

The Reformation (4) - Christ Alone

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[0 : 0 0] Now, will you turn with me to Paul's letter to the Ephesians? Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1. And for a short time this morning, we're going to look at verse 7.

Ephesians, chapter 1, and verse 7. 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.

It's very difficult to break into this very long sentence, which actually runs from verse 3. In other words, divided up in the translation in English here, it runs from verse 3 right through to verse 14.

That's one long sentence where the apostle so closely joins together so many things of crucial importance for us. But we're looking at this today. In him we have redemption through his blood. And in fact, we're able to continue with the studies we've had for a while on the Reformation and the Reformation solas. Although this is a communion service, it just so happens in the providence of God, there's not any deliberate planning on my part, but it so happens that we are going to look at the next study in that series on Christ alone.

[1 : 2 9] We've seen the scripture alone teaches us the way of salvation. The scripture alone is our reliable guide and rule of faith and brings us to know the way of salvation.

But where does that scripture lead us to? Is it to the church that leads us? Is it to the sacraments that leads us? Is it to ministers? Is it to our faith? Well, no, it's none of these.

The scriptures lead us to a person. It leads us to Christ. And really that's the emphasis of the Reformation and of the Reformers at the time when they set up those great solas, as they're now called, solo Christo, Christ alone.

And the Reformation from that point of view, you could say really is all about Jesus. It's all about Christ. That's what was crucial to the Reformers, because every other sola really relates to this one in some particular way or other.

Whether it's the scripture as they manifest Jesus to us, whether it's our faith as we place our faith in him, whether it's the grace of God that has been revealed to us and has come to be active as we've seen, but it's all in Christ and it's all focused upon him.

[2 : 4 4] And so it's appropriate as well, as well as the timing of Providence, that we actually look at this particular verse in relation to that solo Christo, that Jesus or Christ alone, where the focus here is on redemption.

In him we have redemption through his blood. Christ alone is the one in whom we have redemption. But what is redemption?

What does the Bible mean by redemption? What do we understand when we read this word so often in the Bible, redemption or redeemed or redeemer? It's one of those achievements, if you like, that the cross has achieved, that the death of Christ has brought about and achieved or been successful in, if you can use that phraseology.

There are actually six great achievements altogether. Some of them relate directly towards God, where Jesus in his death relates towards God the Father.

But the six are expiation, the covering of sin, propitiation, dealing with his own wrath, the wrath of God, reconciliation, dealing with enmity in the relationship between us and God, satisfaction, where God the Father receives, satisfaction for all the requirements that need to be met before redemption, before salvation can come to us.

[4 : 1 3] And then there is fifthly this one, redemption, and sixthly victory. And we're focusing out of these six on Christ alone in relation to redemption.

In him we have redemption through his blood. So what then is redemption in the Bible's teaching, in the Bible's meaning of the word?

Well, redemption, essentially, there are a number of words used for redemption that are translated usually by redemption, but there are a number of words in the New Testament especially that encapsulate the whole scope of meaning of redemption.

And if you put all the words together, without going into different passages just now for time's sake, redemption really means such things as to loose, to set free, to deliver, to purchase back by a ransom, to pay a ransom in order to deliver those who are in need of being set free.

So it has that emphasis really on loosing, delivering, setting free, and sometimes setting free by the payment of a ransom price.

[5 : 26] And all of these things are built into the idea of redemption in terms of the word as it's used or the words that are used throughout Scripture. And what that tells us is, first of all, that we as human beings are actually bound.

There's a great backdrop to the idea or the truth of redemption. There's a backdrop without which you cannot really understand redemption in the way the Bible speaks about it.

We saw that in relation to grace as well, that the backdrop to grace is our sin, our sin and our being, as Ephesians 2 puts it there, dead in trespasses and sins.

And it's the same essentially here where the backdrop is one of bondage, of being bound and held fast and in need of being redeemed, being set free, being loosed, and where God has done that in Jesus Christ.

That's why God sent his Son into the world so that we might be redeemed, so that we would have him as our Redeemer, as the one who loses or releases us or sets us free from the bondage of sin, especially, in which we are held.

[6 : 39] We'll come across that in a moment as we go through with other aspects of the study. But that's essentially the meaning, and that's the background, really, of redemption, that you need to understand the meaning of it, that background of being bound, being enslaved, being in bondage.

