

Ephesians 1:7

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[0 : 00] Turn your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1. We finished a kind of year-long series in the Book of Acts last week, and next week Ruben is going to start preaching through the Book of Ruth for us over September and October, and Andrew Quay is going to preach Genesis 4 to 11 in the evening, so you'll hear from me a little bit less.

I'm going to preach some one-offs over the next while. We've found, haven't we, in the Book of Acts looking at long chapters. We've done that, and we're going to go from one extreme to the other. I want us to look at one verse this morning.

We're going to squeeze the juice out of the orange and look at one verse. It's Ephesians chapter 1, verse 7. In him we have redemption. That's the word. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

In lots of ways I want to look at one word, redemption. What is your problem? What's your problem? Said the cyclist to the driver.

What's your problem? Said the woman on the tube to the man sitting opposite him. What's your problem? Said the parent to the child.

[1 : 16] What's your problem? Said one football player to another. It's a great question, isn't it? What is your problem? What is your problem? What is your greatest need?

That's the first point. There's six points this morning. There possibly might be seven, but I haven't decided yet. But there's six points and they should be appearing on the screen before me one at a time. What is your greatest need? The need for redemption.

There's lots of answers people gave, don't they? Sometimes we go to the doctor and we say to the doctor, I've got a pain here. Here is the problem. And he examines our wrist maybe and he looks at our wrist and he says, no, that's actually just a symptom.

Your problem isn't there. Your problem is there or your problem is there. Your presenting symptom shows a deeper problem.

The problem is really here. And I think when we come to God, we can often be like that. When we come to God, you might think you know exactly what you need this morning.

[2 : 31] But when we put ourselves into the hands of God, we discover there is something different. There is something deeper. There is something far more radical that God intends. And when he implies in this verse, the Apostle Paul, when he writes about the need for redemption, that the deepest need of your heart and my heart is tied to this little word that is often used, sins.

It's the word transgressions in the verse. In him we have redemption. Through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, the forgiveness of our transgressions.

The word transgression is rebellion. It is deliberately breaking God's law. It is a do not touch the wet paint and putting your hands on the wet paint.

Do not step on the grass deliberately, consciously going onto the grass. Transgression is deliberate breaking of God's law. It is going over the border of what God says is acceptable and unacceptable, of what is legitimate and illegitimate.

It speaks of our disobedience to God's will and to God's law. And so this redemption produces two things. Can you see it? The Apostle speaks, doesn't he, of forgiveness.

[3 : 51] That's the thing that we're probably most familiar with this morning if we've been in church. That when someone transgresses God's law, trespasses God's will and commandments, they are guilty in the eyes of God of transgression, of rebellion.

They bear, in relation to God, a burden of guilt. Sometimes we feel that.

Sometimes we don't. Often, most often, people are not burdened by guilt. And so guilt is not so much something that you feel, but something that you have, something that you bear.

When you disobey God's law, when you trespass his commandment, when you trespass his will, you are guilty. I am guilty.

In the sight and presence of God. There are lots of people in London today, lots of my friends, they have no sense of guilt. That doesn't mean they're not guilty. It doesn't mean that they're not sinners.

[4 : 56] It does not mean that they do not need forgiveness. It's simply that they're unaware of their burden of guilt. They think, maybe you think, that your greatest need is something different.

Maybe it's happiness. Maybe it's relationship. Maybe it's prosperity. Money. But here the apostle is diagnosing your greatest problem and mine. The deepest need of the human heart.

For which the greatest blessing of the Christian faith is the answer. And that is forgiveness. From God.

Forgiveness from God. You might not have realised that. I've come into church this morning unaware of that. That your greatest need is for forgiveness. And Paul says that in Jesus Christ, in the good news, in the gospel, not only do we have forgiveness because we bear the burden of our guilt, and one day that will be apparent to us.

One day we will hear the judgment of God on your life and on my life. We will hear guilty before God. And we'll have no plea.

[6 : 14] We'll have no excuse to make. But there's another factor in this kind of need of redemption. And it's not just the need of the burden of our guilt being lifted by the proclamation of God's forgiveness in Christ.

The other need is that we are not only guilty as sinners, but we are slaves to sin. We're slaves of sin. That's what the word kind of redemption contains, doesn't it?

It's got this picture within it of slavery. Of being slaves to the very thing that's made us guilty. And that's contained within this whole thought, this whole concept of redemption.

The whole idea of redemption, it's a Bible word in many ways. It's pictured for us in the Bible supremely by the people of Israel that were slaves in Egypt, hundreds of years after Joseph.

