

Sermon Notes & References
“Given to be Forgiven” – Ephesians 1:7-8 NAS ...
“⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our
trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸ which He lavished upon
us. In all wisdom and insight ...”
February 17, 2008

- A. Introduction – Favour and Grace

- B. In Him {Christ} we have REDEMPTION ... (v. 7)
 - 1. the meaning of redemption

 - 2. redemption as future^A

 - 3. redemption as present^B

- C. In Him we have redemption through His BLOOD, ... (v. 7)
 - 1. God’s possessions are^C

 - 2. the purpose and costs of God’s redeeming Israel^D

^A Romans 8:23, Ephesians 4:30, 1:14
^B Romans 3:24, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:15
^C Genesis 1:16
^D Isaiah 43:3, Romans 3:2, Hebrews 10:14

- 3. the purpose of blood in sacrifice^E

- D. ... redemption through His blood, the FORGIVENESS ... (v. 7)
 - 1. the meaning of forgiveness

 - 2. the implications of forgiveness^F

- E. ... the forgiveness of our TRESPASSES, ... (v. 7)
 - 1. trespasses and sin

 - 2. what kinds of sin need forgiveness?

- F. ... according to the riches of His GRACE ... (v. 7)
 - 1. what ‘according to’ means

 - 2. why is grace needed?^G

- G. ... grace which He LAVISHED on us. (v. 8a)
 - 1. what is the character of God’s redemption, forgiveness, grace?^H

^E Leviticus 17:11, 1Samuel 15:22, John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:18-19
^F Romans 3:24-26
^G Romans 3:20
^H Psalm 23:5, Romans 11:33, Psalm 107

A. Introduction

1. asking a favour of someone

a. when we ask, 'say, can you do me a favour' we may be met with varying responses, depending on the other person

- (A) it may be a guarded, 'what is it?'
- (B) or, from someone closer, 'sure; what is it?'
- (C) to the unqualified, 'certainly!'

b. but, it is unlikely that we will receive a straight, 'No!' – at least not until we explain what the favour is – and then it will probably be couched in a reason why not

c. because, a favour, in the sense in which we use the word most of the time, usually means some trivial action

d. so in explaining to someone that 'grace is the unmerited favour shown by God to someone' we may inadvertently convey a far less than adequate idea of God's grace

e. the opening verses of this book of Ephesians do not leave us in any such doubt, describing to us

- (A) God's choosing us to be holy and blameless
- (B) God's foreordaining that we should be His children
- (C) and, in today's text, verses 7-8, God's forgiving us of our sins; we are Given of His grace to be Forgiven

2. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. ...

a. leaving the last few words of verse 8

- (A) 'In all wisdom and insight'
- (B) until another day when we shall see how they join together the message of today's text
- (C) with that which follows: 'The Mystery of His Will'

b. we will look at a half dozen important words from the text

- (A) Redemption
- (B) Blood

- (C) Forgiveness
- (D) Trespasses
- (E) Grace
- (F) Lavished

B. Redemption In Him {Christ} we have redemption ... (v. 7)

1. redemption is one of those words build up from other words

a. we have examples of these in English

- (A) stand means just what I am doing now, but also means to set as fixed or firm, as in 'I took my stand'
- (B) standing refers to a person's status, his fixed position, marking their acceptability in certain circles
- (C) standard is something that stands as a fixed rule
- (D) standardizing is setting those fixed rules which mark a thing's acceptability in certain circumstances
- (E) each addition to the word makes it more particular

b. in the Greek, redemption is a similar word

- (A) λύω – to loose, untie, set at liberty (the first verb that you learn in both classical and biblical Greek!)
- (B) λύσις – liberation, deliverance; freed from bonds
- (C) λῦτρον – the price of ransom or deliverance
- (D) then, taking that last word, and adding a prefix that emphasizes that this is deliverance FROM something
- (E) ἀπολύτρωσις – redemption effected by payment of a price, or release granted on receiving a price

c. now this word redemption can be used in a more general way for deliverance, but in the Bible with possibly one or two exceptions it is deliverance at a price – and that is certainly the case in these verses as we shall see

2. there is a future redemption ahead of the Christian

a. *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.* (Romans 8:23)

NAS)

