



Complete Redemption The Kind of Love We Need

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Well, I have a mental recalibration for you. Kind of an adjustment in your mind that I am pretty sure will help you maintain your sanity. It's the kind of mental adjustment I needed as a kid in third grade when the carnival workers coaxed me into this thing called the Fun House. Fun House. It was terrifying. And painful. I bonked my forehead into this plexiglass that I thought was an open hallway, I turned corners and was frightened by these distorted images of these mirrors that made me look even more bizarre than I actually did as a third grader. I had these pylons as they direct you down these thin hallways would spring out from the wall and knock me down. I got queasy from these plastic skulls that hung in the dark part of the Fun House that had strobe lights in them. I had recurring nightmares from the creepy portraits on the wall near the exit that the eyeballs followed you as you walked out. It was terrifying. It was not what it advertised itself to be. It was not fun. I wouldn't go back. You couldn't pay me to go back. I don't want to go in the Fun House.

Sadly, I think we need to recalibrate our minds not as it relates to the word fun, but as it relates to a word that everyone is chasing in our culture, it's the word love. A lot of people are entering into a lot of things that have love as a banner over the top. Hey, this is it. You know, relationships and experiences and careers and purchases and all kinds of things. Well this is it, I'll feel loved here and now in this. But just like that Fun House really wasn't fun, no rational, reasonable definition of fun, those things really are not what would be defined in what your soul craves for in terms of what we need when it comes to love.

Love is a big word and everybody's talking about it. But you can't have the lyrics of pop songs define it for you. You can't have even your experiences of human beings define it for you. It has to be something much more transcendent because there's a transcendent part of you that craves for this thing that is called love. I don't know what you think of when I say love and we need love, we want love. I mean, love is what, you know, is at the pinnacle of what human beings crave and want. It probably isn't this word. We have to go through a lot of words of synonyms and, you know, word associations to ever get to this word: "redemption."

But if you saw the title of the message this morning, I really think the goal is to try and align those two words as best we can, even though it sounds like a stodgy theological word, redemption, right? Pulling out this word redemption. It doesn't sound like love. And I guess if you're a Sunday school grad, you'd say, well, okay, I get that he might be saying that this is some kind of, you know, act of love. But what I really need us to do is to understand the breadth and dimension of the concept of redemption and then align that with what love is. And it's going to take us from the cheap lies of what everyone else and everything else is saying is love. And it might just keep us from going bonkers or at least being discouraged and down and disillusioned by all the things that don't really deliver on what they promise.

So I decided this Easter to give you a break and not just preach a big passage. I'm going to preach one verse to you. It's just this big in John Chapter 13 verse 1. I'd love for you to go



and pull that up on your device or if you brought your Bible, which we encourage you to do, to have your Bible there open to John Chapter 13 verse 1. Now, this is a pivotal verse because John has just spent, I mean, 12 chapters on three and a half years of Christ's ministry, and now he's going to spend, you know, five and a half chapters on 24 hours of time. And it starts with this pivotal verse right here.

And it is what you know of as the Last Supper. It didn't look like what Da Vinci was painting for you, you know, this was much more of a hometown meal and around the table and they're celebrating the Passover, as it says there. And I'd love to have this passage here read to you by me and so I will do so. Sometimes you start sentences and you think, where's this one going? (audience laughing) And then you've got to kind of bring it back to where it should be. John 13 verse 1. Look at it in your Bibles and let me read it for you here.

And if you don't know where to go for a Bible, you can always go on your phone. We have free and fast Wi-Fi here. ESV.org. That's the translation we use around here. Not that it's the only translation. There are plenty of good translations, but ESV, English Standard Version. But ESV.org, if you don't have a Bible, just pull that up and punch in John Chapter 13 and you should have a nice printed text there on your phone or your iPad or whatever. And then you can get a printed one, the old Gutenberg-style in our bookstore after when you're done. Or just ask for one, then we'll give you a Bible.

John Chapter 13 verse 1. It's the celebration in the Jewish calendar of Passover. "Now the Passover," it says was here, "before the Passover," it's just about to begin, that's what's going to transpire here, they're going to have the Passover meal. Now, here's an interesting phrase. "When Jesus knew that his hour had come." Now, that little phrase, if you were to look it up earlier in John, there are times when he said it hadn't come. He didn't get "arrested because this hour had not come." They weren't able to kill him because "his hour had not yet come." Well, now it says "his hour had come." So now he's going to die. Right?

And you know the elements here. He's going to have a last supper. He's going to institute this thing called the Lord's Supper. He's going to be betrayed in a garden after praying. And Judas is going to betray him with a kiss. They're going to arrest him. They're going to have a kangaroo court with the Sanhedrin and the Roman officials. And then they're going to be by the morning right after this trial, they're going to hang him on a Roman execution rack. He's going to suffer all day long, right? By three in the afternoon, he's going to die and they're going to take his body off the cross, put him in a tomb on Friday before sunset. And then by Sunday morning after the sun rises he's going to rise from the dead and that's why you're here, whether you know it or not. Right? That's the point, the point of the resurrection.

But it all starts here that "his hour had come." It was time for all these important events to take place. But look at how it's described right in the middle of this verse. Now, "to depart out of the world to the Father." So the point is, he's transitioning from this earthly ministry to going back to where he came from. And of course, God is his father, God the Father. He is God the Son as the very first verse of this book began, "In the beginning was the Word," that's Christ,



right? Verse 14 says, "He became flesh and dwelt among us." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

So here is this co-equal person of the Godhead who's taken on human form for very important reasons. He's fulfilled all righteousness. And now when his hour has come and he says, I'm going to go back to the Father. I'm going to leave, this time, though, with a body, which is an interesting and radically profound paradigm shift.

Now, here's our word, "loved." "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the "telos," "to the end." Telos is this Greek word in the Greek New Testament. Telos. It's a mysterious phrase. "Loved them to the end." What does that mean? Is that "end" in terms of chronology? He loved them to the end of his earthly ministry. Right? Which was 33, 35 years perhaps. We'll talk about that later and why I said 35, perhaps. Doesn't matter. Not now. Extra words. Words I wish I could get back, but we're going to keep going. There's a lot of depth to all of this in our Bible.

