***Redemption, Freedom, and Forgiveness, No. 2

Colossians 1:4-9

COL-107***

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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."

Acts 20:30: "And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

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

Please turn in the Word of God once more (direct your attention) to Colossians 1:14. Our segment is Colossians 1:9-14. Our topic is "Prayer for the Colossians, number 41.

The apostle Paul, in verse 14, says, "In whom (that is, in Jesus Christ) we have two great realities. We have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

All human evil, with its destructive effects, and resulting suffering, is often mainly dealt with by advising a person, who is caught up in some segment of evil, to deal with it by just saying "No:" Just say "No" to the evil. That is a very ineffective human viewpoint solution which fails to account for one very important fact. And that is the overpowering attraction of man's sin nature toward evil. Man, by nature, wants to do evil. He is driven to it, because he is enslaved to his old sin nature which he has inherited from Adam. And if there's anything a human being resents, it is somebody butting into his life, and telling him to knock it off when it comes to responding positively to the lusts of the old sin nature. We don't like God telling us not to do the things that are evil, that our sin nature is encouraging us to do, unless something very dramatic has happened to us.

You must understand that people, by nature, don't want to do right. They want do what is wrong. So, it's nonsense to say to somebody, "Here's a great problem that you have: a sexual immorality; or, a drug abuse problem. Just say 'No.'" The truth of the matter is that everything in our society today is moving toward making evil acceptable – the norm. And this goes from the highest echelons of government to the lowest garbage pickers on the street – to make evil normal.

I read this week of a teacher somewhere in the East, which was awarded by a federal court, and a settlement of $750,000 to be paid by the school board that she was hired by (that she was working for). Why is she given this? Well, the school board had dismissed her. Why did they do that? Because in her junior high class, they had a presentation in which she permitted and encouraged the students to use obscenities and vulgarities, and curse language in their presentation, to make it real – the way life is out there in the garbage dump. And the parents were outraged, and the school board said, "That's going beyond the realm of what is acceptable, and you are dismissed. The federal courts came back and said, "You can't dismiss her for that. That violates her First Amendment free speech.

Now, what that is, is the federal courts, because they're so filled with men and women who are on their way to the lake of fire, want to make our society as coarse and vulgar and sinful as it can be. If you haven't caught onto that yet, wake up, folks. This is what your children are faced with every day at the public school, in the social associations they have with other kids. It is to coarsen them. We take great pride in robbing children of innocence. A child doesn't need to know a lot of things that an adult needs to know. A child doesn't need to know things for a long time. His years of innocence should be preserved. Instead, the public school and social agencies of our society are falling all over themselves, trying to make our children as crude and course as they can be, as early as possible.

Why is this? It's because of the sin nature. People are now resenting normal courtesies. Feminists are great for this. If a man steps back, and he opens the door for the lady going through, she wants to punch him in the mouth, because she's as good as he is, and she can open the door. She's not a weakling. Tell that to the ladies who applied for the fire department to lift the ladders. It is a deliberate desire to coarsen us, so that even manners are viewed as what? A hypocrisy. And that's not genuine. The reason you are courteous to people, and the reason you are civil to people, even though you may not like them, or you have a disagreement with them, is because you are hypocritical. If you are hypocritical, and if you are genuine, you'll be coarse and ugly and crude.

George Washington's mother made him memorize 101 principles of personal conduct and civility by which he had to comport himself as he dealt with other people. Now, that might be a good exercise – for all of us to get together and write down what rules our children must abide by. And we list them one-by-one, and put them all together, and say, "This is the way you will act within my sight; out of my sight; and, always in the sight of God, because this is good manners.

Even as a youth, I remember being taught: why do we have good manners? Because it's the oil that makes relationships smooth. It enables us to deal with people on a smooth basis, in a way that we may have to agree to disagree. But yet we will act with Christian courtesy; Christian womanliness; and, Christian gentlemanliness.

However, the sin nature wants to tear all that down. And that's exactly what is going on in our society. We are appalled at what people do, but they're proud of it. Is that any surprise? No. The Bible has told us that the unbeliever, who is indulging all the lust patterns of the sin nature to the hilt, looks at other people, and wonders what is wrong with you such that you do not want to join him. And then the Bible tells us that they resent those who will not join them in their evil.

