

EPHESIANS 1:7c-8a
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 17, June 13, 1999

INTRO: In Ephesians 1:7 we have looked at the place of redemption (in Him), the people of redemption (we), the price of redemption (the blood of Christ), the parallel of redemption (the forgiveness of sins), and this morning we want to look at God's policy of redemption. We find this policy in the closing words of verse 7, you see, God's redemption and forgiveness is "according to the riches of His grace." Now all of what follows in verses 8-14 is connected to the word *grace* in verse 7 by the word *which* in verse 8.

This morning I feel constrained to read to you from D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, that great preacher of England from the not too distant past as he begins on the words we now want to look at: "We now come to deal with the last phrase in this verse - 'According to the riches of his grace'. There are many ways of considering and studying the Scripture; and it must be clear by now that I am a follower and an exponent of one particular method. I regard the Scripture and these great statements in it 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 catalogue from the guide at the door, and then holding it in their hands walk round the gallery. They notice that Item number 1 is a painting by Van Dyck, let us say; and they say, 'Ah, that is a Van Dyck'. Then they pass on hurriedly to Item number 2 which is perhaps a portrait by Rembrandt. 'Ah,' They say, 'that's a Rembrandt, a famous picture'. Then they move on to further Items in 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 has said, 'Well we have "done" the National Gallery, let us now go 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 some such manner as I have described, and they feel that they have 'done' it. It is surely better to stand if necessary, for hours before this chapter which has been given to us by God Himself through His 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 take of their fullness."

That is one paragraph from Lloyd Jones sermon on our text this morning. We too, want to stand before these words this morning and feed our souls. We must not hurry, for surely then we will fail to see the truths meant for us. So we come to point 5 on this redemption verse:

5) The policy of God's redemption

Let us say you have a fire insurance policy that will replace anything you might lose in a house fire. The policy states that you will be paid according to what riches you have in your house. Little riches, little repayment. But God's redemption policy is not according to what we have, but it is according to what He has, according to the riches of His grace. Let us say that you are insured with the world's wealthiest fire insurance program and their policy read that if your house was burned down, they would pay you according to their riches. How different would be the program!

J. Vernon McGee has an interesting insight regarding God's redemption being according to the riches of His grace. McGee tells of John D. Rockefeller, that multi millionaire who often played golf in Florida. Rockefeller always gave his caddie a 10 cent tip. McGee says Rockefeller did not give according to his riches, he gave out of his riches. Had he given according to his riches he would have given more than a dime. Now notice that in Christ we receive, not out of the riches of God's grace, but according to the riches of His grace.

Notice first that God's redemption program is according to the *riches* of His grace. We have made much of the grace of God in

an earlier message. I define God's grace as being whatever you need whenever you need it to either become a Christian or live the Christian life. Do you need strength? God's grace to you will be strength. Do you need wisdom? God's grace to you will be wisdom. Do you need courage? God's grace to you will be courage. What need are you here with this morning? Consider Hebrews 4:16 as a refresher this morning, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Grace is help in time of need. What is it you need today? Have you gone to the throne of grace? You see, on this throne is God the Father and seated at His right hand is God the Son, and both are the source of grace. You do not find grace in boats or books, nor in food or fun. You do not buy groceries in a garage, nor a car in a clinic. Grace may only be found at the throne of grace or the throne from which all grace proceeds.

Now initial redemption takes place the moment I experience salvation by grace through faith. But redemption is not yet complete in the life of the believer. Our soul and spirit have been redeemed. At the rapture our bodies will be redeemed. But I think there is a sense in which redemption is an ongoing process. We call this the process of sanctification. You see, the verb in verse 7, "In Him we *have*..." is in the present tense verb. It does not say we have been redeemed in Christ, past tense. It does not say that we shall be redeemed. No, it says we have redemption in Him. We are being redeemed from every kind of sin and wrong in the present. And for every kind of sin or slavery there is a facet of the grace of God to help.

Now notice that Paul speaks here, of the riches of the grace of God. I suggest first that the grace of God is multi

faceted (1 Peter 4:10). There is grace for every need. What is your need today? You will find in the multi faceted grace of God something for every need. (Ill. of multi faceted knife).

Second I suggest that Paul speaks of the riches of the grace of God is because when somebody is rich in something it means there is an overabundance. I mentioned to you earlier John D. Rockefeller. Now he was a rich man. He could buy anything he needed and almost everything he could possibly want. If he bought a new Rolls Royce he did not have noticably less money after the purchase than before. It simply would not put a dint in his account. He had riches galore. And if this morning you have some great need and you come boldly to the throne of grace, God is able to give you all you need and be, in a sense, richer than before.

I wonder this morning if you have thought about how Paul might know about this? I suppose Paul said many times, "I can't believe I'm the man who used to be Saul. Once I murdered the saints and now I multilpy them. I am a brand new man. I, the chief of sinners, have become the chosen saint of God." What does Paul know about the grace of God in everyday life? Well look at 2 Cor. 11:22-28. Yes, Paul knew of the multi faceted grace of God, both in salvation and in daily sanctification.

