

Series on the Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 1:7
Sermon #5
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Alright. Take your Bibles and turn to the Book of Ephesians.

For those of you who are visiting with us, we are considering the Book of Ephesians in our Sunday morning services. This is our fifth Sunday and we have only gotten down to the seventh verse so we are not making a great deal of headway, but I trust that the Lord is using what we are learning.

My text this morning is verse 7. It reads like this, as you can see in your Bible: "In whom (speaking of Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

We have been spending especially the last three Sundays talking about the spiritual blessings that Paul mentioned in verse 3 where he says that we as God's people have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

I think it is interesting not only to note what blessings he mentioned, but to note the order in which he mentioned these. I always like to think why do they mention what they mention in Scripture, and why in the particular order. I do not know that we can always say, but I want to suggest to you this morning what it seems to me to be the purpose that Paul had in mentioning these. As I have said, I think, each week that we have been looking at these spiritual blessings, "he does not mention all of them. If he had, and said just a word or two about each one why the Book of Ephesians would probably look more like the Book of Psalms because we have so many blessings in Christ." He was not being exhaustive, he was being selective. As you read over verses 3 through 14 I think that each one of you could perhaps see what I am going to point out to you this morning; but just in case you have not had that privilege let me suggest what appears to be his purpose in this. Then you can consider it in your own reading.

It seems, since Paul started with what took place between the members of the Godhead before the foundation of the world, that his first purpose is to get us to look to the past and to the foundations of our salvation. He mentions two particular blessings that we have, and most of us have learned about this after we were saved and not before we were saved. One is that long before we ever chose the Lord Jesus Christ we were chosen by God before the foundation of the world--that means before creation. Secondly, we were chosen to be his sons. You have the first of these in verse 4: "He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (and we learned that this means to be placed in God's family as sons, chosen really to sonship) by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (vv. 4-5). That all has to do with the past. When we get down to our text for this morning, he is talking about the present. We certainly have all of these blessings, but this is his emphasis: "In whom we have (present tense, right now, as an immediate possession) redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." So we move from the past to the present. Then, when you go on from verse 8, and especially down through verse 12, you will see that he talks about the future. In verses 10-13, for example, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times (which is eternity to come) he might gather together in one all things in

Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in

Christ." Paul is telling us what we all know. That is that this wonderful salvation which has its roots in eternity past is a very present possession with us now and is not going to be fully realized until the dispensation of the fulness of times, until eternity to come when we enter in to the fulness of our inheritance and when we will be and what we are to the praise of His glory, because we are going to be like our Lord Jesus Christ for we shall see Him as He is. So, you see, he starts with the past, moves to the present, and then projects to the future, just giving us a sample of these spiritual blessings.

Well, you see, now that leaves two verses. Yes, it does. It leaves verses 13 and 14. It seems that Paul's thought here is that when he talks about all of these blessings that he has selected to mention and been directed by the Holy Spirit of God, someone might be thinking, "well, now, I have this redemption, I have the forgiveness of sins, I have the prospect that I am going to enter in to my inheritance, but how do I know that I am ever going to make it?" We read in verses 13 and 14 where he says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest (the guarantee) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." If you look on to chapter 4 verse 30 you will see that he says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The day of redemption is the day in which all of us are going to be in glory, all of us are going to be with the Lord, all of us are going to be transformed into his image and likeness. The work of salvation will be completed in us. This is the day of redemption. To guarantee that I am going to be there and to guarantee that you are going to be there if you know the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit so that nothing can possibly happen to us that would mean that our salvation would be taken from us. I agree with you that if our salvation depended upon our faithfulness and upon our obedience, none of us would ever make it; but salvation is all of grace, is it not? There is not any reason why God would choose us, if you are considering us. There is not any reason why He would forgive us through the death of His dear Son. There is not any reason why He would promise us an inheritance and guarantee that except that the answer is to be found in His own heart because of His great love wherewith He has loved us. The greatest mystery in the world is why God would ever want to have anything to do with any of us who are sinners against His righteousness and often against His grace.

I have given you just that picture. I hope that that will help you to understand what he is doing here as he mentions these spiritual blessings that we have in Christ. When you see that it started in eternity past, we are enjoying it now, and our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins, and we have this wonderful inheritance to come, you can see why Paul begins by saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Let us talk about the present. Verse 7: ". . . we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." That is, those who are chosen, those who are predestined to be sons of God in the family of God, those for whom the Lord Jesus Christ specifically died, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.

