

Ephesians 1:7-11

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Preacher: None

[0:00] We turn to Ephesians chapter 1. It's on page 976. Ephesians chapter 1. And we're continuing through verses 3 to 14. That's the section of the three weeks we'll be looking at. We're looking at verses 7 to 10 today.

And this is called the big prayer of praise. Let me read that in verses 7 to 10 again. In him we have redemption through his blood, forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him.

Things in heaven and things on earth. Let me pray for God's help today. Lord, we do ask that by your spirit you would be with us. You would help us to listen and to hear your word and to know Christ better. Would he be set forth today? And would we receive him by faith? And we pray this all in his name. Amen.

Two thousand years ago, a young man, not much older than myself, hung on a piece of wood, bleeding and suffocating and dying.

And if you could have somehow recorded that scene, if somehow you could get a camera and just capture that whole scene on Calvary, it could have looked like a death like any other.

[1:44] There would be wounds just like the criminals around him. Blood like any other person bleeds. But on that day, something special was happening.

On that day, God was restoring the whole universe. Last week, we saw, in Ephesians, the behind the scenes of the church.

We peeped into God's goal and purpose in all of history. All history, all history, all salvation is unfolding for one purpose in particular, to praise Jesus for his grace.

That's the big goal for you and for all of history. And this week, we're going behind the scenes again. We're still peeking behind the curtain. And Paul, the Apostle Paul who wrote this, is going to take us behind the scenes of something extraordinary.

We're going to go behind the scenes of the cross to tell us what is really going on behind that cross 2,000 years ago as Jesus hung on it.

[2:50] What is going on in the spiritual realms and in God's purposes and his plans? Have you ever watched a film on Amazon Prime and seen their x-ray function?

Have you seen that? Maybe some of you don't have Amazon Prime. But when you watch a film on Amazon Prime and you hit the pause button, a little window pops up and a screen, the pause screen pops up.

And it tells you really cool things. It will tell you who the actors are in the scene and their characters. And it will tell you sometimes really interesting, fun facts and trivia about a film.

So if there was a film with Brad Pitt and the scene was Brad Pitt walks in, he has a hat, he throws the hat on a hook and it lands on the hook. If you hit pause on that scene, I've just made that scene up so don't look for a film like that.

If you hit pause on that scene, it will tell you behind the scenes facts like Brad Pitt on the first take threw that hat and it landed perfectly. And that's the scene we have today.

[3:52] Or there will be other facts like this location was actually the director's old school when he was a kid. And that's the x-ray function on Amazon Prime. Well today, Paul is hitting pause and doing an x-ray on the

cross.

You can record that scene on Calvary. That man hung there bleeding. Perhaps a death like any other. And we can hit pause.

And the reality of that scene pops up. And it's not just fun facts that are appearing here. But what Paul tells us in verse 7. In him, that's in Jesus.

In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. Paul says that through that man and his blood, we have redemption, the forgiveness of trespasses.

And this is my first point to see today. You have redemption through Jesus' blood. You have redemption through Jesus' blood.

[5:03] Redemption is a funny word. We were thinking about it earlier in Sunday school. We don't use the word redemption much. We use the word redeem sometimes. It's like when you redeem a voucher in Tesco. But the word redemption in the Bible is a very different use to how we use it.

If we use it at all. Redemption in the Bible is to do with slavery. So if there's a slave who belongs to a slave owner. For that slave to be freed and released, that slave needs to be bought with a price. That slave needs to be redeemed. Bought. Redeemed. At that price. And so redeemed just means you buy someone out of slavery for a price and then they're free.

So Israel were redeemed out of slavery in Egypt with the price of the blood of a lamb. And then they were freed and taken to the promised land.

God gave them redemption. And Paul says here in verse 7, in Jesus we have redemption. So what did he redeem us from?

[6:13] Well later on in the verse, he calls this redemption something else. The forgiveness of our trespasses. We were redeemed from our trespasses.

