

INTRODUCTION:

Probably many of us here this morning have been to pawn shops at various times in our lives.

- The idea of a pawn shop is that we can go in with something that we value, and we can leave that item there for a period of time in exchange for a loan.
- When we have the money, we can then go back to the shop and redeem the item that we pawned.
- What has always kept me interested in pawn shops is that people leave some valuable possessions there and receive money in exchange (whether it is jewelry, some kind of camera, maybe a stereo, or a gun, or any other item that might have value).
- The items can be repurchased (or redeemed) by their original owners.

We know what it means to redeem a coupon.

- We go to a store and trade the coupon for something of value.
- We know what it means to pay a ransom. Money is paid in exchange for a loved one.
- As we look at the Scriptures, we find that a similar concept has been used to describe our relationship with God.

Many times in our worship services here in Salem, we sing songs that use the words “**redeemer**” and “**redemption**.”

- For example, we sometimes sing the song, “**I Know That My Redeemer Lives.**”
- This is a direct quote from **Job 19:25**, a tremendous passage where Job says, “*I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth*”—a reference to the coming of Christ.

In the ancient Greek world, the word “**redemption**” referred to a payment that was made to free a slave.

- A slave could be bought out of slavery and could be a free man if someone agreed to pay for his freedom.
- In fact, we know from history that by the end of the First Century, Christians were using the money from the weekly collections to buy slaves for the purpose of setting them free.
- In the ancient Greek world, therefore, redemption implied that someone was freed from bondage.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah prophesied that there was a time coming when all of God’s people would be redeemed—all of them would be purchased, or ransomed, out of slavery by the Lord.

- **Isaiah 35:10** says, “*And the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*”

We can rejoice because of our salvation, and we rejoice because we know Jesus Christ.

- This morning, I would like for us to consider a passage in **1 Peter 1**, and I would like for us to consider several motivations for a holy life.
- Our study this morning is going to be coming from **verses 17-21**, however before we get to that, I would like to read the four verses leading up to that where Peter says...

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

The motivation for doing this is found in the next paragraph, in **verses 17-21**, and it is closely tied to the idea of **REDEMPTION**.

- Let's look together at **1 Peter 1:17-21**...

17 *If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;*
18 *knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,*
19 *but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*
20 *For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you*
21 *who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

As we do what we can to live holy lives this week, there are several motivations in this section of Scripture that might help keep us on the straight and narrow.

- I.** First of all, as we try to live holy lives, we should certainly remember that **THERE IS A NEED FOR REDEMPTION**. As Peter says in **verse 17**, **GOD IS OUR FATHER AND JUDGE**.

As we are tempted to sin, we need to realize that someday we will stand before a Holy God, and that we will need to give an account for everything we have thought, said, and done.

- One commentator said that, **“The fear of God is the attitude of mind of the man who is always aware that he is in the presence of God.”**
- Everything we do, and say, and even think can be seen by God.

I remember reading about a judge who was known for giving people a choice.

- They could either go into some kind of treatment or therapy, or they could wear a sign or have a bumper sticker on their car that advertised what they had done.
- Perhaps a bumper sticker would say, **“This car owned by a convicted drunk driver.”**
- Most people chose the treatment, because they would rather conceal their sins.

How many of us would want to go through life with a sign on our backs—**“Danger: I am a Christian who does not pray,”** or, **“Danger: I am a Christian who does not study his Bible,”** or, **“Warning: I’m a child of God who gossips,”** or, **“Be careful: I am controlled by lust instead of love.”**

- We would hate to reveal our sins in that way, and yet with God, those sins cannot be concealed.
- Everything is open and laid bare in the eyes of God. All of us need redemption.

All of us need to be redeemed, because the Bible says (in **Romans 3:23**) that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

- In **Titus 3:3-5**, the Bible says that we have been **“enslaved”** to various sins, and it is impossible to ever escape or run away from those sins on our own.

Many people might think that science has done away with sin, that sin is an outdated idea.

- And yet we look at the world around us, and we see that sin has simply been repackaged.
- Cain might have killed Abel by bashing his head in with a wooden club.
- Modern science has just made it cleaner and neater and faster.
- Today, Cain could use a bullet, and we could watch it happen on the evening news.
- Sin is still sin, and science has not really made any improvements on this ancient problem.

