

From The Son
Ephesians 1:7-12
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Let's read the text, Ephesians 1:7-12.

Paul says, "In Him..."—that is, "Jesus Christ"—"...we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation..."—or some translations have "administration"—"...of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."

I remember when my kids were little, sometimes they would overhear my wife and I talking about finances and we would say that we don't have the money to buy something or do a certain thing. From time to time the kids would say, "Well, why don't you just write one of those checks and sign your name on it?" We used to chuckle, because they didn't realize that there had to be money in the bank to back up the check. If you sign your name on a check and there is no money in the bank to cover it, you can be in big trouble.

But as far as our spiritual bank account is concerned, as believers, we have in it all the treasures and all the riches and all the wealth that God has disposed in it for us in Christ. In this series, we are learning all the blessings that are ours from our Triune God—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Last time we learned, in verses 4-6, that God the Father has chosen us, has adopted us and has accepted us. We looked at the doctrine of election. If you were to narrow it down, as a child of God, I would say that you were chosen by God "before the foundation of the world." You are His special favor. He chose you by His grace.

Now we move into verses 7-12, where we will discover the blessings that are ours from God the Son. The four blessings are that He redeemed us, He has forgiven us, He has made known His will to us and He has given us an inheritance.

The first blessing is He has redeemed us. Verse 7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood." Our redemption comes to us through the purchase price of His blood.

James Montgomery Boice said, "Redemption is central to Christianity. More than that, it is probably the single, most-beloved term in all the Christian's vocabulary." I remember years ago when I read that and have meditated on it for many years, I am convinced that's true. If you were going to pick one doctrine or theme that is the heart and center of God's revelation in Scripture of the work of Christ for fallen man, I would use the word "redemption." Jesus Christ is our Redeemer.

I like the song that we sing:

“Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!

Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;

Redeemed through His infinite mercy,

His child and forever I am.”

What a beautiful song. What a wonderful experience when you find that God has redeemed you, and He has done it all by His grace.

So He chose me, He adopted me, He has accepted me and I have been redeemed by Jesus Christ.

What does the concept of redemption mean? It is an exhaustive subject, but the word “redemption” can be broken into three concepts: It has the idea to buy or to purchase, to buy it out so as to take it out of the marketplace and to loose or set free.

In the Old Testament, a buyer could redeem land, animals and people. What a great picture of this is in the Exodus, when the people of Israel went out of Egypt, and it’s also seen in the Passover. That was God’s redemption of Israel. He bought them and brought them out of slavery as His own people. So like the Israelites, Christians are taken from our bondage to sin, we are purchased and then we are set free.

This concept comes from the Roman Empire, where they were glutted with 6 million slaves. They bartered and sold human beings like they were things. At the slave market, you could buy a slave. But if you, in love, wanted to set a slave free, you would buy the slave, it would become your property and then you could grant that slave his or her freedom.

That’s the picture of redemption; all of humanity, because of the sin of Adam and Eve, were sold into slavery, but Jesus, by His blood, bought us, took us out of sin and set us free. So the concept of redemption is that because of Adam’s sin, all of humanity was sold into slavery to sin; we were in bondage to sin and to the law and to death. But God sent His only begotten Son into the world to be the Redeemer.

In the Old Testament book of Ruth you have another picture portrayed of redemption in which Boaz redeemed the land and took Ruth as his bride. He was what’s called a “ga’al,” or “kinsman redeemer.” To be that kinsman redeemer, you had to be a near relative, you had to have the price to buy the land and you had to be willing to do it, to act upon it.

All of that is true of Jesus Christ: He became a man through the womb of the Virgin Mary, He took on humanity—He is near of kin—but was sinless, He had the price to pay—His infinite righteousness and He willingly and voluntarily died on the Cross to redeem us back to Himself.

So Jesus becomes our Redeemer.

