



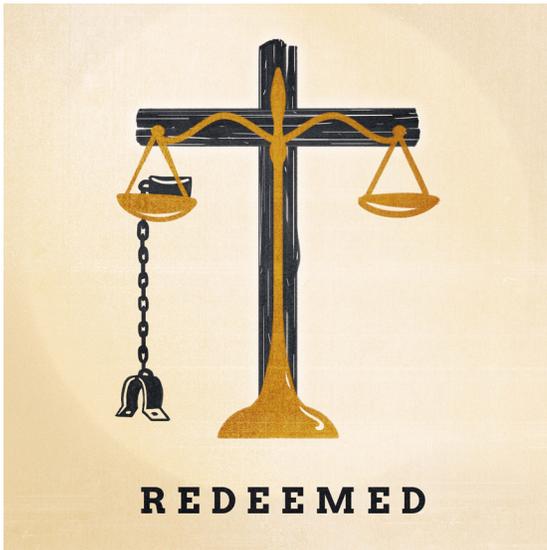
REDEEMED

Sermon Growth Guide

March 20, 2022

Redeemed - From Slavery to Sin

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Romans 6:3-14

Key Verse: Romans 6:14 "For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

Big Idea: Knowing that we are in Christ means that we are now free to live for Him.

Foundations

Thus far in Romans, Paul has stressed that our totally corrupt, rebellious nature is incapable of doing anything to recover from our fallen state. And yet, we are fully rescued and redeemed solely by the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Knowing to the core of our being that this is true allows us to understand why the gospel is good news.

But news of such undeserved grace is often misunderstood in selfish ways. In the mid-1950s, the song "He" became popular. It was about the nature of God and said some good things, but each verse ended with the phrase, "Though it makes Him sad to see the way we live, He'll always say, 'I forgive.'" This implied that we don't have to live in God-pleasing ways because God is really nice. That's a self-centered take on grace.

There is so much more, however, to the experience of God's grace than the forgiveness of our sin. We are also united with Christ in a way in which we share in His entire life. We share in His death, which conquered the power of sin. We share in His resurrection life, which means we are free from all those forces which seek to devour us. We are now free to live the life for which we were created.

Understanding God's Word

In Romans 6:5, Paul writes, "If we have been united with Him like this in death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection." This statement is explosive in its implications because, as one scholar has said, "...if we are united to Christ, then what is true of Him is true of us."

Of course the full reality of our resemblance to Jesus will be seen in glory, but because we have been buried with Christ in His death, so has our sin nature, and we are now free to live in ways that are faithful, not rebellious.

As Paul says in verse 11, we are to think about ourselves as "dead to sin and alive to God." In giving us His life, Jesus has given us a new environment in which we can live ... one filled with peace, purpose, intimacy with our Creator and Savior. We have been transferred from the dark muck of paralyzing sin into light and freedom.

Applying God's Word

Jesus doesn't just do things for us. He also lives in us and we live in Him. How does knowing that we share in His death and resurrection help you interpret the circumstances of your life?

Witnessing God's Word

Martin Luther said that our union with Christ means that we are "little Christs" in our neighborhoods. In what creative ways can your life reveal Jesus to your neighbors?

If you were to come up to the 3rd floor into my office, on a music stand there you'd see a sheet of paper with a phrase on it. The phrase reads: "Remember you're a Holtzman!" These were the words I would hear my mother say as I was leaving the car and heading into school just about every day of my growing up. I'd smile back and say, "OK, mom!" Later in life, when I hit junior high or high school, I'd be around all my friends trying to play it cool, and in a moment of heading to a game or a party, mom would yell, "Remember you're a Holtzman!" I'd say with a frown, "Ugh! OK, mom!" That phrase was not merely something that my mother thought to say, but it was a phrase that got passed down from my grandmother. In fact there are 10 principles that she came up with of what it means to be a Holtzman. It's very enlightening; it helps me often. If you come up to my office sometime, I'll share a few.

Now, it didn't happen often but in my more rascally junior high years, there were days where I said to myself, "Being a Holtzman is OK. But, oh what it must be like to be a Humphries! I had a friend named Chad and every time I'd go to his house, I found myself enamored with the stuff he had, or the clothes he wore, the part of town he lived in...Nevertheless, no matter what I sometimes entertained, it didn't change the fact that I was set into life as a Holtzman. And that's still where I am today. All of us have a particular name that we are located in. And remembering that you are a Holtzman, or a _____, is helpful. But what I want to talk to you about today is what it means to be in Christ. Because the fact of the matter is this: Knowing that we are in Christ means that we are now free to live for Him.