Now, that is a big problem for young people. Unless you happen to have been born with a temperament such as I was born with, by the grace of God, that I did not particularly want to be part of the bunch, and I did not care whether you liked me or not. There were other motivations that (with no particular credit to me) just: that was the way I was. And as I look back on it, I see, in the days of my youth, what the other guys did was not my guideline. Whether I was part of their gang or not, it didn't make a bit of difference to me. But because my parents said, "Your favor with God – that's what counts. And doing what is His will – that's what counts. But it was just easy for me, by temperament and instruction, to say, "I'll walk with God. And if you want to be part of the gang to walk with him too, then you're my friend. And if you don't want to walk with God, you're not my friend, because the Bible tells me that you're not God's friend. And the Bible tells me that that means that if I'm a friend of you, I'm at enmity with God.

Well, the time has come (and the New Year is a good time to be aware of this), that we live in a society that wants to rob our young children of their innocence of evil, and it wants to make everything that is ugly and sinful and vulgar and obscene and degrading, acceptable, and the norm. What is the problem with what the Bible calls the abomination of homosexuality? And when the Bible attaches the word "abomination" to something, it means it is a deep revulsion to almighty God. What is the problem with homosexuality today? It isn't just that these people want to run an evil condemned under the theocracy of Israel with the penalty of death, but they want it to be accepted as the norm. They want it to be accepted as just as normal as any other conduct between two human beings. And what are they saying? "We want that this great evil should be looked upon with favor."

Well, the Word of God says, "No, you do not look upon evil like that with favor. And we wonder why anybody would do that. Well, the apostle Paul tried to explain that to us Romans 3 – this problem of man's innate incapacity to do what is the good and the right. Romans 3:10-18. Paul is quoting several verses from the Old Testament, in which he is trying to prove that the whole world is guilty morally before God. So, everybody is on his way to hell. And he says, "I'm going to prove this to you by quoting what God has said to the people of the Old Testament. Romans 3:10-18, "As it is written (in the Old Testament Scriptures, he means), there is none righteous, no, not even one. There is none who understands? There is none who seeks for God." That's amazing. Not one human being in the world has absolute righteousness so that he can go to heaven. There's none in the world who understands right and wrong. There is not anybody who seeketh after God on his own.

We used to have a professor at Dallas Seminary who said, "We sing in church the hymn that says, "I found Him. Oh, I found Him." But he says, "Remember that when you sing that song, you weren't looking for Him when you found Him." Nobody cares about God, but they all love their sin nature, because they're slaves of it. That's what's normal to them.

Romans 3:12-18, "All have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does good. There is not even one. Their throat is an open grave. With their tongues, they keep deceiving. The poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their paths. And the path of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now, don't tell me that that's not a description of our society today, and of the sin nature in its full expression, as we are seeing it in our society today. Crime is rampant because in the 1960s, a generation, which is now an authority in our country, abandoned the Word of God; went into the drug culture; told themselves that doing what comes naturally is real freedom; and, that's what they went for. Now the bitter fruits are there. The crime is rampant. The world is in a tailspin of self-destruction. And it's not going to come back out, because the only way to change it is coming back to the Word of God. And that the unbeliever will not do. He has no fear of God.

Those in our society who are able to say no to the enticements of the old sin nature are those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation. So, by that act, they have activated in their experience what we have been studying about – the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ provided on the cross. And I hope that by now you understand that the word "redemption" means "release." It means "setting free from enslavement to the old sin nature and to Satan. And that's the only way you get the release. That's the only way a person can say "No" to evil. Otherwise, you'll go right down the line with everyone else. The believer is born again spiritually. Thereby he is freed from enslavement to the old sin nature. He has been redeemed.

**Moses**

Hebrews 11:24 tells us something interesting about Moses in this respect. Moses was part of the royal family of the Pharaoh. He was viewed as the Pharaoh's daughter's son. He was a prince. He had all the privileges and rights appertaining to royalty. Hebrews 11:24 says, "By faith." What kind of faith? Faith in God. This is not just faith by itself, but faith in the proper object. Faith is nothing. Faith is confidence, but it can't be confidence in the wrong thing. This is confidence in God, and the Word of God that he was taught by his mother who, of all things, was brought by Pharaoh's daughter in to be the child (the little baby's) nurse, unbeknownst to the Pharaoh's daughter, that this was the very mother of Moses. So, therefore Moses was nurtured, not only physically, but also spiritually. And because he knew these things, he had a great faith in God. Moses was a saved man.

