



THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1 Peter 1:10-12

Sermon Notes

November 2, 2014

¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

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- On November 22, 2012, James Foley, an American freelance journalist, was abducted in northwestern Syria by Islamist extremists as he worked to cover the events of the Syrian Civil War.
 - He was held in captivity for about a year when the United States, Foley's family, and his employer, *GlobalPost*, began working to negotiate his release.
 - From November 2013 to December 2013, his captors demanded 100 million Euros in ransom (approximately \$132 million US dollars) in order to secure his release.
 - Then, on August 19, of this year, a video surfaced on the website YouTube which filmed his death at the hands of his captors.
 - This event caused many to criticize the United States for its policy that the government will not pay ransom to gain the release of Americans held hostage by terrorist groups, nor does it negotiate with them.

- In fact the family of James Foley had reportedly worked to defy U.S. law, and attempt to pay a part of the ransom for the release of their son and brother for an undisclosed amount of money.
- However, according to one former official in the Bush administration (George Terwilliger): “It made no sense as both a policy and a practical matter to pay money to ensure the release of James Foley...[If you pay ransom to a terrorist group to secure the release of an American hostage] all you’re doing is condemning other Americans to future captivity when people realize it could be a source of funding for them.”
- Furthermore, the paying of ransom does not always guarantee the safe return of a hostage, as seen many times throughout history.
- But, imagine for a moment a scenario where an individual or group is held hostage and a particular ransom is required in order to secure their release. Imagine furthermore that the ransom payment not only satisfies the enemy’s demands, but completely destroys the enemy as well. In fact, the exchange of ransom and liberated hostage demonstrates the power of the Liberator and His ability to successfully secure the permanent freedom of all current and future hostages. If such a scenario did exist in the geopolitical world in which we live, the United States would gladly offer that type of ransom to an enemy of our people.
 - Well, as we know and will see here in 1 Peter 1, such a system does exist.
 - Prior to our conversion and faith in Christ, we were in bondage to sin and death, held hostage by “the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air (our ancient foe), the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—“ “among them all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” Ephesians 2:2-3
 - Yet, ultimately, our greatest enemy was not Satan or his authorities. Rather, our greatest enemy, was God Himself. And it was God, not Satan, whose perfect justice demanded that blood must be shed in order to satisfy the infinite wrath due our sins.
 - And because of this, God had to provide, as we read in Genesis 22, ***for Himself, the ransom that was due.***
 - Yet, as horrific of a death Christ had to die, God the Father demonstrated His acceptance of this sacrifice by raising His only Son bodily from the dead on the Third Day. And it is because of the work of Christ, in His life, death, burial and resurrection that not only has our ransom been paid and we are set free from sin and death, but our greatest enemy – God Himself – now views us with infinite favor, just as He views His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Furthermore, the enemies of sin and death have been destroyed, and our enemy Satan, has been defeated.
- The head of the ancient serpent has been effectively crushed by the seed of the woman, at we look to our Savior for hope and strength to live lives pleasing to God.

- I. The Knowledge of Your Ransom**
- II. The Price of Your Ransom**
- III. The Implications of Your Ransom**
- IV. The Source of Your Ransom**

I. The Knowledge of Your Ransom
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¹⁸ **knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.**

- The verb translated “ransomed” or “redeemed” was used in the ancient Greco-Roman world to describe the emancipation of a slave – a concept known as **manumission**.
 - The slave would be granted his or her freedom after paying money in the temple of a particular god or goddess. The temple would then take a commission and in turn pay the slave owner, with the idea that it was really the god or goddess – not the slave himself – who purchased the freedom, or “ransomed” the slave.
 - The “ransomed” or “redeemed” slave would then be liberated and free in the eyes of not only the former slave owner, but the state as well.
 - However, from that point on, the former slave would be considered a slave of the deity who redeemed him or her.
 - Here in 1 Peter 1:18, it appears that Peter’s thoughts are consistent with the ancient custom of **manumission**, as though he is borrowing from the cultural idea of redemption and demonstrating our true liberation based upon the work of Christ – not some false deity.
- **Most certainly, now believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are slaves to God, which is, indeed, the way to true liberation and freedom.**

²²For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 7:22

- It appears that Peter may also be using a clever play on words to emphasize this truth, noting that believers were not bought with a **time** of silver and gold, but with the **timio**, or “**precious**” blood of Jesus Christ.