- People are still addicted to sin—Jesus himself said in **John 8:34**, *“Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin...”*
- Therefore, people still need to be redeemed, or ransomed from their sins.
- God is still our Father and our Judge, and we are told, because of this in **verse 17**, to *“conduct ourselves in fear during the time of our stay on earth.”*

Throughout the Bible, the idea of fearing God is repeated more than 150 times—over and over again.

- Outside of our own redemption, this is a rather sad condition in which to live.
- How depressing—to live in constant fear—knowing that we are slaves to sin.

And yet as Christians, we know that there is a place for fear alongside the joy that we talked about in the first half of **1 Peter 1**.

- We can look at the words of **Psalm 2:11**, *“Worship the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.”*
- It is all right there in the same verse!

Even as God’s people, then, there is still room in our lives for fearing God.

- I’m thinking of Peter’s words just a few chapters over in **1 Peter 4:17-18**, *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?”*

First of all, then, as we try to live Godly lives, we should remind ourselves that because God is our Father and Judge, there is a need for redemption—we need to be bought back, and certainly that would be one motivation for holy living.

II. There is a second motivation we might consider. Peter makes it very clear that we as Christians should live godly lives because **WE HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ traded His life for ours.

- Those of us who are disciples of Christ have been redeemed by His blood.
- Our freedom from sin has been purchased by His sacrifice on the cross.

There was an article in *National Geographic* several years ago about a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park.

- The forest rangers were making their way up a mountain to assess the fire’s damage, and one ranger found a bird literally cooked in the ashes, sitting on the ground at the base of a tree.
- The ranger knocked over the bird with a stick, and when he struck it, three tiny baby birds scattered out from under their dead mother’s wings.
- The mother bird, sensing danger, had instinctively gathered her offspring at the base of the tree and had covered them with her wings.
- She could have flown to safety, but had refused to leave those baby birds.
- When the flames and the smoke and the heat moved in, she continued to stand firm, and she gave up her life so that those under her wings would live.

We find in the Scriptures that Jesus has done something very similar for us through His death on the cross.

- He purchased our safety with His own blood.

Please look very carefully with me at **verses 18-19**, and the contrast that Peter is making.

- He does not put a value on the blood of Christ, but he is saying that it is not even in the same category as gold and silver.

- In a limited way, we can understand what Peter is saying.
- If someone offered to pay a fair price for our car or for our house, we could come to an agreement and make the sale.
- However, if someone offered to purchase one of our children, it is a completely different matter.
- Money is not the issue, and Peter reminds his audience that our salvation was purchased not with gold and silver, but with the blood of God's own Son.

The blood that Peter was referring to here was real blood.

- God became flesh, and a very real sacrifice was made.
- We remember that Peter knew the Lord in a personal way.
- Peter was in Jerusalem when this sacrifice was made and he saw Jesus get beaten!
- Peter wept bitterly at the Lord's death. Peter knew where the Lord had been buried.
- The sacrifice was especially real to the Apostle Peter.
- Even writing these words probably brought Peter some pain, and yet Peter understood that the shedding of Christ's blood was necessary for our salvation.

In **verse 18**, we find the word *“redeemed”* or *“ransomed,”* and we understand that we did not escape from sin by our own efforts.

- As those who are guilty... We did not break out of jail... He paid our bail!
- As we sometimes sing, Jesus paid it all.
- His blood was the price that was paid.

From time to time, we will hear a special request from the Red Cross, that they are low on blood, and they will send out a call for donations.

- We understand that blood is valuable, that it can save a person's life.
- But we learn here that the most valuable blood in history was spilled on the ground at the foot of the cross.
- The blood of Christ is precious, as Peter says, because it frees us from sin.
- There are some things that money cannot buy.

Perhaps you have heard the story of the college professor who gave a big test one day, and after handing out the tests, he went back to his desk to wait.

- Once the test was over, the students handed everything back in, and the professor noticed that one of the students had attached a \$100 bill to his test with a note saying, **“One dollar per point.”**
- During the next class, the professor handed the test back out.
- The student got back his test score with \$36 in change attached!

We live in a world where nearly anything can be purchased with money.

- It is important to remember now and then that there are some things money cannot buy.
- Paul talked about this ransom that was paid in **Ephesians 1:7-8**—Referring to Jesus Paul said, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.”*
- In the next chapter, Paul refers to salvation as a free *“gift,”* and yet we know that the gift was not really free. The gift was paid for with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Not only did Jesus give up His blood, but he gave up so much else as well.

