

The Wonder of Redemption

1 Peter 1:18-21

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I want to read the text, then I'm going to set it in context, and then we're going to unpack phrase by phrase. Go to 1 Peter 1:18. Peter says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation"—or manner of living—"received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But"—you're redeemed—"with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily"—referring to Christ—"was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him"—that is, Christ—"do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

In Mark 10:45, Jesus told us why He came. If you want to know why Jesus came, the best person to ask is Jesus, right? If I want to know why Jesus came, then I want to hear what Jesus says is the reason that He came. Listen to the passage, Mark 10:45. Jesus said, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a"—listen carefully—"ransom for many." I came not to be ministered unto, but to be ministering to others, and to give My life as a ransom for many. He introduced us there to the theme of our text, our redemption.

Now, in context, going back to verse 13, Peter has given us three incentives to walk in holiness. Now, we haven't been a couple of weeks in Peter so I wanted to set the context again without getting too bogged down. There were three incentives or motivations for us to live holy, godly lives. Holiness means that we're set apart unto God. The first motive was in verse 13, the coming of Jesus Christ. Go back there with me. He says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." That word "revelation" is the word *apokálypsis* or the unveiling, so this coming again of Jesus Christ is a motivation for us to live holy, godly lives.

I believe in the rapture of the Church, the doctrine of the rapture, and I believe that that teaching is that Christ will catch the Church up to meet Him in the air and that that doctrine is the imminent hope of the Church. Now, when I say "imminent," what I mean by that is that nothing has to happen for that to take place. No prophecies, no biblical prophecies, have to be fulfilled for the Church to be raptured. It's the next thing on God's divine calendar, so we should be living in expectation that the Lord could take us home or catch us to heaven in the rapture at any time.

The second motivation is in verse 15, and that's the fact that God Himself is holy. Notice it very clearly in verses 15-16, "But as he which hath called you his holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation"—or the way that you live, lifestyle—"Because it is written"—he's quoting from Leviticus 11:44—"Be ye holy; for I am holy." In Leviticus it goes on to say, ". . . saith the Lord," so the coming again of Jesus Christ and the holiness of God should motivate us to live holy lives. Holiness is a communicable attribute of God—we can be holy like God, not perfectly holy

until we get to heaven, but we can live holy lives.

The third motivation is that we should live with a reverential fear and respect of the Lord, verse 17, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work,”—then what you ought to do, and I’m paraphrasing this a little bit to kind of explain what it’s saying—“pass the time of your sojourning here in fear”—or reverential fear of God. He’s basically saying, “This is how you ought to live,” and used the word “sojourning.” It conveys the idea that we’re pilgrims, we’re strangers, this world is not our home, we’re just passing through, and we need to keep our focus on heaven and the eternal reward, but we live in what’s called the fear, verse 17, of God or of the Lord which is a reverential respect and love for God because I don’t want to do anything to wound or hurt the heart of God. We need to live in the fear of the Lord.

Now, we come to verses 18-21, and Peter gives us one more incentive or motive for living holy, godly lives. Here it is. Are you ready? The fact that you as a Christian have been redeemed. So, we should be living in light of His coming, we should be living in holiness because God is holy, we should be walking in the fear of the Lord, and we should remember that we’ve been redeemed. We have this marvelous little section about redemption and our salvation, but Peter’s talking about it not to give us a theological lecture, he’s talking about it to give us a motivation to godliness. I believe that doctrine leads to duty, and the more we understand who we are in Christ and what Christ has done for us and what our salvation means and involves, the more holy, godly lives we will live. You can’t really live the Christian life if you don’t know what a Christian is, if you don’t know you’ve been redeemed.

The subject of redemption is that which goes all the way through Scripture, the fact that we’ve been redeemed by the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and as I said, that’s the reason why Christ has come. Go back with me to verses 18-19, which are key texts. He says, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not”—here’s the word—“redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But”—and the implication is redeemed—“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The subject in these verses is the doctrine of redemption.

