

# Our Identity in Christ: Redemption

I'd like to thank Reverend Rico Magnelli and the other organizers for the awesome invitation to teach at this extraordinary event on ***Our Identity in Christ: Redemption***. I consider it an honor to address a group so devoted to the accurate study, in-depth instruction, and exuberant sharing of God's Word.

This morning as we delve into the subject of our redemption in Christ, we will first consider what constitutes a person's identity. Each of us has certain roles we play in life that inform not only what we think of ourselves, but also what others think of us. For instance, me.

**"Who are you, Tom?"**

*I am a husband, father, and grandfather, the head of a believing household.*

Last month my wife Marilyn and I were in Florida to help out at the birth of our youngest grandchild. Then last week we celebrated our wedding anniversary back home in North Carolina.

Our marriage brought together two families from opposite sides of the world—mine from the U.S.A., hers from Malaysia. A couple in this circumstance has some decisions to make—for instance, where to live. If you settle close to one family, you'll be far from the other family, and vice versa. Before we were engaged, my wife had told God that if she were to marry a foreigner and live in a foreign country, she would have to feel as much at home with his family as with her own, or the marriage couldn't work. And, it was just as important to me that her family be as close to me as mine.

Well, God answers prayer, and that is indeed how things worked out. As a matter of fact, our lives in the years since have in many ways come to be a fulfillment of the verse we had printed on our wedding invitations. You'll find it in the Old Testament book of Ruth. Ruth 1:16b:

... thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God:

So yes, our identity in marriage and families is personal; but what's even more personal? ***OUR REDEMPTION IN CHRIST!*** And in this teaching, I aspire to give you a glimpse into just how intimately our heavenly Father has drawn us to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ, and provided a family where we can grow and flourish together, now and through all eternity.

Today we will survey God’s Word to comprehend the past, present, and future of our redemption. As a corollary, we need to realize that redemption revolves around two basic concepts: *payment* and *release*. We need to understand both the price that was paid, and what we were released *from*.

We will look at our payment and release through the lens of past, present, and future.

#### PAST — PAYMENT AND RELEASE PLANNED

- ***Before the foundation of the world***, God authored the plan of redemption

#### PRESENT — PAYMENT AND RELEASE ACCOMPLISHED

- Jesus Christ paid the ransom for our release ***now*** from the bondage of sin and its consequences

#### FUTURE — PAYMENT MADE; RELEASE AWAITED

- As heirs of God, we eagerly await our ***future*** release from the bondage of corruption and the redemption of our bodies from the grave

In this teaching, we will examine each stage of our redemption: past, present, and future. The end result of our quest is that we will discover that, as the *redeemed*, we are identified as ***GOD’S VERY OWN, BOTH NOW AND FOREVER!***

To trace the development of our redemption from *God’s plan* to *Christ’s ransom* to *our full release*, we will turn to two books of the Bible: in the New Testament, the Book of Ephesians; and in the Old Testament, the Book of Ruth. In Ruth, we will see the *plan* God designed for a kinsman-redeemer. In Ephesians, we will see our *redemption, accomplished and future*. You may want to use your Bible ribbons to mark Ruth 1 and Ephesians 1, because we will be returning to these chapters throughout the teaching.

#### PAYMENT AND RELEASE PLANNED

Turn to Ephesians, chapter 1. Our redemption could never have happened if God had not first planned it. What’s more, in order to plan it, He had to have first desired it. So, “**WHY** did God redeem mankind?” Quite simply because as the God of love, it was His intense, personal desire to have sons whom He could love and who would love Him in return.

Ephesians 1:5:

[Verse 5 should begin with the last two words of verse 4, “In love”]

God redeemed us for love, and love alone. He intensely desired to have us as sons, and His means for drawing us to Himself was Jesus Christ's complete and total giving of *himself*. He crafted a plan of redemption from the very beginning so that men could be born-again as His *children* and legally adopted as His *sons*.

Let's focus for a moment on the phrase "adoption of children". As it reads in the KJV, it gives the impression that we are the ones doing the adopting; when in reality, it is God Who adopted us. The Greek word is *huiiothesia*, the term used for the legal process called adoption. It can be translated "adoption as sons" or "placement as sons". *Huiiothesia* — also translated "sonship" — is the basis on which we have our rights as God's sons. To adopt someone was to make him your *son* and thus to elevate him as your *heir*. Sonship was a legal status for adults, just as heirship was a civil status.

