***Redemption, Freedom, and Forgiveness  
  
Colossians 1:4-9  
  
COL-106***

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Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Mark 7:6-7: "And Jesus said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites. As it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.' But in vain, they worship Me, teaching his doctrines, the precepts of men. Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.'"

Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desire to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it."

Revelations 3:22: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Please turn in your Bible to Colossians 1:9-14. Our subject this morning is "Prayer for the Colossians," segment number 40.

Whether a person qualifies to go to heaven to be with God forever in total happiness is entirely dependent upon God. This is pointed out to us very explicitly in Titus 3:4-7: "But when the kindness of God our Savior, and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ Our savior; that being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

This passage of Scripture makes it very clear that salvation is an act of God's kindness toward us. It makes it very clear that none of us goes to heaven on the basis of any human doing. We don't go to heaven by living a good life. We don't go to heaven by taking the Lord's Supper. We don't go to heaven by having water baptism. We don't go to heaven by giving money to the church, or even by joining a church. We don't go to heaven by anything, if you're going to follow the Bible, except by the deed of salvation of redemption provided by God Himself in our behalf. It was according to the mercy of God. That means that you have a great misery. You're on your way to the lake of fire, and only God can release you from that misery. You can't even help Him even to do it. Only He can renew our spirit, which is dead, by bringing us back to life spiritually with the Holy Spirit, and then to pour out the power of that Spirit upon us through Jesus.

**Total Depravity**

So, being justified, meaning we have absolute righteousness as a gift from God, we would now be heirs of a hope which is certain of eternal life in heaven. So, that's why we may say very clearly, in contrast to what a great many religious groups would tell you, whether a person qualifies to go to heaven, to be with God forever in total happiness, is entirely dependent upon God. The Bible reveals that everyone is born into the human race totally depraved, so that he is not able to do anything to qualify himself for heaven. That is known as the doctrine of total depravity. Total depravity means that you cannot help yourself to go to heaven. You cannot do one thing, because you're already contaminated.

It's like a doctor trying to perform a sterile operation, an invasion of the human body, and the doctor is covered with contamination – a contamination that he cannot remove. Therefore, there is no way that he can help himself or anybody else. When it comes to surgery, he's going to contaminate, and he's going to cause death. That's the way it is with us. When we are totally depraved, that means that our sin nature contaminates everything that we can possibly offer to God, even in what we think are good works. So, there is no way for us to qualify ourselves.

This is further clarified for us in Scripture by the fact that there is an impossible barrier that separates man from God – an impossible barrier that separates the unbeliever from the living God. And that barrier simply cannot be passed. You can't go around it. You can't go under it. And there is not one thing you can do to remove that barrier. When you understand that, then you can understand how the Titus passage is true: "Not by any works of ours; not by any effort of ours; not by any religious of ours, do we go to heaven. That is because what we have is an impossible situation.

**The Wall Separating God and Man**

Please notice. It's like a wall built of several blocks. The first block that we have is the penalty of spiritual death for one's moral guilt – for your sin guilt. You are spiritually dead. Now, here is God on one side of the wall, and here is man on the other side. The side of man is the position of the lost. The side of God is the position of the saved. The side of man is the position of the lake of fire. The side of God is the position of the new Jerusalem (heaven). Now, any normal human being, that has half a brain, understands that this is a serious business. And you are born into the human race facing this problem. On one side of the wall, in the lost condition, is man by natural birth. On the other side of the wall is God; heaven; and, everything we want. Now, this is not made up. This is not somebody's kooky religious ideas. This is drawn from a Bible which is inerrant, and which has proved its reliability century after century.

1. **The Block of Guilt – Removed by Expiation**

So what's the problem? This spiritual death has to be removed. And it is removed by expiation of one's guilt by the spiritual death of Jesus Christ in place of the sinner. If you are spiritually dead, then the penalty of your sin is spiritual death, and somebody has to pay the penalty. Either you do, or some substitute does. Jesus Christ comes into the picture. He pays the penalty of spiritual death. And this block is gone. You become spiritually alive.