Now, that really is not just simply something that you see in the New Testament. In fact, there is one thing in the Old Testament, one event in the Old Testament, that is as illustrative of what Jesus did by his death on the cross as anything else.

And it remained, through all the years of the Old Testament, the great event that illustrated more than any other redemption. It is the way in which God released the people of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

And as you go through the whole Old Testament, you'll find so many times that this theme is either mentioned specifically, or there are very obvious allusions to it, in the way that God was instructing the people down through all of these years of the Old Testament.

Again and again, he was bringing them back to this great event, to this great act of God, in delivering these people of Israel from the bondage, from the slavery in which they were held in Egypt.

[8 : 03] And if you look at just one of the texts, in relation to that in Exodus chapter 6, you'll find at verse 6 the following, where God is here saying to Moses that this is what he has to say to the people of Israel.

Say therefore, well, verse 5 you could say, he has heard the groaning of the people of Israel, whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant.

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 burden of the Egyptians, and I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord. There's a wonderful package between these two phrases with which the statements, with which the verses begin and end.

[9 : 22] I am the Lord. I am the covenant Lord. I have heard the groanings of the people, and I have come to deliver them, to set them free, to redeem them is the word that he used as well.

And it illustrates for us the meaning of that redemption, of redemption. It is a setting free from one particular case of bondage, which illustrates our bondage to sin, our liability to death, and our being held by what sin is and what the outcome of sin is in our slavery and bondage to it.

And you find the same then in the New Testament, not just here, but if you think back to Romans chapter 6, a chapter which really deals with enslavement to sin, as if sin is pictured there as a great tyrant, as a despot, illustrated for us, so that we can understand something of how sin holds us, as we are in our natural condition, in its grip, in its tyranny, if you like, so that we're held in the bondage of sin, which is why Paul there speaks in verse 15 onwards.

What then are we to sin because we're not under the law? Do you not know that if you present yourself to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one to whom you obey, either of sin which leads to death, or of obedience which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you have been committed.

[11:02] When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness, but now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves or bond servants to God, you have your fruit that leads to sanctification and its end eternal life.

And it goes on to speak of how in being enslaved to sin, we have wages paid to us. Sin pays wages as the tyrant that holds us in bondage, and the wages of sin, of course, is death.

And very significantly, that final verse, it's easy enough not to notice the difference where he speaks there about grace or eternal life. The wages of sin is death.

That's what sin pays out. But the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. eternal life is not the payment of wages the way death is, the wages of sin, because it is the gift of God.

It is the unearned gift that God by grace alone is pleased to bestow. And we come in Christ to be redeemed through his blood, redeemed from the bondage of sin, redeemed and set free and separated from sin.

[12:29] That's important in terms of the forgiveness that's mentioned there. It's almost as if you could say from that, it's not the case, of course, because as we saw, redemption has more to it than forgiveness, than involving forgiveness.

But Paul is so focused here upon forgiveness of our sins, of our trespasses, that he really says in him we have redemption through his sins, the forgiveness of our trespasses, because that lies at the very heart of this redemption.

It is a redemption from sin, from the bondage of sin, from the power of sin, from our liability to death under sin. We're set free from that. We are set free from and separated from that liability to death as the wages of sin.

That's why you come today to remember the Lord in his death. Let's just pause for a wee minute.

So, all right, let's just take your time. redemption is essentially being set free from sin, but also separated from what it pays us as wages.

[13:54] In other words, death, spiritual death or separation from God. That is dealt with in Christ's death as redemption. redemption as the redemption that sets us free.

Now, there's another very significant and illustrative event in the Old Testament which took place once a year on the Day of Atonement. In Leviticus chapter 16, you'll find a description of it there in detail.

And this was something once a year that was kept before the people of Israel so that they would have an understanding of what this redemption meant and what was happening in terms of redemption spiritually.

And you remember there that God instructed Moses and Aaron to take two goats. Both were to be used in the ritual of that Day of Atonement.

One was to be killed and its blood was to be used against the altar. The other was to be kept alive and Aaron, the high priest, was to lay his hand on the head of that live goat and confess the sins of the people of Israel over it.

[15:08] And once he had done that, it was then led by a person chosen for the task away out from the camp of Israel. Remember the camp where they were together around a certain area with the tabernacle and with the Holy of Holies where God was represented as being present while outside of the camp there was this live goat was led out and set apart and taken into a remote place far from the camp and then set free.

