

Redemption

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Bible Text: Romans 3:21-31; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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Our Scripture reading today is from Romans chapter three beginning with verse 21.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.¹

I can remember an interesting experience that I had that was a difficult one a few years ago. I walked into a store and I had a cart, filled it up with things that I wanted to purchase. It was rather full. And I went to the check out counter and I paid my money and I was going out the store when I was stopped by someone, a store employee who wanted to see my receipt and to examine everything that I had in my cart.

Now I was standing there wondering: What in the world is going on? The person before me was not checked. I mean I watched her just walk right out and here I am and I am being checked. And my thought is do I look like an evil character? Do I look like someone who would steal from the store? What in the world are they doing?

And I mean it took a long time. This clerk took quite some time examining every single thing that I had in my cart, picking up each one and checking it against the list and as she

¹ Romans 3:21-31

was doing this I am beginning to think to myself: What in the world is she doing and why did she pick on me?

And so I asked her. I said, “Well, you know, was there some reason why you checked my cart and I noticed you didn’t check the lady who was in front of me.”

And, well, she said, “We are spot checking today. And every five customers who go out we are checking.”

And I thought, “Oh, my. Why couldn’t I have been number three or number four?”

Anyway, so I went through that experience and finally went out and I started thinking to myself, I said, you know, “This is odd.” I mean I own this stuff. You know, I mean I didn’t own it when it was in the store. It was on the shelves. You know, it belonged to the store. But, after I had walked out and after I had paid the bill and I paid a lot of money for it, it was mine. And, well, I felt good about that, put the things in the car and drove off.

I wonder how you would feel someday if you had gone to a gas station and you filled up your tank with gas. And as the prices are today you would be paying 40, 50, 60 may be 80 dollars to fill up your gas tank and an employee of the service station would come over to you and say, “Now, I am going to pump all that gas out of your car because we want it back again.”

How ridiculous. Why? Because you paid for it, too much. And you own it. It’s yours.

Well, today we are looking at a word that we find in this passage. You will remember we are examining the various words that relate to salvation that we find in this passage. And the word we are looking at today is the word translated “redemption” or “redeem.”

The Greek word that is translated as “redemption” is the word ἀπολυτρώσις (ap-ol-oo’-tro-sis). And it is a word that comes from a root λυτρον (loo’-tron) that has the idea of the price that is paid for something. And often it is used as the payment made to release a prisoner. A prisoner is released and that prisoner is released on the basis of the payment of a certain amount of money. That is the concept that we have here.

The idea of redemption is...it has the idea of delivering, delivering by the means of paying a price. And, as I said before, it is often used as the concept of paying the price that a prisoner might be released.

Now when you think about this, as we get into this concept we are going to understand that the price that was paid was paid for us because we were prisoners of sin, that we were bound in a lifestyle that was sinful and the payment was made that our sins might be taken away and that we might be free of sin and that we might be viewed as righteous before God.

Now this word is used quite frequently in the Scriptures. The word “redeemed,” as we see it, usually has the idea of something that Jesus did for his people.

Let’s take a look at the just a few of the passages where the word is used. And you don’t have to turn to these because I am going to be jumping from one to the other.

In Luke chapter 24 we read, “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”² They were looking forward to a Messiah who would come to redeem Israel.

We read again in Titus chapter two and verse 14, “Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession.”³

1 Peter chapter one. “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood...of Christ.”⁴

Luke chapter one and verse 68 says...And now we look at the word “redemption,” that form of the word. “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people.”⁵

Again in Luke, “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”⁶

And a passage that we are looking at today where it says in Romans chapter three, “Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”⁷

What is the concept that we have here? Well, it is basically that the Lord Jesus Christ was willing to pay a price to buy us.

Now think about that for a moment. If we really understand our condition as we examined it in the first three chapters of the book of Romans, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that we are sinners who deserve absolutely nothing at the hand of God, that we are people who could justly be condemned by God and from the human point of view God was facing what we would call a little bit of a dilemma. Now, of course, it wasn’t a dilemma for God because he knew exactly what he was going to do ahead of time. But here was a dilemma and we have looked at this before.

How can God who is absolutely and totally just, God who is perfect, God who cannot allow sin to enter into his presence and cannot look upon sin, how can that God accept

² Luke 24:21

³ Titus 2:14

⁴ 1 Peter 1:18-19

⁵ Luke 1:68

⁶ Luke 21:28

⁷ Romans 3:24

sinful human beings into his heaven. How could he look at us who are sinful and say, “Ok, come up here and be with me in heaven forever”?

I couldn't have worked out a plan where that was possible, but God did. And this was his plan. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to work and Jesus lived a perfect life for over 30 years during which time he never sinned, during which time he did only that which was good and righteous and holy in the sight of God his Father. And then he willingly went to die on the cross of Calvary.

