

Reveling in Redemption: God's Grand Accomplishment through Christ

INTRODUCTION

I love the text of that hymn (“Here Is Love”) by the notable 19th century Welsh hymn-writer, William Rees. (Rees’ ministry followed that of William Williams – “The Watts of Wales” and author of “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” - in terms of chronology, contribution to Welsh hymnody and pastoral leadership of the Tabernacle in Liverpool. See www.hymnary.org) I chose it intentionally to be sung prior to today’s message. It’s poetry is so poignant in its description of God’s love for us through Christ. It’s imagery helps us to grasp the beauty of our possession in Christ where the limits of our vocabulary fail. We have just one word for “love” in the English language and, as a result, we can only convey the kind and the quality of our love through the addition of other phrases or the inflection of our voice. That’s why it’s so important – men and children – that you clarify what you mean when you say, “I love you!” and you say it with meaning. Consider the complications that could come from saying “I love you!” in the wrong way. Let me demonstrate:

What if I said to my daughter: “Yeah, yeah, love you tooooo...”
(Ambivalent response of husbands / children totally dissatisfying for moms / women)

What if I said to one of you ... a church member: “I love you but . . .!” (*Storge*)
(With raised inflection indicating exasperation but an attempt to forebear)

What if I said to my wife: “Come on girl ... You know I love yuh!” (*Philia*)
(Cocky, superficial expression common among guys but unconvincing for girls / wives)

What if I said to Jan, my assistant: “I love you!” (*Eros*)
(Provocative, sultry expression *only* appropriate for husbands and wives)

Now, if we were Greek, all these complications would be solved because we would simply use the word for “love” – of which there are more than four – that is most fitting. Let me clarify the phrases I said previously using the Greek word that’s most fitting.

“Love you too ...” (Ambivalent response)
Wait ... there is no word for this response.
It’s just wrong! Husbands, kids ... take note and beware!

We could appropriately say to one another when aggravated, “I *storge* you ... but... !”
Brothers, we could rightly say to one another, “Hey man, I *philia*!”
Men, you should say to your wives, “I *errros* you!”
How significant then is it that God says of us: “I *agape* YOU and ...”

We face an even more disconcerting dilemma with the word “redeem” in our culture today. It does not carry hardly any of the weight it once did in ancient culture. We redeem coupons for discounts off of goods. We speak flippantly of the need to “redeem ourselves” from blunders of one kind or another but the stark reality of life and eternity is that we can *never* “redeem ourselves!” We need a Deliverer, a Substitute, a Savior ... we need a Redeemer and the doctrine of redemption is at the very core of the Gospel. It carries with it connotations of atonement – “redeeming” the relationship with our Heavenly Father from Whom we are estranged by sin.

It includes expiation; that is the offering of a sacrifice to pay the ransom for our sin. Redemption effects, that is, brings about our justification (Romans 3:24), which leads to our liberation to live for God and our sanctification to be set apart for Him as those whom He “bought with a price.” (1 Cor. 6:20) All these “-tions” are inherently connect to “redemption.” So, it is absolutely vital that we understand this doctrine of “redemption” and I pray by the end of this morning we’ll see the glorious truth that God has made so abundantly, compellingly, soul-satisfyingly clear in His Word!

LET’S PRAY (*briefly*)

Let’s begin by defining “redemption.” We have seen this terminology in our study of the book of Ruth. The writer uses the word “Redeem” 11 times, “Redeemer” once and “redemption” twice in just 4 brief chapters of narrative. Moreover, clarification of its meaning and significance are replete throughout the story of Ruth. Her future, and the story of the Gospel for that matter, hang in the scales of “redemption.” Will God accomplish the impossible for her, for His people and for us? It all depends upon the accomplishment of his will through Christ, our Redeemer. John MacArthur writes,

Define Kinsmen Redeemer

“The Old Testament concept of a kinsman-redeemer set forth three qualifications: he had to be related to the one needing redemption, able to pay the price, and willing to do so. The Lord Jesus met these requirements perfectly.” **MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians.**

So we turn our attention this morning to, perhaps, the most descriptive text of the New Testament concerning God’s work of “redemption” through Christ: Ephesians 1:3-10.

SCRIPTURE TEXT

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.* **Eph. 1:3-10**

I. **Establishing Our Relation**

“Blessed be the God and Father of *our Lord* Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us in Christ* ...”