He was looking to God to provide a Savior down the line as God had promised: "By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ (his confidence in the coming Messiah Savior) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."

Now, here was a great spiritual insight on the part of Moses. He had it all, physically and materially. And he says, "This is worth nothing." The only thing that has worth is the reward I will someday receive in God's presence. That is what I'm working for. That's the reward I'm seeking.

So, what did Moses do? He declared, as a prince of the royal court of Egypt, that he was not going to participate in the pleasures of sin. And make no mistake about it, what the sin nature wants you to do is a lot of fun. It is very pleasurable – the pleasures of sin. But he aligned himself with the moral laws of God, because he was trusting in the coming Christ, who would, in effect, provide the redemption that Moses now had on credit. He had it positionally then. But when Christ came, and provided that redemption, Satan's power over him was broken.

However, people in the Old Testament had the same response and benefits as we do. When we believe in Christ, redemption kicks in, and we are freed from the sin nature. They had it on a preview basis. They had it on a coming credit basis, the Scripture says. When they believed in the coming Messiah Savior, redemption (that was still ahead to be provided by Christ) also kicked in, and they were freed from the authority of Satan. Moses was thus able to just say "No" to his sin nature, and to all the pleasures of Egypt.

Moses knew something else from doctrine. Did you catch that? . . . "Chose rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." It is amazing how some Christians never learn about the dark side of sin. They never learn about the dark side of the pleasures of the old sin nature. Moses knew that those pleasures were momentary, and that they were going to be followed by a dark side of grief, and of shame, and of death. So Moses refused to be part of Satan's world of pleasure as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose the reproach of the world in order to secure the eternal pleasures of God's heavenly rewards.

So, a Christian who has been redeemed and released from the sin nature, yet is negative toward God, and is negative toward the doctrinal principles, and he is willing to be a friend of Satan's lifestyle in this world – that person is going to yield to the Old Testament lust pattern. You're a Christian. You're freed. You're redeemed. But you can still have negative resistance toward God. And that's why I was telling you about young people. Unless they're are a certain type, they want to be like the rest of the kids – as coarse, and as crude, and as vulgar, and as ugly, and as sinful. That may not be so in a very gross way, but in just those little ways of negative giving God the back of the hand that make it easier as they go through life to be disloyal to the Lord Jesus Christ, and loyal to Satan's world system – to discount the dark side of the sin nature's pleasures. And anybody, as a Christian, who is negative to the Word of God, and who is careless about being under the instruction of the Word of God, that person is going to go down.

It's just a matter of time, because they can't just say "No." They're like the girl in one of the songs in Oklahoma: "I'm just a girl who can't say 'No.' I'm in a terrible fix. Indeed she is. And the reason she couldn't say "No" is because the sin nature was her master. Without salvation, and without maintaining your temporal fellowship as a Christian, you are a slave. This kind of a believer is out of temporal fellowship. So, he's in the status of what the Bible calls "carnality;" that is, dominated by the sin nature. He's out of temporal fellowship with his Heavenly Father. He's back in the condition as if he were enslaved to the sin nature. He just can't say "No."

I think it really hurts to see a believer be disloyal to God, and to be friends with the devil. It is just really sad to see a believer, especially one who has had opportunity to be well-taught, and to know the score, and to have the skinny on all these things, and to then play the fool, and say, "The sin nature is better than God's way." And this was true of the earliest times of the Christian community.

**Demas**

One of the saddest examples is in 2 Timothy 4:10. Here the apostle Paul refers to a man who he had mentioned several other times in Scripture as one of his close and esteemed associates on his evangelistic team. He speaks about Demas. He had mentioned Demas two other times in a very positive way in Scripture. Demas was a man that he counted on. Demas was a man that he esteemed. Demas was a man that was essential to the operation, not just some ninny who sat around and didn't ever do anything in the work of the Lord. 2 Timothy 4:10: "For Demas, having loved this present world (he loved the lifestyle of the sin nature) has deserted me (gone to Thessalonica)." And Thessalonica was one of the good time cities of the ancient world, where the sin nature had all kinds of opportunities to be expressed.

