

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Second Sunday After Easter, April 14, 2024

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 56, 53:1-2, 206:1-5, 367, 200:1,2,8.

Lessons: Isaiah 53:4-9, Acts 2:14a and 22-32, Luke 24:13-35.

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

What is the most important thing that you have ever learned? What is the most important thing that you know? Peter is here reminding believers of the most important thing that they know: ***“You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”***

As he begins this letter Peter has just told us to exercise self-control and how to do it. He wrote ***“prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”*** (1 Peter 1:13–16, NIV84)

Now he gives you motivation to want to live as God’s obedient children. In order to stir you up to live lives that please God in all you do, Peter reminds us again of our

REDEMPTION

- 1. He tells us how it happened.**
- 2. He tells us what the price was.**
- 3. And he begins to tell us what this means for you.**

Peter is writing this letter ***“To God’s elect, strangers in the world ... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.”*** (1 Peter 1:1–2, NIV84)

He writes of the redemption that God has given us. You were redeemed. What that means is that you were bought back. Something was traded for you. When you redeem a coupon or a gift card, (hold up a gift card) you give it up for something else and that’s exactly what Jesus did to redeem you. He gave up something. He traded something in. As Scripture uses the word, the word redeem means to pay a price in order to free someone from captivity or slavery. The captivity from which Peter says his readers were freed was the ***“empty way of life”*** characterized by the evil desires they ***“had when you lived in ignorance.”*** (1 Peter 1:14, NIV84)

And it is redemption from more than just an ***“empty way of life”***. It is redemption from eternal damnation and from slavery to Satan. It is redemption from the slavery of sin.

The price that was paid was not silver or gold but the precious blood of Christ.

Before Jesus Christ was executed on the cross, he lived a perfectly holy, sinless life. He was the ***“lamb without blemish or defect”*** who was then slaughtered to save you.

In the Old Testament no one could approach the most holy place in the tabernacle and then later in the temple without a sacrifice of blood, and animals were sacrificed so that their blood could be sprinkled to appease God. All those sacrifices were pointing forward to the redemption, to the sacrifice that God’s own Son would make to pay for our sins.

We read in the letter to the Hebrew Christians that Jesus ***“did not enter [the Most Holy Place, which is a reference to the Temple where the Jews served God] by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”*** (Hebrews 9:12, NIV84)

Remember, he did that for you.

The very word lamb refers to sacrifice. And the sufferings and death of one person on a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem would be totally meaningless and useless if it were not for the results of that sacrifice.

The death of that man on that cross was not a very obvious sacrifice to save someone else. It was not a picture like a soldier throwing his body on a grenade to save his buddies right now. Not like a lifeguard drowning to save the life of someone else right now.

Peter may remember the words of John the Baptist: ***“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*** (John 1:29, NIV84) He may also be thinking of our Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 53 where we read ***“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*** (Isaiah 53:6, NIV84)

And as a Jew Peter surely remembers the Passover lamb and all that it signifies.

You were redeemed ***“with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”***

In the third verse of this letter Peter wrote ***“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*** (1 Peter 1:3, NIV84)

You have been born again. You have hope of something better than this life on earth.

As a redeemed, believing child of God, you now know, you are reminded of how important you are to God. God loved you this much (stretch out arms) and even more! He loved you so much that he traded the life of his only-begotten Son so that you might live forever.

Remember that we are strangers, living as outsiders in this sinful world. We are constantly attacked by temptations outside of us and are constantly attacked even by our own flesh, the ‘old man’ within us, like an autoimmune disease. There is no relenting of the attacks against us. We were lost and condemned creatures. We were in the power of Satan.

And for any hope to be saved we had to look outside ourselves.

What was the redemption price? Not silver or gold, which were considered the most valuable metals available in New Testament times. They are some of the most durable and valuable metals or minerals on earth.

But those things perish. Even an old silver or gold coin gets worn down. Look at the old coins in your pocket or your purse. Especially the solid silver coins made before 1965 get worn down. They are not permanent. Gold and silver do not last forever. But the ransom price Christ made lasts forever.

When it comes to what you know, the verse in the middle of our text is one of the very most important facts to learn for life.

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18–19, NIV84)

But it’s easy to set that idea aside. It is easy to find other ideas to fill our minds and lives with.

All mankind was captive in the bondage from which no gold or silver, nothing that men could pay was able to ransom them. All the treasure of the world could not ransom a single person. No corrupt ransom can save from a corrupt life.

Nor can the good life of any person save anyone. The Psalmist tells us ***“The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”*** (Psalm 14:2–3, NIV84)

The life of every single human being was filled with godlessness, lusts, and countless sins. Without Jesus Christ, without faith in Jesus Christ, I and you and every human being was condemned to eternal damnation. This is what we inherited from our ancestors. This was the tradition we inherited. Like the people Peter knew, our fathers and former generations had nothing better to pass on to their descendants, ***“the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.”***

Except for God and the ransom he provided, every human would have remained in bondage to their sins which leads only to hell.

Jesus Christ gave up his life. He traded his life. You were bought back from slavery.

The ransom price that was paid was **“precious blood.”** Animal blood would scarcely be called “precious.” Precious fits the idea of ransom, for ransom prices are high. Today ransom prices for a kidnapped person can be in the millions of dollars. But to ransom someone from the punishment and death of hell, even silver and gold do not suffice. The fact that precious **“blood”** was paid as the ransom price for the readers tells us that someone died in their stead, in place of them.

Jesus himself said that he came **“to give his life as a ransom.”** (Matthew 20:28, NIV84)

We’ve just come through the Lenten season, 40 days in which we especially looked at the bloody death of Christ. So you have recently heard about the price Jesus paid.

You, like every human in the world were totally in the possession of Satan. You had no choice.

But God redeemed you.

He redeemed you to give you something better than any life anyone could imagine here on earth.

And now you have the ability as a born-again child of God to serve him and your fellow men. You have a chance; you have opportunity to be light in the world through your actions and your words to show how important the true God is to you.

You are able to **“live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”** As a Christian you have the ability to “fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” That means we have the ability to give glory to God above all things by placing his word and command above the word and command of anyone else. We can honor God with respect and obedience. We don’t do this to try to earn redemption. Redemption has been given to us through the work of Christ. And because the Holy Spirit has worked faith in us, we have the ability to serve God.

Our faith thus rests in God, who, by raising Christ from the dead, has assured us that the ransom which was paid for our sins is sufficient. Because of this we have confidence in God the Father, who has accepted the sacrifice of Christ, our Advocate. Because of this, our hope and our faith are directed toward God and we have the certain conviction that God will make us partakers of the glory of Christ.

Lord, remind us every hour of every day that we are your children, so that we may serve you in righteousness, innocence and blessedness here on earth before your take us to heaven to serve you there forever! Amen.