

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 7/1/01 PM
1 Peter 1:18-21 "Something We Must Never Forget"

Proposition: 1 Peter 1:18-21 explains for us something we must never forget, namely, how God sets a person free.

- A. How we were NOT set free (18)
- B. How we WERE set free (19-21)
 - 1. The Payment (19)
 - 2. The Plan (20)
 - 3. The Participants (21)

God wants His people to *remember*. That's what communion is all about. *This do in remembrance of Me*. As we prepare to observe communion, I want to address the subject, "Something We Must Never Forget." What we must never forget is the answer to the following question...

How does God set a person free? The Bible teaches that every person is born into this world as a hostage. You were born a hostage. So was I. We are all born hostages. Hostages to what? To sin and death. Every one of us. But in eternity past, God devised a plan to free us.

Q: How does God set people free?

Peter wrote the letter of I Peter to people that had already experienced the life-saving work of God. God had already set them free. They were no longer hostages to sin and death. They'd been released.

Q: But how did God set them free? How does He do it today for us? The answer is, He *redeemed* us.

Key Word: "Redeem" (18)--"to release by paying a ransom"

1 Peter 1:17-21 explains for us how God sets a person free. He wants people who have been set free to remember how it happened.

The Context: Verse 17

V 17 "Since you call on a Father..."

Notice the verse begins with a connective word, "since" ("and" in the KJV) That reminds us to check out the context. Remember Peter wrote this letter to Christians living in Asia minor. They were suffering severe antagonism from a society that was hostile to Christianity. What did Peter tell them?

First, he reminded them of their identity (1-2). Christians are sojourners in this world (1). We're temporary residents. We're aliens. But what's more, we are special to God (2). We are elect sojourners. We have been chosen by the design of God the Father, by the display of God the Spirit, and experienced the deliverance of God the Son. What's the right way to respond to our privileged identity? Bless God!

Vv 3-12 are a Benediction, a Blessing. Peter calls on us to bless God for His Salvation. Bless Him for what He's done in the past (3a). Bless Him for the inheritance He will give to us in the future (4-5). And bless Him for what He is doing in the present (6-9). True, we may have to suffer in this life. But so did Christ. In vv 10-12, Peter

reminds us of the pattern Christ established. The suffering comes now, the glory will follow. So bless God.

But don't just bless God with your lips. Bless Him with your life. That's what vv 13-16 are all about. Saved people are to be holy people. We are to BE holy.

Q: Why? Why should we live holy lives?

A: Vv 17-21 tell us why. Because of the Price that was paid to set us free!

Q: What's our responsibility as holy people? V 17—we're supposed to live this life as "strangers."

Do you remember what happened to Abraham's nephew Lot? When did he get into trouble? When he stopped living as a sojourner, and became a resident in Sodom. Everything he lived for went up in smoke. He lost his home and all his earthly possessions. He lost His wife. He lost his testimony.

If you call on the Father, and if your a Christian, then our Heavenly Father will judge us one day without partiality and favoritism. And if that's the case, then we have a responsibility. We are responsible to live our lives right now as sojourners, as those who fear God.

But what's our incentive? We are to live as sojourners, yes, but why? God gives us the reason in verses 18-21...

V 18 "Forasmuch as you know" -- There are a lot of things I don't know. There are a lot of things you don't know.

But listen. The Bible makes on thing perfectly clear. There may be differences of interpretation on a lot of things, but not on this. Peter says WE KNOW beyond a shadow of doubt how we're redeemed! In fact, we know two things regarding our redemption that Peter affirms in verses 18-21.

A. We know how we were NOT set free (18).

V 18 "You know that you were NOT redeemed with corruptible things..."

There were 3 kinds of people in the world of Peter's day: Freemen, slaves, and freed men. 60,000,000 people in the Roman Empire were slaves.

A person could become a slave in various ways: through war, bankruptcy, they could sell themselves, their parents could sell them, or by birth.

A slave could become a freed man by paying the price his owner required. If he could come up with the redemption price, he could be free.

The Romans had a pagan practice that Peter may have in mind here. If a slave was seeking to buy his freedom, he would pay money into the local temple treasury. His aim was to honor his god (small "g"). He believed that his god would ransom or purchase him from his master. When that happened, as far as society was concerned, he would become a freed man. But as far as he was concerned, he was the property of his god. (see: I Pt 2:16 "As free men...servants of God.") (see: Michaels, 64)

Q: How were we set free from our bondage to sin?

Did we pay off God? Did we buy His favor? What does Peter say? NO! "You were not redeemed with corruptible things..."

Listen. You can place all of the religions of the world into 2 categories.

1. One says that Man is responsible to reach and appease God. That's what Islam is all about. Tragically, that's what the average person on the street in America believes too. "If I live a good life, when I die, I'll go to heaven."

2. The other says that man can't reach and please God. He's dead in his sins. He needs God to reach down and save him. That's the gospel.

This is amazing. Christians are people who have been set free from their vain manner of life. We're not perfect. But we have been set free. We've been redeemed.

