

Redeemed

Romans 3:24

September 28th, 2008

We will study the last half of verse 22 of Romans chapter 3.

Scripture

“through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

I believe C.S. Lewis' intentions were honorable in his classic story The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. In that story he tries to picture the plight of man and the plight of the world in a literary way. Lucy discovers a wardrobe which opens to the land of Narnia. Narnia is under the control of the white witch. It is always winter, but Christmas never comes. Edmund does not believe Lucy until one day he stumbles into the land of Narnia himself. He quickly encounters the white witch. It does not take her long to realize that he is a very self-centered little boy, and is filled with lust and passions. Before long she has him in her sleigh, and with her potions she creates his favorite thing, Turkish Delight, and she literally has him eating out of her hand. It is not long until the story unfolds that the white witch has taken Edmund captive. He is now at her house in chains. Again, the story unfolds and the followers of Aslan reach Edmund just in time. The dwarf and the white witch have Edmund at knifepoint. The dwarf pulls Edmund's hair back exposing his neck to the witch's knife, and the rescue happens just in time. If you have read the book or seen the movie, you know that Edmund plays an important part of a prophesy about two sons of Adam, and two daughters of Eve. Now, seemingly Edmund is back in camp with Aslan and his siblings. It would appear for a moment that the rescue has been provided without great cost.

If we did not have this last phrase in verse 24, we might think that our right standing with God, (because of His amazing grace, revealed to us without cause) was also without cost. And it would not be a big deal. Verse 24a clearly tells us that the source of our right standing as a sinner with God is nothing within us, but totally lies within the initiative of God, and it comes to us as a gift. But this next word that will introduce this next phrase is so important. You know my hang up with grammar. On what basis can God justify a sinner? Can God, as the world says, just be a God of love and turn His head on the wickedness of people and let them into heaven? On what grounds does God bestow grace upon a sinner? That is what that word **through** means. It can be translated "on the grounds of, or by the means of". God bestows grace to us upon the grounds of redemption; "*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*". Notice Paul did not say through a redemption. Do not ever let anyone tell you that Jesus is just a way to God, He is the way to God. Do not ever let anyone tell you that He is a door that leads into the presence of God, He is the door that leads into the presence of God. He is not just a vine, He is the vine. He is not a head, He is the head. He is not a savior, He is the Savior. He is not a redeemer, He is the Redeemer. There is not salvation in a redemption; the only salvation is in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! I know that sounds narrow, but it is the truth. God has brought us into a right relationship with Himself based on the redemption that is in Jesus the Messiah.

There are two different Greek words used by Paul that have been translated as **redemption** in English. Sometimes it is hard to see the difference. One used in Galatians is a word that comes to us from a root word of **Agora**. Agora was their marketplace. It is where they bought and sold things. Therefore, they had a verb **agorazo**, which means to go into the market with the purpose of buying, or "to buy in the marketplace". Then they put a little prefix on that word **exagorazo**, which meant to go to the marketplace with the purpose of buying something in order to take it out of, or out from the marketplace to somewhere else. That word is

translated to redemption, and it means "to purchase with the purpose of owning after you have paid a price". But that is not the word that is used here. The word that is used here in the Greek world started out to mean "to loosen, to unbind". It was used of a person taking off their clothes or loosening their belt. It was used of a soldier in the military loosening his armor. Then it began to be used to talk about prisoners. They were captured and taken to prison and then would be "loosened from the chains and shackles". Soon this word began to mean "to be set free". But they were set free because a price had been paid for deliverance. For us as Christians this word redemption means the only way a person can be made right with God by His grace, freely, without cost to you, without cause in you, is because of the redemption that is in Christ. This word means to be set free because a ransom has been paid. In this specific verse Paul does not tell us what the redemption is from, but if you look at the context you know. From chapter 1:18-3:20 we have been seeing the wrath of God poured out on sinful man. The wrath is God letting man be as sinful as he wants to be. Man needs to be saved from sin. We know the Bible teaches that man willfully chose to sin, and became enslaved to sin by his own choice. The picture here is man on the slave market, or slave block, and there being a redemption taking place. A picture of someone being willing to set that slave free by paying a price, or ransom. Paul, in Ephesians 1:7 says, *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our trespasses"*. In Colossians 1:14 he says, *"In whom (talking about the beloved Son) we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins"*.