Preceding the provision of “redemption” Paul records a litany of spiritual blessings we have received in Christ. These provisions qualify us to receive redemption and the sum of them shows God’s unimaginable forethought, goodness, intentionality and love. Look at the list of spiritual blessings Paul says we *have (already/irrevocably) received* in Christ:

- Chosen (elect) in Christ
- Before the foundation of the world
- With God's intention that we be counted blameless and be made holy (Ultimate Sanctification)
- In explicit love, God set His affection / intention upon us (He foreknew, Romans 8:29)
- By the design of all human history He predestined us to bring us into fellowship
- By legal right He adopted us, thereby endowing us with all the rights *of sons*
- With the expectation that we would embrace His will for our lives and praise Him for His grace
- For the fatherly favor with which He has blessed us *in* His beloved Son, our Lord and brother
- And there is more – much more – in the blessing of redemption

As we have seen in Ruth, “Redemption” in the Old Testament had to do with payment of a debt, recovery of lost possession or renewed identification with a people from whom a person had been estranged. (See Leviticus 25:24, 51-52)

However, there is more to “redemption” in the New Testament than the mere payment of a debt or deliverance from slavery as significant as these provisions may be. Redemption in the New Testament conveys a gravity that goes beyond our record of past offenses and speaks to our freedom from an eternity of deserved destruction.

Define and Describe the Unique Nature of Redemption (*Apolytrois*)

The writers of the New Testament purposed to convey their deeper understanding of “redemption” through their use of an altogether unique word. I quote here from the *New Bible Dictionary* of InterVarsity Press:

“The characteristic New Testament word for redemption is *apolytrois*, a comparatively rare word elsewhere. It is found ten times in the New Testament, but apparently, there are only eight occurrences in all the rest of Greek literature. This may express the conviction of the early Christians that the redemption wrought in Christ was unique.” *The New Bible Dictionary* (Intervarsity Press)

Let's unpack some of the implications of “Redemption.”

II. Accomplishing Redemption

“In Him we have redemption ...” (7)

A. By the Only Adequate Means

“... through His blood” (7a)

But this is no easy forgiveness – no slight offense that can merely be dismissed. No, the magnitude of our offenses against the character of our holy God is so great that only capital punishment will satisfy the injustice done to His honor. Someone or something had to die to atone for sin. This has always been the case:

“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” **Hebrews 9:22 (ESV)**

Why blood? Because God declared in Leviticus (17:11) that blood is the essence of life. This is not foreign to us, for we use phrases to speak of loved ones as our “flesh and blood.” We use the phrase, “blood, sweat and tears” to speak of the expenditure of our lives for some cause. Think how much greater, how much more costly, the forfeiture of Christ’s life was for His Heavenly Father Who sacrificed His beloved Son for our redemption! The writer of Hebrews speaks to that sacrifice when he says,

“**[Christ] entered once for all** into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption**. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, **how much more will the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**”
Hebrews 9:12-14 (ESV)

The Apostle Peter also speaks to the merit of Christ’s sacrifice in **1 Peter 1:18-19**,

“**For you know that** it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that **you were redeemed** from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but **with the precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect.

B. At Its Core *but More*

“... the forgiveness of our trespasses” (7b)

At the core then, New Testament “redemption” is the forgiveness of our sins through Christ’s sacrifice resulting in our justification. However, there is more to “trespasses” than meets the eye:

- 1) First consider they are plural – they are many! Indeed! They are legion – a record of wrong-doing so vast we could not account for it if we were even aware of all we’ve done wrong! There too is an issue that deepens the nature of our sin debt. The word *trespass* “is defined primarily a false step, a blunder ... used ethically, denotes a deviation from righteousness.” **Vine's Expository Dictionary**

Were our known offenses not enough to condemn us, there is an equally damning ledger of mere “departures from righteousness” that earn for us equal condemnation in the sight of a perfectly righteous God Who is deserving of perfect allegiance. These unknown trespasses are evidences of a nature that is hopeless broken and in reality dead.

- 2) That is the second aspect of our trespasses that is unseen. We are actually “dead in our sins and trespasses” – a reality that Paul addresses in the 2nd chapter of Ephesians.

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
Ephesians 2:1-3 (ESV)

There is a captivating and pervasive lie celebrated in our culture of which films like the recent blockbuster, “The Greatest Showman” is perhaps the most persuasive proponent. The lie of self-worth, and self-experience and personal achievement in light of intrinsic goodness is so provocatively conveyed that I find myself swooning before the beautiful characters who move me by their spirit and song. They defiantly declare,

When the sharpest words wanna cut me down,
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out.
I am brave, I am bruised, I am who I'm meant to be; this is me!
Look out 'cause here I come and I'm marching on to the beat I drum!
I'm not scared to be seen; I make no apologies, this is me!

