

Ephesians 1:7–10

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 February 2022

Preacher: Bing Nieh

[0 : 00] Again, our scripture reading for today is taken from the book of Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 7 to 10. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning. Welcome to Christ Church Chicago.

My greetings. My name is Bing. I'm part of the pastoral team here. If you are visiting for the first time, I trust that this is not the first greeting you're receiving, but thank you for choosing to worship with us this morning.

Father, we come under your word. And our desire is that we would grow in our love for your word.

And that we would, so that we can live according to your word. And so would you show us our savior? Would you show us ourselves and our sinfulness?

[1 : 50] And would you show us your power to save the sinner? Help us to this end, we pray.

We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Our attention this morning is drawn to verses 7 through 10 of the first chapter of Ephesians.

My aim this morning is to show you the riches of his grace. The riches of his grace. The grace of the Lord Jesus.

The beloved one in the words of the text. The sermon may be appropriately tagged or plagiarized. The riches of his grace right there found in verse 7.

The riches of his grace. Grace is that which we do not deserve. That which we could not and cannot earn. It is mercy shown to the pitiable, even the pitiful, favor pronounced upon the fallen.

[2 : 58] It is the instrument that God uses to draw us to himself. You and I may think of it as a gift, for by grace we have been saved.

But more appropriately, as one author writes, grace is God giving us himself. Grace is God giving us himself.

It is God initiating the embrace on the estranged child. It is the buzzword for all of Christianity and Christendom. For it is the wellspring from which God acts toward humanity.

It is called his glorious grace in verse 6. It is the bedrock of all his actions, I would argue, from verses 3 to 14.

He acts in accordance to the riches of his grace. So to be sure, you need to know, his treasury is full of grace.

[4 : 01] His son is filled with grace. He is abounding in grace. And this morning, the treasury of grace is open to us.

And we are able to peer into the vaults, so to say. What does grace look like when it's poured forth? When we unwrap it, what do we have?

It is certainly a gift, but what form does it take? Well, this morning we will see grace is shown to us in two ways, according to these verses.

First, grace is shown to us in redemption. In redemption. And secondly, grace is shown to us through revelation.

Revelation. It's lifted immediately from verses 7 and 9. You'll see it. In verse 7, it opens up with this. In him we have.

[5 : 06] And according to verse 9, it's made known to us. Made known to us. Revelation or revealed.

Grace in redemption. Verses 7 and 8. The 7th verse resituates us into the domain Paul is addressing. You see it there. The sphere is in Christ.

This is where you need to know you are at. The phrase is embedded 14 times in these first 14 verses to ensure us that we don't wander too far out of the boundaries of these blessings.

They are all bound up in Christ. One author has appropriately called this section, 3 through 14, the symphony of salvation. If these verses are a symphony of salvation, then the concert hall is Christ.

The beautiful music only falls upon those in the room and captivates those inside. Every spiritual blessing comes to the believer in Christ.

[6 : 10] Since he is the fountain of every blessing, he is then the object of all praise. He is the channel by which the Christian receives God's blessing. And therefore, it is to him that praise is directed.

You'll see in verses 6, 12, and 14. This is the immediate outcome and application of our salvation. God did what we could not do, so we give him the praise for performing the work.

When an individual comes to meet Jesus or know Jesus or comes to faith in Christ, it would be very absurd to say to that individual, well done, way to believe, and applaud them as if they were able to give themselves a heart transplant, removing a heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh.

I've never heard anyone say such a thing to a new Christian. Instead, what do we say? Praise God. Because what has transpired in your life is an act and gift of God.

We praise God because we ourselves know it's not our doing. We praise God in response for the transformation of any individual. And Paul has taken us, according to these verses, to the portion of our Bibles that even precedes Genesis 1-1.

[7 : 39] Last week we saw that Paul took us to even the front matter of the Bible. Before Genesis 1-1, what was going on? Eternity passed. He proclaimed the fact that we were chosen and predestined.

And in verse 7, he shifts. He leaves the past tense, the aorist tense, and moves to the present tense. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.

God demonstrates his grace in redemption. The origins of the idea of redemption are probably earliest rooted in Exodus chapter 6.

Exodus chapter 6. It might be helpful to turn there. I have to turn there. Because I would like to read a portion for us. But Exodus 6, to frame it, this is before the magnificent deliverance of God's people out of slavery.

And there God promises his deliverance. And he goes to the original, the OG Moses, predating Harriet Tubman. And this is what God says in verse 6.

[8 : 58] Say therefore to the people of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great acts of judgment.

I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

And here, as Israel languished in slavery to the Egyptians, God promised redemption. For Israel, redemption equated to freedom from enslavement.

The same idea would be conveyed throughout the history of the nation. When they were carried off into foreign captivity by the hands of the Assyrians or Babylonians, there the same term is used.

And it's not only evident in the life of the nation, it was evident in the life of individuals as well. The short love story of Ruth illustrates this. The idea of redemption is associated with the purchase price.

[10 : 06] Submitting a payment that would buy another's release. The biblical idea of redemption certainly carries the idea of paying a ransom price to free an indebted or indentured slave or individual.

