

Redemption, Forgiveness, and the Riches of His Grace

by Eli Brayley

Redemption is the release or deliverance from bondage or captivity, often by payment of a ransom or price, which is provided by Christ.

Duration: 53:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:3-4, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 1:17, Ephesians 3:8

Topics: "Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the need for the Holy Spirit to reveal spiritual truths. He then focuses on Ephesians 1:4-14, highlighting that it is one long sentence in the Bible. The speaker explains that the passage discusses the blessings of being adopted into God's family, using the analogy of two adopted brothers sharing their experiences. The sermon also explores the concept of bondage to sin, death, Satan, and the law, and how these are all interconnected. The speaker concludes by listing ten blessings that believers have in Christ, including redemption, forgiveness, abundance, revelation, fellowship, inheritance, purpose, and salvation.

Transcript

Turn to Ephesians, with me please. Ephesians chapter 1. Last Sunday, we looked at, as Alan said, the objective fact that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing there is in Christ Jesus, in heavenly places. He hasn't withheld anything.

He's blessed you with all spiritual blessings, if you're in Christ Jesus. You have every spiritual blessing. And the Christian life, therefore, isn't one of trying to acquire blessings from God.

Christian life isn't one of trying to get more blessings from God. Rather, it's one of acknowledging what blessings that you have in Christ Jesus. It's a life of acknowledging the good things that he's already given you.

If you look at chapter 1, verse 17, this is what Paul prays for them. He says that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that you might know the hope of his calling. And then in chapter 3 also, he prays that their eyes would be opened, that they could comprehend or acknowledge what they have in Jesus.

So Christianity, if you're a Christian, is all about acknowledging those things that you already have and enjoying them, not striving to get them. And last week, we also looked at how God blessed us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Before the foundation of the world, he chose us in Christ.

And so we looked at this past work of God's grace in our lives. But this week, we're going to look at the present work of God in history and in time. So he chose us in the past, but he blessed us in the present.

And we're going to look at how he did that today. So let's read together from verse 7 to verse 12. Ephesians 1, 7 to 12.

Ephesians 1, 7 to 12. Let me just pray before I begin. Heavenly Father, as we approach your word this morning, we come before you, Lord, needy, desperate for understanding of your word.

And God, we thank you that you have revealed to us and written to us of these things. God, I pray that you'd fill us with the Holy Spirit this morning. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, Lord, to receive from you things that are spiritual.

For God, only your Spirit can reveal the things that are spiritual and compare the things that are spiritual. Thank you for inviting us into fellowship with your Son. Please cause us to hear this morning, God.

In Jesus' name, amen. Okay. Now the best scholars on this have said that from verse 4 to verse 14, it's one big long sentence.

So in your Bible, you may see a period after verse 6 where it says, He has made us accepted or graced us in the Beloved or freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved. And there's a period. But there shouldn't be a period there.

He flows on in this one big long sentence. And so in verse 7, if from verse 4 to 14 is a long sentence, in verse 7, we're just jumping right into the middle of it. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

So what's the connection here? Because we're just jumping right in. I want to suggest that the connection here in verse 7, when it says, In whom we have redemption, it's connected to verse 3, not verse 6. In verse 3, it reads, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And then he takes a slight detour and talks about how the reason we're blessed is because he chose us from before the foundation of the world.

So he blessed us because he chose us. But he picks back up in verse 7, In whom we have redemption through his blood. So even though election is a blessing from God, I don't believe that this is what Paul has in view in verse 3 when he says, God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

He's going to start in verse 7 to exhibit and to open up the package. So in Christ, we've been blessed with this package of every spiritual blessing that we could be blessed with. And starting in verse 7, he's going to open up that package and begin to explain all that we have in Christ.

So the blessings of verse 3 don't necessarily include the election because he says we were chosen to be blessed with all these blessings. But I'm not saying election is not a blessing. Imagine an orphan in the 19th century in England.

And we know that in those days there were tons of orphans and they had these orphanages. And they were just crowded with these poor boys and they weren't very sanitary. They weren't treated very well, these kids, in these orphanages.

My dad actually was an orphan in Portugal under like circumstances in the 50s. It was really poor. But imagine this orphan who has been adopted by these parents.

He's been adopted out of that awful orphanage. And he's too young to even understand what adoption is and what's really taking place. And that these aren't his parents and where's his parents.

He doesn't really understand. All he knows is he's been taken out of this place. He's been adopted.

And suppose he's not the first son that these parents have adopted. It's the second. And so as they're riding home in their carriage, the first son who was adopted out of that orphanage is telling the second son all about the blessings of being adopted out of that orphanage and into this particular family.

