

“Forgiveness of Sin”
Colossians 1:14
(Preached at Trinity, January 21, 2018)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we saw last week, in **Verses 13-14** Paul turns our attention to the work of Christ as our Deliverer and Redeemer. It sets before us the doctrine of redemption.
 2. Last week we focused on two aspects of this doctrine:
Redemption as Deliverance and Redemption as Ransom. Through the sacrifice of Himself Jesus has paid in full the penalty of our sin and satisfied Divine justice through His sacrifice of atonement.
 3. This morning, I want to set before you the end of our redemption—God’s ultimate purpose in our redemption. The forgiveness of sin.
Verse 14 - "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
- I. At the heart of the doctrine of redemption is the issue of sin
- A. All of humanity stands guilty and condemned before God
 1. Jesus Christ will return to the earth in judgment upon sin
Revelation 1:7 NAU - "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be."
Revelation 6:15-17 NAU - "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
 2. All of us will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:10 NAU - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
 3. It is a fearful thought. Every sinful deed and ever sinful thought will be exposed. It will be such a perfect judgment that every tongue will be silent. What shall we answer? There is nothing we will be able to offer in defense.
 4. The issue between heaven and hell is the issue of guilt versus innocence. One single sin is all that is necessary to render us guilty before God. One single sin is all that is necessary to send a man into the eternal fires of hell.
 - a. The Law demands perfect obedience and none of us have met that demand. One single infraction renders us guilty.
James 2:10 NAU - "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all."

- b. Good works and self-righteousness will do nothing to relieve the condemnation of guilt. Jesus will pronounce righteous judgment. **Matthew 7:21-23 NAU** - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"
- B. What shall be done about the guilt of sin?
1. In order to be delivered from our sin we need God's forgiveness.
 2. How shall we receive this forgiveness?
 - a. Could God in His kindness simply pronounce His forgiveness upon sinners? Would this not be a wonderful display of His love? The answer is NO. It would violate His holy character. It would make a mockery of His infinite holiness and render Him an unjust Judge.
 - b. God's perfect justice must be satisfied. Our guilt must be removed.
 - c. The word for "forgiveness" refers to a release or a pardon.
 3. As we saw last week, only the perfect, redeeming work of Christ's atoning sacrifice could satisfy God's justice. His blood shed upon the cross was the ultimate, infinite sacrifice for sin. The Old Testament sacrifices were purposed to point to Christ. **Hebrews 9:11-14 NAU** - "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 4. Our sins have been atoned for. Through Christ's redeeming sacrifice our guilt has been taken away. We call this expiation. In a sense, redemption and forgiveness is the same act. **Romans 3:23-25 NAU** - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. "

II. This is the result of Christ's redeeming sacrifice –

Colossians 1:14 NAU - "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

A. The New Covenant promises forgiveness of sin

Jeremiah 31:34 NAS - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

1. The New Covenant is sealed with the blood of Christ

Ephesians 1:7 NAU - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"

The KJV (TR) adds "through His blood" to **Colossians 1:14**

2. Every sin brings us under the wrath and curse of God. Only the shedding of blood can bring forgiveness, release, and pardon.

Hebrews 9:22 NAU - "And according to the Law, *one may* almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

3. This is why the church has always gloried in the blood of Christ.

Would you be free from the burden of sin?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood;

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's wonderful power in the blood.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus;

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

O precious is the flow That makes me white as snow;

No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?

Died He for me, who caused His pain?

For me who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God should die for me?

There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Immanuel's veins

And sinners plunged beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty stains

B. How is it that the New Covenant promises us that God no longer remembers our sins?

Jeremiah 31:34 NAS - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Isaiah 43:25 NAU - "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins."

1. One of God's attributes is His omniscience—He is all knowing. Is God able by the exercise of His own will to set aside His attributes? The answer, of course, is no. God's attributes are the expression of His being, of His Divine essence. God cannot decide to stop being God. There is nothing that God does not know.

2. So how is it that God no longer remembers our sin? It's not that His omniscience suddenly disappears or that His memory is erased. It means that God no longer holds our sins against us. They were atoned for at the cross of Christ. It is as if we had never sinned. God no longer acts upon what He knows.

Psalms 103:12 NAU - "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Children's Catechism:

Question 50: What is justification?

