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Grace Bible Church, NY
September 5, 2021

The Purpose of Redemption Selected Scriptures

Introduction

I think it is apparent to all that the world in which we live is in greater turmoil now than at any other point of time any of us can remember. Even the few still alive that lived through World War II can remember that though battles occurred around the globe, there were countries of refuge and safe places to be. The war was between nations and military forces that could be easily identified - axis vs allies. That remained true during the cold war. Though nuclear weapons were a threat to the free world and communist nations alike, and proxy hot wars were fought within and between smaller nations, it was still fairly easy to identify friend from foe. However, as the western world increasingly turned its back on its Christian heritage, the philosophies of our political enemies, and even worse, the values of our spiritual enemies, grew within our own societies. What was appalling to my grandparents generation on a host of issues - political, social, moral - became tolerated in my own generation and is now celebrated in the new generation that is now arising. Things we did not even imagine at the end of the twentieth century became tolerated, then accepted, then celebrated and now demanded.

Perhaps the most absurd of these is transgenderism since regardless of how you mutilate the body physically and chemically, every cell in your body remains either male or female as determined by your chromosomes. Your sex is not “assigned” at birth, it is simply recognized. Richard Bargas, Executive Director of our church organizational affiliation, IFCA International, made a very astute theological observation about this in the latest issue of VOICE magazine (September / October 2021). *Today, some men seek to become women, and women seek to become men, mutilating their God-given bodies in rebellion against the Maker. In doing so, men continue to crush women by taking their places as a “woman.” And women who think they can take on masculinity by mere choice are destroying their own selves, still seeking to lead men as a “man.”*

There are a host of foolish ideas that are being forced upon us, many of them in the last year and a half as both major political parties became complicit in destroying basic freedoms and Constitutional rights in the supposed effort to protect us from a virus. I would like to think that the initial efforts were done with altruistic motives of protection, but that was quickly removed when various governments forced the medical community to abandon successful treatment protocols developed in combating SARS-CoV-1 and standard medical care of any viral infection - treat the symptoms - in favor of experimental interventional medical procedures purposely mislabeled as “vaccines.” These are now being mandated by fiat of government and businesses despite the fact that the vast majority of the population is not at any serious risk while ignoring the fact that natural immunity due to having already had COVID provides long lasting immunity of even variants as demonstrated by studies in the U.K., Ireland, Qatar and Israel with the later one also showing natural immunity to be much more effective than any of the “vaccines.” As an individual trained in the biological sciences, I can say unequivocally that science is not being followed in what has been and is being mandated on the general population in terms of lockdowns, masking social distancing and “vaccines.” That is why they have not worked.

As a life long student of history, I can also say that the obvious motivations behind what is being done is money and power. The model of the Chinese Communist Part is being followed. They have never needed a secret police. They simply generated fear in the population and the people would inform on anyone not following the party’s dictates. Fear of COVID has caused a lot of people to be docile in trading freedom - including freedom of assembly, association, travel, religion, trade, speech, and even to make your own medical decisions - for supposed safety, but as Benjamin Franklin warned, *“Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.”*

I know I will be accused of being political again and some of you have told me that you have to put up with this stuff all week, so you don't want to hear about it on Sunday. Certainly there are political aspects to what I have said, but underlying all of it is theology. I have said for years that there is no problem that man faces that is not ultimately theological and these things are no different. We have an adversary that hates God and will do everything he can to thwart you from fulfilling your God given purposes. Perversion and fear are two major tools of Satan to accomplish that, and he is certainly more effective if he can make those societal and political issues instead of just personal ones. How you respond depends on your theology.

Review

About a month ago it became apparent to me that I needed to review some fundamental theological issues about purpose in order to strengthen the foundation you need in order to win the battle for your minds, emotions and will which all direct how you will live. Will you be controlled by the fear of man or by love for God to live according to His will and purpose?

In the first sermon I covered the purpose of Creation. God is the Creator and everything He has created ultimately is to be for His glory. That includes all inanimate entities as well as animate and spiritual beings. The heavens tell the glory of God and their expanse declare the work of His hands (Psalm 19:1-4), and that started on the first, second and fourth days of creation before man was created on the sixth day. Sun, moon and stars as well as the rocks, rills, seas, mountains and valleys of the earth all give glory to God as does the smallest life forms of one celled creatures to the largest ones such as the Blue Whale or the behemoths of ancient times. Revelation 4:11,

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

Man is a creature made by God and as such he shares in the general purpose of giving glory to God. Man is also special in giving glory to God because God created Him in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). That means that man shares with God the attributes of personhood - rationality, emotion and volition (the ability to think, feel psychically and make decisions). He also exhibits God's glory in his reflection of God's communicable attributes which includes qualities such as goodness, kindness, care, benevolence, patience, faithfulness, love, longsuffering, mercy, grace, forgiveness, holiness and even jealousy, anger and wrath. All of these have been diminished and tainted by man's fall into sin so they are tarnished and often perverted reflections of these qualities of God, but they are still there.

