

## Praise for Redemption Through His Blood (Pt 2)

*An Exposition of Ephesians*

By Brian Borgman

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### **Grace Community Church**

2320 Heybourne Rd

Minden, NV 89423

**Website:** [www.gracenevada.com](http://www.gracenevada.com)

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Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Father in heaven, words certainly fail us. What can we say other than blessed be Your holy name and blessed be Your dear Son, our Savior, our Redeemer. Father, we praise You because You are great and glorious. Father, in Your person You are absolutely perfect. Your perfections shine forth and radiate Your glory and, Father, You are glory itself and we praise You. But Father, we also know that the pure undefiled glory is not a cause for us to draw near for, Father, that causes us to shrink back for we are a sinful people, we are a corrupt people, we are a people of sinful lips, we dwell among a people of sinful lips and, Father, when our eyes see, get a glimpse of the Lord of Hosts in all of his glory, Father, we shrink back for we are undone but, Father, we thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus and, Father, we come to You not with some kind of flippancy, not with some kind of chumminess but we come to You in reverence but also with boldness because of the blood of Jesus. Father, we come to You in His name, we come to You clothed in His righteousness, we come to You washed and cleansed in His blood and, Father, we approach You and we thank You for Your mercy, we thank You for Your grace in giving us Jesus.*

*Father, we do come to You in prayer and we thank You for the privilege of prayer. We thank You that You have given it, the privilege, to each and every one of Your children and we pray, Father, today for those who do not know You and who have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Father, there are some even in this room who fit that category and, Father, our earnest and sincere desire is that they would be saved, that their hearts would be opened, that they would see the beauty and the loveliness of Christ and would flee to Him and escape the wrath to come. Father, we pray not only in this place but throughout the world You would be mighty to save.*

*Father, we think this morning of the Tibetan people, people who are lost in the darkness of Tibetan Buddhism, a people who do not have for the most part a solid Christian witness nor solid Christian churches. Father, we pray that the newly translated New Testament in their language would run and be glorified among this people and would bring honor to Jesus Christ by bringing many sheep into His fold.*

*Father, we pray for the nation of Israel this morning and, Father, we are mindful as we have noted before, that when the Prince of Peace is rejected there is no peace. We pray for that troubled spot in the world, Father. Father, we pray that You would save many Jews and many Muslims, that You would save many Israelis, many Palestinians, and that You would bring peace to the hearts of those who find the Prince of Peace. And Father, it is our hope that the blood shed would come to an end. We pray that You would providentially bring an end to that but, Lord, we recognize that in order for there to be true and lasting peace, Jesus must be known. Glorify Your Son in that part of the world, Father.*

*Father, we pray also for many in our own congregation who are suffering with illness, Lord, who are in a state of uncertainty as to their own condition health-wise. We pray, Father, for Your peace to be upon them. We pray, Father, for Your rich blessing to be upon them and we ask that You would bring healing to their bodies.*

*And Father, we pray for ourselves today for the ministry of the word. Father, draw near to us. Feed us with manna from heaven. Father, we pray that You would by the power of Your Spirit break open the word of truth to us, that You would use it to save sinners, that You would use it to edify and nourish and strengthen the saints, and that in all that we do Jesus Christ would be exalted and glorified. Father, make Your word living and active to us today. Father, help this poor and sinful preacher. O Lord, who is adequate for these things? We pray, Father, that our adequacy both in the proclamation and in the hearing would come from on high today and that Jesus Christ would be praised. In His name. Amen.*

I thoroughly resonated with the words of Martyn Lloyd-Jones this week. I'd like to read them to you. Lloyd-Jones said many years ago, "I regard the Scripture and these great statements in it," speaking of Ephesians 1, "as being comparable to a great art gallery where there are famous paintings hanging on the walls. Certain people, when they visit such a place, buy a catalog from the guide at the door, and then holding the catalog in their hands, they walk round the gallery. They notice that Item Number 1 is a painting by Van Dyck and they say 'Ah, a painting from Van Dyck.' Then they pass over to Item Number 2, which is perhaps a portrait by Rembrandt and they say, Ah, that's a Rembrandt, a famous painting.' Then they move on further through looking at each item in much the same way. I grant that that is a possible way of viewing the treasures of an art gallery and yet I have a feeling that when such a person has gone through every room of the gallery and then says, 'Well, we've done the National Gallery. Let us now go over to the Tate Gallery,' the truth is that they have never really seen either of the galleries or their treasures. It is the same in regard to the Scriptures. There are people who walk through this first chapter of this epistle to the Ephesians in such a manner as I have described and they feel that they have 'done it.' It is surely better to stand, if necessary, for hours in front of this chapter which has been given to us by God Himself through His Holy Spirit, and to gaze upon it, and to try to discover its riches both in general and in detail. The Scriptures are meant to feed our souls, to enrich our minds, and to move our hearts, and if we are to know such experiences, we must tarry with these things. We must drink them in and taste of their fullness."