- What is critical here for the believer, though, is that each of us understand our ransom and that we are mindful of it. For, it is this understanding that will lead us into a life of willful submission and obedience to the will of God, knowing that it is Christ who set us free, **even as we were still sinners.**
- Yet, we should also understand that it was not that simply Christ set us free, but that **He gave His life that we may be ransomed.**

II. The Price of Your Ransom

¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

- Even though Peter may be building upon the Greco-Roman custom of manumission, he states that not only were believer bought with the **precious blood of Christ**, he emphasizes that it is **“like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”**
 - This is clearly a reference to the Old Testament sacrificial system – and can a reference really to nothing else.
 - More specifically, it brings up images of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in Leviticus 17.
 - The concept of redemption through the blood of the lamb is also found throughout the Books of Leviticus, Psalms, Exodus, and Isaiah.
 - Throughout the Old Testament, redemption refers to the **deliverance from the bondage and captivity of a foreign entity.**
 - **Even more specifically, it speaks to deliverance from foreign exile. This idea is central to the Book of 1 Peter, but in a rather ironic way:**

**His readers are exiles in the world – foreigners of the Diaspora of Asia Minor -yet they have been liberated from bondage and captivity.
They may be exiles – but they are free in Christ.**

- The Greek word for “redeemed” is most often translated in the Hebrew as *goel* (“kinsman-redeemer”) or *peda* (“ransom”) both of which refer to the liberation and freedom of God’s people from foreign exile and captivity.
- In the case of the Old Testament, freedom from exile was almost always within the context of freedom through Exodus out of Egypt and freedom from Babylonian captivity.

Deuteronomy 7:8: “⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

Isaiah 52:3 (referring to the release of Judah from Babylonian captivity): “³ For thus says the LORD: “You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.”

- **When Peter points out that his readers have not been redeemed with silver or gold, he is echoing Isaiah’s prophecy, demonstrating that this had been the plan all along – that God’s people would not be redeemed by money, but through the life of the Messiah.**
- It is important to note, however, that the concept of manumission – the ransoming of a slave in the ancient world – was not unique to Greco-Roman culture.
 - It is also found in **Psalm 34:22**: “**The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**”

<p>“The concepts of the exodus from the slavery of Egypt and the exile of Babylon, together with the manumission of a slave, imply a transition from a former way of life to a new state once one has been redeemed.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Karen Jobes</p>

<h3>III. The Implications of Your Ransom</h3>

¹⁸ *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers,*

- Peter strongly emphasizes here, in just a few short words, that Christ’s redemption has not only delivered them from the bondage of sin, but from *their former way of life*.
- Peter’s point here is that believers in Christ were ransomed **within a purpose – to free them “from the futile ways inherited from” their forefathers.**
- Redemption and ransom “is defined in contrast to the way his readers lived before they came to faith in Christ, a heritage that, though culturally venerated, he describes as “useless” (ματαιός, mataios).”
 - In the ancient Greco-Roman world, as well as many other ancient cultures, the ancestral way of life was held in highest esteem and it was believed that the basis of a stable contemporary society was derived from adherence to the “former, ancestral way of life.”
 - Some scholars have proposed that 1 Peter is likely the first Christian writing to speak of the ancestral way of life in a negative fashion.
 - Peter describes the “former way of life” prior to one’s conversion as “futile,” “vain,” or simply “useless.”

