

**Revelation 14: 4b; "Redemption and the Firstfruits", Sermon # 102  
in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor  
Paul Rendall on October 3rd, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

If you will recall, when I preached to you last time from these first 5 verses of Chapter 14, that I presented to you two of three points concerning the voice of the Church's sincere spiritual purity. I did this in order to open up a proposition which I gave to you. This Proposition itself was actually the 4th point of the original outline of verses 1-5 which was this: People who are deceived by the Antichristian church of Rome, if they are ever to be saved, must hear the voice of the true Church's sincere spiritual purity speaking to them through us who have come to know and experience it. This purity which comes to the hearts of God's people comes to them because of Christ's redeeming work alone. It comes to them because of His grace. It does not come by observing ceremonies and rituals like the Mass which are not commanded in the word of God. It comes from a person's having heard the word of God preached; then believing in that Word concerning Christ, and Christ grace then coming to them with power to cleanse their guilty and polluted souls from sin. I am praying that in preaching these truths to you, that they may become a part of our witness to people around us; people who we would like to see come to Christ and out of the Church of Rome which is Mother of Harlots and foundation stone of the New Testament Babylon. It is to be hoped that by means of our coming to have a more enlightened witness, that many people who are presently walking in the spiritual darkness of Roman Catholic or Liberal Protestant doctrine, may come fully out into the light of the glorious gospel which frees people from empty forms and rituals and gives them the spiritual substance of Christ. In holding to, and living out these truths, you and I can show forth the depths and the riches of the truth of the Word of God to those who are presently deceived, and then pray that our witness will bear fruit in the lives of others, as well as in our own life. The three points which I set forth in the last sermon were these. 1st of all - Because Christ redeemed His people, all of His true saints are not defiled with women; they are virgins. 2nd - Because Christ redeemed His people, His saints follow the Lamb wherever He goes. And then the 3rd point which we now come to this afternoon, is that; because Christ redeemed His people, they will be the first fruits of a greater harvest which is yet to come. It will be a harvest of those who are pure in heart. As I think about this outline, I believe that we will have to add one more point to it; the 4th, which we will look at next month. That is; that because Christ died for His people, there is found no deceit in their mouth. But let us now pray as we come to examine this truth of the firstfruits, that sincere purity be more and more known by each one of us, Christ's believing saints.

**1st of all - Let us understand that the Redemption of all of God's dear children is a Particular Redemption.**

"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes." "These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb." I do not know how many Christians have come to clearly understand the doctrine of Christ's redemption as we read it in these verses. If they did, perhaps they would not present the gospel in the way that they sometimes do. Here it says that these one hundred and forty-four thousand were "redeemed from among men." Some Christians preach a gospel of a universal atonement; that is, that Jesus Christ has died for all men and therefore has actually redeemed all men, and all that He and God the Father are waiting for is for the unsaved person to "accept" it. They are to accept what Christ has already done for them; that is, they are to believe it, and receive it, and that settles everything in regard to their soul for all eternity. We need to indeed acknowledge that this is true, but it is not the whole truth concerning a person's salvation. It is true that "God so loved the World that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life." Whoever believes in Christ's finished work of Redemption at the cross of Calvary does have everlasting life (John 5: 24), and has indeed passed from spiritual death into spiritual life, and will not come into judgment. The problem comes when we say to people that Christ has redeemed them, and died for them; when the purchase to buy them, in particular, may not have taken place at the cross. We can, and we should say, that God has lovingly provided atonement for the world in general and we should also offer the gospel freely; so that anyone who wishes may come and drink freely the "water of life". But in the preaching of the gospel, although the preacher or the one sharing the gospel may proclaim a full and free salvation to one believing in Christ; the saving application of the redemption which is the basis for any person's salvation cannot be applied by the preacher or even by the one who it is preached to, by himself. Only God and Christ can apply it. Redemption accomplished is applied by no man; only God and Christ. It is applied by God in relation to the faith of the one believing in Jesus in connection with God's eternal purpose. It is only applied to the Elect. These 144,000 were "redeemed from among men." That is; they in particular were purchased, and all the blessings of their salvation in particular were purchased for them by the precious blood of Christ on the Cross. Christ did not die in vain for any person. He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, (that is for all who have been given the gift of grace and then have savingly believed upon Christ), how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" His purchase most definitely secured for all the Elect; all those chosen by God, the redemption of their souls. And He most certainly, definitely, and particularly, will apply the blessings of salvation to them. Rejoice O Christian; you do not have a hypothetical salvation. Your God has, through giving His dear Son, redeemed you to Himself.

And oh, what a costly purchase it was! "You were not redeemed with corruptible things," Peter says in 1 Peter 1: 18, "like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Now, what I am

saying is this. If you are Redeemed by Christ, you are part of a great harvest that Christ is gathering in for eternity. You will not live your life like you did before. This will be especially noticeable in religious things. If you have been Roman Catholic or Liberal Protestant, you will leave the vain religious traditions which you may have learned from your parents or from a minister, or a priest; you will leave those things behind. Why? Because Christ has redeemed you from thinking that by just going to Church and taking the sacraments and saying a few ritual prayers, and confessing your sins in the formal, required manner to a priest, or in a public worship service or a private confessional, is the way to worship God. It is not the way to worship God. It is false. A formal, nominal religion like that thinks that if we just put in our time at Church; if we just along with the traditions which have been added to the Word of God; that God is pleased with that. He accepts that; and nothing more is needed. But, we need to see this afternoon that it is not by our own will that we become a Christian; it is by the will of God that we become a Christian, and learn to glorify God by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with His Word. We have been redeemed, bought back to God out of all false religion, whether Pagan or Papal or counterfeit Christian. And this leads us to our second point about the relation between Redemption and the Firstfruits: **2ndly - Christ's Redemption will certainly bring forth a much greater harvest than we have previously seen in Church History.**