This morning, we pick up with our sermon series **Redeemed**. Today we are looking at what it means that we are redeemed from slavery to sin. From slavery to sin. A life that is apart from Christ is enslaved. It is in bondage to sin. But Jesus, dying on the cross, paid a debt that we could not pay ourselves. He redeems us out of slavery to sin and sets us free to live for Him. But you know what is truly amazing about this? Jesus didn't simply take care of a personal problem of ours, give us a high five and say, "You're welcome. Well, I'll be seeing you." Jesus bought us back, and in doing so brought us back into union with Him. No longer are we in slavery to sin. We are in Christ, free to live for Him. That's the fact.

The questions are: Do we know it? and Do we live like we know it? In Romans 1 through the first part of chapter 3, Paul brings forward his argument about the condemnation of sinners. Before a holy and perfect God, we "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Nobody gets a pass on this reality, no one is immune to this problem. But then from the latter part of chapter 3 through all of chapter 5, Paul goes from talking about the condemnation of sinners to the justification of sinners. You and I move from being separated from God and now brought into right standing with Him. How does this happen? Romans 3:24 says "all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Jesus redeems us. And we are made right before God as we put our faith in Him alone as our Lord and Savior.

So we move from being condemned to being justified before God. And now in Romans 6, Paul turns to address the concept of sanctification. That is, when we put our faith in Jesus, the process of being made more and more like Jesus begins. God doesn't merely free us for nothing; He frees us for eternal and abundant living that is only found in union with Him. When we become united with Christ, we are free to live for Him with all that we are!

But there's a problem. You and I suffer from two debilitating conditions that hijack our mindfulness of our union with Christ:

1. Catastrophic Spiritual Short-Term Memory Loss: We forget that we are set free! It simply dumps out the back of our heads. And in forgetting our union with Christ, the thought of living sanctified lives for Him departs, and the thought of living for ourselves enters in. We're "Prone to wander" as we sing ... catastrophic spiritual short term memory loss.

2. Grace Abounding Misconduct: We abuse God's grace. In view of God's amazing grace, knowing that it will never run out, we catapult ourselves headlong into sinful behavior, thinking to ourselves, "It's OK. God's grace abounds! He is "slow to anger, abounding in love," right? He's such a nice guy, He'll forgive me, regardless of what I do!" Pastor Junior McGarran spoke with me this week about a song she remembered in the 1950s called "He." It provided some help to the church back then, but listen to one of the lines: "Though it makes Him sad to see the way we live, He'll always say, 'I forgive.'"



“Grace abuse.” That’s the other problem that can occur, and that’s the problem that the apostle Paul is dealing with in our passage today: “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3). We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

“Don’t you know?” Paul says. Don’t you know, redeemed ones? Wake up! Remember who you are! You have been “baptized into Christ Jesus.” What’s he saying? Paul isn’t so much making a statement upon the nuts and bolts of baptism here as he is reminding his readers that they are in Christ! If we truly put our faith in Jesus, you are forged together with Him like a weld, united for good. And so the thought of continuing in sin, to live a life that is determined to abuse the grace of God, cheapening it whenever you can—for Paul, it is absolutely mind-boggling. It’s absurd! If we are truly in Christ, “how can we go on sinning?” he says. After all, you are united to Him.

Now, how are we united to Him? Two ways. Firstly, into His death. That old sinful self that separated you from God, that couldn’t help itself but be against Him, was taken down to the grave and was buried with Christ (that’s the image of baptism right there). Because of your union with Christ, your sinful self died, and the power of sin died with it. We are baptized into His death. But why? “In order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead we too may live a new life!” (Romans 6:4). Jesus didn’t simply take care of a sin problem so that we could go on with our lives as we choose. Jesus took care of a sin problem so that you and I could live a new life in Him, with Him, and for Him.

