***Justification

Colossians 1:4-9

COL-109***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Peter 1:19-21: "And so we have a prophetic Word made more sure, to which we do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. But know this, first of all: that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

1 Corinthians 3:19-21: "For the wisdom of this world's foolishness before God. For it is written, 'He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness." And again, 'the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise that they are useless.' For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."

Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

2 Timothy 3:13-15: "But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned, and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that lead to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

1 Peter 2:1-3: "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile, all hypocrisy and envy, and all slander, like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, since you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

Our subject this morning is "Prayer for the Colossians," segment number 43 in Colossians 1:9-14.

**Redemption**

We have been learning the deep truths of God the Holy Spirit relative to two fundamental doctrines: the doctrine of redemption; and, the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins in Colossians 1. Redemption, we have learned is the glorious reality of the believer in Jesus Christ being freed from Satan's control, and the domination of his sin nature. The keyword there is "freedom."

**Forgiveness**

Forgiveness, on the other hand, is the permanent, total separation of the believer from his moral guilt for his sin. The keyword there is "separation." Both of these divine acts of freedom and separation from sin are part of the Christian's heavenly inheritance provided by God the Father through the death of Jesus Christ, God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. I hope you have a renewed and a great appreciation for what it means to be redeemed: freedom. This is not only freedom from doing wrong, but freedom to do what is right. This is not only freedom from that which is going to be so end injurious to you in your life, but also freedom to do that which is going to be such a great blessing. And that forgiveness means that you have been separated by an act of God from all of your moral guilt. Therefore, you stand now as good as Jesus Christ in terms of your absolute righteous perfection, and thus you are fully qualified for heaven. This should be both humbling, and a sense of great relief to you that you know these things.

A lady called in on a radio counseling show conducted by a woman psychologist. The caller said that she had three children under five years of age; worked a full-time job; and, came home to her house chores. Her problem, she said, was that she was finding herself so exhausted, especially when the children were restless enough at night, that she had no energy for her husband. For some reason, that came as no surprise to me. And she said that it was affecting their marriage. And *that* came as no surprise to me. With three children under five years of age, and a full-time job, she was coming home, and then she had no energy for her husband. All day long, she said, these three children were in a daycare center until she dragged herself there after work to pick them up. She had a short time to spend with them after supper, before going to bed early enough so they could get up early enough in the morning to get back to the daycare center. The lady indicated that they had no financial problems or shortages that necessitated her employment.

The woman counselor now had an opportunity to come in to say: what? Would you have said? I'm sure that a number of you have zeroed in immediately on what the problem is; what the solution is; and, what to do about it, from a biblical frame of reference. But the woman counselor, unfortunately, was a Freudian feminist. And she didn't go to the obvious rational solution, let alone a biblical doctrinal solution of telling the lady: "Quit your job. Stay home with these precious gifts from God: your children."

Now, there is another lady psychologist called Dr. Laura Schlesinger. She's an Episcopalian, and it amazes me how well-versed she is in Scripture. And I know that if this had been Dr. Schlesinger talking to this woman, she wouldn't have let her get beyond: "I have three children under five, and I work a full-time job." I've heard Dr. Schlesinger say, "That's it. Stop. Wait a minute." She would have gone right for the juggler vein, and told her, "Get out of the workplace. How dare you have three children under five, and you're running around out there earning money."

Unfortunately, what this lady needed to be told, to begin with, was that she needed to be alerted (informed) of 1 Timothy 5:14, which says, "Therefore, I want younger widows to get married; bear children; keep house; and, give the enemy no occasion for reproach. For some have already turned aside to follow Satan" instead of following God's order.

This poor lady needed to be directed to Titus 2:4-5: "The older women, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands; to love their children; and, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be dishonored." But our society has said that this is Paul's opinion. The guy was a chauvinist (which is an honorable thing to do). A chauvinist is a man who says that it is a great honor to bear the spiritual responsibilities of a man, and I am man enough to carry those responsibilities without apology. And the world says, "No, she shouldn't be a worker at home. She should be a worker at IBM. She should have a career someplace. That's what she should be. What is this crazy stuff of being a worker at home? She should be out there where the action is – somebody great and famous, that titillates the emotions, and gives her a sense of worth.