1. **The Block of Sin Nature – Removed by Regeneration**

The second block in this barrier that rises higher and higher is the possession of an old sin nature. Your old sin nature keeps you from going over to God. You've received this physically at the point of your birth. You're born spiritually dead because of this old sin nature. You have a sin nature from your father. The moment that you take your first breath, you die spiritually. You're dead. And immediately, you have this block in the barrier. This is solved by regeneration of the believer. God makes you spiritually alive, and therefore, the sin nature is canceled out in its effect.

1. **The Block of God's Holiness – Removed by Propitiation**

Then the next block in this wall is the holiness of God, which is His justice and His absolute righteousness. The demand of God's justice is that sin has to be paid for by death. You cannot satisfy this on your own. You are faced with the justice of God. And the justice of God says that sin must be paid for with death. But how can you pay for spiritual death when you're already dead? Do you see the problem? You cannot pay for this. So, in comes God, and what He does is, by an act of His own provision, with the death of Christ, He satisfies the penalty of death. He pays it for you, so that the justice of God is satisfied. That problem is removed.

1. **The Block of Absolute Righteousness – Removed by Justification**

Then there's another block in this wall, and that's the fact that you lack absolute righteousness. You cannot be in heaven without absolute righteousness. You have to be as good as God to be in heaven. So, this is solved again by God, by the imputation to the believer of the absolute righteousness of God. We call that justification.

1. **The Block of Being in Adam – Removed by Position in Christ**

Then there's another terrible block, and that is the fact that you are in Adam. Adam is the place of death. And when you're born into the human race, you are born with Adam's guilt upon you. When Adam sinned, you sinned with him. And because of that, even if you never did a single sin yourself, you're going to go to hell, because you were there in your representative Adam. And his sin is now imputed to you. God has come in with a solution by expiation of Adam's guilt. He, through Christ, removes that guilt, and He places you in Christ, the place of life.

1. **The Block of the Slave Market of Sin – Removed by Redemption**

Then there is the block that we're particularly interested in that we're studying. And that is the slave market of sin. Everybody is in a slave market of sin. And God removes this by redemption – the doctrine, redemption. He pays for your removal, and that's what we have been reading in Colossians 1:14 – the fact that He has provided a redemption for us: "In Whom we have redemption, and consequently, the forgiveness of sins."

So, the fact is that this whole wall which is there originally has been removed by God. The whole thing is gone. Now, the line between being lost and saved can be crossed over by the lost sinner on the basis of his personal faith in Jesus Christ. If you understand this wall (this enormous barrier), you will not fall for all the misinformation and the misdirection of huge denominational groups which give you the idea that there is something you can do to handle this terrible problem of your personal sin. You could not handle it, because this wall exists until you accept Christ. If you don't accept Christ, you're up against all these things that you simply cannot correct. You cannot make yourself spiritually alive. You cannot take yourself out of Adam, and put yourself into Christ. You cannot pay for sin with a spiritual death. You cannot meet the justice of God, of death for sin. You cannot secure absolute righteousness for yourself. You need all those things to go to heaven. And you cannot free yourself from Satan's slave market.

So, this barrier, or this wall between God and lost sinners, has been removed by God Himself. The lost may now come over the line from eternal death to eternal life by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. There is no barrier remaining, so man can now be reconciled to God through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." This is the one who removed the barrier: "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time." Therefore, all in the human race have, by this act of the removal of this barrier, been made saveable. All are now saveable. Since a totally depraved person cannot save himself, he is made savable by this act of God. It is now possible for a person to be reconciled to God and to go to heaven. Why? Because the barrier has been removed.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21: "For the love of Christ controls us. Having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died." We died with Christ on Calvary: "And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died and rose again on their behalf."

