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## Redemption, Part 7

### The Law of Redemption

By now you know that the theme of redemption permeates the word of God. Truly the Bible contains the story of redemption! It therefore is not surprising to discover that in the Old Testament we read of “The Law of Redemption” specifically outlined in Leviticus 25, but going well beyond this passage.

According to the Law of Redemption, both possessions and persons could be redeemed. The idea here is that a person runs into a difficult spell such that they have no means of supporting themselves. Accordingly, they sell their land in order to pay their bills or if things got dire, they could sell themselves into slavery in order to pay their creditors.

Both situations were never understood to be permanent since through His great act of redemption, the Exodus, God delivered His people once for all to live in a land which they were to call their own. And so because their freedom and property had spiritual significance, no Jew was to forfeit it permanently; hence the year of Jubilee occurred every fifty years in which all property and persons were redeemed by God.<sup>1</sup>

Now if it wasn't through the year of Jubilee, how then did redemption take place?

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Leviticus 25:10-11

First off realize that the “right of redemption” belonged to the original owner in the case of property or the next of kin in the case of the redemption of a person.<sup>2</sup> And thus, it just wasn’t anybody who could come forward and redeem a fellow Israelite or his property. In fact there were strict rules which governed redemption.<sup>3</sup>

Now provided the qualified individual came forward, once again strict rules governed how much money could be paid based on how long the individual or property had been bound.<sup>4</sup> In the case of the Levirate Marriage, the closest relative had the right of first refusal whereby, if he deigned to raise a child for his lost brother, he paid a redemption price for the land of the deceased which then would be given at some point to the first born son as an inheritance. So the law went, as it detailed the “ins and outs” of redemption.

And yet one must see that there was much more behind “The Law of Redemption” than simply the physical reacquisition of property or the release of slaves; there was a spiritual side as well. Any Jew with the eyes to see understood that ultimately behind the “Law of Redemption” was the freeing of a person’s soul from slavery to sin! This is emphatically pointed out in the Psalms.

Psalm 49:7-8, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

Truly the “players” involved in the redemption of the soul from slavery and sin is beyond any mortal man. The purchasing of a soul from sin and death would be like an ox endeavoring to purchase a person from slavery... IT CAN’T HAPPEN by virtue of the fact that... an ox does not possess the credentials/the standing to deliver one from slavery; they aren’t kinsmen; they’re not human. Nor does an ox have the resources; money! Accordingly, the thought is ludicrous.

And so the Old Testament Jew was to understand that when it came to the redemption of the soul, no mortal had the credentials to redeem another. Nor did any have the resources. Yet, such was not the case for Christ.

Accordingly, the Bible predicted that the work of the Messiah would be the work of redemption. The promise was given.

Psalm 130:7-8, “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

Thus when the time neared for the coming of Christ Zechariah spoke these words: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant” (Luke 1:68-70 NASB).

At the annunciation of the coming of Christ, the angel told Mary:

Matthew 1:21, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

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<sup>2</sup> This was to prevent a slave trade in Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Leviticus 25:48-49

<sup>4</sup> Compare Leviticus 25:27-50

When Simeon saw Christ as a baby, he said this:

Luke 2:30-32, “For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

When Anna saw the Christ she “Continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). Truly Jesus came for the purpose of Redemption, specifically a redemption which no man ever could accomplish either for himself or another, the redemption of man from his sin and slavery to Satan! Christ confirmed this purpose:

Luke 19:10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

And yet, just as NO Old Testament sacrifice could picture entirely the nature of the sacrifice Christ offered in order to redeem us, so NO Old or New Testament passage addressing redemption could adequately instruct us as to the deliverance we have received in Christ. But that is not to say that there aren’t some that come close; in fact, our text is one of them!

As you know Paul is writing this epistle on behalf of a runaway slave who recently had become a Christian, Onesimus. According to Roman law, Onesimus was guilty of a capital crime such that justice demanded that he be put to death- yet mercy spoke otherwise.

Accordingly Paul sent Onesimus back to his master, Philemon. Yet he did not send him empty handed. Paul gave Onesimus the epistle before you; an epistle which argued for his redemption.