Payment is required for the freedom of one being redeemed. In modern times, we still see it.

Redemption. Now it's hidden. We see it in the freedom of those being trafficked. Individuals, children, the vulnerable.

Exploited by wicked powers. Redemption is only possible through monetary payment or freedom secured by law enforcement or legal enforcement or military action even.

Freedom purchased at a price. Redemption achieved at a cost, most often financial. But it is here where Christianity poses or presents an outrageous idea.

[11 : 14] Redemption, the forgiveness of our trespasses, our sins or our violations, in the Bible are not secured financially.

It would not be bought by silver or gold, but it would be secured according to our text by blood, emblematic of the death, the death of the Son of God, the Beloved One.

It would not come. Redemption would not come monetarily. It does not come militarily, which seemed to be the expectation of the Jewish nation.

Instead, it would come sacrificially. It does not come monetarily. It will not come militarily.

It comes sacrificially in the Son of God. Our redemption was not complimentary. It was not free or gratuitous.

[12 : 19] It came at a cost. The currency was the blood of the Lord Jesus, the death of the Beloved. The bill was paid by the Beloved Son while fastened upon the cross.

He stated, it's finished, paid, complete, done, bought, secured.

Jesus understood this, that even in His life, His life would be a purchase price to free God's people. That He would tell His disciples that He, even Him, the Son of Man, the Son of God, came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

The Christian has been redeemed. Yet you may ask, but Bing, I'm not enslaved. I live in the land of the free, the home of the brave.

I'm not physically enslaved. I'm in no captivity at all. But we'll find in subsequent weeks that you may not be enslaved to a foreign power, but you are certainly captive to sin, death, and the devil.

- [13 : 54] And it is to those that all of humanity is enslaved. And it is from those that all of humanity must be redeemed. See, this grace displayed in the act of our redemption.
- We erupt, or I should say I, I erupt when the person in front of me at the local coffee shop pays for my coffee.
- My heart overflowed when Christy and I were college students in San Diego at a very upscale oceanfront restaurant.
- And there we were, I don't know how old we were, 19, whatever. But there we were overlooking the ocean, and the bill comes, and the waiter says, well, hey, there was someone on the other side of the restaurant that knew you were poor, and they took care of your bill.
- it was amazing. And my heart erupts in jubilation, my heart overflows when these things happen, but it's really to my shame that I don't burst forth with the same enthusiasm when I consider the display of grace and generosity in my own redemption.
- [15 : 26] I could have bought my own coffee that morning. I had barely enough to pay for that meal at that restaurant, but I could not, and I cannot ransom my own life.
- Pay it forward is the mantra of the world. Pay it in full is the declaration of the gospel. Oh, God, may our redemption bring forth God's praise.
- And before we proceed to the second movement of our text, it is worth mentioning that in our redemption, we are not set free to do whatever we want. One of the foundational principles in redemption is delivered from one to belong to another.
- Israel was delivered from the Egyptians, but the following verse is crucial in Exodus 6. I will take you to be my people and I will be your God.
- We would have, we would have, you would be completely confused or misled to think the Lord redeemed me and set me free to do whatever I want.
- [16 : 47] You would be mistaken redemption because redemption is not simply release. When Christ redeems, he delivers and pays the ransom, but he acquires you for himself.
- He sets you in a family, hence adoption. He wins you for himself. As one author put it, the fundamental idea of redemption is the setting free of a thing or person to belong to another.
- And we will discover in these weeks of Ephesians that when we come close to the end, that Paul knows this and he would actually identify the Christian as a bondservant of Christ.
- It's a foreign idea to the Bible that the one for whom Christ died and acquired their freedom somehow lives for themselves. We are not redeemed so that we can wed ourselves to the world or our own personal whims.
- We are redeemed to live before God to please him under his guidance and his care. Grace in redemption.
- [18 : 00] Secondly, grace in revelation. Grace in revelation. The text speaks of how God has acted in accordance to the riches of his grace.
- It's something he lavished upon us. grace. We are to envision heaps of grace. Grace in plenty. Sufficiently abundant grace.
- Excess grace. God is not frugal in how he dispenses grace. He is not sitting there with a measuring cup.
- Bing gets half a cup of grace. I think he just takes a dump truck, fills it up, and says dump that on Bing.
- We will never be in short supply of grace. It is of such great supply that Paul starts to count it in chapter 2 verse 7 and then calls it the immeasurable riches of his grace.

[19 : 07] I can't measure it, he writes. And we have seen grace demonstrated in redemption. But in the latter half of our passage this morning we see grace displayed in revelation.

In God's wisdom and insight, you see it in verse 9, he has made known or revealed to us his will and his purpose in Christ.

Paul has already reached back into eternity. In the beginning, before the beginning, before the foundation of the world, he chose and predestined. And now he goes into eternity future and he speaks of uniting all things in Christ.

The last time I walked up one day, we'll all have the joyous occasion of moving up a floor in this building. But a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to walk up two levels and there in our administrative wing just perusing a little bit.