And God said that with that blood that was shed on Calvary a purchase was being made. He was buying for himself all those who would be his people and so he bought us with the blood of Christ. And then he did something even more than...more important to us than that. He gave to us the very righteousness of Christ. He made him who had not sin to be sin for us that we might be the righteousness of God in him, that we could have that righteousness.

It sounds all very technical, but when we look at it in terms of what God has done we realize that it emphasizes an incredible amount of love.

I want you to think of this in human terms. I want you to imagine that there was a neighbor who lived near you, let us say a young person, a teenager, someone in his or her 20s and that person lived an absolutely horrible life. Think of this. He or she went out and was constantly drinking too much, was constantly in fights with people, would break into stores and steal things and on one or two occasions murdered somebody. How would you like a neighbor like that? Ok.

Now think of this for a moment. Imagine that this person who was obviously horrible and sinful was the person that you decided to adopt to be your own. Because you had so much compassion on this individual who hadn't done one decent thing in his whole life, you decided that you were going to go and pay the price to get him out of jail, that you were going to bring him into your home where he would live with you and be with you.

Now, I am not going to ask for a show of hands, but I doubt whether there are too many of you who would like to do that. That is what Jesus Christ did for us. Though we were worthy of the death penalty in the sight of God he was willing to pay the price that we might be his, unworthy as we were, he made us to be his forever.

The Bible even uses these terms. It talks about God's purchasing us.

Let me look at a couple of passages with you. In the book of Revelation in chapter five it says this in the ninth verse. “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”⁸ With the blood of Christ he purchased people from every nation. And if you are child of God you are one of those who was purchased.

⁸ Revelation 5:9

In Revelation chapter 14 it says, “These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.”⁹

Over and over again it talks about this whole concept of our being purchased by God. Now, there are certain things we need to understand. If we have been purchased by God, our lives need to be different from what they were before. Our lives have to be lives that represent us as people who are thankful to God for all that he has done to purchase us and to make us his own.

Oh, and the Word of God emphasizes this so clearly. Again, I am going to read a few passages.

In 2 Corinthians chapter five it says, “And He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”¹⁰ If he died for us, we are to live for him. That is the concept that is brought about here.

“Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”¹¹

And a passage I think all of us know in Romans chapter 12—we will eventually get to this in our study of the book of Romans, a wonderful passage where it says, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”¹² What is God saying here? As the Jewish people would hear this read it would seem like a very strange concept. To them sacrifices die. That was normal. Remember Old Testament? I mean, the sacrifice was brought to the temple. The animal was killed. It was born on the altar. And so a sacrifice was made to God.

God says, “You are to be a little different from that. I am not going to take you and put you on an altar and kill you. That is not the concept.” But just as sacrifices were made in the Old Testament and totally dedicated to God, so we are to be living and holy sacrifices. In other words, every aspect of our lives is to be completely and fully dedicated to the service of the Lord. What a wonderful passage in God’s Word.

In the book of 1 Corinthians in chapter six and then again in chapter seven it talks about our being temples of the Holy Spirit. It says in 1 Corinthians chapter six:

⁹ Revelation 14:4

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:15

¹¹ Titus 2:14

¹² Romans 12:1

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.¹³

What is he saying here? It is the same concept that we read before, that we have been bought with a price. God owns us. And therefore we are to serve him that we are to live for God.

There is one other concept in the Bible that I think helps us to understand this in a very wonderful way. You have read in the Scriptures how many times the word either “slave” or “bondservant” or “servant” is used depending on what translation of the Bible you use. You may read “a slave of Jesus Christ,” or “a servant of Jesus Christ.” The word that is used in these passages is the Greek word δουλος (doo’-los). And the word δουλος (doo’-los) was the word for a bond servant, one who was owned by another, one who had the responsibility of complete and total obedience to the other.

Now God takes this human concept and brings it into our relationship with him. It says that we are, in fact, the bond servants of Jesus Christ.

Let me look with you at a couple of these passages and we can we apply it to our lives today. Very frequently Paul, I the beginning of his letters and others of the writers of the letters in the New Testament, use that term to describe themselves in the beginning of the letter.

Romans chapter one, “Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus.”¹⁴

Philippians chapter one, “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus.”¹⁵

Titus chapter one, “Paul, a bond-servant of God.”¹⁶

James chapter one, “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

Jude, “Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ.”¹⁸

And so on and so forth. So many times Paul and others refer to themselves as bond servants of Christ.

I often wondered about that. I mean, if you wanted to describe yourself. Let’s say I am going to tell who I am, you know, let the world know who I am. Why, I don’t know. What title would you give to yourself?

¹³ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁴ Romans 1:1

¹⁵ Philippians 1:1

¹⁶ Titus 1:1

¹⁷ James 1:1

¹⁸ Jude 1

Now, you might think, “Well, I am a well educated person. I am a person who has achieved this or that in my life. I am a person who has done this great thing or that great thing.”

