

## **The Wonder of Redemption**

**1 Peter 1:18-21**

**Pastor John Miller**

I want you to follow with me in your Bibles as I read verse 18 down to verse 21. And Peter says, “Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things...”—and he names those corruptible things that we’re not redeemed with—“...silver and gold, from your vain...”—or empty—“...manner of living received by tradition from your fathers....”—or given from your fathers. But we were redeemed, verse 19, “...with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained...”—verse 20—“...before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you; by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory, that your faith and your hope might be in God.”

In Mark’s gospel chapter 10, verse 45, Jesus gave us kind of a purpose statement as to why He came into the world. If you want to know why Jesus came, ask Jesus why He came. Amen? Jesus said that “I did not come to be ministered unto but to minister.” Some translations have, “I didn’t come to be served but I came to serve.” And then He made this statement. Listen carefully. Jesus said, “I came to give My life as a ransom.” And there it is. “I came to give my life as a ransom for many.” The Bible teaches very clearly that your salvation was a ransom. We use the term “redemption” or “rescue.” That Jesus came from heaven, gave His life upon the cross to ransom us or redeem us or save us from sin and from the judgment of sin upon our lives.

Now Peter’s giving us in these verses a motivation to live holy lives. And I remind you last Sunday we saw in verse 13 that the coming again of Jesus Christ was the basis for motivation that we live holy lives. Then in verse 15 we saw the very holiness of God. God said in Leviticus, “Be ye holy for...”—what?—“...I am holy.” And if we’re born of God, then we’re going to have the nature of God, and we’re going to live holy lives. So motivation number 1, Jesus Christ is returning; motivation number 2, God Himself is holy; and motivation number 3 was in verse 17, the fear of the Lord, where Peter said that we pass the time of our sojourning here in reverence or fear. That we live with a reverential fear of God.

Now this morning as we move into verses 18 to 21, we get our fourth and final motivation to live holy lives. And that fourth and final motivation is in verses 18 and 19. It is our redemption. He introduces the subject, verse 18. “Forasmuch as you know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver and gold, from your empty manner of living, received by tradition from your fathers...”—and here it is, verse 19—“...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” So we move from the coming of Christ, the holiness of God, the fear of the Lord to the idea that we’ve been redeemed. We’ve been bought with a price; we belong to God.

Now redemption is one of the greatest themes in the entire Bible. One theologian I read—he said, “If you cut the Bible anywhere, it bleeds. It is red with redemptive truth.” And it’s sad,

because in a lot of liberal churches today, they've taken songs about the blood of Jesus Christ out of their hymnals. They don't sing,

What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus;

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! precious is the flow

That washed me white as snow;

No other fount I know,

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Amen? And the pastors don't preach on the blood or the death of Jesus Christ. But you "cut the Bible anywhere, it bleeds. It is red with redemptive truth." Old Testament, New Testament—it's all about God's redemptive plan in saving mankind. And so I would say redemption is central to Christianity. It's probably the single most-beloved term in the Christian's vocabulary.

Now there are four words that describe the cross. We're not going to look at all four, but I want you to be aware of them. Number 1, the word "substitution." That's the essence of the cross; God gave Himself in your place. Substitution is the heart of the cross.

The second word is "propitiation." A big word that basically means that when Jesus died, He died for the Father, because His law had been violated and broken, so He died to satisfy, to propitiate God the Father. Not only did Jesus Christ die for sinners, He died for the Father; to propitiate or satisfy the demands of His law, which has been broken.

There's a third word that describes the cross, and that is the word "reconciliation." And it means that we were enemies of God. We were estranged from God, we were running from God. And God came and died on the cross to bring us back, to reconcile us back to God.

And then we come to the fourth word, the word we're going to look at this morning. "Redemption." Substitution, propitiation, reconciliation and now, redemption. It's wonderful to know that God created us. And I believe the Bible clearly teaches we were created by God, in His image and likeness. But the Bible also teaches us that we are redeemed as God's people. That we are bought by God, and we belong to Him. And so we're created by God, and we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now what exactly do we mean by the word "redemption"? Before we unpack these verses, I

want to explain the word a little further. There're three kinds of senses to this word. Number 1, it means to buy or to purchase or to pay a price for something. To buy, to purchase or to pay the price for something. Number 2, it means to buy out. So it means to go into the marketplace and to buy and to take it out.