- b. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30 NAS)
 - c. who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:14 NAS)
3. but here in verse 7 it is a present possession as we find also in
- a. being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (Romans 3:24 NAS)
 - b. in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:14 NAS)
 - c. For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15 NAS)
4. Back in the days of American slavery in the South, there was a beautiful black girl who was put on the slave block to be sold. A very cruel and brutal slave owner began to bid for her, and every time he would up his bid, the girl would cringe with fear. A plantation owner who was kind to his slaves was also there, and seeing what was happening, he began to bid against the cruel master, and eventually outbid him and won the sale. He put down his money and then began to walk away. The slave girl started to follow him. But he turned to her and said, "You misunderstand. I didn't buy you because I needed a slave. I bought you in order to spare you from that wretched master and to set you free." ^{-(2)}} – that is redemption; but in our case it is God redeeming us from the bondage caused by sin

C. Blood

In Him we have redemption through His blood, (v 7)

1. Genesis chapter one introduces us to God
 - a. or, perhaps rather, Genesis records God's introducing Himself to us, to mankind
 - b. and there, bit by bit, the creation of the universe and of its contents is quickly summarized, with God at the centre of it all and speaking a word and it was so
 - c. and there in the 16th verse, after speaking of the creation of the sun and the moon, there is dropped in, almost as an afterthought, these words: 'He made the stars also.'

- d. so God could have thrown in a few galaxies to pay for our sin – no problem? – but did He? – no...
2. in the Old Testament, we are told the price that God paid to redeem a nation called Israel to be His own people
- For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. (Isaiah 43: 3 NAS)
 - all those nations were God's and with them He paid the price of Israel's redemption
 - certainly a worthy price – more than the cost of a galaxy
 - and a very special nation for
 - 'they were entrusted with the oracles of God' Romans 3:2, and from them would arise the One, True, Chosen Servant Israel – the Messiah, our Saviour
 - the one who said to the Father God, "Behold, I have come to do your will." (Hebrews 10:14)
 - No; the price paid to ransom or redeem Israel was not sufficient to redeem us from sin's bondage
3. no, it took the sacrificial, atoning death of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God incarnate, as a substitute for us

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in. ^{—{3}}.

- the Old Testament Law explained what the sacrifices were — 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. (Leviticus 17:11 NAS)
- but the sacrifices in themselves were nothing
 - Samuel rebuked Saul "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22 NAS)
 - God tells Judah through Isaiah in chapter 1 that He is up to here with their sacrifices; they are worthless
- their value was to point to the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)

- (A) so Peter tells us, “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18-19 NAS)
- (B) if you would understand the cost, using the words of C. H. Spurgeon, ‘you must see the Omnipotent mocked by his creatures, you must hear the Immaculate slandered by sinners, you must hear the Eternal One groaning out his life, and crying in the agonies of death, “My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?”’ –{4}.

D. Forgiveness

... redemption ... the forgiveness of ...{sin} (v 7)

1. forgiveness is not the only part of redemption
 - a. but in the praise that Paul is now engaged
 - b. it forms a most important element
 - c. it being a direct result of the redemption through His blood
 - d. sometimes this word is translated as remission
 - e. and we use it all the time – “I forgive you; I’ll forget that”
 - f. but what does it mean when applied to us before God

2. the word translated ‘forgive; means to ‘let go, send away, pardon, remit or cancel’
 - a. it’s as though you went to a store with a bill or invoice
 - b. a cheque book in your hand
 - c. pleading, ‘I cannot pay this in full; can I pay part of it?’
 - d. and the owner of the store replied, ‘let it go; take it away; the invoice is cancelled’
 - e. that’s what it means to have a debt forgiven

3. to say, then that we are forgiven, implies we have a debt
 - a. moreover, the fact that we are forgiven also implies that we have no way of meeting that debt
 - b. how easy it is to understate that debt because of the simplicity of the gospel in how it can be forgiven!
 - c. but to do so is to disregard
 - (A) what we have already noted – the infinite price paid to discharge that debt – the death of God’s only Son

(B) the payment of the debt of our sin at the price of blood

- (1) shows how serious sin is
- (2) shows how it deserves to be punished
- (3) shows how a holy God can forgive our trespasses, and the sins of saints previously passed over until the cross were then dealt with: "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. [This was] to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, [I say,] of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26 NAS95)