Now you must see that the book of Philemon is a masterpiece as it details the elements involved. It details not only in the redemption of Onesimus from the sentence which rested on his head but also in the redemption which Christ brought about when He died on the cross for our sin. One man put it this way:

“What we find in the letter to Philemon as a whole is the extraordinary, and almost shocking, fact that Paul is reconciling master and slave by taking on himself the role of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Truly to gaze upon Paul’s labor for the redemption of Onesimus is to gaze upon the work of Christ on behalf of our redemption. Accordingly you will notice that there are elements in Philemon which parallel the Law of Redemption as found in Leviticus 25, and yet there are elements here which are not seen in the Old Testament; elements which I am going to highlight because they were crucial to the redemption which Christ Himself effected on our behalf!

### The Elements of Redemption

So having considered the consequences and motive involved in our redemption from sin, I now want to consider the elements of redemption. The first element is that redemption requires that the redeemer have a specific standing.

Philemon 1:17, “If thou count<sup>6</sup> me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.”

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<sup>5</sup> N. T. Wright, Colossians and Philemon, TNTC, page 187

<sup>6</sup> εἰσῆλθε rendered “count” or “regard” (NASB) in this context finds support in Matthew 14:5, “they counted (or regarded)

Whether you realize it or not, this is an important appeal. Again in Judaism it just wasn't anyone who could redeem a fellow Israelite. Leviticus 25 is very specific as to who could and could not redeem a person or piece of property. From this I want you to see that in the Old Testament, redemption required a particular standing; a specific relation to the one who owned the rights to the person or property!

Well Paul took this concept and tweaked it when it came to the redemption of Onesimus.

How is it that Paul could argue for the release of Onesimus? Was Paul the next of kin? Did he have a legal right?

NO! Paul grounded the redemption of Onesimus on something far more basic and fundamental. He grounded it in the relationship Paul enjoyed with Philemon; they were "partners" when it came to the Kingdom of God.

What is denoted by this?

The term partner<sup>7</sup> is related to the word commonly used for fellowship throughout the Bible, *koinonia*. In its most essential form, its root references that which is "common" and so refers to something that is mutually shared by two or more people. As a term of commerce, the word in our passage could be used of a business partnership.<sup>8</sup>

Our passage is speaking of a business partnership. Through the work of Christ, Paul and Philemon had become, as it were, "partners" in the Kingdom. And it was based on his official "partnership" that Paul makes his plea!

Now you must see that this appeal is deeper and stronger than any relationship presupposed by the Law of Redemption in the Old Testament. In contrast, Paul here was not stressing his rights, but the mutual relationship which he enjoyed with Philemon which was a far superior ground upon which to argue for redemption.

With the Law of Redemption, there always seemed to be the possibility that a closer relative could come forward and claim the prize; think of Ruth 3:12. Here Paul moves himself one step closer than what was possible in Leviticus. As a partner with Philemon, he makes his claim to Onesimus to be one and the same as was Philemon's!

Partnership implies a sharing when it comes to liabilities, profits, and resources; whether it be in a business, marriage, etc. Joint partnership means joint authority. Thus Paul is arguing that his acceptance of Onesimus binds his partner also.

Well how does this apply to the Redemption purchased by Christ?

Don't miss it! Earlier we saw in Psalm 49 that no mortal man could redeem his or another soul from sin because the distance that separates us from God is far too great! (Again an Ox has a better chance of

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him as a prophet."

<sup>7</sup> κοιωνος *koinonos*

<sup>8</sup> Compare Luke 5:10. This was a common use for this term in the papyri. Compare also, Arthur, A. Rupprecht, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 11, Philemon, page 462.

redeeming a slave than we do a soul!) Yet such is NOT the case when it comes to Christ! Christ not only was a Kinsman Redeemer; that is a man like us, but as a “partner” when it comes to God the Father, His rights and claims are one and the same as God the Father’s. In other words, Christ has the authority to redeem man by virtue of His relationship with God, He is a Partner!<sup>9</sup>

This ought to transform your understanding of the redemption which Christ purchased for you. If there is anything that speaks of its permanence, it is this; as God, if Christ deigned to redeem you from your sin, there is no one or no body that could

- Stop Him!
- Make a prior claim!
- At the last moment come forward and object!

### Zephaniah 3

Indeed! We are brands plucked from the fire such that the stench of death and hell at times can be detected on our person. And so there are times when fear grips our heart such that we think that perhaps on the Day of Judgment we will be found guilty after-all; still condemned on account of a prior claim!

You say, “What claim?”

The claim of Satan!