And as I was in the administrative wing, there on this large table rested architectural blueprints of this building project. They're about half an inch thick on sheets of paper that are probably half my wingspan.

[20 : 24] And there I began to flip through it. Diagrams and lines and symbols and abbreviations, text, page after page after page, the electrical lines are indicated, the walls and the doors are labeled, cables are labeled, the water lines for each floor, underground, above ground, in the ground, complex, yet clear.

I flipped through it. I wasn't able to understand much. It was really pretty. But it was all there. The plans and purposes of this space predated today.

And though the building is far from complete, the completion of the project is there on paper. And this is what Paul is getting at.

when it is all said and done, in the fullness of time, it will be completed. This will be completed. What will be completed? Well, in Christ, all things will be united, things in heaven and things on earth.

The blueprint is made known. The archives are open and the plans are uncovered. covered. We know the outcome and the intent of God. What was once hidden is now revealed in Christ.

[21 : 53] What the faithful kings and the prophets and the priests in the Old Testament anticipated is actually actualized in the Lord Jesus. That which the people of God looked ahead toward in faith was fulfilled in Jesus.

This has been the intent all along. this is the blueprint. And what does it mean to unite all things in Christ? The usage of the word is very uncommon.

Not only biblically, but in Greek literature. The meaning relates to math. And you're like, oh, I can't follow math. But all it means is a sum, to sum up, summing up, or bringing together, gathering up.

It carries this notion that in Christ, all things will be summed up and brought together. A facet of this uniting all things means ordering all things and putting them in their proper place.

Being students of the Bible, you know very well that we live in a disordered world. Things are not the way they were intended or created to be.

[23 : 04] There is rebellion in the kingdom that needs to be restored. This idea is captured again by Paul and his letter to the Colossians. He writes in chapter one, all things were created through him, referring to Jesus, and for him, referring to Christ, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace again by the blood of his cross.

As the sun holds the planets of our solar system in order through its gravitational pool, Christ in the end will be proven and shown that he holds all things together.

In the same way, our solar system is heliocentric, centered on the sun. All of human history will prove that it is Christocentric, centered on Christ.

the word means to sum up or recapitulate, that for God, in the beginning, prior to the beginning, all things would center and be sustained by his son.

He is the focal point that gives creation coherence. Christ is the focal point that gives creation coherence.

[24 : 31] And this is what God has made known. He is reconciling heaven and earth. Things will finally one day be on earth as they are in heaven. In him, in Christ, heaven will touch earth.

Or better put, it will literally be heaven on earth, according to the final chapters of our Bible. This is the plan and the purpose of God, and it will all be brought forth by Christ.

And by grace, it's been made known to you, to me, to us. No longer does he call us servants, for a servant has no idea what his master is doing, but he calls us friends.

For what he heard from his father, he's made known to us. We are made privy to his plans because we are his friends. And as I wind down, have you ever considered why God reveals himself to us?

There was no obligation on his part. He could have been like the many other gods of the nations, impulsive, mysterious, unknown.

[26 : 00] He could have withheld the scriptures, leaving us wandering and aimless people. The God of the Bible is not the God of the agnostics, existent, but unknowable.

Rather, the God of the Bible, in the Bible, you have a God who desires to be known, who wants to be known, who, through the Lord Jesus Christ, can be known.

Certainly not comprehensively, but I would argue conclusively. We can conclude what he has stated about himself, what he has told us about himself, and how his actions match up to how he has revealed himself, that he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

He is holy, morally upright, righteous, just, and pure, exceeding any comparable human goodness. He is a God who will judge evil and hates unrighteousness and injustice.

He is the light and salvation. He is a refuge in times of trouble. He is a rock on which I can stand. He is the friend of sinners, the faithful spouse, the love.

[27 : 20] He is love. And this is certainly no exhaustive list, but these are true of God and the God of the Bible. He desires to be known. Why? For once you know him, you will find in him satisfaction for your soul, sufficiency for your needs, joy and pleasures forevermore.

He understands that your well-being is tethered to him. Perhaps more specifically this morning, you've come in this space and you've committed an unspeakable trespass against someone else.

you've looked at something despicable and it's seared in your soul. You've broken something or someone that's irreparable and your guilt weighs heavy and this morning you hear that at God's disposal in the Lord Jesus Christ is abundant grace where you can receive redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Perhaps you arrive this morning and all of life has unraveled. Aimless you wander, no blueprint, no map, no guide, no orientation, no compass.

Your personal dreams are unfulfilled, your ambitions have been thwarted, you're a cog in this merciless world. And here you see God has made known his will and his purpose for not only humanity but heaven and earth and your life and your attention has been arrested.

[29 : 10] Could this be the purpose for which you've been made? Could this be the end for which you were brought forth?

It is in his grace he has made known to you that he's uniting all things in heaven and on earth. and if you've been following closely you will discover that he will not only unite heaven and earth but he will unite a wayward bride to a faithful husband.

He will unite a wayward child to a loving father. He will unite me and you the sinner to a savior.

and may you find that as he unites heaven and earth he is actually uniting you. throne