

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 15 January 2023
Services: *Across the diocese*
Series: Every Spiritual blessing
Passage: Ephesians 1:7-8a
Title: Redeemed

Outline:

- 1. We have redemption**
- 2. Through his Blood**
- 3. The Forgiveness of sins**
- 4. All of his Grace**

INTRO

- the only way that we can be forgiven and rescued from sin and death, is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the riches of God's grace.
- Not through trying really hard
- Not through turning over a new leaf
- Not by pulling up our moral socks or redoubling our efforts to be nice people...
- Now, this is offensive to some...
- Some people think that God's love just wins and that in the end, everyone gets eternal life; but that's not what the Bible teaches. //
- While some may find this difficult – but friends – to think that I am completely underserving – and yet – I can be rescued from my mess... well – it is humbling – and it moves me to thanksgiving every time.
- So, if you only remember one thing from today's passage, let it be this:
- the only way that we can be forgiven and rescued from sin and death, is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the riches of God's grace.

- But let's recap what we've seen over the past two weeks:
- We saw that everything starts with praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Because it's **from HIM** that we receive **every spiritual blessing** in the **heavenly realm**
- We've seen that we were **chosen** by God before we existed...before the world even **existed!**
- That we have been chosen by God **to be his holy and blameless people.**
- Then we saw how we were lovingly **adopted** to be his **children**
- ...and that this was his will **AND** his **pleasure!**
- And all (Eph 1:6) *to the praise of his glorious **grace**, which he has freely given us in the One he loves... //*

- this week we come to v7 of Ephesians 1 and explore what it means for us to be **redeemed**.
- It would be a great help if you would have that passage open in front of you from Ephesians 1...

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

- Let me read again from v7...
- *In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.*

1. WE HAVE REDEMPTION

- We've been redeemed....
- in today's society, we often redeem things.
- We sometimes get a voucher or a shopper-docket which says, 'hand over voucher to redeem this offer'.
- So, if we are taken fancy with the cheap massage on offer on the back of our Woolworths receipt, we take that voucher in, hand it over, and then we would get to enjoy our massage at a cheap price.
- We 'redeem' the deal
- In the 1st Century, **people** were redeemed.
- when an empire was at war, they would take prisoners of war and put them to work as slaves.
- After some time, they might decide that they wanted to get rid of these slaves and so they would make a deal with the country that they were at war with.
- The deal would be that the slave would be freed at a price.
- When the price was paid, the slave would be released or 'redeemed'

- Centuries before Paul and the 1st Century, there was a **great** redemption.
- You'll recall that the nation of Israel was being held captive by Pharaoh in Egypt.
- They were slaves in Egypt in harsh conditions
- they needed rescuing. They cried out to God for help.
- AND God had a great plan to rescue them by raising up Moses as a leader... who he tells to say to the Israelites: *'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm'* **Exod 6:6**
- So, God rescued and freed the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt!
- They were redeemed.
- ...not because of anything that they had done but simply because of God's grace.
- That is what redemption is!
- And it was so important, that Israel where constantly commanded not to forget this great redemption.
- It became part of God's identity – who is your God? – well he's the God who rescued us and brought us up out of Egypt!!
- So, **Duet 15:15:** *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, **and** the LORD your God redeemed you;*

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

- And the Passover was established so that God's people might **never forget** their great redemption from slavery in Egypt by the mighty hand of God!

- Now here in Ephesians, the word of God tells us that those in Christ have been **redeemed**.
- those in Christ have been redeemed.
- Another – in fact – the supreme great redemption story of the Bible!
- The redemption of Israel out of Egypt – was a glimpse – a foreshadowing of our great redemption by our Saviour Jesus Christ.
- Those in Christ... have been set free!
- from what?
- From our slavery
- Not slavery from the cruel conditions enforced by the Egyptians, but slavery to sin and death
- The Word of God tells us in Romans 6:20

*When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.*²¹ *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!* **Rom 6:20-21**

- Every one of us, were slaves to sin which ultimately, results in death.
- Please remember – that when you're a slave, you cannot free yourself.
- ... you are under the control of someone else
- ... you're at the mercy of another...
- and as were slaves to sin, we **couldn't** free ourselves from sin's clutches and death's curse
- We were under the control of sin,
- ... at the mercy of sin (as were) of sin and headed for certain death – spiritual death – separation from God.

- Have a glance over at Eph 2
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
Then at the end of v3 Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath
- Our slavery to sin was death and deadly.
- - with there was nothing we could do to escape it. //
- Without some kind of intervention, we are left heading for separation from God – under his rightful appropriate judgement... //
- **BUT God stepped in...!** He acted for us...
- Our passage – *in Him* we have **redemption** – rescue!
- **Through Christ**, we have our **freedom**.