Well, the counselor instead advised this poor mother to hire people to do her house chores. After all, she's making all this money. She might as well use it on something. Hire somebody do these house chores. She said, "And periodically, why don't you meet your husband after work, and have somebody care for the children a little longer? Go out and have dinner together, and then you can come home and have all that out of the way before you fall asleep, to get ready for the next day's work. It's not much fun to have a wife who keeps falling asleep.

This is a pure Freudian feminism. And I'm sitting there, trying to concentrate on the road, listening to this, wishing that I had this lady's phone number or address. As I listened to the discussion, I realized that this poor mother needed redemption. She needed freedom – freedom from the feminist satanic proposition that a woman has no fulfillment, or worth, or meaning unless she has a career outside the home. She obviously had the idea that the emancipated woman with three under-five children has a job; she is a slave to some man; she is inferior; and, she is unfulfilled. Have you noticed how often this same concept is subtly interjected in television advertisements where it is presented as being normal and sophisticated for the feminist woman to do a balancing act between a job and trying to care for children that she has to take to the daycare center? And if they would buy their product that they're advertising, it would be easier for her to make that balancing act work out. Instead, this woman was, in fact, enslaved to her sin nature disorientation of her role as a woman, and the need of a job in the marketplace.

The doctrine of redemption is a marvelous truth. And if you begin to think about this, and the meaning of freedom from your sin nature, that means freedom from all the disorientation that the world is cranking out, in all of its various news media against us. It is freedom that you don't eat up that stuff. It is freedom that your mind grasps what is the mind of Christ, and that's what you act upon.

Now, this is not only for women. This is important for you men as well. This woman had no divine viewpoint orientation in the terms of a husband – to someone who was going to care for her, and to guide her with doctoral principles, so the result was that life was just a misery for her. But if this man was oriented to the Word of God, he'd have 1 Timothy 5:8, for example, has a point of guidance: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." He sells his wife to an employer to get something, instead of doing without that something, and enjoying each other.

I've been making a list. Every now and then I hear some man saying, "My wife works because. . ." Sometimes I can't do it in front of them, but in my mind, I make a record. And I have yet to hear one answer that'll stand up in the throne room of heaven. Usually it's because, in order to have something that other people have, we'd have to do without. Okay. The Bible says do without. Maybe farther down the line, things will work out, and you can go with it. Redemption – freedom from doing it the world's way. I think it's worth thinking about.

As I listen to this poor lady, I can imagine what she must go through every day. And every day, somebody down in some daycare center is influencing and rearing those three small children. Is that right?

Redemption by God frees us from Satan's control. The sin nature's sinful lust includes covetousness, for one thing, which sees what others have, and wants an ostentatious lifestyle. Boy do people like to put on an ostentatious lifestyle.

1 John 2:16 gives us the great summary of these three, "For all it is in the world," the apostle John says, "the lust of the flesh; the lust of the sin nature; the lust of the eyes; the greed to have what others have; the principle of covetousness; and, the boastful pride of life, putting on an ostentatious life is not from the Father, but is from the world."

So, quick being drawn in (sucked in) to this stupidity of the world's system with its basic concept of indulging the lust patterns of the sin nature: the lusts of the eyes; and, the covetousness of what other people have, and then putting on the front so that people can see that you're a significant person. Even in humility, people will notice that you're significant person.

I inherited by gift a 1961 Chevrolet Impala from a brother-in-law many years ago. And I would drive around with it periodically because it was fun. It got banged up by people in close association with me, that I'll not mention, so that I had to go to the wrecking yard and buy a fender. The car was tan in color, and the fender was blue. Then another one of my associates bunged up a door, and when I got the door, it was another color. Then there were a couple of pieces on the back I had to get, and they were other colors. I drove up into a gas station one day, in the days when the attendants would fill the tank, and a guy came out and started filling the tank. And he says, "I sure like the color style of your car." So, right away, I had an esteem. Right away I was somebody. However, I noticed that when I drove into the bank to cash a check, I would sit there for about 30 minutes. Once they looked at that car, they went all the way up to the records of the Marine Corps on file to check this all out before they would cash my check. But these outside symbols can fool you. And the world doesn't really think of you as significant.

