

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Redemption

By Micky Galloway

Romans 3:23-26, *“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth (to be) a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, (I say), of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.”*

Christ is our only means for redemption! **“Redemption”** has been the theme of many of our songs. However, in spite of the beauty of redemption’s theme and the simplicity with which it is told in the scriptures many do not understand it. **“Redemption”** is the theme of the scriptures.

“What” is redemption? Our English word literally means to re-buy and is defined, *“to regain possession of by repurchase”* (*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*). However, the Greeks had two words which are translated as redeem in our English versions of the New Testament. (1) Exagorazo, *“To buy.”* W. E. Vine says that this word *“does not signify the actual redemption, but the PRICE PAID with a view to it.”* (2) Lutroo, *“to release on receipt of ransom.”* Vine says this word signifies *“the ACTUAL DELIVERANCE, THE SETTING AT LIBERTY.”* When we talk about redemption, we need to keep clear; Are we talking about the PRICE NECESSARY to obtain it or do we have in mind the time of our ACTUAL DELIVERANCE ... being set free from sin! By right of creation man belongs to God. In giving himself over to sin, he becomes the servant of sin (Rom. 6:16). To be the Lord’s again, one has to be redeemed. He must be bought with a price and the actual deliverance from the bondage of sin must take place.

“Who” redeems us? The answer in the broad sense is JEHOVAH. Psalms 111:9, *“He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name”* (1 Corinthians 1:17 through chapter 2). In a more specific sense, the answer is CHRIST. I Peter 1:18-19, *“knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, (even the blood) of Christ”* (cf. Rev. 5:9; 1 Cor. 6:20). I cannot not pay the price of redemption. God, in His grace, gave His Son and He made possible my peace with God, *“through the blood of the cross”* (Col. 1:20; cf. Rom. 3:23-26). Jesus, *“... the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matt. 20:28; cf. 1 Tim. 2:6).

“For whom” was redemption provided? John Calvin, one of the leaders during the reformation period of church history, popularized the concept of “limited atonement.” Calvin believed that God elected (predestined) some for salvation and others for condemnation and when Christ made atonement that He died only for the elect. What do the Scriptures teach? Did Jesus provide atonement for only a few? John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.”* 1 John 2:2, *“and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”* Hebrews 2:9, *“But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, (even) Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every (man).”* Calvin reasoned that if Christ died for everyone, then everyone is redeemed, yet in the day of Judgment some are lost (Matthew 7:21), therefore he arrived at the conclusion that these were lost because they were not included in those for whom Christ died. Calvin’s error lay in his conclusion that the benefits of redemption provided by Christ’s death are unconditionally received. Christ’s payment at Calvary is sufficient for the release of all, however only those who *“come and drink”* or who *“fear God and keep His*

commandments” will receive its benefits (Rev. 22:17; Acts 10:34-35). Indeed, on Calvary Jesus paid the price with a view to redemption. But our actual deliverance did not come at the time of Calvary!

“Where” is redemption? Read the text again. Romans 3:24, *“being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* Ephesians 1:7, *“In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”* (cf. Col. 1:14). The actual deliverance from sin, redemption, is obtained *“in Christ.”*

“When” are we redeemed? Though the PRICE PAID with view to my redemption, was paid on Calvary, the ACTUAL DELIVERANCE, the release from the bondage of sin, occurs when one is baptized into Christ. Galatians 3:26-27, *“For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”* Romans 6:3-4, *“Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.”* We are made free from sin when we obey the form of doctrine (Rom, 6:16-18).

Indeed, the sacrifice of Jesus is a ransom sufficient for the release of everyone who is in bondage to sin, therefore, *“The Spirit and bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely”* (Rev. 22:17). If I don’t share the home of the redeemed, it won’t be because God didn’t include me in His provisions, but because I didn’t accept the provisions.

(Note: I am deeply indebted to my dear friend and brother, Lowell Blessingame for the material he shared with me from a sermon outline many years ago. mg) ■

Hold Fast to the Name of Christ

By Jesse A. Flowers

“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells” (Rev. 2:13).

The church in Pergamos received some sharp rebukes and condemnations in the verses that follow, however, we ought to be greatly impressed with the commendation that they received from Christ in this verse. This city was a very difficult place for a Christian to live and remain faithful. After all, this is where Satan’s throne was – this is where Satan dwelt. This is where pagan worship was prevalent and emperor worship was enforced. But in spite of the pressures and persecution these saints faced, they held fast to the name of Christ and did not deny the faith of Christ. Even when one of their own, Antipas, was killed because of his fidelity to Jesus, they remained loyal to their Lord and steadfast to His cause.

How strong is our faith? Would we hold up under the pressure of threats, persecution, and even death? If our life was on the line, would we continue to confess the name of Christ or deny Him to save our own neck?

Jesus says to His disciples: *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matt. 16:24-25). If we struggle to muster up the courage to confess Christ and share His gospel with an unbelieving world in the absence of persecution, how would we fare in the midst of it?

Let us be moved and inspired by the faith, courage, and loyalty of our brethren in the first century. And let us be resolved to hold fast to Christ’s name and not deny His faith no matter the cost! ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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