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- Because of **Christ**, we've been rescued!
- In Christ, God has had mercy on his lovingly adopted children and rescued us from our captivity and slavery to sin AND judgement.
- We are free from the **chains of slavery** !!!
- We are free from the curse of death!!!
- **Once** we were slaves, bound by a cruel master, now the chains have been **broken**, and we have been set **free** for **eternal life**!
- free to be... children of the living God – free to live the holy and blameless lives, for which he chose us!
- Isn't that brilliant?
- But it came at a cost.
- Because the cost was:

2. THROUGH HIS BLOOD

- It is through the shed blood of Christ that we have been rescued
- It is through his bloody death on the cross
- in his great love and mercy, God sent his son Jesus to take the punishment that we deserve
- you've heard me say before – that a great exchange has taken place...
- where our sin was put on Christ
- and we take instead Christ's 'rightness' with God – his righteousness.
- He became sin for us, so that our sin may be dealt with - wiped out...
- Our slate wiped clean...
- And Jesus' right-ness placed on us...
- Yes – our redemption came at great cost – the cost of Jesus' shed blood.
- That's why we will never stop preaching the cross,
- It will never stop being central
- We rehearse the words every time at communion don't we...?
- That he offered the one true sacrifice for sin... and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people
- That happened at the cross
- Its only by the cross we are redeemed, only by the resurrection that we have certainty of eternal life
- Remember the words of the old hymn:

*Our hope is built on nothing less,
than Jesus blood and righteousness,*

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

- Or the more recent hymn... In Christ Alone -
*Till on that Cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied*
- We've been redeemed, through his blood,
... and that means:

3. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- Let's be clear – it is through that redemption that comes at the cost of Jesus' shed blood, that our sins have been forgiven
- v7 again: *In Him we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.*
- That is what our redemption consists of
- We've been set free – we've been redeemed from being a slave to sin and living in a sinful state
- AND we are also released and liberated from the **guilt** of the **individual sins!**
- We have the assurance – the comfort of this - right now!
- We don't – or we shouldn't – or mustn't lie awake at night, fretting about the sin of last week or last year or 20 years ago, because here, we have been freed and released from them!
- They have been forgiven... through what Jesus has done
- Taken, removed... and dealt with
- What does Psalm 103 say? – as far as the east is from the west – so far has he removed our sins from us –
- That's what forgiveness is all about

And can I take you back to our passage?

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, **in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us***

4. BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE

- Everything that we have explored in the past weeks and today comes only as a gift.
- Have you been chosen by God? That's a gift of God's grace.
- Have you been adopted by him? It's all of his grace.
- ...it's all of his rich abundant grace.
- Notice that it's an abundance of grace which has been lavished on us?
- It's more than enough for his purposes
- He doesn't just give us a slice or a taste... he lavishes grace upon us
- I've shared before the image that this conjures up for me is of Susan lavishing cream on her pavlova... more than is needed! More than is probably good for my cholesterol... but Susan lavishes her pavlova with cream....

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

- That's God's grace for us – its poured out – it's over the top – it's more than we need... its abundant – its wonderful – it's plentiful!
- The almighty, creator, ever-living, holy God doesn't hold back on his grace....
- No, he lavishes **upon** us that love of which we're completely undeserving... that generous act for us, unworthy though we are...
- Our cup is **overflowing** with God's grace
- We are **undeserving**... we're **unworthy** – often **ungracious**... but – he **lavishes his grace on us**...

- Did we choose him – or only because in his grace, he chose us?
- Are we adopted as his? Only because of his grace...
- There is nothing that we can do to get ourselves out of slavery
- No work that we can do that can get us to God – to climb the ladder up to him...
- ... nothing that we can do to free ourselves from death...
- all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God
- but we have been redeemed in **Christ through His blood ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE**
- It's **ALL** of his grace... all that we've seen in this series so far – it's all tied back to grace...
- **Chosen**
- **Adopted**
- **Redeemed...**

- Brothers and sisters, you've heard me talk a lot about the grace of God over the past nearly three years since I began doing these video sermons at the start of lockdown in March 2020
- And I go on about God's grace...through Jesus... because it is at the absolute **heart** of all we **believe**.
- ...and because in my now over 30 years of experience in ministry – there are so many people IN CHURCH – who have yet to really understand grace and the liberation it brings...
- Here in the passage – redemption – rescue – is at the cost of Jesus' blood which results in forgiveness...
- ... and it is in **complete accord** with the **riches** of God's grace... /
- I could tell you have the four teenagers rescued in the week before Christmas from an island in Port Philip Bay in Victoria when they were swept away on paddle boards...
- Redeemed – rescued – by the grace of the police and rescue services... who put their lives at risk...
- They'll never receive a bill – and their rescue was despite their irresponsible actions...
- I could remind you of a murderer of a school teacher – who was at the edge of a cliff in the Blue Mountains – also the week before Christmas – who was rescued and brought back from the brink... despite that murder he had committed in the previous day – that's grace!
- I could tell you of the Australian rescued from a prison in Myanmar on the provision of a prisoner swap from the USA... rescued – redeemed - by grace.

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- Or the solo sailor rescued from his upturned boat out to sea
- Or the residents of Eugowra rescued from off the roof of their house
- Or the shark bite victim rescued by their friend who jumped into the water to get her onto a jet ski despite the risk to himself..
- ...people are rescued from death every day... not because they deserve it or their lives matter more than others... but because of the generosity of others who put themselves at risk to redeem those in danger... who could do nothing to rescue themselves ///
- Or I could tell you the story of YOU.
- I could tell the story of YOUR rescue.
- YOU headed – because of sin - because of the clutches of sin – the slavery of sin – the chains of sin – headed for death and separation from God
- But! – you were rescued – redeemed – not because you’re worthy – not because you showed potential... not because you deserved it – but simply because of God’s grace!
- That’s our story
- And this rescue was free to us... but costly to the one who won it for us...
- the cost? –his shed blood... on the cross....
- But the result is // the beautiful and astonishing forgiveness of sins... - the wiping out of sins....
- Friends - revel in your redemption – your rescue – today...
Revel in your forgiveness which came at great price
Revel in the riches of God’s grace which have been lavished on you!
- Because: the only way that we can be forgiven and rescued from sin and death, is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the riches of God’s grace.