

REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).

Redemption is the act of paying for or buying back. It is the legal satisfaction of a legal obligation. It also has in it the thought of taking possession of that which has been thus bought.

I. The Need Of Redemption.

Sin created the need of redemption. Sin! What a word that is! What a history it has! Sin is the worst word in any man's vocabulary. I cannot think of any other word that is quite so ruinous, devastating, blackening and diabolical as sin. It has crept into every life that has ever been lived, except that of Christ, and left its prints of shame and remorse. Because the word "sin" has in it the hiss of a serpent, many prefer that it not be mentioned. They want to call it by some less objectionable name and regard it merely as an error, mistake, infirmity or failure. But, sin is something to be feared, hated and avoided.

Sin is the most tragic fact in human life, the blackest page in human history. The saddest day in the history of the human race was when sin entered the world. Sin wrecked the Garden of Eden. Sin caused Cain to slay Abel. Sin made it necessary for God to send the terrible flood that destroyed most of the human family. Sin brought the wholesale murder of war. Sin crucified the Lord of glory. Sin is the masked enemy lurking in the shadow of the night, sowing seeds of discord among friends and transforming faith into suspicion and love into hate. Sin robs human life of everything that is really worth-while.

Sin is not something to be laughed at or to be regarded lightly. It is a dreadful thing. It is a transgression of the law of God. It is blindness in the eye, hardness in the heart, perversity in the will and selfishness in the life. It is a dagger aimed at the heart of God. Changing its name does not alter its nature. It blights and curses everything that it touches. All of the world's seething confusion, bitterness, suffering and sadness are the results of sin. Every anguish that rends the brow, every pain that pierces the body, every shame that shadows life and every guilt that pollutes the soul are the fruits of sin.

Man's normal standing before God is expressed in these words: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). From these scriptures we can readily see that normally a man stands before God under the burden of condemnation, under the weight of His curse and under the blight of His wrath. Those who are in this condition are without God, without Christ and without hope.

II. The Nature Of Redemption.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

In his novel, Les Miserables, Victor Hugo told the story of the French peasant who was thrown from his cart and pinned beneath its wheels. A crowd of men gathered about and were vainly seeking to deliver the unfortunate teamster. Jean Valjean, once a convict in the galley ships but then an honored mayor of a city, came upon the scene and, seeing the man who without immediate relief was soon to be crushed to death, cast himself upon his breast and crawled under the loaded cart and, with almost super-human strength, lifted it from the unfortunate peasant and held it there until he struggled out free.

We, like that peasant, were being crushed to death beneath the weight of sin. Jesus Christ cast Himself in great humiliation upon the cross and bore for us the weight of sin and condemnation that crushed us down. He placed Himself in our position of jeopardy that we might stand in His place of liberty and that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4-6).

The basis of redemption is the worthiness of Christ as expressed in His death. He was worthy as a man, without fault, perfect in every feature of His character. He was worthy as a preacher, "Never man spake like this man." He was worthy as a miracle-worker. The storm was subject to Him; disease fled at His word and touch; the very demons were obedient to Him; He willed and it was done. As we look at Christ, He stands out above all others as God's ideal of perfect character. We have God's pronouncement as to what perfection means in His statement, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

"Worthy art Thou . . . for Thou wast slain." The worthiness that brings redemption is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The basis of redemption is the worthiness of Christ as revealed in the cross. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

As to the price of our redemption, God tells us that "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We are redeemed by the blood of Christ. That the blood of Christ made atonement for our sins is the foundation of our faith,

the inspiration of our hope and the ground of our confidence. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The precious blood of Christ redeems from the curse of the law which said, "This do, and live." We were slaves to the law, but Christ paid the ransom price, and the law is no longer our tyrant master. We are free from it. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

When Peter said that Christ redeemed us, men were constantly being bought and sold as slaves, and that was done regardless of color. When a man was held in bondage as a slave, his family or some kindhearted friend, if possessing the means to do so, would redeem the man from slavery with gold or silver or precious stones. That is the meaning that lies back of this great word "redeem." Christ paid the price of our redemption. And how great that price was! It was nothing less than His own precious blood.

Over the portals of a church in Germany there is cut in the stone a beautiful picture of a lamb. A man who worked on the steeple of the church lost his footing and plunged to the ground below. A flock of sheep were grazing in the churchyard, and the man fell on a lamb. The lamb was killed, but the man's life was saved. In his gratitude he cut into the stone over the doors of the church a likeness of the lamb that saved his life. So we are forgiven and saved from sin by Christ Who is the Lamb of God. The blood of Christ, which was shed for our redemption, is the proof of God's love for us. Christ redeemed us from the penalty of sin, the power of sin and the presence of sin.

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins:
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

During the Civil War a chaplain went among the soldiers in a hospital and preached unto them the way of salvation through Christ. He found one man whose eyes were closed and who was muttering something about blood, blood. The chaplain thought he was thinking of the carnage of the battlefield; and, going to him, he tried to divert his mind; but the young man looked up and said, "Oh, doctor, it was not that that I was thinking of; I was thinking how precious the blood of Christ is to me now that I am dying. It covers all my sins."

One day Queen Victoria visited a paper mill and when she saw the filthy rags exclaimed, "How can those be made white?" "Ah, your majesty," was the reply, "I have a powerful chemical process by which I take the color even out of those red rags." Some days after, the Queen found on her writing-desk a lot of the most beautifully polished writing-paper she had ever seen; on each sheet were the letters of her own name and likeness. There was also this accompanying note, "Will the Queen be pleased to accept a specimen of my paper with the assurance that every sheet was made from the dirty rags she saw on the back of the poor rag-picker? Will the Queen allow me to say I have had many a good sermon preached to me in my mill? I can understand how the Lord Jesus can take the poor heathen and the vilest of the vile and make them clean and white. And I can see how He can put His own name upon them; and just as these rags transformed may go into a royal palace and be admired, so poor sinners can be received into the palace of the Great King."

Christ's blood cleanses from all sin--original sin, inherited sin and actual sin; sins of thought, word and deed; sins of presumption and of ignorance, sins of thought and of desire, sins of omission and of commission, sins of words and of deeds, sins of childhood and of youth, sins of adulthood and of old age.

No matter how long you have continued in sin or how deeply you have gone into it, you can be forgiven and saved from it by the Lord Jesus Christ if you will trust Him as your Saviour.