That's another word for sin. We often see sin and trespasses together, particularly in Ephesians. So we were under slavery of sin. Under the power of sin.

The guilt of sin. Under God's judgment for sin. But we were redeemed out of that. Taken completely away from that.

And what is the price paid? Redemption needs a price. Remember. What was paid? Well, look back to verse 7. In him we have redemption through his blood.

Through his blood. The payment was huge. It cost the blood of the Son of God. To redeem us.

[7:15] And that payment is so big. Because the price on our head is so big. Our sins leave a huge cost to pay. And God's judgment is huge.

But there's one thing that can pay for it. One thing that can redeem us. It's the blood of Jesus. And look what this redemption means in verse 7.

In him we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses. Paul hits the pause button on the cross here. And says, you see that blood right there?

Through that blood your sins are forgiven. We don't talk about blood on a day-to-day basis, do we really?

It's not really a topic of conversation. Maybe if you're a doctor here, you might talk about blood a lot. I'm sorry if you're squeamish about blood. But we're going to talk about it today. Because the Bible talks about blood a lot.

[8:16] We, as Christians, talk about blood a lot. We sing about blood. We just sung about blood, in fact. You could say, we here are obsessed with blood. And in some way, the story of the Bible is a story about the quest for blood.

Ever since the fall, we've needed blood. Because blood deals with sin. Hebrews, the book of Hebrews says, Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

That's a big statement. So you here today, you here need something. And it doesn't matter who you are or what you've done.

You need something. You need blood. The human story and the human need is about blood. So, when Adam and Eve first sinned in the garden, they saw their nakedness.

They knew their sin and God, what did God do? He clothed them with animal skins. Blood of animals had to be shed to deal with their sin.

[9:29] Moses was given the law, which we read earlier. He was given the law. And the law is more than the Ten Commandments. The law includes sacrifices to deal with sin.

Sacrifices to deal with sin so that we could dwell with God. Animals had to be killed and blood shed to deal with sin.

Blood deals with sin. So just think about Israel's history in the Old Testament. Just try and think. Of the thousands upon thousands of litres of blood that must have been spilled by goats and bulls to deal with sin in Israel.

But the book of Hebrews says something about that blood that was shed. Hebrews says, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

All that blood in the Old Testament did nothing for our sin. So a question hangs over the human story.

[10:33] Whose blood will save us? Whose blood is good enough to forgive our sins? Well, I have the privilege and the joy to declare today there is an answer.

And the answer is here. In Jesus, we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses. For those who are in Jesus Christ, you have redemption.

Your sins are forgiven. And did you notice when Paul says all of this is happening? In verse 7, he says, we have, we have right now, redemption.

Right now, your sins are forgiven. And we do something every Sunday morning here, and we did it earlier, where we confess our sin and we hear God's pardon, God's forgiveness on us.

And so today, we heard from Micah, the book of Micah, when David was leading us, we heard from the book of Micah that God treads our iniquities underfoot, and he casts our sins into the depths of the sea.

[11:49] Do you remember we heard that earlier? Well, I want you to know that that just isn't a little Bible verse that you read out, just for the formality of the occasion. No, that is a huge moment going on on a Sunday morning.

That is God declaring a profound reality on you, who are in Christ. God says to you, you are forgiven.

Your guilt and your sins have been taken off you, thrown into the ground, stabbed on, trodden underfoot, thrown into the sea, into the depths of the sea, never to be seen again.

And this isn't a maybe, this isn't a possibility, this isn't a, I hope this is the case. No, God is saying definitively, all those in Christ are right now forgiven of their sins by Jesus' blood.

What has washed away your sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Now I'm sure there are many of us here who struggle to feel that.

[13:01] That is an amazing reality, but we can struggle to feel that, can't we? Like, we know we're forgiven in our heads, but the memory of our sins, or that feeling of guilt, still weighs on us.