And the design of that was that they would never see it again. It was to be let go so that it would not return back to the camp. Sometimes called the scapegoat, one of the ways of translating the

Hebrew that's used to describe it.

So there are two goats. And they both are required in order to illustrate what redemption really is about. In the one case there is blood, there is death, there is sacrificial blood.

And that's here very graphically illustrated by him. We have redemption through his blood. The goat that was slaughtered and whose blood was used is really that illustrating the death that lies that lies at the heart of redemption.

Go back to Israel in Egypt. They weren't set free from their bondage without death. They had a death in their families. They had a death in their homes. Not the death that the Egyptians had in the death of the firstborn.

[16 : 42] The death that took place in the families of Israel was the death of the sacrificial lamb. And it was by the blood of that lamb that they were actually said to be free from the death that came upon the whole land otherwise.

And you therefore have redemption with blood, the shedding of blood, with sacrificial death at the heart of it, at the means of it. You have that there, you have it in the goats. The one that was killed was killed so that its blood could be sprinkled.

And then the other one was let go, having had the sins of the people confessed or imputed to it, if you like, and then let go into the wilderness. And that's really essentially what Paul is building together in this emphasis here.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. His blood was shed, his death, as we'll see in a minute, is the real death, the cost of our redemption.

But there is also in it, dealing with sin, dealing with the penalty of sin, dealing with the wages of sin, which is death. And in other words, separating us from that liability to death.

[17 : 58] Just as the live goat illustrated the sins of the people carried away far from the camp, never to be seen again. So as Micah puts it, the Lord's forgiveness is casting our sins into the depth of the sea.

They're no longer to resurface, to accuse you again. In him we have redemption through his blood. But it's redemption, before we look at the cost of it in terms of his blood, let's remember one other thing. It's redemption from all of that. It's redemption from death, our liability to death, the guilt of sin, the bondage of sin.

But it's redemption to something. And the Lord emphasized when he came in Exodus 6, as we read, he emphasized not only that he was going to take them out of Egypt, but that he was going to take them into another land, a better place, a land of freedom and of plenty.

And that's what happens spiritually with us as well. It's a redemption into a state of friendship with God, a state of acceptance with God.

[19 : 09] But it does involve this. It's redemption to a holy life. It's redemption to a holy life. Titus, Paul's letter to Titus, again has a wonderful passage there from verse 11 in chapter 2, for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people and training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. And then to reinforce that, he's saying, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous of good works, who gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness, from a sinful lifestyle, from following the ways of sin.

In other words, to redeem us into holiness of life. And that's one of the reasons we're here today, because we believe that the Lord uses the sacrament of the Lord's Supper along with his word as means of channeling further grace into our lives.

And that it's a means that he uses in a way that enables us to live more and more unto righteousness and to die to sin.

In other words, to be progressively more holy in life. And that was not an accident. It was always the intention of God that the death of Christ would achieve that and would be towards the provision of that and the ensuring of that.

[21 : 05] But let me just again look at, see how redemption is really for the whole of his people in that. we are here today at the Lord's Supper, at the Lord's Table as a people.

We are together as a people, as a congregation as we gather together to worship God. But particularly so, when you're at the Lord's Table, when you come to the Lord's Table, of course

you're here with your individual needs, with your individual thoughts, with your individual relationship to God.

But more often than not, the Bible and the New Testament not least says to us that it is as a people that God regards those who are to be redeemed.

Yes, he redeems us individually, but it's as a people, as one redeemed people, that God in Christ redeems us from all our trespasses, from all iniquity, and purifies for himself a people zealous of good works.

And you can see that throughout this chapter itself. we're reminded that redemption is redemption for a whole people together. When God deals with your life and brings you to know his redemption personally, you're very conscious that he doesn't leave you on your own as if that redemption is something that exists just in your life, detached from every other life.

[22 : 35] He bonds you into a fellowship. He puts you along with others who are also redeemed individually so that God can say, these are my people that I have redeemed as a people from their liability to death.

And then right through from verse 3 to verse 14, you can count it yourselves afterwards, but go through these verses and just pick out the number of times you'll find the words us and the word we.

The words us and we are used there so often. He has blessed us in Christ. He chose us in him that we should be holy and blameless.