Sons may be adopted; children can only be born. In Greek and Roman law, to adopt someone was to make him your heir. The process of *huiiothesia* was therefore inextricably bound with the making of a will, and thus irrevocable. With good grounds a man could disown his son by birth; but he was legally barred from disowning his adopted son. Remarkably then, an adopted son had a stronger position than a son by birth!

*Huiiothesia* involved four elements: 1) a change of family; 2) a change of name; 3) a change of home; and 4) the capacity to inherit. To become a son, then, was to become an heir.

Having a fuller appreciation now of the implications of adoption and sonship, we can savor the translation of Ephesians 1:5 taken from Rotherham's Emphasized Bible [READ THIS TWICE]:

marking us out beforehand unto sonship, through Jesus Christ, for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

According to His good pleasure, God marked us out for Himself beforehand unto sonship through Jesus Christ. He wanted us, not just as *sons*, but as *heirs*!

Knowing *why* God redeemed us—for love's sake—we can proceed to an understanding of the question "**HOW** did God redeem us?" Turn to Galatians, chapter 4.

Galatians 4:3-5:

... that we might receive the adoption of sons [[huiiothesia](#), [placement as sons](#)].

Ephesians 1:5 identifies the *Author* of our sonship: **God**; Galatians 4:3-5 identifies the *agent* of our sonship: **God's Son**. As our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus Christ was the one closest to us who was legally qualified to redeem us. God redeemed us in Christ so we could receive placement as His sons.

On a human level, Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified to redeem mankind. As a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David, he came directly out of the believers' line. Furthermore, as God's only begotten Son, he was the one and only individual since Adam and Eve ever to have innocent blood and thus the potential to live a sinless life. Thus, out of all mankind, he became the nearest of our believing kinsmen who was qualified to be our perfect sacrifice by the shedding of his sinless blood, thus paying the price for our redemption once and for all.

We who were "without God and without hope" were certainly sorely in need of it! Before we were redeemed, our name was "not my people." Please turn to Hosea 2:23. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea. Hosea, chapter 2.

While you are finding the book, I will read the verse to you from another Bible version that I will be referencing at other times in this teaching: the ESV, or English Standard Version. I have personally found this version to often be one of the most insightful and Biblically accurate translations available in modern English today.

Hosea 2:23b (ESV):

... And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People [[Hebrew Lo-Ammi](#)], 'You are my people' [[Hebrew Ammi](#)]; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'"

Everything changed once we were redeemed. No longer "No Mercy", we became the recipients of God's mercy, showered upon us. No longer "not beloved", we became God's "beloved". No longer "not my people", we became "the people of God", "the children of the living God." This passage is echoed in Romans, chapter 9.

Romans 9:25-26:

... Osee [[Hosea – as we just read](#)]

The citing of Hosea 2:23 in these two verses is the figure of speech *quotation*, marking a special, God-denoted emphasis in this passage. God had said we were not His people; now He says, not only that we are His people, but that we are the *children of the living God*! That's you and me He's talkin' about there, Fella!

Please turn to Titus 2. Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus. Being called the children of the living God made us a “peculiar people”—God’s most treasured possession.

Titus 2:14

Today when someone says somebody is “peculiar”, we understand them to be saying that that person is odd or strange. When “peculiar” first came into the English vocabulary from the Latin, however, it was derived from a term meaning “one’s own property.” This is the signification of the phrase “peculiar people” in the King James Bible: *a people who are God’s own acquisition or possession*. As God’s “peculiar people”, we are *His very own!*

In I Peter 2, we see Hosea quoted once more, as well as another reference to “peculiar people”: God’s very own!

I Peter 2:9:

... a peculiar people [the ESV says, “a people for his own possession”];

Just look at that: God says we are “a people for His own possession”! How could we draw any closer to God than that?

Verse 10

Three times now God has reinforced the point: we were *Lo-Ammi* (Not My People), and now we are *Ammi* (My People). From *Lo-Ammi* to *Ammi* in one fell swoop! What a great, big, wonderful God! We truly are *His very own!*

#### OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER

To paint a picture of what this transition means for us in human terms, we will now turn to the Book of Ruth. In Ruth, Jesus Christ as the “red thread” of God’s Word is revealed as our Kinsman-Redeemer. Joshua, Judges, Ruth. Follow the record and see for yourself. Chapter 1.

Ruth 1:1

Moab was a land on the far side of the Dead Sea, in a country today known as Jordan. Descendants of Lot, the Moabites were relatives of the Israelites but worshipped idols rather than the God of Israel.