Well, if that's you, please hear again today, the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from your sin. Jesus didn't bleed, so you could feel, still feel crushed by your sin.

No, he was crushed, so you could be free from your sins. God doesn't look at you, and say, yeah, but I know what you've done.

I still look at you, and I see all of it. No, he looks at you, and says, their sin is on them no more. I hold no guilt over you.

I hold no anger over you. You are in Christ. You're in him. And so, when God looks at you, he sees Christ.

[14:11] He sees his beloved, and now, he calls you, his beloved. You are his beloved son, or daughter. If you are in Christ, God loves you, and you are forgiven, right now.

But we need to see, that this astonishing forgiveness, is for those who are, in Christ. In him. It's for those who trust in Jesus, for their salvation.

Only in him, do we have redemption. So, if you're not trusting in Christ today, God has a big treasure trove, of grace, and he just lavished it upon us, on the cross.

Lavish just can mean, like, overflow, like, give generously. God was just, on the cross, pouring out his grace on us, more than we could ever need. That's what happened on the cross.

So, think of it like this. As Christ, poured out blood from his veins, he was pouring out grace, and forgiveness, on us.

[15:25] Our God is so generous, and extravagant in his grace. And Paul says, in verse 8, all this grace was lavished upon us, in all wisdom, and insight.

In all wisdom, and insight. There's a comma, just after, or it says, which he lavished upon us, comma, but it's better to think of it, without the comma. So, God lavished his grace upon us, in all wisdom, and insight.

The lavishing was wise, and insightful. So, when God poured out his grace on us, in Jesus' blood, God was showing us, something about himself.

He was showing us, his wisdom. So, on that freeze frame, the x-ray of the cross, Paul says, God did all of that, with wisdom, and insights.

That, shows God's wisdom. Now, it's a bit of a, a surprising thing to say, isn't it? We don't often think about wisdom, when we think about the cross.

[16:29] You might think about love, which is true, and sacrifice. But wisdom, it's an interesting thing to say, about the cross, isn't it? In this way, so you can see wisdom, in all the folk, when they just handle their situation, so well.

You can just see, a very wise person, and just think, wow, he handled that situation, so well. That could have been, really messy, but he did the best thing, just at the best time, and he, and he handled that so perfectly, he did that in the best way.

Well, the cross, is God, doing the best thing, at the best time, in the best way. Sin, is such a big problem, with a, such a specific need, and such a, a particular solution, required to it.

There was only one way, it could be solved. It could have, only happened, by the cross. The best thing, and the only thing, to be done, to solve our sin, is God, needed to forgive, our sins.

He needed to, to redeem, a people, out of judgment. He couldn't just, ignore our sin, he needs to, redeem us from it, and take us, right away from it.

[17:46] He needs to, to make us, right with him. And, and he did this, at the right time, at the best time. When all the prophecies, of the Old Testament, had been laid down, when, when our need, for Christ, had been made known to us, and shown to us.

When we'd been prepared for him, at that time, then Christ came. And God did it, in the best, and most perfect way, by sending his own son, in the flesh, God, and man, to believe for us.

So think of this, just another man, just a man, couldn't have saved us. God, is the only one, that can save us.

Yet, only a man, can pay for sins. Blood, needs to be shed. We're humans, that have sinned, and a human, needs to pay for it.

So, God, had to be both. Both God, and man. And God, on the cross, perfectly delivered, in the best way possible, in Christ.

[18:57] It was exactly, what we needed. There's a scene, in Avengers Infinity War, I'm really, playing on the movie theme here. There's a scene, in Avengers Infinity War, if you've seen it, if not, I'll try and explain to it, where a character, Doctor Strange, he's a goodie, he's, they're in a really bad situation, Thanos the bad, he's about to win, and Doctor Strange, he didn't look into the future, through time, and what he did was, he looked into all the different possibilities, of beating Thanos.

He says, I've looked at like, 40 million possibilities, and there's only, one, that works. There's a, famous thing, he does that, one, there's only one that works.