In him we have redemption through his blood. We, plural, you see, he's taking the people as redeemed in Christ. What a precious thing that is.

That you're not looking at your redemption individualistically. We tend to do that perhaps too much to regard salvation and redemption purely in religious terms as something individual.

[23 : 42] Of course it is that as we say, but the emphasis is so much upon the people being redeemed, God's people being made a people through his redemption.

And that belongs to the Lord's Supper as well. One of the things that was wrong in Corinth, as you find in 1 Corinthians 11 and elsewhere, where the Lord's Supper is dealt with, is that they had individual eyes, the whole thing.

And people were just looking out for themselves and making up their own minds as to what to do.

And that's why the Lord said through Paul, Paul, in his emphasis, among other emphases, said this, wait for one another.

When you come together to eat the Lord's Supper, wait for one another. Consider one another.

Take everyone else with you.

into your thoughts, and into what you're doing, and remember that you're just one person, belonging to a people who are redeemed by the Lord.

[24 : 50] But then the redemption price, and I need to be very brief with this. We are redeemed, he says here, in him we have redemption through his blood. And we mentioned this in going over the Old Testament examples, through his blood.

And that means, essentially, the death that he died. It's not the quality of his life as such. We're not redeemed by his example, we're not redeemed by his teaching, we're not redeemed by looking at the Gospels or the New Testament and saying, well I see Christ described there, and that inspires me to be a Christian, that inspires me towards being redeemed and accepted with God.

We are not redeemed by anything less than his blood, and that means his death, the very death that he died on the cross. Without that shedding of blood, as Hebrews says, there is no redemption, there is no salvation, there is no forgiveness.

We are redeemed by his blood. And of course he himself, when he instituted the Lord's Supper, so very clearly stated this. As he took the cup, this is what he said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

In my blood. You're taking this cup today that contains wine. Wine doesn't cease to be wine.

[26 : 24] The wine doesn't become the blood of Jesus. Any more than the bread becomes his body, physically. But the wine as you take it, the cup as you take it, represents to you and seals to your soul the benefits of Christ's death.

As it represents the death that he died, that's essentially spiritually what you're taking to yourself in this act of faith and taking the communion.

him. And you're saying, this is my redemption. This is where my redemption is found. This is the ground of my redemption. I'm redeemed by his blood.

By his blood and his blood alone. Solo Christo, Jesus Christ alone. And in fact, Jesus himself, in Mark chapter 10, one of the famous verses out of many, of course, in the Gospels, in Mark chapter 10, where again he's instructing the disciples as to what service actually means to him and how they have a need to have their minds redirected as to what they understand by being a servant. Well, that's as you know where he said, it shall not be so among you like it is amongst the Gentiles when their great ones exercise authority of him, it shall be for you, if you would be great, you must, whoever of you would be great must be your servant, and whoever would be first must be slave of all, for even the Son of Man came not to serve, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[28 : 10] And that really picks up the idea behind Paul's reference here to redeemed. It's redeemed by a ransom, by the payment of a specific price. Now, you mustn't think of this in commercial terms.

It's not like a commercial transaction where somebody pays someone else for something that he receives or she receives in return. This is not a commercial transaction.

It's actually a judicial one. Remember what he said about sin. Sin, your sin and my sin against God being what needs to be dealt with by God in order that we be saved.

He needs to deal with every aspect of that sin and of what that sin has caused in the interruption and disruption of our relationship with him. And redemption deals with sin.

It breaks its enslaving power and brings us out from under it. And therefore the payment is what is owed to God as our debt.

[29 : 16] What we could never pay him to make up for and to overcome our transgression. The only thing that could do that was the blood, was the death of Jesus.

The ransom that God provided to meet his own requirements and as a ransom price to deliver us from our sins.

As sin has put us in debt to God and disqualified us from paying that debt, the wonder of grace, of God's love, is that he has come to pay the price himself and to pay it in the blood of Jesus in the death of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6 verse 20 captures it exactly. You are not your own for you have been bought with a price, with a ransom price.

And again, just to finish with the emphasis, it is in him, in him alone. You go through this chapter again, this early part of it at least, and you see verse 3, verse 4, verse 9, verse 11, verse 13, in him, in him, in him, through him, in him, in him.