Prior to our redemption from the wrath of God, we were his. He owned the rights to our soul. Could it be that in the end when...

- The worms fight for our body.
- Our relatives for our possessions.
- The demons for our soul.

that Satan could prevail and so win?

Listen! Your redemption was not accomplished by a mortal, but none other than God Himself! It was/is on this basis that Christ came forward and accomplished our redemption! In fact, notice the certainty here. When Paul approached Philemon to argue for the Redemption of Onesimus, he said, “If you regard me a partner...” Brothers and sisters, there is no “IF” when it comes to Christ’s authority. He is God! And so He has the authority; an authority that never will be altered, diminished, or removed!

### A conferred Identity

Such is the glorious standing that Christ enjoys this day with God and hence an important element to the redemption we enjoy as believers! Notice secondly when it comes to our redemption it involves a conferred identity.

Philemon 1:17, “If thou count me therefore a partner, **receive him as myself.**”

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<sup>9</sup> Christ is God, 1 John 5:20. As such, He and the Farther are one. John 10:30

More literally this passage reads, “Take him,” “welcome him,” or “embrace him as you would me!” I love the concept here. As one claiming partnership with Philemon and so a shared authority, Paul makes a request directed NOT at Onesimus, BUT the slave’s owner and Paul’s partner!

What was the request?

That when it came to Onesimus, Philemon view him, treat him, and so accept him as if he were Paul, for after all, wasn’t Onesimus Paul’s very heart (Philemon 12)!

In fact, the word used here for “receive/accept him” once again is a word of commerce denoting the “taking on of another as a partner.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, Paul is asking Philemon that just as they together enjoyed a partnership, so too he must accept Onesimus as a partner when it comes to the business of the Kingdom.

Now this would not be the first or the last time that a person outside of the creation of the original partnership would be treated as if he were in on the ground level. Think specifically of a business partnership when one of the original founders dies. What happens? His heir inherits his stake in the company such that he now speaks with the same voice as the father.

This is the nature of the authority Paul is seeking to confer upon Onesimus. Appealing to the partnership he enjoyed with Philemon, Paul in essence sent back Onesimus as if the disciple in fact had inherited Paul’s part in the relationship. Or to change the metaphor in line with this text, Paul had accepted Onesimus into the “partnership,” now Philemon must do the same! F. F. Bruce paraphrased the verse in this way:

“‘If you regard me a partner,’ says Paul, ‘take him on as a partner too, on the same footing as myself.’”<sup>11</sup>

Now with this point there is no Old Testament precedent for this when it comes to the redemption of one’s property or a loved one. Nowhere do we read of a shared identity which results in this kind of treatment of a slave. But lo and behold, there was and is in the Kingdom of God!

When Christ redeemed you, He conferred upon you the glorious privileges which He Himself enjoyed with the Father.

- He the apple of God’s eye! Well now so are you (Psalm 17:8; Zechariah 2:8)!
- He has the right of Sonship! Well now so do you (John 1:12-13)!
- God treated Him with honor and respect! So is your standing in the Kingdom of God (Galatians 4:5-6)!
- Christ enjoys the wealth of eternity! Now also do you (2 Corinthians 8:9)!
- His life, fellowship and intimacy is with God! Today in Christ we are living out His life (Colossians 3:4)!
- He will judge the world? So will you (1 Corinthians 6:2)!
- God always hears His prayer? So it is now with you (James 5:16)!

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<sup>10</sup> Compare F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, NICNT, footnote #87, page 219.

<sup>11</sup> Compare *The Epistle to the Colossians to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, NICNT, page 219

Do you understand what this means?

By grace we have become partners with God. As God accepts Christ, so He now accepts you! Such is the second characteristic of the Redemption we have received in Christ!

Now brothers and sisters, we must not take from this any notion that somehow today we are as a god before the Lord. Truly being received in the name of another person doesn't make us that person. However we must NOT downplay the rights and privileges we enjoy before God on account of the righteousness of Christ being conferred upon us this day!

Don't miss it, and yes we are getting a little ahead of ourselves here, When Christ hung on the cross and died in our place, we received His righteous record.

2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

From this we draw the conclusion that no longer when God sees us does He see our sinfulness. Rather, He beholds the righteousness of His own Son.

Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

As that is the case, then we conclude that when God looks at you He is well-pleased, taken aback, and impressed for He does NOT see you or me, He sees the Son!

Do you see now how Paul could say that "nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39)?