Well, no one would accuse of racing through the gallery, would they? But it's good to stand. There is a depth here that is absolutely amazing, that is unfathomable, and to race through it is to do a great injustice to one of the richest passages in all of inspired Scripture.

Last week, we started verse 7,

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 on us.  
In all wisdom and insight

Last week, we covered these words, "In Him we possess the redemption through His blood. What is redemption? It's the buying back of a slave by making him free through the payment of a ransom price. We saw last week that Jesus Christ is the great Redeemer and he is the one who has redeemed his people. What do we need to be redeemed from? We need to be redeemed from the slavery of sin and the slavery of Satan. How are we redeemed? Through the blood of Christ, through his sacrificial atoning death on Calvary's tree. So what is it to be redeemed? It is to be freed, liberated from the dominion of sin and the dominion of the devil. It's to have our sins forgiven, to have the just and holy God of heaven take all of our sins away completely and forever. Now today, we get to the why and the how of redemption. Why does God redeem us? How does God bring that redemption to us?

We begin with the expression right in the middle of verse 7, "according to the riches of His grace." This little expression really does answer the question as to the why of redemption. Why would God redeem such rebellious, sinful servants of sin and of Satan? Why would he deliver, why would he redeem those who love their own sin, those who love their own slavery, those who have rebelled against him both in Adam and consciously through their own volition, why would God redeem such miserable sinners? Well, the answer is found in this little expression "according to the riches of His grace." In a sense, that little prepositional phrase gives us both the standard and the reason of redemption. Listen carefully to Peter O'Brien's explanation of the statement. He says, "These riches of divine grace are the ultimate cause of our redemption, for the preposition 'according to' speaks to the norm that governs something and at the same time provides the reason for the deliverance."

What we're saying is simply this: it is the riches of God's grace that is the norm that governs our redemption. Stop and think about it for a moment. Justice could not be the norm that governed your redemption. Justice would not be the norm of your redemption because justice would cry out and be the norm of your judgment. Mere pity could not be the norm or standard of redemption because pity can only feel sorry for the pathetic slave. The standard of redemption has to be the riches of God's grace. It had to be rich grace, abundant grace which governed our redemption. The riches of God's grace is not only the standard but it's also the reason. It is the great because of our redemption. Why did God

redeem? Because he is a God who is rich in grace. Justice calls forth for condemnation. Mercy calls forth for pity. Grace motivates to redeem.

Have you ever thought of this little expression, "the riches of His grace"? In one of those great scenes in the book of the Revelation, we hear these words of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." You know, in Scripture there are a number of things that God has said to be rich in. The Bible tells us, for instance, of the riches of his kindness. The Apostle Paul says, "Don't you know that it is the riches of His kindness that lead you to repentance?" You also have the riches of his glory. Twice we read that in Paul's writings, the riches of his glory. In fact, one of those times will be Ephesians 1:18. We see his abounding riches, Romans 10:12. We see the unfathomable riches of Christ, Ephesians 3:8. We see in our passage, the riches of his grace.

But there's a text that I want you to look at. Turn one page over to Ephesians 2 starting in verse 7,

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The God who is rich in mercy is the God who out of the riches of his grace has redeemed us. It is the fullness of God's grace, it is the riches of his grace that really provides the why we are redeemed. Have you ever considered that the riches or the wealth of God is actually somewhat of an attribute of God? It's an astonishing thought, isn't it? The riches or the wealth of God makes Bill Gates look like a poor, sniveling, begging pauper. The abounding riches of God's grace is unbelievable. In other words, when we talk about God's riches or God's wealth, we are talking about his infinite resources without limit. It goes for his kindness, for his glory, for his grace. In other words, when Paul uses "the riches of His grace," he is attempting in some way to measure the immeasurable. Immeasurable grace. Amazing grace. Abounding grace. The riches of grace. Philip Doddridge put it like this, "Grace, 'tis a charming sound, harmonious to my ear." Isn't that a wonderful word, grace?