The Bible says that's nonsense to focus your family (to twist it up) in that way. Redemption frees us from all of these things. It's freedom to do what is right as well as what not to do. How much better for a woman to be able to live by the guidelines of doctrine, than a passing, stupid deceit of Satan's world society of feminism.

1 John 2:17 says, "The world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever." That woman is not doing the will of God with three children under five in a daycare center. And those children are passing on, and they'll be gone, and that part of her life will be a total waste. What she is doing will not abide forever, but if she sat and lived her life, and grew up with those children, spending time with them, this would have some enormous impact such that she'd be so happy when she stood at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is Hollywood that glamorizes anti-biblical views of women, which even some Christian women cannot resist (except in their heart of hearts, they know that that's not the way it should be).

I have a little article here I want to read. Please listen carefully. It's from the January 22nd, 1997, issue of the "Conservative Chronicle," written by Don Feder. The topic is "Hollywood Hasn't a Clue What Women Want." And yet Hollywood is the great image-maker that propels women to do what they do, and propels that poor woman with those three children. It says (January 8th): "Don't you just love musicals about fascist babes who sleep their way to the top. It isn't the only dumbness in the movies these days. In "One Fine Day," Hollywood delivers a favorite message. Men are attracted to women who are men. The film which should have been titled "Love with a Proper Cell Phone" has protagonists who are divorced parents. She, played by Michelle Pfeiffer, of a boy; he (George Clooney) has a girl. By the way, have you ever noticed the number of characters in 1990s films who are divorced? Hollywood assumes that everyone is or should be, except successful men who leave their wives for younger women, in which case, they deserve to suffer prodigiously, ala, "The First Wives Club."

Back to the Pfeiffer film: both children are five; unbearably cute; and, inmates of the same Montessori school. The children miss a field trip, and mom and dad spend a day schlepping them around New York as they do their career thing. He's a newspaper columnist (unlikely work for a romantic lead) who's going to lose his job unless he can substantiate allegations of corruption against the mayor. She's an architect who has to make a big presentation to important clients that involve building an office complex. Her future depends on the outcome.

Pfeiffer and Clooney spend 90 minutes tearing around Manhattan in cabs; talking practically on their cellular phones; and, snaring, when they aren't sniffing at each other. Oh, and showing us how much they love their kids, but not enough to stay married, or not park them in glorified yuppy daycare. Hollywood has decreed at the busy, confident (even if slightly frazzled), career woman of the nineties, and, of a right, ought to be, highly prized by men. The more aggressive, independent, and tough she is, the more men are supposed to desire her, since, according to feminist gospel, what men really want in a partner is themselves – masculine attitudes and behavior with feminine accessories. Grace, charm, and gentleness are passé."

Now against that, here's a Harris poll. The article goes on to say that: "In a 1995 Louis Harris and Associates poll of women, respondents were asked: "If you had enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like, would you choose housework; part-time employment; volunteer work; or, a career? A resounding 85% picked non-career options. And only 15% wanted full-time employment outside the home." Increasingly, it's becoming clear that women in their heart of hearts know that God's way is the right way. It's the best way. It's the way they really want to go. For whatever reason they don't, they still know that what they're doing, if by necessity even, is not the best way.

**Proverbs 31:10-31 – An Excellent Wife**

Compare this to the poor woman with God's portrait of his ideal woman in Proverbs 31:10-31. How often this should be read, and I'm going to take the time to do it now: "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, not evil, all the days of her life. She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. She is like merchant ships. She brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it. From the earnings, she plants a vineyard. She guard's herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She senses that her gain is good. Her lamp does not go out at night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, and she stretches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself. Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future. She opens her mouth in wisdom. And her teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and bless her. Her husband also, and he praises her, saying, 'Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.' Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands and let her work praise her in the gates." That is hardly the feminist mystique.

Redemption for a Christian parent has a special kind of freedom because it enables you to live with your children. The most valuable quality a child has from a parent, never forget, is the time of their lives together as they grow up. The Bible is replete with statement after statement that nobody has a child except by an act of divine grace.

Psalm 113:9: "He makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord."

Psalm 127:3: "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward."

Mark 10:13-16, "And they were bringing children to Jesus so that He might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant, and said to them, 'Permit the children to come to Me. Do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter into it at all.' And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them:" "Do not hinder the children from coming to Me."

