

Title: The Right Purpose

Text: Galatians 4.4-5

Theme: Redemption

Series: Advent 2005 #4

Prop Stmnt. We were redeemed from what we were in order to become all that God intends us to be.

It is universally accepted that the cross is a symbol of Christianity. But in the early days of the church, believers had to be careful about what signs they used for fear of recrimination. Sometimes believers would paint biblical scenes such as: Noah's Ark, Abraham killing the ram, Daniel in the Lion's den, the 3 Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace, and a shepherd carrying a lamb. All of these images had one thing in common, they spoke of redemption.

Redemption is a great word because it speaks of a great truth. Great words die if we do not take care of them. This word has suffered from lack of care, but rightfully understood, it makes the reader aware of what power is resting in its truth. It is as if you are reading along in the Bible when you hit this word and BAM!! the page explodes. In our text, there are few of these theological land mines, and this is one of them. But the truth of redemption is only part of the entire salvation picture.

Our salvation, which was accomplished by Christ is a like a theological diamond. Depending on how you turn it, its different facets show off different aspects of it. Redemption is one of those facets, along with Propitiation, Justification and Reconciliation.

Because of our sin, we deserve to bear the wrath of God upon ourselves for all of eternity. But, the wrath of God against us, has been averted, because instead of pouring out his wrath against us, God poured out his wrath against our sin when He poured out His wrath upon His own Son on the cross. That is propitiation. It means to remove or to take away the wrath that we deserved. Propitiation is a concept that for hundreds of years was seen in OT Israel. Propitiation takes us into the temple courts where the priest would oversee the sacrifice of the lamb that the OT family brought for a sin offering. Keep in mind that most of the families were part of an agricultural community. Farming and shepherding were very common, while city life was uncommon. When people came to the Temple in order to offer their sin offering, they brought a goat or a lamb. Instead of punishing the person(s) for their sin, the lamb is slain in their place. Leviticus 4 outlines the process that they followed. While you could purchase a lamb or goat, no doubt in many cases, the people brought one from their own herd. The entire scenario made them aware of how personal and how serious sin really is. By laying their hands upon the animal and killing it, they were offering a sacrifice that appeased the wrath of God against their sin. The lamb was killed in their place. The just wrath of God was appeased by the sacrifice of the sin-bearer. That is propitiation. But, those animal sacrifices were never complete, because the animal sacrifices could never make a complete payment for sin. They had to be offered over and over. And the priests who helped make the offerings had to keep making an offering for their own sin before they could help others.

But, when Christ, who did not have to make an offering for Himself, offered Himself in our place, His sacrifice was so complete, He paid our debt in full. “He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb. 9.26) When Christ came into the world he said regarding the Father, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire (referring to the OT system) but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will O God.’” (Heb. 10.5-7)

From the temple courts we go into the courtroom in order to understand the next facet in the salvation diamond. We are guilty and we deserve to die because of our sin. God, the eternal judge has issued the decree that the soul who sins – dies because the wages of sin is death. The only way for the law of God’s court, the law of justice to be satisfied is for the sentence of death to be paid. The infinite fine could not be paid by any sinful creature. Jesus Christ, the infinite God-man lived a perfect life which qualified Him as the perfect payment. He then died in our place which satisfied the justice of God. His life is exchanged for our life and his death is exchanged for our death. When His life and His death is credited to your account, you are declared to be righteous. That is called Justification.

From the court room we go to our homes and neighborhoods. Reconciliation is the fourth facet on the diamond of salvation. Sin devastates people and it destroys relationships. Sin is not only a barrier between people, it is a fundamental barrier between people and God. In order for true reconciliation to take place between people, reconciliation has to take place between a person and God. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled. Christ reconciles us to God and gives us the ministry of reconciliation.

The fourth facet on the diamond of salvation is the facet of Redemption. From your home and neighborhood we go to the market. Redemption is the term that was used in the market-place where slaves were bought and sold.