And if three and a half years of public ministry from the time he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. So does it mean you're going to love him right up until he gets crucified or is there something else? Is this not in terms of chronology, loved them to the end of the chronology of his earthly ministry? Is this love them to the end to the full extent? Well, some people will point to the fact that he was on the cross and he died, he cried out a word in Greek "Tetelestai" which is built on the word telos. And it means "it's finished." It's done.

And of course, that points to the theological payment that he made and that his life was absorbing the penalty of sin, that if you're a sinner and put your trust in Christ, your sin was paid for on that cross. And he says, "paid in full," which is how that word is sometimes used in an accounting sense, in currency, in money and paying off bills, tetelestai. Well, it could mean that and it's like it's finished, the suffering is finished, he's going to die. The payments have been paid. I've incurred all the just wrath of the Father, and now it's over. Well, it could mean that. And it certainly means that because certainly he loved them to that and he loved them beyond that. I mean, there is no end. Matter of fact, he keeps talking about eternal life. So maybe it's not like the end of chronology here in his life.

Maybe it means it's the end of, which I do think it does, the end of what a person could actually do, the extent, the full extent to which a person can love. Right? Like a cup. How full can you fill it? Well you can fill it half. You can fill it three quarters or you can fill it till the fullest, to the end of filling. You can't fill it up any more than that. And I certainly think both can be true. Which one's in view? I think the latter is in view, in part because he kept saying things like this earlier in the gospel of John. John records it that it says, "No greater love has anyone than this: than a man would lay down his life for his friends."

And certainly the redemptive purpose of God in Christ was to see him strung up on a Roman execution rack and suffer and suffocate until he passed out and died. That was God's plan, and that would be the most extreme way to love someone if their life was necessitating a



death of someone else, which it does. And you could say, well, wow, that would be the issue "no greater love," it couldn't be to a fuller extent than a person would love someone than that.

So that's true. And even what I've just explained, you might now pull in the word that I'm talking about "redemption" and you think, "Okay, I know that. I've been to church. I know what redemption is. Redemption is what you just described. Jesus died on a cross and he redeemed us." And that's true. And that's a part of it. But there's much more to it than that. As a matter of fact, there are three aspects in this particular passage that all relate to things that you and I experience. And I hope if you are a Christian, you experience in a whole different kind of way. Some of you only will experience aspects of redemption if in fact you put your trust in Christ.

But here's the thing that redemption has a lot of different aspects to it, and all of them express love in the most extreme way. And when it comes to God showing these aspects, these three aspects of redemption, you'd say, well, that is the full extent of love. As a matter of fact, I should define love by that. And we can start to participate in some of that. But let's look at it one at a time. Let's start at the penultimate phrase there in this passage, not the last phrase, which I think is really, I mean this is weird, but it becomes like the banner and heading in the rubric, the title of all of it. Right? To love to the fullest extent it really requires all these. Let's start with the most seemingly practical and mundane, the phrase just before the last phrase, the penultimate phrase.

Here it is. Look at what it says. It says "he loved his own who were in the world." That was the second to last phrase in this verse. "He loved his own who were in the world." Now, let's think about that. He's sitting there at the end of his earthly ministry. He's got 24 hours of life left. And he says, "I've loved my own who are in the world." Who's he talking about? Well, you immediately think he's talking about the guys he's having dinner with. He's got 12 guys, right? One is a loser and is about to betray him, but he's got his guys around and he says, "I've loved my own."

But there was much more than that. He had Mary and Mary Magdalene. You had Martha and you had Lazarus, and you had not only that, you had groups of teams, he had a group of 70 that he sent out on special missions. I mean, he loved his own. And there were the crowds of disciples who had actually said, we know you're the Messiah, the one who was expected. They trusted him. They followed him. He moved from one city to the next, and they came with him.

So those were the people who put their trust in Christ. And he love them to the end, the end of his earthly ministry, and really he was about to love them to the fullest extent. He was going to show them the full extent of his love. But he loved them in a practical way "who were in the world." And then it goes further with the last phrase, "He loved them to the end." But let's just think of that penultimate phrase "having loved his own who were in the world." He loved his own who are in the world. How did he love them?

Well, one of the ways he loves them is the way that he's about to love them. Scroll down or look down, glance down at what comes next. What comes next? This is, if you grew up in a high church, this is what's called Maundy Thursday. Is that familiar to any of you? Raise your left eyebrow if it is and your right eyebrow if it's not. Okay. Maundy, maundy comes from a Latin word, it comes from the Latin Vulgate. Jerome's translation of the Bible. It was the Bible for a thousand years of the Church, and maundy is the word "command" or "mandate." We get the word English word mandate from it. And Maundy Thursday was that at end of Chapter 13 he is going to say here "a new commandment I give to you that you love one another."

And one of the expressions of how he loves them in this passage, if you look up from that verse later in Chapter 13, the maundy, the commandment on Thursday to love each other, one of the ways he loves them is in a very practical way. What is it? Did you glance through it and look at it? Well, how does he do that in a practical way? Very practical. He puts on an apron to do it. Now that's a hint. What is it Bible trivia champions? He washes their feet, washes their feet. Matter of fact, some people say, well, if that's the way we're supposed to love each other, then we should come to church and we should wash each other's feet.

Don't wash my feet. I mean, we don't do that. And I know that sounds very spiritual to some people because I'm doing what Jesus said, but the point of what he's saying is to love one another in practical ways. In practical ways. And the way that was practical back in the day when you wore sandals on unpaved streets to get to where you were going, and then you laid down in the way that they laid down on cushions to have a formal meal, which is on a small table, and they would lay down on their left elbow and eat with their right hand and their feet would dangle off next to the other guy. What would really be helpful if you washed feet. And that was just the standard thing.