A third way in which man gives God glory is by the fulfillment of the responsibilities God has given man as His regent over the earth and its creatures. The primary responsibility is given to the man with his wife coming alongside to help him fulfill that stewardship including having children to extend that stewardship around the world. Where man properly cultivates and cares for the earth, the environment is better off and all are blessed. Where man either does not fulfill this mandate or mismanages it, the environment declines and the curse of sin on the earth becomes more manifest.

A fourth way in which God glorifies Himself in man is the display of His own attributes as He interacts with man. In the last sermon I pointed out specific ways God does this in what Paul refers to as “vessels of wrath” - unredeemed sinners - in Romans 9:22. That verse specifically mentions God's power, endurance and patience and I used Pharaoh of Exodus 3-14 as a specific example. To that can be added truth, righteousness, holiness and justice in His condemnation of sinners for they reap the consequences of their own choices to sin as shown in Romans 1, and they will be judged according to the very deeds they have done (Revelation 20:12). I concluded that sermon with many of God's invitations to sinners to seek Him and be saved, as well as warnings if they do not. God holds man accountable and all humans are responsible for their own sin if they do not repent and place their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the rest of this morning I want to focus on God's glorification of Himself in what Paul referred to in Romans 9:23 as “vessels of mercy” which are set in contrast to the “vessels of wrath.” God displays additional attributes in bringing about the redemption of sinners so that they are converted and adopted into His family.

A Gift from The Father to the Son - John 6, 10 & 17

I want to begin with a point that emphasizes the fact that you are a creature created by God for His own purposes and not an autonomous entity that exists for your own purposes. The redeemed are a gift from God the Father to God the Son. John's gospel records several times that Jesus made an emphasis of this point beginning with John 6:37-40, ³⁷ *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."* ³⁸ *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."* ³⁹ *"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."* ⁴⁰ *"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."* Note the confidence and assurance this gives in salvation. Because the redeemed are given by the Father to the Son and the Son loses none, then there can be no fear of being lost after being saved. Hebrews 12 explains He will chasten us, but He loses none.

That same reassurance is given in John 10 in which Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd who gives eternal life to His sheep *"and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and my Father are one"* (John 10:28-30).

Jesus' began His high priestly prayer in John 17 with *"Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³ "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* These three passages tie eternal life given by Jesus Christ to His sheep to being a gift from God the Father to God the Son. No wonder Jesus said in John 6:44, ⁴⁴ *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day,"* and John 6:65, *"For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace - Ephesians 1:6

Paul makes many statements about different aspects of the purpose of salvation throughout his writings. All of them can fit as specific ways in which his declaration in Ephesians 1:5-8 is fulfilled.

"In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 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." Your redemption is to be to the praise of the glory of the lavish grace of God bestowed upon you. Everything about salvation points to this particular attribute of God. He extends His blessing to the undeserving, in fact, He extends it to those that are deserving of His curses which is my mercy is so often closely tied to grace. He withholds the punishment you have earned to give you blessings you do not deserve and this is most clearly demonstrated in redemption by which He grants both forgiveness of sin and adoption into His family through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 makes a reference to this in its admonition to be grateful stating, ¹³ *"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* I preached through this passage this past July. The final result of salvation is the gain of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 promises that those foreknown by God are predestined to be conformed into His image. 1 John 3:2 explains that *"when He appears, we will be like Him, because we see Him just as He is."* That will happen at the Rapture when we are changed in the twinkling of an eye and these natural, mortal, perishable bodies will be changed to be spiritual bodies that will be like Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 15:42-54. As Philippians 3:21 states it, Jesus *"will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."* Christians

will give God glory by finally being true reflections of Christ and as such will share in the glory of Christ.

Vessels of Mercy - Romans 9:20-23

This same idea comes out in Romans 9:20-23, ²⁰ *“On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? ²² What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”* Notice that “vessel for honorable use” which is equated with the “vessels of mercy” are contrasted to the “vessel for common use” which is equated with “vessels of wrath.” That contrast displays the attributes of God. What is common, what is normal is that people will be under God’s wrath and prepared for destruction due to their rejection of the knowledge of God (Romans 1:18-32) and refusal to obey the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:8-9). That should be the fate of all mankind since everyone since Adam and Eve have been born as sinners who confirm it by their own actions (Romans 3:10-12, 23). God’s patient endurance and longsuffering is shown in His tolerance of them. Yet God also has mercy and has prepared some beforehand to be recipients of the riches of His glory. Again, that glory will be most clearly displayed when the redeemed become like Christ. Salvation is for the purpose of God’s glory displayed in vessels of mercy who become like Christ and reflect His glory.