Now how in the world did Demas ever come to that? He was associated with Paul: seeing the great works of God being performed; seeing people saved out of the occult; seeing people saved out of all kinds of horrendous lifestyles; being cleaned up and made princes and princesses of God; and, even seeing the miraculous works that Paul was able to perform for a while. And then he says, "The sin nature has a better life for me."

All it takes, folks, is one little negative volition toward God – one little act of negative volition toward Scripture. One negative volition about going to church where you're fed the Word of God. Yes, you can go to church where you're not fed the Word of God. And, oh yes, they may all be Christians. They're all Christians, but they're being starved of their heritage in Christ. You will regret that at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is no question about it. And that sneaky serpent of the sin nature may bite you in the meantime.

It's bad enough to see people who are unsaved being enslaved and destroyed by the evil pleasures of the sin nature; let alone to see a believer, who has God as his Father, and is redeemed (set loose) from the old nature, to be acting like it's old slave.

**Joseph**

We also look back and think in the Old Testament about Joseph. Here is another young man. Joseph was an achiever, and he was another person that we all admire because he loved God. He learned the Word of God, and he went for positive volition toward what he knew was right. Joseph refused the pleasures of sexual sin with Potiphar's wife. And for that, he suffered temporarily because he was loyal to God. He received imprisonment, and went through all kinds of things, but he ended up with an eternal record of glory (an eternal weight of glory) that is upon him, that he will never lose.

Genesis 39:7-9 gives us the grim details, "And it came about, after these events, that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused, and said to his master's wife, 'Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?'"

Now that's a peculiar kind of statement: "How then could I do this great evil against master?" But he didn't say that: "How then could I do this great evil against you?" No, he didn't say that: "How then could I do this great evil against society?" He didn't say that. The great evil was against God. So, let's learn that when you thumb your nose at the principles of the Word of God, and a feeding upon the doctrines of Scripture, and being instructed in the Word of God, it is a great evil and a great sin *against God*. And when you turn to the sin nature and say, "I love your lifestyle better than what God is asking me to do (leaving open for me to do)," the sin is against God.

Genesis 39:12: "When he refused, she caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.' And he left his garment in her hand and fled and went outside." Now there's the principle again of dealing with the sin nature. You get out of the presence. Don't be so stupid, and pretend that you don't know that there's a danger lurking, or things are getting overheated, or you are putting yourself in a position where emotions are being put into hot raging heat such that you won't be able to say "No." Even as a Christian, you have now put yourself in the position of dominance of the sin nature. He fled, and he went outside. He got away. He didn't even stay in the house.

That's what I'm trying to convey to young people – that all the baloney that is out there religiously is what they need to flee from. If you don't flee from all the rah-rah youth work that is put out there, and for adults as well, it is jading you toward Jesus Christ. And that grieves me deeply to see our young people, from Christian homes, being jaded toward Jesus Christ, because they're being cheapened by an emotional orientation of gatherings, and saying, "This is bringing me near to God," instead of realizing that there's only one thing that brings you near to God, and that is the Word of God.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed us. That means that he has freed us from enslavement the lusts of our sin nature. The power of the Holy Spirit then enables us to recoil with horror from evil, and just say "No." And if you don't find yourself recoiling from evil, then you have a problem.

The TV industry is now trying to help us to recoil from evil by putting ratings as to what these shows are going to be like, and what the content is. Mr. Valente and his gang in Hollywood are trying to clean up Hollywood. But unfortunately I've noticed that the rating "G" stands for garbage. And you may not know that. And here they are, saying, "We're going to keep funneling the filth out there, but we're going to try to give you a way to try to avoid it." It never occurs to them: "Don't even put it out there." Is that godly? Is that the Word of God? Yes it is.

The apostle Paul, in Romans 16:19, says, "Don't learn about evil, but only about that which is good." Now, what in the world more do parents need to say to a son, "You can never listen to an Oprah? You can never listen to a Geraldo. You can never listen to a bumping head, and all these yo-yos that are out there, whatever their names are, because they're parading and teaching you about the most gross, vulgar evil. It's imprinted on your mind, and imprinted on your soul, and there it is. And what has it done to you? It has coarsened you. And that's what's amazing to me – that we allow ourselves to be associated with things that are so coarse.

The Lord has redeemed us. That means that He has saved us. He has released us from enslavement to Satan, and to the sin nature. So, let's start saying "no."