1:2-5

... the other Ruth [meaning “Beauty”]:

### **“Who are you, Ruth?”**

*I am a widow and a stranger in Israel. I am seeking rest and restoration with my husband’s people. Some would say I’m “Not God’s People”; but in my heart, I know I am “God’s People.”*

1:6-7

According to Eastern practice, when a woman’s husband died, it was the father-in-law’s responsibility to find another husband for her. In Ruth’s case, however, her father-in-law was dead. The option open to her was to stick by her mother-in-law Naomi. By remaining faithful to her husband’s family, Ruth was keeping that tradition.

As they were returning to Judah together, Naomi tried twice to dissuade her daughters-in-law from leaving their homes and families to accompany her back to her people. But they were reluctant to do this, having invested their lives together over ten years and having grown close in every way. Finally, though, the one daughter relented and decided to go back. But Ruth clung to her.

1:14-15

A decision to return would have meant going back, not only to her people, but also to her gods. But Ruth was resolutely determined to do otherwise.

1:16 -19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem...

Ruth’s response arrested Naomi’s attention. Clearly, she had made up her mind. There would be no further discussion.

Ruth 2:1:

1 ... his name [was] Boaz [[meaning “In him is strength”](#)].

Boaz was Ruth’s husband’s blood relative, or kinsman. This meant he could potentially play a key role in restoring Ruth’s inheritance – that of the kinsman-redeemer. A man who was next of kin had the right to buy back a deceased relative’s property and marry his widow. Let’s see how the story unfolds.

2:2

Today we only use the word “glean” in a figurative sense: “Let me see what I can glean out of the article.” In the agricultural society of the ancient Near East, however, gleaning had quite another meaning: to gather stalks or ears of

grain left by reapers. So, if you were hungry and looking for food, the opportunity to glean was a vital activity.

2:3 ... and her hap was [Hebrew, “her chance chanced” – a figure intensifying the verb and emphasizing that in God’s eyes, this was no mere coincidence, but an integral part of His plan. We might say, “she just happened”] to light on a part ...

Again, we learn that Boaz was a part of the family. To be redeemed, one must be of the same family as the redeemer. Boaz was a wonderful man who was loved and respected by his servants and who, in turn, loved and respected them. He treated Ruth the same way, inviting her to glean as much as she needed to. This astonished Ruth. As the wife of Mahlon, Ruth had had an inheritance in Israel; but with his death, that inheritance was suspended. As a Moabitess, society counted her an outcast. But Boaz didn’t see it that way.

2:11

Boaz had taken the trouble to learn about who Ruth was, and who she loved. He understood all she had given up by choosing to leave her homeland and her family. He was impressed by her love, fearlessness, and dedication to the God and the people of Israel. He pronounced a blessing on her, confirming the full reward that God would give her (verse 12):

2:12 ... under whose wings [a figure, denoting God’s tender care] thou art come to trust.

Ruth gave a heartfelt reply.

2:13 ... thou hast spoken friendly unto [the Hebrew reads, “to the heart of”] thine handmaid,...

Boaz showed kindness and respect for Ruth, providing for her sustenance along with his own servants. Grateful for this, Ruth showed kindness and respect for Naomi, sharing of all the barley she had gleaned. Naomi wanted to know who her benefactor was, so she asked. Ruth told her plainly it was Boaz.

2:20 ... The man [is] near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen [Hebrew *goel*, meaning “kinsman-redeemer”].

The English Standard Version reads, “The man is a close relative of ours, *one of our redeemers*”. This is important, because not just anyone could play the role of the kinsman-redeemer. Only a near family member had the right to redeem

a relative who had been dispossessed of land or lost a husband. And Boaz was just such a potential redeemer!

Seeing the open door in front of them, Naomi instructed Ruth to stick by the other women gleaning in Boaz's field, and not to go elsewhere. Ruth did so willingly, remaining with them through the end of the harvest.

Harvesting the grain didn't end with gathering the stalks; the kernels needed to be separated from the hulls before the barley or wheat could be eaten. The process of beating out the grain from the husk was called threshing, and it took place on a circular, outdoor pad that had been cleared, leveled and beaten down: the threshing floor. Every village had one, and so did some individuals. Generally, the floor was situated on a rocky, exposed hilltop above the village. Since winnowing required wind and breezes often blew on hilltops in late evening or early morning, threshing would occur at night. Threshing was considered men's work, so no women were allowed on the threshing floor. Because the threshing floor was out in the open, the landowner would sleep next to the pile of winnowed grain to protect his treasure from thieves.