Yesterday I did something as a grandfather I've never done before. I took my six-year-old granddaughter to Toys-R-Us. If I look a little tired today, I'm exhausted. I've always heard the stories of grandparents taking their grandkids to Toys-R-Us. I go, "Ahh, I want to do that. Sounds really cool, you know?" So I had Madison for about three hours yesterday. I go, "Madison, I want to take you to Toys-R-Us and you can buy whatever you want." I shouldn't have said that. She wanted the biggest, coolest amazing—You know they have life-size Barbie dolls there? Like \$6,000, you know. Like this is insane. And I've never seen so many toys in all my—I haven't been to Toys-R-Us for like 35 years. I didn't know that many toys existed! It was aisle after aisle. You ever seen a grown man cry in a toy store? I'm like, "Can we go home now? [crying] Madison, please. Just buy this little doll. Look how nice it is. You can comb her hair." She says, "Poppa, we gotta see everything before we decide." Three hours in Toys-R-Us! It's like, "Oh Lord, have mercy on my soul." So finally she picked her little doll out, you know. The first one we saw when we went in. We could have gotten it right off the bat! And then I bought a kite. And we went home, we flew kites and played dolls all afternoon. So I was very cool. But we bought something, and I was never so happy as when I was paying for that sucker and getting out of that cash register. And "Thank God I'm free at last"; you know?

But that's what it means to redeem. It means you buy something, you take it out of the market and then you release it. Now why all those terms? In the Roman world—the Roman world was glutted with slaves. 50 million slaves in the Roman empire. And so they had slave markets. You'd actually go into the marketplace, buy a slave and that slave became a living tool, your property. Life and death were in the power of the master. And you could take that slave and do whatever you want with it. But if you took the slave—you bought it, you brought it home, if you loved the slave, then you could give him his freedom or give her their freedom. And having been freed, if the slave so chooses out of love to their master, they can say, "I love you. You freed me. You bought me. Now I want to serve you." They would become what was known in the New Testament as a "dulos." That's the word "bond slave," a "dulos." And they would put a ring in their ear, and they would be a slave for life, but it was out of voluntary love. "I love you. You bought me. I want to live for you."

In the Old Testament when the people of God came out of the exodus, they were redeemed by God. And all through the Bible there was a picture of the price paid to purchase the first born. So the idea of redemption. So the idea that God has bought us. Here's my definition of redemption. Redemption is God the Father purchasing us with the price of the blood of His only Son out of the slave market of sin to loose us and to set us free. Ben Tabner said, "Salvation is free but not cheap. The gift of God cost God His Son. With His own precious blood He bought us in the market, bought us out of the market and bought us never to return to the market." That's what redemption is. We were slaves in sin. And God sent Jesus, Who died and paid the price to purchase us. We don't belong to ourselves anymore. We belong to God. And then He

released us and set us free, and we serve Him and want to glorify Him because we love Him.

Now if you miss this point, you'll miss the whole passage. Everything we study from verse 18 to 21 is given to us not for information about redemption but for motivation to live a holy life. It does give us information about redemption, but it's intended to be motivation to holiness. I believe the more you understand your salvation, the more motivated you will be to live a holy life. When you understand the price that it cost God to save you and forgive you and redeem you and reconcile you, you're going to be motivated. You say, "I want to live for God. I want to serve God. If He loved me that much to do that for me, then my life belongs to Him." So this is kind of a passage which instructs us, but in reality, it's intended to motivate us to live in true godliness and holiness.

Now what I want to do to break down this passage is ask three questions. Three questions. If you're taking notes, you can write them down. Question number 1: What are we redeemed from? What are we redeemed from? Or you could write down the phrase "the plight." This is the plight of our redemption. Now go with me back to verse 18. He says we're "not redeemed with...silver and gold that came from our..."—this is the point I want to make—"...vain..."—or empty—"...life that came down from tradition from our fathers." So number 1, we're redeemed from the bondage of our sinful, empty lives. Before we came to Christ we were living in emptiness and sin. We were in bondage to our sin. We were slaves to sin, and God saved us, bought us out of the sinful, empty lives that we used to live.

The second thing we're saved from—Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree," which is a reference to the cross of Jesus Christ. So Jesus took our curse. The Law said the soul that sins shall surely die. I sin but I don't die. Jesus didn't sin but He died. So God took my sins, transferred them to Jesus Christ. He took Jesus' righteousness, and He gave it to me; He put it to my account so that I can be forgiven and free. So the penalty of the Law I've been redeemed from.

