

Redeemed by Jesus

Blueprint: God's Design for the Church

Ephesians 1:3-12

Go to Ephesians chapter 1. This week, I spent a lot of time going through old Nicaragua videos. We have ten years of Nicaragua videos and each year had several. I'm going through them, chopping and cutting to put together the video and I find a song to score it with. I put my ear buds in to watch it all the way through. So I'm hearing this story and seeing all the faces. I see the faces of students from 2008. I see how the school used to be and how it is now. I see the Nicaraguan people I know by name, I know their story, and I've seen them come to Christ. I begin to step back and see all that God has done over the past ten years. As the video began to end, I could feel this welling of emotion in my stomach. The music got a little louder, I could sense this overwhelming sense of gratitude to God, tears came, and I began to weep at what God has done over the last ten years in Nicaragua. It is absolutely incredible to see that salvation is truly God's work for God's glory. That's one of our statements that we believe about our church. My name was actually thrown around in the video, but I want to make sure to be clear that I can take about as much credit for what happened in Nicaragua as Moses can take credit for crossing the Red Sea. Moses held a stick up, God parted water. Even our church as we think about what our role was in this. We held up a stick, made ourselves available, and God parted water. God did miracles in the country of Nicaragua. I want to make sure that all fame and all glory goes to His name and His name alone, which is what all of Ephesians 1 is about. This long sentence is so that we know if you're redeemed, it's all for the glory of God. It's to His name be the glory. I want us to read part of that sentence this morning and hear the praise that we are to have because Ephesians 1 is to lead us to worship. We are going to start reading in verse 3, though

we covered those verses last week, but we're going to pick up in verse 7 for the remainder of the time.

Scripture

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the 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. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory."

(Prayer)

Father God, we praise You, we exalt You, we worship You because salvation is to the praise of Your glory. Father, help us to see this beauty of redemption that You purchased for us in Christ. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

Last week, we talked about God the Father's work of salvation that He has chosen us. This week, we're going to talk about the Son's role of our salvation. He redeemed us, and in the future, we're going to talk about the Spirit's work of salvation where He seals us. Salvation was purchased for you by a triune God. It was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that worked

salvation. It is their work; it is for God's glory that we have been saved. We want to feel that this morning. We want make sure that all the glory and worship goes to God. What I want us to do this morning is to look at God the Son's work of salvation, which is redemption. Christ has redeemed us. Look back at verse 7. It says, "In Him (in Christ, in the beloved one, in Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses..." What Paul says is in Christ you have redemption. In Jesus, you have been redeemed. He's talking to the church; he's talking to people who have come to Christ. I want to back up and first ask this question. Why did we need redemption? If you're not in Christ this morning, why do you need redemption? Why should redemption be something you care about? Paul tells us what redemption actually did for us. Redemption was about the forgiveness of our trespasses. Why do you need redemption? Because you need forgiveness. You need forgiveness from a holy God because you have sinned against Him, and you are guilty. Because you sinned against Him, and are guilty, you are wracked with guilt and shame. The only way to get rid of your guilt and shame is forgiveness. It's only available through the gospel. Why do you need redemption? Because you desperately need forgiveness. Your biggest need from God is forgiveness. There is a chasm between you and God, and it's your sin. What you need is forgiveness of your sin so you can have a relationship with God.

I've been watching closely, and I'm sure most of you have too, but the secularization of our culture that we as a culture are getting more secular, we're losing our Christian worldview as a culture. One of the promises with a secular worldview is the idea that the more and more secular we got, the less and less guilty we would feel, the less shame we would have. If you get rid of God, then you shouldn't have guilt. I read an article this past week called The Strange Persistence of Guilt written by Wilford McClay. He goes into the perplexity that is happening in our modern culture. In our modern culture, the more we get away from God, the more guilty and shameful our culture feels. It is an epidemic in our culture of people that feel guilt and shame, and it's a paradox because that wasn't supposed to happen. In fact, he argues in the article that Fredrick Nietzsche promised that once we declared God dead all would be permissible. If there is no God, we could do whatever we want and we wouldn't feel bad about

whatever we did because there would be no right or no wrong. We could do whatever and never feel guilt and shame. The promise of atheism is this idea that we get to go back to the garden scene and reinterpret it. There are no rules, there is no one saying 'don't touch that,' or 'touch that.' We get to make all the rules. We get to make our own determinations, and whatever we choose that's how it is so there would be no guilt, no shame. Yet, we continue with guilt and shame.

