

REDEMPTION—THE BASIS OF PERSONAL HOLINESS

1 PETER 1: 18-19

Introduction:

Donald Grey Barnhouse published a sermon on this verse that blessed my heart many years ago. He began with a question, “Can You Be Bought?”

When you first hear the question, your first thought is that of bribery—will you change your testimony for money? Some cynic has observed that for a price, we are all for sale. It is just a matter of how much it will take.

But the Bible uses this word in a different context. At the heart of the word “redeem” or “redemption” is the idea of being bought. Peter uses this word in the familiar declaration, “You know that you were redeemed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

In this letter Peter makes God’s redemptive work the basic motivation for holy living. Knowing that you have been bought, and the significance of being bought should make a difference in the way you see yourself and the choices that you make in life.

Let's explore this together and see how it could be for a basis for holy living.

We need to understand the human condition that made redemption necessary, the significance of the act of redemption, and then the cost of redemption.

I. THE HUMAN CONDITION THAT REQUIRED REDEMPTION.

“The futile ways inherited from your fathers” reveals the human condition that required redemption.

1. We were slaves of sin.

The word “redemption” points to the condition. As we will notice in a moment, the word comes from the market place. The only persons that needed redemption were slaves. In some cities across the Roman Empire more than half of the population might be enslaved. Warren Wiersbe estimates that there were probably sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire. Every one of them dreamed about being redeemed. They dreamed of a day that they might be able to acquire enough money to redeem themselves, or of a day when some kind benefactor might redeem them.

The human condition is that we are all enslaved to sin. The old sin nature within us has usurped the control of our lives, and instead of doing the things our Creator would want us to do, or even the things we want to do, we end up doing the things that the old sin nature wants us to do. We are slaves and

have an undefined hunger for freedom within that we may not even understand.

Paul had a personal knowledge of this slavery. He wrote, ““I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:21-24, KJV)

Jesus stated the same thing when He declared, “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (John 8:34, KJV)

God saw the human condition and so loved us that He sent His Son to redeem us. Do we understand this?

2. We were alienated from God.

We were created to serve God and to enjoy a relationship with Him. But because of choices that we have made, we have become the slaves of sin. This alienates us from our Creator, and makes us the objects of His wrath. He hates the sin that controls us and the offensive behavior that sin produces in our lives. We must be free from the control and ownership of sin if our

rightful destiny is to ever be realized. This is the condition that made redemption a necessity.

3. We were living empty lives.

Peter speaks of the futility of our lives. The translators use words like “empty” and “worthless” in their attempt to express the word used by Peter. Dr. Barnhouse quoted Isaiah to explain this condition: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isaiah 57:20, KJV) The restless sea is a picture of the human condition.

The bottom line is that we were living lives without significance and meaning. We were busily searching for something to fill the void in our lives. The pagan Roman world to which this letter first went was much like the secular world in which we live.

Later in the letter Peter becomes more specific about the behavior that marked this emptiness. "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries." (1 Peter 4:3, NKJV)

Could there be a better description of our own culture? We are a hurried generation in search of something that will fill our emptiness. We need some

relief and the world has not been able to fill our void. We need to know why we are here and what life means, and the world has not been able to come up with a satisfying answer.

II. THE DIVINE ACT THAT PROVIDED REDEMPTION.

“You know that you were redeemed.” Redeemed is one of the most important Gospel words in the New Testament. It is a word that expresses the heart of our Christian faith. It points to an act of God which sets the Christian faith apart from all of the religions of the world. Only the Christian faith knows about redemption.

Actually the New Testament uses three different words to set forth the meaning of this act of the God of love. Let’s do a little word study.

1. *apolutro*—Revelation 1:5.

"And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (Revelation 1:5, NKJV) The word translated “washed” in the NKJV and the KJV is actually a word for “redeemed”. The idea in the word is to loose by the payment of a price. This points to the purpose of God’s redemptive act—He paid the price to set us free from the sins that held us in slavery.

2. *agorazo*—the common word for marketing.

The emphasis would be on the word **price** as in our text. The price is the blood of Christ.

Dr. Barnhouse used the word “peculiar” as used by Peter in 1 Peter 2:9 in the King James Version. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" (1 Peter 2:9, KJV)

When we hear the word today, we think of someone being odd, different, strange, or eccentric. But the word “peculiar” originally meant something that was bought by the payment of a price. Before they used money in the Latin speaking world, they established the value of something by how many cows it would cost. The Latin word *pecus* means cow. So we are peculiar because God bought us for Himself by the payment of a price.

The NKJV touches the idea in the word with the translation, “God’s own special people.” We are His treasured possession, bought at a great price.

3. *exagorazo*—It carries the idea of buying something out of the market.

The Old Testament provides us an example of this in the experience of Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer. In spite of her husband's faithful love, Gomer gave herself to other men. In the downward spiral of her life, she

slipped to the point of becoming a slave to some man, and he decided to sell her in the slave market. But Hosea still loved her. God had instructed him to love his wayward wife like He loved unfaithful Israel.

Because of this love, Hosea went to the market place and bid on his wife and kept bidding until he bought her. He redeemed her at a high price. He bought her for himself.

When Hosea took his wife home after buying her, he said to her, ""And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee."

(Hosea 3:3, KJV) Is this not a precious thought? I will receive you as thought you had never left is the essence of what he is saying to her. She belonged to him because he bought her. We belong to the Lord God because He bought us for himself. We are His peculiar people.

III. THE PRECIOUS PRICE THAT ACQUIRED REDEMPTION.

By the use of the word "lamb" Peter ties redemption into the Old Testament Passover. It also reflects his memory of the announcement of John the Baptist when Jesus made his first appearance. John announced, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Our redemption required the blood of Christ, His death.

1. The death (blood) of the sinless Lamb of God.

The Passover lamb had to be without spot and blemish—Jesus was without spot and blemish. He underwent every examination possible, even the examination by Holy God, and was found to be without sin. Can you appreciate this? Of all the persons who have ever walked on this planet Jesus was the only One qualified to be the Lamb for the redemption offering. Every other human has committed sins—many of them.

2. The death (blood) of the chosen Lamb of God.

Peter also reminds us that Jesus was chosen to be the Lamb by God. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you," (1 Peter 1:20, KJV)

In the Jewish family it was the responsibility of the father to select the lamb that was been offered for the Passover. It was a serious responsibility that he carried for the family. He wanted his family to be protected from the wrath of the angel of destruction and death so he selected a lamb to be slain. The heavenly Father selected one to be the lamb in heaven. He was the praised and honored Son of the Father from all eternity. But He was chosen and ordained to be the Lamb for the sins of the world. This was what led to His birth in Bethlehem and His life on the earth. This was what consummated in his crucifixion on the Roman cross. He was the chosen Lamb of God.

3. The death (blood) of the sacrificial Lamb of God.

“Blood” reminds us of the violence of his death, but even more of the nature of his death. He was being offered as a sacrifice for our sins. This was the only thing that would pay the price for our redemption—the blood of Christ!