***Freedom

Colossians 1:4-9

COL-108***

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

1 Corinthians 2:9: "Just as it is written, things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and that which has not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him."

1 Corinthians 2:10: "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."

1 Corinthians 2:14-16: "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual discerns all things. Yet he himself is discerned by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him. But we have the mind of Christ."

Philippians 2:15-16: "That you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the Word of life, so that in the day of Christ, I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."

Matthew 4:4: "But Jesus answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.''"

Please open the Word of God once more to Colossians 1:9-14. Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," segment number 42.

**Redemption**

Colossians 1:14 reads: "In whom (in Christ) we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:14 names two great divine provisions from the Lord Jesus Christ to those of us who are destined for the inheritance in heaven from God our Father. The first of these is redemption, which, as we have learned, means release from enslavement to the sin nature within us. This is secured by the payment by Jesus Christ on the cross of the divine penalty of death for sin. Therefore, Christ paid the ransom to secure the believer's release from Satan's control, and thus, redemption has been affected.

**Forgiveness**

The second thing that comes to us as our heavenly inheritance is forgiveness of sins. God's character determines what is right. God's character is what determines what is morally right and what is wrong – not the opinions of men, or the majority view of society. God's glory light is that which expresses His righteousness. The righteous standard of God is totally free of any evil. He is absolute moral perfection. All that violates the standard of what God is (the character of God) is sin. That is what is short of the glory of God – His absolute perfection.

Now, to go to heaven, one must have no conflict with that standard. He must not be in moral guilt in violation of the standard of the character of God in any way whatsoever. Having said that, it would seem immediately that nobody could possibly go to heaven, because what we have said is that you have to be as good as God himself to go to heaven. You have to be as good as Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was to go to heaven. And that's true. Since, by nature, man is already spiritually dead, he cannot pay the penalty of death required to remove his moral guilt in order to secure the forgiveness for sin that he needs to be able to be qualified for heaven.

So, there's only one answer, and that is that God Himself must cover the need to satisfy the demands of His own justice. He must cover it with the death of someone else who is qualified to die on our behalf, and that's what the God-Man Jesus Christ came to do. He has done that through this sinless Person Who has paid the price of spiritual and physical death in our behalf.

That brings us consequently to forgiveness. If you have redemption, you have been freed from Satan's control; from Satan's authority; from Satan's slave market; and, from the sin nature. Now you also, with that, have forgiveness of sins. That's why you're free.

**Separation**

So the second thing, in Colossians 1:14, that is our heavenly inheritance is forgiveness. The word "forgiveness" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It’s the word "aphesis" (af'-es-is): A P H E S I S. This word has a very distinct meaning. It means this everywhere that you find the word "forgive" or "forgiveness" in the New Testament. It consistently means this one, single, basic, core thing. It means "a sending away." It means "a separation." That's the basic thought behind forgiveness. And if you remember that, you'll find a great sense of relief when you are told that your sins have been forgiven you. This is the most powerful fact for us to understand, so that we have clearly in mind that salvation is a work of God, and it cannot be reversed. This word, "a sending away" – here, it refers to the penalty of eternal death or eternal separation from God. It is a sending away of our moral guilt. It connotes that sin guilt will never be faced again. If you are forgiven, and it means that your guilt is sent away, it means a permanent solution by God. He's the one who sent it away. Now, if you send away sin, that's different. We'll look at that in a moment. Human forgiveness is different than divine forgiveness. But when God forgives, He sends away the moral guilt, and it's a permanent solution. So, when the Scriptures speak about forgiveness, it is implying that tremendous fact.

For example, Psalm 103:12 shows the fact of separation: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." That is describing forgiveness.

Micah 7:19: "He will have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities underfoot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." What is that telling us? Separation. It is again describing forgiveness with its basic meaning of being removed from us.

The prophet Isaiah puts it this way in Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My Own sake. And I will not remember your sins." There again is the quality of separation. God removes it, and it's done with.

