

Assured Christ is Your Ransom

From the Gospel of Mark

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Bible Text: Mark 10:45; Daniel 7:13-14

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The text for this morning is Mark 10 verse 45. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”¹

Please pray with me.

Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you for these words that come from the gospel. And thank you, Father, that we have opportunity to look into them. We pray now that you would be pleased to visit us with your Spirit, that you would open our hearts. Open our eyes that we might better see your Son Jesus Christ and what he came to do for the likes of us. Forgive us, Father, that we often don't contemplate these things as we should. Forgive us that as we ply the pages of the Bible, we read them and don't take them to ourselves. We don't look at these words as though they apply directly to us. Apply them now to us, we pray, by the power of your Spirit through Jesus Christ your Son in whose name we pray. Amen.

If you Google the words “famous kidnappings” you will of course come up with a long list. At the top of the list you will find a reference to Wikipedia. If you go to Wikipedia you will see a long list of famous kidnappings dating back to the 1600s. And as you go through these pages and references, you have to page down several times before you come to some more contemporary references.

A couple of the more famous kidnappings were the son of Charles Lindbergh. Some of you may recall this. You would have to be a little older to do this.

Another one of the famous kidnappings is Frank Sinatra, Jr. When Frank Sinatra, Jr. was about 19 years of age he was kidnapped. He was released two days later after his father, Frank Sinatra, Sr., paid a ransom of \$240,000. This was in 1963. I can imagine that the ransom sum would be considerably higher if this incident occurred today. But when Frank Sinatra, Jr. was released, he understood his freedom by recognizing that the ransom payment had been made.

¹ Mark 10:45.

And so it is with the Christian. When you understand that the ransom payment was made for you by Jesus Christ, believing that this is the case, when you recognize this is the case and you receive your freedom, you know that you are a ransomed soul, just like Frank Sinatra, Jr. recognized he was a ransomed soul when he walked free seeing that that ransom had been paid.

And this is what our text this morning is about. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”² And the point is that you assure yourself that you are among those who have been ransomed by faith in Jesus Christ. This is how it works. This is what happens.

And so I want to go through this text this morning and I am hopeful that the outcome will be that you have assurance of the fact that you have been ransomed by Christ as you recognize what he has done, as you believe in him, as you believe in this ransoming work of Jesus Christ.

The text, again, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”³

We have this title, “The Son of Man.” Jesus picks up this title from Daniel chapter seven, this text that I read just moments ago. And I would like you to turn back, if you would, to Daniel chapter seven and specifically to verses 13 and 14 in Daniel chapter seven.

Daniel is having another one of these great visions. And he says, “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.”⁴

Daniel sees this figure, one like a Son of Man, coming up, ascending up to the Ancient of Days. And the Ancient of Days is God the Father. We see this in verse nine. “I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat.”⁵ Here is God the Father who is the ruler over all and the Son of Man ascends up to the Ancient of Days.

Verse 14 says, “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”⁶

And so Jesus Christ ascends up into heaven and is given a kingdom; that is, he takes his seat at the right hand of God the Father almighty. And he is recognized as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. As Peter says on the day of Pentecost, “God has made Him both

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Daniel 7:13.

⁵ Daniel 7:9.

⁶ Daniel 7:14.

Lord and Christ,”⁷ This Jesus now seated at the right hand of God the Father, poured out the Holy Spirit.

And over 500 years before all of this took place Daniel sees a vision of Christ ascending to the throne. We therefore have this title, “The Son of Man.” This title recognizes Jesus Christ as the divine ruler to whom all dominion is given. It is a title of divinity. And Jesus Christ takes this title to himself.

Look again, now, at Mark chapter 10 and verse 45. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”⁸

This divine Messiah came into the world before he ascended back into heaven. And how is it that he came into the world? Well, he came by way of incarnation. The great God of all in heaven took to himself human form. He took to himself a true body and a reasonable, a thinking soul. And this was accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit in the conception of the baby Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary. God became man. And this is how he came into the world. And he came for a special service the text tells us. Look at it again.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”⁹

The disciples are in a little bit of a controversy as Jesus utters these words because James and John wanted special privileges. And Jesus retorts, “No, if you are a servant of God, you don’t have special privileges. You are a servant and you are designated as one who is to serve others.”

