

Ephesians 1:7-10

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[0:00] All right, turn with me in your Bible to Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 1, page 976, if you're looking in one of the pew Bibles. And as you're turning there, just two brief announcements I forgot to say earlier that you could have put in the baskets, but I failed to mention this.

If you're a woman, there's a women's event coming up in two weeks, and if you can RSVP, that would be great. And you can just fill out this insert in the bulletin and leave it at the front or leave at the end of your pew at the end, and we can collect those.

And if you are looking for a place to serve and just help out in the church somehow, there's a list of some easy ways to plug in, and you can check one of those and put your name at the bottom, and we can follow up with you with more information.

So if you've been coming here for a little while and you're thinking, man, I'd just like to do something, but I don't know what I can do, take a look at this list, see if there's something that you think fits you, and you can give it to myself at the end.

All right, Ephesians 1, we are looking tonight at verses 7 to 10, but I'm going to read the whole paragraph, which is verse 3 to 10. So let's read together.

[1:07] 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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

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.

Well, I think many of us, perhaps all of us, want to be free in some way or other. What do we want to be free from?

We want to be free from rejection, free from loneliness, free from meaninglessness, free from oppression, perhaps free from pain.

[2:24] There's a lot of things that we long to be free from. Maybe it's a job that you just hate, but it's the only way you can make your life work right now and you long for freedom from an oppressive boss and annoying co-workers.

Maybe it's some other kind of freedom. Freedom from all the requirements that other people are piling on top of you. And just freedom to be able to do what you want and have some free time.

We all want freedom in some way or other. And some of those kinds of freedom, when you get them, some of them are more lasting and satisfying than others. But these verses we're looking at tonight are really about the freedom that Jesus Christ offers to us and that if we have believed in him, the freedom that we have in him.

Which, according to the Bible, is a kind of freedom that is more, it goes deeper than anything else and it's more lasting than any other kind of freedom. So we're looking at verse 7 to 10, but it's in the middle of this long paragraph that actually goes from verse 3 to verse 14.

It's actually one long sentence in the Greek, which is what the New Testament was written in. And so it's sort of a whole long prayer of praise, right?

[3:52] It talks about, verse 3 tells us what it's talking about. It's how God the Father has blessed us in Jesus Christ with every spiritual blessing. And the whole paragraph is about all the spiritual blessings that we have in Jesus Christ.

So tonight we're going to focus on the middle chunk, 7 through 10, which focuses on this word redemption. And that word redemption, we're going to dig into that.

But that's basically a word that points to the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ. So tonight I want to look at four truths about redemption in Christ, the freedom we have in Christ.

So, number one, redemption means we have been liberated. All right, now the word redemption or redeem, the most common meaning in the ancient world was when someone was delivered or released or set free from slavery or bonded or debt of some kind.

So saying I'm redeemed means I'm free. I'm no longer enslaved to what I used to be enslaved to. Now, you might say, well, okay, well, what is this saying we're actually free from?

[5:11] That's an important question. And verse 7, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. So it's saying we're free from our trespasses. Now you think, well, what's a trespass, right?

Most of us, we think of trespassing, right? There's a sign, you know, there's a sign on somebody's property that says, no trespassing, police take notice, right? So we think of trespassing as sort of crossing a boundary we shouldn't cross or going on somebody else's property and taking advantage of it when they don't want us there.

But I think the bigger meaning, right, that's how we use trespass today in sort of a legal sense. But the bigger meaning of trespass is basically acting like we own what belongs to somebody else.

Or deviating from the way of truth and righteousness. And the Bible says we have all trespassed against God. We've all gone off his way of truth and righteousness and crossed boundaries that we shouldn't cross and acted like we own things that actually belong to God alone.

I mean, what happened in the Garden of Eden, right? What happened in the Garden of Eden sort of set the stage for the rest of human history, right? Right? What did Adam and Eve do in the beginning?

[6:30] Well, God set up a boundary. God gave them a great big garden, said, you eat any tree you want. Eat any of the fruit from any tree you want, except there's one boundary. There's this tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And that's my tree, not your tree. It's the tree that reminds you that I'm the one who draws the boundaries between good and evil. And so they heard that.

And then one day they follow the deception of the serpent and decided, no, we should be able to eat of this tree too.

Why do we have to stay within God's boundaries? So they take it, right? They acted like they own the garden when in reality they were only the caretakers of it.