Now Verse 5 is one I’ve been especially captivated by this week. Can we read it together? “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Amen! United—in death AND in resurrection! This is a cosmic-sized mystery that, quite honestly, is difficult to explain. It’s just too big of a reality! The word here for “united” is also used for a graft that is joined together to the life of a tree or a vine. In other words this is a very close connection, one that has life flowing from the inside. So because we are united with Him in death, our sinful nature died with Him. In the same way, as

Christ is resurrected, we are set free to live fully alive in Him! Why? Because we are united with Him in resurrection. This is a close connection, and yet it is a mystery.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer gets at pretty good when he says this: “The fact that Jesus Christ died is more important than the fact that I will die. And the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead is the sole ground of my hope that I, too, will be raised... Our salvation is ‘from outside ourselves.’ I find salvation not in my life story, but only in the story of Jesus Christ. Only those who allow themselves to be found in Jesus Christ - in the incarnation, cross, and resurrection - are with God and God with them.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer - from *Life Together* p.62)

“only those who allow themselves to be found in Jesus Christ.... Friends have you allowed yourself to be found in Jesus Christ? What does that look like? How does that happen? The rest of this passage points to three things that must be done in order for us to fully apprehend our union in Christ and our freedom to live for Him:

1. You must KNOW for yourself ... what must we know? “

Romans 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Look at verse 8: 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In verse 6, this word for “know” is the Greek word “ginosko.” This is not merely a knowing about or having information regarding a particular subject. It’s one thing to know that the moon’s distance from Earth is about 240,000 miles away, it’s surface is made up of 43 percent oxygen, 20 percent silicon, 19 percent magnesium, and other stuff, you can even know that high tides and low tides are caused by the moon’s gravitational pull. But for the astronaut, who steps off a rocket ship and plants his foot down on the moon’s surface, that is a different kind of knowing all together. That’s “ginosko.”

What’s Paul saying? You must know experientially, personally, that your old sinful self has been crucified, you must know that you



are no longer a slave to sin's demands, you must know that the old rascal that had you imprisoned, enslaved, forcing you to do evil of all kinds, he is now powerless. Why? Because he's dead! And you have been set free! I am reminded of this every time we sing the song *And Can It Be*:

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

Amazing love, how can it be? That thou my God shouldst die for me!"

Set free from sin. No longer a slave. You must know this for yourself. That's the first thing.

2. You must CONSIDER yourself. What must we consider?

11 In the same way, count or consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

"Count yourselves." Go ahead and put it down in the spreadsheet; make an accounting of this! Another translation says "consider yourselves." Meaning think carefully and meaningfully about it. The King James says "reckon ye also yourselves," dead to sin but alive to God.

Paul's personal reckoning comes forward in his letter to the Galatians. This is good one to put to memory: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). You must know for yourself you are free from sin. No longer a slave. You must consider yourself dead to sin, fully alive to God.

This is not unlike what it means to be unified in marriage. Brooke and I met over 20 years ago, and there came a day when I said, "I know she's the one for me." Shortly after, I considered what it might be like for her to be my bride, and you might say that I counted it as such when I asked her to be my wife. (Thankfully she said yes!) And then when the wedding day came, we offered ourselves to one another in marriage—vowing to be in union with one another till death do us part. To fully apprehend our oneness in marriage, we had to offer ourselves to one another. In the same way, friends, in view of God's mercy...

3. You must OFFER yourself to God.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

Friends, today, right now, offer yourself to Jesus. How can we not? After all, we are those who have been brought from death to life!

Friends, if the sinful nature has indeed been crucified, and we know that personally in our heart of hearts ... and if we have truly considered ourselves dead to sin and alive to God ... what that means is sin lost its job as master over your life and now Jesus reigns over your life! You don't have to do what sin says to do any longer. Jesus set you free to live for God! Why would we offer ourselves to something that is dead? It doesn't make sense if we are truly united with Him.

Think about your life right now and reflect for a moment. The power of sin is dead. Jesus killed it a long time ago. You might say that Jesus put a "Do Not Resuscitate" over sin. But Lord have mercy if we take the defibrillator and put it back on the chest of that old tyrant.

"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14).

Knowing that we are in Christ means that we are now free to live for Him. Sin lost his job as master over your life a long, long time ago. Do you know that? Have you considered the fact that Jesus took your sin down to the grave with Him when He died for good? If so, then declare Jesus as your master and offer your whole life to Him.

We'll close with Colossians 3:1-3: "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." Amen.