We often recoil at this thought because we think we ought to have *our* due. Some of us think, “We have paid our dues and so therefore we ought to be served rather than to serve.” But this is not the way of Christianity. And preeminently this is not the way of the Savior. The Savior himself says, “I did not come to be served.”

Here is the King of the universe who could have come to earth and established an earthly throne and have gathered people around him and expected their worship and their obedience. But, no. He did not come in this way. He condescended to stoop low from the glories of heaven and take to himself, as we said, a true body and a reasonable soul, to enter this world as a man, as an individual of flesh and bones and blood and emotions. And he came for the purpose of serving others.

And he talks about this a little bit in the gospel of Mark. Last week we mentioned this. Turn back to Mark chapter eight and verse 31. You may recall these verses. “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the

⁷ Acts 2:36.

⁸ Mark 10:45.

⁹ Ibid.

elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly.”¹⁰

He took on human flesh. The divine God of heaven taking on human flesh and bones so that he might suffer, so that he might be struck in the face, so that a crown of thorns might be placed on his head and he might bleed, so that he might feel anguish in his heart with regard to what was taking place and he might feel the smite of the physical blows, yes, but also of the words that were spoken against him, that he might *feel* these things. This is what he came to do. This was part of the service he was called to render.

Mark nine verse 31. “For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, ‘The Son of Man...’”¹¹ There is that title again, divinity coming down. “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”¹²

The great God of heaven coming down and taking human form, taking to himself a true body so that he might die and a reasonable soul so that soul might be separated from his body in death. That he might experience these things. This is part of his service. This is what he came to do.

And then Mark 10, verse 32.

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”¹³

You see, this was his service, to be found as a man, as Paul says.¹⁴ These are confounding words. All of a sudden, as it were, Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity looks at himself and finds himself in this world as a man in human form. And now he has a service to perform.

Look at verse 45 again.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Mark 8:31-32.

¹¹ Mark 9:31.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mark 10:32-34.

¹⁴ See Philippians 2:8

¹⁵ Mark 10:45.

This service, this peculiar service has to do with this ransom payment that he might... that he must offer. Now this ransom payment involves his obedience as a man, his obedience actively as a man and his obedience passively as a man. Actively he must walk perfectly before God, God his Father. He must render service; he must give his life a ransom for many. He must give his life in obedient service to the Father, in utter perfection. He must serve the Father only. He must not serve an idol. He must never take the name of the Lord in vain. He must keep the sabbath holy. Think about that. He must keep the sabbath holy as a man. He must honor his father and his mother. He must do all in his power to preserve life and not commit murder. He must never violate the commandment, "You shall not commit adultery."¹⁶ That is, he must never have an unseemly thought that runs through his head. He must honor the property of others. He must always tell the truth. And he must never covet anything. Do you remember what Paul says? He did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped.¹⁷ No coveting at all in his heart, absolute perfect obedience.

And not only so, as we have already said, he came, then, to suffer as a perfect sacrifice for sin, unblemished in any respect, going to the cross, allowing, allowing the chief priests... the King of the universe allowing the chief priests to prosecute him and turn him over to Pilate who could then execute the death penalty upon him.

When Jesus was betrayed in the garden Peter took out his sword and when he brought it down he cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. And Jesus said, "Put away your sword. Don't you realize I can speak to my Father and he will immediately send 12 legions of angels?"¹⁸ But Jesus would not request the legions of angels to come and extricate him from this situation. And so he actively and passively obeyed the Father to the point of death. This is the giving of his life in every respect as a servant.

And our text again, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a *ransom* for many."¹⁹

Here again we have this idea of ransom. We usually think of a ransom payment in connection with a kidnapping. I am sure Frank Sinatra, Sr., was ready to pay the ransom for his son. He was ready to write the check or put the bills in a briefcase and deliver the money so that his son would be set free.

But in this case, in our text, the ransom payment is made to the Father. This is one of the things that you need to realize. I think we often get a little confused at this point. You see, some would even say that the ransom payment is made to the devil. Well, away with such notions as this. The work of the devil is really a side-show. The main event is the relationship you have with God through Jesus Christ. The devil is trying to disrupt the

¹⁶ Exodus 20:14.

¹⁷ See Philippians 2:6.

¹⁸ See Matthew 26:52-53.