Notice that Paul uses two different words. The first word ***trespass*** means "to be where you are not supposed to be, to go astray, to take the wrong path". It is like the sign "Keep off the Grass". Why do they put those signs up? Have you noticed they are always in front of your car? You are always in a hurry, and the quickest way to get where you are going is through the grass. But the sign tells us to keep off the grass! You know if you go where you are supposed to you will not have time. So how many of you have walked on the grass? When you touch that grass you have trespassed, you

are not where you are supposed to be. It is the same with the sign that says "Keep Out-Authorized Personnel Only". You cannot resist can you? You just want to open the door and see what is in there. You just want to drive down that road that is for "Authorized Use Only". When you do that, you have trespassed. I know you are thinking you do not do that very often. That is why Paul did not leave this to our own thinking! In Colossians the word that he carefully chooses is the Greek word *hamartia*, which means "to miss the mark". It is the picture of a hunter who shoots an arrow at a target and misses. Over time this word did not mean just to miss the target. You see when you shoot a bow, sometimes you shoot wide and sometimes you shoot over the target. This word came to mean "to miss by falling short of the target". When an archer continually falls short, he just aims a little higher. But this word means that no matter how much we aim at the target, we always miss it. Now if there is going to be a redemption, there has to be a redemption from something, to something, and by something. Paul wants us to know that we are being redeemed from sin, both its penalty and its power. Forgiveness means to remove and to release. In Christ Jesus my sin has been removed from me, and I have been released from it. Yes this is talking about the penalty of separation from God eternally, but it is talking about more than that. It is talking about sin as a power. That is why we can sing, *my chains are gone, I have been set free, my God, my Savior has ransomed me*. The purchase price to set us free, and to remove our sin, and bring us into a right relationship with God, is Jesus Himself. Redemption means to set free by the paying of a price, but in the Greek world they called that price a ransom. It is the same root word used by Jesus in Matthew 20:28 when He said, "*For the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*". Again Paul picked up on that same thought when he wrote to Timothy in 1 *Timothy* 2:4-5. He said, "*God our Savior desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all*".

It is not the purpose now to talk about the ransom of Jesus, but we will later on in Romans. Is it (as some say) for a certain group? Or is it (as some say) for all? For now, see that the ransom was a price paid. When God chose to redeem you, He redeemed you from the penalty of sin. You need to understand that in the Bible we did not stumble into sin, or were misled into sinning, we chose to sin against God. Our sin was willful. Sometimes when we hear the word ransom, we do not get the right picture. We have seen too many movies, and read too many books where ransom means that someone has been taken captive against their will. They do not want to be held in bondage, they want to be set free, but they do not have enough money or the object that the kidnapper wants. In our idea of ransom, the kidnapper is demanding a ransom. He did not take the person because he wanted them; he took them because he wanted a ransom. He hopes there is someone with enough wealth, who loves the person enough, to give him what he wants. Let's say it is one million dollars. He does not want the daughter, he wants a million dollars but he is holding the daughter captive. Now the daddy has a million dollars and he loves his daughter more than he loves the money, so he gives the ransom in order to get his daughter. It is two different thoughts. The kidnapper kidnaps because he wants a ransom. The one paying the ransom wants release. There cannot be release until here is ransom.