Sigmund Freud came along and sought to make guilt merely a psychological problem. Guilt is a psychological phenomenon. It's just something we experience that we really shouldn't. The answer to our guilt that we really shouldn't feel is this phenomenon that happens. What should happen is we should get rid of it through therapy and a lot of medication. Now, we're in a culture where we've gotten rid of God and we're wracked with guilt and shame. What do we do? We go to therapy and get medicated, but the problem is we can't get rid of our guilt or shame. It persists. But it doesn't just persist, it actually grows, it gets worse because as a culture we've lost the sense of being guilty before God, so now we just feel guilt and don't really understand why. We have no language to talk about how to get rid of guilt because we've lost the gospel. We've lost this idea that we need redemption through the blood of Christ, so now we have guilt but no idea what to do with it.

We're trying all these different things, but as the article relays, it's not working. Guilt and shame are actually on the rise even though we are in a secular culture. How could that be? How can guilt persist if we've gotten rid of God? It's because both Nietzsche and Freud were wrong. Getting rid of God doesn't erase the fact that we're created by God and we owe Him our lives, and when we sin, we feel guilt before Him. Freud got it wrong. It's not just a psychological phenomenon; guilt is a real thing because we really have sinned against a real God. Our guilt and shame are real and they point to a real problem, and the only solution is the blood of Jesus Christ. We were made to worship God, but we have worshipped ourselves. We were made to love our neighbor as ourselves, but we love ourselves over our neighbor. We break the laws of God. We know what we should do, but we do the opposite and then wonder why we're wracked with guilt

and shame. Some of you are saying 'my guilt and shame has nothing to do with God because I don't even think about God. I ignore God. God is not even on my radar. I have completely passed over this whole God thing.' So why do you still feel guilt and shame? Because ignoring God is the same thing as hating God.

How is that true? Let me give you an example. One of the things I love is the pageantry around the presidency. I love the White House, the presidency, watching TV shows about the presidency, reading about the presidency, and the history about the presidents and presidency. I love the idea of the office that deserves this reverence. One of my favorite places that it really is drawn out is in the situation room. I love the situation room scene in any show. There are all these five star generals sitting around the table, and then one guy walks in the room, the president of the United States, and what happens? Every person stands, not a seat is left filled, out of reverence for the president. I just want you to imagine if the president walked into the situation room and all those generals stood up at salute, except one guy still sitting, lounging, feet on the table snap chatting one of his buddies. He just looks up, but looks back at his phone, and continues to scroll his Instagram feed. What do you think would happen to that guy? Do you think that would be looked over? I'm pretty sure that guy would never be back in that room. I'm pretty sure he would be under some discipline. The military would not put up with that sort of disrespect towards the presidency, or the president.

Now just imagine you this week in the very presence of God because God is everywhere at all times. You lived in His presence, yet how many of you completely ignore Him? You were like the guy at the table on your phone, not realizing you were in the very presence of God. You broke His laws, you spit in His face, you rebelled against Him all week long, and you didn't even pay Him a lick of attention. Ignoring God is the same as hating God, you're wracked with guilt and shame, and you don't even understand why. It's because you've offended a holy God who you were meant to have a relationship with, and that brings guilt and shame. It says the forgiveness of our trespasses. What is a trespass? It is a willing sin. We know what we should do, but we do the opposite, and then feel bad about it. When we