So, I'm not wrong when I tell you to get a life – to get the life of God, and throw out that life that you are living; that is, your own life, and which you will spent eternity regretting. Let the world do the things of the world. As Jesus said, in Luke 9:60, "Let the dead bury the dead." You get the life that was yours from eternity past, ordained for you to execute. Forget the glamor and the glory and the excitement of the life of circulating in this world system.

2 Corinthians 5:15: "That they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died and rose again on their behalf." We do many things as Christians, and we justify them by saying that we're doing God's work by doing these things, when they are, in fact, the things that the unsaved dead could do just as well, but who cannot do the work of God that only you can do.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17: Therefore, from now on, we recognize no man according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him no longer." We do not look at Jesus Christ as just a man. We see Him now in His full impact of the God man: "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old things passed away. Behold all new things have come." What are the old things? Right here. This barrier of this wall that separates us from God. That's the old things. What has been removed? That's what has been removed. That's what is now new.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21: "Now, all these things are from God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. We have been reconciled by this wall being removed, namely that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting the trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us. We beg you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. That is your life. He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." That's our life – making that message clear, and supporting everything that makes it possible for that message to be conveyed.

Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it explicitly clear how this reconciliation work is done: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (salvation) is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one should boast." The redemption which is provided by Christ is based upon His atonement for the sins of all mankind. His redemption, that we have been looking at, is a provision for the entire human race. 1 John 2:2 says, "And He Himself, Jesus Christ, is the satisfaction (the propitiation) for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." What's he saying? He's saying that this block that demanded the justice of God be satisfied has been done by Him.

**Unlimited Atonement**

Then in 1 Timothy 2:6, we may add this: "Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time." He gave Himself as a ransom. What is that? That is redemption. And He gave Himself for all. He died for the whole world. That, as we pointed out last time, is unlimited atonement. And the coverage of unlimited atonement results in the fact that redemption is paid for every person. And that's what we've been leading up to. Yes, somebody had to redeem you. Somebody had to remove the block – that terrible, terrible block of being in the sin market's slavery to Satan. Somebody had to remove it. Christ, with redemption, has done that, and he has done that for every human being.

**The Redeemed Unsaved**

So, redemption out of Satan's control is a reality. But now the lost sinner who does not accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior by an act of faith in Him alone, will enter eternity as the redeemed unsaved. That is not an oxymoron. Those two things do go together – the redeemed unsaved. And they will spend eternity in the conscious suffering of the lake of fire with Satan and his demons.

Jesus Himself told us that there is a place like that. In Matthew 25:21, Jesus says, "Then He will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" – the devil and his demons. This is neither a wise nor a good choice in place of eternal life with God the Father and the joys of the new Jerusalem (heaven). Why would you choose to go to the lake of fire, when you've already been redeemed out of that destiny? It's already been covered. The only thing you can do is contaminate it, by trying to perform some human ritual or work in order to secure the effects of this redemption. But the Word of God says that if you do that, you'll join Satan and his demons in the lake of fire. But you should simply accept it as a gift from God, and not add anything, because human works always undermine the grace of God.

So, this morning, we're going to bring this all together. Nothing is more important than for you to understand the doctrine of redemption. Once you understand that, you will know why you can be saved, and how that salvation is inevitably irreversible – how it has been all of God, and not of you. And you will know something more than a rah-rah attitude that you're going to heaven.

Unfortunately, the pulpit today is filled with three kinds of preachers. First of all, there is the con man type. The con man who is deceptive. And then there is the rah-rah type – the one who plays the emotions. And then there is the one who is the genuine teacher of the Word of God. And it is amazing how people will gravitate towards supporting the con man or the rah-rah type, and they will recoil from the one who is explaining the Word of God in its genuine meaning from the original languages.

So if you understand the doctrine of redemption, you will not be taken in by all the con men in the religious circuit, and you'll not be carried away by their emotions. You will have a real basis for what you believe is your ground for eternity in heaven.