You've heard that if you've been in church at all. You know in the first century you had the lowest person within the household come and wash the feet. If you had a servant, if you had someone who was of low standing, someone would wash the feet. Well, these guys weren't formal people. No one had washed anybody's feet. But it sure would be nice as we recline at the table if everyone had clean feet. So let's wash their feet. And so Jesus says no one's washing feet, so he girds himself with an apron. He takes a basin of water and you can glance through this and see and he begins to wash their feet.

Matter of fact, in verse 4 you see the summary of this. "He rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, took a towel." Picture like in modern day, like having a sports jacket on. He takes it off. He takes some kind of apron. "He ties it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin to begin to wash the disciples' feet and wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him." A lowly example of doing something that is an act of love. "Well, Pastor Mike, I really want to love you so I'm going to wash your feet." Don't wash my feet. Get away from my toes. I don't want you washing my feet. I'm not interested in that. And I'm assuming you don't want me to wash your feet. And if you do, that's weird. Don't think that. Right?

An equivalent of that is, now you're going to get in territory I might nod and say have at it. Right? We do things in our going through our streets that make things a little, little dusty and



dirty. Matter of fact, I'm assuming you all have disc brakes on the front of your car. There's something that comes off those disc brakes, even the ceramic brakes. But the compound brakes, they create this black dust. Have you noticed that? You go to the car wash, get your car washed, it's like, oh, it all looks great. And then within a week you get all your alloy wheels look so good and now they look all cruddy, right?

Well, you know what? The older I get, the more I hate cleaning those. I don't want to do that. I'm not interested in that. I'll go down to the Aliso car wash and have him do it and I'll tip him to do it. Great. "Can you go and make sure you get my wheels clean? Pull that shiny stuff on the tires and clean my wheels." I can't stand it. I got arthritis in my fingers, it hurts. I cannot stand cleaning my rims. But if I do like it. I like walking out seeing my car wheels look great.

Now if you want to love me, I'm not asking for this, (audience laughing) but I come out and see my wheels looking good, BAM! Right? "A new commandment I give to you, love one another: just as I have loved you." And he loved them in practical ways. Somebody needs to wash the feet, somebody needs to wash your car. In our day, it's like, okay, in California in particular, we spend more on car washes than anybody else in the country. We like clean cars. We've got way too many of them. When we sit in traffic on the I-5 freeway, we want to look around and see in our traffic jam all the clean cars. That's what we want. So everybody likes to wash their car. And that's just a practical thing. Jesus is very practical and he's meeting provisions in his life. "He loved his own who are in the world." In his interaction with people he met practical needs.

Luke 22 at the end of Jesus' ministry, he says something weird to them that unless you know what he said at the beginning of Luke, what he said at the beginning of his earthly ministry three years earlier or so, it doesn't make sense. He says, if you don't have a sword, you know you ought to go sell something and go get a sword, right? And if you don't have a cloak, you better go get your cloak. You better go get your backpack. You better get your money sack. Why does he say all that? Did they not have those things? He told them at the beginning of his ministry don't have those. Don't take those things with you.

Now, everyone would go, if we were going to go on a mission trip, you'd go get a suitcase, pack it and take it. You'd get your passport, you'd get your wallet, you'd go get some cash, you'd get your money exchanged perhaps depending on where we were going. You would get ready for the trip and you'd take all that stuff to the airport with you. Jesus said, "Don't do it. I purposely tell you to keep your money, sack, your backpack, your staff, an extra pair of sandals, an extra cloak. Just leave it all behind. We are going to go on this three-year mission and I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to show you that your needs will be met."

At the end of his ministry, he asked this question before he tells him to go get all the stuff and go into regular life after his earthly ministry. He says this, "When you didn't take those things, did you lack anything?" One-word answer. The disciples answer, "Nothing. We lacked nothing." They lacked nothing because Christ, as the provider, was providing not only as a human rabbi, but of course as the Son of God, right? The incarnate God saying God will take care of you, even if you have one hand tied behind your back. You go on a mission trip and



you forget your wallet. Guess what? God will provide. And he's trying to prove that to them. Now, wisdom would dictate that it would be good for you to have your wallet when you go to the airport and you should. And so he says, "Everybody go do that. But know this, I will provide for you."

We got insiders here who are Compass Bible Church members, did you read the Daily Bible Reading this morning? I have to talk to the insiders for a minute. In the New Testament, we read the passage where Jesus talks about the fact that the ravens get fed by God. Aren't you much more worthy than the ravens? God feeds the birds. Of course he's going to feed you. Do not worry. Do not be anxious. The provision Christ says that the Triune God will provide for you, you need not worry. As a matter of fact, there's nothing more expressive of real love than that, meeting needs, practical needs.

Here's a passage for you if you're taking notes First John Chapter 3 verse 17. In First John 3 verse 17 it says that if you say that you love someone and you love only in word and in tongue by the things you say and you're not meeting practical needs, well then you're really not... "How can the love of God abide in you." If you see someone and they have a need and you have the material means to meet that need and you close your heart against that brother, how in the world can you say you love them? You don't love them. You're just talking. You're using the word love. That's not real love.

So I want you to connect this now. Redemption, now you think how are you going to put redemption in this, means provision. It means practical provision. Example. Old Testament example. God redeems the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Remember that? And he brings them into the desert. And that generation has to depend on God. And the first thing they say is we don't have water. And then they say, we don't have food, we don't have bread. And they're roaming around as these, you know, these roaming nomads in the desert. And God said, "Great. Moses smacked this rock and water is going to come out. Hey, pray and here's the thing. I'm going to send Manna." This thing that the Hebrew word means, "What is it?" What is it bread will come and it will feed them. And it'll have the caloric content and I will provide for them.

I'm going to direct them miraculously with a pillar of fire and a cloud. Right? And depending on night or day, I'm going to switch those back. I'm going to take care of them. I'm going to give them guidance and provision. I'm going to care for them. Why? Because you are my redemptive people. I've redeemed you. You're my responsibility. My responsibility is very different than someone who has a need who is not my responsibility and here's a good example. The toddler room is filled with toddlers, filled with toddlers, and they might have a need at two in the morning. You probably aren't going to meet those needs. You probably might have a nice heart that says, "I'd be happy to meet those needs." But you're not going to meet those needs because they're not your toddlers.