So as they're riding, the first kid is telling, Oh, you've got to know, no more moldy bread. No more bony fish. No more cold hard beds.

No more crowded rooms with lots of bullies. No more mean superintendents. This is wonderful.

What we're going to have is a warm bed and warm meals and loving parents. The kid doesn't quite understand the whole election process and the adoption process, but he does understand all these blessings he's going to have in this new family that he's been adopted into. And it doesn't in any way depreciate the choice from before the foundation of the world, but as the child comes to know all the blessings that he has and enjoy them, then he appreciates the adoption even more.

So as he enjoys this family and realizes all the things that he has in Christ, and as he grows older, then he'll be so much more thankful for that choice and that adoption that took place. And so it is here that Paul, he says we've been blessed in Christ with all these blessings, and he's about to explain them in verse 7. And as we see them and as we enjoy them and as we experience them, then we'll become more and more thankful of that detour section where he said we're blessed in conformity to the factor because he chose us in Christ from before the foundation of the world. Get the picture? So he's telling us what blessings we have in Christ.

We've been chosen, we've been foreordained in verse 5 to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself. And as I said last Sunday, that adoption is a Roman concept, and it's the same in our society. When a person is adopted, they receive the full rights of children.

Unlike in a Jewish concept, they didn't have this idea of adoption. A child might come into the family and come under the wing of the parents or of a person to be taken care of, but they don't receive the whole inheritance. But Paul's thinking in the Roman concept, in the concept we understand, if you're in Christ Jesus, if you're a believer in Christ, if you're a Christian, you have the full rights of a child of God.

And what does that mean? What does that entail? What is involved in all that? He's going to open up to us in the next section here of this long sentence from verse 7 to verse 14. And here are 10 words that I drew out of verse 7 to 14. So in these last 7 verses or 8 verses, I drew out 10 words or 10 things we've been blessed.

This isn't exhaustive, but this is just the 10 things I see Paul talking about here that he's telling us about what we've been blessed. And so here's 10 words, if you want to write them down. And we'll look at 5 of them this morning because we can't look at them all.

But here are the 10 words of the blessings we have in Christ Jesus. Number 1, redemption. Number 2, forgiveness.

3, abundance. 4, revelation. 5, fellowship.

6, inheritance. 7, purpose. 8, salvation.

9 and 10, assurance and consummation. And I'll explain all these things as we go. But the first one here in verse 7, in whom we have redemption through his blood.

So what is redemption and why do we need redemption? That's the question. It says we have redemption. So if you're a Christian, you have redemption.

Ever thought about what that means? You have redemption in Christ Jesus and his blood. What is redemption and why do we need it? Well, the idea of redemption is central to the whole Bible and central in both the Old and the New Testament. So the word redemption would have been very familiar to anyone who knows the Bible, and hopefully it's familiar to you, at least the word.

In the Old Testament to a Jew when they thought redemption, as you read the Old Testament, you see it all over the place. And sometimes the word redemption, it's been translated in our English Bible, redemption. But what it simply means in the Hebrew is deliverance.

So suppose you're in great danger and God delivers you. The Bible would sometimes translate it, he redeemed you from that calamity or from that destruction. But more commonly the thought of redemption is an ancient concept.

And this idea in the Old Testament is of a kinsman redeemer. And this was an ancient concept, an ancient custom of redemption that we've completely pretty much lost in our society. And there's reasons for that.

Because a kinsman redeemer, what he would do is, is that if the property or the possessions of a family was ever in danger of being lost through maybe debt or it was conquered by war or the death of a spouse, so maybe by some circumstance some property is going to be lost. The responsibility was upon the nearest kin of that family to go and buy back that property that was going to be lost. So suppose Jonathan has a board game and by some foolish bet he loses it.

Well, Peter, being his nearest kin, needs to go buy back the board game so that the property can remain in the Shelke family. And that was important in the ancient world because in the ancient world when family units were so important, tribes were so important, land was being inhabited and population was growing, you needed to keep the property within the family otherwise you'd just lose it. Today it's not so important because we don't really operate on that basis anymore of tribes and families and communities like that.

So back in those days it was really important. And God even in his law has commandments about the kinsman redeemer. He actually says this needs to happen.

You need to keep it within your tribe or within Israel even. If an Israelite was in danger of being captive, you needed to buy him back and keep everyone in. So this is the concept in the Old Testament of this

kinsman redeemer.

He would redeem the property or a person from being lost from the family and from being taken over by someone else. So that concept of buying back is one of the ideas of redemption. And when you come to Leviticus and the Levitical law, you see also this idea of redemption in obligations to God.