Is it possible that what that poor woman is doing is hindering her children from coming to Christ? Let's suppose she's a Christian woman, and she has them down at the daycare center. Is she violating this serious, serious principle?

Ephesians 6:4, "You fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Oh boy: "discipline." That word, which means "training." That means fathers telling their kids what they're going to do; how they're going to live; where they're going to go; when they can drive; when they can't drive; telling them how they will spend their time; and, telling them when they can touch the television set, and when they cannot. Discipline and instruction in the Lord.

Then also Mark 9:42: "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believes to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea." Now, that's pretty strong language. Is it possible that this poor woman is a candidate for having a millstone around her neck because she's causing these little ones to stumble in the influences of the ungodly world system that are coming to them? I think so. What is running out for her is time.

Now listen carefully. Charlie Reese published in the "Conservative Chronicle," January 1st, 1997, an article that is so perceptive. I want you to listen to it. It's entitled, "Time is our Children's Best Gift." December 23rd: "One of the best gifts parents can give their children isn't on sale, and can't be found in stores. Yet it is the most precious thing any human being can have. It's time. To a child, time equals love. And children want the love of their parents more than anything, especially during the formative years from birth to seven.

"A friend of mine once taught American history at an expensive private school to sixth-graders. One day, during a discussion of the Great Depression, she was startled when one of the children said he hoped the United States would have another depression. Several piped up in agreement. When she probed the children with questions, she found out why. At the time, "The Waltons," a series about a depression era family was on network television. 'If we had a depression,' the kid said, then perhaps our parents would spend more time with us, like they do on “The Waltons.” It turned out that most of these children from affluent families had every toy and gewgaw and gadget you could imagine. But their parents were busy people, making all that money, and doing all their community chores, I suppose, and didn't have much time for the children. Money and the stuff it can buy, however, are not a substitute for time. Children seem to understand intuitively the true nature of time.

"Searching my memory of Christmas's past, I cannot remember any particular gift. But I have vivid memories of going with my father to a forest to find and cut a Christmas tree. The stuff under all those trees is forgotten, but the time spent with family remains. Time is God's currency. One way to think of it is that when we are born, God opens an account for us, and credits us with a finite amount of time. We rarely know the account balance."

What a perceptive statement that is. God gives us a certain account of time. Now, you've heard us say this in a different way. God gives you a box every day: a box with so much emotion; so much intellectual capacity; so much time; and, so much material things. And when that box is shot, it's gone. Here it is. You never know how much is left in the balance. Will a child die? Will a child go its own way against good wisdom, or because he's neglected? Will you be taken off the scene? How we spend this time determines our life. We are free to spend it as we please, but there are no refunds; no exchanges; and, no second chances. Once an hour of life has gone, it is gone forever. If we decide later that what we spent our hour on isn't worth it, it's too late. The phrase "a wasted life" can be all too accurate."

For a moment, what does the Bible say? Matthew 16:26: "What should it profit man (a Christian man) if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own life." He could waste his life in terms of the potential at the Judgment Seat of Christ? What have you gained? And please don't miss this perceptive thing. This, once it's spent, it's gone forever. And when you decide later, it's too late.

Are you still running around saying, "Someday, I'm going to do this for God? When this happens, I'm going to do this for God. When things come into line here, I'll going to do this for God." In God's name, when are you going to stop doing that, and realize that redemption has freed you to do it now, not someplace down the line when things line up? Forget about that. This is your moment in time. That's not only true with children, but it's with everything.

[continuing] "Since time is so valuable, you can tell a lot about a person's values and priorities by watching how they spend their time. All human beings have the same 24-hour day, so they have to make choices. And it is out of these choices that we construct our lives. So, time equals life, equals love. It's hard to convince children with whom you spend no time that you love them.

I know many of us are not completely free in determining how we spend our time. We have to work. We get encumbered with obligations. But even if we are free only at the margins of our days, we ought to think carefully how we spend those hours. We ought to think carefully before undertaking obligations. We ought to think carefully about the expenditure of time in making all our decisions, including what kinds of work we choose." That is a very perceptive statement. There are so many Christians in agony because they're hanging on to obligations that the Scripture says, "Let the dead bury the dead. And you get on into God's work. Then you'll have time. Then you'll have energy. Then you'll have capacity. Then you'll have orientation. Then you'll begin to be able to get ready and to do it.