They were the managers of it. They could benefit from all kinds of things within it. But they had forgotten who they were. They were acting like they had made themselves when God had made them, right?

[7:33] And don't we do the same thing, right, and follow in their path when we violate God's laws, when we indulge our lustful fantasies or our greedy desires, when we twist the truth and cover up our flaws instead of being open and truthful about them?

Or when we put ourselves at the center of the universe and think that the world revolves around me? Of course, we wouldn't say that, right? That sounds really arrogant and egotistical to say that.

But how much, how often do we act like that? Right? You get caught in traffic. I mean, road rage, right? When you get caught in traffic, isn't that a reminder that the world doesn't revolve around you?

And what do most of us do when we get caught in traffic? We get mad. We get mad at those other drivers. Because they're hindering us from getting where we want to go. I mean, this is a very simple, you know, this is a trivial example.

But, right, when somebody, or when you have to wait in a long line at the supermarket. If you go to Stop and Shop on Whaley Avenue, right? And you're waiting in line and there's only two registers open.

[8:42] And you're in the line with four people instead of six people. And then, whatever, somebody gets a price wrong. And the whole thing takes 20 minutes, right? Like, we easily get mad when something reminds us that the world doesn't revolve around us.

Right? We have this sort of default or tendency to think of ourselves as the center of the universe instead of God.

And the Bible says that is an attitude that results in trespassing, if you want to put it that way. And the Bible says our trespassing has consequences.

We're guilty. We've broken God's law. We're no longer in right relationship with God. We're under his judgment. And we have a record stacked against us. But what this verse says is that in Jesus Christ, we have the forgiveness of our trespasses.

That word forgiveness is a word that means release. It means sending it away or taking something away or removing things or letting go of things.

[9:49] Right? It means in Jesus Christ, our trespasses, every one of those ways that we have violated God's law, the guilt that we have accumulated throughout our whole life, and even in the future, has been taken away.

And it doesn't stand against us anymore. That we have the forgiveness. Our trespasses can be sent away because Jesus Christ has taken them away.

As far as the east is from the west. Our debt is paid in full. Our guilt is removed. Our condemnation is taken away. That's the kind of freedom the Bible says you can have in Jesus Christ.

And if you've believed in him as your Lord and Savior, that's true. That's what he's done for you. He's taken away your trespasses. And that is a liberating message.

John Stott told the story of a British psychiatrist who was the director of a large mental institution in the UK many years ago. And he said at one point, he said, I could release half my patients tomorrow if they could be assured of forgiveness.

[11:06] That they could be forgiven. That they were forgiven for all the things they had done. He said guilt. Man, I mean guilt can drive you crazy.

It really can. And I'm not just talking about people who, you know, I'm not just talking about if you're diagnosed with a mental illness.

But guilt can eat you up on the inside. You can be very functional on the outside. But having the weight of guilt and self-hatred and condemnation.

I mean guilt can lead to despair. Self-sabotaging. Restlessness. Defensiveness. Blaming others. Don't all those things come often from a sense of unresolved guilt.

But the Bible says in Jesus Christ, you can have freedom from that guilt. Your trespasses have been taken away. You're free. Paul said in Acts chapter 13, he says, Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

[12:18] Through him, everyone who believes is set free from every sin. A justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses or anywhere else. See, every human being, every one of us needs forgiveness from God.

None of us can obtain it on our own. But in Christ, there's forgiveness of sins and freedom from guilt. And Paul says we have this forgiveness of sins.

If you read that verse 7, in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. He doesn't say you might have this later on. He says, no, you have it.

You possess it. You can hold on to it. It's yours. Now, in the present, you can know that freedom.

The freedom of forgiveness. So, that's the first point. Redemption means we're free because we're forgiven. Second point about redemption.

[13:18] Redemption means our freedom, our forgiveness, had a price. There's no such thing as redemption or forgiveness without any cost.

You know, in the ancient world, if you were buying somebody out of slavery, you had to pay a ransom price to their owner to set them free.

Right? Or, I mean, today, different example. But if somebody's arrested and thrown in jail, but they haven't been sentenced yet, what does the court usually do or the judge usually do? They set a bond.

Okay? And if you want to bond the person out, you have to go to the clerk of the court or the bail bondsman. We won't deal with bail bondsman tonight.

If you want to bond the person out, you've got to go to the clerk of the court and pay that bond. There's no way you can bond them out without presenting the money. All right?