You can break it down into three things. First, our plight or our need for redemption; we all were in the bondage of sin. You need to understand the Bible teaches that when Adam and Eve sinned, they acted as a federal head, bringing sin upon the entire human race. Even a little baby that is born is born a fallen sinner. It doesn't take long to see that; when they begin to talk, one of their first words is "Mine!" Maybe their second word is "No!" Those are their favorite words.

We recently spent five days with our two-year-old grandson. It was a blessing, but he has an Adamic nature. You know that when you have grandkids, you don't have to teach them how to throw a tantrum. It just flows out of them naturally. So you have to curb those sinful, rebellious bents. It takes regeneration, being born again, to be free from that sinful nature, which is part of this whole concept of salvation: He has chosen us, adopted us and redeemed us. So the plight is our sin; we are in bondage to sin and Satan.

Secondly, the person of our redemption is Jesus Christ. Verse 7 says, "In Him." At the end of verse 6, we have a reference to "the Beloved." That's a beautiful title for Jesus Christ. Without skipping a beat from verse 6 to verse 7, "the Beloved" is "in Him." So from verse 7-12, we have reference of the blessings that are ours in "the Beloved," in Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Redeemer. In Mark 10:45, Jesus said that He has come to "give His life a ransom for many." He came to give His life to ransom many.

Thirdly, we have the price of our redemption. Verse 7 says, "through His blood." For Jesus to come into this world to buy us out of the slave market of sin, it took the price of His own blood. When the New Testament uses the phrase "the blood of our redemption" or "the blood of Christ," it is talking about the entire sacrificial, atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Jesus is not talking about just Jesus' blood that flows from His body; He is talking about His whole, substitutionary, atoning sacrifice on the Cross.

When we sing about the blood of Christ, we're talking about the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It's a synonym for His death. The Bible says, "The soul who sins shall surely die." So Jesus came to pay our penalty for sin, so that we could have His righteousness and we could be redeemed or bought back, taken out of the slave market of sin and set free.

In 1 Peter 1:18-19, Peter says, "...knowing that you were not redeemed..."—there's our word—"...with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." So we are His by creation and we are His by redemption; He made you and He bought you. You doubly belong to God; He made you—He is your creator, and then He redeemed you—He's your Redeemer. The Bible says we are not our own. We've been "bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Your body is not yours to do whatever you want with it. You can't sin and rebel against God,

because your body belongs to God. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit. So we want to honor and glorify God as our Redeemer.

Creation will be redeemed, sinners who have fallen into sin are going to be redeemed and then we are indwelt by His Holy Spirit. In the next segment, we will discuss the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

So number one, Christ has redeemed me. He came into the slave market, bought me, took me out and set me free. Can you imagine being a slave, then being bought, but your master says, "I love you," so he sets you free? That would be so glorious! Then he says, "I want to adopt you and give you all that I have as an inheritance." You would think, Whoa! That's awesome! That's what God has done for you. We were enemies of God, but He reconciled us. We were strangers, but He adopted us. And He has redeemed us to Himself.

The second blessing from the Son is in verse 7. It is that He has forgiven us. Number one, He has redeemed us, and number two, He has forgiven us. In this passage, in many ways, forgiveness is the fruit or the result of being redeemed. Those who He redeems are those who He forgives. Notice verse 7 says, "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." D. Martyn Lloyd Jones says, "A Christian is a person who is amazed at the fact that he or she has been forgiven."

I remember when I was a young Christian praying with my grandmother, who was still alive at the time. She had walked with God for over 60 years. She was a godly woman who loved the Lord and loved God's Word. We were praying one time and she prayed, "Jesus, thank You for forgiveness." I remember saying, "Grandma, you haven't sinned in 60 years!" To me she was a saint and glowed in the dark. So I asked, "Grandma, how can you pray with such fervency thanking God for forgiving you? You've walked with Jesus for so many years."

She just said, "John, I sin every day and I need forgiveness."

That's why 1 John 1:9 is in the Bible: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So we have been redeemed and we have been forgiven.