I’m going to give you four words. The last of the four words will be the word “redemption.” I wanted to give them to you because these are four important key words in understanding the cross of Christ. If you’re taking notes, write them down. The first is “substitution.” Write that word down, “substitution.” This is the doctrine of the cross that Jesus died in our place, that He took our place on the cross. Our sins were laid on Christ, He paid for them in His death in full, and then He imputed to us His righteousness. The death of Jesus Christ was a substitutionary death, and you need to understand that.

The second word is “propitiation.” What that means is when Jesus died on the cross, He not only died for sinners, but He died for God the Father. You say, “Well, what do you mean by that?” What I mean by that is God is holy, God is righteous, and God is just; and the soul that sins shall surely die, and the wages of sin is death. So, God’s law, which was broken by all

sinner, needed to be paid for or satisfied. When Jesus died on the cross, He died to pay the penalty for our sins Godward or toward God to propitiate or to satisfy God's holy, righteous law. This is something very rarely talked about in church, but it's a clear doctrinal truth about the cross. He is our propitiation. He died to satisfy the demands of the holy, righteous law of God.

The third word is "reconciliation," another key word of the cross. What that means is that we as sinners are separated from God, we're estranged from God, and that the work of the cross of Jesus Christ is that He's reconciling us back to God. In the Bible, reconciliation is always God the reconciler. God's always the One who does the reconciling. We don't reconcile ourselves to God by our good deeds or our righteous acts, Jesus is the One who reconciles us back to God, so He brings sinner and God together through the death of the cross.

That introduces us to our fourth word, which is our topic, that is, "redemption." So, we have substitution, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. These are four important words on the cross. The word "redemption" we're going to describe in just a moment a bit more, but it basically means to be purchased or to be bought, to be taken out and then set free. It has all those meanings—buy, take out, and set free. It was taken from the slave market where they would buy a slave, take the slave out, then the master could grant the slave freedom. If that happened, the slave decided, "I want to serve you because you set me free out of love," then he would become a bondsman, a *doûlos* bondsman. We as believers have been purchased, we've been set free, and we, out of love, serve Him as His bondsmen, His *doûlos*.

So, redemption is central to Christianity. It is probably the single most beloved term in all the Christian vocabulary, "redemption." 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. When we get to heaven, do you know what our main songs up there are going to be about? Redemption. We're going to be bowing down and worshiping Christ our Redeemer. What a beautiful picture that is.

It's wonderful to know that we have been created by God, but how much more wonderful to know that we've also been redeemed by God. He created us, there was the fall, we were separated. He reconciled us, but in the work of the cross, it is a redemption, He's brought us back into a fellowship by buying us through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Only when I understand this key doctrine can I know what a Christian is and what Christ has done for me and how He wants me to live.

Again, let me break down this word "redemption." It literally has three facets to it. It means to buy or to purchase by the paying of a price, so when you go into the store you buy something, you're buying it and purchasing it unto yourself. Then, we also know that the word also has a prefix preposition which has the force of intensifying the meaning, which means out of, so the word means to purchase out of the marketplace or to buy and take out of the marketplace.

The third meaning is that the word for redemption is an entirely different one which means the basic meaning of to loose and to set free. In the Old Testament picture of that was when the

children of Israel were in Egypt and they had the Passover, the lamb was slain, the blood applied to the house, and the death angel passed over the homes where the blood was applied, and in the homes of the Egyptians where no blood was applied to their homes, the death of the firstborn. Then they went out in the Exodus, right?, and then they were separated through the Red Sea and eventually made it there into the Promised Land, but the exodus was a picture of God redeeming, or buying through the blood of the Lamb, the people of God. It's a picture of our redemption to the cross of Jesus Christ.

I've written down my definition of redemption, and I'll read it to you. 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 set us free.

Years ago I heard a story about a little boy who had made a model boat. It was a big sailboat. He was so excited about this little sailboat that he made. He went down to this pond and put his sailboat on the pond. It started off in the water, and the wind filled the sail. Then, a big gust of wind picked it up and it went out in the water and fell over. He couldn't retrieve it, so he went home really sad and bummed out that he lost his sailboat. About a day or two later, he was walking in town, and in a store window he saw his sailboat for sale. He went into the store and said, "That's my sailboat in the window there. I made it, and I lost it. Can I have back my sailboat?" The man said, "Well, I'm sorry little boy, but it's mine now. If you want your sailboat, you're gonna have to buy it." He went home quite rejected, but he went to work saving his money and his pennies. He saved up all the money he could to buy his sailboat and finally went back. With great pleasure, he laid his money on the counter and bought his little sailboat. When he was walking out of the store, he started talking to his sailboat. He said, "I made you, but I also bought you, now you're doubly mine." What a picture that is of God—I made you, and I bought you, and you're doubly Mine. We are His by creation, we are His by redemption, so that's why it's such a precious thought for us as believers.

