

God's People Part 1: Who We Are Redeemed Ephesians 1:7-10

Introduction: A big part of what we are trying to do as a church is to get people plugged into a group, because as you will see in our passage today, it's how we are meant to live in relationship with Jesus. A relationship with Jesus is not one that God intends for us to have by ourselves, but He literally sent Jesus to die for our sins so that we could have a relationship with Him and all who are in Him! Getting plugged into a group at Venture is practicing what we will have with all who are in Christ forever! I will tell you up front that we aren't good at it yet, but the primary job of our two campus pastors is to get us to where we are, and that starts with people saying, "Sign me up for a group!"

Before we get too far into this, let's examine today's passage and look at what it tells us about who we are as God's people. Paul writes,

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. (Ephesians 1:7-10)

The central theme of verses seven through ten is all about the doctrine of redemption and, as such, tells us what it means to be the redeemed of the Lord!

Proposition: Ephesians 1:7-10 gives us three truths about the redemption we have in Christ.

The first truth about our redemption in Christ is that,

(1) Christ redeemed us from the slave master of sin. (1:7a)

A. "7 In him we have redemption through his blood," (1:7a)

B. "In him"

- 1.** Paul continues to use the word "in" to specify the location of events. The things he is writing about have not, nor are they taking place, in our actions or abilities.
- 2.** Instead, it was "in Christ" that we received all the blessings of heaven (verse 3). It was "in Him" (Christ) that we were chosen to be holy and blameless before God (verse 4). Now Paul makes it clear that our redemption was not found in our actions either, but rather "in Him" (Christ).

C. “... we have” is in the present tense, meaning that what is being presented is not something we are waiting for but something we already have.

D. “redemption”

1. “The Greek word used here, *apolytrōsis*, refers to the act of paying to free a slave.”¹
2. “Refers to the act of freeing someone who is enslaved. Just as Israel was enslaved in Egypt before being rescued by Yahweh...”²
3. “The story of redemption can be told in three Greek words; *agorazō* (ἀγοράζω), “to buy in the slave market” (I Cor. 6:20, 7:23, 30, II Pet. 2:1, Rev. 5:9); the Lord Jesus bought us in the slave market of sin, the ransom price, His blood; we are his bondslaves; *exagorazō* (ἐξαγοράζω), “to buy out of the slave market, to buy off, to buy for one’s self” (Gal. 3:13, 4:5); the redeemed are the possession of the Lord Jesus forever, and will never be put up for sale in any slave market again; *lutroō* (λυτρώω) [(this is the root word that Paul uses in Ephesians 1:7)] “to liberate by payment of ransom” (Tit. 2:14, I Pet. 1:18); the redeemed are set free from the guilt and power of sin now, to be finally set free from the presence of sin at ... [His return].”³

E. “... through his blood,”

1. Concerning this verse, almost 170 years ago, Charles Hodge wrote, “**We are redeemed neither by power, nor truth, but by blood; that is, by the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus.**”⁴
2. Theologically, it can’t be missed that not only does the blood of animals not redeem us from sin, but nothing else does either! There is no knowledge of something or practice of something that frees me from being trapped as nothing more than a person who is incapable of living in fellowship with God, others, or even myself, the way God designed. There is literally nothing I can do, no water I can be baptized with, no religious practice I can perform, no wine or bread I can consume that can pay the price God requires to be paid to be freed from the curse of sin; the curse that leaves us as slaves to sin. But, the death of Jesus, the shedding of His blood DID! It’s why the writer of Hebrews wrote,

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Eph 1:7). Lexham Press.

² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Col 1:14). Lexham Press.

³ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 39–40). Eerdmans.

⁴ Hodge, C. (1858). *A commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (pp. 40–41). Robert Carter and Brothers.

