

Who Is Worthy

by Steve Mays

The sermon 'Who Is Worthy' explores the concept of redemption, highlighting the law of redemption, the conditions of redemption, and the God of redemption, Jesus Christ.

Duration: 30:01

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 1:19, Revelation 5:1-7

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays discusses the concept of redemption and how God never gives up on us. He emphasizes that God has been in the 'recycling business' for much longer than humans have, and that He is constantly working to redeem and sanctify us. Pastor Steve also explores the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, highlighting the fellowship they had with God before sin entered the world. He then transitions to the book of Revelation, specifically chapter 5, where he discusses the worthiness of Jesus Christ as the one who can redeem and restore humanity.

Transcript

It's the 2011 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. We look at God and we say, now wait a second. You know the wickedness of my life.

You know my thoughts are not always right. You know the weakness of my spiritual life and you still want me. God will never throw us away.

Pastor Steve Mays shares the good news of redemption today on Light of the Word. He redeemed you. He sanctified you.

He loves you. He's never going to give up on you. Hey, let me ask you a question.

Do you recycle? Many today feel very strongly about that. You know, so does God. In fact, He's been in the recycling business for a lot longer than you and me.

He's been in it for a long time. The Bible calls it redemption. It's when God does amazing things with the garbage in our lives and redeems us to perfection.

Today on Light of the Word, Pastor Steve helps us understand the law of redemption, the conditions of redemption, and the God who redeems. Here's Pastor Steve with a lesson. You're going to like this one.

It's called, Who is Worthy? Let's listen. Revelation chapter 5. Let me bring you up to date very, very quickly. In chapter 1, verse 19, it gives us the whole outline of the book of Revelation.

Write the things which you have seen. Write the things that are. And write the things that shall be after these things.

Now let me interpret that. Write the things which are. Basically, what you have seen.

Chapter 1. He saw the image of Christ. John was taken up and saw Christ. In chapter 2 and 3, write the things that are.

The seven churches of Asia Minor. Ephesus, Myrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, so on. Write those seven churches.

And that would be the church history, everything else. And then, lastly, write the things that shall be after the word meditata in the Greek. After this.

After what? After the church has been taken up, which we call the rapture. Then, what is going to happen? Well, chapters 4 and 5, the church is in heaven. And we are beginning to worship the Lord.

But then, in this moment of quietness, in chapter 6, then judgment comes down. And from chapter 6 all the way to chapter 18, just incredible judgment. And then, of course, in chapter 18, 19, a new heaven and a new earth and so on.

Today, we are in heaven. That's a wonderful thought. And last week we did chapter 4, how to worship God.

Today, I want to do something a little bit different. I want to talk to you about a little book. And this little book is the most important little book you can ever see.

Join me as I read to you and follow along in Revelation chapter 5, verses 1 through 7, till we finally get the heart of what's being said. And I saw in the right hand of him that set on the throne a book, written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals. Now, don't panic.

The word seven means complete. So it was the complete work of God, a complete seal. And I saw a strong angel, and that would be John, is seeing this, a strong angel, the apostle John, proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof.

And no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth. So heaven, earth, principalities, and powers under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I, John, wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, that be Christ, the root of David, Jesus Christ, has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and low in the midst of the throne of the four beasts, in the midst of the elder stood a lamb, as it had been slain.

Interesting. In heaven, you're going to see that the hands and his feet, they're going to be there the witness of the nails. He was slain, having seven horns, seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into the earth.

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him, that set upon the throne. So we know that God sets upon the throne, and we know that Christ is now in the eyes of John, walking up and taking this little book out of his hands. The reason why it's important is because when this book is opened, then chapter six begins, and it begins with the seven seals, in other words, the judgment of God.

And what John is saying is that he wants to see the kingdom of God come. And unless someone can come and open this book, it's never going to happen. This little book is a book of redemption.

We could say that it's terms of redemption. God gave the rulership all the way back in the Garden of Eden, you remember. God made the earth, and then God placed man in that garden.