Vance Havner, who Billy Graham called the most quotable preacher in America, said, "Salvation is free but not cheap. The gift of God cost His Son. With His own precious blood He bought us in the market, bought us out of the market, bought us never to return to the market." I love that. So, He bought us, took us out, and set us free, but we are forever His.

In looking at this text about redemption, we're going to ask three questions that are answered in the passage. If you're taking notes, the first is, what are we redeemed from? This is our plight, verse 18, "Forasmuch as ye know"—follow with me—"that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,"—we'll come back to that, this is the negative, what we're not redeemed with—"as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers"—this is what we were not redeemed from.

First, if you're taking notes, we are redeemed from the bondage of our sinful, empty lives. It's interesting that in this passage he actually says that our redemption involves being bought from the empty, hollow, sinful life that we used to live, verse 18, from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, the King James has "fathers." So, we were not redeemed

with silver and gold, but from the “. . . vain conversation,” notice that. Now, in my King James translation, old English “conversation” meant the way that you lived not the way that you talked. We were living in emptiness. Here’s a description of our “BC days,” before we came to Christ. If you think about it, if you’re a believer, certainly before you were born again and came to know Christ, you were living a vain, empty life. Amen? It was empty and vain and hollow. He says we’re not redeemed by the vain way that we used to live.

Then, when he talks about not, “. . . as silver and gold,” he’s actually saying that we’re not saved or redeemed by any performance of our own or good deeds that we can do. We can’t redeem ourselves. Jesus is the Redeemer, and we are free from the law as well. So, first we’re free from bondage to our empty former lives, verse 18. Then, if you were to write down Galatians 3:13, it 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 that hangeth on a tree,” so we’re redeemed from our empty former lives and we’re redeemed from the curse of the law—Jesus being made a curse for us.

Thirdly, one day we’ll be free from our earthly bodies, we will have the redemption of our actual bodies. Write down Romans 8:23. Paul says, “. . . we ourselves groan”—and I do that quite often, quite well—“within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” How many of you need a new body right now? All the old people raise your hand. I need a new body, and I’m going to look forward to that body—no more pain, no more weakness. Do you know what we’re not going to say when we get to heaven? “Whew! Man, I’m so tired. I need a nap. I can’t bend over to tie my shoes.” No pain, no sorrow, no sickness, no death, no cancer. Praise God! All the former things will be done away with because we’re going to get glorified new bodies.

Remember, you’ve heard me mention many times, the tenses of salvation, we’ve been saved, we’re being saved, we will be saved. We have been saved, which is from the penalty of sin, past tense, justified; we’re being saved from the power of sin, sanctified; we will be saved from the presence of sin, glorified. And, what starts with grace in justification ends in glorification. That’s that golden chain Paul describes in Romans 8 that cannot be broken.

Now, for us as believers, guess when we have the redemption of our bodies? At the rapture. This is why we so long for and pray for, desire the rapture. Amen? And by the rapture, by the way, we will actually escape death. This is why Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” So, rapture, actually we bypass death, we go from life to life. This is why it’s such a blessed hope that we’ll be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and if we’ve died before the rapture, our bodies will be resurrected, reunited with our soul and spirit, and we’ll be in a new, glorified body. If you’re alive when the rapture happens, you’ll be translated immediately, and your body will be metamorphosized and “. . . this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,” that’s why Paul says, “. . . then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” That’s all a part of our redemption. So, I’m redeemed, but my body is not yet fully redeemed.

Here's the second question about redemption we want to ask, that is, what are we redeemed by? This is the price. So, we have the plight, we're redeemed from sin, from death, from sickness. We're redeemed from the law. We're redeemed from our old, empty lives. Now, we have the price. What are we redeemed by? Verses 19-20, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for"—notice that—"you." That little phrase, "for you," he's speaking to the believers, reminding them that Christ died for us.