Isaiah 44:22 says, "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you." And there you see that forgiveness is conditioned upon redemption. If you haven't been freed from Satan because God's justice has been satisfied, you don't have forgiveness. But if you have been redeemed, now you have forgiveness.

One more: the prophet Jeremiah 31:34: "'And they shall not teach again each man his neighbor, and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord. 'For I will forgive their iniquities, and their sin I will remember no more."

In the new covenant with Israel, God says that there will come a time (which will be in the Millennial Kingdom) when there is not going to be anybody running around trying to tell somebody about God; trying to explain who God is; or, trying to teach about God. He's going to be on the throne in Jerusalem. Everybody's going to know about Him. Everybody will have nightly news information about the Savior Jesus Christ. The knowledge of God will be everywhere. There will be no looking for information. They will have it. And what God says He will do is that they will be told that their sins have been forgiven, and their iniquity will be remembered no more.

That is the basic meaning of forgiveness: separation. Does that mean that everybody goes to heaven because sins are forgiven, for this covers everybody. Just as redemption is for all mankind, so forgiveness is for all mankind. No. This is the positional possibility that God has provided. In comes the personal factor now of accepting this gift of God: to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

So, when Christ paid the penalty of death for human sin, and thereby secured mankind's redemption, the guilt of human sin was sent out of divine sight for all mankind. It has been separated from us.

**The Scapegoat**

This forgiveness of sin was symbolized in a very dramatic way in the Old Testament ceremony of the scapegoat. One of the ceremonies that Israel performed, once a year, as the nation would gather, for the high priest, on the great day of atonement, to cover symbolically the sins of all the people, as a whole, and as a nation, so that they would now be under, once more, another year, facing a new year under the favor of God, they would go through a ceremony. They would bring two goats together without blemish: two male perfect animals. And one of them would be slain in sacrifice, symbolizing the future death of the coming Savior for covering the sins in reality of the nation. Now they were doing it symbolically. And as we read a moment ago in Scripture, the Word of God said that God said, "I have redeemed you for My sake" – for His sake. Why has He done this? He said, "I'm going to provide eternal life for you. Now I have to keep My Word, and I am going to make a basis of redemption.

So first of all, don't think that God saved you because it's a good thing for you and me. That's true. But that wasn't His first motivation. His first motivation was to maintain the integrity of Himself. The justice of God is what is prime – His personal integrity. Therefore, He said, "I'll save you in the future, but until the Savior comes, it has to be on credit." Now it's done.

So, the scapegoat was saying, "In the future, all of this is going to be covered. That animal was slain. Then the priest would go through a ceremony where he would lay his hands upon the other goat, and he would place upon that goat all the sins of the people of that past year as a nation. And on the basis of the slain goat's promise of God's justice being satisfied eventually for the forgiveness of those sins, this scapegoat was sent out into the wilderness. And the people stood there and watched him wander off, out into the thickness of the brush, and finally out of sight, and he was never seen again; so as to symbolize that when God forgives, He separates you from your sin, on the basis of the blood of Christ. This was a very effective visual aid. And forgiveness was therefore clearly demonstrated to the understanding, from the youngest to the eldest Israelite. They knew what it meant to be forgiven. They had been separated from that horrible, cancerous quality spiritually upon them: their sins. As Israel never again saw the goat carrying their sins, so the Christian believer is never confronted by his sins once they have been forgiven. They are then out of God's sight. They are beyond any realm of dealing with in the divine consideration.

**Separation from Sin**

In Isaiah 38:17 and Micah 7:19, God says, "I put it behind my back. I'm never going to see it." He says, "I've thrown it in the deepest sea. It's never going to be seen." Forgiveness means separation. Separation specifically from what? Sin. That's the Greek word "hamartia" (ham-ar-tee'-ah), H A M A R T I A. "Hamartia" is one of the words for "sin" in the Bible.