[14:15] There's a price. Or, personal level, if somebody is in debt to you. Right? You loan somebody money. They said, I'll pay you back. If you cancel or forgive that debt, that means you lost that money.

You're absorbing the cost. Or if somebody wrongs you. And I don't mean something trivial. But if somebody really does something that really hurts you.

Maybe they harmed your reputation. Maybe they did something that was really offensive to you. And if they come to you and say, I'm really sorry.

I want your forgiveness. You know, there's still a cost to extend forgiveness. And to accept someone's repentance.

Someone's expression of sorrow. Because you know what? They still gossiped about you. And your reputation still got harmed. And they might not be able to fix all that. Right?

[15:28] Once the words come out of your mouth, words have come out of your mouth. And you can say you're sorry. But that doesn't take back the words. And so forgiveness always has a cost. Maybe it's a financial cost. Forgiving a debt.

Maybe it's an emotional cost. Accepting someone who says, I'm sorry. I wronged you. Will you forgive me? Can we be reconciled? And saying yes to that has a cost.

Forgiveness or redemption, it always has a cost. There's no situation where it has no cost. And the Bible says there was a cost to our redemption.

Our forgiveness. It came through his blood. Through the blood of Jesus that he shed on the cross. Jesus took our sin in his own body.

He received the judgment of death and condemnation that we deserve. He paid the price so that we could go free. So that we could be forgiven.

[16:31] He was forsaken so that we could be forgiven. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, you are bought with a price. That's the second point.

All right? We're free because we're forgiven. But our freedom had a price. Third point, our freedom has a purpose. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says you were bought with a price.

And then he goes on to say, therefore, glorify God in your body. Okay? Redemption doesn't just mean being caught loose and left alone.

Okay? If you're redeemed, you now belong to the one who redeemed you. And you belong to that person not as a slave or as a hired worker.

Right? Not in a relationship of mere obligation and authority. But you belong to them as a family member. You're bound to your redeemer in steadfast love.

[17:34] This is sort of the biblical picture of what redemption looks like. So, in the Old Testament, the word redemption was used for a variety of things. Not just buying someone out of slavery, but someone who personally intervened to rescue someone in trouble.

And to sort of come alongside them and say, I'm not just going to give you a little help once or even twice. But I'm going to sort of link myself to you.

And I'm going to say, your problem is going to become my problem. And I'm going to walk with you through this. And I'm going to be with you. And I'm going to...

And if you're in trouble, I'm going to do all that I can to get you out of trouble. So, some examples of what redeemers did in the Old Testament. One description says this.

A redeemer was a member of the clan who rescued someone. Another member who had fallen on hard times. So, a redeemer could restore property. They could buy back property that had been sold to pay a debt. That would have given someone an opportunity to sort of start up to work again.

[18:44] To have some land to cultivate. They could assist in a lawsuit. They could ensure that justice is served for a relative. As well as purchase a relative out of slavery.

There's a variety of things and some other things that a redeemer would do. And that's a concept that you'll find in the Old Testament. You don't find it elsewhere in the ancient world.

This idea of a redeemer. Someone who sort of personally steps in. And binds themselves to you in a sort of covenant love way. And rescues you from trouble.

It's a uniquely biblical concept. It wasn't a concept that you can find in any other ancient societies. But again, the point of being a redeemer is that you aren't just saying, I'll give you a little help.

But I'll keep my distance. You're saying, you're mine and I'm yours. And I'm going to. And so, one example of this is Boaz.

[19:41] If you read the book of Ruth. Boaz is what was called a kinsman redeemer. He was a close relative. And he redeemed Ruth. Right? Which means, and what did they do?

They got married. Right? So, Boaz entered into this close relationship with Ruth. And enabled her to be able to carry on her family line.

But he gave himself to her in steadfast love. And so, this is the picture. Right? This is what God has done for us in Christ. He hasn't just, you know, when we think of freedom, sometimes we think, all right, I'm free from something else.

And then I can do whatever I want. But that's not the kind of freedom Christ has given us. He's given us freedom from our trespasses so that we now belong to him and that he loves us and will never leave us.

He says, I'll take you for my people and I will be your God. And we see this in these verses. Right? Verse 7 and 8. We have redemption, forgiveness, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us.

[20:47] That means God has given us more than we need. More than we would have expected. He's lavished his love and redemption on us. He's brought us in so that now we belong to him.

We're part of his family. And he's never going to leave us or forsake us. So that's the purpose of our freedom, to belong to Jesus. We're free because we're forgiven.