### **1. The Idea of Redemption involves three parts:**

#### **a. The Person or thing in need of redemption is in deep weeds.**

Do you remember the story of Little Annie? Annie is an orphan living in a terrible orphanage in New York City. But Annie is not a terrible orphan. Oh no, this girl can sing and dance, and smile, and laugh, and preserve and charm the socks off of anybody, especially Daddy Warbucks – the richest man in the universe – or something like that. Daddy Warbucks redeems her and then adopts her, but in the story, we are all cheering for her because she is so redeemable.

Christ came to redeem us, but here is the difference and it is a big one. We are not lovable, huggable, singing, dancing, mind-our-manners, wide-eyed, curly-haired and oh-so-grateful orphans. We are arrogant, demanding, self-centered, hopeless, pathetic, morally bankrupt, but-I-will-save-myself-anyway orphans. We are helpless orphans who are in such a mess that we cannot get ourselves out it.

Remember the OT pictures of redemption? If God had not rescued Noah by giving him advance warning, there would be no human race. Isaac was redeemed by a ram. If it wasn't for that ram that God provided – Isaac would have been killed. Daniel was redeemed out of the Lions Den. It wasn't for God rescuing him, Daniel would have been eaten alive, Daniel could not save himself. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were also rescued out of the fiery furnace. If it wasn't for the hand of God rescuing them and protecting them, they would not have been able to save themselves.

**b. Redemption involves a price.**

That price is called the ransom payment. The person who pays the ransom is called the redeemer and becomes the rightful owner of what he redeems. The OT provides another great example of this in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ruth. Ruth is a young widow from the land of Moab who is living during the times of the Judges in the village of Bethlehem. She and her widowed mother-in-law are 2 vulnerable women living without much of a means to support themselves. There is land in the family and in Israel. The family stayed with the land and the land stayed with the family. If you wanted to buy the land, you got the family along with it. In fact, you became part of the family. Boaz purchases the land in order to take Ruth as his wife. He was her kinsman redeemer. He paid the price in order to become the rightful recipient of the land and to be able to take her as his wife. Jesus said in Matthew 20.28 and Mark 10.45, that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He paid the ransom for us with his own life. And since He paid the ransom price for our redemption that means....

**c. Redemption involves the rights of ownership.**

The person who does the redeeming is now the rightful owner of what he redeemed. Redemption is more than deliverance from a problem, it is the change of ownership. It is the change of identity. In fact, redemption establishes the basis for adoption, which is part of the redemption process.

Now, hold on to this for a second, because here is where it starts to get really, really great. If you redeem something and you are now the rightful owner, what do you get to do? You get to write your name on it.

Hey kids! Do you want to know how to really get your brother or sister upset? Find something that is very important to them and write your name on it. The next time your neighbor is pouring a new driveway, go put your initials in it. You're tracking with me now – aren't you? When we are redeemed, Christ puts His name on us, because that is who we are! We are the property of Jesus Christ! How does He do that? Christ gives us the seal of His Holy Spirit. That means that we are the blood-bought, heaven-bound, Spirit-sealed, purchased of God. As your owner God has the right to do with you what He wants. So, what does He will to do? What does He chose to do? He chooses to make you His child and gives you the full rights of sons!

## 2. The Picture of Redemption is woven throughout the entire Bible.

One of the most sacred events on the Jewish calendar is Passover. Of course this was also the time when Jesus chose to go to the cross. The Passover holy day was established to commemorate the redemption of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The Israelites were in a hopeless and helpless condition. They were the property of the most powerful empire in the world. They had no rights, no government, no official representation, no army and humanly speaking no future. After a series of plagues that God visited upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, God instructed the Israelites to kill a lamb, and apply its blood to the doorframe of their houses. That night, every home in the land of Egypt that did not have the blood of a lamb on its doorframe lost their firstborn son. The shocking result of that enabled the Israelites to leave Egypt – which they did. But leaving, where they used to be and leaving what they used to be was only part of the story. They were now going to a new land, and they were now learning to be a new people. They had been slaves to Egypt and they had to learn to live free under the rightful ownership of God. The OT law, was God’s covenant with them that provided for them a new sense of identity. That was a huge step forward from where they had been. But God had something even better in mind. The OT law was a shadow of the reality that was to come. The redemption accomplished by a lamb, the night of the Passover, was an object lesson of the Lamb of God who would be slain in order to be the final payment for the redemption of people from every tribe, nation, ethnic group and language. The New Covenant in His blood now teaches us how to live as His free children under His ownership.