**The Doctrine of Redemption**

1. **Release upon the Payment of a Ransom ("Lutrosis")**

There are two Greek nouns for redemption. One is "lutrosis" (loo'-tro-sis), and the other is an intensified form: "apolutrosis" (ap-ol-oo'-tro-sis). They basically mean "deliverance or release of a slave on the payment of a ransom." That's all the word means. It is used in Scripture to describe the work of Jesus Christ on the cross in payment for the sins of the world. Somebody had to pay the price of redemption.

Romans 3:24 says, "Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." The word "justified" means to be given absolute righteousness to your account. How do you get it? Through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. And the redemption covers everybody. But it is activated when you trust in Christ as Savior.

Hebrews 9:12 puts it this way: "Not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His Own blood He entered the holy place, once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." So, how was redemption provided? By the death of Christ on the cross? And please remember that on that cross, He died spiritually when God the Father and God the Holy Spirit turned from Him, as He bore the sins of the world, and He cried out an agony to them: "Why have they forsaken Him?" And then He completed the payment by dying physically. And it was the basis of redemption. That's the only way to be redeemed. You can never, never be released from the condemnation of sin and the destiny in the lake of fire except through a redemption that God has provided. This word connotes releasing mankind from Satan's slave market of sin by the payment of the sacrifice of Christ. So, redemption thus has to do with our sins – Christ paying the price in order to redeem us.

Matthew 20:28: "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." The price of redemption was the life of Christ. What redemption does is that it frees the believer from bondage to sin by securing them forgiveness of sins. So point number one: the two nouns, "lutrosis" and "apolutrosis," basically mean "deliverance or release of someone who is enslaved upon the payment of a ransom." It is from the language of the Word of God in its original language that doctrine comes. So that's why we have to point these out.

1. **Freed out of the Slave Market ("Agorazo" and "Lutroo")**

There are the three Greek verbs. The first is the verb "agorazo" (ag-or-ad'-zo). "Agorazo" means "to be redeemed." Another Greek verb is used, for example, in 1 Peter 1:18-19, which illustrates it for us: "Knowing that you were not redeemed "lutroo" (loo-tro'-o) (there it is) with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood, as of the Lamb, unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." "The blood of Christ" refers to the spiritual and physical death upon the cross. This word "agorazo" means to buy in a marketplace. The marketplace is called the "agora" (ag-or-ah'). And "agorazo" comes from that. In the marketplace, there you are as a poor, helpless slave, and Christ comes in and buys you out of it. "Lutroo" teaches that redemption means that the sinner has been made a free man to serve God according to the Word and the will of God.

Revelation 5:9 says, "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy You are," addressing Jesus, "to take the book and to break its seals, for You were slain, and did purchase for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Now it is very clear that all unbelievers are slaves in Satan's slave market. And the price for their release is the death of Jesus Christ, and that's exactly what has happened. They have been sold into bondage by their sins, and they are controlled by Satan (Ephesians 2:2). They're under the sentence, then, of eternal death. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death."

Now, what this particular word stresses is that Christ has purchased our freedom from Satan's control. The Lord Jesus Christ is now entitled to be the owner of everyone. But those who refuse to accept His purchase price – they will remain as slaves to Satan, and spend eternity with the devil. 2 Peter 2:1 says, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." The Lord Jesus Christ had barely gone back to heaven when heresies began entering the Christian community. And at the core of those heresies, they all had one thing: they all denied that Jesus Christ was essential through His death on a cross for a person to get to heaven, and that grace was the only way. Immediately, in one way or another, that simple fact was being contradicted.