Our freedom had a price. The blood of Christ shed on the cross. Our freedom has a purpose so that we belong to him. And finally, fourth, our freedom will have a glorious future.

Look at the second half of our passage, starting in the middle of verse 8. You know, the first half sort of focuses on our personal redemption and forgiveness.

The second half widens out. He says, 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.

[21:52] Right? You have all these words about God's will, God's purpose, God's plan for the future, not just for us personally, individually, but for all things, things in heaven and things on earth.

God's plan is to unite all things in Christ. Now, that word in verse 10 translated unite means to gather together under some unifying principle or person.

Or to sum up under one head. There's one other place in the New Testament the same word is used. It's Romans 13, 9, where it says the law is summed up in one statement.

Love your neighbor as yourself. In other words, all the principles in the law fit under this one unifying principle of love your neighbor as yourself. And all the specific laws, they're all just expressions of that general principle.

Right? They're all under that head. And Paul's saying God's ultimate purpose is that all things, things in heaven and things on earth, be put in proper order under the headship of Jesus the Messiah.

[22:56] And God has set forth that purpose. He's publicly displayed that purpose by sending Jesus into the world, by redeeming us, forgiving our trespasses, making us his own people who belong to him.

God is giving us a glimpse of what he intends to do for all of creation in the future. Now, this is something we look forward to, right? When we talk about all things being gathered together under Christ, the renewal of all things or the new heavens and the new earth, right?

When God will renew his creation and everyone who belongs to Jesus, who believes in Jesus will be part of that. And, you know, this is something I think is hard for us to imagine, right?

Because we can look back and we can talk about what Christ did in shedding his blood for us on the cross. And that's a great mystery. And it's profound and deep, but it's happened, right?

And we can look back at it and think, wow. You know, in the Old Testament, when people are looking forward to the Messiah, they never could have expected, they never could have imagined exactly how it all turned out, but now we can see it.

[24:08] But now we're still looking forward to what God promises here in verse 9 and 10. His plan for the fullness of time to unite things in heaven and things on earth under Christ.

Now, what does that look like, right? We haven't seen it yet, so it's hard for us to describe. It's hard for us to imagine. But I think we see some glimpses in Scripture of what this will be like, okay?

So let me give a few examples. One, it's going to be, in some ways, a renewal of the life that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden, right?

If you look at Genesis 1 and 2, right? God rules over everything, and God put Adam and Eve in the Garden to rule over the world under him. And Psalm 8 says, you have placed all things under his feet, referring to humanity, right?

And there was unity in the Garden, there was order, and everything was under the Lordship of God. But then what happened, right? After Adam and Eve trespassed against God's command, everything falls apart.

[25:25] So what do we see in the next chapters of Genesis, right? We see, first, we see their relationship with God is broken. And people hide from God in sin and shame. Then we see the relationship between husband and wife is broken down.

Adam blames Eve. Eve blames the serpent. Neither of them take responsibility. Then we see the relationship between brothers in the same family that breaks down. Cain kills Abel. Out of envy.

We see fruitful labor becomes painful toil, right? With thorns and thistles. Later on in the book of Genesis, we see the Tower of Babel. We see a whole city that's corrupted by pride and idolatry.

And so what you see after the falls, you see everything breaking down. But then what do you see when Jesus Christ comes? You see God starting to put things back together again.

The way they were meant to be. Right? Foundationally, putting, reconciling us with God. That's the foundation of it all.

[26:31] Right? That through Christ we can be reconciled with God. And forgiven and reconciled with Him. But then what do we also see, right? God doesn't stop there.

He goes on. He reconciles people to each other. Right? And talks about, we'll get to this in chapter 2 in Ephesians. Talks about the Gentiles and the Jews who had been at enmity with each other.

Right? Ethnic groups that had been at odds with each other. There was a lot of tensions between them. And Paul says, in the church, God is bringing people together. Gentiles and Jews under Jesus Christ to be reconciled in Him.

What else do we see? We see God working to restore right relationships between men and women. Right? Just, I mean, that broke down pretty quick after the fall.

But we see God is intentionally working to restore right relationships between men and women. And, I mean, the reality is every good Christian marriage is a witness to God reconciling people who are divided, naturally divided by sin.

[27:45] Right? And selfishness. And showing a little glimpse of what He's going to do with all creation in the future. Right?