And man was to tend it, and he was to walk in fellowship with God. And so we read in Genesis, they walked together in the cool of the evening. There was coolness, there was sweetness, he was filled with glory.

And he named the animals, and he served God. And one day God realized that something was missing in his life, and so he made a woman. He woke up, and in the Hebrews, wow, in other words, my goodness, Lord, this is one nice-looking creation you made.

And God put them together, and they were to rule, and they were to maintain, and they were to be leaders, kings and priests, over this dominion. In other words, God gave them over creation. And God said that if you eat of this tree, you're going to fall.

And some people say, well, why would God do that? Why would God put a tree in the garden? Well, God would have to. If He didn't put a tree in the garden, there would never be a temptation. If there was no temptation, there would never be a free, moral right.

And God made you in His image, which is good, and God gave you the capacity to choose. Lucifer did not make a right choice, and so he rebelled in Isaiah, and he was thrown out of heaven, and so we have the demons, and so on. But God gave Adam the very same choice.

And you're going to see this in just a second. And if Adam would just look to God and leave this thing alone, then one thing would be sure, that God loved Adam, and Adam loved God. And he wouldn't be tempted.

But because of Eve and Adam, they went over, and they ate of that tree, and God said, the day you eat of that tree, you're going to die. And he did die, and she died, not physically, but spiritually. And they were driven out of paradise, and they lost their glory.

And all of a sudden, we find Satan now taking the possession. So when Jesus was in the garden, all of a sudden, Satan came to Jesus and said, if you bow down and worship me, I'll give you all the kingdoms of this world. And Jesus said, I will not bow down to you.

He never disagreed with Satan's claim. And here's the reason why. Paul the Apostle tells us, Satan is the God of this world.

So there in the garden, Adam forfeited his right. Satan took it and destroyed. And what we see today is just chaos and nightmare.

God gets blamed for so many things that are not even fair. It's because of the God of this world, and because of the sinfulness of man, that we make horrible decisions in our life. So in this book, the possibility to once again be redeemed, and what he says, I saw, in verse 2, I saw that there was no one worthy.

And a loud voice, he began to wonder, who is going to take the scroll and deliver humanity? Why? Because we're under a curse. The day that Adam sinned, then once again, we were born in sin, shaped in iniquity, and so we've been cursed. And the earth has been cursed.

Before, the earth would serve man. Now the earth is coming against us, and animals, and everything's out of whack. On the day that we got saved, our spirit was redeemed.

But God put us in this body, this body of sin. And as long as you are alive, something is going to be at war in your life. Let me give you an example.

You know you shouldn't have pizza at 11 o'clock at night, but your body is going to tell you what? You're thin, though you weigh too much. You're going to justify it. You're going to figure a way out.

You know you shouldn't look at that woman, because you're married, and even if you're not married, you shouldn't look at her with those thoughts. The spirit is saying, don't do it. Your flesh is saying, listen, I need to satisfy my needs.

Your spirit is saying, hey, you're cool with 16, 17-inch rims. You don't need \$22,000 and \$4,000 per rim, but your flesh says, I'm bad, I'm good, I'm mean. I need to cruise in South Bay and win people to Christ.

No. See, your flesh is saying, hey, you know, I want to pick up gals, but your belly's hanging down. You feel like you're Atlas.

You're not. You're bald and a little heavy. You see, your flesh tells you a lot of things, but your spirit is really what's inside of you.

And your question is, God, why don't you just take me home and give me a brand new body? And Paul said, this tent is beginning to perish, and when this body finally dies, my spirit is going to go, and God's going to put me in a body made without hands. So then he's going to redeem my body. Same thing happened in the days of Canaan.

They were to go into the land of Canaan. God drove out the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Termites, all these other guys, and they were to move in. But this is what God did.

He left little pockets. And then God said, now you go in and drive the rest of them out. Now, why didn't God just drive everybody out and make life easy? Because that's not going to work.

You have to make a decision how you're going to live your life, why you're going to live your life, and if you're going to trust God. So they never did. The children of Israel occupied because it was too hard.

