

# **Maundy Thursday**

## **To Become a Ransom for Many**

*Mark 10:45*

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# To Become a Ransom for Many

## Scripture

The Gospels contain a large body of material of the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught about all kinds of things such as God, the kingdom, sin, righteousness, and judgment. Scholars and students have spent vast numbers of hours seeking to understand the person and work of Jesus. One of the clearest statements about his work came from the lips of Jesus himself. I would like to draw your attention to Mark 10:45.

Let me read Mark 10:45:

<sup>45</sup> **“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** (Mark 10:45)

## Introduction

In 2004 the movie called *The Passion of the Christ* was released. It is a gruesome depiction of the hours leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion. Those who saw the movie probably still have vivid images in their minds of the suffering endured by Jesus.

At the same time as the release of *The Passion of the Christ*, pastor and author John Piper released a book titled *The Passion of Jesus Christ*. At the conclusion of his introduction Piper says:

When all is said and done, the most crucial question is: Why? Why did Christ suffer and die? Not why in the sense of *cause*, but why in the sense of *purpose*. What did Christ achieve by his passion? Why did he have to suffer so much? What great thing was happening on Calvary for the world?<sup>1</sup>

Piper then says that he has gathered from the New Testament

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, *The Passion of Jesus Christ: Fifty Reasons Why He Came to Die* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 11.

fifty reasons why Christ suffered and died. Indeed, the sub-title of his book is: *Fifty Reasons Why He Came to Die*.

## Lesson

Tonight, let's look at one of the reasons why Christ suffered and died. Christ suffered and died to become a ransom for many.

### I. What is a “Ransom”?

First, what is a “ransom”?

The *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* defines “ransom” as “a price paid to release a captive or seized property, or the act of procuring release in this manner.”<sup>2</sup>

Do you remember the incident a year ago with the Maersk Alabama? Four Somali pirates seized the cargo ship Maersk Alabama about 280 southeast of the Somalia port city of Eyl. Sometime after boarding the pirates managed to seize the captain. At about the same time the crew of the ship then managed to seize the ringleader of the pirates, creating a sense of unease for the three remaining Somali pirates. The crew attempted to ransom the pirate they had captured for the captain, but the exchange went awry and after the crew released their captive, the pirates refused to honor the agreement. They fled in one of the ship's covered lifeboats with nine days of food rations and took the ship's captain with them. Eventually, of course, you remember that the US Navy killed the pirates and rescued the captain.

So, a ransom is the price paid to release a captive or seized property.

### II. Why is a Ransom Necessary?

Second, why is a ransom necessary?

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<sup>2</sup> Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 872.

God created Adam without sin. He put him in the Garden of Eden with only commandment: “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Unfortunately, Adam did eat of the fruit. And he became spiritually cut off from God because of his sin. And all of Adam’s sin passed on to his children.

God was angry because Adam rebelled against him. He did not obey God. So God had to punish Adam. And the penalty for sin was death—both physical death but also spiritual death.

So, a ransom is necessary to pay for sin.

### III. Who Receives the Ransom?

Third, who receives the ransom?

Some say that Satan is the one who receives the ransom. According to this view, the ransom Christ paid to redeem us was paid to Satan, in whose kingdom all people are by virtue of their sin.<sup>3</sup>

But there is no thought in the Bible that Satan had to be paid off to let sinners be saved. What happened to Satan when Christ died was not payment, but defeat. The Son of God became human so “that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:12). There was no negotiation with Satan.

When Jesus says that he came “**to give his life as a ransom,**” the focus is not on who gets the payment. The focus is on his own life as the payment, and on his freedom in serving rather than being served, and on the “**many**” who will benefit from the payment he makes.

So, who receives the ransom? The answer that the Bible gives is that it is God the Father. Notice what the Bible says in the following passages:

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<sup>3</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 581.

- Ephesians 5:2: Christ “gave himself up for us, [an]. . . offering. . . *to God.*”
- Hebrews 9:14: Christ “offered himself without blemish *to God.*”
- Romans 3:23: The whole need for a substitute to die on our behalf is because we have sinned against *God* and fallen short of the glory of *God*.
- Romans 3:19: And because of our sin, “the whole world [is] held accountable *to God.*”
- Romans 8:1: When Christ gives himself as a ransom for us, the Bible says that we are freed from the condemnation of God. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- Romans 2:2 and Revelation 14:7: The ultimate captivity from which we need release is the final “judgment of *God.*”

#### **IV. What Is the Ransom Price?**

Fourth, what is the ransom price?

The ransom price for the release from God’s condemnation is the life of Christ. Not just his life lived, but his life given up in death. Jesus repeatedly said to his disciples, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him” (Mark 9:31). In fact, one of the reasons Jesus loved to call himself “the Son of Man” (over sixty-five times in the Gospels) was that it had the ring of mortality about it. Men can die. That’s why he had to be one. The ransom could only be paid by the Son of Man, because the ransom was life given up in death.

#### **V. How Was the Ransom Paid?**

Fifth, how was the ransom paid?

The ransom was paid voluntarily. It was not coerced from Je-

sus. As Jesus said, “**The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve**” (Mark 10:45a). He needed no service from us. He was the giver, not the receiver. “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). The price was paid freely; it was not forced. He freely chose to rescue us at the cost of his life.

## **VI. How Many Does the Ransom Cover?**

And sixth, how many does the ransom cover?

How many did Christ effectively ransom from sin? He said that he came “**to give his life as a ransom for many**” (Mark 10:45b). Yet not everyone will be ransomed from the wrath of God.

But the *offer* is for everyone. Paul said to Timothy, “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom *for all*” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

No one will be excluded from this salvation who embraces the treasure of the ransoming Jesus Christ.

## **Conclusion**

Have you been ransomed by Jesus Christ? Did he give his life to release you from the condemnation of God?

If you have been ransomed by the blood of Jesus, give thanks to God tonight.

If you have not yet been ransomed by the blood of Jesus, cry out to him tonight and ask him to apply his ransom to you so that you too can be covered by the blood of Christ. Amen.

# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and **membership** in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,  
equip them for their **ministry** in the church  
and life **mission** in the world,  
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons)
2. [www.sermoncentral.com/contributor\\_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181](http://www.sermoncentral.com/contributor_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181)
3. [www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?SpeakerOnly=true&currSection=sermonsspeaker&keyword=Freddy%5EFritz](http://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?SpeakerOnly=true&currSection=sermonsspeaker&keyword=Freddy%5EFritz)

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