So, this word means "a price has been paid." The second word "exagorazo," used in Galatians 3:13, stresses another aspect of this salvation: "Christ redeemed us." Now it's this "exagorazo:" "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" (or on the cross). This word now means "to take out of the slave market." The first word said, "I'm paying for your price." The second word says, "I'm taking you by the hand and I'm leading you out of this area of Satan's authority." And this is purchased. We are purchased in this way, so that we can be children of God. And since we are now the children of God, He will never sell us into slavery again. We now belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 4:4-5 says, "But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son (the first Christmas), born of a woman from under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." What's Christmas all about? It's a very fitting subject for us to be talking about redemption at Christmastime. That's why He was born. And He was born in the fullness of time, the right time historically, as God promised, through a special woman. He was born under the demands of the Law of God, of absolute perfection. He did this in order that He might take out "exagorazo" (to redeem) those who are under the Law. He would just take you out from under the Law. Isn't that something? All these people who want to be legalists; all these people who want to live under the Old Testament Mosaic Law system; and, all these people, some of them very sincere, who are afraid to even go to somebody's house for a meal because somebody's going to stick a piece of pork in front of them. Someone's going to stick a piece of ham in front of them, and they're going to be all upset because of their legal ways. Somebody's going to ask them to do some work on Sunday, which somehow has been metamorphosed into the Sabbath day.

**Adoption**

What He did was take us out from all those demands which nobody could keep, so that we could receive the adoption of sons. Now, that phrase is different in the Bible than what we understand as adoption. When we talk about people adopting someone (someone outside of your family), a child is legally brought into your family by an act of adoption. And that child now becomes part of that family. But that's not what it means in the Bible. In the Bible, the word "adoption," as we learn from other Scripture, means that God now declares you to be a mature son or a mature daughter, with all the rights and privileges appertaining to maturity.

In the Roman world, there was a formal process of adoption. At a certain point in life, a father took his own children, and had a legal declaration of adoption. And once he had done that, they were now to be treated as adults. They could now do the things that only adults can do. They could enter legally into actions that only adults can do. Now, you can see what this means spiritually, when it says that this act of redemption led us out of the slave market so that now we have all the privileges of adult children of God. And what are those? Everything that belongs to Jesus Christ.

In another place, it says that we're His heirs. John 15:16: "Whatever Christ has with the Father is yours." Whatever the destiny and future of Jesus Christ is, it's yours. That is the marvelous thing about being adopted into the family of God.

Then the third word in the Greek is the word "lutroo." This word is used in Titus 2:14. It also speaks about this concept of redemption: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us ("lutroo") from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." This word means that now, first the price was paid, then you were led out by God from Satan's realm of authority. Now you've been turned loose. Now you're free to live your life. This is what Christian liberty means. This is what Christian freedom means. You now, with the Word of God, the doctrines of Scripture, and the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, can live like a royal member of the family of God. And you're free to live it in any way you want within the boundaries of the will of God, and the principles of the laws of God: "Who gave Himself for us so that He might redeem us;" redeem in the sense of turning us free from every lawless deed – turning us free from having to be slaves of sin. He has freed us.

Yes, you can live a righteous godly life. You're free now to do that. You're able to do that: "For Himself; for His own possession." And what does He want you to do? He wants you to be the zealous for good works. So, whose life are you leading? Whose life are you living? When we say, "Get a life," that's a good phrase, but for a Christian, that life is already there. Get out of the world, and get into the life of Jesus Christ that He has for you. If not, you will look back and wish you had.

This word "setting free" is also used in 1 Peter 1:18, "In this way, knowing that you are not redeemed (you were not set free now) to live with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers." When you were led out of the slave market area, you were led into the freedom to live the godly life. And that's why you have to keep feeding your soul upon the Word of God, so that Satan cannot bring your sin nature into power over you once more. This connotes the fact that believers are set at liberty from sin, and from Satan by Jesus Christ. They're not owned by the devil. They're not controlled by the devil. They're not under the authority of the devil.

Well, as free men, we believers can choose to become the happy bond slaves of Jesus Christ. That brings us back to the principle enunciated by Paul in Romans 12:1-2: "I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (these mercies of redemption) to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship:" "God, I want to worship You. Here I am. I have a physical body. I have capacities. I have a mental capacity. I have skills. I have all kinds of possessions. It is my great happiness to start living your life for you." And how do I do that?

