

The Rescue, Redemption, and Reconciliation Found in Jesus Christ
Colossians 1:13-23

Introduction

1. If you remember, last week we learned how it is the wisdom and knowledge found in Jesus Christ that allows us to not only know God and His will, but to please Him and do His will
2. Paul summarized what it means to please God by using four participles:
 - a. Bearing fruit in every good work
 - b. Increasing in the knowledge of God
 - c. Being strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might
 - d. And, joyously giving thanks to God for at least two things:
 - 1) The inheritance we now share with the saints
 - 2) Rescuing us from the domain of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of Jesus
3. We ended our study at v. 14, but grammatically and contextually the passage doesn't end there
4. Vs. 13-23 all fall under the fourth participle—"joyously giving thanks" and provide the explanation for how God qualified us to share in the inheritance and how He rescued us—and once again it all has to do with Jesus Christ
5. Outline:
 - a. God RESCUED us in Christ (13)
 - b. God REDEEMED us in Christ (14-18)
 - c. God RECONCILED us in Christ (19-23)

A. God RESCUED us in Christ (READ 1:12-13)
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1. One of the major themes that runs through both the Old and New Testaments is that God is One who rescues or delivers His people:
 - a. We have entire books like Exodus, Judges and Esther dedicated to God's deliverance
 - b. It's a thread that runs through much of Israel's history and references to God's deliverance are repeated in nearly half the Old Testament books
 - c. In the Bible we see God deliver from danger, sickness, death, enemies, hostility, sin, and even His wrath
 - d. Here, we see another aspect of God's rescue or deliverance
2. According to the Bible, there are two domains which refer to spheres of influence, power, rule, and authority (rather than territory or location):
 - a. One is the domain of darkness:
 - 1) In Acts 26:18 Paul refers to this domain as the "**domain of Satan**" because it is governed (if you will) by him and the enemies of God, both spiritual and earthly
 - 2) Listen to how Paul describes it in Ephesians 6:12: "**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**"
 - 3) As a result, the domain of darkness is one of rebellion against God, sin and death
 - 4) Most of the world is under the influence and control of this domain—if you allow me to paraphrase Jesus, people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds are

evil; they hate the light because it exposes their deeds so they stay in darkness (John 3:19-20)

- b. The other domain is the domain of Light:
 - 1) There are various names for this in the Bible: the Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven
 - 2) We see this referenced in v. 12 when Paul wrote that God has **“qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light”**
 - 3) This domain is the domain of Jesus, it is governed and controlled by Him; in fact Jesus **IS** the Light (this is a major theme in John’s Gospel):
 - a) John 1:1-9 (READ)
 - b) John 3:19-21 (READ)
 - c) John 8:12: **“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”**
 - 4) The domain of Light is one of holiness, righteousness, and goodness, and it is free of sin and death
- 3. Now, here’s the thing: we were all once members of the domain of darkness, but God has RESCUED us from that domain and transferred us to a new kingdom, the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus (REREAD v. 13):
 - a. Paul described our former lives as children of the domain of darkness in Ephesians 2:2-3 (READ):
 - 1) Because we were members of the domain of darkness, we walked the way the world walks, which is according to Satan, the **“prince of the power of the air”**
 - 2) We were controlled by the **“lust of our flesh”** and did what our fallen flesh and minds desired to do
 - 3) We were slaves of sin as Paul wrote in Romans 6:17
 - 4) As a result, we were by our very nature children of God’s wrath
 - b. But, God RESCUED us and we are now children of the Light (READ Ephesians 5:8):
 - 1) We are now members of a new domain, a new kingdom
 - 2) Peter described it this way (1 Peter 2:9): **“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”**
 - 3) As members of this new kingdom went from being slaves to sin and are now servants of God and Christ (Romans 6:19-22)
 - 4) So, we are no longer to be controlled by the flesh but instead we can now be led by the Holy Spirit (READ Galatians 5:16-18)

B. God not only rescued us in Christ, but He REDEEMED us in Christ (READ 14-18)
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- 1. To redeem something means to release or set it free, generally through a payment of some kind or a ransom
- 2. What Paul tells us here is that God has REDEEMED us—set us free—and he highlights the **NATURE** of our redemption and the **MEANS** of our redemption:
 - a. The **NATURE** of our redemption is found in v. 14: **“the forgiveness of sin”**:

- 1) We have been redeemed (e.g. freed) from the debt of sin
- 2) Look at Colossians 2:13-14 (READ):
 - a) A certificate of debt was a legal document hand-written by the debtor as proof of what he owed
 - b) Paul likens our sin to having resulted in such a certificate—a record of our sin and the debt or penalty we owed God
 - c) However, God has **“canceled out the certificate of debt...and has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”**
 - d) This means that our debt has been completely wiped away; we are debt free!
- b. The **MEANS** of our redemption is Christ:
 - 1) Notice Paul began v. 14 with **“in whom”**:
 - a) Romans 3:24: **“...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”**
 - b) According to 1 Corinthians 1:30, Jesus became redemption for us
 - c) Ephesians 1:7: **“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”**
 - 2) As Paul just alluded to, redemption is possible in Jesus because through the shedding of His blood, He became the ransom—the payment—which covered our debt:
 - a) In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said, **“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**
 - b) 1 Timothy 2:5-6: **“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”**
 - 3) This is not something we or any mere mortal could have done; only Jesus could redeem us and it boils down to two reasons (1:15-18):
 - a. The first reason only Jesus could redeem us is because He is the **FIRSTBORN** of all creation (15-17): this refers to Jesus having pre-eminence or superiority over all of Creation; He is head over everything
 - **“He is the image of the invisible God”** (15a): this is a reference to Jesus’ divinity; He is God; Hebrews 1:3 says, **“and he is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature...”**; In John 10:30, Jesus claimed to be God when He said, **“I and the Father are One.”**; we know this because the Jews immediately picked up stones and accused Him for claiming to be God!
 - He is **“the firstborn of creation”** (15b): in the ANE the word firstborn referred not necessarily to the first child born, but the child who was given the highest rank and primary authority among siblings; Jesus, as both fully God and fully human, is the firstborn of creation, the highest in rank and authority
 - **“For by Him all things were created, both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him”** (16): Jesus is obviously supreme over Creation because everything that was created was created BY Him, THROUGH Him, and FOR Him
 - **“He is before all things”** (17): this refers to Jesus’ eternal pre-existence; He existed before anything was created; John 1:1 says, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

- **“and in Him all things hold together”** (17b): Jesus not only created everything that exists, but He maintains/sustains all things; without Him, nothing outside of the Trinity could continue to exist!
- b. The second reason only Jesus can redeem us is because He is also the **FIRSTBORN** of the dead (READ 18):
- Jesus is not only the head of all Creation, He is head of the Church—a new spiritual and human entity made up of redeemed individuals
 - “He is the beginning” of this entity because He is “the firstborn from the dead”; Romans 8:29 says that, **“For those whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He [Jesus] would be the firstborn among many brethren”**
 - Jesus was not only the first to be resurrected (born from the dead), but first in rank, authority, and superiority; **“so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”**

C. God RECONCILED us in Christ (READ 19-23)
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1. The Biblical concept of reconciliation refers to fixing the broken relationship between God and man that resulted from sin; it is the restoration of our relationship with God to a state of peace and harmony
2. And, just as God RESCUED us in Christ, and REDEEMED us in Christ, He also RECONCILED us in Christ
 - a. This was something that pleased God: **“it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness [deity] to dwell in Him [Jesus] and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself,”**
 - b. It was something made possible only through the Cross and the death of His Son: **“having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven”**
 - 1) Ephesians 2:13: **“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”**
 - 2) Romans 5:9-10: **“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”**
 - c. What’s remarkable about this is that God did this **“even through you [we] were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death...”** (21-22);
 - 1) Think about that! God sacrificed His own son for the sake of His enemies. Wow!
 - 2) READ Romans 5:8-11
 - d. And, He did this **“in order to present you [us] before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—”** (22a); this is precisely the purpose for which God called us according to Ephesians 1:4: **“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him”**

Takeaway:

1. I believe one big takeaway for our passage this morning is found in the final verse (READ 23)
 - a. Notice that our RESCUE, our REDEMPTION, and our RECONCILIATION are all tied to one thing: continuing in the faith firmly established and steadfast
 - b. They are all tied to the hope of the Gospel that we've heard
 - c. This Gospel is proclaimed in all creation under heaven because these things are ONLY found in Christ:
 - 1) There is no RESCUE apart from Christ
 - 2) There is no REDEMPTION apart from Christ
 - 3) There is no RECONCILIATION apart from Christ
2. The Colossians were seemingly forgetting that:
 - a. They had found their hope in the Gospel and placed their faith in Jesus
 - b. But, they were in danger of moving away from the hope of the Gospel and placing their hope in other things like philosophy, legalism, mystical practices, and man-made religion
 - c. Somehow they believed that through these things they could learn deeper truths about God and experience Him more deeply
3. We face the same danger today:
 - a. There are voices out there that tell us we need to do more
 - b. That faith in Jesus alone isn't enough to please God or draw near to Him
 - c. There's all kinds of false teaching that tries to draw us away from the simplicity of the Gospel