3. **11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he 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. (Hebrews 9:11-12)**
4. Christ's blood has eternally set us free from the curse of being under the slave master of sin! Verse seven makes it clear that if we have repented and believed in Jesus, we HAVE been redeemed, meaning we have been freed, as in the present tense, which begs the question of why, then, don't we act like it? Now hold on to that thought because we're going to come back to it at the end of my sermon. Instead of walking down that road right now, I want to ensure you don't miss a golden nugget in what I just read.
5. Worth is established by what somebody is willing to pay for something. If people really love something, then that item will cost a lot more money than something people don't care for at all. You can insist on the value of something all you want, but it still comes down to what somebody is willing to pay for it. This is where the Gospel does something unexpected. It not only tells us how God saves us but also how much we are worth. There is no higher price a person can pay than to give their own life. Jesus gave His life as a ransom for us! That's how much you are worth, and that worth isn't theoretical; it's actual because the price was actually paid. There is nothing God the Father could do or say to more clearly demonstrate our worth! That's how much He truly loves us!! It's why Jesus said,
6. **16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)**

The second truth about our redemption in Christ is that,

(2) Christ redeemed us from the entire penalty of our sin. (1:7b)

- A. **“... through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,” (1:7b)**
- B. **“... through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,”**
 1. The word forgiveness isn't a verb. It's a noun. It's not something God is doing. Forgiveness is something that the blood of Christ has provided us. It's a status! We have the forgiveness of our trespasses as a possession, so much so that it is a part of who we are. I am one who is forgiven!
 2. More specifically, it's a noun used as an appositive. An appositive is, “A word used to clarify or add to the meaning or significance of another word or

clause. This is sometimes called epexegesis.⁵ In this case, that means the REDEMPTION provided to us through the blood of Jesus also means there is no penalty, no debt I still owe God because my fault sheet, that is, my debt sheet, is totally paid forever!

3. “The word “forgiveness” is *aphesis* (ἀφεσις) from *aphiēmi* (ἀφιημι), “to send from one’s self, to send away, to bid go away or depart.” The noun *aphesis* (ἀφεσις), used in relation to “sins,” means “a release, the letting them go as if they had not been committed, thus, forgiveness, a remission of their penalty” (Thayer).” ... One is reminded of the one goat who was offered as a sin-offering on the Day of Atonement, and of the other goat upon which was placed the sins of the people (symbolically) and which was let go in the wilderness, never to be seen again by Israel, the latter goat typifying that aspect of redemption in which the sins of the human race were put away, never to be charged against the individual again.⁶
4. It is in the blood of Christ that the promises of God in the Old Testament are fulfilled:
 - a. **“... For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34)**
 - b. **“19 He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19)**
5. It’s why the writer of Hebrews wrote:

Note: **4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ... 11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:4, 11-14)**

6. Although the goat on which the priest put the blood disappeared, their sins did not! All the goat did was symbolize something only Christ could do! But in Christ’s blood our sins are GONE! Before God, we are “blameless” (Eph 1:4), again, not because of anything whatsoever that we did, but completely because of the blood of Christ.

⁵ Lukaszewski, A. L. (2007). *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament Glossary*. Lexham Press.

⁶ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 40–41). Eerdmans.