Like if a person was bound by an obligation to God, you could substitute that person or that thing by a payment or even by a sacrifice to release him from the obligation or to redeem him from the obligation. So in Exodus 13, if you remember, God slays all the firstborn children, firstborn males in Egypt. And on that day, he says, I sanctified to myself all the firstborn males in Israel.

So they're mine. They're bound to me now. So because they were bound to him, they belonged to him.

They didn't belong to anyone else anymore. And then later, God even says, instead of these people in their place, I'll take the whole tribe of Levi to myself. But what's going to happen with all these firstborn males? You're going to have to redeem them.

You're going to have to pay a price to the Levites in exchange for this person who would belong to me, but you can give money to the Levites and redeem this person. So that's a concept. They're bound to God, but you can make a payment to release them from that obligation.

And in other aspects, too, in the Levitical law, you could redeem a lamb, you could redeem an ox, you could redeem a donkey that was under obligation by payment to the temple. So it's buying something back or redeeming it from obligation. In the New Testament, however, I think that the force of the word redemption becomes much more strong and powerful.

See, as time goes on, words take on new meanings, there's new concepts. And this is very much what's in Paul's mind because the word he uses here, the word redemption, is a Greek word, apolutrosis. And what that is is this idea of a release or a deliverance or a liberation affected by payment of ransom.

So lutrosis or lutron is the word ransom, ransom, a ransom price. So the word redemption is a release or a deliverance by payment of ransom. So redemption is not simply deliverance, but it's deliverance by a payment of a ransom or a price.

Deliverance by price. And here's where the word was used. In the New Testament mind, to the Greek reader, they would have known what this was because in the Roman Empire, there was this vast slave enterprise.

It was said that at one point there may have been 2 million slaves in the whole of the Roman Empire just being traded and used. It was this huge enterprise. And people were sold in the marketplace called the agora, the town square.

Can you imagine just, I mean, you go to the marketplace now, Smith's Marketplace or Lee's Marketplace, and you'd buy food. But can you imagine you see people in chains being sold for labor, being sold for work. And you go and you see people as you're going to buy your food or whatever, you're looking over and people, just as you're inspecting this tomato, someone's over there inspecting this person as if he was just like a tomato.

So this was really common. And this idea of redemption was also known to be used in the slave trade. So you could buy someone.

Redemption isn't just simply buying a slave so that they're a slave to you now. And now, you know, you have to do them service. You can sell them later.

They're still a slave. But redemption or apolutrosis, and there's some other Greek words that are used too, the exagora. So if the agora is the market, the exagora is you buy them out of the market.

You get them off the market. And a redemption would be I'm giving you the price of this slave to free him, to let him go. You're redeeming this slave from slavery.

But as I was thinking about this, and this is common in the New Testament mind and the Greek early first century mind, it's not very common to us at all. So the thing that we would be more commonly, what would be more understandable for us is the idea of someone being kidnapped and they're held for a ransom. And then when you pay that ransom, you redeem them from their kidnapper.

And that works just as well. It's the same idea. So you don't have to go searching through all this like first century slave stuff to try to understand this.

It helps. But you can also understand that someone is captive by a kidnapper and they're released by payment of ransom. This is what's in Paul's mind when he says redemption, the release or deliverance by means of a payment.

Now here he says it applies to you. So now that we know what redemption is, why do we need redemption? Because sometimes as you hear this, you're like, oh, that's nice for the slave back in the first century, and that's nice for the kidnapped person. But what does that have anything to do with me? Why do we need redemption? The reason we need redemption is because outside of Christ, we are true prisoners and bondmen to a bondage that is far worse than any conceivable human bondage or slavery.

Do you realize that? You know, before you were in Christ, you probably didn't realize that until one day God revealed that to you. Did you know you're a slave and you're in bondage and you're a captive? I thought I was free. And you live your life thinking you're a free man and everything's okay.

But God's Word says that outside of Christ, you're a slave and you're in bondage and you're a captive. This is what God's Word says, whether you believed it or not in the past. At some point, if you became a Christian, you need to realize that, that you're in a bad state and you needed redemption.

And you see, the Scripture states what we're in bondage to in several ways. So sometimes it's hard to pin down just one thing. What am I in bondage to when I'm outside of Christ? What does the Scripture say? The Scripture says in different places different things.

It says that we're in slavery to the devil, Hebrews 2.14. It says we're in slavery to death, Hosea 3.13.14. It says we're in slavery to sin and iniquity, Titus 2.14. There's other Scriptures I could go to as well. Slavery and bondage to the law, Galatians 3.13.4-5. Chapter 4, verse 5. We're captive by sin. We're in bondage to sin.