¹⁹ Mark 10:45, Italics added.

main event. This is the whole problem. The devil had some success in the garden. And he continues to try and upset the apple cart, as it were.

You see, the main event is really the relationship you have with the Father. And outside of Christ you have a big debt to pay to the Father. And the reason you have a big debt to pay to the Father is that you have sinned—and I will put myself in this category, too—you have sinned in a multitude of ways. Just think of those commandments that we went through briefly a moment ago with regard to Jesus Christ, how he kept every one of them perfectly.

Remember the Seventh Commandment, that there was not even one thought which was unseemly that went through his head. Can you say that? I doubt it. And I say this because I know myself.

All of us have sinned in a multitude of ways and so God rightly, as a just God, punishes sin. We are liable before God for our sins. You are liable before God for your sins. You have got a big debt to pay because the penalty, in the end, is death and hell. This is the penalty.

Enter the ransom. Praise be to God, enter the ransom.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom [payment].”²⁰ And when Jesus Christ lives a perfect life, a life that you could not live, and offers that life to God as a ransom payment, and when Jesus Christ goes to the cross and pays the ultimate penalty for every sin that you have committed, when he pays that penalty and offers that up as a ransom payment, what happens? You are set free. This is the idea of the ransom, is it not?

Now some would say, “Wait a minute. What’s my part in this? Isn’t there something I ought to do?”

Well, I will tell you what. If you are Frank Sinatra, Jr. in captivity as a result of this kidnapping, is there anything you can do except hope that the ransom payment is going to be made. This is what you can do, which in the end is nothing as far as your freedom is concerned. It has to be done for you in totality. And this is the idea of the ransom payment.

Furthermore, the text says, “He came to give his life a ransom for many.”²¹ And what does this word *many* mean? It means that not all are ransomed.

Now think about this kidnapping again, Frank Sinatra, Jr. The ransom of \$240,000 is paid. And he goes free. Do other people who have been kidnapped go free?

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See Mark 10:45.

Well, you say, “That would be foolish. The ransom payment was made for him and so he alone goes free.” This is the sum and substance of it. And so if the ransom payment is made for you by Jesus Christ, what is the result? Those for whom the ransom is made go free. This is the result.

And how do you know? How do you know if the ransom is made for you? How do you know if you are among these many? You must trust Jesus Christ. This is how you know. And ultimately this is the only way you can know. And so I say to you, “Assure yourself that Jesus Christ paid the ransom to the Father that sets you free by believing in him, by trusting him.”

Norman Schwarzkopf, a retired general, was a lieutenant colonel in Vietnam. He came to a group of his troops one day stranded in a mine field. Colonel Schwarzkopf crawled out into that mine field to rescue the men that he could. And I imagine when he was making his way out to those men in that minefield they were calling, “Come on, colonel, come on, because our only hope is if you get here, our only hope is if you get here and you get us out of this mess. We are trusting, we are trusting in you, colonel, that you will get in here and get us out of this mess.”

And in a similar fashion, friends, you have to look at Jesus Christ and you have to say, “I am in a mess in my life as far as sin is concerned. My only recourse is to trust in the fact that you, Lord Jesus, lived a perfect life and you died on that cross and suffered in a body just like mine. You suffered in that body and you did it for me.”

And then freedom comes. And what do you realize? You realize that Jesus Christ actually did pay the ransom that sets you free.

And so I say to you, friends, this morning, “Assure yourself that Jesus Christ ransomed you from death and sin by trusting him.”

Let’s pray together.

Father, thank you. It is a simple message, really. It is a simple message because we can grasp the dynamic. We are captives and we need to be ransomed. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that you do that work, that you did not come into the world to be served, but to serve and to give your life a ransom for many. And as we experience in our own lives faith in you, we realize that we are among the many who have been ransomed by you. Thank you.

Bless your people with a good understanding of this. And bless those of us here, Father, who have not come to grips with this whole idea the way we should. Penetrate our hearts. Open our eyes. Open our hearts to the fact that without this ransom payment we are dead people walking. But with it and embracing it and knowing the reality of it we are free. We are free.

And so bless us we pray and grant that we might assure ourselves that this ransom payment is, indeed, for us by trusting Jesus Christ. Hear us in his good name we pray. Amen.