feel bad about it, we can't figure out how to feel good about it. That's called guilt. That's called shame. It was put there to lead you to the cross, which is the only place you can find forgiveness for both guilt and shame. Here what you desperately need. If you're not in Christ, you desperately need forgiveness from God. You've sinned against Him, even if it was just ignoring Him, you have offended and sinned against a holy God. You need His forgiveness and the relationship restored. So how do you get forgiveness? It is through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Now that you feel the need, let's talk about the solution. What is the solution? It is redemption. What is redemption? Redemption is buying back. It is usually pictured in slavery terms, buying back to set free. In Roman times, there were some six million slaves. It was big business, buying and selling human beings. This idea is if you had a friend who was caught up in slavery, who was bought and forced to work for someone, you could go and give that friend their freedom. How did you do that? You had to purchase that friend, pay the price from your resources to their master. Once you paid, legally, that friend is now yours. If you wanted to redeem them, set them free, you wouldn't keep them as your own; you would look them in the face and say, "I paid your price. Legally you no longer belong to them, you belong to me, and I declare you free." Then they didn't belong to you either. They were free and could go and live freely. That's the idea of redemption, paying the price to set someone free. Paul is pulling from that to say that is what Christ did for you.

One of the greatest Old Testament examples of this in my mind is the story of Hosea. Hosea was a prophet, and God said 'I'm going to use you to show Israel My relationship with her. I want you to go and marry a harlot.' Hosea marries a harlot and she doesn't fix her ways; she actually continues to sleep around and go after other lovers. It gets to a point in her life where she is so entrenched in that lifestyle that through circumstance she becomes someone's slave. So there's a man who now owns her, he has authority over her. She's become a slave though her husband, Hosea, loves her. Hosea chapter 3, God says 'Hosea, I want you to love you wife, I want you to go and buy her back.' Hosea goes to where slaves are bought and sold and sees his bride, Gomer, who belongs to him. She is his and he is

hers because they're in a covenant relationship. You've got to imagine she's in rags, feeling shame, worthless, because she's being bought and sold, and her husband shows up. Can you imagine what she felt in that moment? What is he going to say to me? What's he going to do? Is he going to give me a lecture on how he told me this is how my life would go if I ran away from him? You've got to picture Hosea going up to Gomer and instead of disciplining her or giving a lecture, he pulls out his wallet and says how much for her. He pulls out fifteen shekels and some change and buys his wife. He buys her back because she's his; they belong to each other. They're in a covenant. That's his wife. Though she ran away and put herself in slavery, he now pays the price of her. He buys her back so that she can once again be in a right relationship with him. God says that is what I've done with Israel. That's what I've done with My people. Israel has run away from Me, they went after all sorts of other gods, and they have gotten themselves into slavery.

We have done the same. We have walked away from our creator; we have run after our sin, and instead of freedom, it has led us captive to slavery. Now we have guilt and shame, and we're in slavery and there's no way out. Here, Jesus comes up to us, our beloved, and says I am going to pay your price. I am going to buy you back for Myself. Though you ran from Me, I'm going to love you. I'm going to pay the price for you, and I'm going to buy you back to Myself. That's what redemption is. God would buy a people back for Himself. But it wasn't for fifteen shekels of silver and some change; it was with His own blood. That's what we see, the price of redemption. What is the price of our redemption? What does the Scripture say? It says 'through His blood.' Through the very blood of Jesus is how we are redeemed. That is the price to set us free. What does blood represent? It represents the life of Jesus. He's saying I'm giving up My life so that you can go free. Why did that have to happen? Because our sins are offensive against a holy God. They're crimes of treason against the High King. We have run away from Him and He told us in the beginning if you eat of that tree, if you disobey Me, you will die. Romans 3:23 reminds us of that. The wages of sin is death, so if you sin, you will die. That's the price tag over us. We're in slavery and our price tag says death. That's what we owe, the price we have to pay because of our sins.