Verse 7 contains a parallelism. I am sure that most of you, perhaps all of you learned what a parallelism was when you were in school. But, in case that slips your mind and you do not understand what I mean by that, let me explain. A parallelism in literature, in writing, means that you have two statements side by side or following each other which resemble each other in their meaning. This is a very common thing about Hebrew poetry. You see it in the Proverbs, for example, and you see it in the Psalms again and again. You see it in the writings of the prophets. These two statements are very similar in their meaning. In fact, we could say that they mean essentially the same thing; but they are expressed in different words to bring out separate ideas so that our understanding of these statements can be more complete. If Paul, for example, in writing

this had said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (v. 8-9) why there would not be any change in the meaning of this verse. Or, if he had said, after "he has made us accepted in the beloved that we have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." He could have taken either one of those statements and the truth would still be here. But when he says that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, he is indicating that if you are redeemed it means that you are forgiven and that you cannot be redeemed without being forgiven and you cannot be forgiven without being redeemed. You see, these are parallel statements that tell us the same thing. When you put the two of them together, it helps us to understand what redemption means and what forgiveness means. So we have this parallel statement.

He was telling the Ephesians that this redemption was theirs through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ because when he talks about His blood he had just mentioned at the end of verse 6 the beloved one. God has poured out these blessings upon us through His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This beloved one has redeemed us by His blood and His blood is the expression of God's grace. As I have already mentioned this morning, you and I cannot begin to understand the sacrifice of Christ, the blood of Christ, until we understand the grace of God. When you look at us, or you look at any child of God, there is not any reason why Christ should die for us. He died for us because of the grace of God, because God in His mercy has intervened for us. When you think of the blood of Christ think of the grace of Christ, just as when you think of redemption think of forgiveness. Here is Paul putting this altogether so that hopefully we can understand what this means.

Redemption means that we have been totally and permanently forgiven of our sin. Consequently, it is important for us to understand this link between redemption and forgiveness.

Let us look at the verse. I just want to break down the verse a little bit more for you this morning in the hope that the truth of this will really grip our hearts perhaps in a new way.

The first thing that I want to mention about this verse is that it speaks about a special person. The reference to this special person is in those two words, a prepositional phrase really, where we have "in whom." "In whom we have redemption through his blood." I have mentioned that he is speaking of Christ. He is speaking of the beloved one in whom we have his redemption. God has bestowed His grace upon us in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we go back to verse 5 and we go back to verse 4 and then we go back to verse 3, we find the same thing, do we not? Let me read those verses to you, and let us do it in reverse: Verse 5 -- Our predestination: "Having predestinated us unto (sonship) the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." Verse 4: "According as he (God) hath chosen us in him (that is, in Christ) before the foundation of the world." Verse 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." So you see, all of these spiritual blessings, all that the Apostle Paul could have mentioned, every single one of them, comes to us through Christ. We do not have anything apart from Christ. If it were not for Christ we would still be in our sins. He is the Son of God, is He not? He became God manifested in the flesh. He is the One we speak of as the God man. He is our Saviour. He is our Redeemer. He is our Great High Priest Who has made the sacrifice, as we heard in our Scripture reading, by which eternal redemption has been provided for us. He is the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. Jesus Christ is the Lord. He is the Lord Jesus Christ as Paul mentioned there in verse 2. How thankful we ought to be for Him. Every spiritual blessing you and I have in Christ, because of Christ, and through Christ. We have them all in Him. Without Him we would not have a single one of these blessings. If we are without Christ, we are without God. If we are without God, we are without hope and we are still in our sins. You cannot worship God unless you worship Christ and worship God through our Lord Jesus Christ. When a person talks about his relationship to God, I hope that you and I will understand that they do not know what they are talking about unless at the same time they are referring to all of these blessings, tracing all of these blessings to our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no one, absolutely no one, who can begin to compare with our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the most special and most wonderful person who ever walked upon the face

of the earth. "In Him we have redemption through His blood."

Let us think of this as a present possession: we have. For Paul to be able to write this meant that he had complete assurance of his own salvation. He did not say, "we will have." He did not say, "we hope to have, or we may have, but we have." You and I came into these spiritual gifts when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle John stated it very clearly in 1 John 5:12 when he said, "He that hath the son hath life." When the Lord Jesus was speaking those words recorded for us in John 5:24, you remember, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." If you have Christ you have redemption through His blood as a present possession and you have the forgiveness of sins. If you do not have the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour there is certainly no better time and no better place than here and now to make sure that Jesus Christ is your Saviour. If you wait until you die, you have waited too long. The Word of God tells us "today is the day of salvation." We have no guarantee whatsoever that we have any time at all beyond this present moment. So, in Him we have a very priceless gift: redemption through His blood.

The Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Chrysostom (spelling) who lived many, many years ago said on one occasion that "this word redemption which the Apostle Paul used here is a word which expresses the completeness of our redemption in Christ Jesus, a redemption which no later bondage should follow." That is, He has not only redeemed us, but there is no possibility that we could ever be unredeemed. Money could not buy what has been purchased for us by the precious blood of Christ. The price placed on our redemption by God the Father was nothing less than the precious blood of His Son, precious because it was His, but also precious because no other sacrifice would have been sufficient to purchase our redemption.

Isaac Watts wrote on one occasion the words of the wonderful old hymn,
"Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish alters slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain:

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb
Takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing his bleeding love."

We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

Now. The word "redemption" means that there has been a deliverance provided and a deliverance accomplished by God through the Lord Jesus Christ, deliverance from sin's guilt and from sin's penalty.

One writer has said that redemption is a word which pictures sin as slavery, and the sinner as slaves.

Because we are sinners we are under divine judgment. Our sins demand that we die. That is our judgment before God. No one will escape that judgment except those who have been redeemed through the blood of Christ. Through the death of Christ is what the blood of Christ means, through the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a gift that God has bestowed upon us which you and I certainly do not deserve. All of the money in all of the world could not buy a single spiritual blessing for the best person that you could find because our salvation cannot be purchased by money.

There is one other thought that I want to bring out about this wonderful word "redemption." There is so much that could be said about it. Not only does it mean forgiveness of our sins, that we have been delivered from the penalty of our sin, but it means that we have not only been delivered "from" something, but the word indicates that we have been redeemed "for" something. We have been redeemed for God Himself.

Long ago, in the prophecy of Isaiah in the forty-third chapter and you find it in the first verse, the Lord said this to His people in the Old Testament, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Paul, writing to the Corinthian church says, "Ye are not your own any longer. Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). So by the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ we belong to the Lord. He purchased us for Himself. Because we are His, this means that we are to live our lives in obedience to His Word and to spend our time seeking to do the things that will glorify Him. Again let me say, "If Christ is not your Redeemer, make sure that today your faith and your trust is in Him. He is the only One Who can give you perfect acceptance with God."

Then, let us think for just a moment about this unbelievable statement "the forgiveness of sins." "The forgiveness of sins."

I have told you before about the person who said that the sweetest word in any language is the word "forgiveness." That is especially true when we are forgiven by God. There is not any question about our guilt. I do not think any honest person can escape the recognition of that. We are not only sinners by nature, but so often we are sinners by choice, sometimes deliberately rebellious against God. We have all sinned many, many, many times. Over and over again we have been guilty of doing that which is displeasing to God. We are guilty before God. We deserve hell. We do not deserve heaven. But we are forgiven. We are forgiven.

How could that be? Well, as our verse tells us it is all because of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at it a little bit closer. What does it mean to be forgiven? It means that we are released from all the charges that are against us. You and I could not possibly list all of the sins that we have committed. We are not conscious of all the sins that we have committed. Things not only that we have done, but things that we have failed to do that we should have done, on the other hand. To think that all of these charges have been dismissed, God no longer has a case against any who are in Christ. Christ took our penalty upon Himself. He paid our debt and we have been set free. Consequently, Paul can say, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." The expression that he uses here is even more interesting.

I try to trace these words that are used by the apostle or by any of the writers of Scripture because the words of the Bible are so rich in their fulness and their significance that it is just really impossible to exhaust the meaning of these. The usual word for "sin" is not the word that he uses here. The word which you have all heard defined as simply "missing the mark." As I began to investigate the word that he does use here, some said that this is a word which simply means a fall or an error; others say that this is a word which means the things that you have left undone that you should have done; others say that it speaks of things that are grossly wicked and sinful in the sight of God. As you examine all of the reference material and the background material of this word "the forgiveness of sins" the word that he uses for sins here you can only come to one conclusion because this man will say, "well, here is this word used in this connection" and another one will find out, "but