Justin Paul / Benj Pasek
© Sony/ATV Music

Contrary to this pervasive lie, people are not “who they’re meant to be.” They are not “generally good” and just in need of indifferent acceptance of their defiant inclinations. Our lives are replete with “trespass-*es*.” In fact, We are consistently errant, ungrateful, rebellious, self-absorbed, wicked; objects of death and subject to all the inclinations of darkness we can imagine if we’re willing to be truly honest about all that goes on in our hearts and minds. **Yet, ALL these “trespasses” have been forgiven by God “according to the riches of His grace” to us in Christ.**

C. From the Wealth of God’s Grace

“... according to the riches of His grace” (7b)

Redemption is not just the payment for sins that is *equal to* the amount of the debt. Here Paul speaks of God’s grace *abounding to us according to* His inherent benevolence, goodness, love and mercy which are boundless in supply. These attributes super-abounded in our Savior Who not only lived adequately but perfectly, prolifically, and purely in our place. His life and death *more than paid* our *individual* debts. His redemption paid the debt of all who would ever trust in His sacrifice. Moreover, His resurrection insures that “the wages of sin” have been paid in full for all who will ever trust in Him. The redemption God has accomplished through Christ is “according to” / *proportionate to* the *riches of His* grace.

Did you pay attention to what you were singing just moments ago?

You took our sin; You bore our shame.
You rose to life; You defeated the grave
and a love like this, the world has never known!

Chris Tomlin, Matt Maher & Jason Ingram
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It’s an incomparable love! Here again what was sung in William Rees hymn, “Here Is Love”?

Of your fullness, You are pouring your great love on me anew,
Without measure, full and boundless, drawing out my heart to You.
You alone will be my glory! Nothing in the world I see.
You have cleansed and sanctified me.
You, Yourself, have set me free!

Oh! How marvelous! Oh! How glorious!
Is my Savior's love for me!

William Rees, Steve & Vikki Cook
© 2003 Sovereign Grace Worship

The great 19th-century Presbyterian theologian and commentator Charles Hodge wrote,

When God gives "in accordance with the riches of [his] grace" he gives from his unlimited treasure-house an overflowing abundance of unmerited love, inexhaustible in God and freely accessible through Christ ..." quoted by Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word – Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*.

This unmerited love God “lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.”

D. With Complete Pardon in Sight

“... lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight” (8)

Not the reality of God's ability to see into the future who would and would not be redeemed. Though that is a reality according to vs. 3-6 of Ephesians 1 that is clearly predetermined by God's intention to bring us to Himself. No, what I want to emphasize here is the wisdom of God to pardon all sins that He alone had the capacity to see before we ever committed them; in fact, before we sinners were even born. Our gracious and Sovereign God had them ALL “in sight” and paid the pardon for them all in Christ in advance! Our forgiveness is complete and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39): nothing in our past, not any sin with which we presently struggle, not any unforeseen failing that is deserving of our disqualification! The Father paid it all and delivered us - *redeemed us* - from any further penalty for sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His Son. This inconceivable / unimaginable grace He “lavished on us in all wisdom and insight ...”

John MacArthur writes,

Even before the Messiah came and paid the price for redemption, God spoke of it as already having taken place. Depressed Christians forget that God looked down the corridors of time even before He fashioned the earth and placed the sins of His elect on the head of His Son, who took them an eternal distance away. He dismissed our sins before we were born, and they can never return. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians*.

(APPLICATION / AFFIRMATION)

I don't know about you but I need this rebuke. I am all too often one of those depressed Christians who looks to my sin or my circumstances and groans about my inability to overcome or questions the goodness of God in the midst of life's challenges. Admittedly, life challenges can be hard! Some of you certainly know the reality of depression, difficulty, grief and grappling with sin in far more debilitating ways than I. We can never say, however, that our Savior does not know far darker paths and deeper sorrows than we nor should we indulge the notion that God does not have a perfect purpose for them. In His wisdom and insight He is walking us even in the valley of the shadow of death that the glories of the days to come might magnify our joy when once meet Him face to face.

