Series: Rediscover – the good news about King Jesus

Title: Redeemed Gospel

Text: Ephesians 1:8-14, John 8, Isaiah 44, Ruth 4, Exodus 6, Genesis 48.

Main Idea: Redeemed People Redeem people.

Challenge: Stop going back. Go forward into God’s grace

1. Introducing Redemption
   1. The woman caught in Adultery
      1. One of the most famous stories in the gospels is found in the fourth Gospel written by John. It is interjected rather abruptly into the story, in fact most scholars do not consider part of John’s original composition because it just seems rather disjointed from the surrounding context, and Context is what?
      2. I’m of course talking about the woman caught in adultery found in chapter 8. You all know the story. A woman was brought before Jesus to put him to the test. She was a trap laid by the pharisees to get Jesus in trouble.
      3. They bring the woman by angry mob into the temple grounds where Jesus was, of course she was living out her worst nightmare, embarrassed beyond measure, ashamed, dehumanized, and condemned to death because of her sins.
         1. I wonder about the strength of her regret in that moment. What if I could go back and do it again? I wish I could go back in time and do that differently. If only I could go back and smack some sense into my younger self. OH God Please, let me go back and have a second chance!
         2. Have you ever said that to yourself? Man, if I could just go back, I would change some things. Regret is a powerful weapon of the enemy. It doesn’t move you forward. It only moves you backwards. Going backwards can be helpful to remind you how you got where you were, but it can also be a prison. Going back focuses on the darkness behind you and not on the light in front of you.
      4. Jesus, seeing their true motives, writes in the dirt. What? No one knows.
      5. Then after seeing what he wrote in the dirt, her accusers leave. First the older men, then the younger. Then it’s just the two of them. Then they exchange few words.
      6. You see this woman has a sin problem, a sin problem that has enslaved her. This enslavement to sin goes all the way back to Adam and Eve to the very beginning. And that story goes something like this…
   2. Adam and Eve
      1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and everything was perfect and just as God intended it so he called it good. But not long after the story begins, there is an inciting action that disrupts God’s good world. Adam and Eve listen to a talking snake who tells them they can usurp God’s authority and become like him by simply eating from the forbidden tree.
      2. As a result of this rebellion against God, three consequences are given:
         1. They were **sentenced** to death.
         2. They became **slaves** to their sins.
         3. They are **separated** from God in Exile.
      3. But God sends them away with a bit of hope. He tells them that he will send someone to make right all the things they have done wrong. This someone will be a child of the woman. He will crush the snake, but the snake will bite his heel. And this rescue mission of hope is launched in the person of Abraham. Abraham’s descendant will bless the world. Abraham receives a family. That family becomes a people, that people become a nation, that nation becomes a kingdom, and the kingdom produces a king. But it’s not the king they expected.
      4. Jesus comes and becomes King and then pours out his blessings upon the world. These blessings appear as a three-pronged solution to our three-pronged problems:
         1. Resurrection
         2. Redemption
         3. Reconciliation
      5. Today we are looking at the second R in our list of R words in this series. Last week we looked at Resurrection and how it impacts who we are today and not just a future event we have to look forward to but we have resurrected hearts and we are spreading the new creation in the midst of the old when we take God’s kingdom and love to people who need it. This week we are going to examine Redeemed.
   3. Hook
      1. **I am interested in two questions. How? And the logical follow up, Why? How does God Redeem his people? And the second, Why does God redeem his people?**
   4. Transition
      1. To answer this question, I’d like to survey the biblical drama and see various uses of the word Redemption. We already know the quick answers to these questions, in fact I bet you’ve already answered them in your head. How does God redeem his people? Through the blood of Jesus on the cross. And the second, Why? Because he loves us.
      2. But I think we can go deeper. Let’s begin by answering the Why first and then go back to the How.
2. The Why?
   1. The Greek word
      1. The word in Greek that our Bibles translate into Redeem, or Redemption is the word ap-ol-oo'-tro-sis
      2. Go ahead and make yourselves sound like nerdy Greek scholars, say ap-ol-oo’-tro-sis. Very good. It’s not easy so I commend those who can squirm their way through it.
      3. This word is actually two words smashed together to make a new word. It is a combination of the word Apo and Lutron. Apo mean to take out of. Lutron means to ransom. So the word literally means to ransom out of. We have chosen an English word for that, Redemption and we only find it used 10 times in all of the new testament. Jesus only utters this word once. It is mostly used by Paul in his letters.
