

Our Salvation: The Son Paid For It *Ephesians 1:7-12*

In Dresden, Germany, there is a gallery of famous paintings and gems. Included in the collection of gems, there is a silver egg. When you open the egg, you find a yolk made of gold. Open the yolk, and you see a golden chicken. If you touch a little spring, the chicken opens, and inside the chicken is small diamond crown. But you're not done yet. Open the crown, and you will find a valuable diamond ring. It's one treasure after another, the deeper you look.

That's the way it is with our tour of Ephesians. The more steps we take into this Grand Canyon of Scripture, the more treasures we see. Everywhere we look, in every direction, we see precious gems. Last week we saw that our *Heavenly Father has planned our salvation*, and today the jewel we pick up tells us that the *Son has paid for our salvation*.

Verse three reads, "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" and verses 4-6 are about what God did in planning the way by which we can be saved. But when we get to verse seven, we see a shift from God the *Father* to God the *Son*, and we see the incomparable role that Jesus played in securing our salvation.

D. L. Moody, an evangelist of another century, once said, "I must die or get somebody to die for me. If the Bible doesn't teach that, it doesn't teach anything. And that is where the atonement of Jesus Christ comes in." So the bottom line is: He did for us what no other being could do. Jesus has paid the price for our sin. But what does that really mean for us?

1 We've been redeemed, v. 7a

Here are the beautiful words from verse seven: "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*" Let those words find a permanent spot in your heart!

Let's start with the word "redemption." What a beautiful, yet complicated concept. Many books have been written and many hymns composed about how Christ has redeemed us, yet it remains a truth that is so rich and deep that we still cannot fully understand it. In our day, the word has become so watered down that it almost means nothing. If a basketball team is favored to win a particular game, but they lose, it is said that they need to "redeem themselves" by winning the next one,

thereby proving that they are a good team after all. I remember my mother collecting S & H Green Stamps, and how she would go to the store to “redeem” those stamps for small appliances or other things. Today we “redeem” coupons. Redemption is also an investment term.

When we hear the word “redemption” while sitting in a church service listening to a sermon, we normally think of the amazing love that sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. But Paul’s first readers thought of something else. Paul could have chosen any one of several words to describe what Jesus did for us, but he chose one which caused his first readers to immediately think of a slave in the slave market. It is estimated that there were as many as six million slaves in the Roman world at this time. Sometimes they had been captured in a battle, but many times a person might be sold into slavery in order to satisfy a debt. That person could be redeemed from slavery if the original debt was satisfied. This word has the meaning “to purchase a slave at the slave market with the intention of setting him free.” It means that a ransom has been paid.

That is what the redemption of Christ has done for us. We owed a debt we could not pay, could never pay, and we were in slavery to sin. Verse seven says we have “*redemption through his blood,*” meaning that the blood of Christ is what satisfied that sin debt. Our sin is such a big problem that the blood of Christ was the only thing that could satisfy that debt! And not only has the blood of Christ bought us out of slavery to sin, but we have been bought with the intention that we should be freed from our sin.

Now there are a couple of important points to make about this redemption. First, notice that this redemption is not something we have to wait for. Read the verse carefully: “*In him we have redemption through his blood...*” The language used here is very precise. We have it—**now!**

Second, this redemption includes *forgiveness*. “*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.*” This word for “forgiveness” means “to set free and send away.” Here’s a good way to look at it: The person without forgiveness is like someone carrying around a sack with 100 pounds of rocks in it. The person who has been forgiven has had those rocks put into the basket of a hot air balloon and has watched them sail away. Jesus has paid the price for our sins, and our sins have been removed from us through the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross.

2 We've received an abundance of God's grace, vv. 7b-8

Paul says that we have redemption through the blood of Christ, "*in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.*" How do we measure God's grace? Is it measured by how good we are, or how few sins we've committed? Do we determine how much grace God extends toward us by how sorry we are for our sins? How about by how often we go to church or how much money we give?

No. None of that. Pay attention to this: It doesn't read that God gave us His grace *out of* His riches, but *according to* His riches! That makes all the difference. Suppose you are a multi-millionaire, many times over. You have so much money, in fact, that you really don't know what to do with all of it. And suppose that I approach you one day and ask you to contribute something to a mission offering. You say, "Sure, I'll do that," but you only give \$10.00. When you do that, you are giving "out of" your riches. But if you gave me a signed check and said, "I'll be happy to do that. Just fill in what you need," then you are giving "according to" your riches.

That is what God has done in Christ. His love, mercy, kindness and grace are boundless. Annie Johnson Flint was born in 1866, and when she was a young adult became a school teacher. But after only two years of teaching, arthritis set in with such a vengeance, and soon she was crippled. She lived to be 66 years old, when the arthritis finally took her life after 37 years of suffering. During that time she barely eked out a living by writing poems and verses for greeting cards. But one of the things that kept her going was the firm conviction that God would enable her to get through the suffering. In the midst of pain and suffering, she wrote a poem in which she said,

*His love has no limit, His grace has no measure;
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.*

There's a story about a young woman who came to Christ one evening in a church service, after a life of alcohol, drugs and prostitution. God extended His grace to her, and she understood it! The change in her life was so dramatic that everyone noticed. She became a faithful member of the church, and over time even began to serve.