So God gave Canaan. They came in victorious. They had to deal with Canaan.

God gave me the spirit, but he put me in this body of sin. Now, if I yield to God, I'm going to have victory. If I yield to the flesh, I'm going to have problems.

This is exactly what God's going to do. Now, on the day that he comes, he's going to redeem my body. I'm going to get caught up, get a brand new body, and then at the very end, he's going to make a new heaven and a new earth.

He's going to redeem creation. But that's not happening. Right now, creation is not redeemed, and my body is not redeemed.

So my spirit lives in this body, and I live in this wicked world. And I'm waiting for the day that God changes my body and changes this world, and it's going to be a great day. That's what this little book's all about.

So this little book is about really the terms of redemption. And all of a sudden, John said, I saw a lion of the tribe of Judah, and I saw the root of David, and I saw once again the Lamb of God. He took it.

Now, three things I want to share with you this morning about redemption. Three important issues I think are really important. Number one, the law of redemption.

Number two, the condition of redemption. And number three, the God of redemption. Now, you know what redemption is.

It's where God buys you out. We used to have these horrible things that my mother made me go to. We had those S&H green stamps.

You remember those? They were just horrible. I think it's punishing children to have you do that. And we'd have these stores called what? Redemption stores.

And so my mom, bless her heart, would have us lick these stamps because we knew we were going to get a bicycle. And so we licked like 400 books. And so we really can't talk very well.

So if you have a generation of people that kind of get their tongues stuck, that's probably because of S&H stamp glue or whatever. But we'd go down with these books, and 400 books wouldn't even buy anything. And there was a bicycle.

And that bicycle was like 70,000 books. And you realize, I'm rebellion as a kid. I'm not going to do it no more.

But I remember that like yesterday. And so we took our books and bags, and we presented them. And we walked out, I think, with a coffee maker.

That was it. Broke my heart. Devastated my life.

But that bike, I think it was like 60,000, 70,000 books, it was out of reach. Well, that's what it means. It means that God came into your life, went into the marketplace of sin, bought you out, and delivered you.

So the first thing I need to understand about this word redemption is there is called the law of redemption. And it's found in Leviticus. And you don't need to turn there.

But in Leviticus chapter 25, 25, If thy brother be wax poured, and has sowed away some of the possessions, if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sowed. In verse 49, Either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh kin. Here is the glorious thing about being a child of God.

If you were born in Israel, here's what's kind of cool. The land belonged to God. So if you went out, and you owned a piece of property, and you lived on that piece of property for 10 years, and it had a home, and one night you went out and gambled, and you mortgaged your house, and you mortgaged the land, at the end of losing your bet, you'd have to give it up.

You'd have to move out and go rent something. You'd have to tell your wife, and all kinds of bad things would happen. But then they would be able to take over your possessions.

But the Bible declares, at the end of the 50th year, it had to come back to you. So he could enjoy it for 40 years. But at the end of 40 years, he would have to give it back to you.

So you really could never lose your possession. Now in that 40 years, any uncle, any kinsman, could come, buy back, and give it to you, and you could move back in. So it was called the year of jubilee, where things return, or it was called the day of redemption, when someone came and bought it back.

And it's illustrated, probably the very best, in the book of Ruth. And the book of Ruth is about Boaz, and about Ruth. And it talks about a family, Naomi, and she had a husband and two children.

One day it was a horrible famine, and they did not trust God. They left Bethlehem, which means the house of bread, and they took off, and they moved over to this area called Moab. The Moabites lived there.

And it was a horrible decision. God did not want them living with the Moabites. But they lived there.

And in living there, finally the two boys married. One orphan, and one Ruth. And all of a sudden, Naomi has this happy family.

Then her husband dies. Then one of her boys dies. Then the other boy dies.

And all of a sudden, Naomi said, don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara. I'm bitter.

I'm destroyed. We should have never left Bethlehem. And all of a sudden, she said to the two daughter-in-laws, go ahead and go back to your people.

