

“The Big Words of the Bible: Redemption”

1 Peter 1.17-21

Lenten Midweek 2, 2006

The Word of God for our sermon meditation this evening is recorded for our faith and life in St. Peter's First Epistle, the first chapter, beginning with especially with this 18th verse “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

I don't know if you clip coupons or not for your family shopping but at the bottom of every manufacturer's coupon there is some interesting language. In all that fine print there is a promise that the manufacturer will redeem the coupon's face value plus 8 cents to the store at which it has been used. In other words, the manufacturer pledges to secure redemption, the release of the coupons used by buying back the coupon. Redemption, in this case, involves cash, money, something we all have some interest in to one degree or another.

In connection with our spiritual lives we learn that we had to be redeemed as well, but not from some store. Redemption for us, we learn, was necessary from the Law and the justice of God. We all, in our sin, were in bondage and could not effect our release from sin and death. The word “redemption”, according to the Scriptures, means a release or a setting free that is accomplished by the paying of a price. It conveys the idea that one has to buy back and satisfy a cost demanded in order for deliverance to occur.

How true this is in connection with us and every sinner. For our condition before the Law was one of bondage from which we could not set ourselves free. We could not render the ransom; the price required for our redemption and release, any more than a penniless slave could on an auction block. For the holy Law of God requires perfection and blamelessness in order for one to be free of its condemnation. God's holy justice demands satisfaction from a sacrifice that is pure and undefiled that we may be delivered from His wrath.

This is something that we know that we are incapable of rendering, not just because we know what the Bible teaches on

this truth, but because we also feel that poverty of our sin as guilt afflicts us and our consciences groan under the burden of iniquity and transgression. Oh, we try to figure out ways to make ourselves feel better. We make all sorts of promises to God and pledge all sorts of bargains, but it just doesn't work. After all our best efforts, we still find we have only spun our wheels in the muck of our sin and made ourselves more unclean and spotted with sin in the process.

The Scriptures indeed teach that it is impossible for us to render and pay the ransom required for our redemption under the Law. Money cannot obtain. The works of the Law cannot provide it. Even the avoidance of evil and wickedness does not satisfy the price. The cost for our redemption is beyond our reach as the authors of the 49th Psalm teach us. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him -- For the redemption of their souls is costly."

So there we sat in our sin and wickedness, like a bunch of unredeemed coupons in the drawer of Hell. For, without a sufficient ransom for our release, without redemption we were destined to go from bondage to bondage without any hope of release from the terrors of Hell. In sin we could only expect a life of servitude, agony, torment, and more as well as an eternity of the same. Like slaves on the auction block, before the Law we have no hope of deliverance, of redemption arising out of ourselves. This is where our aimless conduct places us for this is what we have received from Adam, the father of us all.

But the Scriptures not only announce this bleak and tragic news of the Law on the sinner but they also announce that our redemption from the Law has been accomplished for us by our Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus, our blessed Lord, the Father's only-begotten, rendered for you and for me that all-sufficient sacrifice for our deliverance from sin's bondage and the condemnation of the Law. Christ, the Holy One of Israel, the Lamb of God who has come and taken away the sins of the world, purchased us for life eternal with His own lifeblood as the price.

This is the very reason and purpose that our Lord is manifested into this world. He came to us at Christmas for the sole purpose of being our ransom and for the sole reason of securing our

redemption from the Law. Our Lord Jesus knew the reason and purpose for His incarnation and first advent into the world for He concurred with it from all eternity. As Jesus explained to the disciples in our Gospel reading for tonight, Jesus came to serve us, to be enslaved to the Law for us in order to redeem us from the Law and free us for life eternal.

So writes St. Paul to the Christians at Galatia saying "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." Jesus came, the Creator and Manufacturer of us all, if you will, in order to redeem us from the Law's drawer so that we would be children of His Father on high.

So He came and took to Himself our flesh and blood. He came as our redemption, as the ransom that would deliver us from sins' curse, release us from the Law's condemnation, and set us free to be the people of God, rather than the slaves and play things of Satan. In order to redeem us Christ takes our place as our Sin-Substitute. He completely and fully fulfills the whole will and Law of God on the behalf of us all.

With His own lifeblood as the price, He redeems us, buys us from damnation in Hell by bearing Hell's punishments for us. With His own body and life, He secures our release from the Law by suffering its judgments as the Servant of us all. In His great love, He pays the price, the high cost for the redemption of our bodies and souls, by suffering and dying upon the cross of Calvary as the ransom for us all. In order to satisfy His own justice, in order to meet the ransom demands of His holy Law, in order to secure our release and deliverance from His own sentence on the sinner, Jesus is made to be Sin for us and sacrifices His life unto death on a tree.

So wrote St. Peter in our sermon reading for tonight. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." As we gaze upon the cross, no matter where we see one, whether crowned with thorns or not, we can see the price of our redemption, the cost of our salvation before us.

For with His holy sufferings and death, through the shedding of His precious blood, Christ redeemed us from the bondage of the Law and the sentence of eternal damnation in Hell. Through faith in Him as the spotless Lamb of God, we have been released from sin's curse, we have been delivered from the Law's condemnation, and we have been granted entrance unto the Kingdom of Glory.

These blessings are ours – the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation – because the lifeblood of Jesus is the all-sufficient ransom for our salvation, for our forgiveness, and for life everlasting before God. God set the terms for our redemption and seeing that we could in no way satisfy the ransom and terms for our release, knowing that there is no way we could render the price, God in Christ came and did it for us when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

Since He has risen from the dead the third day as He taught we are assured that the payment for our sins, for our redemption from the Law has been accepted by the justice of God. For, as St. Paul declares in Romans 4, [Jesus] was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” The price has been paid. The ransom has been satisfied for each and every one of us, no matter how many transgressions and sins we have committed. As the hymnist puts it “Lord, I believe were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore, Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.”

That blood always cries for our forgiveness and pardon before God and Christ's sacrifice always secures for us forgiveness for every sin for, as the Scriptures teach, we have redemption through the blood of Christ. As such, we are no longer slaves to sin. We have been freed from the Law's condemnation. We have been liberated from the bondage of Hell. We are, therefore, to live and conduct ourselves accordingly St. Peter teaches in our sermon text for tonight. We are no longer to give ourselves over to aimless conduct, but conduct worthy of those who have been redeemed, purchased from sin and death to be the people of God.

Or, as Luther puts it in his explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed: “I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.”

God grant we affirm this teaching of our redemption in Christ by all that we say and do since we, as Peter has taught us this night, “Conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Amen.

+Soli Deo Gloria+