Why did God redeem you? Because he is wealthy in grace. The redemption that we have in Christ's blood is governed by and caused by the riches of our Father's grace. He has given us grace according to his wealth. Now stop for a moment and consider this expression, "according to the riches of His grace." Imagine that you had two men of great wealth and they were both confronted with a needy cause, and the first man gave a large check – now listen to the preposition, you know the whole world turns on prepositions – the first man gives a check out of his wealth, the second man writes a check too but this check is according to his wealth. Who gives more? Who gives more? The latter, of course, because to simply give out from your wealth means that you have plenty to spare,

to give according to your wealth means that the measure in which you give it corresponds to the measure in which you possess it. So here is God who is abounding in this grace, this wonderful, marvelous, glorious redemption, comes to us according to the riches of God's grace. Absolutely nothing stingy about this redemption. No penny-pinching in God's economy of redemption.

You know, as you read this section, one thing that you should be struck by is that the Apostle Paul himself never seemed to get over God's riches of grace toward him. If there was anything that Paul was struck by time and time and time again, it was God's grace to him. In fact, what we find in this first chapter is that every time God mentions grace or every time Paul mentions grace, it sends him right into more doxology. Here's the apostle, one that was a persecutor of the church, a blasphemer, one who hated Christians and his whole life he was compelled by some kind of zeal without knowledge to serve God, but yet he was serving God not in a real sense but in a way that puffed up his own pride, and all of a sudden when God who was rich in mercy showed his grace to this apostle, the apostle would never be the same.

Do you know something of that transforming grace? Do you know something about just hearing the word "grace" and all of a sudden having a sense of God's magnificent redeeming love for you in Christ Jesus? Grace should be one of the sweetest words in your vocabulary. Grace should be one of those words that every time you hear it, it begins to move you with joy and adoration and gratitude for what this holy and just God has done for you in Christ Jesus. If you don't know Christ, I invite you today to the banquet table of his grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within, grace that is greater than all your sin.

This next expression, of course, comes right off of the heels of this riches of his grace. Notice verse 8, Paul says, "which He lavished on us." Which he lavished on us. In a sense, we could put it like this, we move from the standard and reason for our redemption to the actual experience of it. Many of you have picked up Professor Murray's little book, "Redemption Accomplished and Applied." That's really a wonderful way to put it. When we talk about redemption accomplished, we're talking about the objective work of Christ that he has done on our behalf, but when we talk about redemption applied, we are moving from objective historical fact to experience. The application of redemption is an experiential application. It's something that you enter into by human experience. It is not something that is simply mental, it is not something that is merely volitional, but it is something in the fullest sense of the word, fully humanly experiential. When God comes and lavishes his grace upon us, it is something that you know. Now you may not be able to remember the exact day or hour but there is something in you where you know that God lavished his grace on you in such a way that there was a time you were in darkness and now you are in light, there was a time when you were dead but now you are alive, there was a time when you were indifferent or even hated God and now you love God and all of a sudden the very experience of being transformed by his grace becomes a reality.

Do you see that if the accomplishment of redemption was according to the riches of his grace, the application of redemption is just as bounteous and full. This redeeming grace, Paul says, is lavished upon us. We don't use that word "lavish" very often, do we? It sounds like a sissy word, doesn't it, lavish? I like the Greek word, "perisseuo." That doesn't sound quite so girly. This idea of lavish, what does it mean? It means "to make bound; to shower." The lexicon says "to be more than enough; to have a lot left over; to be present in abundance; to provide for in abundance; to be extremely rich and abundant; overflowing."