Now, let’s tie this all together. Go back to our text in Galatians 4. What is the argument here? What is the point that Paul is trying to make? The people to whom Paul is writing were in a spiritual and a theological crisis! (the two go together) There was a movement within those churches that was teaching that after you come to faith in Christ you have to obey the OT law in order to achieve spirituality. Paul is arguing that obeying the external standards of the OT law does not generate any true spirituality. He says in 2.16, “by observing the law no one will be justified.” The OT law reveals our sin. The law makes us aware that we are in deep weeds, but it can’t do anything about. The law is like the cat-scan that gives you the diagnosis of cancer, but a cat-scan cannot fix a thing. 3.24 says, “The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.” His point is, we are saved by faith in Christ and we live by faith in Christ. In other words, we follow after Christ not in a self-centered, rules-driven, pompous-producing, me-comparing-to-you, fear-of-people atmosphere. That isn’t following Christ. We follow Christ with a faith-driven obedience. Faith-driven obedience starts in the heart, where we consider his commands and His truth to be more precious and more worthy of our obedience than the lies and the calls of this world. We have been redeemed to live redeemed. You see, the means by which we have been saved becomes the means by which we live. What you are saved with, you are saved to. You were a slave – and the law pointed that out to you that you were a slave.

## 3. The Fact of Redemption was accomplished by Christ.

This statement about being redeemed (Galatians 4.5) is not the first time that Paul mentions this in this book. Go back to 3.13-14, and we see the same idea presented. (read) Do you see how these two go together? The fact is, Paul is explaining these truths in this section. In 3.13-14 he focuses more on how we were redeemed, and in 4.4-7, he is focusing more on the purpose for our redemption. But you can see how they go together. Christ not only redeemed us out of the mess that we were in, but He did so in order that we could be adopted into His family.

Remember that the idea of redemption begins with the person who is in need of being redeemed, being in a desperate condition. This is explained a little more in 3.10, where it says that we are under the curse of the law. Redemption involves the payment of a ransom, which is the payment of a price. The price that Christ paid was the price of death. But His death was a humiliating and cursed death. Christ redeemed us by becoming cursed in our place. Ephesians 1.7 says that in Christ we have redemption through his blood. His blood is a reference to not only the fact that he died, but also to the manner in which he died. Christ died a cursed death. Christ died a disgraceful death. Christ died a violent death. He died for you. He died in your place. He died on behalf of you. That is how serious your sin is, and that is how intense the love of God is for you. He went as high as he had to go, and as deep as he had to go and as wide as he had to go to redeem you from your sin and to redeem you to Himself.

You are the slave. You are in bondage to your own sin and to Satan, the father of lies. You have no future, no hope, no peace, no rights, no standing, no inheritance, no place at the table, no identity, and no life. You are chained to a post in the market. Your life is treated like a piece of meat. You are in bondage to your sin and to the empty way of life that comes with it (1 Pet. 1.18). You owe a debt that demands complete servitude for the rest of your life. Into the market-place comes the Son of God. He nails a piece of paper to the post, and then with his nail-scarred hands he breaks the chains off of your wrists and ankles, heart and mind. He then gives you a robe, shoes and a crown and sets you inside his carriage and takes you home, to his home. The piece of paper? It simply read – “Paid in full.” He did it all – for you. There is nothing left for you to add to it. You must accept it by faith alone.

#### **4. The Full Benefit of Redemption will be Realized.**

Next Sunday morning, I am going to expand on this point since this entire text is flowing toward this idea. We have been redeemed for a purpose. We have been redeemed in order to be adopted as His Sons. Right now, we experience the benefits of redemption since our status before God has changed. But one day, our bodies will experience the full benefits of redemption. When Christ redeemed us, he redeemed us all. Our bodies belong to God because He is the Creator. This body will be resurrected. But, if you are a follower of Christ, your body also belongs to Him because Christ is your Savior. You belong to Him because He purchased you. There is a third sense in which your body belongs to God, and that is because He indwells you by means of His Spirit. Bought by God, your body is a slave to no other. You were both born and re-born for this.