**Missing the Mark**

This word means "missing the mark." This is what happens in Berean Youth club Summer camp at Lake Murray, when we go to archery class, and some kid stands up there, and he pulls those beautiful compound bows that we have with the pulleys, that are easy to pull back, and yet multiply the thrust considerably when the cord is released, and he aims for the bullseye, and he misses it. When he misses it, he has sinned. And all the kids who know something about doctrine say, "Oh, you sinned. You missed the bullseye. You 'hamartia.'" In fact, if you want to really be up there, you just say, "You just 'hamartia.' Did you realize that?" In fact, that will scare some kids. He thinks he's got a disease, but when he misses that bullseye, this is what this word means. You miss the mark. What's the mark? The standard of God's absolute righteousness.

Romans 3:23 uses this word in this way: "For all have sinned." All are guilty of the act of "hamartia." All have sinned. In what way? They've "fallen short of the glory of God." This is the mark for human conduct that is required by God's character for everyone. If you miss that standard in any way (you violate it) you're guilty of sinning.

So, this is what we are up against – to have this moral guilt of missing the mark of God's standard, by something we have thought or said or done, removed. The apostle Paul speaks about forgiveness in only two places in the New Testament. He speaks several places about the doctrine (the idea) of forgiving, but forgiveness, as such, is mentioned in only two places. One is right here, and here it is forgiveness of missing the mark. And I'll show you the other one: Ephesians 1:7, because that use a little different word. It says, "In Him we have redemption through the blood." And there again, you first see redemption (paying the price to free from the sin market) and then you get: "Forgiveness of our trespass according to the riches of His grace." Now you have forgiveness again. This is the other time that the word "forgiveness" is used by the apostle Paul, but this is a different one.

**A False Step**

It's interesting how the Word of God covers it all. This word looks like this. It's a long word. This word is "paraptoma" (par-ap'-to-mah): P A R A P T O M A. "Paraptoma" is another word for sin, but this is sin meaning "a false step." The other one was missing the standard of God's absolute righteousness. This one is taking a false step: going out of bounds. There are certain bounds that are proper for a Christian to walk in. He steps out of that, like the 10 commandments gives you all of those under the Jewish order. When you've step out of that, you have stepped out of bounds. And this is the problem. People who step out of bounds of the moral laws of God are now in a major problem with eternal life.

So, here again, Paul says in this verse, in Ephesians 1:7, "We have redemption through Him" – forgiveness for our "paraptoma," our stepping out of moral bounds beyond the boundaries that are the laws of God.

There are many other places where Paul actually stresses the concept of the forgiveness of sins in terms of salvation. Romans 4:7 speaks to that, as well as 2 Corinthians 5:19, Colossians 2:13, and Colossians 3:13. All these verses speak about God's forgiveness, which means "separation." Separation from what? Either missing the standard of God's absolute righteousness, or stepping out of bounds of the laws that God has laid down.

So, when Madonna tells us, as she did in the little news item recently, that she's going to have her little daughter read the Bible, but she will explain to her that these things were simply stories made up by people, and that they are not necessarily binding on us, and that that isn't the way it has to be, she's quite wrong. This is exactly what "paraptoma" means. Those laws (those guidelines – those parameters) have been laid down there by God, not by men. And to step across them is a very serious matter. That is the way it has to be.

Who would've thought a generation ago that people would've had the attitude toward marriage that they do today? I was listening to a radio program driving in the car, where they were discussing the attitudes of people toward God's moral laws. And it was absolutely shocking. They would say, "How many people think that it's okay to live together without being married? I thought, "Well, 5%. Oh, okay, maybe 10%." The real answer was 60%. Six out of 10 people that you associate with think that God is wrong, and they are right. They've revised the moral law of marriage, where someone who is your sister in Christ, as a fellow believer, becomes your wife in Christ – a totally different relationship and different boundaries that may be entered then.

So, this tells us where American society has come since the 1960s, with its sophistication of abandoning the fact the Bible is the way it has to be. That is the way it has to be. And anybody who steps outside of that, sooner or later, is going to pay a very grievous price. You may get away with it at the moment, but as life goes by, the bitter fruits are going to begin to pop out on the plant you've cultivated, and it's going to turn to ashes in your mouth.