We're slaves to sin. The law, death, and Satan, all these things are used. So sometimes it can be confusing.

Is it one or what is it? What are we in slavery to? We're in slavery to it all. It forms one bondage. They're all related.

All of that is related. Sin, death, Satan, and the law, they're all related. And is there an order to it? I believe there is an order to it.

And here's the order that I see in Scripture. Each and every one of us when we're outside of Christ is under the law, the law of God. God's law has requirements and demands that is upon you.

And you are subject to the law in all its conditions. You're under that law. What happens is when you sin, when you break that law, then all of a sudden that law turns against you.

That law which would have blessed you. Because the law says, if you do what I say, you'll be blessed. And it's true.

You will be. But the moment you break that law, then the law turns against you and curses you. And then you come under a curse.

And now you're cursed by the law. And now you're under its curse and under all of its awful consequences of breaking that law. And what happens is you die.

And you become subject to death. So now you're not only subject to the law, and now you're not only a sinner who's broken the law, and the Bible also says that whoever sins is a slave to sin, and sin even comes and dwells in you and takes you captive so that you continue to sin. It's not that you just sinned once and, oh no, now I'm in big trouble.

I need to somehow atone for that one sin. But all of a sudden you become a sinner and your nature becomes sinful, and you now are just like this sin machine just pumping out sin. You're in slavery to that.

Try to stop and you'll find you can't. And then you find that now I'm subject to death. Death has a grip on me.

I can't even get out of death. I can't get out of the law. I can't get out of sin.

I can't get out of death. How do you walk away from that? And because you're under the sentence of death, you're under the sentence of Satan. You're under the jurisdiction of Satan.

Hebrews 2.14 says that Satan has the power of death. Do you know that? Satan has the power of death. It's almost like God turns you over to his dominion when you're under that curse and when you're dead.

He turns you over to that dominion. It's like Satan is almost the executioner that God uses. And Satan's weapon is the law.

He stands before God day and night, it says. Day and night, even while you're sleeping, and accuses you by the law. And he says, he sinned.

He's mine. He sinned. He's mine.

I can do what I will. I have jurisdiction over this person because he broke your commandments. Now you're under his dominion.

You're under his control. They're captive to do his will, it says in Scripture. And he accuses you day and night before the throne.

How do you walk away from that? How do you escape from that dominion? How do you find deliverance from an immutable law of God? You can't walk away from God's law. You're captive to it. You have to obey it, and if you don't, you're dead.

You can't just wake up in the morning and say, God, I don't really want to be under the law anymore. You have to. He's God.

How do you change that immutable law? How do you get deliverance from that? How do you deal with your sin? How do you erase your past and cure your present and secure your future from sinning? How do you do that? You're in bondage to sin. You can't erase the past, you can't cure the present, and you're going to sin in the future. What do you do to avoid that? You can't.

You're in bondage to it. Can't run from the law, can't run from sin. How do you escape death? How do you reverse that? Try reversing it.

Say, okay, I don't want to die. I can figure this out somehow. Sit down and, I won't die.

I'll create some potion. People have always tried to avoid death. People have always sought immortality.

Everyone's dead because death has dominion. How do you escape from Satan? How do you silence your accuser in heaven who, day and night, makes a bulletproof case? See, he has a good case. He sees everything.

He has the records. He can go over to God's filing cabinet. He can say, on this and such and such a date.

How do you avoid that? How do you stand up and say, I plead not guilty. I'm going to get this accuser and this prosecutor away from me. You can't do it.

You're in bondage to him. So they're all connected. Slavery to the law leads to slavery to sin, which leads to slavery to death, which leads to slavery to Satan.

And this is Satan's great enterprise. The Romans had two million. Satan has six billion currently.

That's just a rough number. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that should be a sweet sound for a Christian. You have redemption.

Actually, in the Greek, it doesn't say you have redemption. It says you have the redemption, because there is only one redemption from all of that. There isn't alternative redemptions.

You have redemption, but you could have found it over there. There's only one redemption from the slavery and the bondage that you were in before you were in Christ. There's only one.

It's the redemption through his blood. That's the only one. What is that redemption? What was the price that he paid to release us from that bondage? Christ Jesus, the Son of God, stepped out of heaven, seeing this whole enterprise, this slave trade that men were under, and Jesus came, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he grabbed sin off of our backs, and he hoisted it up in the air, and he dropped it on his own shoulders, and he sunk down into hell, and he rose again victorious without sin.