My favorite aunt passed away this week and will be buried this very day. She sacrificed her whole life serving with my uncle Paul in the Mountain Mission School of Grundy, VA – a home for orphaned and delinquent children of Appalachia. There's was no life of luxury. In fact they lived with only the most meager of comforts, rarely did anything for their own experience or enjoyment and she spent the majority of these final years in pain, disability and despair. Greatest among her griefs was surely the mysterious and untimely death of her son, my closest cousin last year. He was a brilliant and extraordinary churchman, father and professional, achieving the status of Senior Vice President of Toyota, North America before his tragic loss to cancer at the age of 50. In retrospect, my aunt's life seemed so incredibly hard and my cousin's loss, such a shame. But I can say unequivocally what was the outcome of their passing. My aunt Jenny has revealed this whole last week, and will be for eternity, in the face to face fellowship of her Lord and Savior and has shared that unspeakable blessing with her beloved son.

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For [these] light momentary afflictions[s are] preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Our gracious Heavenly Father has not stopped with the grand accomplishment of redemption. **He has exceeded all expectations and He has purposed to make known to us “the mystery of His will ... to unite all things (including us) in Christ.”**

III. Exceeding All Expectations

“To unite all things in Him” (10)

A. His Eternal Intention

“... making known to us the mystery of His will” (9a)

Though this mystery was only a hope to the patriarchs, veiled from the prophets, and hardly more than a glimmering hope for the apostles and early Church its revelation to us was His eternal intention. So here we are, centuries later and we can see the historic movement of God through His Church to reach a globe so vast and lost and diverse. Here we are, the beneficiaries of a great commission than ultimately brought the Gospel to our shores. Here we are with the opportunity to partner with our very own missionaries to break fresh fields with the Gospel in Ghana and Hamtramck and India and Scotland and all over the globe. We are a present and eternal part of all that God *will* accomplish in His kingdom because of His work of redemption through Christ!

B. His Historical Action

“... according to His purpose” (9b)

How did our inclusion happen? According to His purpose! He *purposes* to make it happen! Think of it! The God of all eternity *purposed* to make Himself know to me and to you. He called a young kid at camp and convinced through His Word and confirmed by the baptism of His Spirit and convicted of sin when straying in wayward youth and kept by His forbearance when back-slidden in college and preserved from life-altering error and protected by His angels when lost and alone in Israel, and hiking alone in remote mountains and wading alone through swift waters and serving alone in Nigeria and being held at gun-point on dangerous jungle roads and flying home from abroad on the very eve of 9/11 and ... and ... and think of all that God has purposed to do in your life and the lives of every other person He called to redemption in Christ!

C. His Personal Intervention

“... which He set forth in Christ” (9c)

Why so watchful! Why so involved? Because the price He paid through the death of His Son would have been too high a cost were He willing to risk it all on happen-stance or hopefulness or the whimsy of men. No! The sacrifice of His Son was no gamble, no concession, no back-up plan. He knew the character of His Son. He knew the power of the Logos, Who was living and reigning with Him from all eternity and was the catalyst for all of Creation. He knew this Savior could and would be obedient unto death, giving His life as a ransom for many and He knew by the accomplishment of that perfect work He would raise Him up again on the third day and exalt Him at His right hand in the heavens and award Him the name that is above every other name. JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD! He knew that all He set forth to do through our Redeemer He *would do* for me and for you! Hallelujah!

D. His Eternal Objective

“... for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him” (10)

And God will not stop accomplishing His purpose for us until the fullness of time when we know the full measure of His love forever and we are with Him forevermore! What an assurance! What a promise! What an offering we dare not deny! This offering is for everyone who would call on the name of the Redeemer for pardon of sin and deliverance from death. Oh! Would you who have yet to believe be redeemed this day through this incredible accomplishment of Christ? For those of us who have come, may we revel in our redemption and renew our union with Christ!

LET US RECEIVE HIS INVITATION:

to Union with Christ

to Eternal security in His Kingdom

to Fellowship forever around His Table

“... until that day when [we drink the cup of the new covenant a]new with [Him in His] Father’s kingdom.” Matt. 26:29

COMMUNION

NOTES

Redemption denotes ransoming someone from captivity or from slavery. The supreme OT example was the exodus, where God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt (see [Ex. 15:13](#); [Deut. 7:8](#); [2 Sam. 7:23](#); [Mic. 6:4](#)). **Forgiveness of our trespasses explains the nature of redemption: Christians are freed from slavery to sin and guilt.** This was effected by Christ's **blood**, which means his death as an atoning sacrifice (see also [Rom. 3:24](#); [Eph. 1:14](#); [2:13](#); [4:30](#); [Heb. 9:15](#)). **ESV Study Bible**

The characteristic New Testament word for redemption is *apolytrōsis*, a comparatively rare word elsewhere. It is found ten times in the New Testament, but apparently, there are only eight occurrences in all the rest of Greek literature. This may express the conviction of the early Christians that the redemption wrought in Christ was unique. It does not mean, as some have contemplated, that the redemption is simply the same as deliverance.