Verse 2: "Do not be conformed to this world (do not cut out to its patterns – get out of it), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (through doctrine), that you may prove what the will of God is (the life that He has for you), which is good and acceptable and perfect. Real freedom as a human being is this: that you permit God to live your life. That's it. That's real freedom. Permit God to live your life. Nothing should stand in the way.

So, we have these three Greek verbs for redemption. "Agorazo" teaches that redemption requires a price that had to be paid for God to purchase the sinner. He paid that to His own justice.

Secondly, "exagorazo" teaches that redemption purchased men out from the slave market of sins, so that you never return to it again, because you are now a new creation, and you're under a new jurisdiction.

Next, "lutroo" teaches that redemption means that a sinner has been made a free man to serve God according to the Word and the will of God.

1. **Believe the Gospel**

The mechanics of redemption are found in 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Knowing that you are not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a Lamb, unblemished, spotless; the blood of Christ." You were not purchased out of the slave market with rituals. You are purchased by the death of Christ alone on the cross. And Act 16:31 tells us, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will secure redemption, personally." Believe the gospel. Believe the claims of Christ, and you will be saved. That's the mechanics. That's how you do it. It's just that simple.

Ephesians 1:7 puts it this way: "In Him we have redemption, through His blood; the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Redemption is for everybody, but forgiveness: no. But the two go together. With redemption, which is what we have in Colossians 1:14, we'll get the forgiveness. With redemption, the great thing you get is forgiveness, potentially. Everybody has been redeemed, but forgiveness is only for those who accept the redemption by turning to Christ and saying, "I believe in you. Save me. Take me to heaven. I'm taking my hands off."

Now you can hold that in great contempt, or you can say, "That's great. It's wonderful to know that." For 1,500 years following the ascension of Jesus Christ, that simple truth of redemption and the consequence (forgiveness of sin that comes from those who accept it) was totally lost to mankind. Only here and there were spots of believers who read the Scriptures, and who had access to the Word of God, and who understood this principle. And everywhere the Roman Catholic Church would get its hands on those people, they were killed to silence them. Talk about a work of the devil. It was only until Martin Luther stood up and said, "I've had enough of this, when he finally understood how to have his sins forgiven. And he quit beating up on himself, and doing all of these stupid religious ceremonies, and he finally said, "Redemption has already been provided by the death of Christ. Forgiveness comes through my faith acceptance of that redemption."

**Reconciliation**

Redemption has removed the wall so that Christ has reconciled me to Himself, but I have to adjust to Him. The standard is now there, and I'm able to do it. The word "reconciliation," you may remember, means "to adjust." It is what you do when we go from standard time to daylight saving time. You take your watch. Here's the standard: regular time; or, daylight saving time. And you turn the button, and you reconcile your watch to stay with what the standard says. God has redeemed us – for removing the wall. Now it is up to us to accept the gift of redemption, which will give us forgiveness of sins, and thus reconcile us to the character of God. Then He says, "Come on home to heaven. You're welcome, because you're qualified."

1. **A Kindred Redeemer**

The qualifications required for someone to be a redeemer of mankind – that's a problem. This is beautifully illustrated in the book of Ruth, between Ruth and Boaz. There are several things that are required for somebody to be able to be another person's redeemer. This was a practice under the Old Testament theocracy. First of all, the redeemer has to be a kinsman. He has to be related to you. So, Jesus Christ, that first Christmas, had to come down and assume a human body. He had to be related to us as a human being, so that He could pay for our sins. He couldn't die for our sins as God. And he had to qualify as a human being to pay for our sins.

Hebrews 2:14-15, "Since then, the children share in flesh and blood, He (Jesus) himself, likewise, also partook of the same (flesh and blood); that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death (that is, the devil), and might deliver those who, through fear of death, were subjects to slavery all their lives." What is he talking about? Redemption. So, the first thing a redeemer has to have to be qualified as a redeemer, is that he has to be a kinsman.