Sin is gone. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He took care of it.

He paid for it. The price was his blood, it says here. The redemption through his blood.

He shed his life's blood on the cross to pay the price of our redemption, of our deliverance from the captivity of sin. And what the main thing is, or what it contains, is the forgiveness of sins. See the next thing he says in verse 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

If you're in Christ through faith, you have been blessed with the forgiveness of sins. You've been blessed. And so Satan, in horror, looks as his vile enterprise is over.

It's up. He can't accuse a Christian anymore. He can't accuse them anymore and says, they're mine, and so they're sentenced to death, and I have dominion over them.

Wait, they're forgiven. Where's the filing cabinet? Their file is gone. Where is it? I can't use it anymore.

They're free. He's silenced before the throne of God. He can't accuse.

And because he can't accuse, and because we're forgiven, and God sees that our sin is gone in Christ Jesus, we are free from the death that we would have died. Jesus said that whoever believes in me will never die. Did you know? He said that.

This physical death that we will experience is not death anymore for us at all. It's not death anymore. It would have been.

But it's a glorious thing that death has no sting. We shouldn't see it as death anymore. The Bible even uses a different term.

He says slave. It's not death because we've been released. The Bible says that in Christ we've become dead to the law, free from all the obligations that we were bound by.

Isn't that wonderful? Now, it's not because the obligations are bad. It's because we were just in a hopeless state under those obligations. But he paid the redemption price to free us from the obligation of having to obey all the commandments, a good thing which we couldn't do because we are sinners.

He freed us. He redeemed us. Isn't that good news? The redemption that's in Christ Jesus, we have it.

A man named Warfield in the 1800s says this about Jesus being our redeemer. Here's his quote. Redeemer, however, is a title of more intimate revelation than either Lord or Savior.

It gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from him, but also to our appreciation of what it cost him to procure this salvation for us. So if we just say he's our Savior, we know, okay, he saved me. But if we say he's our redeemer, we think automatically of what it cost him to redeem us.

The blood. It is the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Redeemer.

Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes, and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance, not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that he paid a mighty price for it. And the price of redemption, we will not know this side of eternity, just what it cost him. What did it cost him to enter into our slavery, to be numbered with the transgressors, to be put to death for our sins, to shed his

blood, his life for us? This was not just some ordinary death.

This was a substitutionary death and a redemptive one. Isn't that wonderful? So as a Christian, when you think of the word redemption, and when you call Christ your redeemer, and I've been noticing it in the hymns, I've been noticing the word redeemer, how much it comes up now, whereas before I didn't really notice it as much. Because you kind of lump them together, like redeemer, Savior, Lord, it's all kind of one.

But it's good to make these distinctions and to see that when you say Jesus is your redeemer, you understand what he redeemed you from and what it cost him to do that. We said last week, if you're in Christ, if you're not in Christ, your position is most miserable. You have nothing.

You have no hope. You're in bondage. You're under death.

You're under sin. You're going to hell. You're Satan's in his jurisdiction.

But if you're in Christ, your position is glorious to the extreme. You have God. You have forgiveness.

You have forgiveness and redemption. You're free from sin and all obligations. And you're not now just not a slave.

You're an adopted child of God. That's amazing. So those parents, when they paid for that boy out of that orphanage, they had to pay some price.

The price of our redemption and the price of our adoption was the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. It says we have the forgiveness of sins. It doesn't just say we were forgiven.

Forgiveness is something you actually possess presently. Some people say, oh yeah, God has forgiven me. Of course that's true.

But you also have it. It's a blessing you have in Christ Jesus. And because you have it, it is something you have for your past, your present, and your future.

So your past is erased. Your present and your future are secure because it's something you have. It's a good question to ask one another, to remind each other.

Do you have forgiveness? Do you have forgiveness? Not just did he forgive your past, but is forgiveness a blessing that you have? Is it one of those spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus that you have? Isn't that amazing? You have it. And it doesn't say you have predermission. The word in the Greek for predermission is pesis.

That means overlooked sin. If Paul wanted to say that, he would have used that word in the Greek, pesis, and he didn't. He used the Greek word for forgiveness.

That's the pardon. That's when God actually sees the sin, doesn't overlook it, but it's paid for, it's pardoned, and it's forgiven. It's not just overlooked.

Something actually was done to our sins to make them forgiven. And here we see that true religion starts with forgiveness. It's one of the first blessings we get, or at least in order, logical order.

We receive the redemption and the forgiveness of sins. And it doesn't end there. Christianity does not end with forgiveness.