They use such a word as *rhyomai*, "rescue," and *apolytrōsis* to mean deliverance on payment of a price, and that price is the atoning death of the Savior. When we read of "redemption through His blood" (Ephesians 1:7), the blood of Jesus Christ is clearly being regarded as the only price of redemption. In the Old Testament, God told Moses to daub or smear the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorpost. That was a just symbol; a show of things to come. But the blood of Jesus "freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Romans 3:24 KJV) John Matthew, *The Nature of God's Divine Redemption (Intro)*

Original Word: *ἀπολύτρωσις*, *apolytrōsis*

Usage Notes: a strengthened form of No. 1, lit., "a releasing, for (i.e., on payment of) a ransom." It is used of (a) "deliverance" from physical torture, [Heb. 11:35](#); (b) the deliverance of the people of God at the coming of Christ with His glorified saints, "in a cloud with power and great glory," [Luke 21:28](#), a "redemption" to be accomplished at the "outshining of His *Parousia*," [2 Thess. 2:8](#), i.e., at His second advent; (c) **forgiveness and justification, "redemption" as the result of expiation, deliverance from the guilt of sins, [Rom. 3:24](#), "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" [Eph. 1:7](#), defined as "the forgiveness of our trespasses," RV; so [Col. 1:14](#), "the forgiveness of our sins," indicating both the liberation from the guilt and doom of sin and the introduction into a life of liberty, "newness of life" ([Rom. 6:4](#)); [Heb. 9:15](#), "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant," RV, here "redemption of" is equivalent to "redemption from," the genitive case being used of the object from which the "redemption" is effected, not from the consequence of the transgressions, but from the transgressions themselves; (d) **the deliverance of the believer from the presence and power of sin, and of his body from bondage to corruption, at the coming of the Lord Jesus** (the *Parousia* in its inception), [Rom. 8:23](#); [1 Cor. 1:30](#); [Eph. 1:14](#); [Eph. 4:30](#). *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.***

Vines defines redemption as "forgiveness and justification, "redemption" as the result of expiation, deliverance from the guilt of sins, [Rom. 3:24](#), "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" [Eph. 1:7](#), defined as "the forgiveness of our trespasses," RV; so [Col. 1:14](#), "the forgiveness of our sins," indicating both the liberation from the guilt and doom of sin and the introduction into a life of liberty, "newness of life" ([Rom. 6:4](#)). **Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.**

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry the Father declared Him to be "My beloved Son" ([Matt. 3:17](#)). And because we have believed in Him, "He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" ([Col. 1:13](#)). Because we are now in the Beloved, we, too, are "beloved of God" ([Rom. 1:7](#)).

In the Greek, [verses 3-14](#) comprise one sentence and encompass the past, present, and future of God's eternal purpose for the church. It is Paul's outline of God's master plan for salvation. In [3-6a](#) we are shown the past aspect, election; in [6b-11](#) we are shown the present aspect, redemption; and in [12-14](#) we are shown the future aspect, inheritance.

Within God's master plan of salvation is every believer who has or will ever trust in God and be saved. As it is sometimes expressed, history is simply the outworking of "His story," which has already been planned and prewritten in eternity.

This passage can also be divided into three sections, each of which focuses on a different Person of the Trinity. [Verses 3-6a](#) center on the Father, [verses 6b-12](#) center on the Son, and [verses 13-14](#) center on the Holy Spirit. Paul takes us to the very throne room of the Godhead to show the greatness and the vastness of the blessings and treasures that belong to those who are in Jesus Christ. **John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians***.

Only Jesus Christ has the inherent right to all the goodness of God. But because we are identified with Him by faith, that goodness is now also our goodness. Because our Savior and Lord is the Beloved of the Father and possesses all the goodness of the Father, we are also the beloved of the Father and possess all His goodness. Jesus said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father" ([John 14:21](#)).

The Father now loves us as He loves Christ and wants us to have everything that Christ has. That is why Paul could say He "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" ([Eph. 1:3](#)). Every Christian is God's beloved child because the Lord Jesus Christ has become our Redeemer.