And Ruth said, where you go, I'll go. Where you lodge, I'll lodge. Your God will become my God.

And so Naomi begins to head back. And Ruth begins to go back with her. But in this process of going back, she had lost her husband.

She had lost her property. She had lost her land. She has lost everything in her whole life.

And so all of a sudden, she ends up back in Bethlehem. Now what is cool, is Ruth begins to go into a field and begins to glean. And what that means, is when you have a field, you could round the corners.

You couldn't round the corners, back up and get the corners. In other words, the corners was how you would feed the homeless people in your town. You could make a tight sweep, but you couldn't back the animals back and get a better one.

When you made that sweep, what was left is theirs. Ruth came in to glean. She was gorgeous.

And guess what? Boaz saw this gal. And Boaz began to ask questions. Who is that woman? And they began to find out answers.

They came back to Boaz. Hey, Boaz, she is the daughter-in-law of Naomi. And by the way, Naomi is relative.

Boaz, you have a right and the option, if you like, to redeem Ruth, Naomi, the house and everything else. And all of a sudden, we see there was this incredible law. But secondly, there was a condition to redemption.

So first of all, there's the law of redemption. It was possible. Secondly, we come to the book of Ruth and we find the condition.

There were three. Number one, it had to be a relative. Number two, they had to be rich.

And number three, they had to be ready to marry the person. Three important qualities. I'm going to tie this all back in just a second.

Number one, he must be a relative, next of kin. Number two, he must be able to be rich so he can purchase what was lost. And number three, he had to be ready so he could redeem and involve everybody else.

So when I read Ruth chapter two, verse one, and Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth. His name was who? Boaz. Two qualifications.

One, he was a kinsman. And number two, what? He was wealthy. Then I jumped down to chapter four, verse five of Ruth.

Then said Boaz, what day thou buy the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth, the Moabite, the wife, be dead upon the inheritance. Let me explain. There was one person before Boaz who was closer to Naomi.

So Boaz knocks on the door. He says, hey, you are next of kin closer than I am. Would you like to buy the field? A little greedy.

Yeah, I would like to. It's mine. I know it's yours.

So he goes before the elders. He's going to buy the land. And at the last moment, Boaz says, oh, by the way, you've got to marry Ruth.

Now he's married. Now, imagine me taking the whole front row home to my wife. I mean, I love you.

Come on home. Wife, what do you think? Well, she would either shoot me or kick me out. But hey, I want to live.

We're all going to live together. No, it's not going to work. You see, the one who was going to redeem it, who was close, was already married.

He was already married, and he wanted the land, but he didn't want the relationship. He didn't need a widow. He didn't need a wife.

And so what did he do? He let it go. Boaz, not being married, had the money, had the relationship, and wanted Ruth. So he bought the land, bought the house to get Ruth.

And with Ruth, he also got a hold of Naomi. Now, let me bring you to the last point. The law of redemption, the possibility.

The condition of redemption, it has to be a relative, has to be rich, has to be ready to marry. The God of redemption. Number one, is he a relative? Well, it's interesting in Hebrews 2.16, for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Paul said in Philippians, that he humbled himself and became obedient, took on him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man. He came down. John said, the word was with God, and the word was God, verse 14, and the word tabernacled among us.

It says of Mary, she bore Jesus Christ. In other words, Christ made me, Christ died for me, and Christ is next akin to me. So this changes everything in my life.

See, Jesus isn't way up there. He's closer than a friend. He's closer than a brother.

He's the God that made me. He's the God that died for me. And he's the God that redeemed me.

So this self-esteem, and all the pain, and all the agony I go through, time out. This God understood that he could fulfill everything that was needed to help you and I out. First of all, relationship.

Is he part of our life? Yes, he is. He is God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Jesus died before the foundations of the earth.

He made you, he bought you. Without him, nothing is made. So first of all, he fits the bill because he was born at the seed of Abraham.

He came through a virgin birth. He tabernacled among us. He took on him the form of a servant and he was beaten so he would understand our lives.