It starts with forgiveness. We have a friend in the bookstore we talk to all the time about this, and he thinks that it ends with forgiveness. He thinks, I have to do all these things in order for me to be forgiven.

But he doesn't realize that it starts at square one with the good news of Jesus Christ and his gospel, that he died on the cross, and that if you accept him by faith, you are forgiven before you do anything, before you do any good work. So always remember, it starts with forgiveness. It doesn't end with forgiveness.

If it ended with forgiveness, there'd be no hope because you're in bondage. How do you stand? There's a scripture in the Old Testament that says, Lord, if you marked our iniquities, who would stand? With this file cabinet of marking down your sins. If you marked our iniquities, who would stand? That's a relevant question today.

If God marked all of our sins and kept them, who would stand? Do you know anyone who could stand in God's sight and survive his scrutiny and his judgment? Who? But then he says, There is forgiveness with you that you may be feared. See, we love God and we serve God and we fear God because he's forgiven us. We stand forgiven.

Otherwise, it would say something like this, Lord, we have to fear you in order to be forgiven. I have to stand in the judgment before I can be forgiven. But that's not what it says.

It says who can stand? Nobody. Therefore, you need forgiveness. And that forgiveness leads to the fear of God and the service of God.

It's not the other way around. Anyone who tells you it's the other way around is a liar. He doesn't know God at all.

Now it says here in verse 7 at the end, We have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. So everywhere we turn in Ephesians, we're going to find God's grace. God's grace meets us at every single turn in Ephesians.

It's really the theme. Like we said last Sunday that in Ephesians, we're taking a tour of heaven. We're going up into the heavenlies and we're seeing things up there from his perspective.

And what we see up there is grace. And we see these riches of his grace. It's like opening a vault and seeing all the gold and all the wealth of a rich person.

And in heaven, we go up and we see all the riches of his grace. It doesn't just say his grace, but the riches. I think one commentator said it was the limitless wealth of his grace.

The limitless wealth of God's grace. Isn't that awesome? In chapter 3, verse 8, it talks also about the riches of God. And it says they're unsearchable.

The unsearchable riches of Christ. Unsearchable. That means that we can study it here for 50 years and we'll not get to the bottom of it.

It's unsearchable. You can't say, I know the boundaries of God's grace. And literally the word unsearchable means that you can't find the boundaries of it.

You're trying to find the end and you can't. It's higher than you're high and it's lower than you're low and it's wider than you're wide. And when you think, I was asked a question once in our Thursday Night Bible

Study.

Well, what if God's grace runs out? Well, if God's grace runs out, then God himself has run out. But it can't. It can never run out.

You can't out-sin it. Where sin abounds, and sin does abound, God's grace abounds more. It's always one step beyond.

It's unsearchable. You can't track it. You can't draw a map.

You can't find its boundaries. It's unsearchable. And so when you think about God's grace, do you think about it as unsearchable? Or do you think about it like in this thing that you can manage and it's small and you understand it.

And oh, if I sin, I'm going to lose it. You think of God's grace like that? It's something so small that you've got to worry about finding it or you've got to worry that you're going to lose it. Or do you think about his grace just like an ocean with no shore? And it just goes on forever and ever and ever.

He has done this according to that grace. The riches of his grace. Think of his grace like that.

It's not like we're in a boat wondering, oh, it's so foggy and I think I'm going to hit the shore. I think I'm going to tear the bottom of the boat if I get too close to the shore. You just can't.

His grace is too good. And he did this according to his riches. Think of how rich people in this world like to exhibit their wealth by driving really fancy cars and buying really fancy houses and living in luxury and nice suits.

I mean, this is typically what a rich person does. And some people who aren't rich like to pretend they're rich and buy these things so that they look rich. In some areas of the world, people buy these things and put it around their neck and they call it their bling.

But it's something people that are rich do. And rich people compete with one another. Who can hold the biggest party? You can have the best lawn.

You can have the best car. You can have the best jewelry around their neck. In one way, it's like God exhibiting his riches.

But it's not money. It's grace. And he's saying, you want to see how rich I am? Here's my bling.

Here's my riches. Here's my unsearchable riches. Redemption in Christ Jesus and the forgiveness of sins.

Isn't that awesome? And not just this stingy grace, as you see in the next verse. He poured it out abundantly on us in Christ Jesus. Abundantly.

So we're blessed with redemption. We're blessed with forgiveness. And we're blessed with these abundantly.

He didn't give you it in a small measure, but abundantly. And this is something we need to understand and grow in. Because it's very difficult for us to believe it was so abundant.

