

REDEEMED – A NEW MASTER

Selected Scripture

Introduction:

A few minutes ago, we celebrated communion, as we do on the first Sunday of almost every month. It is a time when we focus on the sacrifice of Jesus as our substitute. We focus our thoughts to remember what He endured and what He accomplished for our sake. When we take the cup, and drink it together we are reminded of the precious blood of our Saviour.

Peter, in his first epistle, reminds us that we were ransomed, or redeemed from our old way of life, “...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.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

A couple of months ago, I began a short series of messages to be given on communion Sundays. The idea behind this series was to look at some of the aspects of our glorious salvation. The first time we looked at the wonder of justification. We are justified – we have a new standing. We are declared holy and righteous before God.

The second message in the series focused on the truth that we are sanctified – set apart for holiness. We have a new purpose – God has called us out and set us apart to be holy. Justification gave us a new standing – we are declared righteous. Sanctification is the process by which we are made righteous – living it out in our daily walk in the world.

This morning I would like to look at a third aspect of this glorious salvation – redemption. We are redeemed – that means we have a new liberty, and a new responsibility.

Before we get into the main content of this message, there is one thing we must note. There are two words or terms that are used in the NT that are both rendered as “redeemed” in most translations. The first is *loutroo*, which means to liberate by a payment or ransom. This is the word that is used in 1 Peter 1:18-19.

The other word is a compound word – *exagorazo*. Ex – out of or away from; agorazo – to buy or sell in the market place. When put together you get the idea, “to buy out of the market; to redeem.” So, both terms carry the idea of a purchase price, a payment. And both suggest the idea of releasing or redeeming the item that is purchased.

With that background let us consider what this means for us. I want to look at this with three points this morning:

- Slaves to sin and Satan
- Redemption through the blood of Christ
- Slaves to God and righteousness

Slaves to Sin and Satan

Probably the best-known hymn of all time is “Amazing Grace.” It was written by John Newton, and many of you know something of his story. He served for several years as the captain of a slave ship, transporting slaves from Africa to Great Britain. But what you may not know is that he also spent some time as something of a slave himself.

He tells of a dark and miserable period in his life when, for various reasons, he fell out of favor with his employer and was treated like a despised slave. He describes being “destitute of food and clothing, depressed to a degree beyond common wretchedness, such that even the natives thought themselves too good to speak to me.” He says his condition was “living in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and the want of all things.”

As time went on, his lot improved and he became captain of his own slave ship. Eventually, through the grace of God, he came to saving faith, and his life was remarkably transformed. He recounts that change in that great hymn, Amazing grace, how sweet the sound... (*You can find more details in the book “Slave” by John MacArthur*).

Perhaps no one understood better the horrors of the 18th century slave trade than John Newton. But he also understood clearly the bondage of the unrepentant sinner to sin and Satan. He described his condition before Christ as “the willing slave of every evil.” He saw himself as enslaved by Satan and bound by chains of guilt and sin.

That, my friends, is the condition of every person without the saving grace of Christ. Before we knew Christ, we were enslaved to a cruel master. Paul reminds us of that life in Ephesians 2:

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
(Eph. 2:1-4 ESV)

And in our text in Romans 6, he points out in v. 17 that you *“...were once slaves of sin...”* And in v. 19 – *“...you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness...”*

But all of that changed when Jesus Christ entered our lives.

Redemption Through the Blood of Christ

So, how does God rescue us from the sin which has bound and enslaved us? That is where this doctrine of redemption comes in.

(I recently read an amazing book by John MacArthur entitled simply, **“Slave”** – subtitled, *“The Hidden Truth About Your Identity in Christ.”* He goes into a lot more detail than we have time to talk about this morning. I would highly recommend his book for a deeper understanding of this subject.)

As I have already mentioned, there are two words used for the idea of redemption. *Agorazo* – to buy, or to purchase; *lytroo* – the ransom money paid for the manumission of slaves.

Since we are all slaves to sin, the only way we can be released from that bondage is for the ransom price to be paid. That is the glorious truth of redemption – the price was paid. But, unlike the slaves of Roman times, we *“...were ransomed from [our] futile ways ... not with perishable things such as silver and gold...”* (1 Peter 1:18) Neither were we redeemed—ransomed—by *“...the blood of goats and calves...”* (Heb. 9:12). It was not money or precious jewels, nor was it animal sacrifices that provided the ransom to purchase us from the slavery of sin.

Rather, it was the blood of Jesus himself. *“...he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”* (Heb. 9:12) The Apostle Paul tells us in Titus 2:14 that Jesus Christ *“...gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”*

In our text in Romans 6, Paul says – read vv. 17-19. Having been set free from bondage to sin and Satan, he says we are now to submit to a new master. That leads to our third point this morning...

Slaves to God and Righteousness

You may be thinking, Wait a minute. If we have been redeemed, bought out of the slave market of sin, are we not now free, no longer under a master who controls us? That is a valid question. To answer it we need to look to the Scriptures and consider the significance of a word that is used over and over to define our identity in Christ. Let's go back to our text in Romans 6 – read vv. 16-19 again.

That word, “slave” is a significant one. In the Greek it is the word *doulos*, and it refers to a bondman, a man of servile condition. It describes one who gives himself up to another's will, one who is devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. In other words, we are speaking of a slave, one who is bound to an owner and master.

Throughout the NT the writers referred to themselves as slaves – *doulos* – even though in our English Bibles, the word is usually translated servant. However, it means far more than a servant. Let us consider for a few moments just what it means to be a slave of Jesus Christ. There are a couple of things that immediately come to mind...

Our Relationship – We Belong to Him

The thing about slavery is that when a slave was purchased by a master, he became the property of that master. The slave had no claim to anything that was his own. He belonged to another.

When Jesus Christ paid the ransom price, and purchased us out of the slave market of sin and Satan. He took ownership of us. We belong to Him. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 6:19-20:

"...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price... you belong to God. He bought you.

Now you may be wondering, how is that any different that what we had before. If we are still slaves, where is the freedom in Christ that we so often talk about?

Once again, I take you back to our text in Romans 6 – *read vv. 20-22*. The difference is in the nature of the master we belong to and the end result of that relationship. Sin is a harsh and cruel master whose only aim is to destroy. But God is a gracious, loving master whose only aim is fruit that lasts to eternal life.

Look at v. 23 - *Read it...* With sin you get what you earn – death; with God you get a gift – eternal life.

Our Responsibility – We are to Serve and Obey Him

The responsibility of a slave is to obey his master. The master's wishes are the only thing that really matters to a committed and dedicated slave. We said earlier that the word for slave – *doulos* – describes one who gives himself up to another's will, one who is devoted to another to the disregard of his own interests.

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that *"...being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who **obey him**,"* (Heb. 5:9) So often we view obedience and service as a negative thing, yet there is no greater joy than to serve and obey someone we love and who loves us. And when our master is God himself, that service is even more sweet, knowing that He is working out our eternal salvation.

Conclusion

Well, we need to wrap this up – I have kind of wandered from the topic of redemption. But being redeemed by God means that he has bought us out of the slave market of sin, so that we no longer serve sin, but rather serve him, in willing and joyful obedience.