We who believe in the Lord Jesus, in this time period of the Church's Babylonian Captivity; this time period of the Church being in the Wilderness; are the first fruits of a greater harvest coming; of those being brought out of all religions of works-righteousness. Turn with me to James 1: 17. Salvation is a gift of God. It is not of our will, or our works or the ceremonial works of a minister or priest that will bring us to God and to heaven. It is God Himself alone. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." The first fruits of the harvest in the Old Testament were those fruits consecrated to Him; given to Him. Jeremiah Chapter 2, verse 2 says, "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: 'I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.'" "Israel was holiness to the Lord, the firstfruits of His increase." You see, early on, this was the way that God viewed Old Testament Israel. So, too, He now views His New Testament Church during this, her time of being driven into the Wilderness spiritually as was mentioned in Revelation 12: 14. "But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and a half a time, from the presence of the serpent. Even though we are in this Wilderness state, God has planted us in Himself, and Christ has purchased us, so that we might be purely devoted in our worship of Him. Listen to Thomas Manton - "...As it was the privilege of the first fruits of all the sheaves to be consecrated; so

believers and converts among all men, were set aside for the uses and purposes of God." "The first fruits of all things were the Lord's, 1st, Partly to testify His right in that people." "2ndly, Partly for a witness of their thankfulness; they, having received all from Him, were to give Him this acknowledgement: 'Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thy increase.'" (Proverbs 3: 9) "This was the honor and the homage they were to do to God." "Now this is everywhere attributed to the people of God, as to Israel, because they were God's peculiar people called out from all the nations: "The first fruits of His increase is holiness to the Lord." That is; of all people they were dedicated to God." "So the holy worshipers, figured by those virgins in Revelation 14: 4 are said to be "Redeemed from among men, to be a first fruits unto God and the Lamb." "These were the chiefest, Christ's own portion."

So what you and I need to grasp is that this whole business of the firstfruits in relation to the harvest is very important and significant to the great future which lies ahead for the Church of Jesus Christ. Those one hundred and forty four thousand, having their Father's name written upon their foreheads, represent those who have been truly saved and redeemed during this time period of the 1260 days ( or years) of the Church's Babylonian captivity under Antichrist. Those one hundred and forty four thousand were "redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb; of a much greater harvest which is yet to come. The greater harvest is found in the time period of the Millennium which will come after the fall of the Roman Antichrist. This should be a real incentive to our present efforts at evangelism. It is not for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ to always have her "eye on the sky" looking for the return of our Lord; it is for her to have her eye on what He has given her to do; the proclamation of the His truth; the doing of good works, so that the gospel will conquer and prevail over the whole earth. That is the Great Commission. The Great Commission is not - "Be looking up for the Rapture of the Church, for it could come at any minute!" No, it is "Go therefore and make disciples of all the Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age." This is what our Lord commanded, and in the book of Acts Chapter 1, verse 6 it says that the disciples in the early Church asked the Lord Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" "And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.'" "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And what was their reaction? It says in verse 9, "When He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (He was Raptured). This is because His work on earth was finished; but the Church's work is not finished. The Great Commission has not yet been fulfilled. And so it says in verse 10 - "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Men of Galilee, why do

you stand gazing up into heaven?" "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." Brethren this still has not taken place, and I believe that we have many indications from the Scripture that it will not take place for some time yet. Does that mean that we are guilty of thinking that the Lord has delayed His coming? No, not unless we begin to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunkards. (Matthew 24: 48 and 49) No, if the minister of Christ is working hard to be faithful and giving the Lord's servants their portion in due season; if the people are "laboring for their Master from the dawn to setting sun; if they are talking of His wondrous love and care; when the saints on earth are gathered over on the other side; when the roll is called up yonder they'll be there." If we do not believe that the Lord is coming imminently it does that mean that we do not "Look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ?" (Titus 2: 14) No, we look; but we do not stand gazing. We look, with our mind and heart we look as we labor for Christ and as we share His gospel. But the Church has never known the specific time of the Lord's return. The Father wants it that way. He wants us to think of it as though it could happen any moment, but work for Him as though it were still a long way off. Why? Because the harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest. There is so much work yet to do. The Lord Jesus must "see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

There is indeed coming a time of great harvest in the days of the Millennium, and we should so work as to help to bring it in. The way that we help is by sowing the good seed of the Word of God. Listen to Psalm 72, verse 5 - "They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations." "He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth." (that is Christ in the person of His Holy Spirit working in great power) "In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust." The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts." "Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." Verse 16 - "There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, (that will be because of the great sowing of the Word of God which will take place then) on the top of the mountains; (the mountains being all the nations and kingdoms of the world) its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and those of the city (the Church is the City of God) shall flourish like grass of the earth." "His name (that is; Christ's Name; He who is the greater than Solomon) shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun." "And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! "And blessed be His glorious name forever!" "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory." And so it shall. "Amen and Amen."