Guess who's going to meet the needs of the toddlers? Mom and Dad. They will meet the needs because that's their toddler. You're mine. Right? Now, that I have grandkids watching Cocomelon all the time, which I don't care to watch but I hear it. They have this little song



about, "you're mine, you're mine, you little kid, you're mine, you're mine, you're mine." What is that? That's a picture of redemption. You're mine and therefore you're my problem. Now, they don't sing those words, right? But you got a poopy diaper, that's my responsibility to change it.

See, because what does a toddler need? Question? Answer. Everything. Right? They need everything. They can't eat, they can't find their own food, they're not going to forage in the yard to find food. They can't kill rabbits and cook them and eat them. They can't change their own poopy diapers. Don't even let them try. They can't do anything. You have to do everything. Why? But they are yours so you do it. Do you know what one of the greatest acts of love is? Now it starts at the bottom here, we're going to build much bigger. But the greatest act of love is that you say I will provide for you. That's love. It's not in word. It's not in tongue. It's in deed. It's in truth. If you got a need, let me meet it. That's love.

Number one. Here's the thing. If you are a person living on planet earth, this is true of you, Christian or non-Christian, you need to, number one, "Acknowledge Jesus' Daily Provision." Right? We start at the bottom of the verse. We see he "loved his own in the world." How does that work for me today? Here's the thing. The Triune God loves not only his own, he loves everyone in the world because he provides for everyone in the world. "He makes the sun rise on the evil and the good." Matthew Chapter 5. "He sends his rain on the crops of the just and the unjust." He's giving everyone everything, as Act 17 says. "He gives every single human being life and breath and everything else."

The difference between non-Christians and Christians should be this: you acknowledge it. And when you acknowledge it, Romans Chapter 1, you also give thanks for it. And you say, I know that I have everything that I have because God is providing that. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. There is stuff that gets taken away and you moan and you complain about all that and you whine about it. I get it, I get it. It hurts when things are taken away. But he gives us everything we have.

And here was the problem with the redemptive people of God. In the desert they knew it. Water out of a rock. Manna from the sky. I need meat. And quail comes in and falls in the camp and they cook it up. God gives them everything in a way that was so miraculous they knew God was providing and they gave thanks for that. Not all the time, but they did more than when they came into the Promised Land and God said, "Oh be careful. Here's what's going to happen. You're going to have your crops, your houses, wells that you didn't dig and fields that you didn't own, and now you own them and you're there in the Promised Land and your tendency will be to forget me. You're going to forget me. You're going to forget that it's me that's provided this for you. You're going to forget that it's I that provides you the power to gain any wealth. I'm giving you that power."

You go out and you work all week long. If you got a good job, make a good paycheck, you sit back in your easy chair at night and you think, "Oh, look what I did. I went to school, I got this degree. I work really hard. I came early, I stayed late. That's why I'm making the big bucks and got the big bonus." That's not the reason why. Because here's the thing. Everything that's working in your brain, everything that worked in your past, all the education, all the gifts, all



the skills, all the talent, even the electricity to make your brain work, the synapse of your brain fire, all of that the Bible says comes from God. "In him we live and move and have our being." If you want to be specific about it use Jesus' words.

Well, that's how the book starts, right? "Nothing was made that has been made that he didn't make," Christ, the Word. He is the agent of creation. And not only that, Colossians says, "He's the one who holds all things together." He holds your brain together. He holds your eyes together. He holds your mouth together. He holds your body together. All things in him consist. They hold together. Christ is the one who provides this.

Now God the Father is the architect. But the Bible's really clear, the Son is the agent of creation. Everything that has been made has been made by him. Now he's taken on human form. He's walking around. Then he left. But here's the thing. He still provides. And if you're a Christian, you should be very specific in saying, "Thank you, Jesus." Right? Now that seems like an old lady phrase or whatever, right? But that's what you should be saying. Something good happens, "Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for what you did. You are the provider of every good thing."

Now, I know we can think about God in general or God the Father, "every good and perfect gift comes from God." But the delivery system of the good is coming from Christ. And you should acknowledge that and give thanks to God for that. Because here's the thing. How much have you provided for others in your life? "Well, I had a toddler, man, and I provided everything." Great. But are you providing everything now? No.

Here's the deal. There's no relationship like this relationship that God has with you, providing for you every single day. If you want love, that's love. Providing from the beginning of your life in conception all the way to the end. That is a God who is carrying you, here is how it is put in the book of Exodus, as he redeems his people, I've redeemed you and "I carried you on eagle's wings. I brought you along." Good way to look at it. Poetic way to look at it. Acknowledge Jesus' daily provision.

Christians should be good at it. Non-Christians ignore it. They suppress the truth of that in unrighteousness. They like to think they're self-made men, self-made women, and they do it themselves. You don't do anything yourself. You didn't decide when you were born. You don't oxygenate your blood. You didn't design the nerve system in your hands. You don't do anything except utilize that as an agent and a steward. And God is the one providing it. That's where we as Christians say that is the truth. "All things are from him and through him and all things should be to him." Romans 11, by the way.

"He loved his own who were in the world." Now God loves all people because he's giving all people these things. But at one point he's going to take those things away from people who have rejected him. Right? So if we are his own, I think there's a special relationship we have as his adopted children and we say we're so glad he gives us that. We acknowledge him as the provider of all things.



Okay. Back up to the beginning of this. If I say the word redemption you think of what? You think of Christ dying on a cross, probably. Right? Christ dies on a cross. Here's what Romans 5 says. That is ultimate love. Right? This is love that he would die not just for normal people, but he'd die for sinners. And the Passover is the time in which God the Father chose for him to die. You always wonder, you know, why we never know when it's Easter. We can't figure it out. I mean, I know when it's Christmas. Tell me the date. What day is Easter next year? "Dah?" Why don't you know that? Right? Because the Jews are controlling all this. Right? That's not a pejorative statement, right? I love the Jews, but it's their calendar that keeps messing up the fact that we can't figure out when Easter is. Why? Because it's tracking the Passover, right?