This redemption is the basis for our entrance into heaven, out of Satan's kingdom of darkness. This redemption is for all mankind, and it is a basis for our qualification to share in the joy of life forever with God in heaven's light.

**Redemption**

We have looked at some of the principles of the doctrine of redemption. Just as a quick review: the Greek nouns for redemption refer to the release of a slave upon the payment of a ransom. There are three Greek verbs that convey to us the spiritual nature of redemption. The first word we showed you was "agorazo," which means to pay the price of death for sin required to free those who are enslaved to Satan. This is God's ransom. The second word is "exagorazo." "Exagorazo" meant to remove permanently a redeemed person from Satan's authority; that is, to take him out of the confines of the slave market. The third verb was "lutroo," which means to set the redeemed person, now taken outside of the slave market, free to live for God; that is, to execute his mission in life. Now, that's what the great word of redemption means.

There is a great hymn that we sing: "Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it." Redeemed – that is the core of the whole thing. That's what it's all about, because without redemption, there's nothing for us but to be slaves of that sin nature and of Satan.

So we have the price paid for. God has taken us out of that slave market. We're no longer under Satan's authority. We don't have to say "Yes" to him. We can say no to him. And then he has set us free: "Now go live your life, and live it to the glory of God." Now, that is the life that you should get. But what do we see among believers? "Man, do they have a life?" Oh, they have a life, and one of the first things you will notice about the life that they've got, which is not God's life, is that they're not here in church. They're every place under the sun, but they're not here. They're not in God's service. They're not reliable. They're not consistent. You couldn't count on them.

Suppose that God were to come to you and say, "I have a very grave spiritual mission for you to perform now. Pick one Christian out of the Berean congregation. That person is going to go with you, and it's going to be hell on earth that you're going to go through. Who would you pick? I guarantee it wouldn't be these people that you see popping in and out once in a while. You know how incapacitated they are spiritually. You know how easily the sin nature is at home says, "Ah, don't go to church today. Ah, don't do it today. This is this. This is that." You have all of these exceptions. You have these reasons to remove it. The Word of God is what it's all about. Without it, there is no strength.

The mechanics for activating one's redemption is accepting, by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Then next: the redeemer has to meet certain qualifications to be a redeemer. One: we said he had to be a kinsman. Jesus was human, as we are. Two: he must have the price of redemption. He must be able to die spiritually for sin. Three: he must be free of sin personally, so that he's not a slave himself of Satan. And four: he must be willing to redeem. And Christ chose to redeem the lost.

**The Doctrine of Redemption**

Here are the final points of the doctrine of redemption.

1. **Christ's Life Mission**

The life mission of Jesus Christ was to become the ransom for mankind's redemption. That is why He came into the world. That is why He was born at that Christmas event. That was the purpose of His life. 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."

1. **Justification and Propitiation**

The next point of the doctrine of redemption is that the redemption provided by Jesus Christ is the basis for justification and propitiation. Propitiation means that God's justice is satisfied by the payment of the price of sin, which is death. Justification means that that person, because he's redeemed, can now receive to his credit the absolute righteousness of God. He is as good as Jesus Christ in the eyes of God morally.

Romans 3:24-26: "Being justified (being given absolute righteousness as a gift) by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (a satisfaction) in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because, in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed."

What the apostle Paul is saying is that your sins are forgiven on the basis of the redemption that God has provided, because His justice demand for death for sin has been satisfied. Therefore, you are freed, and this was done through the death of Christ (the shedding of His blood on the cross). And you receive this by an act of faith (trust in Jesus Christ). And He says that all of this is to demonstrate that, in the Old Testament, when God said to a person, "You're going to heaven," there had been no payment. There had been no redemption yet: "You're going to be saved," but there was no redemption. God was saving them on credit. Now it says that God's integrity is kept intact because He has paid, when Christ came for all those from Adam on up to that point, that He had saved on credit.

1. **Redemption Means Forgiveness**

The word "redemption" has a twofold application. It has a present application to the forgiveness of one sins, and that is a great thing to know: "My sins are forgiven." Ephesians 1:7: "In Him, we have redemption through His blood (that is, his death), the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace." We now have our sins forgiven. Sin is only a problem to you if you don't confess it, and cease and desist, as per 1 John 1:9, so that you are back in temporal fellowship with God the Father. Your sins are forgiven. You never lose your eternal fellowship.