Now, first we have the negative, " . . . ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold," so you can't save yourself. You can't buy your salvation. We are not redeemed by anything we are or anything we can do. What are we redeemed by? Verse 19, "But with the precious blood of Christ." One of Peter's favorite words, this big, strong fisherman Peter, used the word "precious." I think it's precious. Do you know what the word "precious" means? The word "precious" means very costly, very valuable, something that's esteemed very highly, and something that is to be held in honor. We're not to take lightly that Jesus shed His blood on the cross—precious. Now notice it's the blood of Christ, which is God's own blood. The Bible says, " . . . God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," so the price that was paid was the blood of Jesus Christ. The Person was God in flesh.

When the Bible uses the phrase, "blood of Christ," it's a phrase that is used to describe His substitutionary, propitiatory, reconciliation death on the cross. It's a word that's used to describe what Jesus did on the cross. Yes, He bled, but He also died; so the whole term there, "blood of Christ," is for the work of Jesus Christ dying for us on the cross. He was the only sinless Son of God who came from heaven through the womb of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death to be the One who could redeem us by His blood. What a blessing that is! This is the sacrifice, redemptive work of Christ on the cross.

Notice in verse 19, it was, " . . . as of a lamb"—and then he describes it in two ways—"without blemish and without spot." That word "blemish" means that there was no inherited defect, and the word "spot" means that there was no acquired defect. If you've studied the Old Testament, you know that the lambs that were used in sacrifice had to be perfect. You couldn't take a lamb that was all messed up and say, "That's the one we're going to use as the sacrifice," because if you brought your lamb to the temple as a substitute for your sin, they would examine it, and if there was any inherited defect or any acquired defect, they wouldn't allow you to use that lamb for a sacrificial animal. It had to be perfect. It had to be without blemish. It had to be without spot. This is conveying the idea of the sinlessness of Jesus who was therefore worthy to die and suited in our place. We could die for our own sins, but we couldn't die for our sins to atone them, so Jesus becomes the Lamb of God. This is the theme that runs through the entire Scripture.

Way back in Genesis 3, right after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God had to kill an animal and they had to have the shedding of blood to have the coats of skin to cover their nakedness. There's Genesis 22, where Abraham had to take the ram caught in the bushes and substitute it for Isaac, his son, on the altar. I've already mentioned Exodus 12, where you have

the Passover lamb that had to be slain and the blood applied to the house that they wouldn't die and they could be redeemed. What a picture that is! By the way, in Genesis 22:7, Isaac asked his father Abraham, "... where is the lamb ... ?" Do you know what Abraham said in Genesis 22? "... God will provide himself a lamb ..."

There's two ways to view that. First, that God would provide the lamb, and indeed He did, He sent the Son, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son;" and also that God is going to be the Lamb, providing Himself as the sacrifice. As I said, "... God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Someone said, when Jesus hung on the cross, "He hung upon a cross of wood, but He made the hill on which it stood." God died in our place to redeem us, that's why it's called, "... the precious blood of Christ." In Revelation 5, as I said, when we get to heaven, verses 11-14, we'll be singing about His redemptive work for us on the cross.

Christ's redemptive death was, verse 20, "foreordained," notice that. He said, "Who verily was foreordained"—when?—"before the foundation of the world." This is so important to understand. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was not an afterthought. It wasn't an accident. It was planned, designed by God, before the world was ever created—all plotted out, all designed, all planned. Nothing caught God off guard. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, He didn't say, "Oh, no! What am I going to do now? I gotta figure this out."

God in His infinite wisdom and purpose and plan knew man would fall, man had a free will, it doesn't violate his free will, but God had a purpose and a plan that He would get greater glory by not only creating us but redeeming us, that we would be doubly His. So, we're not just going to worship Him as Creator, we're going to worship Him as Redeemer. He made us and He bought us and we belong to Him, "... therefore glorify God in your body," what a picture that is. This "foreordained" indicates that God had preplanned to send His Son to die on the cross for our sins before the world was ever made.