That's like Hanukkah and Christmas. Those are always like, "Oh, when is, you know, is Hanukkah? I don't know. My Jewish friends, do I get them a Hanukkah gift? Was it this week?" It would be great if it were at the same time as Christmas, wouldn't it? That's a good thing about Passover and Easter. They both happen together every year. Every year. Good Friday is Passover, right? That's when the Jews celebrate it. Why? Because we're always connecting the death of Christ to the Passover. And we go ahead and use the lunar calendar that the Jews use to track their holidays. And we all as Christians convert to that come springtime. And we say we're going to celebrate Good Friday and Easter on the weekend that they celebrate Passover. Why? Because the height of redemptive prophecy is the Passover. And God the Father said on the Passover, I am going to have my Son crucified and I'm going to lay on him the iniquity of us all.

Was anybody here on Friday night? Nobody. Okay. Well, on Friday night, I was here. I was here on Friday night. I know, it's the 9:00 crowd. You're a little more quiet, reserved. I don't know. Whatever. I love you, but... I had this cross-thing up here on Friday and a couple of dresses up here. And I said, all of the dirt from our sin, all this blemish over there on that dress has to be somehow atoned for so I can be right before God, righteous before God. The only way to do that is to have it paid for by Christ.

Redemption is that the lamb at the Passover who was slain after you brought this young lamb into your home, you lived with it, you got attached to it, your kids got attached to it, and then you took him out at twilight and you slit his throat with a sharp knife and you let the blood splatter all over your sandals. And you take the blood and you take some kind of brush or a hyssop or some plant and you put it up on the doorpost on the lintel of your doors, and you say, okay, death has occurred, a lamb has been sacrificed. All the children, the firstborn of Israel, are going to be killed. Right? But I don't want that to come to us. I don't want sinful society to be judged, I don't want to be judged as a part of it. And it wasn't because they were holier than thou. I hope some of them were more righteous than the Egyptians, but a lot of them weren't. And we learn about that in the wilderness wanderings, they weren't.

But what happened was God treated them as though they weren't deserving of the punishment because the blood was on the door post. Paul put it this way to the Corinthians. "Our Passover lamb has been slain." The reason the Lord's Supper didn't involve lamb... It's interesting. This is the Passover. They're going to celebrate the Passover. And one thing, if



you know anything about Jewish law, the Old Testament, you not only have unleavened bread and you not only have the fruit of the vine that you drink, but you've got lamb chops in the middle of all this. Well, we don't have any of that on the Lord's Supper. Right? The main dish is gone. Why? Because the Passover lamb has been slain.

Christ is "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And that is the ultimate act of love as Jesus said, "No greater love has anyone than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends." The just, righteous, dying for the unjust, the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. Or here's a verse you heard twice if you were here on Friday, right? "God made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." So what happens at his death is that he suffers, a repeat of Friday now, as though he were the sinner that we are. And no greater love has anyone than that.

Number two on your outline put that down. Do you want love? Here's the ultimate bathing and frolicking in the love of God to "Benefit from Jesus' Ultimate Sacrifice." Benefit from Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. And I say that as though you know how and to know how is to get back to the gospel, which is you got to see your sin for what it is. If you were here on Friday, that dirty dress, you got to say that's me, whether I feel like I'm Joshua the high priest and I got the best duds in the house. You can look as good as you think you look on the outside but God looks at the inside. He sees our sin and you've got to admit it. That's called confession. And that means I don't like it. It's not right. God doesn't like it. I shouldn't like it. I should turn from it. That's called repentance. I need to get it off my account. I need my record expunged. I need my sins expiated. How do I do that? I have to have it on Christ.

My sin imputed to his cross, his righteousness imputed to my life. That takes place through, here's the shorthand for it in the Bible, repentance and faith. You have to repent of your sins, which includes confessing them, recognizing them for what it is, knowing that they're gross before God. It's an immoral affront to God. It's morally repugnant to God. Even you're lying. You're cheating. You're stealing. Your flattery. Flattery. Right? Think about that. How bad is that? Do you go home really broken up over your flattery on the patio this morning? "I said she had a beautiful dress, but I didn't really mean it." I mean, no, you probably don't think much about that.

But the Bible says all that is sin, right? It's sin. You don't have to tell her her dress is not all that. You don't have to say everything that you think. But you shouldn't say things for the sake of flattery so you can ingratiate yourself to people. You shouldn't lie. You shouldn't cheat. You shouldn't steal. There are a lot of things we shouldn't do. All of that that is done can be completely expunged by trusting in Christ, seeing it for what it is, putting our trust in Christ and becoming the righteousness of God.

Can I summarize this for you in a passage that I know you know? John 3:16. Have you ever heard of that? Yes. You raise both eyebrows on that one. Go to John 3:16 and look at this. It's the verse I'm about to quote, which is a little bit of the context maybe you don't remember is abutted up right next to it. Right? What's the adjacent verse to John 3:16? Well, John 3:15. Well, yeah, but it starts in John 3:14 so let's start there. John 3:14.

You can quote John 3:16, right? "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son," his one and only Son, "that whoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life." That's the ultimate example and expression of love. I'd like you to benefit from that, that the Father would send his Son and give him as a sacrifice so that you would have eternal life. That would be the ultimate experience of being the recipient of God's love. That'd be great.

But it's got to start with this, verse 14. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up." Okay. 20% of you are tracking with that. What does that mean? Moses had a snake and lifted him up like Rocky's belt, you know, in Philadelphia? What is this? Here's the story. A bunch of rebels. I told you they came out of Egypt. They weren't spared because they were better than the Egyptians. Some of them were. A lot of them weren't. You had people who were rebelling against God and his leader. And so God sent snakes into the camp, venomous snakes, and they bit them. They bit them.