Forgiveness is man's greatest need. Remember when a man was let down on a mat by his four friends from the roof of a house into Jesus' presence? The man was lame and his friends wanted Jesus to heal him. But first Jesus met his greatest need. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." That's music to my ears. But the man's friends on the roof said, "What's the deal? We want him to walk! We didn't bring him here for his sins to be forgiven. We brought him here to see him walk!"

The Pharisees, scribes and religious leaders said, "This is blasphemy; only God can forgive sins." In order to show them that He had the authority to forgive sins, Jesus said to the man, "Stand up, take up your bed and walk." Then the man was instantly healed. He picked up his bed and left walking.

So Jesus alone has the power and authority to forgive our sins. We have our forgiveness because of what Jesus did on the Cross. The price of our redemption was His blood, and it was His blood that forgives us and cleanses us from our sins. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

The word "forgive" has the idea "to carry away." I'll never forget that time when I accepted Christ and I sensed that my heart was clean. The weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt that I was right with God, and I felt pure inside. What a blessing that was! Maybe you remember that initial moment when you were forgiven by God. You felt clean inside. What a blessing it is that God gives us a clean heart!

In Psalm 51:10, David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence....Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit." David said, "Don't count me as a sinner. Forgive my sin." When he sinned with Bathsheba but finally repented, he had great joy over the forgiveness that God brought.

I want you to note that in verse 7 of our text, this forgiveness is "according to the riches of His grace." The phrase doesn't say "out of"; it says "according to." There is a difference between "out of" and "according to." If you hit Bill Gates up for some money and he gave you \$10, that would be "out of" his riches. If he gave you \$2 million, that would be "according to" his riches. So God doesn't forgive us "out of" His riches; He forgives us "according to" His riches.

The point is, "How rich is God's mercy? How rich is God's grace?" It's infinite. There is no sin that God won't forgive. Any sin you will repent of, God will forgive. The only sin that God refuses to forgive is the sin you refuse to repent of. If you turn to Him, He will not cast you out. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

You may feel guilty about some sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanses us from all sin." There is never any reason for you to carry around that guilt and that shame. There is never a reason for you to feel unforgiven when God says in His Word that He will forgive your sins and iniquities. "Their sin will I remember no more." He says, He will separate them "as far as the east is from the west."

In John 8, Jesus told the woman in adultery, "I don't condemn you. Go and sin no more." Forgiveness is not a license to go out and sin, but it is a blessing to know that God does forgive us and that I can be right with Him.

So I have positional forgiveness and also practical, fellowship forgiveness as I confess my sin and He "cleanses me from all unrighteousness."

But my question is, "Have you experienced God's amazing grace?" Have you experienced what it is to be forgiven? John Newton wrote in his song, Amazing Grace:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I am found;

Was blind, but now I see.”

That’s the evidence of conversion. I was a wretch, I was miserable, I was blind, but God forgave me by His amazing grace.

So blessing number one is that God has redeemed us in Christ. Blessing number two is that He has forgiven our sins “according to the riches of His grace,” which are infinite. Blessing number three is He made known His will to us, verses 8-10, or He has given us revelation and understanding. Verse 8 says, “...which He made to abound toward us.” So he closes verse 7 “...according to the riches of His grace.” And it is through “the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence...”—or “insight” in the King James version or “understanding” or “revelation”—“...having made known to us the mystery of His will...”—there’s the point—“...according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation...”—or “administration”—“...of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”

Notice in verse 7, you have “In Him,” at the end of verse 10 you have “in Him,” the beginning of verse 11 you have “in Him” and at the end of verse 12, you have “in Christ.” All these blessings from God come to us because of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8 says that He lavished on us “all wisdom and understanding.” When you become a Christian, your eyes are opened; you understand what life is about. You understand where you came from, why you’re here and where you’re going. You understand there’s a God, there’s a heaven, there’s a hell. You understand the reality of the spiritual realm. God opens your mind and opens you up. You understand from His Word the reality of the unseen world and of eternity. And you learn that this world is not your home; you’re just passing through. You’re looking for a city “whose builder and maker is God.”