To Be Conformed into His Image - Romans 8:26

The next passage, Romans 8:29–30, gives greater focus on glorifying God by becoming like Jesus. ²⁹ *“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”* This is sometimes referred to as the golden stair-step of salvation because each one leads to the next culminating in glorification. What I want to emphasize here is that God’s predestination of the redeemed in eternity past was so that they would become *“conformed to the image of His Son.”* I use that verse as part of my signature because it so succinctly states the purpose of my life since it extends back to eternity past and extends forward to eternity future.

Confidence in this work being done in present life is found in Philippians 1:6, *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”* You are to do your part in the pursuit of becoming like Christ such as described in 2 Peter 1:5-8, ⁵ *“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* At the same time, this is a work of God in you which He will continue to do even if you are not as cooperative as you should be. Paul expressed this in 2 Timothy 2:13, *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”* However, be aware that Hebrews 12:4-11 is clear that God will discipline His children that fall into sin because He loves us. That is part of His work in conforming you into the image of Christ.

This is a very important truth to keep at the forefront of your mind as you are living your life. There are many things that you will experience in life, both good and bad. The good comes from God as declared in James 1:17, *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”* The bad is a consequence of sin - your sin, the sin of other people and living in a sin cursed world. Yet Romans 8:28 applies to all of it both good and bad - *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those*

who are called according to His purpose.” It is obvious that good works for good, but the bad? James 1:2-4 explains, ²“*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,* ³*knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.* ⁴*And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*” God uses the troubles you will face in life to force you into positions in which you must trust Him - have faith in His character and promises - which will bring you by steps into maturity. Romans 5:3-8 gives greater detail of this process and its foundation for success. ³“*And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;* ⁴*and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;* ⁵*and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.* ⁶*For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* ⁷*For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.* ⁸*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Paul could exult in tribulation because no matter what the circumstances, nothing can change the fact that God’s love is demonstrated in Jesus’ sacrificial death for sinners, and Romans 8:38-39 declares that ³⁸“*. . . neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

These truths are foundational and enable the Christian to not only survive but to thrive even in the most difficult circumstances including those in daily headlines. While it appears that evil is reigning, God has not lost control and He will use the evil things that come upon you to make you more like Christ and glorify Himself. That is not pie in the sky by and by; that is reality that is lived out in the present time. World events are moving steadily to fulfilling prophecy after prophecy which described long ago the evil that is unfolding in our daily news. Fulfillment of our purpose of existence is not dependent on the circumstances of life. It is dependent upon glorifying Jesus Christ as we become more like him. That is why some missionaries have stayed in Afghanistan knowing they are marked for death by the Taliban. They want to be models to their Afghani brothers and sisters in how to live for Christ and if necessary, how to die for Christ while proclaiming salvation from sin through faith in Jesus Christ to as many as possible for as long as they have life whether that be a short time or a long time. They are able to do this because they know the purpose of their lives.

God will accomplish His purpose. He will conform you into the image of Christ, so that should be your own goal. That is why it is legitimate to ask the question, “*What would Jesus do?*” as you consider your actions in any particular circumstance you encounter whether good or bad. The better you know Jesus, the easier it is to know what He would do and then do it. And remember, just as God warned the Israelites on numerous occasions, there is great blessing in cooperating with God in obedience to His commands in this process, and the consequences of disobedience escalate in severity.

To Be Holy - Ephesians 1:4

Going back to Ephesians 1 which we looked at earlier, I want to point out another purpose of God redeeming man which is stated in verse 4. ³“*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,* ⁴*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*” While the emphasis usually made when preaching on this passage is God’s election in eternity past of those who would be redeemed, the emphasis I want to make this morning is the purpose of that - “*that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*”

This actually goes back again to God’s original purpose in creating man in His image. 1 Peter 1:16 quotes from Leviticus 11:44, “*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*” The root meaning of holiness is to be “set apart.” God is set apart from Creation because He is something other than anything in creation and is perfectly righteous. Blameless refers to living a life in which there can no longer be a just accusation of living contrary to God’s commands. We become holy as we are “set apart” to God at salvation at which time God no longer

condemns us because we are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). We then become more holy as our manner of life becomes more set apart to God and therefore more blameless, and we will become perfectly holy and completely blameless when our bodies are transformed and set apart to be with God for eternity.

There are many Scripture passages that address this purpose of salvation. Here are a few of them.