So people start bloating, getting fevers and chills and all the things that happened when you get a venomous snake bite and he says, okay, here's the deal. That's what they get for doing what they've done. But I'm going to show my grace, as God so often does, I'm going to forgive them. But here's the means by which I want you to do it. You make a snake. You put it on a pole, you bronze him, and you put him up on a stick. Okay.

If you ever go to the hospital or you're, you know, looking real carefully at stuff that you know is representing ambulances or nurses, you'll see snakes on poles. Have you ever noticed that? The snake on the pole is a picture of medicinal help. But in the Bible, it wasn't medicinal. It wasn't nurses and medicine and doctors doing surgery and giving you stuff to get you through your illness. Right? It's God miraculously doing it by having this weird thing happen. Put a snake on a pole, a bronze snake on a pole, it's going to shine really brightly in the sun. Put it up on the pole. It's going to take some time as people are shivering from their snake bites. But have them look at it.

Have them look at it and believe and trust me that they have sinned and you're going to look right at the thing that you don't like, snakes. Look at the snake. Look at the snake. This is the punishment that you're getting for your sin. Look at the punishment. Right? "Just as the snake was lifted up in the wilderness, so the Son of Man is going to get hoisted up." And you can imagine it, right? Some paintings show it where Jesus actually gets nailed to the cross. Well, then they have to hoist him up, take some ropes and the Romans get use to it. They've learned it from the Persians, how to sacrifice people on a cross. And they pull him up and they land him in the base in the hole for the cross. And you can see him now. BAM. And he's hung there, but he has to be hoisted up. Everyone can see him just like the snake on a pole.

Look at it again, "that whoever," verse 15, "believes in him may have eternal life." The benefit is not you just getting healed from your cancer or getting fixed from your COVID or whatever you're struggling with. It's you having eternal life. Which then he says, "God so loved the world that he gave his Son." He didn't have Moses make a snake-like some artisan and some, you know, some metallurgy guy. No, he sent his own Son "that whoever would believe



in him," just like those guys had to believe that the snake was the solution. Here is a man dying as a criminal between two criminals. And if you just "believe in him," that he is the solution, "you wouldn't perish." "Oh, wait a minute, does that mean I'm not going to die." Well, you're going to die biologically, but you're not going to die relationally. You're going to have a relationship with God and your sins will be forgiven.

God didn't send his Son into the world to say, "Ah, the snake. You guys are all bitten and you're all going to hell, nah-nah-nah-na." That's not why Jesus came. Right? Verse 17. "God didn't send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." The point is, even Romans were acknowledging as he was dying on the cross, "Surely this is the Son of God." You had Romans who went to boot camp to learn how to kill people who are sitting there going, "Hey, this is the guy, this is him. This is the solution. Look at how he's dying."

"Whoever believes in him," verse 18, "is not condemn, but whoever does not..." There's the rub right there. Because your neighbors, "Oh, you're running off to church? Is that the Compass Bible Church? Is that the one that preaches... Ah, the Compass Bible Church? They believe in hell there don't they? Um, well, that's not true. I don't know. I'm not going to go to... You can go have your little invisible friend and go do your thing and I hope that helps. But we don't believe there's any proof."

The Bible says, "But whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he's not believed in the name of the only Son of God. This is judgment: that the light is coming to the world, and people have loved darkness." "No, I don't want it. I'd rather have my thing. I'd rather have my own stuff. I'd rather do my own thing the way I want." But the Bible continues, "Rather than light because their works are evil," and there will be judgment. That is the judgment that the light has come and they've loved their sin.

The Bible says, "Whoever does wicked things hates the light, does not come to light, lest his works should be exposed." "I don't want that preacher telling me that my life is wrong." It is the Bible that says, "But whoever does what is true," that's called conversion, "they come into the light," I get it, "so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God," that God now is changing hearts, changing lives, the whole fulfillment of all the prophets, including the great promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 33:34, all these great promises of God saying, "I'm going to change your heart, I'm going to cause you to move to keep my commandments, you're going to live a better life morally than you did before, albeit imperfect. I'm going to move you in the direction of keeping my rules." And you'll see God's at work in my life.

The judgment, though, is, I mean, you can't reject it. It's not optional. That's all I'm trying to say. You can't dismiss this as optional. What you have to realize, verse 14, is that there's a problem and it's called sin, verse 15, that there's a solution, verse 16, that the solution is Christ, and it's the ultimate act and expression of love, and it's all bound up in a sacrifice. And I hope that today you'd benefit from that. If you don't know that you're a beneficiary of that now's the time. Christ dies for the ungodly, for wayward sheep, Romans Chapter 5.



I quoted Hosea on the Friday night service if you were here, Hosea Chapter 3, 1 through 3, these verses, "Go love..." go chase the bride down and marry her. The point is God here chasing down sinners and bringing these sinners to himself. I would hope that you would tell your kids as they're growing up looking for a wife, like if the girl doesn't want to marry you just leave her alone, right? Find someone else.

Here's God chasing after the rebels, the wayward sheep. And maybe God's got his hooks in you right now because that's what the Bible says is going to happen. The Bible says he's going to send his Spirit into the world, John 16. He's going to convict you of sin and righteousness in judgment. Maybe he's going to use a sermon from some fast-talking Orange County preacher to say, "Hey, you are a sinner, you need help, you need God, you need Christ." It's not an aid, it's not an aspirin, it's not some extra credit. It's you saying, I can't do this. God has to do it. He has to expiate my sins. He has to atone for my sins, and I have to trust him for a new heart and that he is going to instantaneously, like the thief on the cross, make me right and acceptable before God. Repentance and faith.

I trust that perhaps just as Christ was crucified at the Passover that you would say that bloody mess, that whole awful gross thing that you and I, with our sensibilities, would never, never, never bow to. That you'd say that's what I need. I need the blood of Christ to atone for my sin. That's the heart of redemption. If I say redemption and they go well that's what it means. Well, of course I get that. "Go so loved the world." That's an act of redemption to give his own Son and that I think we can identify with. Redemption you may not have seen is your mine therefore I take care of you. That's daily provision.