- He left His Father's Paradise for a stable.
- He traded his eternal crown for a crown of thorns.
- He traded the worship of angels with the mocking of Pilate's soldiers.

We need to appreciate the gift that Jesus gave.

- We need to get down on our knees before God and give him praise and thanks for redeeming us from our sins.
- It is no wonder why there are so many songs in our songbooks about redemption.
- And when we're done singing, as Peter says, we should go out and live our lives in holiness and fear.

III. There is a third motivation for holy living, and that is, GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION WAS PERSONAL AND PLANNED.

The Bible makes it very clear that the death of Christ was an appointment, and not an accident.

- For about six years now, Traci and I have had cell phones.
- We have really enjoyed having cell phones, not just because of convenience of reaching each other, but also because of the address book and the calendar.
- I really like that you can schedule recurring appointments at a set time every week or every month or every year.
- When I first got the phones, I plugged in the birthdays of my family members.
- I was a little curious after I did that, so I looked at the calendar and scrolled ahead to the next year, and sure enough, Kaitlin and Kelsey's birthdays were there on the 2005 calendar.
- I kept on scrolling, and the years kept going, and as far as I scrolled, that appointment is on the calendar...for years, and years, and years.
- I could not find the end of the calendar, because as far as I could tell, it kept on going, and going, and going.

In a slightly similar way, the death of Christ on the cross was an appointment that God made even before time began.

- It was not an accident—It was not a last-minute glitch or a change of plans, but it had been planned from eternity.
- We read about this in Peter's sermon in **Acts 2:23**.
- Peter was referring to Christ, and Peter said, *"...this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."*
- The death of Christ had been planned from eternity, and yet the most amazing thing is not that God designed this plan and carried out every detail in perfection, but that He did it for us!
- In **Ephesians 3:19**, the Apostle Paul refers to *"the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge."*
- It is beyond our understanding because it is deeper than anything we could ever plan or carry out on our own.
- We remember Paul's summary of the gospel in **Romans 5:8-10**, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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."*

If we are looking for some kind of motivation to live holy lives in the fear of God, we only need to remember that our redemption has been planned from eternity.

- God made an appointment—knowing that we, at one point, would obey the gospel—taking advantage of the blood of His only Son.

To reinforce how deep this thought really is, let's look back to some more verses in **1 Peter 1—verses 10-12**, *"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was*

indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.”

Was this great plan revealed to Adam and Eve? Vaguely.

- Was it made known to Abraham? Sort of.
- What about Moses, or David, or Elijah? Only as shadows.
- It was not until the time of Peter that the plan was fully revealed, and it was done then for our benefit.

SUMMARY:

This week, therefore, as we are tempted to lash out in anger at someone, or as we are tempted by the sins of lust or greed...let us remember that the sacrifice of Jesus was for our benefit.

- It had been planned from eternity, and God knew at that point that a time was coming when we personally would need to be bought back from sin.
- The ransom was paid with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and certainly that should affect our behavior...especially when we consider...

1. That God is our Father and Judge and we need to be redeemed.
2. That we have been redeemed with the blood of Christ which is more precious than silver or gold.
3. That this redemption has been planned from eternity—an appointment that God made before we were ever born.

For these reasons, Peter says, we should conduct ourselves with fear during our time on earth—living holy lives and turning away from sin.

CONCLUSION & INVITATION:

Once we realize what God has done, we react with faithful obedience.

- We do not earn or deserve our salvation—we simply accept God’s offer with love and thankfulness.
- Do we want to be on this road to redemption?
- If so, we need to change our lives, and we need to allow ourselves to be buried with Christ in baptism—so that our sins can be covered by Jesus’ blood.

I should point out that just being here this morning, associating with Christian people, or even acting like a Christian, will not bring us down that road... any more than a runaway slave might pretend to be free.

- We would hate for anyone here this morning to be lost due to any false sense of security.
- The ransom needs to be paid AND it needs to be accepted.

For that reason, if you would like to obey the gospel, we hope you will do it right away—as soon as you understand what you need to do—give us a call at any time of day or night.

- If you have any questions or concerns, let’s work it out.
- But if you are ready to do it right now, you can come to the front as we sing the next song.
- Let’s stand and sing...