

Blessed Beyond Measure: The Saving Work of the Son Ephesians 1:7-10

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen, the apostle Paul begins this powerful letter to the Ephesians with a long sentence (in Greek) that runs from verse **3 through verse 14**, in which he blesses God for all of the spiritual blessings that He has freely given to us in Christ. In **1:3-6**, he blesses God for the work of the Father; in **1:7-10**, he unfolds the work of the Son; and, in **1:11-14**, he shows the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation.

For this morning, we focus our attention on Ephesians 1:7-10. What we find in these verses is a celebration of redemption. This is a proper celebration for all who truly know Christ.

Let's dig in...

Please note all of the benefits that the child of God enjoys thanks to the saving work of the Son:

I. We have been _____ (1:7a)

Paul is helpful and tells us exactly what he means by redemption. In our culture, in movies and books, redemption can often mean that someone has overcome a problem, situation, or deficiency all on their own. Sometimes it means that they have somehow atoned, or fixed, the problem. What makes them special is their own striving. When we remember that our problem is sin and rebelling against God, how do we ever plan to fix that? The best we could do would be to stop fighting (as though that is possible on our own), and even then, what would we do about all the times, years, and ways we fought God previously in our sin?

There are three different Greek words which have been translated for the idea of "**redemption**" in the New Testament.

1. Agorazo: "To purchase."

When we think of making a purchase, we think of buying groceries or a car or a house or some other inanimate object. We don't talk about purchasing people - that went out with slavery over a hundred years ago. But slavery was

commonplace in Paul's day. And you would commonly go into the marketplace - the Agora - to purchase a slave.

2. Exagorazo: "To purchase out."

This is the same word with a prefix placed in front of it meaning "**out.**" The picture is that you go into the slave market and you purchase a slave and then you bring him **OUT** of the market.

3. Lutro or Apolutrosis: "To release or set free."

This is the word used here (Apolutrosin). It takes the picture one step further as you take that slave that you have purchased, and you bring him out of the slave market and then set him free. This is what Christ has done for us. He came into this world of sin. And He paid the ultimate price for us - His own blood shed on our behalf.

Redemption involves the payment of a ransom to reclaim something that has been taken away or is held captive. Sin (both our personal sin and the sin nature we inherited from Adam) takes away the righteousness God intended to characterize our lives and holds us hostage to Satan's purposes. Apart from Christ's provision, we would perpetually exist in a prison of guilt and shame. We cannot escape by our actions. They too are tainted by our sin. We have to be rescued from this sinful state by something outside ourselves. The price for our ransom from sin's captivity is the sacrifice of God's Son. By the gift of his life, we are freed from our captivity to sin.

We know the truths so well that it may be hard for them still to affect us as the apostle intends. We who were made in God's image, holy and privileged, through the fall of our first parents became slaves to sin and bound to its penalties forever. Yet God so loved us that He sent His own Son to die in our behalf. We are purchased with a price, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). With His blood the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world purchased persons for God from every tribe, and language, people and nation (**Rev. 5:9; 13:8; and see Eph. 2:13**).

II. We have been _____ (1:7b)

There is an additional effect of this shed blood: forgiveness—or, more specifically, the forgiveness of our trespasses. **We trespass when we cross boundaries God has set for us to obey or veer off the path He has designed for our righteousness.** Because the blood of Christ also deals with our trespasses, we know that His blood redeems us not only from the original sinfulness of our human nature, but also from the guilt of our individual and daily transgressions. Every dimension of my sin—all my individual trespasses—was covered by the blood of my Savior.

The fact that we have been forgiven of our trespasses presupposes that there are trespasses of which we are guilty. The fact of our forgiveness presupposes our guilt. That is the bad news. The bad news is that we are guilty. And we don't just deserve a parking ticket. **The proper and just wages of our sin is DEATH - eternal separation from God in a conscious place of torment.**

The bad news is really bad. But the corresponding good news is really God. It is that Christ took our blame and our guilt and our sin upon Himself. He was the perfect and holy sacrifice for sin. **Forgiveness did not come cheap.** It never does. Forgiveness always costs somebody something. When someone slaps your face and you forgive, that forgiveness costs you a slap in the face. Our forgiveness cost God the life of His Son. The payment was made at the cross. And because of the cross, we can be assured of total forgiveness.

