4-15-18

Ephesians 1:7-8a

Last week we began considering this verse and all that goes with it. It is really the Gospel in one sentence. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the blood of Jesus Christ and it is all due to God’s grace. Our only pathway to a good relationship with God is through Jesus, we can’t earn it. There is so much more to what Jesus did for us than simply dying on the cross. He shed His blood, and in the blood is the life of any being. Through that blood we now have life; eternal life, in Christ.

We talked about redemption. Its basic meaning is “to buy out”. In particular, in Scripture, it means to buy out of slavery. This is what Jesus has done for us; He has paid the price necessary to buy us out of slavery. Because of the fall in the Garden of Eden, all of us are born into slavery. We are slaves to sin and to satan. The only way out of this is the blood of Christ. He offers to purchase us, to redeem us; all we need to do is accept. All of us here today who have believed on Jesus as our Saviour are no longer slaves to satan. We are still affected by sin and satan, but we are not controlled by them. We belong to Jesus.

That very fact of redemption is more than we could hope for or deserve, but God lavishes the riches of His grace upon us. Redemption has many more good consequences that it brings with it in addition to salvation. Last week we looked at a few of these blessings that come along with redemption. It brings us forgiveness and righteousness. Because Jesus took the punishment we deserve, justice was done and we can receive free forgiveness. In addition, His righteousness has been imparted to us; when God looks at us, He sees Christ’s righteousness instead of our poor, failing attempt at it. Because we are forgiven of sin and have righteous, we can come before God. What a blessing it is that we can talk directly to the creator and sustainer of the universe and all the living.

Redemption brings us eternal life. The blood of Jesus actually purchased us for God, we are His. This gives us eternal life, with Christ. It also causes God to adopt us as His very own sons and daughters. We truly become His children in spirit and body. Now we can call Him our Father. When we come to Him, it can be as children, not as purchased slaves. In addition to this, by being His children we are in line for inheritance from our Father. There is great treasure waiting for us in heaven, all to be used to bring glory back to God.

Now let’s consider some other good things about redemption.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 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.

Notice the redemption of every lawless deed. That is, sin. We spoke earlier of our slavery to sin and here is a Scripture that spells that out. This is different from forgiveness. This refers to the breaking of the bond that sin has on us. Have you ever noticed people who commit the same sin or sins over and over again? They are in bondage to that sin, it actually has a hold on them so they can’t get free of it. Quite possibly, they don’t want to be free of it because they are also blinded by it.

Perhaps each of us can think back to some sin that had a hold on us prior to our conversion. That sin should be gone now; if not, prayer and repentance are needed. Redemption gives us the strength we need to break the grip of sin; it also gives us the desire to break it. That’s part of what happens when we accept Jesus; His desire is: “to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Jesus wants us to be pure, that is, free from the stain of sin. Since we can’t do that ourselves, Jesus did it for us. We have good works assigned to us from before the beginning of time. Any good things we try to do ourselves are not pure and are not acceptable to God. The reason they are not pure is because they will be touched by sin; we will always have some impure motive lurking in the background. We require Jesus to purify us and our works.

Christians have a certain way that God expects us to live. There are certain things we do, and others we don’t do. We live in this world, but we are to be separate from it. Here again, the only way we can accomplish this at all is because of the redemption that Christ provided.

Colossians 1:19-20

For it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

The redemption provided by the blood of Jesus Christ has brought reconciliation. And more importantly, that reconciliation is between us and the Almighty God of the universe. By our human nature, we were constantly in rebellion against God. There is no way to have a good relationship with someone you are constantly rebelling against. In fact, we learn from Romans 5:10, that when Jesus died for us, we were actually enemies of God. Think about what a horrific idea that is; to be God’s enemy. The Bible is very clear that no enemy of God will prevail against Him. It is also very clear about what will happen to His enemies. Praise God that we have been removed from that list!