How can you avoid that? By avoiding it like the plague. Avoid sitting in a church service where you listen to the gospel to see people come down the aisle to get saved, every service, where you're starving the Christian; or, where you're getting a lot of cutesy one-liners, or you're getting a lot of inspirational talk. That is deadly. And you can be the nicest person in the world, but you will go down. Our society is all against you morally, and it is only as you find strength with other Christians, who say that it is not weird, and it is not dumb to stand by the authority of the Word of God, that you yourself can be encouraged to hang in there with the truth.

**Emancipation**

So, we have had, Paul says, forgiveness as a consequence of our redemption: forgiveness of our sins, both as missing the mark of God's absolute righteousness, and as stepping outside of the boundaries of His moral laws. The chain of sin guilt binding the lost as slaves of Satan has thereby been permanently broken by the redemption which we have in Christ. This redemption payment has resulted in the forgiveness of sins for the believers in the Lord. The believer's moral guilt is removed. Therefore, he enjoys the forgiveness of his sins.

Redemption is this: it is emancipation from the curse of sin (Galatians 3:13), and emancipation from the enslavement to the sin nature (John 8:34, Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 7:23). And then it means the release of the full and irrevocable freedom of sins forgiven (John 8:36, Galatians 5:1). Redemption is the emancipation from the curse of sin. Galatians 3:13: "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.'" To be hung on a tree (to be hung on wood, literally) was a sign that you were under the curse of God. When Jesus hung on that wooden cross of the Roman Empire, He was viewed as being under the curse of God by the Jews. Christ redeemed us. He freed us from the curse of the Law. So, it is emancipation from the curse of the Law, which is the curse of sin.

It is also enslavement to the sin nature. Come over to the gospel of John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." Everyone who practices sin is a slave of that sin nature.

Romans 7:14: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am, of the flesh of the sin nature, sold into bondage in sin." This is the enslavement to sin.

1 Corinthians 7:23: "You were bought with a price. Do not become slaves of sin."

So, we go from being slaves of sin under the curse of the Law of God's moral code, that we are free from that enslavement to sin, so that we are now released to full and irrevocable freedom, with sins forgiven.

John 8:36: "If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

Then one more: Galatians 5:1: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Therefore keep standing firm, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery."

So there's the pattern: I'm a slave. God has provided redemption. I accept Christ as my Savior. That redemption kicks into official operation. I am now freed from Satan. I can say "No" to him. I'm no longer subject to him. I am no longer subject to my sin nature. And I'm released to the full freedom of being able to do the right thing – to live as one who sins are forgiven. I'm separated from my moral guilt.

Now there's a difference between human and divine forgiveness. And this is where people make a very grave mistake – why people go astray in thinking that they can handle sin on some kind of a ritual, or some kind of a human intellectual basis. Human forgiveness simply means the remission of a penalty which you deserve. The penalty is canceled out, but you're still as guilty as sin for the violation. On a human level, you have done it, and the moral guilt is there. But you're pardoned. But you're still as guilty as can be. That's how we do on a human level. We just forgive people.

However, what they've done has not been covered; has not been paid; has not been changed; and, has not been removed. It's all still there. But when it comes to divine forgiveness, that's not the way God can operate, because integrity is the key thing with Him. So, divine forgiveness means the payment of the penalty for the violation must come first. Then the moral guilt can be removed. God cannot forgive until the price for the sin has been paid. That price is death. The sin of a saved person does not cause him to lose his eternal salvation. Once you are saved (it's an act of God), you have been separated from your moral guilt. But when you do sin, because that sin nature is there, and you can let it take charge, then what you have done is stepped out of fellowship with the Father. You have not stepped out of salvation with Him. All your post-salvation sins are also covered by the death of Christ. So, God's justice is satisfying.