When God looks upon us, He beholds NOT our sin, BUT the righteousness of Christ and so the identity of His Son! Such is another characteristic of our redemption! And so, the redemption of man

- Requires a specific standing on the part of the Redeemer- which is what Christ has as He is God.
- Involves a Conferred Identity such that today we stand before God in Christ!

Notice a third characteristic without which Onesimus could not enjoy his redemption;<sup>12</sup> redemption involves the assumption of liability.

Philemon 1:18, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account."

Once again we note the terms of commerce used here. Thus far we've seen a reference to

- A partnership, v. 17a.
- A conferred identity/inheritance, v. 17b.
- And now the concept of accounts receivables!

Don't miss it! When he escaped, Onesimus did much by way of harm to Philemon and his plantation. Not only did the runaway damage his master's property, but he also stole from him. Now by this point, the

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed the lack of restitution would have been a "show-stopper" to Onesimus' redemption. Onesimus had done positive damage. This damage had to be addressed

money undoubtedly was long gone. And rather than placing upon Onesimus the Old Testament requirement levied against all thieves; specifically the paying back of double what they stole.<sup>13</sup> Paul here simply assumed the liability of all that Onesimus owed Philemon. And lest you think that this is no big deal restitution is an essential component of forgiveness. So long as an individual believes that a wrong has not been righted; either by the person or by Christ, there always will be a sense that there is “unfinished business” between them and their former adversary.

That is why Scripture is quick to speak of “restitution” when it comes to transgression against another.<sup>14</sup> Truly without restitution, the fellowship which flows from a relationship will be hindered! And with this we behold the radical nature of the redemption for which Paul argued here!

In Rome a system had developed for all thieves- be they intentioned thieves<sup>15</sup> or not. When someone owed another person an amount which they couldn’t repay, the individual was thrown into debtor’s prison. Here the individual remained until a family member or close friend repaid the debt; in the case of a petty thief, this most likely would never happen which means his prison sentence would have been for life.

That Onesimus might not have to suffer in a debtor’s prison of Philemon’s own making, Paul here stepped forward and took upon himself the liability for all that Onesimus owed- Paul here is offering his own “right standing before Philemon” his own good credit- as the basis for Philemon’s forgiveness. Such a liability would include

- The original amount stolen.
- The cost of repairs for the damage Onesimus brought to Philemon’s property.
- Most likely a doubling of the total amount owed- in keeping with Jewish expectations.
- And any interest that Philemon under the Roman system cared to levy.

That’s quite the commitment on Paul’s part. Yet that’s what would have been required for Onesimus legally and relationally to be delivered from his obligation to his master.<sup>16</sup> Now you must see that such holds true when it comes to the redemption we have received in Christ. The fruit of forgiveness would be null and void without the paying back of any and all debts!

You say...

- What debt have we accrued before God?
- I haven’t stolen anything from God or damaged any of His property!
- What possibly could I owe the Lord?

Don’t miss it, for upon the head of every man rests quite a heavy burden, the debt of creation! First of all involved in our creation is

### The Debt of Obedience

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<sup>13</sup> Exodus 22:1-5; Numbers 5:6-8

<sup>14</sup> Compare Exodus 22; Numbers 5:7-8; Leviticus 5:16; 6:5; and 2 Samuel 12:6

<sup>15</sup> That is, unpayable debt.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur A. Rupprecht wrote, “In fact, slave prices in the Greco-Roman world were directly proportional to the skill and economic value of the slave. A common drudge brought only 500 *denarii* (a *denarius* was a laborer’s ordinary daily wage), but skilled teachers, physicians, and actors were purchased for a hundred times as much.” (EBC, page 462)



Genesis 2:16-17, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

When God fashioned this world and then placed us in it, He initiated a relationship with man which required his entire person his entire life. From the very beginning it was clear that Adam was not his own man

- His time.
- His labor.
- The work of his hands.
- His marriage.
- His goings in and out.
- His rising and lying down.

All were to be unto Christ. Mankind owed God their lives! It was based on this fact that Tozer wrote so eloquently this paragraph:

"The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long; but even if the multiple burdens of time may be lifted from him, the one mighty single burden of eternity begins to press down upon him with a weight more crushing than all the woes of the world piled one upon another. That mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul [and] to obey Him perfectly..."<sup>17</sup>

Do you see how our creation has made us obligated to God? Do you see that as long as we live, we owe God perfect obedience?