Certainly the things that we would think of would be the most positive things that we have experienced to be able to define ourselves to the world.

When Paul wants to define himself sometimes he calls himself an apostle. But most frequently he calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ, a bond servant of Jesus Christ.

In other words, he is one who is owned by the master. He is one who is responsible to be obedient to the master. He is one whose life is totally dedicated to the master, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you, my friends, do you see yourself as a bond servant of Jesus Christ? Do you want your life to be totally and completely dedicated to him? If you do there are a couple of concepts that we need to understand.

What was the obligation of a master to the servant in those days? Well, all of the needs of the servant had to be provided. I mean there had to be food so that this person could be nourished and serve well. There had to be a place for this person to live, an abode where he or she could have a place to spend life. There had to be clothing provided and all the necessities of life so that the person who was serving the master would be able to live decently.

Amazingly, that concept carries over to our relationship with God.

The Lord Jesus Christ provides us with all of our needs. There is not one of us who can say that Jesus has not cared for us.

An amazing phenomenon that sometimes we live in a world where we have to work very, very hard to receive the wages that we need to live. But when we look at it logically instead we could have been starving, but God provided us the work and the means and everything that we need that all the necessities of life have been provided for us. That is what he promised and that is what he has done.

The master also would provide direction to the servant and that is what Jesus Christ has done for us.

By the way, that is what this book is. This is our direction book in life. And as we ponder it and read it and understand it, we know what God wants from us. You know, this is a marvelous thing if you think about it. How wonderful it is that God has not only chosen to make us his, but he has chosen also to give to us everything we need for our lives, all of the direction and provision that we might be able to serve him.

But then the other side of the coin is: What did the servant have to do for the master? Well, the servant was required, first of all, complete obedience to the dictates of the master. In other words, the master said, “Do this,” and the servant did it. The master said, “Go,” the servant went. The master said, “Come,” and the servant came. Obedience was an absolute necessity.

Isn't it the same in our relationship with God? The Word of God says our obligation is to obey the master, to do what he says.

Well, as I said before, this is a direction book. If we don't know the directions we can't obey the master. And so we need to be students of the Word of God, but not only knowing it, but obeying it and doing it that we might be truly his servants.

And that involves a life long commitment. We don't serve the Lord for a couple of moments. It isn't enough to serve him Sunday morning for an hour when we go to church. That is not enough. It isn't enough if we go to church Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday nights for three hours. That is not enough serving of the master. We are to serve him 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year and 366 on leap year. We are to serve him every single day of our lives. That is what is required of us because we are owned by the master. The Lord Jesus Christ has paid the price and we are his.

Well, you know, when you first hear that it may sound a bit overwhelming. But, you know, there is a wonderful truth that is a corollary of that. And that is that the great gift that we will receive from God, or we have already received from God is a gift of eternal life.

As most of you know I have worked in a hospital setting and a hospice setting for many years. And I have seen the fear that so many people have had as they are approaching death. Well, there may be some fear in the lives of believers because nobody likes the process. But for a believer death is not something that is horribly scary. “Oh, death, where is thy sting?”¹⁹ the Word of God says. Why? Because at the moment that we leave this earth by death we will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the moment that that horrible experience—as most people view it—takes place in our lives, we will begin an eternity in the presence of God, a period that will never end. And forever and ever and ever we will be with God.

There is a sense in which I would like to live many years on earth. That is a good thing because I have more to do for the Lord. But there is another sense in which I look forward to being in his presence and I look forward to the joy of seeing his face. And I look forward to seeing those who have gone before me, loved ones, friends, who are no longer here on earth.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:55

So I can anticipate the years that God will give me on earth, but I also anticipate the joy of his eternal blessings.

My friends, are you the bond servants of Jesus Christ? Have you come to know him as your Savior and Lord?

A couple of questions today. If you haven't come to know him, I challenge you. You know, if you don't know Christ you are on the wrong team. Trust in him that you might have life.

For those of us who are his do we see ourselves as owned by the master? Are we looking at our lives and saying, "Lord 24 hours a day, seven days a week I want to serve you. Just show me how"?

If we have that desire he will give us direction and our lives can be fully and completely dedicated to his service. May it be that each one of us would be dedicated to the master that our lives would be full with his service.

Let's pray together.

Our heavenly Father, we thank you for who you are and what you are. Truly we see you as the master of our lives, the one, our Father, who has given to us all that we need. The provisions of life are ours. And, Lord, also, the directions for life are ours. We have your Word. Help us, Lord, to know it and love it and study it. Help us, Father, to live our lives in a way that will always and forever bring glory to the name of our Savior.

We pray, our Father, if there is anyone here who knows you not, that this one may come to faith in Christ even today and for those of us who are yours, use us as your dedicated servants throughout our lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.