

The Ephesians Series
Christ's Role in the Drama of Redemption (Part 1)
September 16, 2007
Tom Pennington, Pastor
Countryside Bible Church

This week I read a story that was originally taken from Thomas Costain's history called *The Three Edwards*. It describes the life of a man you probably never heard of, a man named Reynald III. Reynald III was a fourteenth century duke in what is now Belgium. Reynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt, threw Reynald from the throne, but instead of killing his brother, he captured him and built him a room in Newark Castle. And he promised his brother that he could regain his title, his crown, his property, as soon as he was able to leave the room that had been built for him. Now this wouldn't have been difficult for most of us, because the room had several windows; it had a door near normal size, and none of them were locked or barred in any way. The problem was Reynald's size.

Reynald was grossly overweight, and so to gain his freedom and his crown, all he needed to do was lose sufficient weight to be able to exit the door of the room in which he was held. But Edward knew his older brother, and he knew him well. And so, each day, he sent his brother a large variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Reynald grew larger and larger. When Edward was accused of cruelty, his response was this "My brother's not a prisoner. He can leave whenever he chooses." Reynald stayed in that room for ten years, and he only was able to exit it after his brother's death. And his health was so ruined by that time, that a year later, Reynald died. He was a prisoner of his own appetite.

You know, as I thought about that illustration, I thought, you know, there is a true portrait of all mankind. There is a portrait of what all of us were at one time. We were slaves of sin, without power to rid ourselves, or extricate ourselves from that slavery. Our only hope was redemption. That's the theme that we come to today in our study of Ephesians 1. I invite you to turn there with me again as we continue our study of this great letter of the apostle Paul.

Paul begins this letter with the single richest, most profound sentence in all of his writings, I believe. In fact, I think by the time we're done you may even agree with me that this may in fact be the most profound single sentence in human history, because it tracks for us the great eternal purpose of God. It opens, if you will, the mind of God to us, and we see His great plan of eternal redemption. It runs from verse 3 all the way down through verse 14. It is essentially an outburst

Available online at: www.countrysidebible.org
Copyright © 2007 Tom Pennington. All rights reserved.
Unedited transcript for personal use only.

of praise to God for His eternal plan of redemption. Although it's only one sentence in the Greek text, it can be divided into three units of thought, or we could say three stanzas. Those stanzas are marked by the repetition of a refrain, or a chorus Paul repeats three times. "to the praise of His glory".

The first stanza in verses 4 through 6 describes for us the role of the Father in the eternal plan of redemption. The second stanza in verses 7 through 12, the role of the Son. And in verses 13 and 14 we have the third stanza, the role of the Holy Spirit. We learned in verses 4 through 6 that the Father's primary role in the eternal plan of redemption was sovereign election, and we studied that at great length, and we'll not go there again today.

But today, we come to Paul's expression of praise to God the Son. In verses 7 through 12 Paul outlines the primary role that the Son had in our redemption. Let me read these great verses for you. You follow along as I read, beginning in verse 7. Paul writes,

In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

Now in verse 7 you'll notice that Paul's perspective changes. Verses 4 through 6 occurred in eternity past, in a council among the Trinity to choose certain ones unto salvation. In verses 7 through 12, these verses occur in human history. In fact, they occurred during the lifetime of each of us who are in Christ because these verses outline for us the blessings or benefits that come because of Christ's role in redemption, a number of blessings or benefits that are ours because of what Christ has accomplished in His great work. This morning we will examine only the first of these benefits.

The first great benefit of the work of Christ that we see and experience is redemption. Christ purchased our redemption. Notice verse 7. "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." In Him, that is, Christ, we have redemption. In other words, because of our connection to Christ as our representative, we

have right now, present tense, redemption. Redemption is one of those key Biblical words that frankly has fallen on hard times. It is today out of fashion. There's a reason for that. It's because over the last ten to fifteen years there has been a trend in evangelical churches to jettison the terminology of the Bible.

Today in many churches, you will, by design, never hear words like justification, sanctification, or redemption. Now on the surface, the reason some pastors give for avoiding words like this is that the unchurched people they are trying to reach simply don't connect with them, don't understand them. Now, I'm all for understanding, although I'm sure I'm not always clear. I have a goal of being clear, and being understood. But there's far more at stake in this exodus, this avoidance of biblical terminology, than that. You see, these words have belonged to the church for more than 2000 years. First, even in some cases, in the Old Testament. Then in the New Testament they were received by us in Greek. And then eventually the church received them in the Latin translation of the Bible, the Latin Vulgate.