### The Debt of Worship

That's the first debt. There is yet another, the debt or obligation of worship.

Revelation 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

This passage is referencing what is known as the Doctrine of Creator Rights. Because God is the One who created us, He ALONE has the right to our worship. As Paul said, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Romans 9:21).

Truly on account of our creation, we have the obligation to

- Worship God alone.
- Give glory to nothing other than God.
- Be a living sacrifice, holy devoted to God.

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<sup>17</sup> A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Pages 10-11

From this I hope you see that it is not enough that Jesus died on the cross as the penalty for our sin. That solves one half of our problem. The other half is our obligation to God; the fact that we owe Him everything!

Yet that's why Christ came to this earth! He came to insure our liabilities... to pay these our debts!

How did He do this?

He did it in two ways<sup>18</sup> first He upheld the law of God perfectly- IOW, He made good on what we owe to God by virtue of creation. And then He freely gave us His right standing before God.

2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Implied in this statement is the fact that while Christ received the death we deserve, we received His life His right standing.

Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Truly Christ upheld the law of God on our behalf and so assumed our liability to live perfectly before God. With this we behold a third characteristic when it comes to our redemption: The Assumption of all our Liabilities.

When Christ came to the earth, He fulfilled the claim that God had on all of mankind.<sup>19</sup> Indeed through His death, He satisfied God's justice. Through His life, He satisfied our obligation! This is such a glorious and important part of Redemption which many look past.

Next week we'll talk about Christ's death and its effect on our redemption, yet let's consider His life.

How would it be to be delivered from the penalty of sin, but still be strapped with the obligation of restitution?

### The Unmerciful Servant

Consider the parable of the unmerciful servant. A regional tax collector is brought before his lord and asked about the 10,000 talents that he owed. Now, a debt of 10,000 is astronomical. By conservative estimates, it would take the common man in Christ's day 2,777 lifetimes to earn that much money.<sup>20</sup> Now, he obviously doesn't have the money. Yet in grace, the master forgives the entire debt.

Matthew 18:27, "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

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<sup>18</sup> This references what in theology is identified as the Active and Passive obedience of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> i.e., all people groups.

<sup>20</sup> The Attic talent, which probably is the weight mentioned here, amounted to no less than 6,000 denarii- or 16 1/2 years worth of labor for the common man. From this we conclude that it would have taken the common man 166,667 years to amass this much wealth. Or assuming an average life span of 60 years, it would have taken 2,777 lifetimes to accumulate 10,000 talents!

Now imagine if the master merely “released him,” but then held the tax collector liable to repay the 10,000 talents?

While the tax collector wouldn’t be in a physical prison, nevertheless the obligation to make up what he lacked would become a prison. This is the scenario for each and every one of us, had Christ NOT assumed the liability which creation imposed! Had Christ merely paid the penalty for our rebellion and nothing else, today we would be imprisoned to a calling we could never fulfill- not in 2,777 lifetimes.

- Perfect worship?
- The perfect utilization of our time?
- Being moved and swayed only by God and no other weight or compulsion?

Truly while our life no longer would be on the line, nevertheless there could be no relationship with God, for we’d be wracked with guilt on account of how poorly we had done! Yet let it be known and understood today that Christ not only paid the penalty of our sin but He also assumed our liability by virtue of creation: Perfect Obedience... Perfect Worship.

Now personally I’d like to stop here, go to the table, and then pronounce the benediction. Yet responsibility won’t allow me. Over the past thirty or so years, the reformed camp has seen a variety of “movements” which have called the church back to the gospel! I praise God for these movements. However, as I consider them, they are not without criticism. For while they have gloried in Christ’s death, they have neglected Christ’s life and its implication upon our own!

If the grace of God in your life hasn’t burdened you to

- Serve the Lord more passionately.
- Want to offer yourself a living and holy sacrifice to God.
- Be faithful to the Lord.
- Honor Him in all your doings.

Then you have sorely misunderstood not only the grace of God, but the work of Christ on your behalf. Properly understood, redemption frees a man for the first time in his life to

- Obey God.
- Serve Him with a whole heart and willing mind.
- Fulfill the demands of creation, yet without the guilt or the threat.
- Delight in the law of God.
- Glory in fulfilling it.

All without fear!

How does this work?