Illust:

To "redeem" means "to set free, to rescue, to free by paying a ransom." How were we set free? By what price?

B. We know how we WERE set free (19-21).

Peter explains 3 facets of our redemption.

1. The Payment (19)

V 19 "But with the precious blood of Christ..."

Remember, Peter was a Jew, with a lengthy Jewish heritage. In v 19, Peter is calling to mind a rich, Jewish illustration from Israel's history.

If God taught His people anything in the OT, it was this. Sinful men can approach Him only through sacrifice. Day after day, year after year after year, the Israelites brought lambs to be slain as sacrifices. Beginning in Moses' day, for over 400 years they brought their animals to be offered on the altar in the tabernacle. Then after Solomon built the temple, sacrifices were made there in Jerusalem. The sacrifices went on for hundreds of years, until finally, the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in AD 70.

Just think of it. The blood of thousands upon thousands of animals flowed down the altar. Why? For one reason--to provide a covering for the sins of men. Thousands upon thousands of lambs gave their lives. Until what happened? Until THE Lamb of God came. He was a lamb without blemish or spot--Jesus the Messiah.

Q: Why did Jesus Christ enter the world?

A: To be our Passover Lamb.

When Jesus came, He lived a perfect, sinless life. He lived the perfect life we could not live. And when the time came, in obedience to His Heavenly Father, He laid down His life. The blood of the Lamb was shed. He became a Sacrifice for us.

Mk 10:45 "For the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a RANSOM for many."

Tit 2:14 "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us..."

Our redemption involved a great payment.

Q: When did God design our redemption?

This may hard for us to fathom, but God devised our redemption even before He created the world!

2. *The Plan (20)*

Many feel that v 20 is actually an excerpt from a creed or hymn.

V 20 "Who verily was foreordained before..."

Did you catch that? Our redemption was in the plan of God before Creation occurred. Christ's death was an appointment, not an accident. We share in the benefits of something that was in the mind of God throughout eternity past. Listen. God has you in view before He ever created Adam.

Your redemption was planned before Creation. Then Peter reminds us that it was "manifested" in these last times. Listen. From the human perspective, our Lord was cruelly murdered. But from God's perspective, He laid down His life for sinners (Wiersbe).

Q: What does that truth do for you?

A: It should motivate and encourage you! Why? Notice the last 2 words of v 20- "for you." The payment was made FOR YOU. You are special to God.

Illust:

Q: Does benefits from this redemption? Notice the participants...

3. *The Participants (21)*

V 21 "Who by Him do believe..."

Q: Who are the participants in the redemption of God?

A: Those people who have genuine faith.

Notice I said "genuine" faith. Listen. It's not enough merely to have "faith" or to "believe." The Bible talks about a deficient faith.

Q: How can a person's faith be deficient?

A: Faith is only as good as its object.

Illust: Suppose you and I took an airplane ride. When we got to 5000 feet, suppose I said, "I'm going to jump." You'd say, "Are you crazy?" And I said, "No, I'll be OK. I've glued some feathers to two pieces of cardboard. They'll save me. I can fly with these. I believe I can fly. I have faith I can fly!"

Could I fly? No. Did I have faith? Yes, but a deficient faith. Faith is only as good as its object.

Q: What's true of genuine faith?

A: V 21 shows us 2 marks of saving faith.

1. Saving faith has as its object the Person of Christ.

V 21 "Who BY HIM do believe"

Please listen. Faith that saves is faith that's placed in the Person of Christ. It's not enough merely to believe things ABOUT Jesus.

2. Saving faith has as its object the Work of Christ.

V 21 "Who raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory..."

If a person exercises saving faith, he/she will acknowledge the redemptive work of Christ. That includes His crucifixion (19), His resurrection (21), and His glorious exaltation (21).

Problem: Listen to the testimonies people share about how they know they're saved and going to heaven... For many, there is no mention of Jesus Christ being the object of that faith...

E.g.

Q: Have you ever talked with someone who claimed to be a "Christian," yet didn't live like it? Have you ever noticed how people like that are highly offended if you insinuate the possibility that maybe they are not genuinely saved?

I'm convinced that there are a lot of people who think all is well between them and God. They say they have faith. But they're confused as to what genuine faith is. If you asked them, "Do you believe in Jesus?", they'd say, "Sure." But when you ask them who Jesus is, He's merely an Example to follow.

Listen. He is that, but first and foremost, He is a Savior we must receive.

Conclusion:

We must never forget. God paid an incredible ransom to set us free. What have you done with Jesus?

Francis Ridley Havergal saw a picture of the crucified Christ with this caption under it: "I did this for thee. What hast thou done for me?" Quickly she wrote a poem, but was dissatisfied with it and threw it into the fireplace. The paper came out unharmed. Later at her father's suggestion, she published the poem, and today we sing it, "I gave My life for thee, My precious blood I shed; That thou might ransomed be, and quickened from the dead. I gave, I gave, My life for thee, What hast thou given for Me?" (Wiersbe, 399)