

Ephesians 1:7-11

Moving on in Ephesians to verses 7-11 of chapter 1. Paul had just told the Christians in Ephesus that before the foundation of the world God planned to adopt them as members of His family, His new creation. A problem developed, however, that threatened to derail that entire plan. Adam and Eve sinned. Fortunately, God had that possibility covered and God's plan took Paul's discussion from the work of God the Father to that of Jesus, God's Son. Paul explained in Ephesians 1:7-11 what Jesus did about our sin problem. Read Ephesians 1:7-11.

The end of verse 7 notes that redemption was rooted in the **grace** of God. Grace means undeserved goodness and that goodness flows from God's great love for us. God's grace is a theme of Ephesians and appears 11 times throughout the book. God's grace was tremendously important to Paul. Read Ephesians 2:8.

Paul began this unit by telling the Christians in Ephesus that they have **redemption**. Few words are more significant to Christians than that of redemption. Jesus is known as the "Redeemer" and at the heart of that is what He did for us on the Cross. In chapter 2 of this letter Paul reminded us of what it was like before we were redeemed. Read Ephesians 2:1-2.

As Christians we use the word "redeemed" often but seldom stop to think about what it really meant to Paul and the Christians in Ephesus. Christians regularly talk and sing of being redeemed without seriously thinking about what the New Testament was saying when it used that word to describe our salvation. There are several words used in the New Testament that are translated "**redemption**" and they all carry the idea of buying something back. Most commonly in New Testament times it referred to the buying back of someone who was in slavery. The word most commonly meant "deliverance by payment of a price" and was specially applied to the ransoming of slaves.

The word "redeemed" was used in the Old Testament primarily to describe the way God rescued or redeemed His people from Egypt. Egypt, of course, represented to the Israelites slavery and Moses leading them out of Egypt was viewed as redeeming them out of slavery. The idea of being redeemed from slavery carried over into the New Testament where redemption depicts being rescued from slavery to sin. Read what Jesus declared, according to Matthew 20:28.

Think about the imagery of being bought back from slavery. Before we made a personal commitment to Jesus, we were not just sinners, we were slaves to sin. We didn't just do wrong things from time to time, we couldn't do anything but sin because sin was our slave master. Instead of thinking we occasionally sinned, the reality is we were bound by sin and occasionally did that which was good. Listen to how Isaiah described the occasional good in Isaiah 64:6, "**All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;**" Jesus redeemed us by buying us out of slavery. In Egypt the Israelites' lives were totally controlled by their slave masters and so were we to sin before Jesus redeemed us. That is, He bought us on the slave market with His shed blood and set us free,

In the opening verses of Ephesians Paul talked about God adopting us into His family but the reality of it was that He could not do that as long as we were held as slaves to sin. Jesus came to pay our sin debt to literally buy us back. He took our death penalty upon Himself and died in our place so that we might be free to be adopted by God.

There was, of course, a price to pay for our redemption and Paul shared what that price was. He wrote in verse 7 that the price was paid **“through his blood.”** Read Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22. Shedding of blood is a picture of death. Since there was no way we could pay that price ourselves and live, Jesus took our place. Read how Paul explained it in Ephesians 5:2. Peter put it clearly in I Peter 1:18-19. Read those verses. On the Cross Jesus paid the debt for our sins, thereby making redemption or salvation possible for all who will believe and invite Him to be their Savior.

According to verse 7, redemption includes **“the forgiveness of sins.”** The forgiveness of sins includes the sins that separate us from God which were cared for when Jesus paid the penalty of our sins. But forgiveness also includes the sins we commit as Christians. Read I John 1:9. All sin was covered when Jesus took our place on the Cross. Redemption bought us back from the penalty of past and present sin and ultimately from the very presence of sin as we spend eternity in His home.

Acts 13 records a visit by Paul to Pisidian in Antioch. As was his custom he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and was invited to speak. His message covers most of Acts 13 and reaches a key point in verses 38 and 39. Read Acts 13:38-39.

Don't miss the rest of 7 where Paul described God's gracious redemption and all it provides for us as **“in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.”** God's grace not only meets our needs, it lavishly meets them. Like every attribute of God His grace it all abounds beyond imagination. His grace is boundless beyond any sin we commit. Read what Paul wrote in Romans 5:20. Obviously that is not justification for sinning, assuming that no matter what we do God will forgive it, but it is a reminder that all of our sins have been cared for, they have been removed as far as the east is from the west. We have been set free from sin.

There is still more. Not only has God lavished grace upon us and provided forgiveness of sins but read what else He has done in Ephesians 1:9-10.

God **“made known to us the mystery of his will.”** When I think of the word mystery, I think of things such as mystery theater where all sorts of weird things take place. That is not the biblical meaning. In the Bible the word carried the idea making known what was once hidden or unknown to man but has now been revealed to God's people. The root word translated “mystery” is connected in meaning with the word “apocalyptic” and it related to the Greek title of the Apocalypse or book of Revelation.

Paul was telling the Ephesian Christians in verse 10 that because they have been redeemed they can know what Jesus intends to “**put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment**” or literally what Jesus intends to do when He wraps history up. Man has always been interested in what will happen at the end of time because we know that we will be impacted by that even if we are not here to see it. If, for example, in the end everything implodes on earth and life is no more, than we know that when life is over, that’s it. If in the end God will come back, as Revelation teaches, and set up an eternal kingdom for those who believe, that is a totally different story.

While we were in slavery to sin, we really could not be told what was going to happen when **times reach their fulfillment** because it was beyond our ability to comprehend it. Now that we have been redeemed God can tell us that in the end, He is going to “**bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.**” History is not spinning out of control but is moving under God’s control to that point where it will all return as originally planned, under His authority and loving care.

Paul wrote that as Christians we can know where history is going. Perhaps more important than that, because we have been redeemed we know that when history is no more we will be gathered together with all of the other believers from all the ages and all the nations of the world and will spend the rest of eternity with Jesus in the place described as heaven.

Israelite slaves in Egypt couldn’t imagine a land of their own but then God redeemed them from slavery and took them to that land. As slaves to sin we could not imagine what eternity would really be like but as those who have made a commitment to Jesus and thereby been redeemed, we can know who holds our future securely in His hands.

Praise God He provided redemption! We no longer need to be slaves to sin. Praise Him that we can know where we will spend eternity so when the end of our time comes, we don’t have to say, “*I hope*” but we can say “*I know*” where I will be.