What you do lose is your fellowship with the Father in time so that the sin nature is back in control instead of the Holy Spirit. You restore that temporal fellowship by confession of known sins. That's why it is very important that you understand the very words of 1 John 1:9 upon which this concept is based – that your sins can be forgiven by an act of your personal confession. This has nothing to do with salvation, but it has everything to do with your being able to pray and get answers, and being able to have direction for your life. It is a very big problem for all of us Christians to stay focused on God's purpose for our life.

**Moses**

Just think what God had to do for Moses. Moses grew up in an elite society. He had all the material benefits. He had all the social prestige for 40 years of his life, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and as a potential member of the ruling class, perhaps even to become Pharaoh. And all of a sudden, while he is riding high in that realm, but nevertheless, deep in his soul is the knowledge of the Word of God, taught him by his mother. He executes an Egyptian for beating up on one of the slaves which he wasn't supposed to be doing. And the problem was that he was a Jew. And executing that Egyptian put him in the displeasure of the Pharaoh. So, he had a run.

Well, what did he do for 40 years? Tend sheep. Now how is that getting ready to be a big-time operator, to do something very big and something very significant? Here is God saying, "Moses, I have to get you out of your life. You have a life Moses, though I'll commend you that you chose not to go along with the pleasures of Egypt." The Bible tells us that. "You were a straight arrow, and you chose not to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto. But you are still not focused on your mission.

So, finally God collapses his life. So, when the Lord starts collapsing your life around you, and all of a sudden, you find that it's not as much fun being a Christian, and you're not there in the heat of the battle, and you're not there in the midst of the fellowship, and you're not there in all those activities for which the Christian community held you in such great esteem and value, you better take a look at whose life you're living – your life, that you somehow distorted into thinking is God's life. Get a life, and get the life of God. And that's what God said to Moses.

So, for another 40 years, he's tending sheep. By that time he didn't have a life. Now he was ready to really get a life. That was a hard way to do it. I guarantee you that it's a lot smarter to say: "There's only one thing that I'm taking my next breath for, and that is for God's mission, for my purpose, and my gifts, and me to live for Christ: "For me to live is Christ." Other than that, there's no purpose. And God is going to have His way.

So, Moses got a life. And that last 40 years of his life – what a magnificent performance of service to God he was. And interestingly enough, it showed up on him physically. For 120 years, the physical capacities were all there, fully operating, in top quality, and in top performance. When you are spiritually in the life in which you belong, you will find that it'll have great effect upon you physically as well.

So, temporal fellowship is a place where you have to be. And that confession is important. But here's what it says: "If we confess our sins." This is a third-class condition "if:" maybe you will; and, maybe you won't. But if you do confess (admit your sins – your 'hamartia:' missing the mark), He (God the Father, that you're out of step with) is faithful. He'll forgive you every time you admit it. And righteous – He's doing it because that sin has been covered." He's not winking at it. His integrity is intact: "To forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," because there are sins that you're not aware of, or that you have forgotten. When you confess those that you know, all are covered.

This is a simple fact. But when you talk about forgiveness, you have to have both sides. Forgiveness from God's point of view to separate me from my moral guilt. And then in my daily walk, forgiveness from my foolishness that restores me to His fellowship while I'm still in His family as His child. Both have been provided by God, and both are a separation.

That's why, when in temporal fellowship you are forgiven. Don't ever say something foolish like: "Here's some great problem in my life. Here's some great mix-up. Here's some great tragedy. And God is punishing me because of something I did here. No one else knows I did it. I'm the only one. But here God is punishing me. How dare you blaspheme God like that? Forgiveness is separation. And when God says, "If you confess it, I will forgive it; I'll put it behind my back; and, I'll forget it, it's in the deepest sea. Just like your moral guilt for your salvation is gone, so is the memory of your temporal break with Me." And that's how you should treat it. Don't go chain smoking – lighting one sin from another, because as soon as you confess, you're back into another one, because you're still remembering the one you confessed.

