

Our Redeemer, our Assurance - radio

The scripture for our sermon today is found in Matt. 20:17-28. *“17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. 20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matt. 20:17-28).

I've entitled this sermon, “Our Redeemer, our Assurance.”

Christ came to serve

Consider first this surprising truth first: that Jesus **Christ the Lord of Glory, the Prince of Life, came to serve**. He did not come that men might serve Him, as though He needed anything, or as though the service of sinful man could have any value to Him (Acts 17:24-25). Sinful man is bound in his sins under the law of

God. He cannot serve, cannot worship God. “Joshua said unto the people, *Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins*” (Joshua 24:19).

- Christ's humility, indeed, the very heart of God Himself, is seen in stark contrast here to human pride. His humility is seen in ultimate self-denial and ultimate self-sacrifice, even as He offered Himself as a sacrifice for these proud, contentious, presumptuous disciples.
- James and John sought for the highest place among the disciples. Even among all others in the kingdom of heaven. They wanted to sit one on the left hand and the other on the right hand. The other ten disciples were indignant against them because they thought they should have the place of preeminence themselves! Pride is a part of our sin nature. It is present in all that we do. **It can only be subdued by free grace** (Rom. 6:14)! This text of scripture proves that to us. In the face of the pride and presumption of James and John and the other disciples, Jesus bares Himself in humility and holds Himself up as the lowest servant. He tells these disgusting sinners that He would give Himself to pay the ransom His people owed God by the debt of their sins, and set them free from the curse and bondage of their sin, of God's law, of death and from the devil himself. In short, every enemy!
- James and John thought that by enduring whatever suffering was required, they could be worthy to sit at Christ's right and left hand! How ignorant of God's grace they appeared now to be. Yet, what was in them is found in the heart of everyone of us! Pride is no stranger to us! It is our constant companion. It is the tyrant that influences all that we think and do.
- Jesus told James and John that they do not know what they were asking. He asks them, “*Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with!?*” They presumptuously and naively said, “*We are able*” (Matt. 20:22)!
- Jesus then said that they would indeed drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism! Now, the truth of the Gospel is that every believer suffers what Christ suffered and died the death that He died because He stood as their substitute and representative (Rom. 6:6-11; 1 Pet. 2:24)! There is only one way that it can be truthfully said that these disciples drank the cup of wrath

the Lord Jesus drank and were baptized in the sea of woe into which He was baptized. They did so, just as all God's elect did. They drank His cup and were baptized in His baptism representatively. God made Christ the Head of His people that He might deal with all of His elect in one man, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Adam stood for the entire human race in that covenant of works, Christ stood for all of God's eternally adopted sons in the covenant of grace (Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 13:20; Gal. 3:16-29). In Christ all of God's elect are completely and perfectly saved by his representative work as our Substitute. By His pre-agreed Suretyship with God the Father, all that God's elect did by their sin became Christ's so bear. Therefore, scripture says that for His people, Jesus Christ "*was made sin*" (2 Cor. 5:21). And by this same eternal arrangement, all that Christ did became the possession of all of His people. He was made sin in order that "*we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 45:24-25; Jer. 23:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:30-31). Thus, every believer suffered and died with Christ, and in His suffering and death they suffered and they died (Rom. 6:6-11; 1 Pet. 2:24)! **God received all that Christ did as from His people.** God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and with Him, raised all who were given to Him (Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:13; Rom. 4:25)! There is no greater comfort to the soul of every believer than this: **that God put upon Christ and received from Christ all that He demanded and required of me!** In the Lord Jesus Christ, every believer is the very righteousness of God (Isa. 45:24-25; Jer. 23:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Rom. 10:4; Php. 3:7-9; Matt. 5:17,20)!