There's one more aspect to it, and it's the aspect that's often forgotten. It's the aspect that's not preached on as much as it ought to be. I try to overdo it here at our church, but we want you to think about this as much as possible. Right? And it's stuck right in the middle and it relates finally to the resurrection. Let's look at it in John Chapter 13 verse 1, right in the middle of the verse. It says, "He knew," his time had come, "his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father." Well, that's pretty presumptuous. You're going to return to the Father, are you? I mean, are you sure you didn't do anything wrong or mess up? Maybe... How do you know he's going to accept you? Return to the Father?

Well, what's weird about him returning to the Father as he prays John 17, this great high priestly prayer. He prays and he says, you know what? I want you to restore the glory I had with you before the foundation of the world, before I came to be incarnate. I want you to do that. And I'm ready. And I'm going to be. I mean, it's just a great text. Chapter 17. I just like the highlight of it in verse 24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom you've given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you've given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

So you seem pretty set in the fact that you're acceptable before God. And then you say, I want these people who you've given to me, "I love my own that are in the world," I provided for them. I'm about to go to the cross and die for them. And now I want you to allow them to



see my greatness. That's what glorious is. See my greatness. All the good, all the favor, all the good stuff. I want them to see it. I want them to experience it.

We don't have to go to Chapter 17. We go to Chapter 14, turn to that one. We're close to it. Scroll to Chapter 14, dropdown. We don't even need to dropdown. Let's start at the top. Let's just read the whole book of John. No, no. Look at verse 1. "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God," trust in God, "believe," trust, "also in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place?"

The ancient Near Eastern custom is a dad would have an arranged marriage. Choose a bride, usually in a family that he liked and choose the bride for his son. And the son would go and become betrothed to that bride, and then he would go back to the compound. And some cultures still do this where multiple families live together. They just keep building on big old houses that are connected to the other house, or at least adjacent, and they have the family compound. And so the son goes and prepares a place for his bride, and then he comes back to get his bride and he brings his bride into the household of his father.

That idea, that picture, is probably not what you would want in your modern, you know, expectations of marriage unless you really like your father-in-law, like my daughter-in-laws, their fathers wouldn't mind, live with Pastor Mike. (audience laughs) Sorry. But the point is that picture of I'm going to go, I'm going to get things ready, I'm going to come back, I promised to you my relationship. I betrothed you to me. My Father has chosen you to be my bride. He already has approved you. I've paid the bride price for you in my own blood. I'm going to bring you now into my Father's house. And there's a lot of space and it's going to be great. It's a mansion. Matter of fact, the old translations translated it that way. "In my Father's house many mansions." Right? The picture is a spacious place to live. "And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again to take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

And he says, "You know the way I'm going." Thomas says, I don't get it. Right? "Thomas says, 'Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said, 'I am the way,'" it's me. You stick with me. The way that I'm going is to the cross. But you got to stick with me through the cross. You have to trust in what I'm doing on the cross. "I'm the way, I am the truth," I've told you of the truth, "and I am the life." This thing called eternal life is granted through me. "No one comes to the Father except through me." Lay that one on your neighbor. Right? That's the reality. "No one gets to the Father except through me." God sent his Son into the world to collect his bride, pay the price with his own blood, and bring them into the kingdom. And he says, "I'm the way, I'm the truth, I'm the life. No one's going to get there except through me. If you'd known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him because you know me."

That's just a great picture of the fact that I am accepted by my Father. I'm loved by my Father. And that's where I started to go at the end of this chapter, verse 23. "Jesus answered, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'" Here's the deal. I only know the Father through the Son. The Son came. I'm a gift from the Father to the Son. And the Son has paid the price to redeem



me. I'm now his. And the ultimate redemption is when he comes and consummates this by bringing me into his Father's house.

Now, here's the problem with me going into a place that is eternally perfect. God may have remade my heart. He hasn't remade the whole of who I am. Romans Chapter 8 says there has to be a redemption of my body. There's a future redemption. And in a sense, we often think about the fact I have been redeemed, but you better put an asterisk next to that, because one of the most important, most significant and most far-reaching consequences of any aspect of God's love for you is yet to be seen. It is future redemption. It is the redemption not only of your body, but of the whole world when his heaven, his dwelling place comes and takes its place here on earth. That coming of the Father's house to us is when all the unmitigated pleasures and blessings and fulfillments of our lives arrive.

Which, by the way, all the things, as C.S. Lewis rightly said, all the things we're ultimately craving for, or as Augustine said so many years before Lewis, all of those things are what God is going to provide. No death, no mourning, no crying, no sin, no rebellion, no tempter. It's gone. We get finally to the fulfillment of it all. I mean, a bride is thinking about her wedding and setting up a new household with her new husband. I mean, that's just a minor reflection of the kind of anticipation we ought to have about the "then and there."

And I often say from this platform because I'm trying to counterbalance a lot of the preaching that goes on all over the world with open Bibles that they talk about Christianity helping with the "here and now." Here and now. Here and now. It's going to help your marriage, help your parenting help your... We want to help you with all that. But it ain't all that because in the end it will all be a cheap substitute for the reality. And the reality is something much, much, much, much, much, much better. And it's coming when the kingdom comes, when Christ gets his bride and takes us to the Father and the Father's household comes and establishes itself on the new earth. That's the future redemption we're looking forward to. And the only way we get it is because the Father accepts us.

How do we know he accepts us? Because I'm right with the Son. And the Son is one with whom he's well pleased. "This is my Son with whom I'm well pleased." So I want to associate with Christ. And I can do that historically by looking at the life of Christ and saying, "I trust in what you've done. I trust in the payment you've made. I want to be your bride. I want to be your follower." And then when I finally meet my maker, the architect of the universe, I meet his Father, I'm in, I'm good.