And throughout the whole of the Bible, that is the picture of human beings enslaved. It's the picture of life without Jesus Christ, of being enslaved to the sin that we're guilty of.

[7 : 26] You might have believed the delusion that human beings, we are free. You might think, no, no, no, no. We are free. I am free. I am free to choose whatever I want.

And yet, whenever we're willing to look at humanity and to look at our lives, we will discover our humanity and we are in chains, in bondage, a slave to our sin.

You'll know that in your experience. We discover that far from being able to change, our pattern of life is we are in bondage. Here's a man who's got furious temper.

Furious temper that gets out of control. He sees the damage that it causes. He sees the heartbreak it brings to other people. And he recognises that. And so he says to himself, I will change.

And for a time he can. But what's the real story? The real story is that ultimately, he finds that the chains of his temper still bind him.

[8 : 32] And so every so often, maybe a little bit more rarely, but every so often, it breaks out again. Or it shows itself in other forms. Well, we can apply that to every sin.

That we are in bondage to. And that is why we need redemption. We do not just need forgiveness. We are like someone when they've committed some crime against the law of the land. They're not only declared by the judge to be guilty, but we're locked up. We're put inside.

And it's no good going to that prisoner when they're locked up inside and saying, I've got good news from you. You've been delivered from your guilt. You've been delivered from your guilt.

Your guilt has been removed. What would the prisoner say? The prisoner would say, I want to be free. I want to be set loose. I want to be released.

[9 : 34] And there's a spiritual parallel for that, obviously, isn't there? And so number one, the need of redemption. Number two, the nature of redemption. The word simply means being set free by the paying of a price.

Being set free by the paying of a price. Let me explain it to you. Its background is in the ancient world as well as in the Bible. And so when two countries go to war, when two armies go to war and one army is victorious over the other army, they conquer the other army, they would take some of the best of the soldiers.

They would take some of the cream of the conquered army. And the defeated army, the best of the defeated army, would be taken away. And they would be made slaves in a foreign land.

And then what would happen was there would be negotiations between the defeated party and the victors. And the defeated party might agree to buy back some of those who'd been taken into slavery in this foreign land.

It mattered greatly to the people of their country. Those soldiers that had been taken captive, they were valuable. And so a ransom price is agreed.

[10:47] And that ransom price is paid. And the captives would be released and be brought back. In the Old Testament, the great picture is that picture of Israel in Egypt.

Of God's redemption of a people in the land of Egypt. The Exodus. And the people at the start of Exodus, just hundreds of years after Joseph, they are in bondage to Pharaoh.

They are in a situation, aren't they, of utter helplessness. And they cry out to God and God comes down. And clearly only God can do it.

God comes down and releases the people of Israel. He says, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. They couldn't save themselves. God puts out his strong arm and his mighty hand and it is costly to God to redeem them.

There's a lamb, a perfect lamb, a spotless lamb who was slain and he is the ransom price to which his people were delivered. And God sets a pattern, doesn't he, in Exodus?

[11:57] A pattern from which his people have learned all through the ages that he was the redeemer. You cannot save yourself. You cannot redeem yourself. That's what it says. But that God delivered his people at a ransom price.

The Apostle Peter says to the church there, he says, you have been redeemed and not with ordinary wealth, not with silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

a lamb without blemish and without spot. And that is the nature of redemption. It is deliverance. It is freedom. It is forgiveness.

Paul ties the two together, doesn't he, in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. But redemption is more than forgiveness. The two are not completely matching. They complement each other. They don't exhaust each other. We've got to put them alongside each other.

[13:01] There is redemption, deliverance from bondage, and all that it involves, and forgiveness, freedom from guilt, and reconciliation to God. The need for redemption, the nature of redemption.

Thirdly, let's look at the source of redemption. Where does this redemption come from? What is your problem? What is your problem?

What is your deepest need? Where is your deepest need met? Where does deliverance from sins bondage and forgiveness from its guilt come from?

Paul answers it, doesn't he, in the first two words. Can you say it? Verse 7. In him. In Christ, we have redemption.

And that's the source of it. Doesn't come from any other source. Deliverance from sins bondage and forgiveness from sins guilt come from being in Christ.

[14:15] It does not come from any other source. It doesn't come from the psychologist or the counsellor. No true guilt has ever been lifted by the psychologist.

There's such a thing as false guilt and the psychologist can certainly help with that. The counsellor can certainly help with that.

But the guilt of sin that comes from being under the judgment of a holy God can only be lifted in Jesus Christ. It's the only place. Paul says it's in him.