His great ransom

Second, the Lord Jesus Christ paid Himself to God as the great ransom for the souls of His people. Jesus said that He came to give Himself a ransom to God for many. The price paid for the souls of God's elect people is Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Acts 20:28). He paid that price to God (Ps. 49:7-8). Now, the only thing that matters in our redemption is what God thinks of the obedience and suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only issue is, did Christ pay the ransom, and did God receive full payment from our Redeemer? That is the only thing that

matters! If Christ paid all, and if God received His ransom in satisfaction for our sins, then all for whom Christ paid a ransom are redeemed, they are set free, they are released! From this we see several things:

- **First**, we see that **the evil of our sin can only be measured by the price of our redemption**. How holy is God? How just is God's law? How evil is my sin? All of these questions and more are only answered by this: what was the price God required for our redemption!? "*It is Christ that died*" (Rom. 8:34)!
- **Second**, **the strength of our sin can only be measured by the strength of the One who redeemed us from our enemies!** Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, by the Spirit of God said that Christ would redeem His people from their enemies. "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life*" (Luke 1:68-75). What are the enemies from which Christ has redeemed His people?
 - First, Sin. "*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee*" (Isa. 44:22). "*He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*" (Ps. 130:7). "*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*" (Titus 2:14).
 - What other enemies? The law of God, both its curse against us for our sin, and bondage to fulfill the law for our righteousness and life (Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 3:21-22).
 - "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*" (Gal. 3:13).

The grace of our Savior

The third thing we see from this scripture in Matt. 20, we see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ by His ransom!

- First, we see the grace of God as measured by the cost Christ paid to redeem us. And we see His grace because it was a price paid for sinners whose guilt and corruption deserved only the wrath of God. Perhaps your own children, whom you love, have rebelled against your loving instruction and the boundaries you placed around them for their safety and for their good. Perhaps they have despised you for your instruction. Perhaps they have treated your love as constraining bondage. If so, what is your reaction? Have you felt a measure of anger towards them? How could they be so ungrateful, so cruel in return for your loving provision and care over them? Now, think of the infinitely greater rebellion we exerted against our good and great God! Now, see in Christ the heart of humility and the grace of God. In spite of our open enmity against Him, He looked for reason to save us -- not in us -- but in Himself! He made a way for His grace. He provided all things for us. He put Himself in harm's way by interposing Himself under His own justice in the person of His Son. He created a human nature for His own Son and in that nature, made Him guilty for the sins of His rebellious people! Then, in justice, He plunged the sword of His wrath into His own Son (Zech. 13:7)! In all this, Christ willingly, voluntarily, and in humility, offered Himself up as the ransom payment for those who were His enemies (Rom. 5:10)! He endured all that God required to make satisfaction for the sins of His people! Now, in all this, see the infinite humility and the riches of God's grace towards His people! Do you and I know this great, glorious God and almighty Savior who humbled Himself so!?
- The second way in which we see the grace of our Savior in His ransom for us, is that it is certain that I can bring nothing to God to take away one sin, or overcome one sin, or contribute one thing to my salvation, because of the dignity and greatness of Christ who alone could pay my ransom! He who sits on heaven's throne gave Himself a ransom to God as the price required to by

God to remit the debt of sinful men and their rebellion against God. The price He paid was Himself, His own blood. Therefore, **the evil of our sin is beyond all comprehensible measure!** The death of Christ is the measure of the evil of our sin (Acts 2:23)! And **the strength of our sin is greater than we could ever free ourselves** (Rom. 5:6). We are slaves to sin in our nature, and accountable to God for eternal damnation (Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 85:3; Isa. 12:1-3)! **We see this evil and power of sin in the dignity and greatness of the One who God required to put it away!** And in this we see the grace of our ransoming God and Savior! If God could have offered all of creation, it would not have been sufficient to take away one sin (Isa. 40:16)! If there had been a way for you and me to take away one sin or free ourselves from the power and strength of our sin, then God would have never sacrificed His Son! But there was no other payment sufficient to redeem! *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”* (Gal. 2:16)! But God did require Christ to give Himself a ransom for His people! And Christ did drink that cup of God’s indignation against sinners (Mark 14:36)! And Christ was baptized under the flood of God’s wrath (Ps. 88:7)! Therefore, **righteousness comes by Him alone, and there is no righteousness apart from His obedience unto death!**

The assurance of salvation

The fourth thing we see in this scripture, in which Christ said He would give Himself a ransom for many, is that in Christ alone we have assurance of our salvation. What is the assurance of our salvation?