And eventually, they came to us translated from the Greek text into English. And these words have been passed to us in the English translations that we have received. Why is that? Because those words, as difficult as they might be for some, are accurate translations of the words the original authors of Scripture used. They best reflect what God intended to communicate. Now, certainly, they need to be explained, as with any word that we have not encountered before. But I believe people are bright enough to learn a new word. It's really an insult to their intelligence to say I can't use a word because they may not understand it.

Now, what's really going on behind the scenes with this avoidance of the biblical terminology? I don't want to take a lot of time here, but let me take you to a man by the name of R. L. Dabney. R. L. Dabney was a great American theologian of the 1800s, and he wrote a book for pastors entitled *Evangelical Eloquence*, and in that book, Dabney described a process that occurs over and over again in church history, and it's occurring right now. That process is a decline from orthodoxy to false teaching. A church doesn't wake up one day and is orthodox, and wake up the next day and be heterodox, be contrary to false teaching.

So how does it happen? Dabney says this is how it happens. In the first generation, the church presents biblical truth in what he called biblical dress. In other words, the church teaches biblical truth in biblical terminology, in biblical language.

The second generation, he says, tends to present biblical truth, they still hold to the truth, but they present the biblical truth in secular dress. That is, they take the biblical truth, and they put it in non-biblical language. They avoid biblical language, and present it in contemporary jargon. Now, I'm not talking about old outdated words versus updated words. I'm not using Elizabethan English here. I'm talking about a deliberate bias to avoid Biblical language.

And Dabney said, once you've taken those two steps, the final stage is this. You simply abandon biblical truth altogether. And sadly, he was exactly right. We see that happening in contemporary American Christianity. So, we as individuals and as a church ought to cling to biblical words, words like "redemption". There's no need to abandon that word. It's still used in our culture. It's used in movie titles for goodness sake, and certainly it's a word that's understood in the culture.

But we need to make sure that we understand what this word means in a biblical context. The Greek word that's translated "redemption" originally came from Sanskrit. It goes that far back, and it was a word in Sanskrit that meant to cut or to clip. In its original setting, it meant to free someone by cutting their bonds, their ropes or the chains that bind them. Then it came into Greek as a familiar word to all Greek students. There are a few Greek students here. We have some seminary students. It's the Greek word "loo-o", from which it's built. The word means "to loose". So, to redeem then, listen carefully, simply means "to deliver or rescue someone through the payment of a ransom".

In secular Greek, when it was used of people, it was most often used in the context of literal bonds, someone being bound with chains or ropes. It was used of criminals. It was used of prisoners of war, and often, in the papyrii, which I spent six months of my life in graduate school translating, it was used of slavery. That is, the rescue of slaves from their slavery by the payment of a ransom.

So, the implication behind this word redemption is very clear. The word picture is clear. Before Christ saved you, Christian, you were literally a "prisoner". You were bound by your own sin, as was I. We were slaves of sin. This message appears throughout the Scripture. Go back to the Old Testament. Proverbs 5:22, we read, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin." Isn't that how sin is? The bait is cast, and once taken, we're enslaved. John 8:34, our Lord put it this way. "... Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

In Romans 6:16, Paul says, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

In what sense are we slaves to our sin? Well, Paul puts it this way in Titus 3:3, reminding us as Christians what we used to be. We also once were enslaved to various “cravings and pleasures”. There’s the slavery, slaves. In 2 Peter 2:19 Peter writes that false teachers promise their followers “freedom”, while they themselves are “slaves of corruption”. Now listen to what he says. Listen to Peter, who was taught by our Lord. “For by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.” If you are overcome by something, then you are in the power of that thing. You are enslaved.

Before Christ, we lived our lives thinking that we were free, but in fact, we were slaves, slaves to our own sin. And more than that, from God’s perspective, not only were we slaves, but we were condemned slaves. We were criminal slaves, condemned to eternal death. In the mind of God, the sentence had already been passed. The verdict had been made, the sentence passed, and you and I, in the mind of God, before Christ, were, as it were, living on death row. It’s a startling thought.

We studied recently about the judgment seat, the Great White Throne Judgment. We studied about hell. It’s a chilling thought to think that in the mind of God, the person who has not yet embraced His Son is already condemned, as the apostle John says in John 3, already sitting under the verdict of guilty. The sentence has been passed and merely awaiting the sentence to be carried out. But from all of that, Christ has redeemed us. He loosed us. He delivered, or rescued us, and He did it through the payment of a ransom.

Now, this immediately brings us to a very important question. To whom did Christ pay this ransom? You know, sometimes in the history of the church there has been a wrong answer to that question. Perhaps you have even heard this answer taught. There are those who say that Christ paid the ransom to Satan. That’s absolutely false. That is called by theologians “the ransom to Satan theory”. Listen, the New Testament is clear. At the cross, Jesus defeated Satan. He trampled Satan under His feet. He didn’t pay him anything. What the Bible teaches is that the payment, the ransom payment, was made not to Satan, but was made to God the Father.

Why was that necessary? Because the Bible teaches that you and I have broken God’s law, and as a result, we have become slaves to that sin, and we have come under the curse of the law.

What's the curse of the law? What did the law demand from the one who sins? "The soul that sins, it shall die," death. And not simply physical death, but eternal death, the second death as the apostle John calls it. So, Christ comes and He pays the price to deliver us from that curse, the curse of eternal death that we deserve, that our sins had earned.

Whose law had been broken? Who had pronounced the sentence of death upon us? None other than God Himself. So, understand that Christ paid the ransom price to redeem us from our slavery to sin and the curse that that sin brought, the curse of eternal death. And He paid that price to God the Father. He released us, set us free from the bondage of sin and the curse of the law, by means of the ransom which He paid on Calvary.

Now, beloved, think about that for a moment. If we are in Christ, then He has made us free from the verdict of guilty that hung over our heads because of our sin. He has delivered us from the execution of the sentence that we deserve. And He's even rescued us, the Bible says, from the daily control of sin, the power of sin in our lives. In Revelation 1:5, the apostle John says He loosed us from our sins in His own blood. Freed us! We're not slaves anymore. Paul comments on this in an extended way in Romans 6. Turn there with me for a moment. Romans 6, in verse 17, Paul says, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, [that's what you used to be before Christ, you were slaves of sin] you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed."

Let me paraphrase that. He is saying. You used to be slaves of sin, but you came to really embrace the truth of the gospel. And as a result, verse 18,

[you were] freed from sin. And] you became [instead] slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. [I'm trying to help you understand this.] For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness [before you were a Christian] resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now [that you've been freed from that sin] present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free about righteousness. [you didn't owe righteousness anything, you were the slaves of sin] Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed?" [Because, all they gave you was death.] That's all you got from that slavery. Verse 22, "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God"

Now stop there a moment. Think about that with me. Before Christ, we were enslaved to sin. When we genuinely come to Christ, we become slaves of God. You realize that freedom is a myth? Every single person in this world is enslaved to something or someone. It is either to sin or it is to God. “Now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.”

Turn to Galatians 3. Here, he talks about how we’ve been freed through our redemption from the curse of the law. Not only from the slavery, the controlling power of sin, but also from the curse that comes with sin. Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.” What was the curse of the law? The death penalty for our violation of it. He freed us from that curse. How? “... having become a curse for us.” He died in our place. He took the curse of the law, which was death, for us. We have redemption. Paul says, back in Ephesians 1, “... we have redemption in Christ.” It is a present reality.

What an amazing statement. I wish you could get your arms around it. I wish you would think about that this week and meditate on the reality that that word describes. That you were a slave. If you’re a Christian, you were a slave to sin, but no longer. Now, by God’s grace, you are a slave to God. And that’s a wonderful slavery. Remember what Christ said?

“Come [un]to Me, all [you that labor] ... and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn [of] ... Me, for I am ... [meek and gentle] in heart, ... for My yoke is easy, and My burden ... light.”

Every person here is under someone’s yoke. It’s either the hard grueling, controlling, enslaving yoke of sin, or it is the easy, light yoke of Christ.

But Paul takes us a little deeper here into this rich biblical concept. After he tells us that we have redemption, notice that he finishes verse 7 with three qualifiers. And in these three qualifiers, he helps us further understand this concept of redemption. First of all, notice, he identifies the “inconceivable cost”, the inconceivable cost of our redemption. He says, we have redemption through His blood. That was the cost. Now, there’s far more to this simple phrase than meets the eye. It is filled with the richness of the Old Testament sacrificial system. And while I’m thankful to God we don’t still live under that system, and we’re not here this morning to offer some animal sacrifice to God; nevertheless, our distance from it keeps us from fully appreciating what Paul is saying here. So, let me take you back for a moment to the Old Testament era.

Imagine for a moment that you were an Old Testament believer, and you wanted to offer a sin offering. You knew there was sin in your heart and life. You knew that it deserved God's wrath and His justice, and you wanted to deal with that sin. Here's what you would have had to do. You would have gone to the temple. You would have taken to that temple a physically perfect animal, an animal without spot or without blemish. And you would have brought that animal, and the animal depended upon your own financial situation. There was allowance for those who didn't have much resource. For those who had resources, the animal would be a lamb or some other animal. And you would bring that animal to the forecourt of the temple.

And there, you would tell the priest that you were there to make a sin offering. The next thing that would have happened is, there in the forecourt of the temple, you would have taken your hands and in great ceremony, you would have placed your hands on the head of that animal. That was symbolic of the reality that you were now having that animal serve as your representative. That animal represented you.

The next thing that would have happened shocks most of our modern sensibilities because you, as the worshiper, would have taken the knife in your own hand, and have slit the throat of that animal. And as the blood poured out of that animal, the priest would be there with a bowl, catching that blood in a bowl. And then he would walk a few steps away, where only the priest could go, there where the altar was, and he would have taken that bowl of blood and splattered it across that altar. And then he would have taken the remaining pieces of animal, the pieces of animal that that particular offering required for burnt offering. He would have taken those pieces of that animal, and he would have thrown them up in that all-consuming, constant fire on top of the altar, and that animal would have been consumed.

The point of the entire process, and especially the laying hands of the worshiper on the head of the animal, made it clear that this animal was dying in your place. Then the guilty worshiper would actually, with his own hand, kill the animal as his substitute. It was crystal clear to an Old Testament worshiper that an innocent animal had died in his place, the one who deserved to die. And it couldn't just be killed in any way. To illustrate the principle of life for life, the animal, for example, could never be strangled. Instead, its blood had to be shed. Without the shedding of blood, the Bible says, there is no forgiveness of sins. Why was that? Why did the animal's blood have to be shed?

Well, Leviticus 17:14 explains. It says, “For *as for the* life of all flesh, its blood is *identified* with its life.” The blood identifies its life. And so, the pouring out of the blood of the sacrifice pictured the pouring out of its life. The innocent dying in the place of the guilty.

But an animal, as you know, could never have been an adequate sacrifice for human beings made in the image of God. Hebrews 10:4 says, “... it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin” So instead of that animal, eventually Christ had to come and pour out His life, shed His blood, in violent death. And He did so in the place of, or as the substitute for, sinners. His life as the ransom for yours. This was the reason Christ came to earth. He said it with His own lips. You remember Mark 10:45. “The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve.” Serve how? To give His life as a ransom for many. He came to give His life as a ransom, and thank God, He did it. And now, we have been redeemed through His death in our place, as our substitute.

In Romans 3, turn there for a moment. Paul puts it very clearly, as he turns to the issue of justification. Sinners declared righteous before God on the basis of Christ and His life and death, and he says in Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned, no exceptions, all have sinned, and we all fall short of the glory of God.” We don’t come close to being what God designed us to be. But we are justified, verse 24 says as a gift, we are declared righteous by God as a gift by His grace. Now, how can He do that? Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. That’s how He did it.

In 1 Corinthians 1:30, we looked at this several weeks ago, it says by God’s doing, you are in Christ Jesus. Salvation is monergistic. That is, one working, God’s doing. You are in Christ Jesus. And He became to us, Christ did, redemption. Christ became our redemption. But probably the most famous text in the New Testament on this issue of redemption is in Peter’s first epistle. Turn there with me. First Peter 1:18. Peter says,

knowing that you were not redeemed with ... [a ransom of silver or gold,] perishable things like ... [that,] from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but [instead, the ransom for your life, to buy you out of slavery, to buy you away from the curse of the law was] ... precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. [He says, understand that all that those Old Testament animal sacrifices did was point forward to the Lamb who is Jesus Christ. And through Him, by His ransom, by His life being poured out, by His blood being shed, you have been redeemed.]

You know, honestly, as Christians, we tend to think of forgiveness as a pretty easy thing, don't we? I mean, why does God have to do all this. It's easy to forgive. Just say it. Just say, I forgive you. But that's us. We don't even begin to understand the problem that our forgiveness created for God. Because God is a perfectly holy and righteous being, who cannot allow the guilty sinner just to walk away, because His holiness and justice demands that every sin be punished. It's a huge problem that forgiving sinful people presented to God. The only way that He could accomplish it was through the sacrificial death of the only innocent one, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when Paul says that we were redeemed through the blood of Christ, understand that is like a New Testament shorthand. He means by that, that Christ secured our spiritual rescue by means of His violent death on the cross, by pouring out His life for ours. One life, one man's blood shed for the benefit of so many.

In West Africa in 1927 a blood specimen was taken from a man named Assibi. He was sick with yellow fever. There was no vaccination for yellow fever at the time, but there was a doctor who was trying to come across a vaccine that would help. A monkey had just arrived from India and was inoculated with a specimen taken from Assibi. The man recovered, but the monkey died of the disease, and so for many years, vaccine, all the vaccine that was manufactured to combat yellow fever, came from the original strain of virus obtained from this one man, Assibi, in West Africa in 1927.

Through most of the 1900s this was true. It passed from one laboratory to another, through repeated cultures, constant multiplication. The blood of one man in West Africa offered immunity to yellow fever to millions of people across the face of the earth. You and I have been rescued from the disease that's far more terrifying, and has far more eternal consequences, the disease of sin, by the blood of one man, our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the inconceivable cost of our redemption.

The second qualifier that Paul uses gives us the incredible results, incredible results. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. You notice the phrase 'forgiveness of our trespasses' follows the word redemption as a kind of appositive? In other words, this second phrase defines or enriches our understanding of the first. So, forgiveness is the immediate result of our redemption, of payment being made to God for our redemption.

Now, to fully understand this or appreciate it, let's look first at the word "trespass". The English word trespass can be a bit misleading, because we think of that as going onto someone's property where we don't belong. In the New Testament, the word trespass refers to "a deviation from the

path of truth, the path of righteousness". God has given us in His law the path we ought to walk on as human beings. When we deviate from that path, when we take a step away from that path, that is a "trespass". It's a "conscious, deliberate false step out of the path that we know", because the law of God has been written on all of our hearts, hasn't it. When we step away from that path deliberately, that is a trespass. Notice here it's plural. In other words, it doesn't just happen once in our lives. It is a series and succession of individual sinful actions of step after step after step, as we step away from the path of God. It describes who we really are.

In chapter 2 verse 1, Paul says that we were, before Christ, dead in trespasses and in sins. That's the realm in which we lived. We were, to quote Isaiah, like sheep who have all gone astray, each pursuing our own way. We're not interested in God's path. We want our path. That's where we were. That's a trespass. We may do many things that appear good. You know, people deviate from the path of God, and they may do lots of good things. Have you ever thought about this? You know, here's a person over here off of the path of God, doing wonderful things as far as the world sees. And then we think, boy that's good.

No, it's not good. Those things are bad because those things are designed to maintain our rebellion against the only sovereign God and His path and His laws. We've chosen to leave the path, and the fact that we may do good along the way doesn't change the act of rebellion--of leaving the path of the law of God. But God, motivated by His grace forgives our trespasses through Christ dying as our ransom.

Think about the word forgiveness for a moment. We use it all the time as Christians. Have you ever thought about what it really means in reference to God? What does it mean that God has forgiven you? Well, when we say that God has forgiven us, we are really talking about God having done two things.

We're saying, number one, He has removed the verdict of guilty from us. You see, in God's court, we've all been declared guilty, and when God forgives us, He removes that guilty verdict.

And secondly, He cancels the sentence of death that that guilty verdict deserved. So, when we say God forgave us, what we mean is, God is not going to consider us guilty, as we deserve to be held guilty, and He's not going to carry out the punishment that that guilt deserves. And He does it forever. Understand this, that if Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior this morning, then for Christ's sake, every single sinful thought and attitude you have ever allowed in your mind, every sinful word you have ever spoken, every sinful deed you have ever done is forgiven. That

includes past, present, and future. Notice Paul doesn't say He forgave you, past tense, although he does say that in some places. Here, he says we have, present tense, forgiveness. We live in a state of forgiveness. God has removed the legal guilt from our offenses, and He's cancelled the penalty those offenses deserve.

We have been, maybe this is the best way to understand Biblical forgiveness, we have been pardoned by God. We walk out of the prison, free. It's an irreversible decision. There's no double jeopardy in the court of God. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the East is from the West, so far has He put our sins from us" . Isaiah 44:22 "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud...." Or I love Micah 7:19. "I have cast [your] ... sins into the depths of the [ocean]...."

They're lost; they're gone, never to be found again. That's forgiveness. But here's the good news. Forgiveness doesn't come by itself. It comes as part of a package that theologians call "justification". And the wonder of wonders is that God has not only declared you innocent, free of all charges, no longer guilty, that would be good. But that wouldn't be all we need, because we could mess up still in our future. But instead of just declaring us innocent, God has actually gone the positive direction and declared us, what? righteous. God says you're as righteous as His Son, because He looks at you through the record of His Son's perfect righteousness. He has credited to your account, Christian, the perfect life of Jesus Christ. The life you should have lived, God sees you as having lived. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. That's the incredible result, the forgiveness of our trespasses.

Lastly, notice the "inexhaustible supply". The final qualifier that Paul adds is, "according to the riches of His grace". Here is the spring from which our redemption and forgiveness flow. They flow from the heart of God. God is by nature full of grace, and He delights in showing that grace to us. What is grace, by the way? We define it as unmerited favor, that's okay. That's not a bad definition. But let me give you a full definition.

"Grace", by biblical definition, is "God doing good to those who deserve exactly the opposite". And God delights to do it. Notice, He forgives according to the riches of His grace. Look at those words "according to". Those are very important words. Imagine for a moment there are two wealthy men. And these wealthy men both give to a charity. One of these wealthy men gives a mere pittance of what he's really worth to this charity. He has given out of or from his riches. The other wealthy man gives a huge gift to this charity. He has given according to his riches, big difference. You see, God forgives us and redeems us according to the riches of His

grace. He's not stingy with His grace. He lavishes it upon us. God has plenty of grace. John Eady writes "much grace is expended. Many sinners of all lands, ages, and crimes are pardoned, fully pardoned, often pardoned, but infinite wealth of grace remains behind." God never runs short of grace. He doesn't in this life, and He never will in eternity, never touches the riches of His grace. It's never depleted

In 2006, for the twelfth consecutive year, Bill Gates was named the world's wealthiest man. Forbes Magazine says that at 50 years old, Bill Gates is worth an estimated fifty billion dollars. Now, imagine if Bill Gates wanted to spend his entire estate during his lifetime. It's hard to do, because if he lives to the average age of men in our country, that's 74, that means Bill Gates has 24 years left to live. That means, if he were going to spend it in that time, he would need to spend a little more than two billion dollars a year. That's 173 million dollars a month, 5.8 million dollars a day, which is 241,000 dollars an hour, 4,000 dollars a minute.

Now, obviously, Bill Gates will never exhaust the riches that he's accumulated in this life. But the riches of our God make Bill Gates look like a beggar. And our God is rich in grace. He can give you all the grace you need and never even touch His supply, never exhausted. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace.

I love what Martyn Lloyd-Jones says about this passage. Listen, as I close this morning, to Lloyd-Jones. He says,

there's nothing in heaven or earth which is in any way comparable to this, that I can say the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me, gave His life a ransom for me. His blood was shed that I might be forgiven. Oh, the riches of His grace. Oh, the abundance of His love." [Lloyd-Jones counsels,] "Go to the cross. Stand there and look at it. Survey it with Isaac Watts. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Stay there, [Lloyd-Jones says,] until you see that you have never had or ever will have a vestige, a shred of righteousness, that all your goodness is as filthy rags. But see your sins laid on Him and see Him paying the price, the purchase price of your redemption, your salvation. And then fall at His feet, worship Him and praise Him and give yourself to Him saying, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Let's pray together.

Father, that's how we feel. That's the response of our hearts this morning. Love, so amazing, so divine demands my soul, my life, my all.

Father, I pray that You would help us to think on, to meditate on, even as we read from the Psalm this morning, Your work of redemption. Help us to contemplate the riches of Your grace, the slavery that we were once in, from which You have purchased us by the death of Your Son. Father, stir our hearts to obedience and love and faithfulness to You.

And Lord, I pray this morning for the person who is enslaved to their own sin. They know it, no matter what professions they've made. You've worked in their heart. You've brought the realization, Father, of the nature of their sin before You, and the slavery they're in. Lord, I pray that this morning would be the morning that they would turn from the slavery of sin to Him who said, come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke. Father, may they take the yoke of Christ. May they turn to Him in faith and repentance and find Him to be a loving gracious master.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.