Consider the life of Christ. When we consider Christ’s life we note that by virtue of our creation there rests upon us the demand for total devotion/consecration to God! This obligation results in a disposition on the part of the child of God which wants to obey, serve, love God. And that brings us to the problem.

Notice that it is NOT sin which is preventing us from fulfilling the demand of our Creation, it is our humanness. If the fall teaches anything it is NOT that Adam and Eve were bungling idiots RATHER it is that even a perfect man falls short of God's glory! And so though Christ's cross-work dealt with the penalty which resulted from our rebellion, the Christian still lives mindful of their obligation to God! Accordingly they live with guilt.

Think again of the Unmerciful Servant. Imagine if only his penalty was removed, but not his debt? That is how so many in Christ live today. Yet would you notice the bearing that Christ's life has on the demands of Creation.

Christ fulfilled creation's demands such that now the Christian is freed from any guilt that might arise on account of our Creation-Obligation.

John 8:30-32, "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Free to do what?

Free to obey for the first time without the threat of judgment!

Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Paul, having proclaimed this glorious truth- freedom from Creation's Obligation- notice the exhortation. It is one and the same as the obligation of creation; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

When Christ came in the flesh, He upheld the obligation of Creation. As such, when a person comes to a saving knowledge of Christ, they now relate to God NOT ONLY as ones who have fulfilled the covenant of works, BUT ALSO as ones who have upheld the obligation of our creation. Now in Christ, the only obligation is the obligation that flows from love. "For the love of Christ controls us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

And what compulsion does love and so grace place upon us?

Titus 2:11-14, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

You will note that the exhortation which flows from grace is one and the same as the obligation which creation placed upon man. It's that now in Christ there is no condemnation either before the covenant or creation! Thus the Christian is freed from any hint of guilt; free to serve God without fear of reproof!

O.K. How does this translate into our lives? What difference does all of this make?

Chris and Grace

I want you to consider two Christian women: Chris and Grace.

Chris was raised in a loving Christian home; yet her parents were perfectionists. As such, Chris rarely could do anything right. When she cleaned her room, her parents would inspect the room and tell her what she had done wrong. When she washed the car, her parents would point out the areas she had missed. It got so bad that Chris grew up rather insecure. She knew her parents loved her. But she also knew she never could measure up.

Now when it came to her walk with God, her parent's perfectionism had disastrous results. Though saved by grace in Christ alone, do you know what she did? She related to God with the same insecurity as she did with her parents. Accordingly, any and every command of God was met with dread... for she knew she'd never measure up.

Then there's Grace. She too was raised in a loving Christian home; yet her parents related to her with a little more grace. In fact, outside of rebellion, Grace really could do no wrong. When she cleaned her room, she was greeted with a "Well done!" Later she was instructed on how she could have done a better job. When she washed the car, her parents said, "You have no idea what a blessing that was. Thank you so much!"

This level of acceptance ingratiated her all the more to her parents such that she found herself living to bless her parents. And so she found things to do around the house... just to receive those precious words, "Well done, thou good and faithful daughter." Well she too was a believer. And as such, she brought this same sense of blessing to her walk with Christ. Indeed! She rejoiced over the cross-work of Christ which paid for her sin. But she also understood that God's disposition toward her, on account of Christ's life (His active obedience), was one of constant well-pleasing.

The result is that Grace found herself delighting in the law in the inner man. She longed to do it. She loved to do it. NOT because she believed that it made her more acceptable to God. BUT because she understood that with every activity, she would be greeted with, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Listen! Christ had cleaned the bathroom or washed the car. How could she fail when she went in afterwards?

Today, the church is filled with Chris's and Graces. And the message both continue to need to hear is that Christ is their all in all- both in His life and His death! As such, they no longer need to live with...

- The fear of wrath- Christ died on the cross in their place.
- The guilt of failure- Christ lived His life in their place.

Such is the third element of Redemption!

## **About Bethel Presbyterian Church**

*The Bethel Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is published regularly.

### **VISIT US WHEN IN Broomfield, COLORADO**

Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10<sup>th</sup> Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

All our sermons can be accessed via the World Wide Web. The recording for this sermon and these notes can be found [The Elements of Redemption](#). The web address for all sermons at Bethel Presbyterian Church can be found out as follows: <http://bethelpresbyterian.sermonaudio.com>

### **About the Preacher**

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on June 15, 2008. Greg is the preacher at Bethel Presbyterian Church