By the blood of Christ, we are no longer enemies of God, but His children. We have been reconciled to God, things have been made right between us. There is peace between ourselves and the Almighty. And this is an everlasting peace. We don’t have to worry about doing something that makes us God’s enemy again. Now, that certainly doesn’t give us license to do what ever we want; when we do wrong, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Surely, we have no desire to grieve the One who has been so good to us.

1 Corinthians 6:19

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?

The redemption brought about by Christ has given us forgiveness and righteousness; by this, God can now dwell in us. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God at the request of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is part of the triune God and we have become a dwelling place for Him. Not only can we approach God, He always resides with us. He is always there to guide us and comfort us. He brings the appropriate Scripture to mind when we need it. He protects us from sin and satan. And He Himself is a seal; when we are sealed with the Holy Spirit we have the assurance that we are saved and look forward to an eternity of life.

There is a word in Scripture that is closely related to redemption and that is ransom. We are told in Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Let’s think about the term “ransom”. It’s usually used of a payment of money to release someone who has been kidnapped. Payment is made to ransom someone. This leads to the question “*Who was the ransom paid to*?” Was it paid to God or to satan or someone else? It turns out that we need to look at ransom in a slightly different way, in a more basic way. A ransom is something that takes the place of something else. In our example of the kidnapper, the money takes the place of the person kidnapped.

This is how we must think of Jesus as being a ransom. He took the place of us. He took our place in the administration of justice for our sins. He took our place in receiving the punishment that is ours. He also took our place in being cursed.

Galatians 4:5

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”

Paul had previously pointed out that everyone is cursed who does not follow the law of Moses down to the very letter of the law. We don’t have to read very far in the law to realize that we are cursed; we have not followed every point of the law, not even close. So, in addition to sin, we are under a curse. Jesus followed the law perfectly, therefore, He wasn’t cursed. But in order to redeem us He had to take on a curse. When the Roman soldiers hung Him on that wooden cross, a tree, by the law He came under a curse, even though He didn’t break the law. Jesus came under a curse to suffer in our place and we are redeemed from the curse of the law.

In the blood of Christ, we have forgiveness and imparted righteousness. We are no longer enemies of God and we have even become His children. We are no longer bound by sin and are free to do the good works that God has planned for us from before time began. We have been freed from the law and its curse, we are a holy people for God and we can bring Him glory. We look forward to eternal life with God instead of eternal death in separation from Him.

These are only some of the great riches of God; all of which are now part of our inheritance; all of which comes to us by grace. How amazing God is; we don’t deserve any of this. The only way to describe what God is giving to us is lavish. All this is in addition to what blessings He gives to us in this life. Because of sin, this life can’t be perfect, but we live in the wonderful expectation of what is coming; of what is promised to us.

With all the problems we face in this life, it is good sometimes, to just think about any good things that you have or have happened to you. All good things come from God. After considering these, look up the verses we have just gone over and think about all the blessing that are coming. After this, consider Ephesians 3:20. “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.” Once we think about all these blessings we have in this life and in the life to come, Paul tells us that God can still do abundantly more.

Long ago, God planted a garden in Eden and He placed the man and woman there. He knew what would happen. So, why did He let it? Only God Himself knows the full answer but I think this is part of it. He really had so much more planned for the human race; even more wonderful than living in that beautiful garden. He planned on a close fellowship with us and providing us with blessings and fulfilling, eternal lives. He allowed things to go wrong so that we who want to be with Him would show it. The next life will be populated by people who want to be there, who want to be with Jesus. There will only be Christians.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, when we consider what You have done in redeeming us we have no choice but to joyfully bow before You. Lord God, when we consider the grace You pour out upon us, we have no choice but to give it back to You in glory.

With Your precious blood, You have purchased us from slavery; from bondage to a cruel and merciless master. We now belong to You, a Master who is merciful, whose yoke is light and even provides the strength to carry it. You reach down to us and pull us up to become Your friends; even children of the Father.

We now only feel some of the joy that You provide for us, but it is enough, until you bring us to that full joy that we look forward to. Jesus, keep us by Your Holy Spirit throughout this life until You bring us home.

Jesus, it is in Your name we pray

Amen