

# Ransomed by My Sovereign Savior - radio

The scripture for our sermon today is found in Matthew 17:

*“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, **The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.** And they were exceeding sorry. And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute (didrachmon, “dee-drahawk-mon”: **double drachma**, a silver coin equal to one half a shekel) money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him(anticipated his word), saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, **Then are the children free.** Notwithstanding, **lest we should offend them**, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee” (Matt. 17:22-27).*

I’ve entitled this message, “Ransomed by a Sovereign Savior!”

There are at least five lessons taught in this scripture

1. **First**, our Lord Jesus Christ speaks here of His imminent death, which He would soon accomplish. Soon, He would give Himself into the hands of wicked men in humiliation, suffering and death. But on the third day, He would rise again.
2. **Second**, He teaches that as Son of God, He is not obligated to any man. Moreover, all of His people, as sons of God, also are free.
3. **Third**, Nevertheless, by example, He shows that it is better to bear personal cost to avoid offending men in matters of indifference, lest insignificant matters become a stumbling block between them and the Gospel of Christ.

4. **Fourth**, By the coin He provided for Peter and Himself, He shows that He is the all-knowing, sovereign God who rules over the smallest details of creation and providence.
5. **Fifth**, Though Christ is free as the sovereign Son of God and King of kings, yet by Himself He paid the ransom price God required to redeem His people.

## Christ speaks of His death that He would soon accomplish

First then, in these verses, Jesus tells His disciples that He will soon accomplish redemption for His people by His suffering and death. In the first part of this chapter, on the mount of transfiguration, He discussed His death that He would accomplish (Luke 9:31) at Jerusalem with Moses and Elijah. Now, it is about to be done. May we ever see that scripture is about Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the salvation of His people, to the glory of God! If you see this in scripture, you have seen the message of the Bible. If you understand this and are persuaded that Christ, in His sin-atonement death, is your justifying righteousness and eternal salvation; if you come to God by Him, trusting Him as your sovereign Savior and your only answer to God, then you believe the message of God's word! God makes Himself known and makes His glory known to His people in the Lord Jesus Christ by His redeeming death. This is why this statement of Christ to His disciples is so important. It is the message of all of scripture. By this, Christ saved His people from their sins! But why did the Lord Jesus Christ tell His disciples about His soon coming death at this at this time? In Matt. 17:22-23, Jesus tells them that He must soon lay down His life. It is because:

- As God, He declares the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:9-10).
- And it is because He wants them to know that He is the Lord Christ; He is not a victim. He willingly endured the humiliation and suffering and death of the cross in the place of His people according to the will of God (Gal. 1:4). He offered God His life for theirs. It is His offering to God that will obtain their eternal redemption by the will of God.
  - *“By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”* (Heb. 9:12). Christ's blood obtained redemption. And that it is eternal redemption! He offered

Himself to God once. And by that one offering, He obtained eternal redemption for all He shed His blood in ransom payment to God.

- By the Spirit of God, the apostle Peter wrote: “*Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- And in John 10, Jesus said, “...*I lay down my life for the sheep...Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father*” (John 10:15-18)
- His suffering and death were obedience. By His obedience, He made His people righteous with an everlasting righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 2:6-8; Dan. 9:24).

## The children are free

Second, our Lord teaches here that as Son of God, He is not obligated to any man. Moreover, all of His people are sons of God. Therefore, they also are free. The tribute collector asked Peter if Jesus paid the half-shekel tribute, which at that time was used to maintain the temple. But Jesus told Peter that Kings do not collect taxes from their children (vv. 24-26). Now,

- Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Heir of all things (John 3:35; Heb. 1:2).
- He is King of kings and Lord of lords: “*The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*” (Ps. 110:1; Mark 12:36).
- He is greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6).
- Therefore, He is not under any obligation to any man.
- Moreover, because all who believe Christ are children of God, they also are free.

- Believers are the children of God. “*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham*” (Gal. 3:7; John 1:12).
- Therefore, believers, as children of the King of kings, are free from all men (1 Cor. 9:19; 7:23; 6:20).
- Every true believer is a son of God in three ways
  - First, **by eternal adoption**. God the Father chose His sons in eternal election before the world began.

*“3 Blessed be the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (therefore heirs): 4 According as he **hath chosen us in (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (in Christ, His beloved Son, as His children)**” (Eph. 1:3-6)<sup>1</sup>*

- Second, believers are children of God **by the redeeming work of Christ**. We were under bondage to sin, God’s law, the world and satan. But Christ redeemed us out of all bondage that we might receive the adoption of sons to which God the Father predestined us before the world began. “*God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*” (Gal. 4:4-5).