Answer: It is God forgiving sinners, and treating them as if they had never sinned.

III. How does one receive the benefits of the redemption of Christ and the forgiveness of sin?

A. Through the Gospel

1. The Gospel is the record of Christ redeeming His people from their sins.
2. The Gospel demands faith – trusting in the merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ; of trusting in the perfection of His blood to satisfy God's justice.
 - a. Faith is required for justification. It is God's means of applying the Gospel to the sinner.

Romans 3:23-25 NAU - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. "

- b. Justification is the imputation of Christ's work to the sinner. His perfect righteousness satisfying the Law's demands is imputed or transferred to us.

Our sins were imputed, or transferred to Christ and He paid the full penalty, thus satisfying God's justice and turning away His wrath.

- c. The blessing of God's forgiveness comes immediately upon our trusting Christ.

John Eadie – "So soon as faith springs up in the heart the pardon of sin is enjoyed—the results of expiation are conferred. Forgiveness is more closely connected with redemption than any other blessing, as it is the only blessing enjoyed immediately from Christ, and as the direct result of His expiation. Other blessings obtained for Christ's sake are given through some appointed and dependent medium. Thus, peace is the effect of pardon; and holiness is the product of the Spirit and the word, as agent and instrument. But forgiveness passes through no intervention—it comes at once from the cross to the believing soul. ¹

3. The Gospel also demands repentance – turning away from our wicked sin and turning to forever follow after Christ.

Acts 3:19 NAU - "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;"

¹ John Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, ed. W. Young, Second Edition., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884), Page 40.

- B. The Gospel demands that men acknowledge their sin and their just condemnation and cry out to the Savior for forgiveness. There is a two-fold problem that prohibits sinners from fleeing to Christ.
1. The first problem is fallen man will not call upon God because he does not see his corruption and guilt which has placed him under condemnation.
 - a. To receive a diagnosis of terminal cancer is one of our greatest fears because it carries the sentence of death – When handed this diagnosis men go to great extremes for a remedy - Radical surgery removes tissue – Radiation and chemotherapy weakens the body but a person is willing to do whatever necessary.
 - b. The reason people will not cry out to God for salvation is because they do not believe their sentence of death
 2. Man will not call upon God because he insists upon his own independence – his own sovereignty and autonomy.
 3. Man will not call upon God because he wants to decide what is right or wrong and he trusts in his own conscience as the ultimate arbiter
 - a. Our conscience is that part of us by which we judge right from wrong.
 - b. Our conscience came into existence at the fall – it exposes our shame
Genesis 2:25 NAU - "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."
Genesis 3:7 NAU - "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."
 - c. The problem with our consciences as a judge of morality is that it is corrupt – it allows us to cover our shame with our own devices. We've been given the knowledge of good and evil but lack the ability to discern one from the other.
 4. God's forgiveness demands that we acknowledge our sin and confess it and turn away from it.
1 John 1:9 NAU - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- C. The other issue that keeps fallen men from fleeing to Christ is the failure to acknowledge the excellence of Christ
1. If we fail to see the greatness of Christ we'll never trust His work of redemption.
 2. The things of this world will overshadow Christ. We won't turn our attention to Him. He becomes more and more diminished in our sight that we soon forget Him altogether.
 3. No man will forsake their sins and flee to Christ unless they see Him as greater than anything else in this world.
- D. Upon confessing our sin and trusting the cross as sufficient to cover our sin God forgives us. He no longer holds our sins against us. We no longer stand condemned.

Conclusion:

1. This is the great need of man. We must be rescued from our sin and reconciled to God. Our sins must be pardoned. This can only take place through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
2. It is only through Jesus Christ that we are rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to His own glorious kingdom.
 - a. We should note that the word for “domain” in **Verse 13** is ἐξουσία which refers to authority. The lost man is held under the jurisdiction or authority of Satan who is referred to as the god of this world.
 - b. This is why excommunication is so fearful. The sinner is delivered back over to the jurisdiction of Satan.
3. Oh, how wonderful to have such a powerful Redeemer. We must turn from our sins and trust Him. Only then can we experience God’s blessing of forgiveness. God’s redeeming grace is the fount of every blessing. Only then can we experience the grace of adoption. The Holy Spirit take up His abode only in redeemed sinners. Joy and peace can only take place in pardoned sinners.