There is a practical application here. It is that you are to forgive in the measure to which you have been forgiven. To what measure have you been forgiven? Totally!!! And it is to that measure that you are to forgive others. Here is the **principle: Forgiven people forgive.**

III. We have been _____ with the _____ of His _____ (1:7c-8a)

God could have saved us **OUT** of the riches of His grace. But He didn't. He did something better. Our salvation was "**ACCORDING TO the riches of His grace.**" When God gives "**according to the riches of his grace**" he gives from his unlimited treasure-house. Grace is unmerited favor. In addition to being redeemed and forgiven, we are now eternal objects of his divine favor in accordance with his riches which he lavished on us and will continue to lavish! As believers with Paul, we are wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, for God gives not from the riches of his grace, but according to the riches of his grace! We are going to be lavished with favor for eternity. This ought to bring music to our souls.

We have been redeemed; we have been forgiven; we have been gifted with the riches of His grace...lastly, please note...

IV. We have been given _____ and _____ the mystery of His will (1:8b-10)

God has a plan for the universe. History is moving toward a goal. We do not have to guess at either the plan or the goal. It has been made known to us. **Verse 9** says that He made known "**to us the mystery of His will.**" The term "**mystery**" in the Bible does not mean a riddle to be worked out, **but rather a truth that we cannot discover without God's help.** The mystery of God's will cannot be understood through science, through examining history, or through philosophy. It can only be understood through God revealing His will to us. Through Christ, God has revealed His will to us, and given us a glimpse of what His ultimate plan is.

Throughout the Old Testament era, God spoke to the fathers through the prophets, but He did not tell them all that would come to pass. They were missing a key element of the puzzle. But that has changed for us. **The key element has been revealed. It is JESUS.**

In the Old Testament, they knew that there was a promise of a perfect seed who would come and destroy the works of Satan. They knew of a great prophet that would come. They knew of their need for a lasting sacrifice. They knew of God's covenant promises. And they knew of God's kingdom. But they did not know exactly how it would all work itself out in the plan of God. We do. **The answer to the mystery is Jesus.** He is the perfect seed of the woman. His death overthrew the devil and his demons. Through His blood we have entered into a greater and more perfect covenant. He is the Prophet, Priest and King. And we have entered into His kingdom through faith.

We have the whole story. We have the *beginning* of the story in the Old Testament. We have the *middle* of the story in the coming of Christ and in His death and His burial and His resurrection and ascension. And we even had the *end* of the story, for we have His promise that one day He shall return. It will be at that time - the fullness of the times - that we shall experience the summing up of all things in Christ (1:10). When Christ returns, the entire universe - things in the heavens and things upon the earth - shall be brought into conformity and into submission to Him. **In the Greek text, there is an additional idea that is not communicated in our English Bibles. It is the idea of restoration**—that God's plan is to restore the earth to the way it was before sin entered the world; that God intends for everyone and everything to be unified in worship and service of Him. Paul reminds us that this process will not be complete until Christ returns again, but it has been underway for thousands of years.

Think about the early church. Because of the redemption and forgiveness offered through Jesus, there was unity among the believers, regardless of their background. Jews and Gentiles (who wouldn't even eat together before) now treated each other as equals, people who were forgiven though they didn't deserve to be. Slaves and their masters were able to worship together, because they understood that they were both servants of Christ. Men and women could view each other as equals, because both were under Christ. **This process began with Christ and continues today.**

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? This passage is filled with rich doctrine that is essential to the Christian faith. It is important that we really seek to understand the things that Paul is teaching. But simply understanding the teaching is not enough; this teaching demands a response from us. If we understand these truths, then we, like Paul, should respond with a heart of praise. But true praise results in action, so we should also be motivated to live in a way that is pleasing to Him. Our lives should reflect the attitude of gratitude that we have.

Here are some takeaways from our study today:

1. Understand the _____ of salvation.
2. Understand the _____ of your forgiveness.
3. Seek to _____ the same kind of forgiveness to others.
4. See that God has a _____, even if we don't fully _____ it right now.
5. Live with _____ at the wonder of God's love for us.