

Sermon Notes: *The Romance of Redemption* (Ephesians 1:7,8).

Intro: The word “redemption” comes from the marketplace. It is a commercial term. In its most basic sense “redemption” means to secure the freedom of a slave through the payment of a ransom price. This doctrine of redemption through Christ’s blood brings us to the heart of the gospel. Strange as it sounds, in the Bible redemption involves not only a commercial transaction but also romance! It reveals how deep is God’s love for sinners and how far he has gone to save them. He has paid the ransom payment of his Son’s blood to secure their freedom from sin and judgment!

#1: Redeemed from sin. Here we pass from eternity into history. In eternity God chose us to be holy in love and predestined us to adoption as his children. But God’s way of securing our holiness and adoption, decreed before history, was to send his Son Jesus into history to redeem us from our sins. How important! Today a wholesale attempt is being made to do away with the NT’s preoccupation with the cross. It is considered a scandal. But this spirit arises from a world which is not scandalized by its own sin. How contrary is the point of this verse to the spirit of our age! God’s primary objective is redemption of sinners from a state of bondage out of which they cannot free themselves! “Redemption” was important in the OT period. God’s Law prescribed how various animals and people must be redeemed. A firstborn donkey must be redeemed (Ex. 13:13). A family’s firstborn son belonged to the Lord and had to be redeemed. If a man’s ox gored someone to death his life was forfeit unless he was redeemed by paying a ransom price. Of all the types of redemption, one of the most important was the redemption of land that had been lost or sold in order to pay a debt. In OT Israel there were no debtor’s prisons or government bailouts but there were three ways to redeem property which was lost. One was for the seller himself to buy it back through a ransom payment if he was restored to prosperity. Another was to wait for the year of Jubilee when all property reverted back to its original owner. A third way, precious to Israelites, was for a relative or kinsman to assume responsibility for redeeming the property of his destitute brother (Lv. 25:25-28). Israel even owed its existence to redemption. When it lived in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt God redeemed and freed Israel to serve him by his mighty power! Through such redemptive practices, God taught Israel to call on him as their Redeemer and to call themselves the “redeemed of the Lord.” The NT applies the concept of redemption so basic to Israel’s daily life to the problem of sin. God has chosen a people for holiness and predestined them for adoption, but a barrier stands in the way—sin. Boice helps us understand the comparison: (1) as a person might be born into slavery so have all men since Adam been born into sin, inheriting father Adam’s sinful nature and heart (Ps 51:5). (2) A person might be enslaved as the result of military conquest, so too are we under the power of sin and Satan (Eph. 2:1ff.) (3) if one could not pay his debts, he was sold into servitude, likewise our sin has created a debt we cannot possibly repay. We must face up to this unflattering truth if we are to know the romance of redemption through Christ’s blood.

#2: Redeemed by Christ’s blood. The measure of God’s love for us is revealed by two things: the degree of our unworthiness when God saved us and the degree of his sacrifice in saving us from his justice. The price to save was the blood of Christ. Two implications. We are redeemed by: Christ’s obedient life. As an Israelite could be redeemed by a near kinsman, we are redeemed by our near kinsman, Jesus Christ. The ransom price to redeem us from sin had to be paid by a man of flesh and blood, a member of the race of man. Jesus Christ is the Son of God,

the second person of the holy Trinity, who became man—the infinite God/man. Just as Adam’s representative disobedience brought man into a state of sin so the God/man’s representative obedience brings God’s people into a state of righteousness (Rom 5:19). Christ as our representative and surety lived the perfect life we owe to God. Christ’s obedient death. Having given obedience to God for us, Jesus then offered up his life to God’s judgment for us (Mk. 10:45; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Our redemption required the ultimate price—the righteousness and blood of the Incarnate Son. What a romance! In love, Christ utilized all his resources and gave himself to judgment to rescue us from demoralizing sin!

#3: Redeemed to love God. God chose us to be holy in love. He predestined us to love him as adopted children. Trusting in our redemption by Christ’s blood inflames our hearts with devotion for God! Why? God’s perfect pardon. How complete is our forgiveness and perfect our pardon? God’s pardon is perfect because the payment of our debt by Christ’s blood is complete (Col 2:13-14; cf. Ps 103:12). God’s extravagant grace. God has “lavished” the “riches of his grace” on us! Some of us despair that our particular sins can ever be forgiven. Consider then the price that was paid for your sins according to the riches of God’s grace! What debt can you have that cannot be paid completely by the precious blood of the Incarnate Son? How wonderful the romance of Christ’s redemption!