We think it was stingy. But it was abundant. It's God showing off the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus.

Think about it this way, and you'll be encouraged in Christ. You'll be filled with rejoicing as you think about it this way. Or if you think about it like, oh, it's just this small thing that I've got to hold on to.

I've got to deal with the good works and good deeds. Otherwise, man, he'll take it away from me. I can guarantee you, you're going to have a miserable life.

Or you're going to become a hypocrite. But walk in the abundance of the grace of God. Enjoy it.

You'll find your life will be changed. See, God always acts according to something. You see it all the time.

He did this according to, according to, according to. God always acts according to. He doesn't just act according to nothing and arbitrarily.

He always acts according to grace or according to his mercy or according to whatever is in his character. But here it's grace. And just a practical question, what do you act according to? Do you act according to the riches of God's grace that you've received? Or do you act according to your own little list or your own little performance list, your own law? What do you act according to? Just think about it today and think about it the rest of this week.

When you make a decision, when you respond to another person and their either behavior, their sinful behavior, do you act according to grace or do you act according to something else? Think about it. Sometimes we overlook that, but God acts according to grace and the riches of his grace. In Philippians it says that when it's talking about our material needs, that God will supply all of our need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

He'll supply all of our need. But here it's not talking about this now. He's supplying our spiritual need and he's doing it in abundance.

So with our material blessings, God might supply your need perfectly. Like Hudson Taylor was hungry. He got a potato through the wall.

There's a story. It was his need. God supplied it.

But here it's talking about an abundant supply of grace. So it would be like, I'm hungry and God just lays out this huge banquet for you. I'm sinful.

Here's the forgiveness of sins, not just according to your need, but more. That's what he's talking about right here. And then it says, he's done it according to his grace.

He's abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. He made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being foreordained according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will. I take that all as one, together.

You see, in verse 8 where it says he's done this according to wisdom and prudence. He's done it in wisdom and he's done it in prudence. Now there's some debate about that, whether that's he's given us wisdom and prudence or whether he's doing that in his own wisdom and prudence.

I believe that Paul is saying he has done this according to his own wisdom and his own prudence. And we see later in chapter 3, verse 10, another look into the heavenlies. It says what God is doing by gathering people together in Christ and making a church is he's showing off his wisdom to the powers and the principalities.

He's done this in wisdom. It's the wisdom of God in lavishing us with grace. It's not the wisdom of God when we're talking about him giving us a bunch of commands and a little bit of grace if we do it.

It's God's wisdom. His wisdom is in Christ, in the atonement, in the redemption, in the forgiveness, and in the abundance of grace. He's got wisdom there that we're missing, it seems.

We're thinking worldly wisdom. As long as we're thinking worldly wisdom, we're not seeing the wisdom of God in abundance of grace. You see, a religious person or the religious worldling says this, those who are moral and upright know God.

That is what the religious wisdom is. If you want to know God, you've got to keep all his commandments. And those who keep his commandments are the ones who really know God.

But what we find in the wisdom of God is not like that. It's the opposite. It's upside down.

The world doesn't understand this kind of wisdom. See, it's not the morally upright that really knows God. No, the one who really knows God is the sinner.

It's the sinner who really knows God. Like the prodigal who really knows who the father is. And it's the person who's experienced the awful shame and guilt of sin and the despair of sin that experience the dimension of God's grace that they would never have experienced otherwise.

That experience God in the fullness of his character, who he really is. He's a gracious God and one who's gracious towards sinners. You've got to be a sinner to know that.

And this is the wisdom of God. The wisdom of the world is you know God by being all morally upright. I'm not condoning sin here.

It's like the charge of Paul in Romans 3. Well, are we supposed to sin so that we can know God and shine up his righteousness? No, but sinning does shine up his righteousness. And we really do know God through our sin. Not that it's a good thing.

But out of that bad thing, the glory of God truly shines and is a beautiful thing. And that's his wisdom. It's not like the wisdom of the world.

The one who knows shame and guilt is the one who really knows God. When he swoops down in Christ, kisses him, puts a ring on his finger, puts a new robe on him, that's the one who really knows. And you see what he's saying is this.

This is God's wisdom in doing this. In lavishing grace upon sinners like this. And gathering into one a group of sinners to proclaim his praises and his excellencies.

The mystery of his will is just that. That in the ages to come, in the fullness of time, God would have a people who would show forth his grace and the praise of his grace. Who know God.

Who aren't just singing words. But they really know God because they've experienced that redemption and that forgiveness and that grace. And there's this people being gathered.