C. “according to the riches of his grace,”

1. “This forgiveness is “according to the riches of His grace.” The words “according to” are the translation of *kata* (κατά), a preposition which in its local meaning has the idea of “down.” The word “down” speaks of domination. The word “domination” speaks of control. The degree of this forgiveness was controlled, dominated by the riches, (*ploutos* (πλούτος)) wealth, abundance, plenitude of God’s grace. This forgiveness is therefore a complete, an unqualified, an unchanging one, since it is controlled by the plenitude of God’s grace, and that plenitude is infinite in proportion. Expositors comments: “The freeness of this divine favor in the form of grace, the *unmerited* nature of the divine goodness, is what Paul most frequently magnifies with praise and wonder. Here it is the mighty measure of the largesse, the grace in its quality of *riches*, that is introduced. This magnificent conception of the *wealth* of the grace that is bestowed on us by God and that which is in Christ for us, is a peculiarly Pauline idea.”⁷
2. The phrase “according to” emphasizes the orientation of the forgiveness we have received. The sheer dominance, or alpha, of the measure of forgiveness we have received from God relative to any other is that the forgiveness He gives is according to the riches of HIS grace! Why is that a big deal? Well, let me explain.
 - a. I used to love snow skiing. My knees are too bad to even think about it now, but in my 20s, especially when I was at VT and Liberty, I would go skiing whenever I could. At Liberty, there was a place just 45 minutes away that sold \$5 lift tickets on weeknights. Because I had my own skis, boots, and poles, I could ski for \$5.
 - b. However, as any southeast skier knows, skiing in the southeast is more like ice skating than it is snow skiing. The climate is not conducive to the formation of packed powder. The snow on the surface typically melts just enough to refreeze as a sheet of ice rather than a fluffy snow surface.
 - c. So, when I finally got a chance to go skiing out west, I was ecstatic. My boss at Liberty and his family, as well as a major donor at Liberty and his family, all split the cost of renting a house and a rental car in Breckenridge, CO, to go skiing for a week. It took every dollar I had to afford to go. I inched and pinched and went without for months so I could make the trip, and it ended up being the most fun I had ever had skiing.

⁷ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 40–41). Eerdmans.

- d. Unfortunately, the skiing in Colorado was so fun that it totally ruined my expectations of what skiing was supposed to be like. I could never again view skiing in the southeast the same way. The packed powder of the western ski resorts is heaven compared to what you get in the southeastern United States.
- e. We had so much fun that we didn't even want to stop and eat anything more than a quick snack. We skied hard all day long. So at night, we were all massively hungry. The donor to Liberty was wealthy, and my boss was the President of the Seminary, so he also earned a great living. Therefore, when they chose where to eat, they had a different financial perspective than I did. I remember looking at the menu and thinking, "I can't even afford to eat an appetizer." As I was looking it over, Jamie, the donor to Liberty, suggested what I should order, and, foolishly, I did it! I was thinking, "How in the world am I going to pay for this?" as I told the waitress to bring me the expensive entree that Jamie told me to order. Therefore, I can't tell you how relieved I was when I realized Jamie had quietly paid for everybody's meal! I thanked him, as did my boss and his family, but I also quietly thanked God for inspiring Jamie to do that because that bill was going to hurt!
- f. This process was repeated every night during our stay in Colorado. I was super grateful, but at the same time, this guy Jamie and his son, whom I was just getting to know, were spending a ton of money on me. I didn't want him to think I felt entitled to his generosity, so I believe it was on the fourth night, when we were out to eat, that I subtly caught the waitress's attention during the meal and tried to slip her my credit card to put everyone's meal on it. Jamie was engaged in a conversation with my boss, so I thought it was a perfect time to pay for the meal without his noticing.
- g. I don't know what in the world I was thinking! At a \$100-per-week salary, it would have taken me all year to set aside enough money to pay for that meal, and, frankly, I don't even know if my credit card would have accepted the charge! But even though I thought I had caught Jamie at a time when he wouldn't notice what I was doing, he somehow saw what was going on and intervened. Jamie isn't arrogant at all, so please don't misconstrue what I'm about to write as him being arrogant; it was actually the opposite. Jamie knew exactly how much money I made and wanted to make sure this waitress didn't try to run my credit card. He's also a very smart man and probably knew my credit card would laugh at the attempted charge, and reject it, so he was also trying to save me the embarrassment of her coming back to tell me that my credit card didn't work!

The third truth about our redemption in Christ is that,

(3) Christ redeemed us into an eternally perfect relationship with God and all who are in Christ! (1:8-10)

A. 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.

B. The riches of His grace are massive, and He is lavishly spending them on us! To lavishly do something is to go miles past what was necessary, to spend far beyond what was needed. God's grace didn't stop at our forgiveness but has redeemed all who repent and believe in Him into perfect unity with Him and with one another; something He is going to complete at the second coming of Christ.

