

EPHESIANS 1:7a
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 15, May 9, 1999

INTRO: I suppose, having had Easter and two baptisms in between this message and the last one we need a little review. We are going through the book of Ephesians. Chapter 1:1-2 forms the introduction of this letter. We saw that this letter was written by Paul, an apostle by the will of God. Several times in this passage we have found that God has a will. We saw that this letter was addressed to the saints at Ephesus and that saints are the faithful in Christ Jesus. Paul has wished for them both grace and peace. Two wonderful elements available to the Christian.

Verse 3 then begins the first section. It goes from 1:3-3:21. I have called it "The Wonderful Work of Salvation." The second section covers chapters 4-6 which I have called "The Worthy Walk Of The Saved." In this first section we have first the blessed source of our salvation. This source according to verse 3 is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw that we are to bless God, the source of our salvation. Then we began to look at the reasons why we ought to bless Him. First, in 3b it is because He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Second, (v.4) He elected us before the foundation of the world. Third (vv.5-6) He predestined us in eternity past. If you were not here for those messages you might wish to get the tapes. See brother Jake Letkeman and he will help you with that. Here are some very crucial matters to understand. These are matters that affect much of our whole view of salvation.

This morning we want to look at the fourth reason God Almighty is to be blessed. See it as we read verses 7-9 (Read). In these words we have the imagery of slavery. Redemption has to do with slavery. Recently Radio Bible Class, Day of Discovery put out this little booklet, "What Does the Bible Really Say About Slavery?" On page three is this quote, "The story of slavery in North America is a sad chapter in American history." Radio Bible Class writes these words describing the slave as taken from Encyclopedia Britannica, "...he was usually a marginal person in the society in which he was enslaved, and he was often an object of contempt, neglect, abuse, or brutality."

There are stories of the contempt, neglect, abuse and brutality of slavery and they are enough to make the hardest of men weep. We can hardly even imagine slavery. I wonder how many of you have read "Uncle Tom's Cabin"? When we lived in Quesnel there was a rancher just across the road from the school. Every spring we would hear the bawling cows after they had been separated from their calves which were shipped out on semi trucks. Picture an auction arena. Picture a black lady being led on stage for the next sale. Picture her begging that her child should be sold with her. Picture her weeping uncontrollably as she is shackled and led off to her pen and her child is sold to someone else.

Today I am like Moses, "Lord I am not eloquent to speak." If I should but be able to draw the pictures of the many sad stories of slavery I know that even my Mennonite brethren would weep. Now Uncle Tom, from Uncle Tom's Cabin, was a Christian. His master was in debt and had to sell him. Tom was separated from his wife and children and sold like an animal. Year went by on year and yet uncle Tom could not return to his family. His wife worked under kind owners and she was permitted to go to work and she worked to "redeem" her husband, Tom. If she had enough money she could buy her husband back and that is called redemption. Now I can't tell you what happened to Uncle Tom because I would ruin the story for you but if you would like some idea of slavery there is a good book for you to read. But I want us to look at slavery now from a Biblical perspective.

d. God redeemed us in Christ (1:7-9)

This morning we are going to begin a study of redemption as given in Ephesians 1:7-9. Before we do that we need to know something about this word, redemption. There are two words that speak of redemption. One is *exagorazo*, which means to buy back. Here redemption is looked at from the perspective of the buyer. The other is the Greek word *lutrosis*, or as in our text, *apolutrosis*. In this word, redemption is looked at more from the perspective of the one who has to sell on payment of a price. It is a releasing on payment of a ransom price. The one who sells has no choice when the price offered is big

enough. We will be dealing with this price in a later point.

1) The place of redemption - in Him

Now we are ready to look at this text. It begins like this, "In Him we have redemption..." What we must consider first, as this is what the text does, is that our redemption is *in Christ*. He is the place of redemption. It is so crucial that one understands that salvation is not in anyone but Christ. Listen to D. Martin Lloyd Jones, "You ask a person: 'Do you think you are a Christian?' and the reply one so frequently gets is: 'Well, I am trying to be one,' or 'I am trying to become one'. Such a statement is a clear indication that this first primary statement in connection with the way of salvation has never been understood" (1:149). Redemption is not in Budha or Mohammed, nor is it in trying to be a Christian or in hoping to become one. It is IN Christ.

Now some people think they are going to heaven because they believe in God. But the Scriptures tell us of the demons also believe and tremble (James 2:19). Some say they believe Jesus died for the world, was buried and rose again, therefore they hope they will go to heaven some day. But my question to such people is, "Do you believe He died for you and has He taken your sins away and given you His righteousness?" You see, it is a real personal thing. It is to as many as received Him that He gave the right to become the sons of God. It is in Him. It is in Christ that we are saved.