A couple of weeks ago when I thought I was going to get to this part last week, I was thinking about this in detail, thinking, how in the world can we convey this "which He lavished upon us"? I mean, how in the world can you get a word picture that describes this kind of experience? And as with most of my illustrations, they're poor and homely but this is my best attempt. You know the soup lines, people who don't have enough go to a soup line and they are fed. Well, imagine instead of a soup line, you have a grace line and the poor and the needy line up for this grace line, and the first guy who's standing in the grace line has a teaspoon and he says to the guy behind him, "I'm here to get some of God's grace and I brought my teaspoon, and I'm hoping that God fills it up. I don't want to be overly forward with God but I hope that He fills up the teaspoon." The guy behind him says, "You're foolish. We're talking about the Lord God Almighty, the God of abounding grace. Don't you understand? Forget the teaspoon, take a teacup." And there he is standing with a teacup, "The Lord is going to fill this teacup up with grace. I know it, I know it." Then both of them look at the guy standing behind them and he's got a bucket. "Don't you think that's being a little cheeky? Don't you think that's being a little demanding? I mean, a 5 gallon bucket. You really think God's going to fill that up with His grace?" "I was just kind of hoping. I thought I'd take a risk and bring the bucket." Then they look to the next guy and he's standing there and he's got a 33 gallon garbage can and he says, "You know, you're all out to lunch. You don't know anything about this God. You don't know anything about His grace. He's going to give you more grace than can fill up that stupid teacup or that bucket. I brought my garbage can. He's going to fill it up. Don't know how I'm going to get it home but I'm going to ask Him just to fill it up."

And then the hour draws near when the grace is about to be dispensed, and here's the first guy standing there with his little teaspoon, and there's the second guy standing there with his teacup, there's the third guy standing with the bucket, and there's this guy with the garbage can, and all of a sudden in a flash there is a deluge of grace, and all of a sudden they're just dumped with grace and pretty soon they realize that they're floating, they're treading in the water of grace. That's what it is for God to lavish his grace on us. Forget the teaspoons, forget the teacups, forget the buckets and the garbage cans. Just swim in it. That is the kind of God that we serve, not a God who's niggardly, not a God who's stingy, not a God who holds back but a God who floods us with his grace. The God who gives according to the riches of his grace lavishes, pours out, dumps out that grace upon us.

Well, how does he do that? How does he do that? Well, the text tells us, with "all wisdom and insight." We move from the why of redemption now to how does God bring that redemption to us. Here it is, he lavishes his grace upon us in all wisdom and insight. The

New American Standard and the RSV make "in all wisdom and insight," go with what follows. You can see it right there in your Bibles if you have a New American Standard. They put a period after "us," and "In all wisdom and insight" begins a new sentence. The King James, New King James, even the New International Version, attaches this expression with what precedes. I think the New American Standard is wrong. As much as it brings me great grief and pain to say that I think the NIV is right and the NAS is wrong, the fact is that no translation is authoritative, it's the Greek text that's authoritative and amazingly both of the Greek texts put the punctuation in a way that tells us it goes with what's in front of it, not what's in back of it. So the text reads like this, "In whom we possess the ransom, the forgiveness of transgressions through His blood, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us with all wisdom and insight." This is really not God's wisdom and insight per se, but rather it is the wisdom and the insight that God gives to us when he lavishes his redeeming grace on us in Christ.

You don't need to turn there but you can look at the passage later this afternoon. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, the wisdom of God is tantamount to the revelation, the revelation of the gospel itself. Christ himself is the wisdom of God, 1 Corinthians 1:30. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, the wisdom of God is the revelation of the gospel of God through Jesus Christ. When Paul tells us that he lavished on us his grace with all wisdom and all insight, he's talking about the wisdom and the insight he gives to us.

This word "insight" is only used in one other place in the New Testament and it has the idea of the changing of the mind and the changing of an attitude. In fact, it's used in reference to John the Baptist's ministry, that he would turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and their attitudes towards righteousness.

What we begin to see unfolding in this text is this: wisdom and insight are necessary provisions in order for us to receive redemption. That is why I said this is the "how" of redemption. How does God bring redemption to you personally experientially? He pours out his grace on you with all wisdom and insight. A parallel might help us. If slavery to sin and to Satan requires God to redeem us, then our natural ignorance and blindness requires God to give us wisdom and insight in order to receive the redemption. The Bible is very very clear. You and I are born into this world with a native ignorance towards the things of God. You and I are born into this world with a blindness, a blindness of heart. It is our ignorance and blindness towards the things of God that requires God to grant us from above his wisdom and insight in such a way so that we are able to comprehend and embrace his redeeming love.