God, our work can be redeemed. Right? God says, I've prepared good works in advance for you to do. Not work in order to justify yourself and make a name for yourself.

But I've prepared good works for you to do as my people. Right? So, all these things, God is putting back together what had fallen apart after the fall.

And I think that's sort of what Paul's talking about when he talks about all things being united in Christ. Things in heaven and things on earth. Is God beginning to, is, is, is, this is what God is beginning to do.

Right? This is what we are called to be as the church. Right? A sign of what God's going to do in the future. But he says, one day, all creation will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

[28:52] Now, what does this mean for us? Well, it means that being redeemed, being a Christian, being forgiven, it doesn't just mean, okay, I'm forgiven.

I prayed the prayer. I've been there, done that. Now I'm good. I know I'm going to heaven when I die. Now I'll live the rest of my life however I want. And, you know, maybe if I feel motivated, I'll try to obey.

And, you know, serve God. But, you know, I've got my life insurance, I've got my eternal life insurance policy, and that's what redemption is.

No. That's not what it is at all. Paul says redemption is the beginning of something that's going to continue into all eternity. When you're forgiven of your trespasses, it's the beginning of God making you part of all things being united under Christ.

And he's showing, he's calling us to be a picture or a signpost of what God is going to do in the future when he makes new heavens and a new earth.

[30:04] Right? When all things will be gathered together under the authority and the lordship of Jesus Christ. And he wants our lives and our community to be a little picture of that.

Of his redeeming work. So what does a redeemed life look like? Well, looks like our lives that maybe are often driven by fear and anxiety.

Isn't that what drives a lot of our activity? Our lives being brought into peace and order under Jesus Christ. With him being present and abiding with us. It looks like our bodies.

All right? What's the first part of creation you're called to rule over? Your very own physical body. Okay? That's what you're primarily responsible for offering to God. And ruling over rightly.

All right? So redemption looks like our bodies. Instead of being ruled by selfish desires or our fickle passions. Being ruled by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

[31:07] When we say, I will not seek to indulge my fleshly passions. But I will seek to use my body as an offering of worship to God. And as a way I can bless other people.

It looks like our possessions. Right? Don't we often look to gain our stuff as a means to bolster our image?

And when we're redeemed by Jesus Christ, we start to use our possessions differently. We start to use our possessions as a means of showing hospitality or showing mercy to other people.

Or relationships. Right? Don't we often struggle with relationships that are filled with conflict? Or even bitterness? Or unforgiveness? Or deception?

Or hiding? Or pretending? And those relationships starting to be healed and made right through repentance and forgiveness. And speaking the truth in love. All those are little pictures of what redemption.

[32:11] That means the freedom we have in Christ. Right? Which is a signpost of the freedom that all creation will one day have. Being brought under the lordship of Christ.

So that's the message we have tonight. In Christ, we're free. Because we're forgiven of our trespasses. The greatest, most lasting, deepest kind of freedom that you can ever have.

Our freedom had a price. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's son. Our freedom has a purpose. We belong to him now and forever. And our freedom has a future. That it's a picture of what will happen when Jesus Christ comes.

To judge the world and to renew his creation. And in the new heavens and new earth, all things will be under his authority. Let me close with a quote from an early Christian writer named Irenaeus.

Who spent a lot of time reflecting on these ideas we've just talked about tonight. He says, Christ began afresh the long line of human beings and furnished us with salvation.

[33 : 18] So that what we had lost in Adam, namely to be according to the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ Jesus. He has therefore summed up all things.

Waging war against our enemy, Satan. And crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam. As our species went down to death through a vanquished man.

So we may ascend to life again through a victorious one. And as through a man, through Adam, death was victorious against us. So again by a man, by Jesus Christ, we may be victorious even against death.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the redemption that you purchased for us. And that you apply to our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, we pray that we would walk in this freedom. We pray that we would come to you and receive this freedom if we haven't yet done that.

[34 : 19] But we pray, Lord, for those of us who have received you. Received your death on the cross in our place. Lord, that we would walk in that freedom. That we would not walk in bondage when we really have been set free.

That we would not act like we have shackles around our legs when you have broken them off of us. Lord, that we would walk in the freedom that you have purchased for us. And Lord, that we pray that our lives and our church would be, more and more, would be a signpost of what you are going to do in the future.

To bring all things under the headship of Jesus Christ. Lord, may that be true for us. Lord, we need your Holy Spirit so that that would be a reality in our lives more and more. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.