical kind. Others were enslaved to this high view and lofty view of yourself. Some of you enslaved to false religion that taught you wrong things and you believed them and your mind was captivated by that. Every one of you, in different ways, can relate to an aspect that you were in a dark bondage and you were even unaware of it. Some of you were confessing to be Christians while chains of sin were binding you from doing anything to truly glorify God. How is it that we were delivered from that slavery? How is it that we escaped the judgment that we deserved for that? How was it that we were delivered from that cruel task master of our souls?

Well, this verse tells us, and it's all about the person of Christ. It's all about something that He did. And before we get into the details of the passage in front of us, I want you to, as we flip back and pause for a moment to remember our spiritual bondage, I want you to realize that someone, if you're a Christian today, the overview of what we're saying here is that someone with power, with authority and with grace, as verse 11 says, someone with power, authority and grace intervened on your behalf when you had no claim on Him to do so. The song that Elizabeth sang for us earlier spoke of Christ as the friend who took our place. Someone who had no obligation to you intervened on your behalf. Someone with a greatly magnanimous heart said, "I want to intervene and help." That is an expression of such grace, and love, and undeserved mercy that whatever else is going on in our lives this morning it should be overwhelmed by a sense of the majesty, and the glory, and the goodness, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. You realize, don't you, that you were a slave! You were in chains of a spiritual nature that you could not be released from, and they were holding you in a cell, as it were, just waiting for eternal judgment to come upon you. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed and beautiful Lord Jesus Christ, did something on our behalf that we had no standing from which to ask Him to do. There should just be such an overwhelming sense of being humbled by your prior condition and such a great gratitude of thanksgiving to Christ for what He has done that your heart just eagerly receives everything that this text has to say to us. Everything that this passage is going to teach us here this morning should drive you to a profound gratitude and a profound spirit of obedience to this One who stood in our place. We don't trivialize Christ. We don't take it lightly. We don't take our Savior lightly, because of the magnitude of what He did.

What was it that He did? Point number one here this morning. I'm going to give you three aspects of the way that Christ delivered us from our spiritual slavery, and every one of them we should receive with tender, sensitive, grateful hearts. Point number one: our Lord Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior, from verse 13, what did this great God and

Savior do? Point number one: He took our place. He took our place. He took your place, if you're Christian. As slaves we could not free ourselves. "Out of grace," this passage says to us. "Out of grace upon our condition Jesus Christ intervened and did what you could not do for yourself." Look at verse 14. What did He do? Precious words, verse 14. "He gave Himself for us." He gave Himself for us. The simplicity of those words tell us the magnitude of how Christ has intervened on our behalf. The eternal Son of God, God's agent in creation, the One who existed before time began, the One who shared the full glory of God with the Father and with the Spirit, that God, that Son, that One came down to earth, left the throne of His glory, and came down to earth, and entered into humanity for the express purpose of giving Himself for us.

Do you see the magnitude of that? Do you see the eternal halls of majesty that we bow before when we think about the glory of what Christ has done for us? He gave Himself for us. This great one in heaven stepped into humanity, not to declare, as it were, not to declare His glory so much, although He displayed the glory of God in what He did, He came with the purpose of giving Himself for us. The Master of righteousness came to give Himself on behalf of the slaves of sin. What kind of friend is that? What kind of great God and Savior is that? The greatness of this Savior is unspeakable. The glory of Christ in this self-giving of Himself cannot be measured. He not only left heaven. He left to become a man. And He not only became a man. He went to the cross, and He paid for the price of your salvation. He paid the price of your salvation with His own innocent blood. He gave Himself over to that. He gave himself over to be despised and rejected by men in order to fulfill the purpose of His Father. In love for those who would become His own, He laid down His life for us. Beloved, if that doesn't humble your heart, if that doesn't cause you to well up with gratitude and sink down in humility, I really worry about the condition of your soul.