The article continues: "Other people will spend our lives for their own purposes if we let them. They will enlist or recruit us to accomplish their objectives. That's how the world works. They're not bad people because they do that. It's up to us to decide when someone asks us for our time, which is our life, if it is worth the expenditure.

"I had a colleague once who came to work promptly on time, and left just as promptly. He refused to stay longer because it took time away from his family. And to him, family was more important than the job. It cost him a promotion, but he didn't care. I chose not to play golf because I wasn't willing to spend five to eight hours away from my children on the weekends when they were young. Like everyone else, there are some expenditures of time I regret. But I do not regret one minute I spent with my children. Frankly, I've never found any company I prefer more than theirs. It pays to remember that we do not know how much time is left in our account. It pays to remember that we do not know how much time is left in our account. We do know that the amount is continuously decreasing, and that the account inevitably will be closed. Spend time wisely, and have a joyous Christmas."

It takes time to protect your children from the world's evil devices and from their worldly peers. Babysitters cannot be paid to do this. And yet, I'm amazed at how often parents, especially of teenagers, do not tell those children what they will participate in, in church activities, and what they will not participate in world activities. They just let the kids drift along. And don't give me that sorry excuse that I get that you're trying to teach your children responsibility. Do you know how you teach a person responsibility? By making them do right. By making them do what they should do. By knuckling under to be responsible to the duties that are before them; to what they have committed themselves to; and, to what is the God-given mission of their life? That's how people learn responsibility. They learn it because they get into the frame of mind of doing what is right, and carrying the burden that they should. Do not pretend that you are training your children for adult responsibility by letting them decide for themselves. You are guilty, if you do that, of failing to spend time with them – the time that it takes, and the trouble that they need, for you to keep them on track. That's how you learn responsibility – when somebody keeps you on track.

So, let's do what is right, which Christ has freed us to do. That's the great doctrine of redemption. And I would say to you kids: "Ask your parents to make you act with wisdom – the wisdom of God; and, to do what is right in His service. You might have to nudge your parents, and to say, "I need you to be jerking me up, and pulling on my chain, and getting me gently back there on track where I should be, and where I need to be. Sometimes, the children have to have the wisdom to lead the way.

**Forgiveness**

With redemption freedom, there's another great factor, and that is forgiveness of sins freedom. Freedom from Satan results in freedom from moral guilt for our sins. And there's a great companion now to forgiveness – to be separated from your moral guilt for your sins. Forgiveness of sins is based on the ransom of the blood of Jesus Christ paid in redemption. And I stress again that, in human realms, you forgive by just forgetting what people do. You don't make them pay for it. But that is not the way in the work of God.

Ephesians 1:7, "In Him (Christ), we have redemption (freedom) through His blood (consequently, separation), forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace." We have forgiveness because the penalty of death was paid. God doesn't just ignore it and forget it.

In Matthew 20:28, Jesus says, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." It cost 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."

**Justification**

Then we have that great summation in Romans 3:24-25 of the basis of forgiveness: "Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." And there justification is now connected as the companion of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the negative factor of salvation – separated from your moral guilt. But the positive which is equally necessary is being declared absolute righteousness – having imputed to you the righteousness of Christ Himself. And that's what justified means – to have absolute righteousness as a gift from His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (a satisfaction) in His blood through faith. Satisfaction to what? To the justice of God that says, "I can't give you forgiveness until the death penalty is paid." His righteousness – because, in the forbearance of God, He passed over sins previously committed.

Now, the enormous price that this is, is something that God tries to stress – that what it costs Christ is so enormous that we get used to it, and we pass it off lightly. And when we do that, we pass everything else off lightly in terms of our human relationships, not the least of which, we've been talking about this morning, are our children.

Let me show you. The Bible keeps referring to what Christ has done with a great spirit of soberness. Who is going to come into the kingdom of God? Who is going to rule in the Millennial Kingdom in authority? 1 Corinthians 6:10 speaks about Christians: "Who are thieves; who are covetous; who are drunkards; who are revilers; and, who are swindlers. These shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This is not salvation. This is a type of Christian who is not going to have a position of authority in the Kingdom, because they treat, by their lifestyle, with such contempt what it cost Christ to give them redemption – that freedom.