[30 : 42] It's all to do with him. It's all because of him. Christ alone. And today you come to remember his death in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

and you say, with John Wesley, in the hymn that he wrote, Can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?

Died he for me who caused his pain, for me who him to death pursued? Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die?

For me. In him, we have redemption through his blood. Let's pray. Gracious Lord, help us, we pray, through what we are engaged in today in word and sacrament, to appreciate all the more that the redemption that we come to possess and enjoy is at the expense of Christ and his death.

We thank you, O Lord, as we mark the fact that you are risen from the dead and now ascended to glory. Help us, we pray, to mark your death as the ransom price of our redemption and enable us to understand more fully, even through what we do today, that the cost of our redemption was great and remains to be one that staggers us as we think of the Son of God coming to give himself to redeem us from all iniquity.

[32 : 33] Bless us then, we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now we'll sing some verses now from Psalm number 22. Psalm number 22 on page 26 12 18 These are of course verses that you know are associated as a prophecy with Jesus with his death, particularly in his sufferings.

And so from verse 12, that's on page 26, Strong bulls of patience circle me, wild bulls approach on every side as roaring lions, tear their prey at me, their mouths they open wide.

So we'll sing verses 12 through to 18 to God's praise. Strong bulls of patience circle me, wild bulls approach on every side, and allDA sung Rose show them and T love To Ex neivas khác han

se■■■■■ All my bones are torn apart.

My inmost pain melts away. And into wax is turned my heart.

My strength is dry like shattered clay. And as I bite to draw my breath.

[34 : 56] My tongue is singing to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.

A pack of dogs encroaches me. Their circle round me is complete.

I am beset by evil men. And they have pierced my hands and feet.

I count the number of my bones. With glowing eyes the people stare.

They throw the dice to get my coat. Among themselves my coals they share.

[36 : 23] Amen. Now we usually refer this part of our service, refer to it as the fencing of the Lord's table.

It's merely a way of directing those who ought to be at the Lord's table and those who presently are not in a position to come to the Lord's table. So it's not intended primarily as something to bar the way of coming to the Lord's table.

But rather to encourage those who have the right and duty and privilege of coming. And let me just say it's really wonderful to have the children coming in at this point.

It's really good that you're here, children. It's good that you're here to see the Lord's Supper and to be able to ask about it afterwards so that you can learn more about the salvation that's in Jesus.

And that we come to remember the death of Jesus and what we do in the Lord's Supper. So in the fencing of the table I want to just mention two things briefly. Again from the same passage in Ephesians.

[37 : 25] And in verse 3 we have verses 1 to 2 rather we have Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints who are in Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus.

And these two words saints and faithful give us guidance as to who have the privilege and the right and the duty to come to take communion.

They are saints of God. They are saints not in the sense in which they will be saints in heaven.

Though that is of course true or a truth.

They are saints now. Paul is writing to those people in Ephesus and he's writing to them as saints.

They are saints already as he writes.

He describes them as saints. Sometimes perhaps we confine the word saints to those who are eminent in godliness. Or to those who have passed on and are in glory.

[38 : 25] They are saints. Well they are. But all who are in Christ are actually saints. Because the word means to be set apart. To be in Christ consecrated to God.

God taking us and taking our lives and taking our persons. And in union with Christ. Setting us apart for him. To be his. And for him to be our God.

It's the same as you find in 1 Corinthians. Chapter 1 and verse 2. Paul begins that letter to the Corinthians. And you know yourselves how many things were wrong in the church in Corinth.

And what things Paul wrote to correct. And now he was very strong in the language that he used.

And the excesses that you find described there. But this is how he begins. To the saints.

Sanctified in Christ Jesus. Called to be saints. God has called them. And therefore in calling them.

He has made them his saints. They are consecrated to God.

[39 : 27] They are set apart as his. As they are found in Corinth. Just as these here are in Ephesus. Just as you are in Stornoway. The fact that you are saints already. Qualifies you.

To sit at the Lord's table. To take communion. Christ has sanctified you. Set you apart. Made you his. They are also.

Faithful. And faithful here doesn't mean. In the practice of our lives. That we are. Absolutely faithful to God.

That's connected with it. And that's something of course. That's important. But faithful here. Literally means. Believers. Those who are of faith. And it's conjoined with the word saints.

Because they always belong together. You're not a saint. Except as you are a believer. And you are a believer. Therefore. You are a saint. The two things belong. Inseparably.