To see Christ on display in a text like this makes the true Christian humbled, grateful. It drives us to worship. There's no place for reducing this to human joking and callous indifference or a superficial approach to this. We're talking about eternal revealed realities that took place in time and space and Christ did it with you in His heart on His mind by name 2,000 years before you were even born. When we proclaim the glories of true biblical salvation, we are proclaiming majesties before which we should bow in humble worship. You want to know why people live superficial Christian lives? You want to know why people treat this lightly? It's because they haven't seen themselves as a slave of sin. They have too high of a view of themselves, and when people have a higher view of themselves than what they have, the more you think about yourself, the more you pull Christ down to your level. When you're humbled by it, when you're humbled by your sin, you see Christ ever greater, ever more exalted. And so, the value that you place on the work of Christ and Him giving Himself for you is proportionately related to what you think about yourself. And if you have a high opinion of yourself, you're not going to esteem Christ properly. And you can work it backwards. If you don't think that Christ is a great big deal, then I can tell you that you think highly of yourself.

Christ did this for us. Look at the verse with me again. He gave Himself. That would be magnificent enough. I mean, by all rights, He could've stayed in heaven, but He gave

Himself, and then, get this, get the level of the condescension of this, get the measure of grace in this that He gave Himself for us: He took our place. Christ stood in the place of sinners and took the punishment of death for everyone who would ever believe in Him. Turn back to the book of Isaiah 53. I want to show you a couple of familiar passages just to keep these things rightly in your mind. Isaiah 53, beginning in verse 4. Isaiah 53 verse 4. Prophetically looking forward to Christ, it says, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried, yet, we ourselves esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, but He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to His own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." Christ wasn't suffering for His own sins on the cross. Every one that was present at the time, Pilate, those around Him, the thief on the cross, all declared He was innocent. "This man has done no wrong." Why then is He suffering the death of a common criminal? For us. On our behalf. As our substitute. As the One who stood in our place giving Himself over for us. Scripture teaches us that our sins were placed on Him, and that when He died God was punishing Christ for things that He had not done. Instead, He was punishing Christ for things that you had done. Let that sink into your mind, beloved. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let that sink into your mind. Our great God and Savior, the eternal sinless Son of God, entering into the punishment that should've gone on to your head for your volitional, intentional sins against God, for the sins that you committed in ignorance, for the things that you did in blindness, all of it, all of it worthy of judgment. And this one friend, who took your place, as it were He said, "Father, I will substitute my life for theirs. I want to give Myself in obedience to You. I want to give My life so that You would punish me in my righteousness, so that they and their sins would not be punished." He gave Himself for us as our substitute in our place. He suffered the penalty that by all rights should have fallen on our heads. And as Christians, for me, for you, we can rightly say, "He did that for me. He did that for me! He did that for us, for those who will believe in Him, but I'm one of those. He did that for me! He did that by name! He knew me before time began. He knew. He came to earth with the intention to be my substitute, to stand in my place, to take the stroke that should've been on my neck. He took it on His own for me. He gave Himself to that."

Look over at 1 Peter 3:18 where you see it expressed from a New Testament perspective. 1 Peter, just after the book of Hebrews. 1 Peter 3:18. Christ took our place. He was our substitute. He was paying for our sins, so that we did not have to. 1 Peter 3:18. "Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God." Separated from God as Isaiah 59 verse 2 says that "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear." Christ bridged that gap by laying Himself down and saying, "Father, I'll take their punishment. Please set them free." And as we study elsewhere in Scripture, our sins were placed on Christ, and His righteousness was credited to our account. It's not just that in Christ we're declared not guilty. In this magnitude of Him giving Himself for us, His righteousness is placed to our account, so that we can rightly say that God has declared us righteous. He hasn't simply wiped away sin. He has given full righteousness to our account, so that we stand legally perfect before God because of the perfect righteousness

of Christ. Look. Look: you can't buy that with religious deeds. You can't buy that with money. You can't buy that with the tears of a sorrowful soul. This is a gift from God that we completely did not deserve. He took our place and gave Himself for us.

