

# REDEMPTION

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24 November, 2019

Today I want to talk to you about redemption. What is redemption? The dictionary defines it as: the action of saving, or being saved from sin, error or evil; the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing debt.

This is the definition in the English language for redemption, but today as we reflect on how Jesus died on the cross in our place, we see that HE was the payment for our sin debt. HE really was our redemption.

First, I want to start with a brief overview of mankind and how we came to need redemption, so let's look at Genesis 1: 26 & 27.

"<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." **Genesis 1 (NIV)**

So, right off the bat, we see that mankind started out on the top, set above all creation. We started out pure, in the image of GOD! We are the only things in creation who can say we were made in GOD's image. No other creature can claim that, not even the angels!

We did not start out on the bottom as the world view and science portray us. We did not start in the dark. We did not start out knowing nothing. We were created right from the start, in GOD's own image! According to the Bible, GOD's Word, we started out as the crown piece of GOD's creation! We began elevated, over all, overseeing creation, taking care of it, and having dominion over it. As we read further on in the Bible, we see that Adam and Eve actually walked beside GOD in the garden of Eden. What an amazing experience that would have been, to walk side by side with GOD!

So, I'm just going to jump ahead here a bit, when the devil comes and is deceiving them, asking them if GOD actually said that they should not eat the fruit. "Now the serpent was craftier than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"" Genesis 3: 1. So the devil is tricking Adam and Eve. He is deceiving them.

He is actually tricking them into eating the fruit. Eve takes the fruit and eats it. Then she gives some to Adam who eats it. "<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" 10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." 11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" 12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Genesis 3: 6-13.

So that is the fall of mankind. We were given a command not to eat that, but we disobeyed GOD.

At the start we were pure and innocent, as GOD intended us. That is where we started in the history of mankind. Then, by disobeying the LORD, after being deceived by the devil, they eat the fruit, disobey GOD, so when they hear GOD walking in the garden, Adam hides from GOD because he is ashamed and afraid. He no longer is walking alongside HIM.

But it is through this text we discover that Adam and Eve actually walked in the garden with GOD. It would have been an amazing experience to be there with them! The LORD was with us, and now, we are hiding and afraid.

Now we will jump to where the LORD talks to Adam and Eve.

"16 To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Genesis 3: 16-19

So, this is the curse. This is where mankind is separated from GOD. Without any redemption process, without any plan to get out of this place, it is very "NOT good" to hear this! Imagine having this said to you straight to your face! That is where mankind would be left without the redemptive process!

This is the way we would be living now if there was no redemption plan, but GOD knew mankind would fall, and HE has provided a plan for redemption. From that time right there, until now, there has not been a time when GOD did not have HIS redemptive plan. It is absolutely amazing! GOD planned the perfect redemption for our sins: the blood of the Lamb, Jesus! Ephesians 1: 7 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."

This is the promise of GOD. This is the blood of Christ, through HIS sacrifice on the cross in payment for our sins. That is the redemption of mankind. And when we claim this and we accept HIM into our lives, we are redeemed! We become children of GOD. This is how we get from where Adam and Eve were in the garden, after they fell. That is how we get back into the presence of GOD. This is truly amazing!! It is through the riches of HIS grace. *That* is how we feel the love of GOD flow through us. *That* is how we see people being healed. *That* is how people have purpose again, people going from the ashes of their lives, taking that bigger step, finding joy, finding meaning. *That* is how we get there: through the blood of Christ!

2 Peter 3: 9 tells us that GOD's heart's desire is that none should perish. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

It is GOD's heart's desire that not any should perish. In fact, it is quite the opposite! GOD desires to show us HIS love and forgiveness. HE does not want any of mankind to go through life without HIM.

HE is patient: HE is very patient towards every one of us. GOD does this to bring us into HIS kingdom. It shows us how HIS love for us brings us from where we are into repentance. It actually comes from repentance. We have to turn from our ways and follow GOD. And, through that turn, just like *that* (snap of fingers), it happens in an instant! The redemptive process takes place and Jesus' life is paid in exchange for ours! We are bought into the kingdom of heaven, not with gold or silver, but with the blood of Christ!! It is absolutely amazing!

So, throughout this season leading up to Christmas, this is what I would like all of us to focus on: To think about all the good that came from the sacrifice of Christ!

This is what we need to think about this Christmas season. That Jesus was given to all mankind, the SON of GOD, in payment for all our sins.

Without the sacrifice of Christ, we would not be able to stand in the presence of GOD. We would fall short and be stuck where Adam and Eve were! That would not be a good place to be. But the love of GOD, the love of Jesus, was given in payment of all that! It is through HIS blood that we can come into the presence of GOD!

So, that is what I would like us to focus on for this season.

And coming out of The Walk to Bethlehem this weekend is an amazing way to share this message.

Going through The Walk, you see the whole amazing redemption story. You could see it on the faces of people, you could see it in their eyes as they grasped the hope and reality of the redemption story of Christ.

Even though it was a dark, terrible time in history, the birth of Jesus brought so much hope and joy! The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross brought us all back to GOD!

Don't get caught up in the bad news of the world view. See things as Christ does. It does not mean to ignore the problems of the world. But don't let them conform you.

Focus on Christ and the hope of HIS gift of redemption. Share the love and joy of Jesus with others. Visit someone. Fulfill a need for someone somewhere! Share your happiness with others.

There were so many people who were touched by the presentation, who received the Gospel, whose hearts were touched and turned to GOD. It was an amazing testimony of the love of our amazing GOD!