You go to him. It's because as Ephesians 1 is teaching every blessing of the Christian gospel has been given to us in Christ.

You'll not find it anywhere else. It's the exclusive nature of the Christian gospel. The exclusive nature of the Christian message. You don't find it in any other religion. You don't find it in any other source.

[15:24] You don't find it in any other kind of life coach or self-help source. It is in Christ. That's where you need to go this morning. God has in his marvellous wisdom and grace arranged to deal with his people's bondage and to deliver us from guilt in Christ.

Christ. And so the great and vital thing for you this morning for every man and woman and boy and girl who is alive is to be in Christ. That's the great need.

To be united to him. As a branch is to the vine as a branch is to the tree as a limb is connected to the body so that from Christ we might receive redemption.

The forgiveness of sins. It's why saving faith is so vital isn't it? It's not faith that saves us but it is faith that connects us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is by saving faith this morning by you reaching out by you entrusting by you resting by you relying on the Lord Jesus Christ and being united to him you receive redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

[16:56] The need for redemption the nature of redemption the source of redemption the ground of redemption. How can God do this?

On what ground does God redeem those who are in bondage to sin and under sin's guilt and sin's judgment? Well the answer is in verse 7 again it's at the end of the verse isn't it?

It is in accordance to the riches of his grace. According to the riches of his grace which he lavished on us he poured upon us with all wisdom and with all understanding.

Here is the why. This is the basis on which God can redeem you and I. God does not redeem by saying you do this and I will provide that.

God he doesn't say to us this morning you achieve this level and I will let you in. You get the grades and we'll give you access to the course.

[18:05] That's not what he does. He says I will bring you redemption I will bring you forgiveness and he does it by free unmerited grace.

It is a gift of God. We can neither attain it as a prize nor can we earn it as a wage.

We are given it as a gift and in his lavish grace undeserved kindness this is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

It's illustrated isn't it in the book of Exodus again that supreme picture of redemption the people of Israel they are in Egypt and the people of Israel could not get out of the land of Egypt.

The people of Israel could not free themselves they are enslaved until God comes down and frees them. And God does something wonderfully unique doesn't he?

[19:11] It is his work of redemption to achieve their deliverance. And that's why Christians we are obsessed with amazing grace. Amazing grace.

And it is by grace alone by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone that we are redeemed from the bondage and the guilt and the power of sin.

Number five the means of redemption. The means of redemption so the need of it the need of redemption lies doesn't it in our sin and our rebellion and that's produced our guilt and it's put us in bondage that's the need.

The nature of it is deliverance upon the payment of a ransom price. The source of redemption while it's all in God the ground of our redemption is his undeserved kindness and the means you notice what is the means by which we're saved?

It's in the middle of verse 7 we have redemption through his blood. In him we have redemption through his blood.

[20:20] so remember the very meaning of the word the very meaning of the word of redemption throughout the Old Testament as well as in the world in which Paul lived was the freeing of someone or something by the payment of a price.

Pawn shops isn't it? So cash converters you ever got a cash converters? There's not many nods but take your goods cash converters it's on Xbridge Road and you go in and you hand over your Xbox or your Playstation and cash converters gives you money for it.

But the great thing about cash converters is when you've got enough money you can go and you can buy it back. When you've got enough money when payday comes you can go back and you can buy it back.

You can go in and redeem it. And the way that you redeem the item is by paying the price.

Sometimes people did that didn't they in old days with quite expensive things and so there was a considerable price to be paid.

The whole idea of redemption there's this concept of the payment of a price. God has paid the ultimate price hasn't he in the blood of his son Jesus Christ.

[21:49] That is the price of redemption. If you are trusting in Jesus Christ if you have put your faith in the Lord Jesus if you are connected to him savingly you've been ransomed!

redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. lots and lots of people have difficulty with this and they will say I don't understand why God demands this kind of ransom.

You might say when people do something nasty to me or when people do something to me that offends me and they need my forgiveness I simply say out of my kindness and out of my

benevolence I forgive you and let's forget about it.

Why can't God be as magnanimous as I am? Why can't God be as kind as I am? Why does God demand that a price be paid?

Why does God demand a ransom? It's barbaric. The answer to this we could spend all day talking about this but the answer is that I am merely a private individual against whom you may have offended or sinned.