here it is used in another connection." The conclusion that you come to is that he has chosen a word here which means "every kind of sin that is possible for people to commit." Some people do not seek forgiveness because they think their sins are too big. Others do not seek forgiveness because they are not conscious of any really bad thing that they feel that they have done. They are like the rich man who came and wanted to know what he could do to inherit eternal life. The Lord pointed him to the various commandments of the Law. He said in the presence of Jesus Christ, "All these have I kept from my youth up." The Lord did not contradict him, but I am sure the Lord knew his heart. Here was a man who had apparently been sincerely seeking to do everything that people told him that he ought to do and refrained from doing things that he should not do so there was not any great consciousness of sin in his heart. When we come to the Word of God we find that whether a person is a great sinner as we would think of sin, or one whose life has been lived more on a self-righteous, moral plane--and there are a lot of people like that in the world, good people, people who are honest, people who try to do the right thing. The reason that they can feel good about themselves is that they have never seen themselves in the light of an infinitely righteous and holy God. The Word of God says without any reservation or any exception, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). There is not a just man upon the earth who does good and who sins not. Every person stands guilty before God. We might be very acceptable citizens before our fellow men, but the solemn fact remains that apart from Christ we are under the judgment of God and we are faced with the prospect of eternal separation from God in hell. Consequently, regardless of how good a person might be, he is not good enough to get to heaven.

One of the faculty members at Moody Bible Institute many years ago wrote a very enlightening tract. The subject of the tract is "Why all good people will be lost." That is true. If you are trying to get to heaven on your own goodness you will never make it; but if, on the other hand, you sit there this morning and you are conscious of the fact that you have grievously sinned against God, you cannot stand yourself because of the thing that you have done and you feel that there is absolutely no possibility that you could ever be saved because of the way that you have dishonored God by your sins--and perhaps not once, but a second time or perhaps many times. Oh, when Paul wrote this word remember that he was talking to people in that first century as he describes them in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 when he was talking about this wonderful salvation he says. He says, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuals), nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 9:9-10). You are not going to find people like that in heaven. But he says, "And such were some of you . . ." Well, if they were in this category, how could he ever talk to them as the people of God? But then he goes on to say, ". . . And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 9:11). You see, there all kinds of sinners in the world. There are sinners who are still in their sins; but there are sinners who have recognized their sins and have turned in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and they are washed and they are cleansed and they are sanctified because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It sounds too good to be true, does it not? But it is true. Even though it is hard for us to take in that God could forgive us of our sins. We are still inclined to feel that there is something that ought to be required of us, something that we ought to do. That brings us to the last statement of our text: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Paul cannot get away from that word "grace," can he? He talked about the glory of God's grace in verse 6 and now he talks about the riches of God's grace. Grace means that I do not have any part in it. I will only come to Christ if I am drawn to Christ by the Father. If I am to repent, I must seek my repentance from Him. If I am to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am to be looking unto Jesus Who is the Author and Finisher of my faith. I must learn that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. If I can contribute, and listen to me, one single, even small good work,

salvation is not all of grace. For it to be all of grace means that it is all of God. It does not have anything to do with me.

When we get to Ephesians 2 we are going to see that "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves." Nobody is saved on personal recognizance. ". . . not of works, lest any man should boast." When he says it is not of yourself and it is not of works, he has eliminated you and me completely. It is solely by the grace of God. You see that by the riches of His grace, is it not interesting that when he takes this word sin which means all kinds of sin, he links this with the riches of His grace. It is not just the grace of God, but it is the riches of the grace of God. So, however bad those sins may be the riches of His grace are infinitely able and capable of taking care of all of those sins. Oh, how thankful we ought to be to God for His wonderful salvation which He has provided for us in Christ. It not only took grace to save us, to save the best person, it takes infinite grace, it takes the riches of His grace. There is a message for every one of us here this morning. If you are redeemed and you know that it was through Christ that you have been redeemed, that you were chosen in Him, that you were appointed to be His Son, and in time He has brought you to Himself, then you have this wonderful salvation which can never be taken away from you because you are sealed in Christ. Then there should not be a day go by, I say this to myself as well as to you, but what we say from the depths of our heart--this would be a good way for all of us to start the day, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." If you do not think that you have anything to praise God for, you will never be able to praise Him enough for the salvation that you have in Christ.

If you are not redeemed, would you believe that you are here this morning by the providence of God? He brought you here. He wanted you to hear this message. He has been working in your heart. He has promised to save those who come to Him. Let me plead with you to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ today, to put your trust in Him. If you have been trying to work your way to heaven, you have been trying to do something that you can never do.

"Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

I trust, this morning, that if you are here without the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you have never trusted Him, I trust that God in His wonderful grace will draw you to Himself and you will realize as you have never realized before that your only hope for salvation is in Jesus Christ and in the precious blood that He shed on Calvary's Cross to redeem sinners just like you are.