You think how could that be? I just sin; why is it that big of a deal? We think about crimes, and usually the punishment is determined by who the crime is acted against. If you kill an animal, it might be a crime. There might be a penalty. If you kill a person, it's a lot bigger punishment because it was done to a human being. If you lie to your sister, the punishment might be she yells at you or doesn't play with you anymore. If you lie to mom or dad, it's a little more severe. They've got some other things they can do, some other punishments they have that sister doesn't. What if you go to school and lie to your school teacher. There's a principal, detention, lowering of grades, and your mom and dad finds out, so they still do their thing with you. It gets a little worse. What if you go to a court room, put your hand on a Bible, and say you swear to tell the truth, and then you look a judge in the eyes and lie? You could go to prison for that. It's the same sin. It's just lying. Lying with your sister is a little bit of a deal, but lying to a judge is a big deal. Think about this. Every sin you've committed, every law you've broken was done against an infinite God, who has infinite value. So every single crime that you've committed, every single sin that you've committed deserves an infinite punishment because of who the sin was done against. That's why if you die in your sins you will have an eternal punishment in Hell. It's eternal because you've sinned against an eternally good, just, and loving God who is infinite in value and worth. Your sins are a big deal. We trivialize and minimize sin in our culture. They are a big deal before a holy God. That's why the only price for redemption is the blood of Jesus. That's the only way out because our infinite sin needs an infinitely valuable sacrifice. That's not a goat. That's not a lamb. That has to be the Son of God who is infinitely valuable. He is the one who laid down His life for you so that your infinite sin against an infinite God can have an infinitely valuable sacrifice, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look at His life and count you to be righteous, it's by His blood.

It's that picture of Abraham where he takes Isaac upon the mountain and has him laying down because God said I want your firstborn son. Abraham has the knife and is getting ready to drive it into his son's heart, and all of a sudden, God says stop. There's a substitute, a ram in the thicket. They rejoice and sacrifice the ram because the ram is the substitute. We glory in

that. Isaac was saved but the ram died. We fast forward to another where God the Father didn't stop the knife of His judgment. But instead, because there was no substitute, Jesus was the substitute. We should have been the ones who died under the wrath of God, but Jesus was that ram, He was the one that willingly laid down His life, and the Father drove the knife into His heart. He laid His life down for you and for me.

It's that picture of Aslan, this big lion, in Chronicles of Narnia where he is going to a stone table. He is a lion who could take everyone there. He could defeat the white witch in a second, but he willingly walks to a table and gets tied up. He gets his mane ripped out, they mock and curse him, and he willingly submits to them. He looks at Edmund because Edmund was supposed to die on the table. Instead, here comes this lion who is infinitely more valuable than Edmund, he is the one who lays down on the table and takes the dagger to the heart so that Edmund could go free. Why did CS Lewis picture that story? Because he wanted kids and adults both to get the gospel. That's what Christ did. We deserved the stone table. We have broken the laws of God, but God is His own substitute. God gives His own Son to take our punishment from us.

What we desperately need is redemption. If you're not in Christ this morning, I want to urge you to think through your need for redemption. You have guilt and shame and there's no other way to get around it. It has to be the blood of Christ. We don't just say Jesus is the only way because it's a fun thing to say. We say that because there is no other way. You can't chant enough, pray enough, do yoga enough; you can't have another exit to get rid of guilt and shame. It's only the blood of Jesus that will give you forgiveness from God. Some of you need redemption because you feel your guilt in your gut, and you have so much shame you have no idea what to do with it. All the things everybody is telling you are not working. You still feel guilty, you still feel like you should be in shame. It's because those feelings are probably true. You do have guilt and shame and you need forgiveness, you need redemption; you need the gospel. How do you get that? You repent and believe in Christ. Jesus said 'the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.' Turn from you and trust in Him. As the song says, I've claimed it in my word

that I've done redemption. What you need to do is say amen to that. You need to say yes, let it be so; You Jesus redeem me through your redemption. I'm trusting in You that Your blood is enough for me. You turn from self and trust in Christ and the guilt and shame will go away. Why? Because you have forgiveness from a holy and good God.