And then, thirdly, one day I will be redeemed as to my earthly body. In Romans 8:23, it says we groan in this body, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." And I won't ask you to raise hands, but how many of you need a new body right now? I need a new body, especially after Toys-R-Us yesterday. I'm looking for a new body. No more sin. No more sickness. No more sorrow. No more suffering. No more pain. No more weakness. No more human frailty. No more disappointments to my own lack of courage and strength. No more. All the former things are going to be passed away, and He'll wipe every tear from our eye. I've often told you and I'll tell you again, that salvation has three tenses: we've been saved, we're being saved and we will be saved. You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, the past tense, we've been saved. We've been saved or redeemed from sin's penalty. The present tense, we're being saved. It's called "sanctification." From sin's power. Christians aren't sinless, but as they grow in sanctification, they should sin less and less and less and less. We're growing in Christ-likeness. And number three, is the future tense. I just quoted from the book of Romans. We're "waiting for the adoption...the redemption of our body." One day, when the Lord comes,

and “those of us who are alive remain, will be caught up...”—we’ll be raptured—“...to meet the Lord in the air, and so will we ever be with the Lord.” We will get new bodies. I love that. And in the “moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” this corruptible will put on incorruption. This mortal will put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass, Paul says, the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” And then he sticks his tongue out at death and goes, “Dead where is your sting?” [sticking his tongue out] “Oh grave, where is your victory? Nanny, nanny, nanny, you can’t touch me!” Because through Jesus Christ, we don’t need to fear death. We don’t need to fear the grave. We don’t need to fear the judgment that is ours, because why? We’ve been redeemed. The moment you were born again, it was God’s work of redeeming you. And you became His; you were bought with a price. And then He sets us free. So what were we redeemed from? Our empty, sinful lives, the curse of the Law and one day, future tense, we’ll be redeemed, we’ll be given new glorified bodies.

And here’s the second question I want you to write down we want to ask. And that is, what are we redeemed by? What are we redeemed by? So we go from the plight of redemption to the price of redemption, and again, we go back to verse 18 and 20. We were first of all negatively—notice verse 18—“not redeemed by...silver or gold...” Now those are precious metals. And they don’t really rust; they tarnish. But they are temporal. He’s basically saying you cannot be redeemed by money. You cannot be redeemed by your own good works.

Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law's demands.

These for sin could not atone.

Thou must save, and Thou alone.

I can’t pay my way to heaven “Okay, God. How much do I have to give You to get to heaven?” Sometimes people think they can put money in the offering, and that’s going to appease God or give them acceptance before God. Or they can work hard or get baptized or be religious or live a good life or don’t smoke or don’t chew or don’t hang out with those who do. Don’t dance, don’t go to picture shows, don’t do sinful things, and God’ll get you into heaven. You can’t work for, earn or merit or deserve eternal life; it’s a gift from God. So we’re not redeemed with gold or silver or corruptible things. Those things cannot save us.

What are we redeemed with? Verse 19, “the precious blood of Christ.” Now one of Peter’s favorite words is “precious.” He uses it in chapter 2, verse 4; chapter 2, verse 6; chapter 2, verse 7. And I picture Peter—and I don’t know about you, but I picture Peter as a big, strong, burly, muscle-bound fisherman. Man’s man. I don’t think when we get to heaven, Peter’s going to be a little, “Mr. Milquetoast” kind of a guy; you know? He’s going to be a real dude. A big, buff guy, because he’s pulling in those fish and everything. But yet when Peter wrote his letter, he used the word “precious.” “Isn’t it precious?” And I think that’s precious. He used that word over and over. And ever since I’ve studied this epistle of Peter, years back, I just got that in my brain, and I can’t get it out. “Precious blood of Christ.” “Precious Word of Christ.” “Precious Redeemer.” Now what do we mean by “precious”? What we mean by precious is that it is

costly, it's of great value and that it's to be highly esteemed and held in honor and that it's rare.

What do we mean by "the blood of Christ"? This is a very important point. When we speak of the blood of Christ—or the Bible uses that phrase—it's not just talking about the literal blood of Jesus. I believe that it's a figure of speech to convey the whole death of Christ, the whole redemptive work of Christ on the cross. That in one phrase, "the blood of Christ"—that he's describing the entire work of the cross—of redemption, of propitiation, of reconciliation, of substitution—with the phrase, "the blood of Christ."