It’s not about the temporal or the mundane. The Bible says that everything we see is temporal. But “The things which are not seen are eternal.” So many times we are living only for the temporal or mundane. We’re not fixed on the eternal, which will last forever.

So basically, Paul is saying in verse 8 that God gives you discernment or understanding.

Then in verse 9, He “made known to us the mystery of His will.” This is the first time you get the word “mystery” in the book of Ephesians. In this epistle, Paul unveils the mystery of the church, the body of Christ. There are many mysteries that God makes known to us.

The word “mystery” is not something that we can’t know; it means something we cannot know

unless God reveals it. And He has revealed it. So it means we cannot know it apart from revelation, and God has revealed it.

What has God revealed and made known to us? He has revealed that He has redeemed us, verse 10: "...that in the dispensation..."—or "administration"—"...of the fullness of the times..." That is talking about a future time, when Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth for 1,000 years, which will flow into the eternal state. It's called "the kingdom age" or "the millennium." It's when Christ comes back in His Second Coming and He sets up His kingdom. That's the culmination or final conclusion of God's purpose and plan in the world.

Continuing, "...He might gather together in one all things in Christ..."—or "under Christ's headship and authority"—"...both which are in heaven..."—that would include angels—"...and which are on earth..."—that would include man and creation—"...in Him."

As I pointed out, this whole passage is one long sentence in the Greek, from verses 3-14. What Paul does in this passage is he goes from eternity past—God chose you—to the present—He has redeemed you—to the future—God has a purpose and a plan in the fullness of time when He will gather everything under and in submission to Jesus Christ. This is what God has revealed to us as Christians. History is going somewhere. History is "his story." History has a purpose and a plan.

We don't have to freak out when we watch the news. I tried to watch the world news with my wife, and she said, "Let's just turn it off and pray." You watch it and get upset and angry. Then you pray, but you pray, "God, break their teeth in their mouth! In Jesus' Name!" (I'm sorry.) No, you don't do that. You want to but you don't. Then after you want you, you ask God to forgive you. But then you rest in the fact that God has a purpose in this. God has a plan.

Isn't it exciting to think that we, as God's people, know where the world is going?! When you're waiting in line at the grocery store and someone says, "I don't know what in the world is going on!" you say, "I know." Philippians 2:10-11 says, "Every knee will bow...and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That's where we're headed. No matter how evil men will rise up and come against God's Word and God's work, Jesus Christ will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

So what God has revealed to us brings us hope and a future. Then we, like Abraham, can look to a city "whose builder and maker is God." We realize this world is not our home. We're living for the eternal, beyond this world. God redeems us, He forgives us and He reveals His Word and His ways to us in the administration of the fullness of time when Christ returns.

Romans 8:18-23 tells us that "The whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now." The whole cosmos is waiting for "the revealing of the sons of God." That will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You and I, the redeemed, are going to come back with Christ in power and glory. Then everyone will know the truth about God's purpose and plan. At that moment, creation is going to be restored. Remember I said creation can be redeemed?

He's going to redeem creation. He's going to reverse the curse. And Jesus Christ is going to reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

There is one last blessing that comes from the Son. He has not only redeemed us and forgiven us, made known His will to us—given us discernment and understanding and revelation—but in verses 11-12, as He closes with this doxology, He has given us an inheritance. We have a future and a hope. “In Him...”—referring to Jesus again—“...also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will...” God is doing His will sovereignly in the world right now. Verse 12, “...that we who first trusted...”—or “hoped”—“...in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance” is challenging to interpret. It could mean one of two things, both being Scriptural. Number one, it could mean that we are going to obtain an inheritance. That's Biblical. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” He's building a place for us in heaven. That's our inheritance. And we're going to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” It was “prepared for you before the foundation of the world.” So we have an inheritance; it's called “heaven,” our eternal home. Peter spoke of this in 1 Peter 1:4, where he said that we are called “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away reserved in heaven for you.”

You may not get an earthly inheritance, but you're a child of the King. One day you will inherit “all things.” Your Father is rich, and you are heirs and joint heirs with Christ. What an awesome thought! You will be reigning with Him and inheriting “all things.”