So he's compassionate. So number one, Christ came. When Adam sinned, he lost everything.

He lost paradise. He lost his dominion. He lost his power.

He lost his God. When Naomi moved out of Bethlehem, she lost her husband. She lost her children.

She lost her land. She lost her home. When Christ came, he redeemed us.

We were without God, without Christ. He reconciled us back to God. You see, what happened in that little scroll is the terms of redemption.

Number one, Father, I am part of their lives. I lived with them. I was born through them.

I was you incarnate in their life. I am next to kin. That's pretty cool.

Second, is he rich? You remember the Bible declares very simply in Ephesians 2.14, but God who is rich in mercy. We were without God. We were alienated.

But God who is rich in mercy has redeemed me. And so he's rich. It says of Laodicea, buy of me gold.

That's been tried in fire. And he said to the church of Laodicea, you're naked and poor and blind and in debt, but buy of me. So the second thing is, is he rich? Yeah, he is.

Well Steve, I'm kind of poor. Walk outside, look at the stars, you own them. Go up on a national park, you own it.

Go to the ocean, you own it. In other words, all the inheritance that Christ has, you now have. When I die, my children get my inheritance.

I am joint heirs with Christ. I am as rich as he is. Well then why am I depressed? Because we don't believe it.

Why do I not feel important? Because we don't understand it. He built a relationship and now he's rich. And third, does he want to really marry me? Well notice it says in Revelation 19, verse 7, let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb has come.

The third thing is I'll take you just like you are. I know you're in debt. I know that you've lost your land.

I know that you've lost your home. I know that you've lost everything but I want to redeem you. And so we look at God and we say, now wait a second.

You know the wickedness of my life. You know my thoughts are not always right. You know the weakness of my spiritual life and you still want me.

Well Steve, number one, it's not that I don't want you. Number one is that you are my servant and you are my friend and most of all that I now live inside of you and I've accepted you and I've made you joint heirs and I've taken your poverty and I've made you rich and I've taken everything that has shamed you and I've taken it away and given you everything of my richness and my greatness and who I am and my word and the Holy Spirit. Everything that I have is yours.

Well Lord, you know that I'm up and down and all over the place. I know, but I'd like to marry you. You're kidding me.

No one wants to marry me. My wife doesn't even want to stay with me no more. You know, you want to marry me.

I want to marry you. In fact, I'm coming back. I went away to prepare a house, a big mansion and when I'm done I'm going to come back and you make sure you're ready because when you're ready and I come back we're going to get caught up in the air and we're going to go get married and we're going to live forever for the rest of our life.

You mean you want to marry me? Yeah. You see, when we talk about redemption, that little tiny book, what John understood is that unless somebody had the right and the authority to do it all, he couldn't open the book. But when Jesus Christ came, he was next of kin.

Secondly, he was rich in mercy and number three, he wanted to marry you And so he opened the book and then judgment started. And at the end of the judgment, he'll make a new heaven and a new earth. So I want to encourage you with all my heart, this is the time to look to heaven and say, no one has ever loved me, you're right.

He redeemed you, he sanctified you, he loves you, he's never going to give up on you. He bought you out, he took you back, he's making you what he wants and he's coming back to get you. And I'll tell you, that's the greatest moment.

And when John saw that, he just rejoiced. And what chapter five is, is just heaven going crazy because this Jesus brought us one. Pastor Steve Mays, sharing the good news of redemption today on Light of the Word.

And we're glad you're along. You know, all too often people think of salvation in Christ as a kind of retirement plan for the future. And so it is.

But what about our earthly existence? Are there ways we can enjoy these great benefits today? Pastor Steve Mays says, yep, absolutely. Throughout his series on Revelation, he shares the importance of tapping into the power of Christ for today. It's tremendous encouragement that'll help you navigate through the valleys of life.

This new look at Revelation is where Pastor Steve reveals not only insight concerning the last days, but practical instruction that we can use as we wait for the Lord to return. By the way, today's message is part of that extensive set. And we'll be glad to let you know how you can get this collection called Revelation.

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