Now salvation is a free gift; amen? It's "not by works, lest any man should boast," but it's not cheap. It's expensive. It's like the toys at Toys-R-Us; a little, tiny, plastic doll—650 bucks! But how great is our salvation, that it would cost God the death of His own Son. Not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ. That God would have to send His Son to suffer and die upon the cross. And there was no other way for man's redemption. No other way for man to be saved. When you hold that bread, this morning, in your hand, and you hold that cup, remember it symbolizes the body and blood of Jesus Christ. And that's the only way we could be forgiven, the only way that we could be redeemed, the only way that we could have eternal life, the only way that we could have the hope of heaven—through the cross of Jesus Christ. So the price of our redemption, as it makes very clear in this passage, is the blood of Jesus Christ, Who was God in flesh; fully God and fully man. Born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, Who died a substitutionary death for us on the cross. Notice He's as "a lamb without blemish," no inherited defect; and "without spot," no acquired defect. He didn't inherit a sin nature; He was born of a virgin. He didn't acquire any sin, because He lived a sinless life.

And all the way through the Old Testament, all the lambs, all the pictures, all prefigured and pointed to the death of Jesus Christ. I love the story in Genesis 22 when God told Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him upon a mountain that I will show thee of." What a picture of "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son; whoever believes in Him would never perish but have everlasting life." So Abraham got up in the morning, he saddled the donkey, he got the wood for the fire, he got the fire, he got the knife and they took off for the land of Moriah. And they come to the mountain—by the way, I believe, the same mountain where Jesus was crucified. "In the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen." And as they were walking up the mountain, Isaac asked a question. "Father, here's the wood, here's the fire, here's the knife, but where's the sacrifice? Where's the lamb?" And Abraham makes an amazing statement. He said these words to his son: His God "will provide Himself a sacrifice." Now you can interpret that two ways. And I think both of two ways. Number 1, that God would provide. God would provide the sacrifice. "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son." God provided himself a sacrifice. You know, that's where we get our word "Jehovah Jireh," God will provide. Jireh actually has the idea that God sees, and wherever there is God vision, there is God provision. God sees and God provides. Jehovah Jireh, my Son. God will provide himself a sacrifice.

Second way to interpret those words of Abraham in Genesis 22 is that God provided Himself as the sacrifice. For the Bible says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." Not

only did God provide the sacrifice, God was the sacrifice. Someone said, "He hung upon a cross of wood, but He made the hill on which it stood. And God was in Christ dying for man, the creature's sin." Can we take our salvation lightly? No. Can we live in sin, when it put Jesus on the cross? No. It's all a motivation to live a godly, holy life. So He was "the Lamb Who was slain."

Now I want you to notice also in verse 20 that Christ's redemptive death "was foreordained." It says in verse 20, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." What's that mean? It means that the death of Jesus Christ was an appointment, not an accident. God wasn't caught off guard. Go, "Oh, man! He got crucified. Messed it up!" You know, a lot of false religious systems have come along and said it was a mistake for Jesus to get crucified. He wasn't supposed to get crucified. But the Bible clearly teaches that God the Father, including God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—that in the counsel of the nature of the Triune God in eternity past, they just decided that at a point in time—"in the fullness of time"—that God would send forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law. You know the death of Jesus Christ was an appointment? You know when it was planned? In eternity past. Before time. Before man was ever created.

Now notice in that statement that he makes there in verse 20. He says He was "foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for..."—who?—"... you." I've been asking that question all morning, and everybody kind of just sits there and looks at me. Like, "I don't know." Hey, if it doesn't say "you" in your Bible, you got gypped when you bought your Bible. You need a new Bible. "For you." That's you and I. Naturally Peter's talking about those that he's writing to, but I think it comes all the way down to you and I. God foreordained that Jesus would die for you, for me. Ever taken John 3:16 and put your name in it? "For God so loved John Miller that He gave His only begotten Son, that if John Miller will believe in Him, John Miller will have eternal life." Isn't that cool? Stick your name in there. God so loved you. Your name can go right in there. If you believed on Him, if you trusted in Him, you'll never perish. You have everlasting life. And that God had you in mind. All the way back before you were ever born. That He would send His Son to die for your sins, so that He could purchase you and redeem you and make you His child. So at the end of verse 20, where it says that He was "manifested in these last times," that's talking about His first coming, His incarnation, when Jesus became a man to die for our sins.

Here's the third question. Write this down. What are we redeemed to? We've seen the plight of redemption, we've seen the price of redemption, and now thirdly, and lastly, we see the purpose of redemption. One verse, verse 21. "Who by Him do believe in God..."—that's by Jesus Christ, we've come to trust in and believe in God. And it was God "...that raised Jesus up from the dead, and gave Him..."—that is, Jesus—"...glory; that your faith and your hope might be in..."—who?—"...God." "Your faith and your hope might be in God." So in that one verse, verse 21, it's through Him we believe in God, God's revealed Himself in the person of His Son and we're brought to God through Jesus Christ.