But then the news broke that she and the pastor's son were to be married, and that's when the trouble began. Many in the church just didn't think that a pastor's son should even be considering marrying a woman with a past like hers. The gossip began and the members of the church began to take sides. So a meeting was called to discuss the matter.

During the meeting, emotions ran high. Discussions were heated. The young woman was very upset that all of her past was being dredged up and paraded out in front of everyone, and she began to cry. Finally, the pastor's son stood up to speak, and he said, "My fiancé's past is not what is on trial here. What you are questioning is the ability of the blood of Jesus to wash away sin. Today you have put the blood of Jesus on trial. So, does it wash away sin or not? Is God's grace sufficient for all sin, or not?" Many began to weep as they realized that they had been slandering the blood of Christ and the grace of God.

This grace, the Bible says, has been "*lavished*" on us. The King James Version reads, "which He made to abound toward us." I love that word "lavished"! It means "to overflow, to abound, to exceed a fixed measure, to give more than enough." It could be compared to standing on the seashore, and watching the waves pound the shore, one after the other, and they never stop. Remember that the waves have been coming in since the earth was created, and will continue until God says "Enough!"

In a very inadequate way, that's a description of the lavishness with which God redeemed us, according to the riches of His grace. It never runs out. Picture there being so much of the love and grace of God that not even heaven could hold it, and Christ Himself is the conduit by which it is poured on us. In wave after wave of forgiveness and mercy and love and grace, it never stops.

Jesus has paid the price for our sin, folks. And what that means for us today is that we've been redeemed, and that we've received an abundance, more than enough, of God's grace.

3 **We've been included in God's eternal plan, vv. 9-12**
Verse nine tells us that God "*made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.*" It goes back to the plan God had to provide salvation for us. We talked about that last week. This "mystery" is something that was previously hidden, but has now been made known. But what is that "purpose" that verse nine mentions?

The answer is in verse ten: “...*to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment*—“ and here is the plan—“*to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*”

So what does that mean? Gather around and let’s look at it. In the original language the phrase “bring all things...together” is really just one word, but it was used in various ways. I want to share those with you because each one reveals a slightly different shade of meaning for us. **First**, the word was a mathematics term, and meant to add up several numbers in a column to reach a total. That tells us that all the things God has done, is doing and will do are being added up to achieve the purpose that He has in Christ.

Second, the word was used to describe separate items that have been combined to make a single whole. If you bake a cake, you are combining several different items to present a single cake. It is the process of gathering various things together to present them as a single whole. God, in Christ, is bringing people from every nation, language and tribe into a single Family. That, too, is His purpose in Christ.

And **third**, this word was used to describe the action of putting titles on a chapter in a book. In this case it refers to something being the head, or the beginning. In fact, it comes from a word which means the top of a wall or the mouth of a river—the head, or the source from which something begins. So this case, we see that everything finds its source in Christ. And Scripture agrees with Scripture. In Colossians 1 we find these words:

*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the **head** of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (vv. 16-18)*

That was the purpose God had in sending His Son—that everything that ever was and ever will be should be brought under submission to Christ.

That Jesus paid the ultimate price for our salvation—by shedding His blood and dying a horrible death on the cross—is what made it possible for us to be included in that eternal purpose. We could never approach God on our own without the work of Jesus. We would not even know there was a God with a plan to save us had Jesus not come and died for our sins.

In fact, when you look at verse eleven, you see these words: *“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”* That word “plan” tells us that this was God’s deliberate intention from the very beginning, that nothing was left to chance or circumstance, and there were no other options. It tells us that before the creation of the universe God predetermined that even the vilest sinner could receive salvation by placing his or her faith in Christ.

So what does all this mean for us today? If you can get this in a fresh way today, how it will change your life!—to know that regardless of what skeletons are in your closet, regardless of the headlines of your past, by placing your faith in what Jesus did for you on the Cross, you have been redeemed from sin and set free. You have received an abundance of God’s grace. And you’ve been included as a part of God’s eternal plan. This will change your life—and better than that, it will change your eternity.

It’s all been set into place by our Heavenly Father. What triggers all this so that it is true in your life and mine is when we make a decision to confess our sins and repent of our sins, and surrender our lives to Jesus as Lord of our lives.

Perhaps that is the very thing you need to do today. Do you know that you’ve been redeemed from your sin? Do you know that you have been forgiven? If you have in fact trusted in Jesus for your salvation, then believe the Word when It tells you that you have—right now!—redemption by the blood of Christ. Receive it by faith this very morning!