Also, notice in verse 20, "... but was manifest in these last times for you." Notice in verse 20 the contrast, "... foreordained before"—time—"the foundation of the world,"—but was in time—"manifest in these last times for you." It's interesting that it uses that phrase "last times for you." This is referring to the first coming of Christ, or first advent, the incarnation. The Bible actually uses that phrase of "last times" for beginning with the coming of Messiah to die for our sins. Now, if that was the beginning of the last times, I believe the Church today is in the last times of the last times, the end of time. But all this time from the cross till the rapture is the end of time, even in through the time of the tribulation and then the introduction of the Kingdom Age, the Kingdom of God on earth, the millennial reign of Christ. But he uses the phrase, "last times" for the manifestation or the incarnation of God in flesh in Jesus Christ, "... for you." This is why I opened with that passage where Jesus said, "I have come to redeem mankind, to give My life as a ransom for many."

One of the number one reasons for Christ coming, for the incarnation, is for redemption, for Him to die to redeem us back to Himself. How marvelous! This speaks of the incarnation, His

coming and manifestation.

Here's my third and last question, verse 21, what are we redeemed to? This is redemptive's purpose. What are we redeemed from? What are we redeemed by? “. . . the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained” What are we redeemed to? What's the purpose and plan of God for us in redemption? Verse 21, “Who by him”—that's a reference to Christ—“do believe in God.” It's through Jesus Christ that we come to believe in God. I love John 14, what Jesus said, “. . . ye believe in God, believe also in me.” You believe in God, believe also in Me. He said, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” so we come to believe in God through and by Jesus Christ because He is God manifested in the flesh.

By the way, that term, “. . . believe in God,” is used for Christians, that we are believers. It speaks of our faith in Christ, “that raised him up from the dead”—so God the Father raised up God the Son Jesus Christ from the dead. If you're taking notes, that phrase is talking about Christ's resurrection. So we have at the end of verse 20, Christ's incarnation, becoming flesh, and then in verse 21, Christ's resurrection, that God the Father raised Him from the dead. At the end of verse 21, “and gave him”—that is, Christ—“glory”—that is, exaltation. So, incarnation, then we would have logically the crucifixion, then we have the resurrection, and we have the exaltation. This is all describing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for us, “Who by him do believe in God,” He's revealing God to us, we come to faith.

What does it mean for us as believers to be redeemed? First, it means freedom—freedom from the bondage of sin and the old life, the law, and one day our sinful bodies. We're set free through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it means that we come now to have faith and hope in God. I love it! Verse 21, you could miss it so easily, notice the word “faith and hope,” “. . . that your faith and hope might be in God,” that's what a believer is, “. . . faith and hope . . . in God.” By the way, that's the object of our faith, the object of our hope, and that's what a Christian is, has faith and hope in God and God alone. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling, so we come to Him and put our faith in God.

Thirdly, the purpose and plan of God redeeming us is that we would bring glory and honor to Him. Notice it in verse 21, “. . . and gave him glory: that your faith and hope might be in God,” or in order to bring God glory. Salvation and redemption are all designed and planned and plotted by God in order to bring glory and honor and praise to God. This is why when we get to heaven and we're with the Lord, the theme of our song is going to be redemption.

It's really a shame, we don't sing enough hymns. I have more than one hymnal in my office and I have a hymnal at home, and the two most important books for the Christian, the Bible and a hymnal, is singing to the Lord. Hymnals are full of songs about redemption. Our modern worship songs have more about us than they do about God, shame on us. If we're redeemed, we should be worshiping God. If we're redeemed, we should be praising God. If we're redeemed, we should be serving God and glorifying God and living for God.

Now, as I said when I started my study tonight, you may have not heard it or paid attention to it, but I said this theological text on redemption is given for motivation. This theological text on redemption is given for motivation. Motivation to what? To live a holy, godly life; to live in a way that honors, glorifies, and brings praise to God; that I would live in holiness and service and worship.

Someone put it in these words: I will sing of my Redeemer, and his wondrous love to me; on the cruel cross he suffered, from the curse to set me free. Sing, O sing of my Redeemer! With his blood he purchased me; on the cross he sealed my pardon, paid the debt, and made me free." Amen?