It says in heaven and on earth. One of our visions for all saints is just that. To see the church as all the saints who have ever existed, who are now in heaven and who are on the earth now.

This is who it's talking about. All the saints together. Whether they're in heaven or on earth.

In Christ, they're one. And they're praising God for the glory of his grace. So one of the blessings that we see here is that we have the revelation of God's wisdom.

And his purpose in making this church. And another blessing is we've received an inheritance in that church. That's a blessing.

And the beautiful thing is this. It doesn't matter what doctrine you believe about other things. It doesn't matter if you disagree with me on eschatology or end time stuff.

But if you have received the redemption and the forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus. You are one with me. We are one together.

You are one with one another if you've received the forgiveness and the grace and the redemption of God. That's what makes you one. You're one together rejoicing in his grace.

And you may read some book of some Christian. You may say, I disagree with all sorts of things that he said. Maybe dead now.

But you're one with him. If both you and he have received the forgiveness of the sins. That fellowship should unite us.

That is our true fellowship. That is our true unity in Christ Jesus. You know, it's not just, hey, I'm a Christian.

We're all Christians because we all believe in Jesus, right? I hear that all the time. No, no, no. Do you have the redemption through his blood? Do you have the forgiveness of sins? That is what makes us one.

And that's what God's doing. And we'll talk about that more in the future. But this is what God's doing.

There's nothing more important than this. His whole purpose is the praise of the glory of his grace through a church, a people. He looked into each other's eyes.

Not just a building or an organization. But a people who will praise him and show forth his praise of who he really is. A God of grace.

And how do you get in if you're not in? Because maybe you're hearing this and you're like, wow, I wish I was in. That's glorious. That is what God's all about.

This is what God is doing. I'm telling you. God has created this world and he's saving sinners to have a people to praise him.

To show forth his glory. He's adopting them into this beautiful family. Maybe you're sitting in the orphanage and you're wanting to be adopted.

You say, I want to be in that warm bed. I want to have that food. I want to be loved.

I want to experience the love of God. I want to be adopted as well. Well, it tells us in verse 12 how you do that.

It says, after saying we've been saved that we should be to the praise of his glory, it says what we did. This is the first time, by the way, in this long sentence it has ever talked about something we do. It says in the past tense something we did, but we can learn about it.

What we can do if you're not in. But this is the first time. Everything else has been what God has done.

But here it says, who first trusted in Christ. If you want in, you simply trust in Christ. That's all you do.

You trust him. You trust his word when it says, you know, you're in the slave trade in Satan's enterprise. You're going to die.

You're a sinner under God's violated law. You're in big trouble. You need redemption.

You need to believe that. You need it. You can't continue on in life saying, I don't need redemption.

I'm fine. I'm okay. You're okay.

Let's all just think positively and get along. It doesn't work like that. If you think like that, then you're opposing God in his word.

Just trust him. Okay, Lord, I believe I'm in this bondage. How do I get out of it? The redemption in Christ Jesus and his blood.

My son shed his blood on the cross to redeem sinners. To save sinners from hell, from Satan, from death, from the law. He did it.

It's all finished. Hear the word of emancipation. If you're a sinner in bondage, it is finished.

Come unto me. Trust in Christ. That's all it is.

Faith is trust. I'll just close with this final analogy. I read the other day, which I thought was really wonderful.

There was a missionary who I don't know his name. And he was in a place that I don't know either. But there was a missionary who was translating the Bible into this language that had no Bible.

It was a tribal people. And he had spent time there. He had gotten to know their language, but he was translating their Bible.

And he was really struggling because he couldn't have a word. He didn't know what to use a word for faith. He was trying to find a word for faith.

And he was really struggling. He was praying, God, show me what word I can use for faith because I really don't know. They don't seem to have a word like it in this language.

They don't use that word. And as he's struggling and thinking about it, this man runs into the hut really tired. And he falls down onto this chair.

And he lays in the chair. And he goes, and in this language he says, Oh, how sweet it is to rest my full weight upon this chair. Like in his language.

Something along those lines. Oh, how sweet it is to rest my full weight upon this chair. Because he's tired and weary.

And the guy said, that's it. That's what it is. And so he put that.

Because that is what faith is. It's trusting Christ. It's resting your full weight upon Christ.

That's what faith is. It's not believing just some fact. But it's resting in that fact that he died for you.

And just simply leaning in that chair. And saying, I'm trusting Christ for my redemption and my forgiveness. I'm trusting what he says.

That's all faith is. That's what Abraham did. And that's all we do as well.

And when you do that, you enter in. You enter in. And you're blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

As an adopted child. Let's pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22249.mp3>

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