Secondly, he must have the means to redeem. Jesus Christ had the price required to redeem us. He was spiritually alive. The price is spiritual death. In Acts 20:28, this is stated in this way: "Be on guard for yourselves, and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His Own blood." Here, speaking to the elders, in the various house churches in Ephesus, at Paul's farewell to them at the beach, he says, "Be on guard for yourselves. God has given you a flock of people to lead. You are to be their pastor-teacher instructor. And the Holy Spirit has made you their overseer, which is another word for the "pastor," in order to shepherd (which is what a pastor does) the church of God, by leading them into the Word of God which He purchased with His blood." So, to be a redeemer, you have to have the price to pay. You can't go to a pawn shop and redeem something that somebody put there unless you have the money to pay for it.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold, from your futile way of life, inherited from your father's, but with the precious blood as of a Lamb, unblemished, spotless; the blood of Christ."

So Jesus Christ, first of all, was a kinsman. He was human, as well as divine. Secondly, he had the means to redeem us. He had the spiritual life with which to pay for our penalty. Third, he must be free from enslavement to Satan. One slave cannot redeem another slave. And, of course, He qualified here again because He was sinless. Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a High Priest, who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (singular – the old sin nature). Our high priest is Jesus Christ. He knows what it is to be tempted. He was tempted all the time as a man (as a human being), from the world, and from Satan. You and I have a triple whammy. We have an old sin nature that also is the source of enticement to sin. Jesus did not have that, because He had an old sin nature. But the world was also trying to entice Him to sin. The devil, you certainly know, was always trying to entice him to do evil. But he was free. He never succumbed to that. Therefore, He was qualified to be another person's redeemer.

1 Peter 2:22-24: "Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth (speaking of Christ, the Savior). And while being reviled, He did not revile in return. While suffering, He uttered no threats. He kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously." You and I, by nature, want to punch back when stupid people abuse us for doing good – when people who are eternally indebted to us, spiritually, and for the things that will really count, begin beating up on us, and acting with disloyalty. What your inclination is, is to punch back. That's when you have to sit down; quietly turn on the light; turn to the Scripture; and, read it again: "While being reviled, He who did nothing but good did not revile in return. While suffering, because He was a human being, and it hurt (what people were doing). He uttered nevertheless, no threats. Instead, He kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously." Well, he did the worst thing he could possibly do to people. He went and turned them over to God, and said, "Father, I think some vengeance is needed here. If I try to do it, I'll botch it up. Please handle it for Me." That's a prayer you should often pray on occasion when it's necessary. You turn people over to the disposition of God, and He will take them. If you do nothing else to them, one of the worst things is to lead them out into the spiritual wilderness. That's when the greatest price of all is paid. And for them, life is just as beautiful and wonderful as it ever was.

Then the fourth thing for a person to be a redeemer, he has to be willing to redeem. Jesus Christ made His personal choice that He would redeem us. Luke 22:42: "Saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." What's He talking about? He's facing this problem of dying for sin. And he said, "Father, I'd rather not have to take upon Me the filth and sewage of human sin, but that's necessary to satisfy your justice. If there's any other way, I'd rather do it that way, but I'm going to do it the way it has to be done."

Matthew 16:21-23: "From that time, Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem; suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes; be killed; and be raised up on the third day. And Peter took Him aside, and began to rebuke him, saying, God forbid it Lord. This shall never happened to you. But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan. You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on God's interest, but on man's." Peter was getting a life. He was thinking like the world. He had the life of the world. And Jesus says, "Wait a minute, Peter. Get a life. Get God's life. You're not speaking for God. If I don't die, the worst thing in the world will happen to you. The only hope for you and the rest of humanity is that I die. Don't try to stand in My way, and dissuade Me from that."

So, to be a qualified redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ filled the bill on every account. He was a kinsman. He did have the means to redeem with spiritual life. He was free of any personal sin. And He was willing to pay the price. There are about six more significant points, and we're going to stop there this morning in the doctrine of redemption, because we now come to the climax – the closing points that make redemption the marvelous thing upon which to build your life. And we will look at them next time.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this doctrine of redemption.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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