[40 : 25] Together. And that's our encouragement today. To come to the Lord's table. And it's encouraging to. To any who are not at the Lord's table today. And who may examine themselves.

As to.

Why they're not there. Or. When. If at all possible. They could come to be there. This is your qualification. That you are a saint already.

And that you are faithful. That you are a believer. In Christ. Now we come. To the Lord's table. I'm sure today. Most of us. If not all of us. Lamenting the fact.

That we. Don't really find ourselves. Very adequately described. As saints. That's when we look at it. In terms of the usual meaning. We give to it. With so many shortcomings.

So many defects. So many things. That still need to be corrected. And set right in our lives. So many sins. To forgive. To cover. To confess.

[41 : 21] And the same with faithful. We may think. If we're using. The usual meaning with it. Well. We're not very faithful. Not fully faithful. We're. At times. Very unfaithful. We have lapses.

We go away from. The path of obedience. To Christ. So we can't be faithful. But then. You see. That's taking the usual meaning of it. Rather than what's here. You are saints.

You are faithful. You are believers. You are set in Jesus. And as you are set in him. You actually have the qualification. Of coming to the Lord's suburb.

To take communion. In remembrance. Of Christ. Now children. We were. Thinking earlier. About redemption. It's a big long word. And it means.

To be set free. From sin. And from the death. That's attached to sin. I think I used this illustration before. But I'll use it again today. It's just come to mind. I remember.

[42 : 17] Quite a number of years ago. When I was in Garibust. I had a number of sheep. And on a Sunday morning. Of a communion. When I was going to go to a communion. In Kinloch. I happened to just check on the sheep.

And it's as well I did. Because one of them. Had got tangled up. In barbed wire. Overnight. And it was so. Tight into its wool. That it couldn't release itself. It had been trying desperately.

To get itself free. And it just couldn't. And the barbed wire. Had just got tighter rounded. So I had to start taking. Some of the wool away. To get to the barbed wire. And eventually.

I managed to get enough of the wool. Taken away. Torn away. And I was able to take the barbed wire away. And wind it back round. So that it was no longer attached. And then as soon as the sheep. Knew it was free.

It just bounced up. And shot off. And joined the others. On the other side of the field. And to me. That was a wonderful illustration. About what Jesus does. In our redemption.

[43 : 15] He sets us free. From the way that we are tied up. And bound. And enslaved to sin. He sets us free. From our sins. And you know the other thing.

That morning was. When I looked down at my hands. I hadn't noticed. When I was doing this. I was so concerned. For that sheep. And to get it free. I hadn't noticed. That the barbed wire.

Had actually cut the palms. Of my hands. And there was blood. Running down. They weren't serious cuts. They weren't big cuts. But they were. Enough to actually cause blood. To run down my hands.

And then. As I was going to the communion. I remembered. Well isn't that. What the communion is. We're remembering. That Jesus died. That he shed his blood. To set us free.

From the grip of sin. And that's what you're seeing today. As children. As you see the Lord's Supper. You're seeing how Jesus came. And by his death. By the shedding of his blood.

[44 : 13] Set us free. From the barbed wire of sin. In which we were held. Until. Redemption came. In Jesus Christ. Pray that God will bless.

These thoughts on his word to us. Now we're going to sing. Some verses now. From Psalm 118. Psalm 118. In the Scottish Psalter. Page 398.

And from verse 15. While we're singing some verses. The elders will. Bring the elements out. And place them. On the table. So we'll sing on. Until the elements.

Are placed on the table. In dwellings of the righteous. Is heard. The melody of joy and health. The Lord's right hand. Doth ever. Valiantly. So from verse 15.

Of Psalm 118. We'll sing until the elements. Are on the table. In dwellings. Of the righteous. In dwellings.

[45 : 13] Of the righteous. In serve. The melody.

Of joy and health. The Lord's right hand. The pepper.

Valiantly. The right hand. The right hand. Of the mighty Lord.

Exalted is on high. The right hand.

Of the mighty Lord. The Might. tutto. The Lord. The Lord. My ancestors. The Lord. The mighty Amen.

[46 : 13] Which God. I gave. The Christ. The mighty Lord. The Ru skill.