The Old Testament concept of a kinsman-redeemer set forth three qualifications: he had to be related to the one needing redemption, able to pay the price, and willing to do so. The Lord Jesus perfectly met these requirements. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians*.

Forgiveness is not the act of an indulgent deity who is moved by sentiment to the exclusion of justice, righteousness, and holiness. Forgiveness depends on the shedding of blood: it demands and depends on the payment of the penalty for sin. Christ's death and the shedding of His blood is the foundation for forgiveness and, without that, there could be no forgiveness.

*I think here we need to learn the distinction between human forgiveness and divine forgiveness -- they are not the same. Human forgiveness is always based on the fact that a penalty is deserved and that the penalty is not imposed. It simply means that one wipes out the account. God is holy and righteous. Therefore divine forgiveness is always based on the fact that there has been the execution of the penalty and the price has been paid. Human forgiveness comes before the penalty is executed. Divine forgiveness depends upon the penalty being executed. **Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.***

*When God gives "in accordance with the riches of [his] grace" he gives from his unlimited treasure-house. Grace is unmerited favor—"an overflowing abundance of unmerited love, inexhaustible in God and freely accessible through Christ ..." says **Charles Hodge***

In addition to being redeemed and forgiven, we are now eternal objects of his divine favor in accordance with his riches which he lavished on us and will continue to lavish! As believers with Paul, we are wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, for God gives not *from* the riches of his grace, but *according to* the riches of his grace! **Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word – Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ***.

It is tragic that many Christians are depressed about their shortcomings and wrongdoing, thinking and acting as if God still holds their sins against them—forgetting that, because God has taken their sins upon Himself, they are separated from those sins "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:12). They forget God's promise through Isaiah that one day He would wipe out the transgressions of believers "like a thick cloud" and their "sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me," He said, "for I have redeemed you" (Isa. 44:22). Even before the Messiah came and paid the price for redemption, God spoke of it as already having taken place. *Depressed Christians forget that God looked down the corridors of time even before He fashioned the earth and placed the sins of His elect on the head of His Son, who took them an eternal distance away. He dismissed our sins before we were born, and they can never return.*

Hundreds of years before Calvary, Micah proclaimed, "Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:18-19).

To ancient Israel the distance from east to west and "the depths of the sea" represented infinity. God's forgiveness is infinite; it takes away our trespasses to the farthest reaches of eternal infinity. **MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians.**

The word **mystery** means a secret, something into which we must be initiated; something which we cannot discover ourselves and which can be known only as it is revealed. In this sense the Gospel is a mystery; and any fact or truth, however simple in itself, in the New Testament sense of the word, is a mystery, if it lies beyond the reach of our powers. Compare Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7-10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26.

For the same reason, any doctrine imperfectly revealed is a mystery. It remains in a measure secret. Thus, in Ephesians 5:32, Paul calls the union of Christ and believers 'a great mystery'; and in 1 Timothy 3:16 he refers to the manifestation of God in the flesh, and writes, 'the mystery of religion is great.'

*In the present case **the mystery of his will** means 'his secret purpose,' that purpose of redemption which was hidden for ages, but which he has now graciously revealed.* **Charles Hodge, A Commentary on Ephesians.**

Having contemplated the holy nature of God and His uncompromising, unyielding character and government, it is not difficult to accept the solemn decree, "The soul that sinneth it shall die"; likewise, "The wages of sin is death"; and, again, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." God never deals with sin in leniency or mere generosity. The awful penalty which sin inevitably incurs cannot be lessened in the slightest degree. God's holy demands which are based on His holy character are as unchangeable as His nature. Christ paid the required ransom. Divine justice is satisfied, and the way of salvation is now open for all. **The responsibility imposed on the sinner is that of believing the record God has given concerning this redemption which is in His Son. This record points to the Redeemer as the only One who is able to save, and calls for nothing less or for nothing more than saving trust in Him.** It is in Him that we have redemption. He is our redemption. By the shedding of His blood He accomplished a perfect ransom; by His resurrection He proved the completeness of His undertaking, and resumed His life by the same authority by which He laid it down. Thus He ever lives as the all-sufficient Redeemer of those for whom He died. It is God who in infinite grace provided a ransom, and it is man who in infinite sin rejects that ransom. The price is paid and the grace of God is the portion of each and every one who will receive it, and those who are saved can say with the Apostle, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Lewis Sperry Chafer, *The Ephesian Letter*.