Now consider verse 8. God Almighty, who has riches of grace has made this grace to abound toward us. But we are about to learn some very important things about how to handle things in which we are rich. Now you may not believe it but it would not be good for most of us to be rich in money. Here in our area we have a good many people who are prospering. And we have it within our capacity to buy all kinds of

things for our children. And the majority of us do not have the wisdom how to handle those riches and we are ruining our children. We do not know what to say yes to or what to say no to. We think we are doing better for our children than our parents who had no money, did for theirs. And alas, we are training up young people who are affluent and difficult to reach with the Gospel.

Let us learn something now from God Almighty from this next clause, "...which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence..." Notice first the word *abound*. A word that probably gives us a better picture of the meaning here is the word *overflow*. God made the riches of His grace to overflow toward us. Most of you have seen the Peace River overflow from time to time. Here a few years ago, it overflowed. The ferry, which is parked up on the bank was raised and and came to rest on top of the big mettle poles to which it was tied by steel cables. The crawler tracter used at the ferry landing had water over the conopy. You could have taken ten million gallons out of the Peace River and it would have made no visible difference. It was overflowing. God has made His grace overflow toward us.

I want to draw our attention now to verse 8 and the words that God made His grace to abound toward us "...in all wisdom and prudence." Let me just mention that among theologians there is a rather heavy debate as to whether the wisdom and prudence is God's or man's. I will not spend time on this matter other than to mention that it is a rather significant question. In my opinion, and I may not have the best commentators on my side, the wisdom and prudence is God's. You see, if one is rich in something, let us say money for instance; if you make it abound to others without using wisdom and prudence you may

just do more damage than good. Let me go out on a limb and use an example from our own country of Canada. Our Canadian government is pouring, in my humble estimation, an overflow of tax money toward the native Indians. And this expense of money is spent without wisdom and prudence. Now I am not down on or against the native Indians. I am just saying that in my opinion there is not much wisdom and prudence being used in this outflow of money. And what is the outcome of this outflow of tax money? Is there gratitude? Are the natives better off after the big expense or are they in a sense worse off? Is there wise use of this large expense? You see, if one is to make money overflow toward people, even if for good causes, if wisdom and prudence is not used it may end up doing more harm than good.

Now let me show you just briefly the wisdom and prudence in God's method of making His grace abound toward us in the matter of salvation alone. Take the price of one sin, for instance. How much does it cost for God's justice to be satisfied regarding one sin? Our Catholic friends have a list of prices for sins. Let's say, lying \$2.50, cheating \$5.00 etc... I don't know what their prices are but they have a price list. But in God's economy, what price does it take to satisfy God's justice with regard to only one sin? One thousand dollars? One million dollars? One billion dollars? The price is so large that it cannot be paid in money. The only thing that will satisfy God's wrath is the death of the sinner and eternal punishment in hell fire. The fire must be eternal because the sin is never paid for. The highest and most painful price cannot pay for one sin so the torment must be of the highest degree and last forever.

But there was one price, a price so huge that even God's wrath was propitiated or satisfied. There was one price which was so huge that it was sufficient to pay for all the sins of the world. If all the money in the world could not pay for one sin, how big was this price? It was the price of the death of God's own Son. And this payment is available on request to any person, anywhere, anytime.

This morning you may ask God for forgiveness and He will freely forgive you. If you are a murderer, a drunkard, a liar, a thief, etc... God will pour out of the abundance of His grace and save you this day. But when God extends His salvation by grace to anyone at any time in any place; He does so in wisdom and prudence. In such a wise and prudent way does God hand out these things, that when He has freely extended forgiveness for thousands of sins the sinner has been turned into a saint of God. Such is the outcome of the wisdom and prudence of God when He makes His grace overflow toward us.

When God has made His grace to overflow to the sinner in all wisdom and prudence, the thief has become a theologian. The prisoner has become a preacher or the murderer has become a minister. And for the riches of God to be made to overflow toward the unrighteous with such results takes wisdom and prudence. We must consider next time, what wisdom and prudence for.

CONCL: Consider in conclusion this morning the Apostle Paul. When God's grace had been made to overflow toward him in salvation he was so entirely new that he even got a new name. But he learned of God's overflowing grace in daily life so that in the midst of tremendously trying circumstances he was a victorious man. Take for example when he was cast into prison with Silas in Philippi. He and Silas had been beaten with rods. Then they were cast into

the hole, the inner prison, a dungeon under ground, doubtless much like an outside toilet hole, only deeper and bigger, along with the rats and such like. With feet fast in the stocks, beaten and bruised, and the shriek of the rats, Paul and Silas had a prayer meeting and a time of hymn singing. There is the grace of God in life.

I ask you this morning, "Are you a Christian? If you died today, do you know if you would go to heaven?" I want to give you opportunity this morning to receive Christ. I am going to pray a prayer. Let me read it first and if you are ready to say this prayer I will give it slowly and while our heads are bowed you can pray this prayer in your heart silently with me. And then I want you to give me a phone call or talk to me afterward and I want to help you on your way in the spiritual life, because this is only the beginning.

Lord, I know that I am a sinner and on my way to hell. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sin, was buried and rose from the dead. I am willing to turn from my sin and live for You. You have said that if I receive You, You give me the right to become Your child. I now invite Jesus Christ to come into my heart and live as my personal Saviour. You have said that he that lives and believes shall never die. I know you keep Your Word and I thank You for giving to me eternal life because I believe in You. By God's grace I will follow and obey Christ as Lord in my life. Thank You for saving my soul.

In Jesus name, Amen.