C. "Paul's use of the word "mystery" here is ironic, for what he is saying is a mystery to many who read this text. It need not be. In Bible language a mystery is something that formerly was unknown but is now revealed. What Paul reveals in this verse is that God's ultimate purpose in redemption is "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together" again under Jesus Christ. In the first volume of his multivolume study of Ephesians, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has an excellent study of these verses in which he points out rightly that the key to understanding them is a word which, strangely enough, most of the translations omit. It is the word "again," and it occurs in Greek in connection with the verb "bring together under one head." The word really says that it is God's purpose "to bring together, unite, [or] sum up" all things "again" in Jesus Christ. In other words, everything was together in Jesus once, ceased to be united to him through the Fall, but is to be reunited in him *again* by redemption. This is not a doctrine of universalism, the doctrine that all fallen creatures will be saved. That is repudiated in other places, including places that quote Jesus himself (see Matt. 25:41, 46; Mark 9:47–48; John 3:36; 5:28–29; 12:48). It is the teaching rather that all things will be subjected to Christ—some willingly as those who have been redeemed by Jesus joyfully exult in his rule, some unwillingly as evil is nevertheless restrained and all are forced to acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all. Lloyd-Jones writes, "The perfect harmony that will be restored will be harmony in man and between men. Harmony on the earth and in the brute creation! Harmony in heaven, and all under this blessed Lord Jesus Christ who will be the head of all! Everything will again be united in him. And wonder of wonders, marvellous beyond compare, when all this happens it will never be undone again. All will be re-united in him to all eternity. That is the message; that is God's plan. That is the mystery which has been revealed unto us. ... These things are so marvellous that you will never hear anything greater, either in this world or the world to come."⁸

D. Paul will develop this in greater detail as we go through this letter, but the point that can't be missed is that Christ didn't die simply to get rid of our debts, then put us in a situation where we are starving paupers for the rest of our lives. He didn't release us from the curse of sin only to leave us with a future of doing the best we can in a sin-sick, sinful world under the curse of sin. Instead, His death,

⁸ Boice, J. M. (1988). *Ephesians: an expositional commentary* (pp. 24–25). Ministry Resources Library.

burial, and resurrection were God's plan all along to rescue a people for Himself out of the curse, restore them into a perfect relationship with Him, each other, and themselves, and to live out this perfect relationship in a world that is set free from sin and living in Him as well. It's a total restoration of all things that are in Him and an eternal casting out of everything that isn't!

- E. John described the manifestation of this promise in Revelation. At the judgment seat of Christ, all things will be subject to Him; some being cast out by Him and others being totally restored and united in Him, but all under Him.
- F. **3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:3-8)**

Conclusion: Is your life a testimony of freedom from sin or slavery to it?

Are you someone who has never repented and believed in Jesus? If so, you're still a slave to sin, but the offer of salvation is right there for you to take!

Have you given your life to Christ, but still live like you haven't been redeemed from sin?

An interesting thing can happen to people who have lived their lives enslaved to somebody else, in that when allowed freedom, some people will actually choose to go back into slavery. I recently read a report on the interesting number of people who will lay down their lives to fight to keep a totalitarian dictator in place that has robbed them of every fundamental human freedom, executed people for even appearing to question his authority, and left them in extreme abject poverty.

Like a chicken that grew up in a cage that won't leave the cage to go live its life as a free-range chicken, it's wild how we as humans will voluntarily surrender ourselves to the reign of sin, even though it's proven to do nothing but destroy us and everybody else around us!

If you have repented and believed in Jesus, you have been SET FREE from the slave master of sin (Romans 6). It's not conceptual. It's actual!

Why, then, do we volunteer to live as if we are still slaves to sin in our morality, our ethics, and even in our relationships with one another?

Why do we live like slaves when we have been REDEEMED to be HIS children?

Why do we volunteer for the devastation of sin when we can choose to live in the abundance of God's life?

In just a second, our campus pastors will take a couple of minutes to talk about how you can change that pattern and how we, as a church, can help, but the steps they are going to give you are totally worthless if you can't admit the truth about who you are and who you are living like.