

Blessing #2 Redemption (Continued)

Ephesians 1:7-8

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 24, 2019

As we think about God's grace in creating physical life, I want to turn to a book of the Bible that talks about His grace in creating spiritual life, and that's the book of Ephesians. And as you're turning there with me, if you're joining us for the first time today, we're on the front end of a series on the book of Ephesians called the "All of God" series because that's what the book is about.

It tells us that our salvation is all of God. All the blessings and riches, the treasures of the Christian life come from His hand and not from us. In other words, the Christian life is all of God's grace. That's where salvation comes from, that's where a new life comes from – it comes from His mercy. You can't earn it, you don't deserve it, you can't achieve it. This comes from Him and not from you.

A little background about the book; if we were to count it up, Ephesians is the 49th book in the Bible, and it's the fifth book written by Paul. So if you were to put Paul's letters in order of appearance, Ephesians is the fifth book. It comes after Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and then the book of Ephesians.

And you could make the argument that all of Paul's letters were about the grace of God. It was a theme that he just kept going back to over and over and over again, this idea that salvation is all of God. Nothing amazed Paul more than that, nothing blew him away like the fact that God would save a sinner like him.

We often read the Bible and we think that the people in the Bible were perfect. That they all went around with halos over their heads, and sitting on clouds, eating grapes. You guys know what I'm talking about? Paul was involved in a murder. He was partly responsible for the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He was also a persecutor of the church. He went around from town to town to town, putting Christians in jail until he became one of them. That's an amazing thing about his story. He went around taking people like you and me, and hurting them until he joined us.

And at that point, Paul said, "All I can think about now is the grace of God, that He would save someone like me, that He would show me mercy." It just blew him away and he wrote about it in this book. This is one of the books that he talks about God's grace. And he wrote about the tremendous blessing of salvation and the fact that God did it all.

In my reading recently, I came across a quote from the commentator H.A. Ironside who said this, he said, "Some people talk about the second blessing of the Holy Spirit, and they ask you, 'Do you have the second blessing? Do you want the second blessing?'" H.A. Ironside said, "After reading a book like Ephesians, I tell them, 'I don't want just the second blessing

in the Spirit, I want the third and fourth and fifth and sixth and seventh blessing as well.”” He said, “I don't want just two of them, I want everything that's mentioned in here. This book is about the blessings of God, blessing upon blessing upon blessing.” And Paul says, “You can have this through God's grace.”

I was talking with another man from our church the other day who told me that when they got saved, they couldn't stop reading the Gospels. He said, that's all they did; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, day and night, reading the Gospels. Until the wife said, “Maybe you should try reading the book of Acts, too.” So we did that and he said, “I just loved it, I couldn't get enough of it. Day and night, it was the book of Acts.” And then she said, “Well, maybe you should try reading the letters of Paul. Maybe you should try reading the Old Testament. Maybe you should try reading on and on and on.” And he did that and he came back to his wife and he said, “Wow, do you mean I could have all of this? Do you mean all of this is mine?”

Friends, I'm here to tell you that it is. That's the message of this book. Every blessing, every promise in the Scriptures can be yours through the grace of God. That's the message of Ephesians. Your salvation is all of God.

And this morning, we want to look at the next blessing in our list. We want to talk about the next promise that Paul mentions in here. We started talking about it last week, but we ran out of time. And so this week we're going to go back to it. But if you read in chapter 1:1-8, here's where this next blessing occurs. It says,

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us.

Our focus this morning is on verses 7 through 8. But just to give you a quick review of this passage, I've told you before that Paul starts off Ephesians, the book of Ephesians in an unusual way. He does something kind of strange because he begins by giving us the longest sentence in the Bible. Paul starts a sentence that goes from verse 3 all the way down to verse 14 without a break or without a pause. If you look in your English Bibles, it has sentences, periods and things, but in Greek, this is one long sentence. It has over 200 words in it and more commas than I can count.

And verse 3 tells you the theme of it. Verse 3 tells you what the sentence is all about when Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” In other words, this is all about the

blessings you have in Christ. You can see the word “blessing” repeated several times in that verse. This is all about blessing. This is all about the grace God has given you in Jesus.

To explain that, Paul says in verse 4 that, “You’re chosen.” And in verse 5, he says, “You are predestined because that’s where your blessings come from. That’s why they are yours. Not because you earn them, but because God chose them for you.”

Verse 5, he mentions “adoption” because that’s the first blessing in the list, that’s where this all begins - with adoption. Which means God brings you into His family. That’s what adoption is. You’re adopted. You start off in this family, you end up in that one. You begin your life in this sphere, and you go out in another one. That’s what God has done for you in Christ. You started as a child of Satan in sin, you started rebelling against God, and in grace and mercy, He brought you into His family and pointed you in another direction.

And to do that, in order to bring you into His family, verse 7 mentions another blessing, and that is the blessing of redemption. Verse 7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.” God redeemed you. In order to adopt you, He bought you back from sin. That’s what the word “redemption” means. It means He bought you back from sin.