Number three. That's the ultimate experience of love, which is to "Share in Jesus' Acceptance with God." God the Father, the maker and architect of things, Christ, the agent of creation, the Spirit, the one who convicted me and brought me into relationship with him. All of this comes to fruition when the acceptance of God is full and complete. Because right now I see through a glass dimly as Paul said. It's long distance. It's I know him just from afar. I know him imperfectly. I mean really so imperfectly. But then I'm going to have a face-to-face reality experience with the God who made me.



One last passage takes you out of the book of John to Romans Chapter 3. I'll take you to Romans Chapter 3. It says in... Well, let's get a little context to get you what I just paraphrased. Verse 23. Romans 8:23. Is that what I said? I'm saying it now, 8:23, Romans, New Testament, Bible. Verse 23, "And not only the creation," which is messed up, have you noticed? Plates shifting, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes, birth defects, it's a mess. "Not only creation," wants to get changed, "but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit," we have the Spirit drawing us to a relationship with Christ, and "we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons," that's the ultimate act of love and here's the word for it, "the redemption of our bodies."

The redemption of the earth if you look up further, the groaning of the earth, waiting to be redeemed. "In this hope we were saved." Don't let someone picture Christianity to you that's always focused on the "here and now." It's not about the "here and now." The realization of all the promises, they call that an over-realized eschatology in theology. We look at people saying, "All the stuff the Bible says will be given to you. Oh, you'll get it now." You don't get it now. This is a relationship that we are saved in hope. "Now hope that is seen is not hope." You already have it. Well, you're not hoping for it because it's already there. "For who hopes for what he sees?" You got it right in front of you. It's not hope. "But we hope for what we do not see." And that's the thing. We see it really dimly. Just an idea on paper that we try to imagine. "But we wait for it with patience." That's so good.

Verse 31. What are we going to say to all this? The Spirit is going to help me in the meantime, we're going to wait eagerly, we're going to hope for this. We can't wait for the completion of redemption, that third phase of redemption. "What do you say if God is for us," the Father's for us because the Son is betrothed to us, we are betrothed to him. "Oh, who's going to be against us? He didn't spare his own Son." Matter of fact, "He gave him up for us all." There's the heart of redemption, right? He gave this, the sacrifice of redemption. That's the ultimate act of love.

And now he's got to sustain us until we get there. Now, he says, "Will he not also with him graciously give us all things? That's the redemption of provision. You're mine, I'm going to take care of you. I am God's problem. Right? And by the way, that provision is only going to come when I'm part of the body of Christ. By the way, if you're coming here on Easter and you're not a part of a church, a good Bible-teaching church, you can't live the Christian life that way. These promises are realized as you function within the body of Christ. Right? That's how it works. Right? He gives us and provides us all things.

I have no problem. If my house collapses today, my car burns up, it won't start, I got four flat tires because someone's trying to clean my rims and did it wrong or whatever. Here's the deal. I've got it taken care of because I got you. I have the body of Christ and God provides through his body. "He didn't spare his own Son, he gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously, give us all things," through the body of Christ. "Who is going to bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is going to condemn? Well, Jesus Christ," he's the judge of all the world, but "he's the one who died -- more than that, he was raised."



That redemptive work of him going bodily to heaven and then coming back and setting up bodily a kingdom. And he's going to take us and have mortality put on immortality, and we will inherit the kingdom. Right? That's the ultimate fulfillment of all of God's loving intentions toward us. "Who's going to condemn? Jesus Christ the one who's died," more than that, he was raised -- who's at the right hand of God, he's interceding for us now." He can't wait for us to be there. "Who's going to separate us from the love of Christ?" Intertwined, aligned with the word of redemption, that concept of redemption. "Shall tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword?" Some funhouse of some terrible experience we have. No. Nothing is going to separate us.

He quotes this Old Testament psalm. A lot of hard things are going to happen between here and there. "No, but in all these things," verse 37, "we're more than conquerors through him who loved us," because he redeemed us and he's redeeming us now, and he will redeem us later, "for I'm sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's a three-phase redemption that I trust that you have in your mind and in your heart and your experience that you acknowledge he daily provides because you're his.

He provides for others even when they're not his by adoption. But as you benefited and become his child by adoption, because you have benefited from his ultimate sacrifice on a cross, the redemptive work of the cross. And that you anticipate like I anticipate sharing in Jesus' acceptance with God that I'm ushered into a kingdom one day because I'm right with Christ. That's the gospel. That's what it's all about, these three phases of redemption. And you want to know what love is. That's what it is.

And everything else in this life is pale reflection. Not that we don't engage in it, not that we don't do it, not that we don't get married, not that we don't love our friends, not that we don't seek to love and do good in our society. We do. But it's never going to realize the craving of our hearts, which is to have love. And love is spelled in Scripture "redemption." I trust you are a recipient of it.

Let's pray. God, help us as we think through this concept theologically of redemption to take hold and grasp firmly by faith the payment of Christ on a cross, which was the ultimate act of redemption, buying us out of the penalty of our sin. And as your children, God, we see more, I hope, more poignantly and fully than anybody else that you are providing for us every day. As David said, "I've never seen the righteous forsaken, I've never seen their children begging for bread." God, let us continue to trust that you will take care of us and not worry. We can't add an hour to our lives. You feed the birds, you're going to take care of us.

And then God ultimately as we anticipate the coming of the kingdom, as we seek the return of the bridegroom for his bride, I pray that we would anticipate with a great palpable sense of excitement that you are going to take this world and all of its kingdoms and all of its problems



and subject it to the kingdom that is of our Lord, the Father and of his Christ, the Son. And that he will reign forever and ever. Sin will be expelled. We will be blessed.

God, in the meantime, we want to collect as many people as possible to join us. And it really starts with coming face-to-face with the cross. As we do, we recognize your great provision and we recognize the future promise. So, God, we love you very much. We'd like to understand love better. We know it's a lifelong process to understand it, but let us align it more intelligently and carefully with the concept of biblical redemption because of our time studying your word this morning.

In Jesus name. Amen