For those of you that still are not Christians, as you hear these things, let me say to you this: understand that through the preaching of God's Word this morning Christ is calling you to come to Him and partake of the benefits of this great self-sacrifice that He's made. He calls you by name and says, "Come to me. Come to me. Come and repent of your sins and receive me. I want to bestow this gift of salvation upon you. I want to share this with you, that which I've given to so many others in this room." Please, I beg you, receive Him. I don't know if I am going to have a chance to say this to you again. I'm not planning to leave. Don't get me wrong. Don't panic over something like that, but we don't know what tomorrow holds. This might be the last time that I get to say it to you. It might be the last time that you get to hear it. Today is the day of salvation. Don't wait! The urgency of this must come to bear upon your heart, and I pray by the Spirit of God that it would. That He would shatter the darkness of your mind, shatter the rebellion of your will, and that you would come to Christ. Christ calls you, and I beg you as His ambassador to come to Him today. You're a slave to sin. Only Christ can break those chains. Why would you turn away from a Savior like this? Why would you continue to reject Him? There is no excuse for someone to turn away from the Gospel. It can only be explained by your own unbelief and your own stubbornness. Oh God! Pierce their hearts! Oh God! Do it now that they might come to this great Christ who gave Himself for us.

For those of us that are Christians, we should have a smile on the inside of our heart anyway, if not one on our face. Christ paid the penalty of sin on our behalf. He gave Himself for us. We are free from the threat of eternal punishment, and we are freed from the dominating power of sin, because He took our place. Christ has fulfilled the Law for us. He was our substitute. Perfect, gladly, willingly giving Himself for us, He took our place. That's how we find ourselves free from sin. That's how we were delivered from the bondage of sin. He gave Himself for us.

Now, secondly, He gave Himself for us. He took our place. Secondly, we can say this: He paid your price. He paid your price. As we've said in the past, there were many many slaves in the first century. They could be set free if someone paid a ransom price for them. They could pay the master and the master would release that slave to freedom. The payment of that price was called redemption. The price that was paid was called the ransom price. It was a technical term in the slave market of the first century. You redeemed a slave, you bought him out of slavery. Well, the Bible takes that understanding, that imagery of redemption from slavery, and applies it to the nature of New Testament salvation. And the word is used here in verse 14. Understand this. When Christ died on the cross, He was paying a price. He was paying the price that God required for the release of your soul from its bondage to sin. The price of your salvation was the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 14 with me again. Titus chapter 2 verse 14. It says that He gave Himself for us, and here's the purpose: He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed.

There is the purpose of this giving. He gave Himself to redeem us from every lawless deed. And so, Christ redeemed us thoroughly, and His death on the cross, we must think about it as a payment that was made for us. There was a price for your redemption. There wasn't simply a matter of God erasing your sin and forgetting about it. No, there was a price to be paid. There was a debt, and the debt wasn't merely canceled. It was paid up in full. Your soul had a debt on it that had to be paid, and our Lord Jesus Christ paid that debt with His own life.

For you to be free from sin there had to be a redemption. There had to be a payment to deliver you from that slavery to sin and other things that we'll talk about this evening at our communion service. We're only focusing on one aspect of it here this morning. But when Christ, and the Bible says that Christ gave Himself to redeem us, it's saying that He gave Himself to pay the price that was necessary to release you from your bondage to sin. And look at verse 14 with me. How thorough was the payment? How comprehensive was it? Think about whatever you calculate to be the worst sins that you've ever committed and realize that Christ paid even for that. Verse 14. He gave Himself to redeem us from, watch it here, look at the text closely, "from every lawless deed." The innumerable sins that you and I have committed against God, the innumerable violations of His law both in things that we have done and in things that we have not done, every one of them was paid for in that self-sacrificial act of Christ when He went to Calvary. He paid for it. There is no longer any debt that you owe to God, because the price has been paid in full. That's why Jesus could say, "It is finished." The price that, as a substitute, He paid it all for us, and there is nothing, there is no sin, beyond the value of this redemptive price that He paid for our souls. He covered it all. We're going to sing tonight "Jesus Paid It All." He paid for every one of your debts against a holy God.