Well, with our sin problem, you can look, at infinity options, and only one, could work. It's the cross. It shows God's, sheer and utter wisdom.

That is how you save us, and what a way to save us. And his wisdom here, is also displaying his grace.

It is through the blood of Jesus, that God's glory, and grace is best displayed. On that x-ray, when you pause on the cross, it says, there lies God's wisdom.

[20:22] But it shows us his wisdom, for another reason. Because the cross shows us, something else. It shows us his ultimate plan, to unite and restore, the whole creation.

And this is my third point, for today. The cross, is God's big plan, to unite the whole creation. The cross is God's big plan, to unite the whole creation.

So look to verse 9 with me. Verse 9, when God poured out his grace on us, in Jesus' blood, verse 9, he was making known to us, the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven, and things on earth.

In the cross, God was making known to us something. He was showing us his will. He was showing us what he was deciding to do with creation, which Paul calls, in verse 10, a plan for the fullness of time.

Paul is saying that the cross reveals God's plan for the fullness of time. The fullness of time, that just means when this age is complete, and eternity arrives, the age to come arrives.

[21:43] That's what he means by the fullness of time. So when you hit pause, on the cross, an x-ray of the cross, a plan pops up. A blueprint, you could say.

God's plan for all creation. And what is that plan? Verse 10, a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven, and things on earth.

God's big plan for creation is to unite all things. In Jesus, the plan is bigger than you think. The cross, and Jesus' work, is bigger than you think.

On the cross, yes, Jesus was uniting us to God's, forgiving our sins, that they were uniting there. And if he was doing something else, he was uniting a people together.

The doors of salvation were being blown open to Jew and Gentile on the cross. And we're evidence of that today. But actually, God's plan is on a cosmic scale.

[22:53] His plan is to unite all things in Jesus, things on heaven and things on earth. So this world we live in, it's broken.

It's splintered. The world we live in, it's fractured. It's not united. And that's what sin does. Sin shatters and splinters.

And it starts to pick away and unthread reality. And so, if you can look on the world right now and think, what is going on?

Do you ever think that? You just look at the world and think, what is going on? The world is falling apart. There's war right now. There's hatred.

There's disease. There's economic disaster. And you can look at all of this and just say, this isn't right. This world is falling apart.

[23:55] And you're right to say that. And we can look at our own lives as well. We can look at the pain and suffering in our own lives.

And we can feel the same. Our bodies are failing. Our work is frustrating. Our lack of work is frustrating.

Our relationships are broken. And war. Death is around us. Death is separating us from the ones we love.

Our lives are shattered and splintered in so many ways. And we can look into our hearts and see the sin that lingers there and just think, what is going on?

All of this isn't right. And all of that, all that splintered, fractured stuff are in the world and in our lives.

[24:57] All of that is the world crying out to be united. It's saying, this needs uniting. This is a world that needs to be pulled back and held together.

God's big plan. And that is God's big plan. To unite all things in heaven, things in heaven and things on earth, to restore the whole universe to how it should be, to wipe out all sin and suffering and conflict and lies and division and to wipe out death entirely.

And we will all be held together in perfect harmony with Jesus as the head as its king holding it all together. So if you x-ray the cross, that is what God is doing.

He's redeeming us sinners and he's redeeming the whole universe. Jesus really is the saviour of the universe.

Now this will only completely happen when Jesus returns at the fullness of time. But the cross is the beginning of that plan. It's the centre of that plan. And this plan is huge.

[26:15] Brothers and sisters, we are a part of something cosmic. God's plan is cosmic. The church is at the centre of a universe-scale plan to restore all things in heaven and on earth.

Jesus' blood has healed our souls and it's going to heal the whole universe. And on that final day, Christ will be the one sat on the throne holding it all together and we will be united together in our praise declaring, apply your blood, Lord Jesus, we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. We long for that day. Let me pray.