

Sunday Sermon: October 13, 2019

Sermon Text: I Timothy 2:3-6. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

Sermon Theme: Redemption: Payment Made. Payment Received.

Redemption. That's the word that's on the front of your worship folder this morning. Redemption, or redeeming, is not a word that we use all that much anymore. It means to buy something back from someone else. About the only place I have heard the word redemption is in the recycling industry.

In Michigan, when you buy a beverage in a plastic, glass or aluminum bottle, you have to pay a special fee to cover the recycling. Then, when you are done drinking that beverage, you take that can or bottle to a redemption center and the state of Michigan will buy that bottle or can back from you for the same amount of fee you paid.

That's a pretty complicated picture of redemption. In our sermon text, the Apostle Paul uses a much simpler picture of redemption. He uses the picture of ransom, price that's paid to buy someone back. With this picture of a ransom the Apostle Paul gives us the perfect picture of what redemption is. In redemption Christ has made the payment and the payment has been received by God.

When we hear the word ransom we probably think about any one of many movies that have kidnappings. Someone or something is taken and the kidnapper demands a ransom before they will let that someone or something go.

Often when a ransom demand is made it is hard on the person or the family because the price is so high. Yet, at the same time that the price may be so high, there is little or no choice but to come up with the ransom somehow. If the ransom is not met there could be punishment or worse death.

Our ancestors Adam and Eve had the perfect life with God. They lived in his beautiful garden. Walked and talked with him often and enjoyed perfect peace. Yet, that peace wasn't good enough for them. They fell into sin and because of that sin, the devil has a hold on us. The Bible tells us that by nature we are all held captive to sin. By nature, we are blind to God's love and what he wants for us, we dead in sin, and we are enemies of God because our hearts and minds are inclined to evil even from the time we were conceived. By nature, we lean to what is wrong more often than to what is right.

When we look at ourselves we see what Paul means when he tells us we are slaves to sin. We understand what he means when he says that the evil he does not want to do he keeps on doing and the good he wants to do, he finds he cannot do because that is the same for us. If we are honest with ourselves, we find it is easier for us to do the sinful sins and not what God wants us to do.

By nature we are hostages of sin and the devil. We might think that we could raise the ransom and save ourselves, but we would never be able to do that. We can never do enough to set ourselves free. The only hope that we have is that someone will help us. Someone will pay the ransom and buy us back.

Although God had every reason to punish us and demand a payment for our sins, God loved us enough to set the price that it would take to buy us back from the devil. The price would be very high. Someone would have to suffer and die to pay the price for the sin we commit. Someone had to die to pay to buy us back from sin and death. From that very first sin, God promised that he would send someone to pay the ransom and buy us back from our sins.

Instead of waiting for some champion or super hero to come along and attempt to do this for us, God sent his one and only Son to be our Savior and pay that price to buy us back from sin.

Jesus came to earth on the mission: to pay our ransom in full. Jesus didn't make a partial payment for sin, Jesus paid the price of suffering and death that was equal to all of your sins and mine, also the sins of the whole world. This payment was necessary to destroy the power of the devil and the devil's hold over us. It was necessary so that we can be forgiven and be heirs of eternal life.

In our ransom story, after the ransom has been raised, the kidnappers give of instructions for where that payment should be dropped off. Usually its somewhere odd like, drop it in the garbage can in the park and walk away. Leave it under the clothes rack in the store.

Then the family waits to see if the payment will be received by the kidnappers. Will they pick it up, or will the payment be left.

Is the payment that Jesus made for us received by God? Yes, God has shown that he has received the payment in a couple of ways. Jesus did not remain dead in the ground. God showed he received the price that was paid for sins by raising him from the dead. When the angel rolled the stone away from the tomb on that first Easter, it was empty. Jesus was not there. God raised him from the dead to show that the payment for sin was made and accepted. The devil's hold over us was broken because Jesus has paid for all of our sins and God accepted that as payment.

God has also shown the payment was received by giving Jesus a very special job. The redeemer is also the mediator. A mediator is a go-between. Often mediators are used during negotiations. The mediator will hear the terms of one side and go to the other and propose those terms. Then they will go back with counter terms. This may take a long time, until finally the two sides are ready to sit down and talk.

The one who bought us back is also the one who is standing before the eternal judge to remind him that our sins have been paid for and God has accepted that price, there is nothing left to judge.

After the ransom has been collected by the family, after it has been paid and received by the kidnappers, the family waits by the phone because what comes next is important. They need the phone call that the ransom was good enough. It was applied to their family member and they have been set free.

Jesus has made the payment for our sins, God received that payment for our sins, and because it was accepted, Jesus' payment has been applied to us, it has been applied to our account, to set us free from sin.

Think about your credit card. All month long you rack up charges. Then at the end of the month you get a bill. You have to pay that bill because you were the one that made all those purchases. You are responsible.

Think about if you had a sin credit card. Every time you sinned it was scanned or swiped. Then imagine getting the bill at the end of the month. As you are looking at the charges you might be shocked at the all the sins you have committed. There are sins you recognize, but those other charges aren't fraud, they are sins that you didn't even know or realize you were doing. As you look at the pages and pages of charges, you begin to understand that the price to pay is going to be quite high.

But when you get to the final charge, after you have looked at the tab of sin you have accumulated, the price that you have to pay is 0. The bill says your account was credited with the exact amount of love and forgiveness that you need.

Jesus made the payment for our sins when he suffered and died on the cross in full. That payment was received by God the Father as paid in full. God put his stamp of approval on the payment when he raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus' suffering was credited to us as payment for all of our sins.

How does the family feel when their loved one is set free and returned? How should we feel that the ransom for our sin has been paid, our account settled, and we are set free? We should be as joyful as that family, because we have been taken from death to life. We have been taken from the power of the devil and are now children of God with heaven as our destination. That joy will show itself in our life.

Our lessons this morning talked about living this life of joy in what Jesus has done for us. Abraham was willing to trust in the Lord's love and goodness to provide for his every need rather than to take the blood money from the unbelieving kings. The Apostle Paul encourages us to live peaceful and quiet lives in godliness and holiness because we know that the price for our sins has been paid. In our Gospel, Jesus reminded us to serve God by using all that we have to share that message of Jesus with others

All of these things are only possible if and when we understand what it is Jesus has done for us. He has redeemed us, he has purchased and won us from sin, death and the devil and the cost was his body and blood on the cross. With this payment Jesus has taken away all of our sins and has given us the freedom of a new life in him.

This love of God through Jesus should motivate us every day to live in the joy and peace of our forgiveness by thanking and praising and joyfully serving and obeying our loving God and Redeemer.