Paul intends us to understand this not simply in terms of releasing us from the penalty of sin. This is in the context, look at verse 12 with me. The greatness of the work of Christ is not just in the fact that it releases us from the eternal penalty of our sin. Christ has also redeemed us from the present power of sin. He has bought us out of that dominating power of sin and put us under the dominating power of His Holy Spirit to be slaves and instruments of righteousness now, not instruments of sin any longer. And what this means is that there is no sin in your life that is outside the liberating power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not one! He has given us the power to overcome sin. It's why He came! Look at verse 12 with me. Let me remind you of what it says. "The grace of God has appeared, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires." That's the negative side. On the positive side, "to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age." That's the purpose of grace in your life right now, and understand that. In His self-sacrifice, Christ gave Himself in order to buy us out from under that power of sin, so that we actually have the power to fulfill what verse 12 calls us to do. That's what it means when it says, "He gave Himself." Look at verse 14 with me. "He gave Himself to redeem us from every lawless deed." He bought us out from the bondage of those sins and put us in a position where we now have the power to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age. That's what it means. To say as a Christian that "I can't overcome this sin" is a contradiction in terms. It's an oxymoron. We have the power to overcome sin. Do we struggle with sin? Yes. You know that by experience, and so do I. Does that sin own us

like it owns unbelievers? No. There is a resident power within us that enables us to respond to temptation and to overcome it and to live righteously.

And so, if you're here as a Christian, and you've been struggling with sin, let me just state plainly what the truth of Scripture is. The truth of Scripture is that Christ paid the price necessary to release you from that dominating power of sin. Ask Him, therefore, repeatedly to help you appropriate that, and to live that power out, and to display it consistently. You appropriate this by faith. You appropriate it by asking God to help you. And I can't help but wonder, starting with my own life, here's what we need to understand is that it's not a matter that God hasn't provided enough for us to live outside that dominating power of sin. That's not the issue. It's not that God hasn't fully provided for us. If there's an issue, it's that we're not living dependently enough upon the grace that has already liberated us. We haven't dependently come. Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive. Knock, and the door will be opened. Seek, and you will find."

What's in the context of a life of righteousness, of pursuing a life of righteousness? I have to ask this. I say these things gently, but I have to lay these things out for you week by week, so that you'll understand and not accept the spiritual mediocrity when God has called you to live at a different quality of spiritual life. Ask yourself, even as I'm asking myself now, what is it that animates and dominates the spirit of your prayers when you pray? Are you asking God simply for earthly material things, getting you through earthly problems, or dealing with this or that situation? Do you realize what a shallow way that is to pray? Especially if you're conscious of sin that just seems to cling to you? Well, if we are serious about why Christ saved us, if we're serious about why Christ redeemed us, He redeemed us so that He might set us free from every lawless deed, then it seems to me like you and I, if we're serious about that, we'd be a whole lot more serious about saying, "Lord, You redeemed me from every lawless deed. Oh God, help me with this one, because I'm really tired of these contaminants in my spiritual life that I know are displeasing to You." When you understand the purpose of redemption, in other words, beloved, it changes the nature of the way that you pray. It's not about adding God's power to, you know, helping you solve this or that problem of today. Think about the struggles of sin that you have in your life and lay hold of the power of omnipotent grace and say, "God, apply that here and help me!" And express your ongoing dependence for that grace to work itself out in your life in a way that is pleasing to Him.