Human forgiveness is also guided by this principle of separation. Human forgiveness is to be extended to others because of the forgiveness which God, in His grace, has given to you and me as a believer. No matter what people may do to you, whether they really did something, or you're just imagining it, your response immediately is forgiveness, because that's what God has done to you.

Now, here's the principle. Matthew 18:32-33: "Then summoning him, his Lord said to him, 'This is the servant that was forgiven so much.'" And then he beat up on the others. He wouldn't forgive those who owed him. . . . "His Lord said to him, 'You wicked slave. I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?" What's he saying? Since you have been forgiven, where do you get off holding grudges against somebody? "Well, I'll forgive you, but I'll never forget it." Come on. That's not forgiveness. That's exactly what forgiveness means: separation. It's not even in your mind. You don't even think of it. So how much do you have against your husband; your wife; your friends; or your children, that's in the back of your mind that keeps popping up, and keeps popping up, and on some occasion you remember, instead of having hit the button that wipes the thing out of the computer of your memory.

Ephesians 4:32 puts it this way: "Be kind to one another; tenderhearted; forgiving each other, just as God and Christ also has forgiven you." When did He forgive you? Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. He forgave us when we certainly didn't deserve it. And it isn't something that we wait around for, and then forgive when we think a person merits that forgiveness.

So, Colossians 1:14 says that redemption and forgiveness are inseparable. Redemption is the basis for the forgiveness of sins. The redemption of Jesus Christ covers all mankind, but forgiveness of sins comes to those who believe in the gospel, and so who trust in Christ for salvation. That forgiveness is potential there like the redemption is. It is activated upon the acceptance of Christ as Savior.

Acts 10:43: "Of him (Christ) all the prophets bear witness that through His name (everyone who believes in Him) receives forgiveness of sins." And those are the only people.

In John 14:6, Jesus says, "I'm the Way, the Truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by Me." So, that's why the gate is small, and the road is narrow. And Jesus says of eternal life: "Few there be that find it," because the great religions of the world and the great denominations of the world miss it at the key point that Satan has deceived them. It is not focused upon believing in Christ and trusting Him because of what He did on the cross to take you into heaven. It is adding something to it, and thus spoiling the grace basis. Or it is making a whole works system that has nothing to do with what Christ has done on the cross except in a very peripheral way. The redemption covers all mankind. Forgiveness covers all mankind, activated by an act of faith in Christ.

Where are the unbelievers? They are left unforgiven, under the wrath of God, as part of the redeemed, forgiven unsaved who choose to be condemned to the lake of fire. That is a horrendous thought – to have been covered with redemption, and covered with forgiveness, and then to choose to suffer for yourself in the lake of fire.

John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged. He who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only Begotten Son of God."

John 3:36. "He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in him."

I stress these two verses to you because believing is often treated in a contemptible way, even by prominent evangelists. Somehow, people think that just because you say "believe," that that means that it will not be genuine. The truth of the matter is that the Bible makes it clear that you are either believing something that God has said, concerning how He provides salvation, or you're not believing it. Now, no one here (or anyplace else) is so dumb that they can't figure out and understand what it means to believe something, or what it doesn't mean to believe something. You know when you believe something, and you know when you don't believe something. And that is the issue: believing God; or, not believing God.

And the reason for this is that the Scriptures make it clear that here is the problem. 1 John 5:9: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For the witness of God is this: that He has born witness concerning His Son." God said, "I've told you what you need to know about Jesus Christ, relative to your eternal destiny."

1 John 5:10, "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself. The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has born concerning His Son." God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, My Son, and you'll be saved." You say, "No. I have to do some works. I have to deserve it. We Mormons have to prove that we're worthy of it, and then we will have something." No. God says, Believe Me. I'm telling you that I have taken care of My integrity. I can take you to heaven, but I have to do it on the basis of a gift that you accept from Me."

1 John 5:11-12 says that the witness is this: "That God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God, does not have life." So there it is. You either believe God, or you call Him a liar, by refusing to be saved by faith.