A price had to be paid for your disobedience. Blood had to be spilled, a death had to be offered, and God offered that in order to adopt you. We don’t use this word “redemption” much today, but it’s an economic term that comes from the world of finance. It refers to the practice of losing something or selling it due to hardship, and then buying it back from the new owner. We don’t have redemption shops today but we do have pawn shops that do this. We have pawn brokers who buy our stuff from us and then sell it back at cost.

I remember as a kid growing up and probably get tired of a CD and I would go sell it to this guy around the corner, and then I’d go back and want it back, had changed my mind, and he raised the price. The nerve of that man, right? Now you can just get them all on your iPod, but it was totally different back then. I’d sell it for \$5, I’d go back and now it’s \$10. I thought that was wrong. But that’s what this word refers to.

With the exception that Paul says, “God didn’t buy our stuff back from us, He didn’t buy our CDs back from us, He bought us.” If you notice the way this is worded in verse 7, it says, “In Him we have redemption. We are the object being bought here. We’re the ones who are saved. God made us, He created us so that we belong to Him. We were His property, but we were lost due to sin. We went astray, and through the blood of Jesus, God has bought us back. Through the death of Christ on the cross, He has made us His again, which is what this is referring to.

It’s been said that we have to bring our sins to God because our sins are all we have. You don’t have anything else. I don’t know where everyone’s at this morning, but if you’re not a Christian, let me tell you, the only thing you can bring to God to be saved, is your sin. But the good news is that God redeems you when you do that. The good news is God buys you back from the power of sin when you bring that to Him in faith.

It's also been said that good works can keep you out of jail, but only the blood of Jesus will keep you out of hell. And that's what this is referring to as well. Jesus' blood can keep us out of hell.

The story is told of a little boy who was orphaned when his parents died in a fire. And he would have died too, except that a man climbed up a drainage pipe along the house up until the two-story window and pulled him out and saved his life. But in the process, the man ruined his hands. He burned his hands down to the bone in order to save this child.

As the story continues, a few months later, the child was put up for adoption because his parents died. The court was looking for someone to raise him. And a few adults came forward until this man spoke and he said, "Your honour, I don't have much money because of my injuries. I can't work anymore, but I do have this." And he held up his hands. He said, "I can say I love this child because I gave everything for him."

Paul says that's what God did for you, that's what Christ did for me. He gave up everything. He didn't just give up His hands, He gave up His life. Christ didn't just give up part of Himself, He gave up the whole thing. And what the passage goes on to tell us in verse 7 through 8, the end of it here. He said, "Not only did He do that, He did it without hesitation. Not only did Christ give of Himself, He did it richly and lavishly without a moment's pause," which is what we're going to talk about today.

So, if you're taking notes this morning, in Ephesians 1:7-8, I want you to see two more reminders for our redemption in Christ. So if you're taking notes, that's our outline for today. That's what this is all about; the two more reminders about our redemption in Christ. Like I said, we've talked about this last week, so this is kind of a refresher. We've looked at this a little before, and we want to add to this here.

But if you've ever wondered how much God loves you, if you've ever wondered how much God cares, Paul says that He cares this much, enough to die for you. That's what this passage is saying. If you ever wondered how much your salvation cost, if you ever wondered how much God gave up in order to rescue you from sin, this is how much He gave. He redeemed you. And this morning, we're going to talk about that with two more reminders about our redemption.

The first one is this; you are redeemed according to the riches of His grace. That's the first thing our passage says for this morning. First reminder we see is that you are redeemed according to the riches of His grace, which means that not only have we been redeemed, but we've been redeemed richly and generously. Not only have we been bought back, but we've been bought back by a rich man who owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

It's one thing to be bought back by a poor man because you might wonder, "Did he have enough money to do this?" It's another thing to be bought back by the richest person in the universe, and that's what's happened with you and that's what's happened with me. If you read on in verse 7, it says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us."

Just to walk you through that, I just mentioned a moment ago, this is one long sentence in Greek. Verse 3 down in verse 14, this is one big thought in the mind of Paul, which means there's no stopping points. This is all kind of jumbled together. So you have to study it word for word. When you come to Ephesians chapter 1, you can't go through it quickly because it's just not written like that. You've got to take it piece by piece.

So some pastors have taken a long time to go through this. I looked it up and the Puritan (this inspires me by the way) Thomas Goodwin preached 36 sermons on Ephesians 1, and he wrote over 700 pages on it. So I'm thinking I might go that route with you guys. There's a weeping and gnashing of teeth – do I see that here?

Some other ones took a long time. One of my heroes, Martin Lloyd Jones, I think he took eight years to preach through the book of Ephesians or something like that. But the reason they did that though, is because you do have to go slowly because this is given to you in words. That's really the only way to interpret Ephesians 1. You got to go through the phrases in it.

Redemption is a compound word from *apo* - away and *lutrosis* - to be loosed. It means “to be loosed away from your chains,” “to be loosed away from your bondage.” It's kind of an emphatic word. Not only are you loosed from this, you're loosed away from it. Not only are you freed from your sin, you're freed far, far, far away. Your chains are gone, the bonds are disappeared.