If you're a true Christian, when you think about it, more than anything, you want to live righteously, godly, and sensibly in the present age, more than you want anything else. And if you have priorities in prayer that are consistently earthly over against living righteously, then you really need to grow spiritually. You need to grow up. You need to grow up and start living about what God says matters, and pursuing that with Him in prayer, and not accepting the spiritual mediocrity that you and I both know far too much of by personal experience.

We should not be accepting the presence of sin in our lives, because Christ paid the price to deliver us from it. Don't accept sinful patterns in your life. Christ came to redeem you. He said it in His own words. Look over at Mark chapter 10. Mark 10. Oh, I want you to

see, beloved, that this is more than a theological discussion that we're having here. It is that, but Paul is discussing this in the context of righteous, sensible, Christian living. This is intended to be practical. Jesus said, in Mark chapter 10 verse 45, He said, "Even the Son of Man," self reference as Christ is saying it, "even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." What was the price of your salvation? The life of Christ. The greatest man that ever walked the face of the earth, the Son of God incarnate, the One whom angels adore, that life incarnate, that life was the ransom, the price paid for your salvation. I feel really really small right now. Don't you? When you see the greatness of Christ, you can't help but feel small by comparison. The Son of Man, the Son of God, not coming to demand that He be served, but to serve you and me.

And so, the Bible teaches us, as we think about the shed blood of Christ on the cross, to think about it as a payment being made for the benefit of our souls, and that's humbling, because we couldn't demand that. We had no claim on that and yet, He did it. Why? Because He's a gracious Savior. He loved our souls more than He loved His own earthly life. He preferred obedience to His Father to avoiding the stripes. I love Him. Don't you? I'm humbled before Him. Aren't you? This is greatness of the kind that the world knows nothing about. This is supernatural grace and supernatural greatness. This is the greatness, and the glory, and the goodness of God on full display through his Word. And so, as you think about that shed blood of Christ, think about it as the price paid to secure your release from an ungodly life.

Look over at 1 Peter again. 1 Peter chapter 1 where it makes this so clear. Remember, I told you that literal slaves could be purchased out of their slavery by the payment of a price. Payment in earthly, material things. Look at verse 17 here. 1 Peter 1 verse 17. The apostle Peter writing under the inspiration of God, as all the biblical writers did, says, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." Take salvation seriously. Honor God, and fear Him, and revere Him, because of the magnitude of the things that we're talking about. If you address Him as Father, then conduct yourselves in fear, verse 18, "knowing this that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold," the most valuable of metals. You weren't redeemed with that. You were redeemed with something of infinitely greater value, and that should impress a sense of fear upon your heart, a sense of gratitude as well. And notice what He says that you were redeemed from, what you were purchased out of. "You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers." See he's talking about the futility of life lived in sin, lived in bondage. We weren't created for that purpose. We were redeemed for a different purpose. Let me read verse 18 again. I get so carried away I detract attention away from the text. That's not good. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." Literal blood shed for your literal soul. Blood that represented the perfect life of the perfect Son of God. The price paid for your salvation, the price paid for your redemption.

What value, beloved, let me ask you this. What value would you place on the lifeblood of the eternal Son of God? What value can we assign to that? Is it \$1 million? Is it \$10 million? Is it \$10 billion? Is it \$10 trillion? It's a trifle compared to the real value of the Creator of the universe. It is a trifle. Oh, beloved, and you've got to see this. It is a trifle compared to what that blood was doing, securing your release from bondage to sin, and securing, simultaneously, your eternal life. What price would you put on your soul? That's the price, even greater than the price of your soul is the value of the blood of Christ, the value of that sinless, impeccable, righteous, gracious, humble, glorious life poured out for us, the price of our salvation.