- First we must understand that when Christ gave Himself a ransom to God, that God received His offering as full payment. His ransom obtained -- really, actually obtained -- from God eternal redemption for His people (Heb. 9:12)! Do you believe it!? And do I? Christ offered Himself to God and obtained eternal redemption for His people! And His offering was obedience to God (John 10:15,17-18; Heb. 10:5-7). He willingly and completely and perfectly rendered everlasting obedience to God on behalf of and in the place of His people (Rom. 5:19; Dan. 9:24; Jer. 23:6; Isa.

45:24-25). To have assurance before God, therefore, we must see what God sees. He tells us what He sees. *“When I see the blood, I will pass over you”* (Ex. 12:13)! All that God looks for, all that He looks at, is the obedience and blood of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:11) -- that redeeming ransom price of His life offered to God for His people (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Eph. 1:7; Php. 2:5-8)!? By His one offering, He obtained the eternal forgiveness of their sins, He obtained their release from the curse of God’s law, He obtained their freedom from the bondage of bringing their own personal obedience to God for their acceptance, and He obtained their freedom from the devil and from death itself. God sees Christ for His people, and receives Him for them, and receives them as Him. Jesus said, *“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me”* (John 17:23; Col. 2:9-10; Philemon 1:13,17-18).

- Secondly, The assurance of salvation is therefore found in what God says! God say He looks upon and received from Christ all that He required to forgive His people, to make them righteous (1 Cor. 1:30; Jer. 23:6) **“24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength... 25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory”** Isa. 45:24-25). And God looks upon Christ to give His people eternal inheritance. *“For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”* (Heb. 9:15). God looks to Christ for satisfaction for all of the sins of all of His people. And they are free from all claims of His law, to bring obedience to earn righteousness and life from Him, or to satisfy its curse! **God looks only upon His Son for all that He requires of them! Therefore,** He commands us to look only to Christ. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith”* (Heb. 12:2). *“This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”* (John 6:40; Isa. 45:22; John 3:14-15). God commands us to look only to Christ (Acts 4:12; John 14:6), to flee to Christ, to run for refuge to Him (Heb. 6:18; Ps. 62:1-2;

6-7), to come to Christ (Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:35,37; Rev. 22:17), to find all that God Himself requires in Christ alone (Job 33:24; Col. 2:9-10)! He commands us to rest in Christ (Heb. 4:1-10), to submit to Christ in all things (Rom. 10:3-4; 1:5; 10:16; 16:26; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:23)! Does God require my eternal damnation because of my sins!? He gave that cup of indignation to His dear Son to drink, and by drinking it to pay the debt of ransom for my soul! Does God's law require the flood of His wrath be poured out as a flood for my sins!? The Lord Jesus Christ was **baptized** under that flood! The Spirit of God prophesied of Christ, "*I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. 3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me*" (Jonah 2:2-3). "*I Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me*" (Ps. 69:1-2). "*Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves*" (Ps. 88:7). Does God require perfection from me? He found them in His own Son! Does God's justice require my damnation? He poured out that damnation on His own Son! And does God require perfection from me!? The Lord Jesus Christ perfected me by His one offering! "*By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified*" (Heb. 10:14)! Is there remission of sins in nothing but Christ's blood (Heb. 9:22)!? Then full remission has been made, because Christ shed His blood (Rev. 5:9). "*16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. 19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"*

(Heb. 10:16-23). Because God looks only to His Son, because God tells us that He looks only to His Son (Rom. 8:31-34; Eph. 1:3-7; Col. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:30-31), and because God commands us to come to Him only through His Son (Heb. 10:19; Acts 16:31; Isa. 45:22), therefore, ...