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<sup>1</sup> Note, adopt means to choose. We were chosen by God the Father to be His sons in eternity. It was a choice of love. He gave us to Christ that by Him we would be brought to God. He became our Surety. As Judah made Benjamin sure to his father Jacob, to bring him to Benjamin to him again, Christ made His people sure to His Father though the judgment of God demanded their condemnation. He stood up for them. He pleaded His Father’s love for them. He pleaded His own eternal engagements to His Father for them as Surety. And He substituted Himself for them, gave His life for theirs, just as God portrayed in scripture by Judah making himself surety for Benjamin.

- Third, believers are children of God **by spiritual birth**. By the sovereign will of God the Father, the Spirit of God causes us to hear and believe the Gospel of Christ crucified. All who believe Christ have been born of God. The evidence of the new birth is faith in Christ (JOhn 1:13-15). James said, “*Of His own will (not the free will of man) begat He us by the word of truth*” (James 1:18).
- All those Christ redeemed are free from sin, free from God's law, free from the damning doctrines and judgment of this evil world, free from death and the grave, and free from bondage to satan (Gal. 1:4; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:14).

## Christ teaches we ought to bear personal cost to avoid offending men in matters of indifference

Third, though Jesus Christ is Son of God and King of kings and therefore under no obligation to any; though all must answer to Him and serve Him; **yet He made Himself a servant to God and His people for their eternal salvation!** Jesus said, “*The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28). If Christ had refused to pay the temple tax because He was not obligated to men, it would offend men. Being offended, they would not be able to hear Him. In this we see that Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords, is meek and lowly in heart! He did not come to assert His freedom. On the contrary! He made Himself a debtor to God in the place of His people to save them from their sins. He bore the cost of the tribute tax for Peter and Himself to avoid making His personal rights a barrier to the Gospel. Payment of the tax was an insignificant matter. We also must not make an issue out of matters of indifference. We should bear personal cost to ourselves for the good of men’s souls. Paul said, “*Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more*” (1 Cor. 9:19).

## Jesus of Nazareth is omniscient God

Fourth, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is omniscient God, sovereign over the smallest details of creation and providence. Though He was not there when the tribute

collector talked with Peter, yet He knew every word that was spoken! And to pay the temple tax, He directed the exact time and place for one fish out of all the fish in the wide open sea, to come to Peter's awaiting hook! "*Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places*" (Ps. 135:6)! Jesus Christ rules heaven and earth, the seas and all deep places. He prepared that one fish beforehand to locate and pick up and hold in its mouth a coin of the precise amount needed to pay the tribute for Peter and Himself. He sent that one fish to the exact place where Peter would drop his hook. He ordered it to open its already full mouth and take Peter's awaiting hook. And Jesus told Peter to go to the sea and cast in his hook and draw up that little fish, though He did not tell Peter which part of the sea to go to, nevertheless, He directed His steps to the exact spot where that fish would be waiting. In all of this, Christ demonstrated that He has all knowledge and all power. Out of His sovereign power, He provided for both Peter and Himself. In the same way, He orders and provides all things for His people at all times. The smallest details in creation and time, even the seemingly random circumstances of our lives, are ordered by our sovereign Master for the good of His people and His glory (Rom. 8:28)! We should therefore reverence and adore and trust Him for all things, both small and great!

### **Fifth, Christ redeemed His people by the price of His own blood**

Though Christ is free as the sovereign Son of God and King of kings, yet by Himself He paid the ransom price God required to redeem His people from their eternal debt to His law. The tribute that was collected in this account originated from the half-shekel ransom money God told Moses to collect from the people. Our Lord Jesus fulfilled the original law God gave to Israel by Moses that required them to pay a ransom for their souls. Let's consider that law, because it gave rise to the temple tax here in Matthew 17 that Peter paid with the money in the fish's mouth. By His death, the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of the half-shekel ransom that God required of His people when they were numbered.

The law given in Exodus 30:12-16 is this:

*“When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man **a ransom for his soul unto the LORD**, when thou numberest them; **that there be no plague among them**, when thou numberest them. 13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. 14 **Every one that passeth among them that are numbered**, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15 **The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel**, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. 16 And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls” (Exodus 30:12-16).*

The first thing we must understand about redemption is that we are debtors to God. We are in debt to God for our eternal souls. Yet we have nothing to pay. God’s law requires obedience. And it requires compensation for our sins. Therefore, by sinning, we forfeited our lives, our immortal souls. *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23). *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die”* (Ezek. 18:4; Gal. 3:10,12). We therefore owe God our immortal souls. In OT scripture God gave laws that allowed a near kinsman to pay the debt that a relative owed to another man. A person in debt might be required to sell himself as a slave to pay that debt. Now, our sin has put us in debt to God. God is our Creditor. Yet the price God places on our soul is so high that no man can pay what God requires. Payment to God for a soul requires payment of an eternal debt! The price God requires to redeem a man's soul is a price higher than any mere man can pay. Psalm 49 say, *“None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)”* (Ps. 49:7-8).

The second thing we must understand from Ex. 30:12-16 is that every person numbered in Israel must pay a ransom. If a ransom was paid, then the person for

whom it was paid was counted in Israel. If no ransom was paid for any person that was not also part of Israel and numbered.

The third thing we learn from Ex. 30:12-16 is that the ransom was paid to God was an offering that made atonement for their souls so that no plague would come upon them. God is our Creditor. The ransom is an offering. The payment of ransom made atonement to God.

- Only those who were part of the nation of Israel were numbered.
- For all who were numbered in Israel, a ransom must be paid.
- Therefore, only the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel were counted.
- Only those numbered were redeemed by ransom.
- And all for whom a ransom was paid were numbered. You could not be part of the number unless you were part of the chosen nation of Israel and paid the ransom.
- The sum of the ransom was the sum of the people numbered. One ransom payment for every numbered soul.
- No ransom was overpaid or underpaid than what God required for each person.
- Every soul required the same payment: ransom by offering that made atonement to God.
- Payment of ransom to God removed the plague.

Now, in all of this we see the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ, by His death, fulfilled this law. He offered Himself to God. It was an offering of His life: His life for the life of the people. It was a just payment. He made an equivalent restitution to God for their sins. By payment of His blood, the debt His people owed was remitted. God's law received compensation in full satisfaction to justice. The curse was removed. As Peter said, we were redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ*" (1 Pet. 1:19). And Paul, in Gal. 3:13, "*Christ hath redeemed from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*" (Gal. 3:13).

Jesus shed His blood for His people, the sons of God. God chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5). Because they were chosen in Him,



He offered Himself to God, a ransom payment. He took their sins. He shed His precious blood in full payment to God's law for them. "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*" (Eph. 1:7).

As only those in Israel could be counted in the law of the half-shekel ransom, even so, only God's elect, the children of the promise, are "*counted for the seed*" (Rom. 9:8). Just as every one who was counted in Israel must pay a ransom, and only those for whom a ransom was paid were counted, even so, Christ only shed His blood for those God gave to Him. All for whom He died are numbered in the redeemed. All who are not numbered as God's people, are never redeemed by Christ's blood. All who were chosen by God and given to Christ in eternal election, were also redeemed by Christ. There is no difference between the elect of God and the redeemed of God. Jesus said, "*This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*" (John 6:39).

In all that we have considered here in Exodus 30:12-16, we now come to this. Our salvation rests in God's sovereign will, in His sovereign choice, and in Christ's redeeming blood! Jesus did not die for any man who will not be given eternal life. That is His Father's will. "*By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*" (Heb. 9:12). Jesus Christ, as sovereign Lord, humbled Himself to complete the work of redemption for everyone given to Him by His Father. And that is what He did. He finished that work. He obtained that redemption. It is eternal. By one offering, offered once, He eternally redeemed His people. Salvation is not a possibility. It is certain because Christ died! He finished the work. He fulfilled God's will.

But you may ask, how can I know if I am one of God's numbered, ransomed, redeemed people? How can I know if Jesus Christ the Lord paid the ransom of His atoning blood to God for my soul? Our Lord gave this answer in John 6:40. "*This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*" (John 6:40).

Is Christ my only answer to God for my sins and for my obedience? When I think of standing before God in judgment; when I search my conscience for an answer to give to God for myself in that day; when faced with the guilt of my sin in my conscience even now; when I see the foul corruptions of my mind and motives, my words and actions; what answer do I bring to God? Do I run to a decision that I made? Or do I think of a prayer that I prayed? Maybe I think back to feelings I felt? Or do I rather say in my utter helplessness and the barrenness of my soul, **"Lord Jesus, be my answer! Answer for me!"** Is my only answer and standing and hope before God the answer my Redeemer gave and now gives? If Christ is all that I have, then I have God's answer for sinners! I am accepted by God in all of His holiness, because He looks to Christ for me! Christ will answer for me in judgment! But if I have any answer in addition or in place of Christ and Him crucified, I will stand naked before God in all of the guilt of my sins, speechless, with no defense before an angry God whose holiness will demand my eternal damnation! Oh! May God give to you and me today to come to Him even now looking to Christ alone! All whom Christ redeemed are given to come to God by His redeeming blood! To every foul, ungodly sinner looking to Christ, God's own word says, "*When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:6-9).*