      4. Transition
         1. We see this word used two times in Ephesians 1. Let’s go there now.
   2. Ephesians
      1. Ephesians 1:3-14 is the longest sentence, probably ever. You teachers in the room, you would mark Paul down for this run on sentence. It is very long. However, it is done because he is stringing together some very important realities for his readers. Here are three:
      2. You are God’s Possession
         1. We have Text - **Ephesians 1:13-14** – to bring king Jesus glory – Possession
            1. **13**And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the **redemption of God’s own possession**, to the praise of his glory.
            2. Often when we talk about redemption, we talk about how we have been redeemed in the blood of Christ. This verse actually talks of a future redemption that is still yet to come. One that will arrive at the end of all things and the age arrives in all its glory.
            3. We often talk about having eternal life as our inheritance but rarely, if ever, do we talk about what God stands to inherit in eternity. This verse tells us, it’s you.
            4. You are the bride currently being prepared for her husband. We belong to God. In eternity we are his inheritance and this is for his glory, not ours.
            5. You know what this means for you, you belong here. God has paid the price for you. You are his. Not anyone in this room or anyone in your life can change that.
            6. So many people walk through life feeling out of place, outcast, socially awkward, not part of the in crowd. But what Paul tells his readers in these two verses is that you have a place here because you are God’s.
            7. Paul has two more things to tell us but we need to go back in the text a few verses prior. Let’s look at verses 9-10.
      3. You have a revealed Purpose
         1. Text - **Ephesians 1:9-10** – to unite Heaven and Earth under him - purpose
            1. **9**He did this when he revealed to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, **10**toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ—the things in heaven and the things on earth.
            2. You are not just God’s possession, but you have a purpose. Look at what Paul says here, God the father sent his son for one purpose, to unite heaven and earth under the reign of his son, Jesus.
            3. You are his possession in this Kingdom but there is an end goal in mind. The renewal of all things. To make the creation right. To go back to the way things were before Adam and Eve sold our future for a bit of fruit.
            4. Your purpose is to be part of that union of heaven earth. To demonstrate the future realities to your neighbors by demonstrating that you are marked by spirit, set apart, different, and on mission.
            5. Finally, let’s go back two verses to see one more reality.
      4. You have immeasurable Value
         1. Text**– Ephesians 1:7-8** – Redeemed by blood - price
            1. **7**In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace **8**that **he lavished** on us in all wisdom and insight.
            2. Have you ever been told you weren’t worth the trouble? That It would be better to get someone else? That there are better more capable people out there? The rest of the world will tell you that you are only worth what the market can bear. That you are only worth what you can do for me lately. That’s not true with God.
            3. God has given you an immeasurable value because he is willing to sacrifice the most precious thing to him, his son. I got to tell you, I have two sons and there is no way I’m giving any of them up for any of you.
            4. Our value has one price, and it was set at the beginning of time, God’s own life in his son. That is how much you are worth to him. Because you are more than just your mistakes. You are more than just your failures. You are God’s image and that means something.
   3. Transition
      1. We’ve learned from Paul the why. Because you are God’s possession, you have a purpose, and you have immeasurable value. The price for you was set before all things. Why did God Redeem us? Because we are his glory.
      2. Now let’s look at How. In order to see the how, I’d like to **go back** into the Old Testament to see how this word is used.
3. The How?
   1. The Hebrew Word/Isaiah.
      1. In Hebrew, the word that gets translated Redeem or Redemption is Gaw-Al. Gaw-Al. Go ahead and make yourself sound like Hebrew scholars. Say Gaw-Al.
      2. This word is used 105 times in the Old Testament. So, still not all that often. It finds its greatest concentration in the Prophetic book Isaiah where it speaks of one to come and Redeem the nation of Israel through the coming Messiah. Listen to what God says through his prophet in chapter 44:22.
         1. **22** I remove the guilt of your rebellious deeds as if they were a cloud, the guilt of your sins as if they were a cloud. Come back to me, for I protect you.”
            1. But that’s not all, go back earlier in the chapter to verse 6.
         2. **6** “This is what the LORD says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from there is no God. “
      3. Isaiah uses this word to indicate that there is a rebellion raging against God that he will not allow to continue. That He is the true King of the world and as result He will deal with mankind’s problem of sin. We but need to go back to God.
      4. Isaiah is tailoring his message to the Israelites who have a heritage and identity steeped in the idea of Redemption. He is drawing upon the rich themes and narratives laid down by his ancestors. Let’s go back and see for ourselves.
   2. Ruth
      1. Intro
         1. About 400 years before Isaiah a Moabite widow follows her foreign mother-in-law back to her home to the sticks of Israel. A small town called Bethlehem. Her name was Ruth.
         2. Ruth lost her husband and all she had. So she decides to cling to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Your God will be my God, your people will be my people. So together they move to Naomi’s home town.
         3. Because they didn’t have any money to buy food. Ruth picks the grain left behind by the harvesters in the field of Boaz. Boaz continues to show favor on them and Naomi calls him their Kinsman Redeemer. Family guardian. He then Redeems her in the final chapter of the book.
      2. Text
         1. **9**Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. **10**I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”
         2. **13**So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. **14**The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! **15**He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”
         3. **16**Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. **17**The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.
      3. Explanation
         1. Boaz Redeemed Ruth.
         2. Ruth gave Naomi her son.
         3. That son was the grandfather of king David.
      4. The Point
         1. How does God Redeem us? **He Makes us Whole**
      5. Application
         1. Ruth and naomi were destitute and had nothing living off the generosity of local farmers. But God did not leave them in this empty state. He redeems both. He gives Ruth and Naomi back their value. He makes them whole.
      6. Transition
         1. But that is not the only picture we have in the Old Testament of Redeeming. We can learn more if we just go back a bit further in the story.
   3. Exodus
      1. Intro
         1. About 400 years before Ruth, God’s people worked for their masters, Egypt. That is until God sends a deliverer, Moses. He tells Moses to go and demand of the King of Egypt to His people go. Pharaoh of course says no. Then Pharaoh makes things harder for the Israelites, He won’t even let them go out into the wilderness to worship their God. Therefore, Moses goes and tells God what Pharaoh said and God replies with these words:
      2. Text
         1. **Exodus 6:6**“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, **and I will redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. **7**I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. **8**And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.’”
      3. Explanation
         1. But technically, the way the word is used here in the story, this story becomes the biblical archetype of what God’s redemption looks like. So again, this is not just a story about ancient times and ancient people.
         2. So literally, in this story it means to set free from slavery. So I’m going to redeem you with an outstretched arm. Yahweh’s going to roll up His sleeves. With mighty acts of judgment in the 10 plagues, he will free his people from the oppression of the ultimate image of slavery.
         3. And what is the last plague that finally breaks Israel’s oppressor? The plague of the first-born son. God sends the angel to take the life of the first born of Egypt, Men, boys, cattle, all of them. But the Israelites were spared because the best lamb dies in the place of their first born and the Lord passes over them.
         4. This whole story becomes a model or an archetype of how God’s justice and rescue and redemption takes place in the world which is why Pharaoh was never given a name, because he’s just like the archetype bad guy of all humanity and this is God’s redemption.
      4. The Point
         1. How does God Redeem us? **He Sets us Free**
         2. The exodus story tells us that God Redeems us by setting us free. **We are free from slavery**. Slavery to death. Slavery to sin. Slavery to others around us.
      5. Application
         1. God sets us free from sin and death. That is the great problem launched in the Garden. Sentenced to death and slavery to sin. God sets us free from all of that and instead makes us his Temple. We are his sanctuary.
      6. Transition
         1. But we can go back further to the first time the word redemption ever appears in scripture. Let’s go back to Genesis 48:16
   4. Genesis
      1. Text
         1. Jacob, also named Israel, is giving a blessing to Joseph’s two sons Ephraim and Manasseh who will stand in as two tribes of Israel on behalf of Joseph and Levi. Jacob lays his hands on them and says this:
         2. Then he blessed Joseph and said,  
            “May the God before whom my fathers  
            Abraham and Isaac walked—  
            the God who has been my shepherd  
            all my life long to this day,  
            **16**the angel who has **protected/REDEEMED** me  
            from all harm— bless these boys.  
            May my name be named in them,  
            and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.  
            May they grow into a multitude on the earth.”
      2. The Point
         1. What’s the word used here to interpret Redeemed? The NET translates it as protected which is appropriate.
            1. How does God redeem us? **He Protects us.** We are **PROTECTED**
      3. Application
         1. God has protected us from more than we can probably ever imagine. Protected us from others who seek to harm us and what we stand for. He has protected us from ourselves and our own stupid decisions, right? God’s redemptive work is more than just redeeming us from sin, though that is paramount. But he is also redeeming us from harm.
         2. Job in his deepest anguish cries out in song, “I know my redeemer lives.” This isn’t that he keeps it from happening but that when it does he protects us by sustaining us through it.
      4. Jesus is the Angel
         1. But this passage has another mystery to reveal. Did you catch it when we read it? Remember, this is the first time in all of scripture that the word Redeemed is used. Who is doing the redeeming?
         2. Verse 16, The Angel who has Redeemed me. This is a reference to the angel that Jacob has encountered before like the night he wrestled God and left him crippled?
         3. This is the angel of the Lord that Jacob is saying Redeemed him. Well, who is the angel of the Lord? It is the Old Testament code for Jesus. This is Jesus! Jesus is Redeeming Jacob. Jacob, whose name has been changed to Israel. The first picture, the first reference in all of the Bible to someone being Redeemed, it is Jesus redeeming Israel, the name used for all of God’s people.
         4. From beginning to End, or in our case today, from the end to the beginning, it was always Jesus. It was always Jesus who redeems his people.
   5. Transition
      1. But, we aren’t done just yet. Let’s go back again to our story in John 8 and the woman caught in adultery.
4. John 8
   1. Feast of Tabernacles
      1. Remember me saying that this story is sort of interjected quite abruptly into the flow of the gospel of John? The context that this story shares is incredibly important for grasping the weight of its message. You see, From chapters 7-10, Jesus is in Jerusalem teaching during the feast of Tabernacles.
      2. The feast of Tabernacles is a week-long celebration which appears on the calendar between mid-September to mid-October. It commemorates one of the most important events in their history. You know what that is? It’s the Exodus. They are there to celebrate the fact that God redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. And it begins five days after Yom-Kippur, the day of atonement when the Israelites celebrate God’s redemption from their sins through the goat of sacrifice and the scapegoat.
      3. So in the middle of Jesus’ teaching on being set free from sin and death, John interjects this story sort of like a sermon illustration to drive the point home about what Jesus is saying.
   2. Their Interaction.
      1. The woman caught in adultery is an opportunity for us all to place ourselves in her place. We have an accuser who reminds us of all the bad and terrible things we’ve done. To tell us we have no value, no purpose, and no belonging. But in our deepest moments of pain, embarrassment, failure, there is Jesus.
      2. We left off with their quick conversation. What do they say? Let’s start in verse 9.
         1. **9**At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. **10**Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”
         2. **11**“No one, sir,” she said.
         3. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”
      3. Jesus does three things for this woman. You know what they are?
         1. **He protects** **her** by writing in the earth and getting the accusers to leave. Where are your accusers? Who is left to condemn you?
         2. **He Frees** **her** from the penalty of her sin by saying, Neither do I condemn you. We might use the word Justifies. He Justifies her.
         3. **He makes her whole** by saying leave your life of sin. He is pointing her forward. Don’t go back to your sin. Move forward in the freedom I’ve given you. He is making her whole.
   3. Transition
      1. Jesus is the great Redeemer. He redeemed the woman caught in adultery. He redeemed his people. He redeemed Ruth, He redeemed those enslaved in Egypt, and He redeemed Jacob. Jesus has always been in the business of Redeeming you.
5. Closing
   1. Stop going back.
      1. Jesus died on the cross to become king of the world. And by overpowering the one who enslaves us, he can instead offer us grace. And through that grace he Redeems us.
      2. So Stop looking back because you are Redeemed. You are protected, you are freed, you are whole!
   2. The vision
      1. You know what Redeemed people do? They Redeem people. Redeemed People Redeem people. Boaz Redeemed Ruth, Ruth Redeemed Naomi. God Redeemed the Israelites out of slavery. The Israelites pass that redemption on to their children in festivals. Jacob was redeemed by the angel of the Lord and passes on that redemption to who grandchildren. Redeemed people Redeem people.
      2. He has brought you out of the life you once lived and sent you down a new path where the guide is the Holy Spirit. This path includes redeeming others.
      3. This means we fight for those who can’t fight for themselves. It means we actively look for ways to interject our faith into our relationships. It means we tell people about Jesus, the King of the world who wants to resurrect and redeem them to something far greater than they can ever imagine.
      4. It means we don’t condemn others through our judgements, our prejudices, or our fears. But instead, we show them the way forward because a life in the gospel of King Jesus means there is no going back. And this gospel, truth of old, shall not kneel and shall not faint.
   3. Here’s the challenge:
      1. Don’t look **BACK**, look **FORWARD** in God’s **GRACE**