Imagine a poor slave who was both deaf and blind, and you come to him as an executor of somebody's estate and you hold up the title deed to show him that he has inherited \$10 million. You show him the deed but he cannot see it. You try to read the deed to him but he cannot hear it. And so for sake of illustration, let's say that you possess the power to open blind eyes and to unstop deaf ears, you open his eyes and his ears miraculously and then you show him the deed but at that point because he's been blind and deaf all of his life, he has no frame of reference to understand what a deed is. He has no mathematical frame of reference to understand dollar signs or decimal points or zeroes, and so to him

it's just a piece of paper with a bunch of scribbling. Something more needs to happen than simply opening his eyes and unstopping his ears, he needs to be able to possess the wisdom and insight to comprehend the magnitude of his inheritance. That is you and I as we are born into this world. We are born into this world blind. We are born into this world dead in trespasses and sins. We are born into this world ignorant to the things of God. God by his Holy Spirit must open our eyes, he must give us a new heart, he must unstop deaf ears, and he has to give us wisdom and insight in order for us to see the beauty and the glory of Christ and his redemption. That is exactly what God does for us. God grants through his Spirit wisdom and insight that overcomes our ignorant minds so that we begin to see the glory and the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Redemption is a glorious reality, it's a glorious objective historical fact. Jesus Christ died for sinners to redeem them from sin and from Satan. That is a magnificent glorious fact, but in order for you to experience that reality, something has to happen inside of you first before you even see the need for that reality. Something has to happen inside of you first for you to be able to comprehend that reality. The natural man, the things of God are foolishness to him and he won't embrace them. There are some of you here today and you think the gospel is absolute nonsense. You think Christians are fools and the gospel is foolish, a Jewish man dying for sinners, raised up from the dead to give them eternal life. It is my prayer today that God the Holy Spirit would give you wisdom and insight so that you can see you are the fool and the gospel is glorious. It's my prayer that God the Holy Spirit would give you wisdom and insight to see that this Christ is a beautiful Christ. He's not a dead revolutionary. He is the risen Christ who is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. May God grant you the wisdom and the insight to see the beauty, the glory, the truthfulness of the gospel. God must grant to our darkened and blinded minds the insight to comprehend to some degree the unfathomable riches of Christ.

You know, this is a wonderful, it's a beautiful truth. Some of you were raised in Christian homes and you heard about Jesus all of your life. Some of you have been raised in religious settings and the name of Jesus is something that is so familiar to your ears that it makes no impact on you whatsoever. Others of you had absolutely no religious background, no church upbringing, and the only time you ever heard the name of Jesus was as a curse word. The Holy Spirit of God must grant to both the wisdom and insight in order to embrace redemption through Jesus Christ. There are some of you, you just simply don't see your need to be redeemed. You don't see your slavery. You don't feel the chains around your wrists or ankles or neck and, in fact, you think they're rather sporting pieces of jewelry, and in reality you are a slave. It is only God the Holy Spirit that can give you insight and wisdom to see that there is a Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord.

When the Spirit of God gives us that wisdom and insight, things begin to change. Things change. All of a sudden this Jesus whether he was just a religious figure to you, or whether he was an image up upon a crucifix, or whether he was just a curse word, all of a sudden when God the Holy Spirit grants wisdom and insight, things change and this Christ becomes all in all and he becomes yours and you become his, and it is a wisdom and an insight whereby you say, "I am My Beloved's and he is mine."

Simon Peter had received this kind of wisdom and insight. You'll remember Jesus had a fairly large crowd, perhaps 15-20,000 people. He had fed them. A free meal always gets big crowds. And then Jesus decided to do something with that large crowd. He started saying things like this. "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood, it is he who has eternal life." Ew, eat flesh, drink blood, what is this guy talking about? Then just to make sure that he offended virtually everybody, he said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them." So Jesus goes from eating his flesh and drinking his blood to the doctrine of unconditional election. You know what he does, he preaches that crowd down to 12. Don't get too excited over the 12, one of them was a devil. Jesus looks to his disciples and he says this, "Are you going to go away too? Are you going to go away too? These doctrines a little too hard for you, you're going to leave with the rest of them?" And Simon Peter, bless his heart, with wisdom and insight given to him from above says, "Lord, where else could we go? You only have the words of life." How in the world did he say that when thousands of people were turned away, when thousands of people left Jesus because eating flesh and drinking blood and not being able to come to him unless you're drawn by the Father, that was just too much. Oh, but there was this little band that stuck with him. Why? Because in the wisdom and insight given from on high, they recognized, "Where else could we go? Jesus, You alone have the words of eternal life."