- In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, it uses the same adjective to describe idols.

Isaiah 44:9: “⁹ All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame.”

Jeremiah 2:5: “⁵ Thus says the LORD:
“What wrong did your fathers find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?”

- Consequently, Peter is calling his readers to embrace a sort of counter-cultural approach that places them even more out of step with contemporary society; yet, points them to Christ and the importance of union with Him.
- Peter describes the former way of life before the new birth as useless, possibly even idolatrous, no matter how venerated by its indigenous culture.

Goppelt (1993: 117) explains the adjective as describing: “what a world of mere appearance erects against reality; what therefore is deceptive, pointless, and senseless.”

- It is fascinating how we are no different, often doing precisely what the author of Ecclesiastes says is striving after the wind. We live our lives in a manner that obsesses over appearances, yet is in the end useless and futile.
- According to the New Testament, every system that denies God is **futile and worthless**.

1 Corinthians 15:17: “¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”

Titus 3:9: “⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.”

James 1:26: “²⁶ If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.”

- Those who do not find worth and meaning in God drift into a meaningless existence that lacks any real hope for the present or the future.

Philippians 3:4-9: “⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** ⁸ **Indeed, I**

count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith - ” (emphasis added)

- **It is entirely possible that this “former way of life” may also include – as the Apostle Paul seemed to indicate – strict adherence to Jewish tradition that was devoid of Christ. In other words, it is possible that Peter is also warning his readers, like the author of Hebrews, not to return to the cultural trappings of Judaism, but rather put their faith in Christ – the true Israelite in whom there is no deceit.**

Karen Jobes, “He asks his readers to exchange the heritage handed down by their ancestors— whether Jewish or Gentile— for the heritage of ancient Israel as interpreted through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

- Peter is also encouraging his readers to consider the **invaluable cost of their redemption – the very life of the Messiah – Jesus Christ.**

- **For, to continue to live in one’s useless former ways is implicitly to deny the value of Christ’s death.**

IV. The Source of Your Ransom

²⁰ **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

- Finally, we read of the source of our ransom – the foreknown Messiah.
- It is interesting here that Peter refers to Christ being foreknown, just as he referred, in Verse 2, to the elect exiles who were foreknown by God the Father. The concepts are clearly linked here. That is, we are foreknown **within the context of our union with Christ.**
 - Therefore, God fully knew the plan of redemption before the foundation of the world.
 - The revelation of this plan is for the benefit of all who will believe through the hearing of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

- Here, Peter is assuring his readers, quite possibly converted Jews, that **it is through Christ that we are believers in God. That is, they are not Jewish apostates who put their faith in Christ, rather, they are, as Paul refers to them, the true Israel.**
 - This truth is reiterated in Verse 21, where Peter states that it was the one true God – the God of ancient Israel - who raised Christ from the dead.
 - Therefore, to have faith in Christ is to believe in the God of their fathers.
 - Put more directly, it is only through faith in Christ that one is a believer in the God of the Old Testament – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - This thought may be especially reassuring to Jewish Christians, who need to realize that obedience to Christ’s demands is not apostasy from the covenant faith of their fathers but fulfillment of it.
 - Peter has already emphasized, in Verses 10-12, that the ancient prophets of Israel prophesied about the sufferings and glories of Jesus Christ
 - He also explains the Christian’s relationship to God in covenantal terms of holiness (1: 14– 16).
 - He describes Christ’s redemption in terms of a sacrificial lamb.
- There can be no doubt here that Peter’s point is this: the only way to act in a manner consistent with the teachings of the prophets and the plan of God, as established prior to not only the establishment of Israel at Sinai, but the establishment of the world, is to embrace Jesus as the Christ. Only then are we part of God’s redemptive work and covenantal people that began to be revealed to in ancient times through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...through Moses, David, and the prophets, and finally found its ultimate fulfillment in the revelation of Jesus Christ “in these last times.”