And He's resurrected from among the dead. Why? Three reasons for your redemption.

Freedom; and then secondly, faith and hope; and, thirdly, the glory of God. Freedom from the bondage of sin, freedom from the old life, freedom from the Law, freedom from our bodies of sin. We were slaves sold to sin, and Jesus redeemed us to set us free.

Secondly, verse 21, so that “our faith and our hope might be in God” alone. Once you’ve been redeemed, Jesus is the object of your faith all through life, an object of all our hopes. All our hopes are in Him. Our faith is in Him. And what a wonderful thing that is, to live by faith. We’re saved by faith, we live by faith. And what a glorious life that is, of faith and hope and love.

And then the third reason we’ve been redeemed is to glorify Him. To glorify Him. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. He says, “Know you not that...you’re not your own?” You were “bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body...” which belongs to Him. You know, this is a forgotten truth that a lot of Christians pass over. You were bought. You belong to God. Your time, your talent, your treasure—everything belongs to God. So we want to glorify Him with our thoughts, with our attitudes and with our actions. You belong to God. If you’re a young person and you’re not married yet, you can’t just willy-nilly marry whoever you want, because you belong to God. So if you kind of zero in on somebody—that guy’s really cute—“Look he’s got a big Bible; I think he’s spiritual. Doesn’t hurt that he drives a nice car too, Lord, so I just pray, in Jesus Name!” Jericho march around their house, you know. A little Jerusalem oil sprinkled on it. “In the Name of Jesus, I want that man!” I got a little advice for yuh; God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. Amen? God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. “Oh, yeah, but he’s so cute!” or “She’s so cute!” “Oh, Lord, I want that one in Jesus’ Name. I want that one!”

Remember when Abraham put Isaac on the altar? I just mentioned that reference, Genesis 22. I believe that as Christians we need to put our whole life on that altar—our plans, our dreams, our goals, our ambitions, our desire—they all go on that altar. And we take our hands off and we say, “Lord, I’ll go where You want me to go, I’ll be what You want me to be, I’ll say what You want me to say and I’ll do whatever You want me to do.” I don’t care where you’re at, in whatever phase of life, you need to reconsecrate your life to God. You say, “You bought me, You sought me. And You bought me with Your precious blood. I belong to You. You’ve set me free. I want to be your dulos, I want to be your bond slave. I’ll live for You, I’ll die for You, I’ll serve You with everything. And Lord, if You don’t want me to marry that person, if You don’t want me to get married here, or You don’t want me to get married—where You want me to go, what You want me to do, what You want my life to be, I’m Yours.” That’s the ingredient for a blessed, happy life. The opposite is true: “Well, I don’t care what God’s will is. I don’t care what God wants. I’m going to do what I want to do and how I want to do it, when I want to do it. My time, my money. No one’s going to tell me what to do.” That’s the ingredient for a sad, empty life. Is your all on the altar? Have you yielded to God? Do you realize you are bought with a price, and you should glorify God in your body, which belongs to Him?

Why are we redeemed? What’s its purpose? Holiness, service and worship. True story. The woman Frances Ridley Havergal—she was one of the great hymn writers in American history. She was at a friend’s house, and she saw a picture of the Crucifixion painted. And the caption

at the bottom of the picture read, "I gave My life for thee. What hast thou done for Me?" And that so gripped her that she quickly picked up her pen and she wrote a poem. After writing this poem, she was dissatisfied with it. She crumpled up the paper. She threw it into a fireplace. And she forgot about it. A few hours later her Dad came by and found the paper crumpled up in the fireplace and had escaped the flames of the fire. He reached in and got it out, opened it up and found these words that she wrote.

I gave My life for thee, My precious blood I shed,

That thou might ransomed be, and raised up from the dead.

I gave, I gave My life for thee.

What hast thou given for Me?

Good question. That became a hymn that we sing to this day. One of our favorite hymns. And that's the question that we all need to ask this morning. Jesus is our redeemer. Can you imagine if you were taken captive and held for ransom? And someone paid that ransom and set you free? How indebted you would be to that person? We were all in that plight. And Jesus paid the price so that the purpose of our life might be to honor Him, and to glorify Him and to magnify Him. So as we celebrate communion this morning, I want to remind you that Jesus Christ is your Redeemer. He paid the ransom for your salvation. In love He died for you, shed His precious blood so that you could be forgiven and you could be free. How could we live in sin? How could we live selfishly? How could we live for ourselves in light of the cross of Jesus Christ?

Let's pray.