That's the realization of being a recipient of wisdom and insight. Peter exemplifies it for us again at Caesarea Philippi. "Who do men say that I am," Jesus said. "Well, some say you're Jeremiah, one of the prophets. Some say you're John the Baptist raised up from the dead." "But who do you say that I am?" And then Simon Peter, "Well, You're the Christ. You're the Son of the living God." Jesus did not say, "Good logical deduction, Simon Peter." He said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but My Father who is in heaven." In order to comprehend redeeming love, in order to embrace the Redeemer, Christ our Lord, you need to have the Holy Spirit grant you wisdom and insight.

Do you know what you see in this passage? From the beginning to the end, this work of redemption is the glorious work of the Triune God. It's the Father who elects. It's the Father who predestines. It's the Father who adopts. It's the Son who redeems through his blood. And it's the Spirit who applies to us personally through wisdom and insight the riches of his grace. Is it any wonder that Paul starts off with, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

Today is a day when a lot of people believe that it's a pretty good thing to at least look and act religious, find your best suit, put it on. I'm not against some of you wearing suits, I think you ought to do it more, that's not the point. The idea is that, "Well, here is a special holiday and so it's good for me to be in church." I'll tell you, I'm glad you're here. I am glad you are here because I have a question for you: are you redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ? Are your sins forgiven? Is your heart ravished with his redeeming love given to us in Jesus Christ? Are you overwhelmed by the riches of his grace? Have you received the wisdom and insight to see the beauty, the glory, the truthfulness of the gospel? Or are you still dead in trespasses and sins? Are you still a slave to sin? To the

devil? I ask you today are you still blind and ignorant or can you say, "I once was blind but now I see"?

There is a Redeemer, Christ Jesus, the risen Lord, and here is the best news I could tell any of you. You may have been in this place, you may attend here regularly, you may have attended here for years and still be just as lost as can be. This might be your first day in this place. Here is the great and glorious news, news that is a wonderful privilege for me to be able to extend to you Lord's day by Lord's day, week by week, month by month, year by year, I never get tired of telling you there is a Redeemer, there is a Savior, Jesus Christ who is powerful and he's mighty to save, and this Christ who is the risen Lord will gladly receive any repentant sinners who come to him. He will shower you with overflowing abounding grace. He will wash you and cleanse you from all of your sins. He will give you eternal life. He'll give you wisdom. He'll give you insight.

Won't you come to this Christ? Won't you believe in him? If you don't believe in Christ today as your Savior and Lord, you are a little pauper, destitute, impoverished. Do you really enjoy your destitution that much? Do you really enjoy your poverty that much? Why continue on in destitution and poverty when there is a banquet of the riches of God's grace, more than you could ever imagine, but it only comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I not only invite you but on the authority of God's word today I command you to bow before this risen Christ and embrace him today as the one who alone who grant the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Child of God, are you living like a pauper? It's a terrible thing to see God's children who have the abounding riches of grace in Christ living like paupers. Are you living as one who revels in this grace which has been lavished on you in all wisdom and insight? Truly this redemption is one of those great spiritual blessings which we have in Christ. It is to the praise of his glorious grace. Blessed be his holy name.

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, we pray today that You would lay hold of those who do not know Christ. Open their eyes, give them wisdom and insight from on high that they might see the glory of redemption and the beauty of Christ and might put their faith in Him even today. Father, we pray for those of us who have walked in the way for a while and, Father, it's easy to forget the riches of Your grace. Remind us afresh, Father, that You do lavish them upon us and we need to tread in the waters of grace. Father, we pray for these who are about to be baptized. May Your hand rest upon them. May You keep a hedge of protection around them and may today be a glorious day for them, for Your church. Father, may it be a day where they publicly profess their faith in such a way that they are strengthened to walk in it. In Jesus' name. Amen.*