Now there is another way that this statement can be interpreted and viewed, which is also Biblical. It can be interpreted, “In Him also we were made an inheritance.” Greek scholars are divided and not sure which is intended. I say why not take them both? They're both Biblical and Scriptural. We get an inheritance, but we also are an inheritance.

You say, “Pastor John, you're telling me that I'm His inheritance?!” That's exactly what I'm telling you. You say, “Well, that's not a very good deal for God.” Maybe not from our perspective, but it is from His.

Remember when Jesus prayed in John 17 in the upper room before His Crucifixion? It is what's called His great “high, priestly prayer.” Jesus said to His Father, in verse 24, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” What an awesome prayer! Jesus was praying that you and I, who were given to Him by the Father—Did you know that you were God the Father's love gift to His Son? God the Father gave you as a gift. Did you know that we are the bride of Christ?

I have three daughters. All three daughters are married. I walked all three daughters down the

aisle. I'm telling you that one of the hardest things for a dad to do is to give away his daughter in marriage. When our son got married, I told my wife, "I'm going to be enjoying this moment. You do the crying and I'll do the celebrating." But to give your daughter to another man is difficult.

But to think that God the Father gave us, as a love gift, to God the Son for His bride is awesome! You're His treasure. You're His treasure or trophy of His grace. He's going to be showing you off throughout all eternity. He will say, "This is my redeemed bride."

Romans 8:17 says that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Then notice in our text in verse 11 that it's all "predestined" according to God's purpose and will. Everything we have and are in Christ comes from God and returns to God. As I pointed out after each section—blessings from the Father, from the Son and from the Holy Spirit—we have the phrase, in verse 12, that we "should be to the praise of His glory." God designed everything so that all the praise and all the glory go to Him. When we get to heaven all praise, all honor, all glory go to God and to His Son, Who redeemed us by His blood.

So our blessings from the Son are that He redeemed us—He bought us and set us free, He has forgiven us—taken our sins and carried them away, He has made known His will to us and He has given us an inheritance and we are His inheritance. We have been chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed and forgiven. It is all "to the praise of His glory." If you are a Christian, doctrine ends in doxology in verse 12. Understanding doctrine should always cause us to respond in praise, in worship and in thanksgiving.

You may be hearing about these blessings, but none of them are yours. Why? Because you haven't been born again. You haven't been regenerated by the Spirit. You haven't trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You don't go to heaven just because you go to church. You don't go to heaven because you've been baptized. You don't go to heaven because you live in America. You don't go to heaven because of the color of your skin. You don't go to heaven because you try your best to be a good person. The Bible says, "There is none righteous; no, not one." The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

You have to be born of the Spirit or be born again. You ask, "Well, how does that happen?" It happens when you acknowledge that "I'm a sinner. I have fallen short. I'm separated from God. If I died right now, I would be lost." Then you turn in repentance from your sins and receive Jesus as your Savior. How do you do that? By faith. The Bible says, "By grace you have been saved, through faith." Salvation is "a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." So you turn from your sin, you trust Jesus as your Savior and you ask Him to forgive your sins and come into your heart and be your Savior. Then you are given a brand-new heart. You are made a child of God.

Jesus told Nicodemus, a very religious Jewish man, that "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." I want to make sure no one goes to hell but goes to heaven.

You may say, "Well, Pastor John, I don't know that when I die I'd go to heaven. I don't know if I've really been born again. My husband [or my parents or my wife] brings me to church." You can be raised in church and go to Sunday school your whole life and still not be saved.

Have you turned from your sin and trusted Jesus as your Savior? Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine..."—or "have fellowship"—"...with him and he with Me." So if you don't know for sure that if you died right now you would go to heaven, or if you say, "I don't know if I'm a Christian; I don't have any of these blessings," I want to give you an opportunity now to believe in Jesus Christ, to trust Him as your Savior, to know today that you are forgiven and redeemed, that you are chosen and adopted into His family and heaven is your eternal home.