

God's Supreme Purpose

Salvation Purchased by the Son

Ephesians 1:7-10

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Salvation Purchased by the Son

Scripture

We are currently in a series of sermons on Ephesians 1 that I am calling, “God’s Supreme Purpose.” The Apostle Paul’s emphasis in chapter 1 is not on what we must do for salvation, but rather on what God has done for us in Christ. Ephesians 1:3-14 shows us how each Person of the Trinity is involved in the salvation of God’s people. Our salvation was planned by the Father (1:4-6), purchased by the Son (1:7-12), and sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13-14).

Last time we examined the Father’s plan of salvation in Ephesians 1:4-6. Today, we shall examine how our salvation was purchased by the Son in Ephesians 1:7-10.

Let’s read about how our salvation was purchased by the Son in Ephesians 1:7-10:

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:7-10)

Introduction

Dr. Bryan Chapell tells the story about an author who was interviewed on National Public Radio. He described his experience in a New York subway. A reasonably dressed, but apparently disturbed man walked through the crowd, pointing to individuals and addressing them with these words: “You’re in, you’re out.” There was no apparent rhyme or reason to the choosing. One chosen to

be “in” might be poorly or well dressed, black or white, male or female. Sometimes two or three in a row would be “in” and then abruptly someone else would be “out.” “You’re in, you’re in, you’re in, you’re out.”

The crazed man making choices for no reason at all neared the author, whose heart involuntarily began to pound and his breath quickened in anticipation of the coming choice. It was silly. Apart from the potential danger of the crazed man, there was nothing to gain or to lose in being chosen. There was no competition to be won, no qualification to be met. Who cared if you were a loser in this game? The man came still closer, pointing a finger at young or old without distinction: “You’re in, you’re out.” Finally, he came to the author, pointed a finger at his chest and said, “You’re in.”

The author said later that he could not help feeling a sort of euphoria. He was among the chosen. Chosen for what? He did not know. He knew it was senseless to be proud of being so chosen, but he couldn’t help but feel that there was some privilege earned, some approval gained, or some reward deserved now that he was among the chosen. He felt special for being chosen, but at the same time he felt silly for appreciating such a distinction that had no apparent benefits.¹

The Bible teaches that each Person of the Trinity was involved in the salvation of sinful men and women. The Father planned that he would choose a vast number of people to salvation, the Son came to earth to purchase their salvation by his life, death, and resurrection, and then the Holy Spirit applied that salvation to the elect by enabling them to believe the gospel. Last week we examined the Father’s role in our salvation, which was primarily that of election. Today, we shall examine the Son’s role in our salvation. We shall see that there are blessings that flow to

¹ Bryan Chapell, *Ephesians*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 32–33.

believers from God's election of us.

Lesson

Ephesians 1:7-10 shows us the blessings of redemption.

Let's use the following outline:

1. We Celebrate the Present Blessings of Redemption (1:7-8)
2. We Celebrate the Future Blessings of Redemption (1:9-10)

I. We Celebrate the Present Blessings of Redemption (1:7-8)

First, we celebrate the present blessings of redemption.

In verses 7-8 the Apostle Paul lists four blessings of redemption.

A. *The Blessing of Redemption (1:7a)*

First is the blessing of redemption itself.

Paul said in verse 7a, **“In him we have redemption through his blood.”** The Greek word for **redemption** (*apolytrosis*) means “to release or set free, with the implied analogy to the process of freeing a slave.”² The word carried the idea of paying a price, a ransom, to release a person from bondage, especially the bondage of slavery. John MacArthur notes,

During New Testament times the Roman Empire had as many as six million slaves, and the buying and selling of them was a major business. If a person wanted to free a loved one or friend who was a slave, he would buy that slave for himself and then

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 487.

grant him freedom, testifying to the deliverance by a written certificate. [The Greek word for **redemption**] was used to designate the freeing of a slave in that way.³

This is of course what Jesus did. Redemption is the payment of a price. The price was Christ's own blood – his death – to free us from our bondage to sin. All people are slaves to sin, and the first blessing is Christ's redemption of believers by his death.

