

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Praise God for Our Redemption!

Ephesians 1:7

Keywords: Praise, Thankfulness, Redemption, Forgiveness, Blessings

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. We continue to learn why we are to be worshipers of God.
 - 1. We praise His name because He has richly and fully blessed us. Those blessings are the reasons we praise Him.
 - 2. I want you to consider this carefully because there are likely many other reasons for which you might praise God.
 - a. A happy marriage.
 - b. Good health.
 - c. Grandchildren.
 - d. A pay raise or promotion.
 - e. Accepted into a good school.
 - f. All of these are good but in settling for pleasant things to praise God we inadvertently step into a trap that can create tremendous disappointment, anxiety and bitterness.
 - 3. But when we look at the bible and especially consider the uncomfortably clear words of Jesus we are met with some definite challenges.
 - a. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. (Mat 10:16-18)
 - b. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but

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that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. (Mat 24:5-13)

- c. Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. . . . But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:22-24, 27-28)
4. Paul does not abandon this message, none of the writers of the New Testament do.
 - a. Right in the middle of the glorious declaration that nothing can separate us from the love of God we have this reminder: "Just as it is written, 'For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'" (Rom 8:36)
 - b. He reminds the Philippian church: "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me. (Phi 1:29-30)
5. Where is the praise in these times? From what wellspring is a thankful heart offering up thanksgiving and praise in the times God has appointed for you to walk in pain and hate and rejection?
6. Paul points us in an entirely different direction. One heavenward, one that is eternal and not subject to transitoriness.
 - a. We praise God for His eternal election of us.
 - b. We praise God for His adoption of us.

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- c. And with those little blessings I mentioned a bit ago you use them as ways to turn your mind to these soul-satisfying blessings. They become vehicles to praise Him for His eternal love toward you.
 - d. And when the suffering comes you use them to turn your mind to the incomprehensible blessings we are storing up in eternity. That because of God's gracious choice of you that the suffering is not the end, rather it becomes the conduit through which you will enter into the full apprehension of these blessings.
- B. So it is no small thing we are doing here each Sunday as we gather with one simple purpose—To better know God that we might better praise Him in both word and deed.
 - C. And in this opening section of Ephesians we are pointed again and again to the fulness of God's blessing us so that we in turn might bless Him.
 - D. Up to now the blessings took place in eternity past, but today we see the first of several that now enter into space and time and into our lives in a tangible manner.
 - E. We praise God because He ordained that His elect would be redeemed through the death of Jesus. This redemption was effected in a costly manner yet is freely given to those whom the Father adopts. The result is that our sin is resolved and forgiven and it is all done in accordance to His grace. And in doing so He opens our dull and dead minds to truth.
 - 1. So let us consider Ephesians 1:7 with open bibles and a prayerful heart that we might understand the richness of this blessing.
 - 2. The desired result is that we will again be humbled with the glory of God's work on our behalf and that we become emboldened with the hope of the gospel even in the face of great uncertainty.

II. We praise God for His Redemption.

- A. What is meant by "redemption?"
 - 1. This is important to understand and there is a bit of a debate over the term so let me give you a basic theology lesson here. This can be a bit technical but stay with me.
 - 2. The term is only used 10 times in the New Testament, mostly by Paul. Three of his seven uses are in Ephesians.
 - 3. The debate centers on the meaning of the term itself. There are two key positions:

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- a. The first is to see it as "the payment of a ransom price to secure the desired release" (Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 18)
- b. The second is that it simply means deliverance with no thought of a payment (Büch, *TDNT*, 4:351-56).
- c. The term and concept is designed to take us back to the Old Testament where two words are used to describe redemption, *gaal* and *padah*.
 - (1) Both terms are important but the most is *padah*.
 - (2) Here is a brief quote from my systematic theology course I taught years ago:

Originally, it had to do with the payment of a required sum for the transfer of ownership, a commercial term. Exodus and Lev 19:20 speak of the redemption of a slave girl for the purpose of marriage. It is also used to speak of the redemption of a man's life who is under the sentence of death, as in 1Sam 14:45, when Jonathan was redeemed by the people of Israel.

The word was given special religious significance by the Exodus. When God delivered Israel from servitude to Egypt, he did so at the price of the slaughter of all the firstborn in Egypt, man and beast (Exo :23; Exo 12:29). Consequently, the event was to be perpetually commemorated in Israel by the consecration of an the firstborn of man and beast to the Lord (Exo 13:12).

- (3) What is interesting and very important is that only once in the Old Testament is *padah* used as redemption from our sins, which is Psalm 130:7-8.
 - (4) The reason is that redemption is often simplified down to merely dealing with sin rather than the much larger idea of God redeeming us out of this fallen, broken human condition.
 - (5) It actually involves the fulness of what salvation is all about, that transference from death in Adam to life in Christ.
- d. When we consider the term used by Paul here the word is explicitly a slave-market term that speaks of being purchased out of that condition and position. Hence the meaning is to be redeemed or set free.
4. To merely make this deliverance fails to paint the picture that is inherent in the term.