He paid our price. Christ redeemed you. There's consequences to that. Brings us to our third point. Brings us to an obvious conclusion. Think with me here. Christ paid the price for you. You know what that means? Point number three: He owns your life. He owns your life. If you pay the price for something at a store, you own it. You own the thing that you paid for. That's so basic and simple. Well, look. Christ is the Redeemer. Christ is the One who paid the ransom price for us, and, therefore, He owns us. We are not spiritual free agents. We are not free to pursue a life of sin. We're not free to ignore Him. He owns us! He paid for us with the purpose of owning us. We are no longer slaves of sin. We now belong as a slave to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what this passage tells us. Look at verse 14 with me. He owns us. Verse 14. "He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and," here's the side-by-side purpose, from every lawless deed He redeemed us, and "He gave Himself so that He would purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." He paid a price to possess you, to own you. There is no question about the role of the lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ in salvation. He is Lord, and those that He saves He owns by right of purchase, as well as by right of creation.

And so, we need to think of Christ as the One who bought us, and, therefore, who owns us and, therefore, has the right to direct our lives. He has the right to command the way that we think, the way that we feel, the way that we speak, the way that we act. That is the prerogative of ownership is to dispose of us as He sees fit. And for some of us, He has owned us in order to give us a life that seems to be fairly pleasant. For others, He has bought us and has assigned to us a portion that comes with sorrows, and difficulties, and tears. Either way, it's not ours to question that. It's ours to respond to One who owns us. We are His possession. Our souls belong to Him. He bought them. And the force of this goes so far beyond what you do day-by-day. The force of it is an entire understanding of your purpose in life and what the purpose of living is to be. The whole way that you assess life on earth is determined by the fact that you are owned by One who paid, 2,000 years ago, for you and now dwells in heaven where you can't see Him, but He's expressed Himself in His Word. And look. Look. I know I get animated in the pulpit. That's okay. I can't be any other way, but what I want you to understand is that if your hands don't start going when you talk about Christ, that's okay, in one sense, but what you have to understand is that the energy and the enthusiasm that marks the proclamation of the Word is supposed to animate your heart as well. Look at what it says there in verse 14. This is not to be a matter of indifference to you. You are to love Christ with all of your heart, soul, and strength, and you are to do so zealously, enthusiastically, eagerly. That's what it

says. Look at it. Verse 14. "To purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Eager to live for this One who bought you with His own blood, who paid the price for your soul. Oh, beloved, if you get really energized about things in this world, and you're kind of indifferent to the things of Christ and just kind of go along week-by-week, your soul needs some serious attention. We are to see, we are to understand, we are to think about the greatness of who He is in His person, the greatness of what He has done on our behalf, and that understanding is designed to move our hearts, so that we are eagerly, gladly, willingly, joyously, lovingly responding to Him with the obedience of our lives. The Apostle John could say, "It's not a burdensome thing. His commandments are not burdensome." The reason that His commandments are not burdensome to the true Christian is because we love the giver of the commandments. We love obeying Him, because it's the least that we can do in response to such a great act of self-sacrifice.

You see, beloved, when you understand redemption, the biblical doctrine of redemption, it defines your life purpose for you. You don't maximize what you can get out of this life. That's not why we're here. No, we're here with one sole purpose, and that is to maximize the glory of our Redeemer, to love Him more fully, to obey Him more thoroughly, to honor Him, to proclaim Him. And when I think about these things, I can't help but find myself confronted with the earthly things that don't matter. We have to do that earthly stuff. I get that. But look, you should have it in such a perspective that you see the glory of Christ surpassing anything that you could do or get in this life.

Look over at 1 Corinthians chapter 6. We're almost done here. Done for today. You could never be done discussing the glory of Christ, could you? You could never speak enough about Christ and give Him glory. 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 20 states this very plainly. "You have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body." This defines why you live. Redemption defines why you live. We live not for ourselves. We live for the glory of the One who saved us. He owns us. It's only right that we would respond with glad-hearted devotion and obedience.