- The assurance of salvation is that everything is provided by God out of His grace in Christ alone. Only our pride keeps us from coming and finding and resting in Christ alone. Only our pride prevents our conscience from finding peace unless we find reason for that peace in ourselves! Only our own pride withholds assurance from our conscience because we require something more than Christ crucified as our all before God! The Psalmist says, *“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts”* (Ps. 10:4). The pride of our heart keeps us from seeking and finding our all in Christ! What God requires, He provided in Christ and received from Christ alone. The Lord Jesus Christ obtained eternal redemption for His people by the ransom of Himself to God! All God requires, He gives by virtue of Christ’s redeeming blood (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 2:13)! Repentance and forgiveness of sins. *“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 5:31; Eph. 1:7). Righteousness: *“they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”* (Rom. 5:17). Now, if our sins are taken away by God’s grace alone, and if He gives righteousness by His grace alone, then what arrogance on our part is it to entertain a subconscious thought that we could add to what Christ has accomplished by anything we do to make our salvation certain? All of our experience must be abandoned as any cause for comfort, because God sees and received all from Christ for His people! Faith itself, by which we are enabled to look to Christ alone, is God’s gift of grace! Justification is God’s gift by Christ’s blood (Rom. 5:9). Eternal life is God’s gift (Rom. 6:23)! Sanctification is by Christ’s offering of Himself according to the eternal will of God (Heb. 10:10). Remission of sins and perfection before God are by the one offering of Christ (Heb. 10:14)! There is absolutely nothing, nothing, **nothing** that is not freely given by God out of His grace to His people on the grounds of the

ransom Christ paid with Himself!! Therefore, what do we look for in ourselves!? We must look away from all that may be called ours and find our all only in what belongs to Christ (Col. 2:9-10; 3:11)! When you and I are persuaded by God-given faith to look to Christ alone, only then will we have full assurance of faith!

- The one who sees that God looks to Christ and received from Christ all that He demands and requires of me; the one who sees that God finds all in Christ in spite of the worst possible evil in me and my utter helplessness against sin, that soul will find rest and assurance in Christ. That God-given faith will say, from God's own word:
- *"The Son of God loved ME and gave Himself for ME"* (Gal. 2:20)! *"Who gave Himself for OUR sins that He might deliver US from this present evil world"* (Gal. 1:4)! *"Christ hath redeemed US from the curse of the law, being made a curse for US"* (Gal. 3:13)! If you or I try to find one reason in ourselves why we can claim these promises of God in our conscience, then we will NEVER have true peace and rest! We must find every reason for assurance in God's sovereign grace, in Christ's redeeming blood, and in His justifying righteousness! Many think -- we all naturally do -- that God will reward us for what His grace accomplishes in us, as if by God's grace working in us we can become what God requires. But this is utterly false! In fact, it is idolatry! If God, by His grace, could produce in you what He requires of you, then Christ did not need to die! *"I do not frustrate the grace of God. For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain (for nothing)"* (Gal. 2:21)! Only Christ Himself, given in ransom, could free me from the guilt of sin and the power of sin and from the curse of God's law and bondage to keep God's law in order to make God happy with me! Only the suffering and death of the Son of God in my nature, offered to God as a ransom for my sins, could free me from my sin, from the devil, from death, from the world and from the law of God! Christ has freed me from these by giving Himself to God in death as a ransom!

- The other reason for assurance before God is that because we are redeemed by Christ, we are under grace alone (Rom. 6:14)! Grace provides all to the most unworthy, even great and horrible sinners! There is no such thing as a little sinner saved by Christ! If you can clean yourself up, if you can put away your one of your sins, if you can clean up or quit even one sin, then you don't need a Savior! Christ will only do for you what is impossible! It is by His life given to God for a ransom that He has done this! *“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace”* (Rom. 6:14)!

The wickedness of pride seen in unbelief

Now, the wickedness of our pride is seen in our own unbelief.

- God's own word commands us to look upon Christ, to come to Him, to rest in Him! Furthermore, He gives all grace to enable us to see Christ as all from His word.
- Therefore, to fail to submit to Him as our complete and perfect payment to God for all of our sins, or to fail to submit to His righteousness as all my obedience to God, is nothing short of proud and wicked unbelief (Ps. 10:4). The Jews *“3 being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth”* (Rom. 10:3-4)!

May God enable everyone who hears my voice, even now, to look away from our guilt, from our enslavement to sin, from our corruptions, to Christ alone, and find in Him all that God requires of me, and so go to God in peace and joy and thankfulness and worship Him for all that He is to us in our Great Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ!