

# Gospel Orthodoxy - Redemption

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[ 0 : 00 ] The scripture reading comes from Romans chapter 3 and 1 Peter chapter 1. Please follow along on the screen, the bulletin, or your own Bible.

In Romans 3 verse 21, we read, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

Then, in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 14, we read, Amen.

Great. Thank you so much, Janet. Good morning, everybody. On behalf of Claire and myself, I know it's the 10th of January, but I want to just welcome you to 2021 and say Happy New Year.

[ 2 : 14 ] I really wish that we could do this face-to-face. I wish I could see you and give you a big hug, look you in the eye, and wish you the best for this next year. But I guess doing it through the screen, it's just not quite the same.

But really, all the best for this new year to each and every one of us. And I have been praying for us. The elders have been praying for us as a church. Many of you, we've been praying for you by name over the last couple of weeks.

And we really are trusting that this year, despite all the challenges that we face, will be an outstanding year for us. A year in which we walk deeply with Christ. A year in which we experience His grace in a whole new and profound way.

And so really, just trusting for a fantastic year as we walk with God together. We want you to know that we love you. We're so grateful to be able to walk this journey called life and ministry and following Jesus together with you.

And so a warm welcome to you. Will you join us as we pray together? I am very excited for this morning. I have been praying so much for this morning's message. And I'd love for you to join me as we pray together.

[ 3 : 23 ] Let's ask God to speak to us from His Word. So Heavenly Father, as we come to Your Word this morning, God, we say this so often, we're not in the least bit interested in hearing the opinions of man.

We are not in the least bit interested, God, in what I have to say or think. We want to know what the truth of Your Word is. We want Your Word, God, to arrest our hearts and to set us free.

And God, this morning as we look at this incredible teaching of Your Word, how You died, Jesus, to set us free, God, I pray that that will happen. I pray, God, that You really, by the power of Your Spirit, will be at work in our hearts.

And so I pray, God, may Your Word come alive to us this morning. May You bring healing and restoration, redemption to our hearts and our lives, God.

I pray, God, by the power of Your Spirit, won't You be at work? God, I pray, let us hear and take stock of only that which You want us to hear. God, come and glorify Your own name.

[ 4 : 29 ] Come and speak to us this morning. We want to hear from the living, risen God from Your Word. And so we ask that in Your powerful and Your gracious name. Amen.

Amen. When I was growing up, I grew up in South Africa. We had a lot of space. And our family loved playing sports. I had two brothers, an older brother, a younger brother.

And we were forever playing sports, cricket, rugby, soccer. And I had a very happy childhood in many ways. But one of the challenges was that my dad had a bad back.

The lower vertebra of his back were damaged earlier on in his life. And so even as he would play sports with us, cricket and soccer, we were always very aware of the pain in his back and his lack of mobility, his lack of ability to move.

When I was about 10 or 12 years old, somewhere around there, my dad had another back operation, I think his third or fourth operation. And finally in this one, what they did was they took the three vertebra, the lower part of his back, they put bone in the middle, cleaned out the disc, and then they put titanium rods through that kind of new infrastructure and fused these vertebra together.

[ 5 : 45 ] And thereafter, my dad's back was rock solid, as strong as you could imagine. After that, he went hiking to Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak of Africa.

He hiked to the base camp of Mount Everest in the Himalayas. He's gone on motorbike trips and camping trips. And today my dad is almost 70, and he is as strong and as healthy as most 50-year-olds.

That operation brought a freedom to my dad that I had never seen in the years growing up before that. Now I'll tell you that story because we're doing this series called Gospel Orthodoxy.

And the word ortho in the beginning of orthodoxy means straight or upright or correct. And it's the same word that is in the word orthopedics. An orthopedic surgeon is somebody who is concerned with the skeleton, the bone structure of your body, to make sure that your body is healthy and strong.

If a body has a healthy or strong skeleton, especially a spine, a backbone, it gives incredible freedom and mobility and ability to the body to do all sorts of things.

[ 6 : 54 ] But when your skeleton, when your backbone is damaged, it's broken, when it's not working well, it restricts you in incredible ways, just like my dad experienced. In the same way, just like a human body needs to have a strong and healthy skeleton, needs to be straight and upright and correct, so our belief structure, what we know and understand about the Gospel, about who God is, about who we are in God, needs to be correct and straight and upright in order for our spiritual lives to flourish, to be healthy and strong.

As any doctor will tell us, that if our bone structure, our skeleton, is out of joint or damaged or we have a bad posture, it can really affect us for years to come, often later down the road.

In the same way, when we've got a crooked orthodoxy, a crooked understanding of who God is and what the Gospel is all about, it will lead to spiritual disease and decay and apathy in the years to come.

And so that's what this series is really all about. And so last week, Chris helped us, we looked at the biblical doctrine of justification. And justification says that if you are in Christ, you're given a new status before God.

You're no longer under the category of condemned, you're under the category of the righteous. No longer under the category of guilty, under the category of grace.

[ 8 : 17 ] Grace. And this is not because of what we've done, it's because of what Jesus has done. Christ's righteousness is given to us, credited to us.

You may remember that amazing verse in 2 Corinthians. It says, And friends, to the degree to which we understand and know this incredible truth will change your life.

To the degree to which we understand this will be the degree to which we experience freedom, freedom from condemnation, freedom from guilt, freedom from performance, freedom from having to worry about whether God loves us and accepts us.

To the degree to which we know this will be the degree to which we experience deep security in God's love and acceptance of us. Most Christians functionally live as if our acceptance of God is based on our performance.

The gospel tells us that our acceptance before God is found on Christ's performance, on the cross, and that that is credited to us as if it were our own.

[ 9 : 28 ] This is the scandalous good news of the gospel. So that's justification which we looked at last week. This morning, I want us to look at this another amazing doctrine which is the doctrine of redemption.

Redemption. If justification means freedom from guilt, redemption means freedom from slavery.

Now when we hear of slavery, we might think in our minds have this image of 18th century transatlantic slave trade, where people, many from Africa, were kidnapped, trafficked into slavery,

sent across the ocean to work in the new American colonies.

But actually slavery in the ancient world was very different. It was not nearly as brutal as that. It was far more common in many ways. And slavery in the ancient world, people found themselves in slavery for a variety of reasons.

It could have been because of warfare or battle. People were taken as the spoils of war. But actually a very common form of slavery was when people got into financial difficulty or debt, they would often, as a form of indentured servanthood, submit themselves to a kind of slavery in order to pay off their debt.

In the ancient world, often people put themselves into slavery, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to pay off a debt that they earn. And yet unlike the 18th century slave trade in North America, generally speaking, a slave in the ancient world could purchase their freedom, either through they themselves or someone else paying off their debt by paying what was called a ransom.

[ 11 : 08 ] And so what would happen is someone would get into financial difficulty, maybe debt, and they would either sell a property of theirs or maybe themselves into slavery in order to pay off that debt. And then they would work for a period of time, a couple of years perhaps, to work towards their freedom.

But often what would happen is a family member would come and pay off their debt for them or buy out their freedom in order to either restore that property or restore them to a state of freedom by paying this ransom price.

And that act of paying money to buy someone's freedom was called redemption. And so redemption really means to be released or set free or restored by way of payment, to be freed by way of ransom.

In the New Testament, the word ransom and the word redemption are almost identical. They have the same Greek root word. And so having been taken captive or enslaved, upon the payment of some price, your freedom was restored.

You were redeemed. Now, in the Bible, there's lots of stories or imageries that illustrate this. One of the best ones is the story of Hosea.

[ 12 : 21 ] You might know the story, but Hosea was a prophet, a well-respected man of God in ancient Israel. He was given a message by God to speak to God's people.

And one of the ways he delivered this message was through dramatization, through acting it out. And God calls Hosea to marry a lady called Goma. The trouble is Goma is a prostitute.

And so just as today the case was in the ancient times, many people found themselves in prostitution, not by way of career choice. They found themselves there because they were forced into it.

They were often owned by a pimp, some kind of master. And they were maybe sold into prostitution because of a family debt. A family member maybe sold someone into prostitution.

Maybe they put themselves into prostitution because of a debt or poverty that they came across in their lives. Maybe they were taken as a spoil of all. But however it happened, Goma finds herself trapped, enslaved in the world of prostitution.

[ 13 : 24 ] And God calls Hosea to marry her. In order to do so, he first needs to go and redeem her, to buy her out of slavery.

And so Hosea goes down to the marketplace, to the town square, and he says, I want to marry Goma. And her owners say, okay, well, that's going to cost you.

And so Hosea brings a sum of money, 15 silver coins, 350 liters of barley, a massive amount of harvest of barley. Together, it comes to 30 pieces of silver, the price for a common slave.

And he hands it over, and he buys Goma out of her slavery. He redeems her, and he brings her home. This time, not as an object of lust and abuse, but as his wife.

He brings her home, not just to satisfy himself, but to pour out his love upon her. Hosea wasn't just buying her out of prostitution. He was redeeming her humanity, her personhood.

[ 14 : 29 ] Friends, can you imagine how Goma must have felt when she hears that here comes another man that wants to take her for himself.

Here's going to be another man she must have thought is going to treat me like everyone else. And yet, unbelievably, incredibly, she finds that Hosea is not going to abuse her and use her.

Hosea is redeeming her to pour out his love upon her. Redeeming her to bring her home as his wife.

Friends, you know, this is what Christianity is all about. Christianity is not a self-improvement project and attempt to be a better person and attempt to become a more moral person.

Christianity is not a philosophy about how to get in touch with your inner self or how to become a more spiritual person. The declaration of Scripture is that apart from Christ, outside of Jesus, we are lost.

[15:30] We are enslaved to our sinful nature. We are enslaved to our sinful habits and to the power of Satan. And yet, Christ Jesus is our Redeemer, a Deliverer, one who has come to buy us out of slavery, buy us out of captivity, to set us free, to buy us out of the controlling influence of Satan, out of the destructive patterns of our sinful nature and addictions, and to bring us into freedom.

Colossians chapter 1 says this, He has redeemed us out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. In Jesus, we have a Redeemer, one who has come to pay the ransom price, the redemption price, not just 30 silver coins, but with His life.

Remember that great passage that Janet read to us earlier. It says this, you were ransomed, you were redeemed, not with perishable things such as silver or gold.

Jesus didn't come and say, okay, let me come, I got a billion dollars, I got 50 billion dollars, how much do you want? Jesus ransomed us, Jesus redeemed us with His precious blood, with His life on the cross.

Mark chapter 10, Jesus says this, the Son of Man has come, not to be served, but to serve, to give His life as a redemption, as a ransom for you and I.

[17:02] So there's this great hymn Francis Light wrote hundreds of years ago, Praise my soul, the King of heaven, to His feet thy tribute bring, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like thee His praise should sing.

Friends, this is the gospel, this is Christianity, this is what the entire Bible is about, how we were lost and enslaved to our sinful nature, to the forces of Satan, but Christ has come to redeem us and to ransom us, to buy us out of slavery and bondage, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, this is the gospel.

Now, the question is, what exactly has Jesus ransomed us from? What does Jesus, in what way does Jesus redeem us?

I mean, not many of us are walking around with chains tied to our ankles or our feet, so what exactly does it mean when Scripture says that in Him we have redemption?

Well, that's a brilliant question. redemption. This morning, I want us to look at how the New Testament speaks of three ways that we have redemption in Christ. In Christ, we have freedom from the penalty of sin, we have freedom from the power of sin, and thirdly, freedom from the very presence of sin.

[18:22] Let's look at the first one, freedom from the penalty of sin. Look at me, look with me at Romans chapter 3, and this is what Janet read to us earlier.

Paul writes this. We looked at this last week with Chris. Paul writes, For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption, there's our word, that is in Jesus Christ, by His blood to be received by faith.

In Galatians chapter 3, Paul says it this way, he says, Christ redeemed us, there's our word, from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

Now, what on earth does that mean? What it means is that Christ has redeemed us, brought us out of slavery, out of bondage, from the charge, the curse, that was hanging over our heads, on account of us having broken God's holy law.

So picture this with me. Imagine you are traveling in some foreign country, you go somewhere for work, and you've been there two weeks, you've done some work, you're on your way back to the airport to come back home to Hong Kong.

[19:36] And while you're in the taxi on the way to the airport, you're minding your own business and you hear all these sirens, these police sirens and motorbikes coming up behind you and you think, oh, that's interesting. And the next minute, they pull in front of your taxi and they steer your taxi off the road to a standstill.

And the next minute, these policemen jump out of the car, they open the taxi doors, they pull you out, tie your hands behind your back, they arrest you and put you in a police vehicle. And you say, what on earth is going on?

And all they say is, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be held against you. You go to the police station and you say, what's going on? And you find out that you've broken some law of the land, some very serious law.

Friends, you are under the curse, the charge, of having broken the law. You are detained as you face the charges of the law. Friends, look at what Paul says here.

He says, all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's standard of glory. All of us have come under the charge of having broken God's holy law. All of us have lived for ourselves.

[ 20 : 49 ] We've exalted ourselves and honored ourselves rather than Christ and God our maker. We have pushed him aside and we've worshipped ourselves. We've neither loved God nor loved others more than ourselves.

We have broken God's holy law. You've done it, I've done it, we've all done it. And the result is that we are under a charge, under a curse of having broken God's law. And so look at what Galatians says.

He says, Jesus Christ redeemed us, brought us out of the bondage of the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

By taking on that curse himself. Jesus brought us out of bondage by suffering the consequences of our guilt in our place. Jesus had his life taken from him on the cross.

He paid the price that we deserve so that we can be set free from that charge that is leveled against us. The price has been paid, the debt has been settled, the charge of guilt has been nullified and removed.

[ 21 : 51 ] The charge sheet has been torn in two and has been cast aside. Ephesians 1 says it like this, In him we have redemption. There's our word. Through his blood the forgiveness of our sins.

Friends, this is the great news of the gospel. Now, as a sidebar, the New Testament says something very interesting because it says that Christ has also redeemed us from the power of Satan.

Now, in what way has Jesus redeemed us from the power of Satan? One of the ways that the Bible says Satan torments and makes life difficult for followers of Jesus is through his accusation.

In fact, the book of Revelation Satan is called the accuser. And Satan often comes to believers and he says, How can God love you? You're such a sinner. Do you really think that God loves you, that God accepts you when you've done this and this?

How on earth can you think that God loves you? And he accuses us and he reminds us of our sin. But friends, in the gospel, Jesus has dismantled that accusation of Satan.

[ 22 : 58 ] He's taken his primary weapon and he's disarmed him. Look at how Colossians says it. Having forgiven us our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands through his self-offering at the cross, Jesus disarmed the rulers and the authorities and put them to open shame.

Jesus took the very weapon that Satan uses, they're accusing us of our sin, and he disarms him. He renders him a void.

David Mathis says it like this, The decisive weapon the demons had against us was accusation of our unforgiven sin. But when Jesus poured out his blood in our place to forgive us of our sins, he freed us from captivity.

He redeemed us from Satan and the record of debt and legal demands that stood against us. See what's happened there? Friends, if you are in Christ, if you've come to him in faith and repentance, Satan comes to you and says, You're such a miserable sinner.

How do you think God could ever love you or accept you? And do you know what you do? At first, you start to feel condemned. You feel guilty. You feel like, Yeah, I'm such a terrible Christian.

[ 24 : 11 ] How could God ever love you? And then suddenly, you go to CG or you go to church and one of your brothers or sisters reminds you of the gospel. They read something in the scripture and suddenly you realize, I've been free.

I've been set free. And so you say to Satan, Satan, shut it. The debt has been paid. I have been justified. I've been redeemed, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.

You preach the gospel to yourself and you say, Jesus is my redeemer. He has canceled the record of debt that stood against me with its legal demands. It is finished.

It has been paid in full. Friends, Jesus redeems us from the penalty of sin. Now, as wonderful and as powerful as that is, in many ways, that's transaction that takes place in the heavens.

But for those of us that are in Christ, our record has been settled. The debt has been paid. But how does Christ's redemption work actually help us today or tomorrow or this week?

[ 25 : 17 ] Well, that's a great question. Secondly, Christ frees us from the power of sin. I wonder how many of us feel like the death and resurrection of Jesus, as wonderful as it is for our past and as good news as it is for our future, has very little bearing on our lives today.

And yet, we couldn't possibly be more wrong. The New Testament tells us again and again that the death of Christ has ransomed us, redeemed us, set us free on account of His death, not only from the record of sin of our past, but also from the power of sin in our present, today.

Look at how the Apostle Peter says it. Janice read this to us earlier. He says this, As God's children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, so you also be holy in all your conduct.

Since it is written, You shall be holy for I am holy. So let's just pause it. Just think about that. God is saying that it's His will that as Christians, our lives reflect something of Jesus' nature and character. Just as God is holy, we ought to be holy. God doesn't want us to live in the way that we lived when we were ignorant about the gospel and who God is. He doesn't want us to live as if we don't know who Jesus is, we don't understand the gospel, we don't know about the holiness of God.

[ 26 : 42 ] Friends, if you're a Christian, we shouldn't say, Well, Jesus died for my sin, I can just carry on sinning, it doesn't matter, it's all forgiven anyway. God is holy and He wants our lives to reflect His holiness.

Just as it is written, You shall be holy just as God is holy. But then He says, Knowing that, so there's something that we should know or understand, something we need to believe that's going to help us to live lives of holiness.

Okay? Knowing what? Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Friends, you see what Peter is saying? Jesus' death on the cross wasn't just to forgive us, wasn't just to pay for the penalty of sin, as wonderful as that is, Jesus' death on the cross also redeems us from the futile ways that we live naturally, that we inherit from our forefathers, the futile ways of life outside of the gospel.

What Christians in previous generations called our besetting sins. Those sins that keep on plaguing us and tormenting us that we struggle to get free from, Jesus died to set us free from that.

[ 28 : 00 ] Friends, I wonder what areas of our lives don't reflect the holiness and the beauty of Jesus. Don't reflect the redeeming, ransoming power of Christ.

Friends, when you look at your life, what patterns, what behavior keep on tripping you up? Things you just can't seem to get the better of. Friends, what sinful patterns of behavior?

What sinful patterns of thought? What destructive coping mechanisms? What toxic relationships do you find you keep going back to?

Friends, what addictions do you find yourself trapped in? Addictions that you hate but you just can't seem to get the better of? Friends, what idols do you find yourself trusting in again and again out of fear or insecurity?

Christ's death on the cross was meant to ransom us, redeem us, even out of those patterns of our life. In my life, over the last couple of years, I've become aware of just how enslaved I am to people's approval and affirmation of me.

[ 29 : 20 ] I find it often very difficult to say no to people. I find it very difficult to disagree, extremely difficult to disagree with anyone in authority.

Often I find it difficult to say no to requests that are made of me. Even if I know it's not a good idea, I will go along with it. I often find that I hate making people feel uncomfortable or awkward.

I find that this leads me from time to time to being less than honest. I find myself talking to someone and even though I disagree with everything that they're saying, I find myself nodding my head and saying, yeah, I agree with you.

All out of this fear of what will people think of me if I disagree with them or what will out of this fear of people not approving me or affirming me.

I find that I get myself in situations I don't want to be in or because I'm afraid to disagree with people or say what I really feel. And as I've thought about this over the years, one of the things I've realized is that actually in a very deep part of my heart, I love and treasure and value the approval of people actually more than I value and treasure God and who He is and what He has to say about me.

[ 30 : 44 ] In many ways, there's this idol that's deeply rooted in my heart that is the idol of I find security and comfort and peace in people affirming me and people approving me even more than I do in who God is.

Now, I'm sure I'm not the only one that feels like this, but one of the things I found fascinating is that even though I hate it, even though it has this controlling influence of my life, every year, at New Year's, I make a New Year's resolution.

This is the year I'm going to be courageous. This is the year I'm going to be bold. This is the year I'm not going to give in to people pleasing. And yet, a couple of weeks, months down the road, I find that I'm controlled by this and I find myself giving in to it.

And the besetting sin of people pleasing seems to have this hold on me. And even though I hate it, I feel incapable of breaking free from it. A couple of months ago, I realized this and was processing this and praying through it and I realized that I had to confess that this controlling influence of my life is not just because of my personality, it's not just because of my culture, it's not just middle child syndrome or some other psychological thing I want to blame it on.

Actually, deep in my heart, in my psychology, I guess, there is an idol there that treasures and loves to prove with people more than God.

[ 32 : 06 ] There is an idol that I've set up that I trust and hope in more than Jesus. And so over the process of a couple of weeks, I really felt like I did deep confession. I started to hate and despise this idol and bring it into the light and started to do deep repentance as I brought this before God and said, God, I'm so sorry that actually in my heart of hearts, I often love people more than I love you.

God, I'm sorry, won't you forgive me? And as I did the deep soul work of confession and repentance, I started to discover the most amazing thing. I started to discover a freedom that I had not experienced for years and years and years.

Now, I can't pretend that I've got it all sorted and that it never rears its head. But friends, for the first time in years and years, I've experienced this freedom from this deep-seated hold and idolatry in my life.

Now, look again at what Peter says. He says, As children of God, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, for He has called you to be holy, since it's written, you shall be holy as I am holy, knowing this, that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, generations, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul says it the same way when he writes it to Titus. He says this, Our Savior, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us to redeem us, there's our word, from the lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession.

[ 33 : 42 ] Galatians tells us that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, the charge that hangs over our head that says guilty. Paul tells us in Titus and Peter that Christ has redeemed us.

What? Not just from the charge, but from the futile ways that have a bondage over our life, that control us. Christ has redeemed us to set us free so that we can become the people that He's called us to be.

We sang it earlier, What can take away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Friends, the gospel is not just that Jesus died to take away your sin, but now you've just got to suffer and live as if one day you'll get to heaven but it has no bearing in your life.

This day, this week, Christ's power of overcoming the grave is given to you to set you free from the besetting, controlling, addictive, powerful sins in your life.

[ 34 : 39 ] Friends, for those of us who are in Christ, addiction is an illegitimate master. It's a trapment. Scripture says it is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Stand firm then in your freedom and do not be enslaved by a pattern of slavery.

Friends, your freedom has been purchased. The price has been paid by the power of the Spirit. Christ says, walk in the freedom that He's purchased for you. Freedom from the penalty of sin, freedom from the power of sin.

Thirdly and finally, this will be quick, freedom from the presence of sin. One day, Jesus is going to return and He's going to take us home. And when we get to be with Him in glory, there will be no more brokenness, no more sin, no more defection, no more anything that's wrong with our lives, our

hearts, our bodies, with our souls.

We will be completely, finally, and fully redeemed. In Luke chapter 21, Jesus is talking to His disciples and He's telling them about the time when He's going to return again. and He says this, when you see these signs beginning to take place, straighten up, lift up your head because your redemption is near.

Now, He's not talking about your salvation. That happens the day you put your faith in Christ. He's talking about this other redemption, this full and final redemption that's going to take place when Christ returns and He takes us with Him to glory.

[ 36 : 08 ] We sang it earlier, there we will rise to meet the Lord, their sin and death will be destroyed. This final redemption that's coming. So Romans chapter 8 says like this, We know that the whole of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

It's talking about how our world is broken, our own bodies are broken, we feel the effects of sin in our life. Sorry, someone's just trying to call me there on my iPad.

Okay, Romans 8. We know that the whole creation's been groaning, not only creation, but we ourselves, our own bodies feel the effect of it. We who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we groan inwardly as we await eagerly our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

And so this Christian life in many ways, there are these various stages. There's the day you put your faith in Jesus, you become a follower of Jesus, you are redeemed from the penalty of sin. There's this day in the future when our bodies will be redeemed from the defective effects of sin in this world.

No more cancer, no more anxiety, no more depression, no more COVID, no more hunger, no more anger, no more worry.

[ 37 : 22 ] But then in between this Christ's redemption, redeeming power is at work in our lives as He starts to redeem us from even the effects of sin in our life and from the power of sin. Friends, Jesus has come to do this for us.

This is the power of the gospel. Let me close with a personal story of when I experienced the redeeming power of God in my life. It's a story I haven't told to many people so if we can just keep it between the 300 of us that would be great.

I say that jokingly. But it's a story I haven't shared with many people but I grew up in, as I said, the most amazing, wonderful family. The best family you could ever hope and wish for.

And I had a very happy childhood in many ways. When I was 17, someone who was not a family member but somebody that I was very close to, there was a breakdown in the relationship and this person said a whole bunch of things to me, words to me that were very hurtful and harmful and for some reason, I'm not sure why, but for some reason, these words lodged deeply in my heart and they went deep inside of me and they kind of stayed there.

They're almost like the tentacles of these words put roots deep in my heart. And for the next couple of years, I would go through these seasons where these words would just ring in my mind and I would absolutely hate myself.

[ 38 : 49 ] I'd go through these seasons where I just felt useless and miserable, a pile of nothingness. And so for the next couple of years, I would go through these seasons where for two or three weeks at a time, I would wake up and the very first thought I had in the morning, before I knew what day it was, what time it was, where I was, while I was still trying to wake up, I'd have this thought in my mind, I'd hear this voice that was as clear as day and I would say these things like, Kevin, you're such an idiot.

You're so useless. You're such a disgrace. And I was kind of half awake. I didn't even know what day it was or what time it was, but absolutely I knew that I was a disgrace.

I was useless. And so I'd go through a couple of weeks of just where this voice in my mind just controlled me. And throughout the day, I would just feel beaten up.

And then it would dissipate and a couple of months later, I'd go through one of these seasons again. And I couldn't break free from it. And so for four or five years, this happened.

And eventually, one day, I was about 21, 22, I was on a mission trip in Lesotho. Lesotho is a small African country next to South Africa. I was there with a bunch of friends and I was in one of these funk stages.

[ 40 : 02 ] And I remember one morning, I woke up and I didn't even know where I was, but one thing I knew, I was an idiot. I was a disgrace. I was useless. And I was convinced that nobody and nothing could ever love me or accept me.

And later on that day, we were in a church service and there's a time of sung worship and I was just feeling miserable and I heard this voice.

It wasn't audible, but it almost could have been audible. It was so clear. I heard this voice and the voice was God saying to me, and this is what he said. He said, Kevin, my power is in this place. What do you want me to do for you? And I remember I crossed my arms like this and I said, God, I want you to set me free from hating myself. And in an instant, I felt the love of God in a way I've never felt it.

I felt the power of God in a way I've never felt it. And friends, from that day, I have never once gone through one of those stages again.

[ 41 : 09 ] Not once in the last 14 years has that ever come back. I was set free. I was redeemed in a moment by the power of God from the effects of sin and other people's sin in my life.

Friends, I tell you that story because Jesus Christ is our great Redeemer. He's gone to the cross. He laid down His life. He redeemed us from the penalty of sin. That's true. But He also has come to redeem us from the power of sin.

The power of sin in our own life, but also the power that other people's sin have over us. Friends, one day Jesus will redeem us from the very presence of sin.

Friends, this week I've been praying for us. I've been praying for many of us by name. I've been praying and I really do believe that God wants to set some of us free today.

For some of us, it's from the power of sin in our own lives. It's addictions that hold us and we just can't feel that we can ever get free from it. Friends, the Bible says that actually the way to be free and the way to start the redemption process is actually through confession and repentance.

[ 42 : 16 ] Without confession and repentance, there is no freedom. And so even the smallest step requires us just to confess and acknowledge, God, I need you.

I'm so sorry. In my own life, the idolatry of people pleasing it, God has broken the power of that as I've taken the small step of confessing and repenting that.

Friends, I wonder how many of us this morning need to be free from destructive patterns of sin in our own life, destructive patterns of behavior.

Friends, will you come to Jesus this morning in confession and repentance? Will you come and acknowledge there's this idol that out of fear or insecurity you just hold on to? Confess it.

Christ wants to set you free. Friends, for some of us, we need to be set free from bitterness and resentment and forgiveness. For some of us, it's anger in our hearts.

[ 43 : 19 ] It has this controlling power over us that we just can't get free and we excuse it and justify it. We use all these arguments why we justified. Friends, it's idolatry.

It's sin. Jesus wants to set us free from it today. Friends, for some of us, it's sexual addiction, pornography. Friends, for some of us, it's people pleasing.

Some of us, maybe it's other addictions like comfort eating, spending money uncontrollably. It's greed. It's these other things that hold us and we can't be free from it.

Friends, will you come to Jesus your great redeemer? He wants to set you free. Friends, for some of us, it's not so much the sins of our life. It's those that have sinned against us.

It's hurts and wounds of the past. It's words that people have said over us. Friends, Christ, the great redeemer, wants to come and set us free. Friends, for some of us, it's the words of our parents.

[ 44 : 22 ] It's the lack of love that they showed us. It's the affirmation we long for and we never get. Friends, Christ, your redeemer, who went to the cross not only to pay for your sin but to break the power of sin over your life.

Jesus died to set you free. Can I ask you to stand with me if you're comfortable? Maybe if you don't want to stand, you might want to get on your knees.

Maybe you want to lift up your hands and will you join me as we pray together? I'd love to pray for us that Christ, our great redeemer, will set us free.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus Christ, awesome and magnificent God, the sovereign God of the heavens, you who are seated on the throne, you rule and you reign, but God, you are not just transcendent and distant, you are intensely near and imminent, you are personal and close.

God, I pray for us this morning, I pray for myself, I pray for my brothers and sisters across Hong Kong. God, for those of us that are in Christ, I pray that you will come and set us free.

[ 45 : 36 ] God, I pray that you set us free from patterns of sin. God, from idols in our life that have controlled us for too long.

God, from the accusations and the lies of the devil, where Satan has come and told us that we will never be free, it's just who we are. God, where Satan has told us that you will never love us and accept us, that we're just mediocre.

Christ, I pray that the power of the Spirit will break into our lives and set people free now. God, come and do that, I pray. Set people free, God. God, I pray for those of us that feel enslaved and trapped to anger.

Christ, set us free as we confess that and repent it. God, where there's addiction to sexual sin and pornography, Christ, set us free as we confess that and admit the reality of that.

Jesus set us free. Christ, for those of us that feel trapped, enslaved, by the sins that have been sinned against us, words spoken of us, beatings, physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, Christ, I pray by the power of the risen God, that Jesus, you who died and rose again to conquer the power of Satan, God, once you set your people free, Jesus, come and have your way.

[ 47 : 06 ] God, just as you set me free all those years ago, I pray that you'll do that for my brothers and sisters today. God, I pray tomorrow morning we'll wake up with a new sense of life and freedom and joy and power in God because we've experienced the living God.

Oh God, we need you. God, we stand secure in our justification and the fact that the penalty has been paid. We are free from it.

We stand secure. God, now we pray, come and make us free that the power of sin, the power of Satan, will have no hold effect in our lives.

We experience what it means to be sons and daughters of you. You pray this, God, in your powerful name. Friends, as we continue to worship and sing songs of adoration, I urge you, take whatever posture you want.

You can stand, you can jump, jump. If you need to shout it out, if you need to say something, if you need to just lie flat on the floor, do whatever you want. But friends, come to Christ, your great Redeemer.

[ 48 : 24 ] He died to set you free. He's given you the spirit to set you free. Galatians 5 says, it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not allow yourself to be yoked again by a spirit of bondage.

Friends, Jesus, come to set us free. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.