But some of us have redemption, and what we need to do is to feel that redemption. We need to believe that redemption because our guilt and shame are lies now. They're not true anymore. If you have claimed Christ, if you have redemption, there is no more guilt, no more shame for you because it was all accomplished at the cross. I want you to feel it for a moment. Here's what it says at the end of verse 7 and the start of verse 8, here's the storehouse of God's redemption, "...according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us." Where does forgiveness come from? Where does the gospel come from? How can God declare you forgiven? It's from the storehouse of the riches of His grace. How rich is God's grace? Can you in your life outspend the grace of God? The answer is absolutely not! God has way more riches in His grace than you have impoverishment in your sins. He can cover all of your sins. What does He do? He lavishes it upon you. He doesn't just sprinkle a little bit of grace. He doesn't say you're kind of forgiven. We're going to put you in a holding pattern. We're going to see how you do. No, He lavishes His grace upon you when you claim the redemption of Christ. You're not sort of forgiven, not a little bit forgiven, not you should feel sort of bad about what you used to do; it's done with. It's forgiven, no more guilt, no more shame because the riches of His grace have been poured on you.

If you're feeling like, yeah, but you don't know my past; God does, and He took care of it if you've claimed Christ. There is nothing in your past that brings guilt and shame if you've claimed the cross of Jesus, because the cross as your place of guilt and shame. It was paid for because Jesus died and rose again three days later to say you are free. All those crimes have been paid. All of it has been done with. Don't let your past define you right now. Your past has been nailed through a cross and it was left in an empty tomb. Jesus walked out and now He's given you His righteousness. You're free now. You're pure now. It's His riches that have done that for you. How

rich is God? Just imagine if I walked up to you and wrote you a check, I signed my name and handed it to you. You looked at it and it said mine and Katie's name, and it said one million dollars. You would laugh. There's no way! This is a joke. This is funny because you know me; you know I don't have a million dollars. There's no way in the world I have enough riches to cover the check I just wrote. You will laugh and think it's funny, and then rip it up because you won't take it seriously. But imagine if Warren Buffet came in here, one of the richest guys on the planet, and he wrote you a check for a million dollars. What would you do? It's a little bit more serious now. You might kiss him or something, I don't know. You're going to go nuts and then run to the bank. If it's not open on a Sunday, you're going to call the president at home and say come down here because I've got a million dollars I want to put in your bank. They will probably open up the bank and let you put the million dollars in your account. It's a big deal! Why? Because he has the money. His storehouse of riches can cover that million dollar check.

What is God saying? I've got grace and it's based on My riches. How rich is the grace of God? It is infinitely rich. The promise God is making to you, I promise the check will clear if you cash it. I don't care how much sin you have, I promise that check will clear your debt accounts. It will fill it to the max of righteousness, more righteousness than you could ever outlive in your whole life because it's the very righteousness of Christ. That's what God has done for you in redemption. What's your biggest need if you're not in Christ? You need forgiveness. You really have sinned against God. Your guilt and shame are real things. The only solution is the redemption of Jesus Christ. His blood, His death, paid your debt. If you will repent and believe in Him, if you will trust in the gospel, then He will redeem you. You will be saved. We're serving ten years of Nicaragua, the redemption story, but are you part of that redemption story? God's been doing work in this church. Are you part of that redemption story? Have you claimed the redemption of Christ for yourself? Some of you need to do that this morning. Others of you have redemption, but you need to feel it. You need to believe it, that you have been fully forgiven and set free, and you have not more guilt and no more shame because you're in Christ. You need to feel that, believe it, and walk past whatever is still eating at you. You need

to take that to the cross. You need to say, amen God, what You did was really enough. You've lavished Your grace and forgiveness on me. I'm forgiven, now I'm going to go free. I don't know where you are, but if you don't have Christ, you don't have redemption; you aren't forgiven. You have guilt and you have shame. Get rid of your guilt and shame at the cross and have a restored relationship with God. If you've been redeemed, go live that out.