In addition to its use in threshing and winnowing the grain, the threshing floor with its prominent location also served as a meeting place for negotiations such as marriage agreements and redemptions. It was with this in mind that Naomi advised Ruth on how to approach Boaz. She was to go to the threshing floor secretly in the night and to wait until Boaz had finished eating and drinking and had fallen asleep guarding the grain pile. Then she was to quickly lie down at his feet and uncover them. Ruth was "all in."

Naomi's instructions were not what they might seem to be to the Western mind. She was not saying that Boaz would fall asleep drunk and that Ruth could take advantage of the situation sexually by lying down, uncovering his feet and offering herself up to him. First of all, activities on the threshing floor would have been visible to the whole village on a moonlit night. Second, as we'll see in a later verse, everyone in the village knew Ruth to be a virtuous woman. Third, Ruth was following a specific protocol regarding redemption that was known and accepted in the culture.

When Boaz suddenly awoke with a start to find a woman at his feet:

3:9-10 ... spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou [art] a near kinsman [*literally, "a redeemer"*].

Why did Ruth ask Boaz to spread his skirt over her? Because she knew he was not only a near kinsman, but one who had the right to redeem; and the spreading of the skirt was understood to represent redemption. The skirt was

a mantle: a loose, flowing garment worn both day and night. Covering a person with a mantle indicated assurance of protection. Laying down at the feet of one who had the right to redeem was a sign of complete surrender.

Ruth's actions were not indecent according to Eastern custom. When she laid down at his feet and asked him to spread his skirt over her, she was asking him not only to redeem *the land* that had been lost, but also to redeem *her* by marrying her and raising up progeny in the name of her dead husband. Her request was permissible and appropriate because Boaz was a qualified redeemer. How do you like that for "popping the question"?

3:11 -13

Boaz was determined to take care of the matter that day, so he went to the elders of the gate to explain the situation. Hailing a passerby who happened to be the relative with the first right of redemption, he told him of the land Naomi had for purchase to find out if he wanted to buy it back. This first kinsman had thought that there was only land to be redeemed. When he learned that he would also need to marry a widow and raise up seed in the dead husband's name, he decided to relinquish his right. This cleared the way for Boaz, who was next in line.

Ruth 4:7-8:

7 ... he drew off his shoe [sandal].

Drawing off one's sandal and giving it sealed the transfer of property. Thenceforth only the new owner had the legal right to walk on the property. The sandal was the earnest of the inheritance.

4:9 -11: [We are] witnesses...

4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son...

4:17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he [is] the father of Jesse, the father of David...

Little did Boaz and Ruth know at the time of Obed's birth that he would one day become the grandfather of David and a part of the Christ line: so the blessing extended both to children's children and beyond!

**"Who are you now, Ruth?"**

*I am REDEEMED!*

*No longer a stranger, I have a home and a place with God's people. I have rest in the house of my husband Boaz. I have joy with the birth*

*of my son Obed, and my beloved mother-in-law Naomi is his nurse. I have a legacy and an inheritance in Israel.*

Isn't God's Word incredible to portray our redemption on such a personal level? But we're not finished yet! Let's return to the New Testament to pick up the Grace Administration record on our redemption.

#### PAYMENT AND RELEASE ACCOMPLISHED

We will start with that part of our redemption for which payment and release has already been accomplished. Today we enjoy the initial benefits of our redemption—being redeemed from sin and its consequences. Jesus Christ paid for that redemption with the sacrifice of his own life. Ephesians 1:7 is the pivotal verse capturing the truth of our redemption **NOW**.

Ephesians 1:7

To redeem means "to buy back by paying the price". William Wilson translates the Hebrew word for "redeem" as "to demand back one's property", as in the repurchase of land that has been sold. Redemption is a release effected by the payment of a *ransom*.

The *ransom* was Jesus Christ's *blood*. When Ephesians 1:7 says we have redemption "through his blood", it's a two-part figure of speech where "blood" is put for the shedding of blood, which in turn is put for what Christ's death accomplished. This double emphasis underscores the enormity of what Jesus Christ did for us in spilling his life's blood.

Knowing that the ransom has been paid, from what have we been *released*? From the penalty and consequences of sin. Ephesians 1:7 equates our redemption with "the forgiveness of sins." What is the meaning of "forgiveness"?

The Greek word used in this verse for "forgiveness" is *aphesis*, which can be translated either "forgiveness" or "remission" according to the context. Remission of sin is the wiping out of past sins at the time of salvation. Forgiveness, in contrast, is the pardoning of sins committed after salvation, so that the believer's fellowship with God can be restored when it's been broken. In this verse, "remission" would be the appropriate translation by context. "In whom we have redemption through this blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of his grace." God's rich grace super-abounded to us. Truly, "redemption is so costly, that it must be free!"

