

“Redeemed to Be Holy”—1 Peter 1:17-19

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Redeemed to Be Holy”, is 1 Peter 1:17-19 → *And if you call on Him as Father Who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

The story is told of a boy who built a ship. He took meticulous care in making sure the details of his ship were just as he wanted them. After months of creative work the moment came when it was time to test his ship on the waters.

He took his ship to the nearby lake and placed it in the water as he waded alongside of it, trying to make sure it didn’t get too far from his reach. While basking with joy and pride in his creation a strong wind suddenly came up, driving his ship out into deeper water. He tried to

grab it but the wind was so strong that it pushed his ship farther and farther out until he could no longer see it. In tears he started to comb the shoreline but a huge squall was developing and he had to put off his search until another time.

The next day he spent hours walking the shoreline hoping to find his special creation to no avail. It was lost. Heartbroken he went home with a longing for being reunited with his ship. Throughout the next couple of months he would return to the lake periodically, searching and waiting for his ship to come back to him.

One day he walk by the pawn shop downtown and happened to see his ship in the window. Filled with joy at the sight of his creation he ran into the shop and said to the clerk, "My ship is in the window! I built that ship and lost it a few months ago. Where did you find it?" After explaining to the boy that someone pawned it a few weeks ago the boy asked, "Can I have it back? It's actually mine."

"If you pay the price on the tag you can have it back," replied the clerk.

"But I made that ship! It's mine!"

After fruitless efforts to obtain his creation, the boy, determined as ever, did whatever he could to earn money to buy his boat back from the pawn shop. After working for weeks, scraping enough money together for the purchase price, he ran into the pawn shop, dumped his money

on the counter and asked for his ship. After acquiring his special creation he walked out of the pawn shop and said, “Now you’re mine over twice. First, I created you. Then, I bought you back.”

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (cf. Genesis 1:1) Only one part of all His creation was created to live in a unique relationship with Himself—humans—you. Of all His creating activity only of humans does He say in Genesis 1:26-27 → “*Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, and . . . have dominion over everything on the earth.*” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And after creating everything . . . God saw . . . that . . . it was very good (cf. Genesis 1:31). A perfect 10!

The rest of Scripture focuses on you, the crown of God’s creation (cf. Psalm 8:4-8). He meticulously created everything to sustain His special creatures on earth (i.e. us) in a perfect relationship with Himself forever. Unfortunately Adam & Eve, our first parents, choose to mess up that perfect relationship by disobeying His command, bringing death into every area of life. The *wages of sin is death* (cf. Romans 6:23), both spiritual death when they lost that image of God by giving up their righteousness and eventually physical death. It brought on a sinfulness so deep that they ran from God, separated themselves from each other and no longer had peace within themselves or with all created things (cf. Genesis 3).

Over the years this sinfulness bred all forms of sins, such as *malice . . . deceit . . . hypocrisy . . . envy . . . slander* (cf. 1 Peter 2:1), *living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry*. These are just a few examples which Peter in this letter refers to as a *flood of debauchery* (cf. 1 Peter 4:3-4). Need we mention the sin of murder in the very first recorded sibling rivalry after the fall into sin (cf. Genesis 4:8)? Genesis 6:5-6 says that in time *the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . and it grieved Him to His heart.*

These are *the futile ways* which you *inherited from your forefathers* to which verse 18 of our text refers. All mankind fell into sin in Adam's fall and are held in slavery to the power of sin, death and the devil unless . . . you have been *ransomed from* this power and these ways. Ransomed? Ransom has to do with paying money in order to deliver someone's life from death. What does ransom have to do with your life with God?

Our text tell us that sinners have been ransomed *not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot* (verses 18-19). There are numerous concepts which come to play in this action of God described here which we call redemption.

God created the human body to live forever, stating that *the life of the flesh is in the blood* (cf. Leviticus 17:11). We've learned the importance of the blood sustaining life in the body. Think of how blood transfusions can purify the blood for rejuvenating life or even saving life! Desiring to have perfect fellowship with the crown of His creation was difficult because they needed to be holy, completely righteous, in order to have that fellowship with Him in His presence. The only other option is for God's just wrath and punishment to fall on your sin as He looks away from you with a *grieved . . . heart*.

When Yahweh instituted the sacrificial system with His people's worship, He provided the way for them to enter His presence in such holiness by providing a way to deal with their sins and His just wrath upon sinners—the killing of an animal which they offered on an altar to Him. He said in Leviticus 17:11 → *I have given the animal's blood for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life*. Thus, the life of the animal became that which spared their lives from death in God's presence.

The other stipulation made was that the priests whom God had tasked with making this sacrifice for people should *not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable* (cf. Leviticus 22:20). The Passover lamb which Yahweh demanded for the redemption of His people from slavery to Egypt also needed to be *without blemish* (cf.

Exodus 12:5). A blemish or defect would again reflect the presence of sin which separates from God rather than reconciles to God.

Verse 19 of our text says the price paid to *ransom* your life from death in God's presence was *the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot*. The sacrificial system which Yahweh had established looked forward to Jesus, your great High Priest, offering His life blood as the perfect sacrifice to turn God's wrath away from you because of your sin. 1 Peter 3:18 says: *Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit*. His sacrifice as *the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world* (cf. John 1:29) brought a completion to all other sacrifices. They are no longer needed. As they looked forward to the sacrifice of Jesus, you now trust in His once for all sins, for all time, for all people atoning sacrifice for your own forgiveness. By faith in Jesus' Person & Work you stand righteous in the presence of God! *The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!* (cf. Romans 6:23)

Thus, the price paid for your life now and eternally was provided by God in the sacrifice of His Son. Contrary to our concept of ransom where the kidnappers are paid for the release of a person's life, this payment for your sins was made to God Himself that you *should be holy and blameless before Him* (cf. Ephesians 1:4). Hebrews 9:28 says: *Christ,*

having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

This restoration of your original righteousness is reflected in your life here and now as well. Verse 17 of our text tells you to *conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile*. We recognize that this earthly life is temporary as we *are eagerly waiting for Jesus* to come back again. This life is an *exile* in that we are displaced from our proper home, the *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells* (cf. 2 Peter 3:13). Having been declared holy (i.e. righteous) because we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, we strive to *conduct* ourselves with holy *conduct*. In thoughts, words and actions we strive to live as God has created us to live in obedience to His Word and Will, difficult as that may be in this exile where we still have to deal with the presence of sin.

Still, the promise of continued forgiveness and a sanctified life is yours in *the blood of Jesus His Son* which *cleanses us from . . . all unrighteousness* (cf. 1 John 1:7-9). God holds you and says, “Now you’re Mine over twice. First, I created you. Then, I bought you back.” Our response? “Thank You, Jesus!” Amen.

*We have been sanctified through
the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

(Hebrews 10:10)

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