

In Christ our redemption – Sunday 14th August 2014

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:7

Beloved in The Lord,

From time to time, people ask me why I am always preaching about Jesus. The answer lies in our text today: **“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”**

The truth is, that apart from Christ Jesus, we have no access to God The Father. There is no salvation apart from Christ Jesus. We cannot even get near to God apart from Christ Jesus.

We are separated from God at birth. We are born with a sinful human nature that we inherited from Adam. It doesn't take very long at all in a baby's development for this sinful, rebellious nature to manifest itself. We all need to be reconciled to God, because we are all born separated from Him. We are not born children of God.

God so loved us, and He desired that we would live with Him, in fellowship with Him, that He designed a way for us to be reconciled with Him, that still satisfied the righteous requirements of His Law.

God's Law clearly states that the wages of sin is death. Also that there cannot be forgiveness for sin without the shedding of blood. Death, here is not a cessation of physical life, but eternal separation from God. To be separated from God in eternity, with no hope, in utter darkness.

God did not want any human to experience this, and so He provided a Redeemer, a Saviour; His own dear Son Jesus Christ.
Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans:

“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness” (Romans 3:22-25a). (NIV)

Paul explains to us that righteousness – that is a right standing before God is given to us through faith in Jesus Christ. When Jesus shed His blood on Good Friday, He did so for all people. His blood paid the sin debt of every human being, past, present and future. His blood had such redemptive power, that every sinner who turns to Him can be washed completely clean.

That is good news. That is the Gospel. Christ has died for us, in our place. He bore our punishment in His Body, so that believing in Him, we can be free from the slavery of sin and death, and become members of His family forever.

The Gospel is plain and simple:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:14-18).

Jesus clearly tells us that Salvation is through faith in Him. I would dare say that all of us hope to live in Heaven with God after we die. The important question is that if you have this hope, what do you base it on? What is the basis of your hope to live eternally with God in paradise? If I were to ask you to answer this question, I guess that I would hear things like: “Well I have lived a good life. I am not a bad person. I tried to get on with all people. I prayed now and then. I went to Church, I served on the board etc, etc.” The answers would be many and varied, but you know these answers would all be the wrong ones. The only true basis on which you can build your hope is not on what you have done or been, but on what Christ Jesus has done for you. This is spelt out so clearly in our text today. Listen again: ***“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”***

You see our redemption is in His blood. He has paid the price for our redemption. In order to be redeemed, all we need to do is believe in Him. Jesus said: ***“whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:16)***

When we believe in Jesus, then we are no longer subject to sin whose wages is death.

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? To believe is to trust. To come to Him believing that you have sinned against Him, that you deserve eternal death. To repent of (turn away from) your sin, and to acknowledge that His blood has paid the penalty, and that through His death and Resurrection you are made righteous. As the old Gospel song says: “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling...”

This is the key. To understand that Christ Jesus has died for you, in your stead, in your place. You can be reconciled to God only through His blood. Some will object and say : “I am no sinner!” Really? What are you using as your standard to judge by? There is only one standard that matters and that is God’s Word – The Bible. His Word says that all have sinned. We read :

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us” (1.John 1:10). There you have it. To say that you are not a sinner is to make God a liar. Not a good idea. In this same chapter we read words that bring us comfort and hope as we consider the issue of sin:

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have

fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1.John 1:6-9).

You see my friends, if we humble ourselves before Almighty God, and confess our sins to Him, then He is faithful and just and by the blood of Jesus, He cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness.

May we never be boastful, but humble. May we never trust in ourselves, but in Him. May we trust in Christ Alone. If we do we can be sure of our eternal destiny.

Paul in writing to the Corinthians made this heartfelt plea:

“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor.5:18-20).

Be reconciled to God! It is vital that all of us are. We need Christ Jesus. Neither God, nor Paul, nor me, wants to see any of you lost for eternity, and that is why this message comes to you today. If you haven't yet been reconciled to God, through The Blood of Jesus, then today is the day. Do it today. Tomorrow may be too late. You have no guarantee that you will see tomorrow. None of us do. We do not know at what moment God will call us away from this life.

Do not be a fool, but be wise. Do not be proud, but humble yourself. Come to Him today, knowing and believing that He loves you so very much.

Paul wrote:

“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed” (Romans 10:9-11).

Clearly stated. Do not be disappointed after this life when you find yourself outside, because you did not heed His call. Come to Him today.

If you are already reconciled to Christ, then may today's message serve as a reminder of God's wonderful love, grace and mercy, that He has shown to you. Praise Him.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.