Go to Romans, chapter 8. Being released from the bondage of sin, we have entered into a new life as sons.

Romans 8:15-17:

15 ... Spirit of adoption [the word for “adoption” is *huiiothesia*—a “sonship” spirit], ...

#### PAYMENT MADE; RELEASE FUTURE

This brings us to the future or concluding part of our redemption, when, as joint-heirs with Christ, we completely enter into and take possession of our full inheritance in our new bodies. The payment has been made; but for now, the release is still future. Ephesians 1:14 is the focal verse capturing the truth of our redemption in eternity.

Ephesians 1:14:

... earnest [token, guarantee] of our inheritance...

How did we obtain such an inheritance? We’ll find the answer in Galatians 4. When God put His spirit in our hearts, that made us His sons. And because we are now sons, we are also heirs of God through Christ.

Galatians 4:6-7

The essence of our inheritance lies in our being joint-heirs with Christ. How much does Christ have? All things, for he is God’s only-begotten son. I Corinthians 3 further underscores this truth, reminding us that “... all things are yours; ... And ye are Christ’s; and Christ [is] God’s.”

Even in the Old Testament, God looked at His people as His inheritance. Take a look at Deuteronomy 32. Being God’s people, we are also His portion. How near and dear we are to God’s heart!

Deuteronomy 32:9

As we learned earlier, to redeem is to demand back one’s property. We are God’s property! God through Christ has bought us back, and He’s not about to let us go!

What then is “the earnest of our inheritance” in Ephesians 1:14? It’s more than a pledge; it’s an actual payment or down payment. It’s the token or guarantee represented by our being sealed with the gift of holy spirit and the manifestations. Romans 8:23 calls it “the firstfruits of the Spirit”. It’s a little bit of the real thing in the here and now.

Romans 8:23:

... waiting for the adoption [*huiiothesia* – sonship], [to wit – or, that is to say], the redemption of our body.

Please turn to I Corinthians 15. When we were born again, God planted His seed in us: that’s the firstfruits of the Spirit. From that seed will one day sprout “the image of the heavenly”.

I Corinthians 15:49

At the time of the “redemption of the purchased possession” we will have been delivered from all sickness and death and will have new bodies made alive with eternal-life spirit. What a day that will be!

### GOD’S VERY OWN—NOW AND FOREVER

Knowing our unparalleled future, what should we do to express our gratitude to our heavenly Father for our priceless redemption in Christ? I Corinthians 6 holds a wonderful exhortation for us.

I Corinthians 6:20

... therefore glorify God in your body, [*the rest of the verse is omitted from all the critical Greek texts*]...

“Ye are bought with a price.” We got to be God’s special treasure because He paid for us with a precious price – the life of His beloved Son. No wonder He considers us *His very own*! We are His, He is ours and all is ours as His born-again sons.

What does it mean to “glorify God in your body”? Romans 15 gives the answer to that question.

Romans 15:6

Our walk in the body-soul category is comprised of what we think, say, and do. That is why we are to glorify God with one mind—a renewed mind; and one mouth—as spokesmen for God.

We have seen that we have not only been redeemed FROM something — the bondage of sin and a life without God and without hope – but that we have also been redeemed FOR something – living for Him! Having been bought with a price, we are to live like it!

In Philippians 3:9-10 the Apostle Paul makes his bold confession.

Philippians 3:9-10a:

And be found in him [Christ], ... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,...

“That I may be found in him... that I may know him.” What tremendous objectives! Now look at verse 12, which I will read to you from the ESV.

Philippians 3:12:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

**“Who are you, Tom?”**

*As a son of God and joint-heir with Christ, I am not just a member of an earthly household; I am a child in God’s heavenly household! I cling to my identity in Christ, a righteousness not my own but of God. I press onward to make that my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.*

Knowing that Christ Jesus has made us his own, we must always remember our identity as the redeemed:

*You are **GOD’S VERY OWN, BOTH NOW AND FOREVER!***

Return to Ruth, chapter 1. The heart of Ruth characterizes the soul of a person who is ready to stand up and be counted among the redeemed. Ruth 1, v. 16.

Ruth 1:16-17

As God’s treasured possession that He has bought with the blood of His only-begotten Son, let us go where He goes, let us make our abode with Him, let us cast our lot with Him and never look back, and let us cleave to our Father God, His Son Jesus Christ, and God’s faithful people. Only God knows how big He’ll bless you in return.

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” God bless you. I love you.