Well, here's a final question. We won't make a separate point of it. What does the church do with this message of redemption? What are men in the positions of spiritual leadership supposed to do with this? Paul gives an instruction to Titus in verse 15. Go back to chapter 2, if you're not there already. Titus chapter 2 verse 15. Paul instructs Titus. He commands him on what he is to do, and he is also speaking beyond Titus to those first century Christians, so that they would hear what it is that they are supposed to do. Verse 15. "These things," this redemption in Christ, this call to a godly life that goes to older men, older women, younger women, younger men, that goes to all segments of the church, we are to understand this about the message of redemption and the consequences that it has for our Christian life. Paul says in verse 15, "These things speak, and exhort, and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." What are we to do? We teach redemption. We call people to obey the implications of redemption in their lives. We rebuke them if they don't respond, and we do so with authority because God has spoken. The authority of this resides not in the human messenger. The authority of this resides in the written Word of God, and it resides in the God who inspired the Word. We are people

under authority, and, therefore, we teach these things with authority. And we don't allow for the possibility to be raised up in speculation that there might be another way of salvation. We speak with authority, and we say, "There is not allowed a way of salvation that does not impact your life." This is the command of God, and when spiritual leaders speak with authority, it's not because they're elevating themselves, when they're biblical leaders, let's put it that way. A biblical leader speaks with authority because the message is authoritative, and he's commanded to be authoritative in the way in which he speaks. This is what God designs. This is not meant to be presented as something that's optional for people to take or leave, for people to disregard as if they were the final arbiter of truth. Truth has already been revealed in this Word. The only question is whether we submit to it or not. The authority of the Word is established, therefore, we teach it with authority, because God commands it to be taught that way. Biblical preaching is not offering you suggestions to take or leave.

The God who has all authority, the Christ who owns us, doesn't speak to us by way of suggestion. He speaks to us with authority. In the context of the book of Titus, what this authority is directed against is lazy people and false teaching. That's what Titus was dealing with there in the first century. God is calling us out of lazy thinking and lazy living to devote ourselves to the truth of the Gospel, to godly living, and in the context of Titus 2, that's godly living that starts at home in the privacy of our most intimate relationships. Redemption reaches all the way into the privacy of your home, because Christ owns you everywhere. He doesn't just own you on Sunday. He doesn't just own you for this hour. He owns you every day of the week, and praise be to God that it's like that. I'm glad to belong to Him, aren't you? I'm glad that He owns me. I don't want to own myself. I don't want to live for myself. I want to live for the One who bought me with a price. Christ paid the price for you. Your life tells the story about what you think about the value of that redemption.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we do love You. We thank You for our great Redeemer who paid the price for our souls. Help us now to live in response to Him in biblical ways with biblical priorities that ever more increasingly shows us denying ourselves and embracing our role as people of Your own possession that are zealous to obey you in every good work. Lord, make this church, we beg you once again, we beg you, Lord, to make this church a place where true redemption is taught, not only today, but for months and years and decades to come. We ask You, Father, to build this place and somehow raise up people now, and people that will follow us, that will honor Your Word, that will honor this salvation, will honor our great Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, let these early days of Truth Community simply be the seeds that are planted that rise up into a forest of trees of people that stand for Your Word, that honor You, and that is true to the Gospel. We realize, Father, that difficult days are still ahead. Maybe, for some of us personally, even this week, but we realize that there are difficult days ahead for those who want to be true to the Gospel. Would you steel us, would you firm in us the purpose of being zealous for Your Word, zealous for the Gospel, zealous for the salvation of souls, and zealous, Father, not only outside, but inside our own hearts, zealous to be conformed inwardly to

what Christ has done for us externally with the shedding of His blood? Lord, give us that zeal, and enthusiasm, and love, and devotion that would motivate us to hand ourselves over to this, and bless us over the long haul, Father. That Truth Community might become a church that is standing the test of time in difficult decades still to come. We thank you in advance for what You will do, and we praise You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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