

THE TESTIMONY OF THE REDEEMED

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Psalm 107:2.

This is a psalm of praise. The Psalmist realized that he and his people had many reasons for thanksgiving. So, he called on all beneficiaries to give thanks unto the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

In other psalms the writers have called upon all creation to praise God. The mountains, rivers, beasts, birds, insects--all are called upon to join in the grand hallelujah. Now, comes the last and loudest call to the whole animate world, particularly to man; not merely as a creature but as a redeemed person. Of all who should praise God the redeemed are under the greatest obligation, because redemption means so much more than creation. He has a double blessing, and is under a twofold obligation. He not only owes his life to the Lord, but also the redemption of his soul.

Our text begins with the word "let," which implies that man is bubbling over to offer his praise. The scene is swept of all hindrances so as to give man a free, unhindered opportunity to do that for which his heart is yearning. I cannot think of a redeemed man who does not want to praise God. There can be no higher blessing than to snatch a man from the dangers of eternal loss; and, if one is not grateful for this, no word of contempt could adequately describe him. To think is to thank. These verbs spring from a common root. The thoughtful person is the thankful person. Thoughtlessness and thanklessness are twins.

I. Who Are The Redeemed?

1. Those who were eternally condemned, but by the goodness of God have been set free. Their condemnation was so binding and so rigid, that there was no power known to man by which he could be liberated. No galley slave ever knew the servitude of the soul that was under the condemnation of sin. No death cell ever meant as much to a condemned criminal as the condemnation to eternal night. No banishment to any place of stark isolation and desolation ever shut man up to such hopeless despair as this certain ruin. To deliver one from such a fate would be to render an incomparable blessing. Should not such a redeemed one have reason for expressing his gratitude to his Deliverer? The redeemed were as the criminal already on the gallows, with the black cap already over his face and the hand of the executioner ready to spring the trap when a pardon is rushed from the governor staying the hand of justice and giving liberty to the condemned.
2. The state of the redeemed is made clear by the customs of the day in which the Psalmist lived. When a man became involved in debt and could not pay, he or his family or both, with all he possessed could be sold for the debt, or his creditor could make slaves of the man and his family. But fortunately a kinsman could pay the debt and release the man from his bondage. The implication is that this redeemed man, whose liberty was secured by his kinsman, would surely be grateful for his release. I heard the story of a slave who was purchased from the block at a public auction; the price was paid and he was delivered to the new owner; the owner gave the slave a slip of paper which was meaningless because he could not read, but he was told it was an emancipation. The paper was a certificate of freedom. Turning to walk away, he realized for the first time what it meant, ran to him and fell at his feet, and begged to go home with him and serve him with gladness. Redeemed, he wanted to express his gratitude in a fitting manner. That is what the Psalmist is pleading for.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Since our freedom cost Him His life, is there not reason that we should be filled with an

inexpressible gratitude? He brought hope to the hopeless. He gave liberty to the imprisoned. He gave life to the dead. Accept our gratitude, O God!

II. What Do The Redeemed Have To Say?

1. They have an experience to tell.

The Psalmist pictures the scene of a crowd of the redeemed eager to say something, and his plea is that they should be allowed to say it. So we ask what they have to say? And our first answer is, they have an experience to tell. Every redeemed soul does have an experience, for this is what salvation means.

It is not some theory or dogma; it is an experience within the soul. Paul's experience on the Damascus road was not a fancy but a reality, which he never doubted nor ever tired of telling. It completely changed his life, and he felt that it would change the life of any man. He was often arrested because of his religious convictions, but when he was arraigned before the courts he invariably told the experience that came to him on the road to Damascus. And its effects were magical, for it made judges tremble, and prosecutors forget to prosecute, and witnesses refuse to accuse him. When Christ healed the man who was blind from his birth, he had a real experience. When the apostles healed the lame man at the gate of the Temple, he had a real experience.

So all the redeemed have had an experience to tell. Many will be saved when the redeemed tell their experiences. We may not be able to preach a great sermon, nor sing a song beautifully, nor write a book, nor convince the world with our logic; but we can tell our experiences, and this is better than any sermon, song or book. There is no argument to an experience; it is the relation of facts, whether given eloquently or in broken sentences. Nor is there any argument against an experience. When Christ healed the demoniac in the hills of Gadara, the man wanted to go with Christ, but he was sent back to his home and his friends that he might tell his experience, and let them see for themselves what Christ had done for him. This is the most telling work a redeemed man can do.

2. They have a gratitude to express.

We would be a race of ingrates of the darkest hue if we were not grateful to God for His mercy towards us. Does our silence mean that we are not saved, or that we are not grateful for our salvation, or that we do not know how to express our gratitude? The lack of gratitude on the part of some of the redeemed must be the sharpest pang in the heart of God. The noblest service a redeemed man can render man or God is to show by his life that he is sincerely and deeply grateful for the benefits received.

3. They have a recommendation to make.

Speaking out of their own experience they eagerly tell others, who are in like condition, where and how they might find relief. If you had been healed of some dread disease, how gladly you would recommend the physician to your friends who had snatched you from the very grave. If some book had gladdened your heart, and made lighter your burden, what a privilege it would be to recommend it to others who were passing through similar circumstances. Now, the redeemed have a recommendation to make to the rest of the world. They know of a Saviour who forgave their sins, and saved their souls, and comforted their hearts, and gave them strength for the battles of life; what a pleasure it is to recommend Him to all men. There is no sin too great for His love. There is no habit too hard for His Spirit. There is no problem too difficult for His wisdom.

III. Why Should The Redeemed Say It?

1. They are commanded to do so.
"Ye shall be my witnesses," was spoken more than once to the followers of Christ. They were instructed to go everywhere and tell the story of His redeeming love. The world waits for their testimony. A heathen woman rebuked one of the missionaries one day with the words: "Why were you so long in coming to tell us about Christ? My mother and father died before they ever heard of Him."
2. They are expected to say it.
The Lord, the church, and the world expect the redeemed to bear testimony to Christ. The silence of Christians has brought shame to the cause of Christ, and joy to the forces of evil.
3. Alas, some are afraid to say it.
It may be that their lives will not bear out their testimony, and people will doubt their statements because their lives are so contrary, for they know that conduct speaks louder than words. And because of their inconsistency they hold their peace, and hold back their testimonies. Let all the redeemed bear their testimony. Christ will be honored by it. Men will be turned back by it. The church will be enriched by it.