1 Corinthians 7:2: "You were bought with a price. Do not become slaves of men." You were bought with a price. You're saved by the blood of Christ. Why would you become slaves of the world system with its concepts and its beliefs? Why would a woman want to be a feminist disoriented character instead of a beauty of God's creation? The enormous price paid by Jesus Christ is treated with great concern and value in Scripture.

**Adoption**

Galatians 4:5: "In order that He might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." What has He done for us? He has brought us into the family as adult sons. That's what "adoption" means in the Scriptures. It doesn't mean that you're taken into God's family, though that does happen at salvation. What this means is that you're taken in with all the privileges of an adult son. You're no longer a kid. You have all the right appertaining to that position.

In Psalm 49:8, the psalmist says, "For the redemption of the soul is costly" – the very life of Jesus Christ.

In John 1:29, we have the dignity of the redemption provided by Christ: "The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him (John the Baptist). And he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." He died as a Lamb with all the suffering for our sins.

Then there's John 3:17: "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him." The terrible price of the salvation for which He came into the world to provide, and for which we are indebted to Him. How can we live like dogs when we have been treated like kings?

1 Peter 1:18-19: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and 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 dignity placed upon the sacrifice of death in our behalf. And it is not easy for any of us not to live the way our parents did – not to follow their shortcomings, but to imitate their values – their godly biblical values. You simply look upon your parents where they missed the boat. You said, "They were out of it, but I'm in it, because I know the principles of doctrine." And you go with the Word.

Revelation 5:9: "They sang a new song, saying, 'You are worthy 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, tongue, and people, and nation.'"

Revelation 5:12: "Saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.'"

So, there's great dignity in Scripture, as you see, placed upon what Christ has done for us, and we cannot treat it with anything less. That's why we don't want to follow the patterns of the world. That's why we want to be people who are aware of the time that we've been given, and we will not give it to the world system. We'll give it to the God to whom it belongs.

Forgiveness of sins implies a pre-act of God's grace based on the redemption secured by the payment of an appropriate price for our sin guilt. And that's what Christ has done. God chooses to appease His On justice, and His own demands against the moral guilt of all of us, and only He could do it in a way which is compatible with His absolute righteousness, and to satisfy His justice.

So, the wonderful thing to have forgiveness of sin separation is that out of that now comes justification – our absolute righteousness. Now we're as good as God. So, stop telling us that you're going to do something in the future when something happens, because God's not waiting to meet our needs someday down the line. It is because He's not preoccupying Himself with things of Satan. But God is preoccupying Himself with the things of His own righteousness, and with the things of His Own family – we, the royal family of God.

Justification is related to the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of the believer's sins is the negative aspect. That's remove of our moral guilt. Justification of the believer is the positive aspect of salvation. It is the imputation of God's absolute righteousness to our credit. The sinner, by faith in Jesus Christ, activates his potential redemption. God then forgives his sins, and justifies him by imputing absolute righteousness to his account. That's the system. The sinner hears the gospel; he believes it; and, he activates his potential redemption. Then, with that redemption, God forgives him his sins, and when his sins are forgiven, God gives him absolute righteousness. The sin issue, therefore, is resolved by redemption of Jesus Christ.

So, don't go preaching to people: "Stop your drinking, and carousing, and womanizing, and all that. That has nothing to do with your eternal relation to God, and being in His heaven. All those things have to do with the Christian life. The only issue relative to separation from God for all eternity is whether you're going to trust Him to save you through Jesus Christ: trust in Christ – believing that or not. Faith alone in Christ secures forgiveness for sins, and then that brings the imputation of absolute righteousness, and thus we are justified.

So, the combination makes salvation irrevocable. Because you trust in Jesus Christ, His provision is perfect. You have received redemption. You're freed from Satan's authority and from the control of your sin nature. You now have forgiveness of sins. And because your sins are forgiven, you are now qualified to have imputed to your account the absolute righteousness of Christ. Now you have permanent redemption and permanent freedom. So let's live accordingly.

Thank you, our God, for this, Your Word, and we pray that You would help us to bring together in a very practical way the application of this, Your truth. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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