Several Scriptures attest to this blessing of redemption:

- Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- 1 Peter 1:18–19: “Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”
- Hebrews 9:12: “[Jesus] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”

Kent Hughes tells a story that is a helpful illustration of the meaning of redemption:

In a city on the shore of a great lake lived a small boy who loved the water and sailing. So deep was his fascination that he, with the help of his father, spent months making a beautiful model boat, which he began to sail at the water's edge. One day a sudden gust of wind caught the tiny boat and carried it far out into the lake and out of sight. Distraught, the boy returned home inconsolable. Day after day he would walk the shores in search of his treasure, but always in vain. Then one day as he was walking through town he saw his beautiful boat – in a store window! He

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Ephesians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 18.

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approached the proprietor and announced his ownership, only to be told that it was not his, for the owner had paid a local fisherman good money for the boat. If the boy wanted the boat, he would have to pay the price. And so the lad set himself to work doing anything and everything until finally he returned to the store with the money. At last, holding his precious boat in his arms, he said with great joy, “You are twice mine now – because I made you, and because I bought you.”⁴

Believers are not only created by Christ, but we are also redeemed by him.

B. *The Blessing of Forgiveness (1:7b)*

Second is the blessing of forgiveness.

Paul said in verse 7b, **“the forgiveness of our trespasses.”** Jesus paid the penalty for **our trespasses**. But, since he had no sin, he paid the penalty for the sin for all of the elect. Moreover, he paid the penalty for *all* of our sin – past, present, and future.

Legally, we are forgiven for all our sin. However, we do still sin after our conversion. The reason we need to seek God’s forgiveness then is to restore the relationship.

Kent Hughes tells the story of Charles Colson watching Albert Speer being interviewed on “Good Morning, America.” Speer was the Hitler confidant whose technological genius kept the Nazi factories running throughout World War II. He was *the only one* of the twenty-four war criminals tried at Nuremburg to admit his guilt, and he had served twenty years in a Spandau prison. The interviewer referred to a passage in one of Speer’s earlier writings: “You have said the guilt can never be forgiven or shouldn’t be. Do you still feel that way?”

Colson says he will never forget the look of pathos on Speer’s

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 32.

face as he responded, “I served a sentence of twenty years, and I could say, ‘I’m a free man, my conscience has been cleared by serving the whole time as punishment.’ But I can’t get rid of it. This new book is part of my atoning, of clearing my conscience.”

The interviewer pressed the point: “You really don’t think you’ll be able to clear it totally?”

Speer shook his head. “I don’t think it will be possible.”⁵

Colson then wrote these words:

For thirty-five years Speer had accepted complete responsibility for his crime. His writings were filled with contrition and warnings to others to avoid his moral sin. He desperately sought expiation. All to no avail. I wanted to write Speer, to tell him about Jesus and his death on the cross, about God’s forgiveness. But there wasn’t time. The ABC interview was his last public statement; he died shortly after.⁶

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus provides full and complete **forgiveness of our trespasses**.

John Calvin preached on this very text in Geneva in 1558. He said, “God puts our sins out of his remembrance and drowns them in the depths of the sea, and, moreover, receives the payment that was offered him in the person of his only Son.”⁷

The Scripture frequently states the completeness of **the forgiveness of our trespasses**:

- Micah 7:19: “He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”
- Jeremiah 31:34: “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, 33–34.

⁶ Charles Colson, *Who Speaks for God?* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985), 76–77.

⁷ Quoted in R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, 34.

greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

- Psalm 103:12: “. . . as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”
- 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

These are just a few of the many verses that speak of the completeness of **the forgiveness of our trespasses**.

Redemption and forgiveness is a blessing. But that is not all.

C. *The Blessing of Grace (1:7c)*

Third is the blessing of grace.

Paul said in verse 7c, **“according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us.”** The Greek word for **grace** (*charis*) speaks of unmerited favor. That is, God extends favor to us that we did not merit at all. There was nothing in us or nothing that we did that caused God to extend favor to us. On the contrary, it was in spite of us that God extended his favor to us. And that is grace.