Now, the price of redemption has been paid by the death of Jesus Christ. That resulted in the forgiveness of sins to those who believe. And this is what we are portraying in the Lord's Supper. Every time we gather, what is it that this visual aid is portraying? It is portraying this doctrine of forgiveness as a result of our redemption. It is portraying our separation from moral guilt.

Matthew 26:26-28: "And while they were eating," in the upper room, at the moment of the Last Supper, "Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take. This is my body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" That's what it's all about. Every time we eat that bread, and we drink that juice, it is to remind ourselves of the forgiveness of our sins.

Now, I hope after this morning, you'll have no doubt that you know that the word "forgiveness" means enormous, Grand Canyon separation. It is a total break between you and your evil, whether in the form of sins or human good. It's gone, and God has removed it.

So, when a believing sinner is transferred by God out of the authority of Satan's darkness into the kingdom of the light of Jesus Christ, it is because he has been redeemed from Satan's slave market, and the sins which enslaved him have been forgiven, so that they're removed from him, so that there is no moral guilt, because there is no more penalty left to be paid. How can you have moral guilt if there's no penalty to be paid? There's nothing that needs to be paid for. The forgiveness of sins is based on the ransom of His blood, which He paid in that redemption. And we've looked at that several times (Ephesians 1:7, Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45). It is His death that paid the price.

For three hours (Matthew 27:46), Jesus died on the cross spiritually, separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, "Crying out, 'My God, My God" – He's addressing each one of Them separately, "Why have You forsaken Me?" Then, finally he paid the ultimate price, and died physically, to complete the sacrifice for the payment of sins. It was at that moment, the Scriptures tell us, that God's finger, as it were, ripped the curtain that shielded the Holy place from the Holy of Holies in the temple – the place that the high priest could only go once a year behind that curtain. That curtain was shredded from top to bottom, and thrown open. And there, before everybody's eyes, was that box, the mercy seat, which held into those sacred objects from the past of their history. And there were those two angels, one solid piece of gold (cherubim angles – the highest class angels bowed before, looking down upon the top of that mercy seat where the blood was sprinkled so that God could be merciful. What does that mean? Propitious. God could be satisfied. It was at the moment of His physical death that the payment was complete, and at that point, it was signaled from heaven by the shredding of that curtain.

So, this forgiveness is a done deal. It is what God has done for us, based entirely upon what Christ has done. He redeemed us, and the result now is that we have been forgiven. Redemption has freed us from Satan's power. It has freed us from being slaves of the sin nature. We don't have to live like dogs. We can live like the royalty that we are. But as we see by looking around at royal families on earth, at the present time in history, we see how royalty can live like dogs. Yes, you can do that if you want to as a Christian. But you don't have to. You have the freedom. And you have now the privilege of being able to lay on your bed at night with perfect peace, knowing that all of your moral guilt has been separated from you: forgiveness – completely gone. That's it.

Now, that's the negative side of salvation. That now brings us to one other factor that we must be sure that you understand. There is a positive side to salvation as well. Forgiveness is critical. That separation clears the deck for something else to be brought in that now clenches the deal of your relationship to God.

Now, how many people know that? How many people have the understanding of what redemption is? How many can sing the verse of the song we sang this morning: "Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it." The average church member doesn't have a foggiest notion. You can go up to him and say, what does "redemption" mean? He might say, "Oh, well, it means God has done something for us. He's done nice things for us. He is our Redeemer." But they'll never say, "It means 'freedom.' I'm free. Thank God, I'm free at last. I don't have to be a slave of sin." What does it mean? It means that I can walk in the freedoms of Christ.

Well, what is forgiveness? It means that there's nothing on me anymore. All of those horrible corruptions of sin that hung on me, they're all gone, and all removed. When my Father in heaven looks at me, He sees the beauty of Jesus. I'm in His perfection.

However, then there's one other factor that has to be added, and that is the positive side of salvation, and you have to have both of these. It's like love and marriage, or horse and courage – you can't have one without the other. Please join us next time, and we'll go into those – into that final factor.

Father, we thank You for this, Your Word.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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