Titus 2:11–14,¹¹ *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,¹⁴ 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.”*

Colossians 1:22, *“yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—”*

1 Thessalonians 4:7–8,⁷ *“For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.⁸ So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.”*

Even Ephesians 5:25–27 which addresses the husband - wife relationship refers to this purpose of salvation because Christ is the model for the husband in fulfilling his God given role in leading his wife in holiness so that together their marriage will reflect the mystery of Christ and the church (vs. 32).²⁵ *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”*

For Good Works & to Bear Fruit -

The final purpose of redemption I want to point out to you this morning is that God saves us so that we will glorify Him in how we live. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, *“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”* The manner in which a Christian lives should reflect Jesus Christ living in them, for as Paul stated in Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”* The manner of life that you live and the good works that you do in life should reflect Christ in you which will also be the character of God demonstrated in you. That brings Him glory and was a purpose in His redemption of you from sin.

Jesus told His disciples in John 15:16, *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”* Jesus had a purpose in His choosing of them and it was related to His own glory. They were chosen to bear fruit. That will include both fruit in the ministry He had given to them and the fruit of the Spirit in their own lives - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Paul spoke of this purpose several times which helps clarify what Jesus meant by “fruit.” He stated in Ephesians 2:8-10,⁸ *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”* Note that this purpose of walking in these good works was set before you were saved. God’s plans precede your response.

Paul gives more detail in Colossians 3:12–17. All of his practical instruction in the manner of life a Christian should live begins with being chosen by God.¹² *“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.¹⁴ Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.¹⁵ Let*

the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* ¹⁷ *Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”* All of these characteristics are reflections of the same qualities found in Jesus. Whatever we do is to be done in His name so that He will receive the glory for it - and from a practical standpoint, doing it in His name is also a caution to make sure that what we do is worthy of His name.

The Apostle Peter makes this point about the purpose of salvation in 1 Peter 1:18–22 ¹⁷ *“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. ²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²² Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”*

You are redeemed by the death of Christ as the substitute sacrifice for your sin and not by anything in this world, for nothing in this world is of sufficient value to purchase a human soul. Arising from being redeemed is a love for God for we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and from that love comes a love for other believers.

Conclusion

The world we knew in 2019 no longer exists, and the events of this year make it clear that we will not be going back. Evil that we could not foresee back then continues to rise and dominate in many areas of the world including our own society. How will you be able to cope with these things if you do not know your purpose of existence?

Those who are not sure will be dragged along by the world to reflect its values and be manipulated to by those who want to exploit others. The response of fear by which people have so quickly traded in their freedom for a false promise of safety are a prime example of this.

Those who have a more clearly defined sense of purpose will be better at directing their lives toward fulfilling that purpose and resisting manipulation by others. However, if that purpose is only related to the things of this life or is contrary to God’s stated will and commands, then you are on the broad road leading to destruction. You need to repent and change direction before it is too late. You do not want to spend eternity as a vessel of His wrath. Set your will to match God’s purpose for creating you in His image and seek salvation from sin through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you profess faith in Christ, then keep your eyes focused on Him and recognize that God has redeemed you from sin so that you will glorify Him as a vessel of mercy who is to be conformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to become holy and bear the fruit of the good works which God has prepared for you beforehand. In understanding and pursuing your God given purpose, you will be able to act and react to the changing circumstances of life to fulfill your purpose of existence. While there will be grief and sadness over the loss of what should be if the world was operating according to God’s commands, there will still be His peace as well as joy and victory in fulfilling God’s purpose for your life.

Jude 24–25, ²⁴ *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

Sermon Notes - September 5, 2021
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KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – Do one or more of the following: 1) How many times is the word “glory” used. 2) Talk with your parents about how you can glorify God in your life.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. What significant changes have you seen in society in the last two years? What is God’s purpose for Creation? What is God’s purpose for man? How is that accomplished? How is that accomplished in a sinner who is a *vessel of wrath*? What is the significance that those who are saved are a gift from the Father to the Son? Redemption is for the “praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph. 1:5-8). How does redemption demonstrate God’s lavish grace? How are vessels of mercy contrasted with vessels of wrath in Romans 9:20-23? What attributes of God are displayed in them? Christians are “predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son” (Romans 8:26). How does that happen and what would that look like in practical terms? What other verses make similar promises? What does God do with a Christian who is not following His commands and will? How does God use tribulation to make us mature? Explain. Use an example from your own life if possible? Why is the question, “What would Jesus Do?” a good way to decide what actions to take? What does it mean to be holy? How does God make a sinner holy? What is the relationship between redemption and holiness? According to Ephesians 2:10 those who are saved are “*created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we should walk in them.*” What are these “good works,” what is their relationship to salvation, and how do they glorify God? What did you think the purpose of your salvation was before hearing this sermon? What do you think it is now?