[23 : 13] I'm a fellow sinner and the arrangement that comes between you and I affects no one but ourselves and so I may say to you I forgive you and there's nothing there's no more to that and you might say the same to me but when we sin against God let me ask that you get this really really clear when you sin against God you do not sin against God as though he were a person like you a private individual like ourselves it's a verse little phrase in Psalm 50 verse 21 and the psalmist says this where God says this he says you thought that I was one like yourself you thought that I was one like yourself in many ways that is the great sin of the Christian church in the UK and that we think that God is just a bit of a glorified version of ourselves a bit bigger a bit better maybe not better but a bit bigger you thought that I was one like yourself but God is the sovereign

Lord of the universe and in his being and in his nature he is perfectly holy different other and perfectly righteous utterly holy and an offense against God and his law is an offense against the character and the holiness of God and it is an offense against the moral structure of the universe it's difficult to illustrate this you get a shadow of it a faint shadow and this is not a perfect illustration but you think of a judge in court there's somebody brought before the court who has committed a terrible and horrific crime he's hearing a terrible terrible case this judge but it is summing up he says listen it is August it's holiday time the sun is shining let's just forget about you can go free and I forgive you what has just happened what would happen there would be up there would be up someone was raped and battered a woman and the judge says just go free he cannot do that can he because the offense is not merely an offense against him as an individual it is an offense against the legal structure of the land you get a measure of that but you multiply that by infinity and grasp what it means for

God in his holiness to associate with sin to associate with sin unless it has been dealt with grasp the problem that God faces grasp God's most profound dilemma how can he be as the apostle Paul puts it in other places just and the justifier how can he be the acquitter of those who put their trust in his son how does he do that he does it by himself he gives the ultimate price by paying the full price of our redemption by the blood of his son his only son he does it by pouring out his judgment on his son in order that you and I might be redeemed by that blood that's the means of redemption!

Now what's the outcome of it? This is the last point in fact let me give you the seventh point we're not too bad on time alright the means of redemption the outcome of redemption let me give you the seventh point it's the assurance of redemption the wonder of what I'm talking about this morning is this isn't something that we hope we might have this isn't something that we can say well at the end of life I hope this will be we can say it here and now in him do you see the tenses we have redemption in him we have redemption there's an absolute certainty isn't there what's the outcome of it this last point the outcome is this that in him we have deliverance from sins bondage we have forgiveness of sins from sins guilt in other words this we are free we are free in the deepest most glorious sense possible and that is the freedom that we desperately need but I want to finish by pointing out to you that when the new testament speaks about redemption and we are free we are also slaves we are free and yet we're also slaves when we've been redeemed you are redeemed says the apostle do you not know that you have been redeemed and you are not your own you've been bought with a price and so the result of the outcome of redemption is this it is freedom and slavery freedom from sin and all its punishments and all that it does to us but slavery to Jesus Christ and the glorious paradox of living as a Christian of living the redeemed people is this we are free slaves and in the service of Jesus Christ there is perfect freedom and so we live in a culture which is desperate to be free desperate to find freedom and the truth is this it is to be found in nowhere else this morning in this universe than in glad bondage to Jesus Christ that's where freedom is found freedom is found in being enslaved to Jesus in glad bondage to Jesus Christ who has bought us at such a price and so our children who are here this morning who go back to school this week and our teenagers who go back to school this week I want to say to you this I want to say to you remember who you are when you leave the house on

[30 : 26] Tuesday or Wednesday morning remember who you are you have been redeemed you are not your own you belong to Jesus Christ you are free free to serve him we have people leaving us going for a year out starting out as students let me speak to you and I want to say this to you remember that in the service of Jesus Christ there is perfect freedom you'll be free from your parents but in the service of Jesus Christ is perfect freedom that is where you'll find freedom you'll find freedom in giving yourself to serving Jesus Christ and his people and for all of us who've trusted in Jesus Christ for all of us who've been redeemed do you realise what's happened to you do you not know that you've been redeemed you are not your own you are forgiven you are free and so live like it what about under the preaching of

God's word this morning you have realised that you are not savingly attached to the Lord Jesus Christ your faith is not in him you're not resting in him you're not relying on him and you are not redeemed what is your problem what is your problem it is this your greatest problem is that you're not forgiven and you're in bondage to sin and you've not been redeemed why stay like that why stay like that this morning why not come in humility to the one person who can deal with your greatest problem the Lord Jesus Christ who offers you full forgiveness and freedom from your guilt and you can cry to him from where you are you don't need to do anything you can admit to your guilt you can be honest before him and you can ask him to forgive you and you can rejoice that Jesus Christ has come into this world to save sinners like we heard in our assurance of pardon and he will redeem you let's rest in him and rely on him let's pray together let's ■ Thank you.