When we ask if you are saved we are not saying, "Do you believe in God?" Nor are we saying, "Do you believe Jesus died, was buried and rose again?" All of that must be. You cannot be saved without either of

those but then one must receive Him and understand that when I receive Him He takes my sins away and gives to me His righteousness.

2) The people of redemption - we

This text does not spend time on a matter we already know and that is that we were in bondage to sin. We were slaves of sin. You see, this slavery has to do with sin and the tyrant master is Satan. Satan is in the business of obtaining slaves. He will do anything, anywhere to anybody at any time in order to make a slave of that person. He does so by cunning trickery and craft. All he has to do to gain possession of anyone is get them to sin. His task is not big. Man is born with a nature bent on sinning. His task is, it seems to me, terribly unfair to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the rule book for acquiring slaves he can use any means he desires. He can cheat; he can lie, he can bribe, he can use temptations of every description. If the truth helps he can use it, though "me thinks" he hardly knows how. And once he gets someone to sin he is tyrant master of that person. You and I have sinned and thus been sold to the devil. We became his slaves. All this the text takes for granted.

We all have had experience with the tyranny of sin. Sin is a tyrant master. In my life I think back to my cigarette habit. What a tyrant it was. I did not want to smoke but yet I seemed to have every urge to smoke. It was a tyrant master until Christ set me free. I did not become free from that habit because God took it away. I still have it from time to time. No I overcame it because I wanted to please God more than I desired smoking. I came to hate this sin with a passion because it kept me from pleasing my new master. But thanks be to God, through Christ I was set free.

Someone has said that to get rid of a sinful habit you have to throw the whole thing out. If you do it a little bit at a time you're still in trouble. If you take a little bit off of the word habit, say take the h off of habit and you still have abit. Then take the a off of abit and you still have a bit left. Take the b off of bit and you still have it. So best is to get rid of it all together.

Now I want you to notice something with regard to the time of our redemption. The text says in Him we HAVE redemption. The tense of the verb is present and the mood is a statement of fact. It is a declaration of a fact that is true right now. It is not that we might be, could be or should be. If you are a born again believer you are a redeemed person right this very moment! I heard just recently that when the American slaves were set free by a declaration of the president of the United States of America that some slaves remained slaves for several decades. They were free as far as the US law was concerned but they did not act on their freedom. They did not claim their freedom. Maybe you are caught under some stubborn habit. You have heard that you have been set free but in actual experience you are in bondage, you are a slave to some area of wrongdoing. You need not go on in this way. There is freedom for you because you have been declared free from sin's penalty and its power.

3) The price of redemption - His blood

In the OT a slave could be redeemed for a price. The price for a slave is called ransom money. Now I mentioned earlier that there are two ways of viewing redemption. There is redemption from the viewpoint of the buyer. That is the word *exagorazo*. It is to buy someone out. Then redemption may

be viewed from the viewpoint of the seller. The word here is *lutroo*. It means to release on the receipt of the ransom price.

The word in our text in Ephesians is *apolutrosis*, a strengthened form of *lutroo*. Now look at 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. This text tells us that we were bought at a price. That price is a ransom price (See Matt. 20:27-28). Now turn to 1 Peter 1:17-19 to see the ransom price. The price is the blood of God's only Son. It does not say that the price was His death but His blood, which of course results in death.

There are those who object to the Biblical doctrine of the blood. All those who object do not understand the Bible doctrine of salvation and the horrific price God Almighty paid for your redemption and mine. It was the ultimate price.

(Give story of John Griffith briefly.)

CONCL: This morning I ask you, my friend, have you been redeemed from the awful penalty of sin? If not, today you are on the path to destruction. I know you don't want to go to that place we call hell. The price has been paid for you. If you would like to receive Him this morning I want to give you that opportunity. But you may be here this morning, redeemed from the penalty of sin but caught in the vice of the power of sin. Maybe you are enslaved to some sin and you cannot come free. I want you to know that I would be glad to talk to you and pray with you.

I remind you this morning of the price of your redemption. I have not met a man yet, whether criminal or otherwise, who has a son who would be willing to allow the life blood to be drained from his body for any price he might wish. And when I ask them that question and they have no price I say, God Almighty had a price. He loves you so much that He was willing to allow man to drain away His only Son's life blood. It was earth's darkest hour. Nature mourned with God when He paid this price of all prices, and darkness fell on this earth for three hours. But just three days later Jesus

arose from the dead that you and I might rise above sin. He lives today to give us life. We have redemption IN HIM and we are IN HIM and there is no reason why we should not walk in newness of life.