There had to be a ransom, but not as an ugly god wanting to kill his son. It was because He wanted a release. C.S. Lewis missed it in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Most of us saw the movie but never got it. That is why we applauded and cried instead of booing the poor theology. The white witch sent word to Aslan that she wanted a meeting, and they met. She said, before the followers of Aslan at the table of stone, "The traitor Edmund belongs to me. His life is mine, his blood is my property. Do you understand the deep magic?" Aslan responds that he does. She says, "Then you know the deep magic says that because the law was broken the blood belongs to me. If I do not receive his blood, Narnia will be burnt with fire and will cease to be." If you remember, Lucy looks at Aslan. The

followers of Aslan wait for just a breath from Aslan to banish the white witch, but he does not. The lion and the white witch begin to converse in private, and when they come back out Aslan announces that the white witch has renounced her claim on the son of Adam. The followers cheer. The white witch asks Aslan how she will know he will keep his promise. He roars to her, and she skirts out of the way. It looks as if Aslan has been saved by mere talk. Later that night, Aslan goes to the table of stone. Lucy and Susan are startled and see Aslan's shadow and follow him. He stops them and tries to explain briefly, but tells them they must go back to camp. But being two girls, they do not; they follow at a distance. The white witch, the dwarfs, and all of her followers are there at the table of stone. Aslan submits himself to the witch. They bind him and shave him. They hit him and beat him. They mock him and ridicule him. The whole time the sad eyes of Aslan are going up to the table of stone where finally the knife is drawn and the life of Aslan is taken. The followers of the white witch roar.

I am saying to you that this is wrong! C.S. Lewis believed a false theology. He believed a theology of the ransom theory. It teaches that because man was held by sin, in sin, he was captive to the enslavement of the devil. Because he was a child of Satan, God had to pay Satan with the blood of His Son. In that movie, the blood of Aslan is given to the white witch. No! Yes, for there to be a ransom it must come from someone to someone. But when Jesus died on the cross to redeem us, and to pay our sin debt, He was not paying Satan! Satan never had a claim on any of God's creatures. Man did not sin against Satan, man did not break Satan's laws; man broke the Law of God! Do not ever root God's grace solely in His love; root God's grace in His justice, and in His righteousness. There is great reserve in the grace of God because of the holiness and the sovereignty and the righteousness of God! For God to bestow grace upon sinful man there had to be a means. That means was a payment that had to be paid. Who could pay God for the consequence of man's sin? No man could, but a God-man could. Do not ever let someone tell you there is a God of wrath of the Old Testament, and a God of love in the New Testament. God is God, and He

has always been God, and He always will be God. He is holy, and in His holiness there is holy love, but also holy wrath. It was God the Father who desired the release of sinners. God the Father willingly gave His only begotten Son. He willfully sent His Son into this world to be our ransom. The ransom was from God the Father to God the Father! Do not believe Jesus had to beg the Father to save man, no! Your salvation does not rest in the counsel of God the Son; it rests in the counsel and love of God the Father who orchestrated salvation! He willfully gave Himself in the person of His Son to pay our sin debt. What was our sin debt? The wages of sin is death. Death is separation from God. We will talk in detail later on about propitiation, but on the cross Jesus paid our debt. We incurred a debt we could not pay. Jesus went to the cross and became our curse. So that you would know that He was cursed by God and faced your eternal separation, He cried out on the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" only later to say, "*It is finished*"(paid). He cried "***Tetelestai***", meaning what? In the death of Jesus, because He laid down His life, He gave Himself a ransom for many! It is not the blood of Jesus by itself, it is a substitutionary death. It is a life laid down of another, for another. And God judged Jesus in our place. In God judging Him, He paid our debt. My chains are gone, I have been set free! My God, my Savior has ransomed me!

There may be a financial crisis on Wall Street, but there is not a financial crisis in heaven. There will never be a foreclosure on me because my debt was paid by Jesus! There is no lien on me. Sin will never grab hold again of me and take me back into slavery because my chains are gone, and I have been set free. My salvation dollar says, "In God I trust." I do not bank of earth, I bank in heaven. I know that my mortgage will never be brought up before my God because of the finished work of my God and Savior on the cross, who is also the Redeemer. My trust is in Him. I promise you that His asset was far more than my liability. It is paid in full. Do not ever let anyone say that I preach a cheap salvation. While my salvation was without cause in me, it was with great cost to my God. It cost Him the life

of His Son. You put a value on that, and then put a value on me. I am not junk, I am not a repo; I am a made in Christ Jesus! Are living out your value at work? Are you living out your value at the bait store? Are you living out your value in front of your spouse? How are you doing in the dorm? How are you doing in class? How are you doing at the ballpark?