Son. Of the ■■■■■■■■■■. of me just I said sore but not to death in no earth O set thee open unto me that it's all righteous then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless this is the gate of God by it the just shall enter in thee will thy praise for love me hurt and ask my safety in glory love me testing you well as is customary we read a warrant for the observance of the Lord's Supper from 1 Corinthians 11 and from verse 23.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.

[49 : 12] Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. And in following the Lord's example, we'll give thanks now in his name.

Amen. Eternal and blessed God, we give thanks to you as the Father of your people for the way in which in love you sent your Son into this world.

We give thanks, O Lord, for that eternal covenant between you and the Son. And we give thanks for the way that it came to be realized in its fulfillment, in the way in which he came as your servant, and in which he fulfilled his service even unto death.

And we thank you today for that death, the death by which we have come to be redeemed. We bless you, Lord, for the completeness of his service and of his commitment to you in fulfilling that commandment which he said had been given to him, that he lay down his life, that he might take it again, and that this commandment he had received from his Father.

We thank you, Lord, that you came into this world, that you took our nature, that you took our sin, and that you took the death attached to it.

[50 : 39] We thank you today that you paid this great price, a price, O Lord, that we cannot possibly estimate or measure, because it is your own death on the cross.

We thank you for the way in which all the dimensions of death were experienced by you, and experienced by you vicariously and victoriously. We thank you that that death which you died included the spiritual and eternal death to which we were liable, the consequence of our sin. Help us, we pray, as we take these elements today, to remember, Lord, that this is indeed what you have done for us, and that it reaches the very depth of our need.

We ask that you would bless to us this occasion. We pray that you would sanctify now this bread and this wine as they are used in the supper, from their ordinary to their holy use, and through them, Lord, in your own mysterious way of blessing.

We ask that you would bless our souls, and that you would be pleased to strengthen your people through what they do. And hear us now, we pray, as we confess our sin.

[51 : 57] As we seek your cleansing and your forgiveness, we do so, Lord, confessing that we have not been what we should have been since last we met together around the Lord's table.

We pray that you would help us through what we do now to further commit and dedicate ourselves to you and to resolve to be a people who live for you and to seek to reflect your glory in all that we do.

Receive us then, Lord, we pray in this hour. Thanks for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, in that passage in Ephesians that we were thinking of and looking at, we find in verse 3 there, verses that can guide our thoughts now very briefly as we come to take the Lord's Supper.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And then along with that in verse 5, where you find that he goes on to speak in verse 6, to the praise of his glorious grace, in which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It's not a promise that he will bless.

[53 : 20] It's a promise that he has done so. And as you come today to sit at the Lord's table and take communion, you do so knowing that he has already blessed you, that all the blessings you will

ever receive are within the blessings that are in Christ Jesus for us, and that in him he has blessed us with all of these blessings in the heavenly places where he now is as the exalted Lord of his church.

He has blessed us. There is no blessing required to be procured for us that has not already been procured. You mustn't think of the blessings that God has for his people as something that needs to be added to by something we do or something the church is able to do or something that you yourself can do in days to come.

He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Not will be blessed, are blessed. Every blessing you receive daily is out of this completeness of blessing with which he has blessed us. And he has blessed us, it says, in the beloved.

That's such a significant term. It doesn't just say in Christ, it adds to that and says blessed us in the beloved. The beloved of God.

[54 : 48] Jesus as the one loved by God. Loved supremely by God. Why do you receive blessings from God? God, because he loves his son as he loves you.

And not primarily because he loves you, but because he loves his son and therefore loves you in him. He has blessed us in the beloved. There's a wonderful thought to carry with you into the taking of these elements and taking communion.

That you are blessed and blessed in the beloved. And that the reason blessings reach you today is not so much for your love, for your love for Christ, but rather God's love for him as his beloved.

Because he is the beloved, the blessings flow out from him as the beloved of God. God is pleased because he loves the son to let blessings flow out from him into our lives.

And he has blessed us in him with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. They're all there. And the death that you remember today is the death that has purchased, procured, made certain these blessings for us.

[56 : 12] Aren't we? Aren't you? a privileged people. Aren't you today humbled and yet gladdened that you have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ?

That through the death you remember, God has a complete package of blessings and they are all already yours because of him in the beloved.

So we read in that night in which the Lord was betrayed that he took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is for you, this do in remembrance of me.

In the same manner also after the supper, he took the cup, said, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come.

This chapter 19 is the end of the work leggins.