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- a. Apart from the grace of God we are utter slaves to the great enemies.
 - b. Sin is described as a power, one so powerful that only God alone can not merely disarm it but utterly destroy it.
 - c. We are like Israel, enslaved in Egypt with no ability to do anything to change our condition. It is our reality, our life. We live in it and except for possible glimpses by reading the bible we are clueless that there is something else.
 - d. To whom is this redemption price paid?
 - (1) Some will try to say Satan, but no where is this found in Scripture.
 - (2) But in reality it was to His Father. It is His Law, His will that is ignored and trampled upon.
 - (3) His justice demands payment. His grace puts His Son upon the cross for that payment.
 - e. That real reality that is bound up in the gospel. That it is not merely us who are to be redeemed, but all of creation. On that day, the day of redemption we shall enter into the fulness of that new reality that right now we only glimpse and cling to by faith.
 - f. Then we shall be fully free, free in ways we can't even imagine.
 - g. But even now we are free. Free because the redemption price was fully paid by our Elder Brother. Not to keep His angry Father from hurting us but because our Father loved us before creation.
5. So with this in mind let's turn to these verses to learn of this redemption.
- B. First we should know the "where" of our redemption.
1. "In Him."
 2. Speaks of Jesus, the Beloved of our Father.
 3. I say the "where" because the term "in" does not speak of the "how" but the "where." It speaks of location or sphere in which redemption takes place.
 4. Our redemption is intimately connected with Jesus Christ.
 5. You and I can't have redemption outside of Jesus.
 - a. This is a missions sending verse therefore.

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- b. This tells us that people are not going to know God as Father without being "in Christ."
 - c. It means that there is no gospel without Jesus and His work being at the center of it all.
 - d. It lets us know a bit more of the glory of what verse 4 meant when before the foundation of the world we were chosen to be "in Christ."
 - e. God looked not to a beautiful people and wanted to make them more beautiful. He looked upon us before we even existed and He looked at slaves to sin and Satan. And He, out of pure grace alone, chose us to be in Christ where our redemption is found.
6. And this redemption that is in Christ is something we now have.
- a. It is not written in the future tense but the present.
 - b. Through faith in Jesus Christ we are current, ongoing possessors of this immense blessing and reality. See your redemption as an ongoing state of reality.
 - c. But like many of the things we currently "have" there is a future fulfillment as well.
 - d. 4:30 makes this point.
 - e. Right now we are strangers to this age. We are to walk with the understand it is not ours nor is it to last.
 - f. We are to walk like Caleb and Joseph walked in the Old Testament with Israel. Redeemed out of Egypt but not yet in the promised land. Walking in faith with full assurance not because they were champions of faith but because they trusted that God was faithful to His promise.
- C. Now we need to know the "how" of redemption.
- 1. "Through His blood."
 - a. This explains in greater detail exactly how redemption was accomplished.
 - b. And again it points us back to the Old Testament and the idea of sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of an innocent animal for forgiveness.

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- c. 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' (Lev 17:11)
- d. You couldn't just strangle the animal. You had to slay it and shed its blood.
- e. And in the New Testament we see no backing away from the reality of the shedding of blood.
 - (1) 2:13—we were far off, what allows us, even causes us to draw near?
 - (2) 1 Peter 1:18-19.
 - (3) Acts 20:28.
 - (4) Hebrews 9:22.
- 2. The author of Hebrews describes how Jesus both as our High Priest and our Perfect Sacrifice went into the holy of holies in heaven and there resolved our sin.
- D. This leads us to the "what" of redemption and it is the forgiveness of our trespasses.
 - 1. I have said this in so many ways already but it bears saying forthrightly yet again.
 - 2. God didn't forgive us by waving His hands and saying, "forgiven." It wasn't cheap. It was incredibly costly.
 - a. And that decision was not decided when sin entered into this age and all fell under its domination.
 - b. It happened back before the foundation of the world. There the Triune God determined this whole plan to the praise of His glory.
 - c. It utterly boggles the mind as you let your mind wander down the various roads of reality and truth.
 - 3. The word is such a beautiful one for those who understand their incredibly hopeless plight. It means a full release from the guilt of sin.
 - a. An Old Testament illustration might help. Every fifty years, known as "jubilee" years, all debts were forgiven, all land returned fully to the family to whom it originally belonged and all slaves were released.
 - b. So when you think of forgiveness, think of freedom or liberty.

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4. And it was not some vague mistakes of which we are forgiven. It is "trespasses."
 - a. It is often argued by a person that they have not done anything that would deserve the eternal wrath of God.
 - b. But the Bible states it very differently. This term speaks to a conscious and deliberate overstepping in the face of a holy God.
 - c. It goes back to Romans one and the idea that all of humanity knows of God and willfully suppress that truth in unrighteousness.
5. But God has cancelled this debt and the punishment that was to go with it. Redemption is the cause and forgiveness is the result (Hoehner, 208).
- E. This was why we took the bread and the cup, to remember the death of Christ.
- F. And all of this was done according to the wealth of God's grace.
 1. "Riches" actually means the idea of full or fulness. Therefore it became a term for the rich, those who had things in abundance.
 2. What is God full of? Grace.
 - a. Grace that abounds constantly toward His beloved, redeemed, forgiven children.
 - b. Grace that puts His Son upon the Cross that we might be free.
 - c. Grace that gives us His Spirit to keep us until the final day of full redemption.
 - d. It is grace upon grace.

III. Conclusion.

- A. How do we bring this to a close?
- B. By once again you being exhorted to be a people of praise and thanksgiving. To be a people who speak and make much of God for He alone is worthy of that glory.
- C. Let us close by hearing the words of the hymn, O Church Arise.

O church arise and put your armor on
Hear the call of Christ our captain
For now the weak can say that they are strong
In the strength that God has given

With shield of faith and belt of truth

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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We'll stand against the devil's lies
An army bold whose battle cry is love
Reaching out to those in darkness

Our call to war, to love the captive soul
But to rage against the captor
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole
We will fight in faith and valor

When faced with trials on every side
We know the outcome is secure
And Christ will have the prize for which He died
An inheritance of nations

So Spirit come, put strength in every stride
Give grace for every hurdle
That we may run with faith to win the prize
Of a servant good and faithful

As saints of old still line the way
Retelling triumphs of His grace
We hear their calls and hunger for the day
When with Christ we stand in glory