This is also pointed out in 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Knowing that you were not redeemed (set free) with perishable things, like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood as of a Lamb, unblemished and spotless – the blood of Christ." The sinless Jesus Christ took on your sin, and He paid death for it.

1. **Deliverance of One's Body from Decay**

So, there is a present application to the concept of redemption. There is also a future application, which is the deliverance of one's body from present debility and liability to decay. That should be good news for some of you, especially you senior citizens among us, who have pretty well-decayed your way over many years, and have debilities. Redemption means that you're all going to be fixed up again.

Romans 8:23: "And not only this, but we also ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons – the redemption of our body." We are waiting eagerly for when you check out of this life, and then redemption takes place, and you look in the mirror, and you say, "This is the way I looked when I was 35, at the prime of life." That's a great encouragement at the beginning of a new year.

Job 19 puts in a very dramatic way – the future application of redemption to the body. Job 19:25-26: "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last, He will take His stand on the earth, even after my skin is destroyed. Yet from my flesh, I shall see God." The book of Job was the first book of the Bible written. It contains enormous doctrinal understanding – the deep things of God in this book, left and right, and here is one of the greatest: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the second coming, He'll take His stand on the earth. And even after I have decayed physically (my skin is destroyed), yet from my flesh (in my flesh), I shall see God. I'm going to see the Lord Jesus Christ in my physical body." What's he talking about? He's talking about a redemption which applies to the future.

1. **The Rapture**

In adding to the doctrine of redemption: the full effects of redemption and experience await the day of the rapture. Ephesians 4:30 points that out – that the full effects of redemption comes when the church is caught up to meet Christ in the air: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you are sealed for the day of redemption." "The day of redemption" refers to the rapture of the church: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God;" that is: "Do not let the sin nature run your life, but say 'No' to sin. The Spirit of God has sealed you to a certain destiny which will be executed at the day of redemption, the day of the rapture."

1. **The Great Cost**

The doctrine of redemption emphasizes the great personal cost by which God purchased our salvation. Redemption is so valuable that, throughout the Scripture, we have a very strong emphasis upon the value of redemption by pointing to what it cost. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no sin (Jesus Christ) to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." It cost Jesus Christ the suffering and death on the cross. That's how important redemption is – that he would do that.

Then in Philippians 2:6-8, the importance of redemption is stressed again: "Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped." Jesus was very God of very God. He was deity. But He emptied Himself. He did not set aside His deity. He just set aside the appearance of His glory: "Taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men." He wasn't exactly like men, because He didn't have a sin nature. But He looked like a man, and He was a Man. And he had all the full features. He was 100% humanity, minus the sin nature: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross." Redemption is a great thing, but my goodness, it was costly. Salvation is free, but it cost Christ a great deal of suffering, not the least of which, as a sinless person, to have to have the garbage and the filth of mankind's sin poured out upon Him.

1. **Animal Sacrifices in the Old Testament**

Finally, the last principle of the doctrine of redemption: The doctrine of redemption was portrayed in the Old Testament by the animal sacrifices. Hebrews 9:22: "And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." Redemption brings forgiveness. You cannot have redemption without the payment of death for sin. So, the basis of redemption is the death of an innocent substitute. And this was portrayed, very effectively, in the Old Testament, every time they sacrificed an animal. They kept coming back to the great word "redemption; redemption; redemption:" "How we love to proclaim it." A new year – that's the message.

God, our Father, we thank You for once more of the time in the Word of God that keeps us oriented to who we are; what our real capacities are; what our real frailties are; and, how good it is to forget the crowd, and to forget those about us who are all swirling in Satan's disorientation, and to say, "I'm with that little gang of believers (those pilgrims – those strangers) who walk alone, and who walk with Jesus Christ. Therefore, they have everyone that is worth walking with.

We pray, our Father, that we'll have a new sense of appreciation for the doctrine of redemption, and for all the implications that that has, for us to be able to rise as noble human beings. Our society is filled with people who are portrayed in the news regularly. We look at them at the grocery store and newsstands as we check out, and there these horrible human beings, without redemption, are classic examples of what it is to be a slave of Satan. Help us to remember that we are above that if we choose to stay in the Word of God; be obedient to the principles of doctrine; and, above all, to walk with You in temporal fellowship, keeping our sins confessed (removed), and making things right. Here is a new year. May our redemption have a new expression. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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