E. Trespasses

... the forgiveness of our trespasses ... (V 7)

1. there are many words in the Bible for sin

- a. the very number of them – lawlessness, unrighteousness, iniquity, and on and on – shows sin is rampant, it is serious
- b. the use of only one here, trespasses, does not mean that all those denoted by other words are not forgiven
- c. in fact this word means a lapse or a misdeed
- d. the kind of wrong-doing that we would seek to excuse in ourselves with the statement, 'I'm only human!'; or saying, 'I misspoke' or, the latest, 'I mis-remembered'
- e. but the truth is that the slightest of those missteps need the forgiveness paid for at infinite price by Jesus Christ – just as much as the most horrendous things we have ever done

2. yet, be (in our eyes) the sin great or small

- a. it is fully dealt with at the cross
- b. not in the surly fashion that some people forgive
- c. forgiven all, forgiven once for all
- d. in the words of the poet John Kent ⁻⁽⁵⁾.

There's pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast;

And, oh! my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come there's pardon too.

e. Oh! that is grace!

F. Grace ... according to the riches of His grace (v7)

1. the words 'according to' have what is called 'distributive force'

a. we saw this in our discussions from Titus in Bible class

b. Titus was told to 'appoint elders according to city' (the literal translation) which meant he was to go to each city, one by one, and for the church in each, appoint elders

c. as others have pointed out, this is quite different from being 'out of the riches of His grace' – let me illustrate

d. put yourself for a moment at Cornelisse's annual ham dinner (which you should do if you never have yet done so)

(A) where in addition to what John has prepared, a lot of special dishes are brought and shared

(B) someone comes to the door and asks if he can have something to eat

(C) If John then takes a plate with some salad, a piece of ham and a roll on it out to him in the porch, then that is giving to him out of the riches of the feast

(D) but, if John brings him into our midst, takes him around to each and every plate, has him take from it not missing a thing, then that is giving to him according to the riches of the feast we are having

e. and that is how all these blessings of God are shared out to God's children – in accordance – in full measure with – the riches of God's grace.

f. again, in Spurgeon's words, 'the riches of the grace of God are infinite, beyond all limit; they are inexhaustible, they can never be drained; they are all-sufficient, they are enough for every soul that ere shall come to take of them; there shall be enough for ever while earth endureth. until the last vessel of mercy shall be brought home safely.' ⁻⁽⁶⁾.

2. what a blessing that this is by grace

a. "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law [comes] the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20 NAS95)

b. but salvation and all its benefits are by God's grace

c. in the words Joseph Hart, 1712-1773 ^{-(7)}}.

The law was never meant to give

New strength to man's lost race;

We cannot act before we live,

And life proceeds from grace.

But grace and truth by Christ are given,

To him must Moses bow;

Grace fits the new-born soul for heaven,

And truth informs us how.

G. Lavished

which He lavished on us ... (v 8)

1. let's go back for a moment in our minds to that stranger who has been invited in, then taken around to every delicacy and had his plate filled, sat down in front of the fire and ate his fill

a. now John makes up a large bag of these good things

b. each in its own container

c. gives it for the stranger for his family and friends

d. and drives him back to his home

2. lavished: to be more than enough; to be present in abundance

a. God, too, doesn't do things by halves

b. there are no short rations with God

c. just as David wrote, 'my cup overflows'

H. Conclusion

1. that is the grace of God to anyone who will come to Him for forgiveness trusting only in what Jesus did on the cross

2. that is the grace of God present with the believer each day allowing him to live in close relationship to the heavenly Father

3. what a gift He has given that we may be forgiven!

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Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
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NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. From “Forgiveness!” by Dr. Dale Johnsen – Kerux sermons #99
3. “There Is a Green Hill Far Away” by Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander (1818-1895)
4. From sermon, “The Treasures of Grace” by C. H. Spurgeon, volume 7, page 62 as published by Baker Books, 1996, Grand Rapids Michigan 49516
5. From ‘The Treasures of Grace’, *op cit*
6. From ‘The Treasures of Grace’, *op cit*
7. Quoted in “Redemption Through Christ’s Blood” by Rev. Geoff Thomas – Kerux sermons #17763