But, notice that Paul said that the present blessing of redemption is **according to the riches of his grace**. What does that mean? I like the way Kent Hughes explains it. He said:

Think of it this way: John D. Rockefeller was the richest man in the world, the richest man America had ever produced. If Rockefeller wished to give of his riches there were two ways he could – *according to* his riches, or *from* his riches. History records that he most often did the latter, giving from his riches. The most famous picture of Rockefeller shows him as a wizened old man, dressed in a top hat and cut-away coat giving a dime to some little waif. Rockefeller reportedly did this again and again for the press to dutifully photograph. One wonders how many boys were truly set on the road to wealth and moral excellence by a wonderful gift

from Rockefeller's fortune.

But think what it would have been like had he given *according to his riches*. If he had done that, he would have perhaps given a grand home, say the famous Greystone Kykiut on the family estate Pocantico, and for the living room a Gilbert Stuart or George Washington, a Rodin for the lawn, and a forest, and a Dusenbergs for the carriage house.

When God gives "according to the riches of his grace," he gives from his unlimited treasure-house.⁸

God's grace is lavished upon all believers. And it is not only a one-time deposit of grace. He continues to do so every moment of every day for every child of God. So, how can we not join in with John Newton and sing "Amazing Grace"?

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.⁹

D. *The Blessing of Wisdom and Insight (1:8)*

And fourth is the blessing of wisdom and insight.

Paul said in verse 8, "**in all wisdom and insight.**" Remember that this is a blessing that Christ gives to believers. It is not that in God's own wisdom and insight he lavished his grace upon us. No. Paul wants us to understand that along with the blessings of redemption, forgiveness, and grace, God has given us **all wisdom and insight**. Of course, Christians grow over the course of time in the knowledge and grace of our Lord and Savior using the ordinary means of grace, particularly that of God's Word.

Allan Bloom wrote an influential book called *The Closing of the American Mind*. In that book described how his "uneducated"

⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, 35.

⁹ *Logos Hymnal*, 1st edition. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).

grandparents lived in **all wisdom and insight** because of the influence of the Bible in their lives. He then says:

I do not believe that my generation, my cousins who have been educated in the American way, all of whom are M.D.s or Ph.D.s, have any comparable learning. When they talk about heaven and earth, the relations between men and women, parents and children, the human condition, I hear nothing but clichés, superficialities, the material of satire. I am not saying anything so trite as that life is fuller when people have myths to live by. I mean rather that a life based on the Book is closer to the truth, that it provides the material for deeper research in and access to the real nature of things.¹⁰

That is so true. People who are steeped in the Word of God are those who have **wisdom and insight**.

I love the way Kent Hughes summarizes the present blessings of redemption. He writes:

There is *redemption* itself – we are twice-owned by God! There is absolute, total, comprehensive *forgiveness* and the freedom it brings. There is the fact that it is not from the riches of his *grace*, but in accordance with the riches of his grace that he lavishes grace on us – a veritable flood of undeserved favor that will go on for eternity. And there is the wonderful gift of [*wisdom and insight*]. Each of these notes comes together to produce a remarkable song in the heart of the redeemed which will only be amplified in eternity.¹¹

II. **We Celebrate the Future Blessings of Redemption (1:9-10)**

And second, we celebrate the future blessings of redemption.

¹⁰ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 60.

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, 36.

Briefly, let me just mention two future blessings.

A. The Blessing of Revelation (1:9)

First is the blessing of revelation.

Paul said in verse 9, **“making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ.”** The **mystery** here refers to “that which has been made known, or revealed.” God has revealed to believers that a new order is coming. And they will be part of it. And that is a blessing.

B. The Blessing of God’s Rule¹⁰)

And second is the blessing of God’s rule.

Paul said in verse 10, **“as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”** Things may seem to be out of control. But God is moving all history to the climactic and final victory of Christ, when he will present the kingdom to his Father, and he will rule for all eternity.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed the concept of redemption in the plan of salvation in Ephesians 1:7-10, let us praise God for Christ’s role in our salvation.

Let us praise God for Christ’s role in our salvation, which includes redemption, forgiveness, grace, wisdom and insight, along with revelation and his rule. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

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