And to explain that, we don't really have this today - thank the Lord. But the ancient world was full of slaves. They were everywhere. I remember going through the airport in Chicago, they had a big sign that says, “We are opposed to human trafficking.” Nobody would have said that in the first century. Human trafficking was a way of life, and that's what this word refers to.

They didn't have modern inventions like the dishwasher or the washing machine to do your chores back then, but they had slaves. That's how it worked. It was done by hand. So you wouldn't go to the pawn shop and buy a washing machine, you would go to the pawn shop and buy a human life to wash your clothes. And people got into this predicament for all sorts of reasons. I'm going to do a little review. We talked about this last time.

But they became slaves for all types of causes, it wasn't just racial. Certain things like bankruptcy would make you a slave. If you went bankrupt and you couldn't pay your bills and you had nothing else to sell, you would sell yourself or your family to take care of the debt. You would sell your loved ones. We have certain things in place today for bankruptcy - they had nothing in place. So if you ran out of stuff to sell, you sold people in your life. Sometimes with the intention of getting them back, sometimes not. But that was one common cause of slavery.

Another one was war. If you were in war or battle in a foreign country and you lost, they didn't give you back. They weren't interested in that. They weren't going to put you on an airplane and give you peanuts and send you home. They would kill you or would sell you into

slavery. And at that point, you could be redeemed. That's what this word means. At that point, someone could step in, go to the country or go around the corner wherever you were sold, and buy you back from your chains.

The philosopher, Aristotle, referred to slaves as animated instruments or breathing tools because that's all they were. They were just property to him and as such, they could be bought and sold like property, which means if you were sold, someone who loves you could buy you back.

In the Old Testament, that was referred to as the "Kinsman-Redeemer." We read about that in the book of Ruth. That was a family member in Israel who was responsible to buy you back if you fell into slavery. In the New Testament, they were just called "Your Deliverer" and they could be anybody; a relative or a friend. But it was their job to meet your new owner, go down to the slave market, argue over a price, and buy you back, and take off your chains.

And Paul says in this marvelous passage, the second blessing, "This is what God did for you. This is what Jesus Christ did for you when He saved you. He went into the slave market of sin and He paid the price for your deliverance."

John 8:34 says, Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." And that is what you were. That is what I was. We were slaves of sin and God bought us back from that. And Paul says that He did it (if you notice at the end of verse 7) according to the riches of His grace. That's a marvelous passage, a marvelous phrase. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Earlier in verse 6, if you look up in a few verses, Paul spoke about the glory of His grace or the beauty of it, because that's what grace is. It is beautiful. To think that God would do something like this is glorious.

Down in chapter 3:7, he's going to talk about the gift of God's grace because that's what God's grace is as well. It is a gift, it is a present. You don't earn it. But now, he's going to talk about the riches of it. That's the point of this phrase. God is rich in grace, God is rich in mercy. He is rich in salvation, which means that He has more than enough for you and me.

We bring our sins to God because that's all we have, and when we do that, God can save us because He is rich in grace. So that every time you sin, the idea is that He can forgive you. Every time you mess up, the idea is that there is grace for you. You never run out of it. You can run out of money in your bank, right? I remember my college and seminary years, I would go to the gas pump and wonder, "Do I have enough money to buy gas?" You go check your bank account and you think, "Oh Lord, help me."

Paul says, "God never runs out of this. His bank account is infinite. It is infinite as He is infinite. It is endless as He is in endless. It is perfect as He is perfect. And every time you go to the bank of heaven, it has more grace for you."

And we could add to this and say this, every Christian in this room and every Christian on the planet is safe for this reason, and this reason alone, because God is rich in grace. If you were saved this morning, if you were redeemed, if you were adopted, it is only for this reason. There's no other reason. You have no other explanation for it. You were saved simply because God is gracious to you and He is rich in that.

You know of all the things to say God is rich in, this is a marvelous one to talk about. We can say He's rich in holiness. We can say He's rich in judgment. We can say He's rich in power. We can say that He's rich in truth. Paul says, "God is rich in grace."

And I was thinking about this, we live in a pretty wealthy area, right? People in Chilliwack are rich in houses or lands. You go down to Vancouver, they're rich in cars. You never know what kind of car is going to go down the street in Vancouver - Ferraris, Lamborghinis, really shiny Fords with the big rims and tall ... I don't know how they get through the drive through at McDonald's when they're that tall.

Paul says, "God isn't into that. God doesn't care about that. He's rich in grace. This is what matters to Him. This is what's important in heaven, the grace of God." And if you notice, Paul doesn't say, "You're redeemed out of His riches or by His riches," he says, "You're redeemed according to them." This is very important. That preposition there, you can't miss this. He doesn't say you're redeemed from His riches or with His riches, it's according to them. You don't want to miss this. This means that your redemption is as great as His riches are. That's what that means. Your salvation is as high as His mercy is.

If you were to approach a millionaire and ask him for money and he gave you \$10, that wouldn't be out of his riches, right? And it wouldn't be that much of a sacrifice. I mean the guy's a millionaire and he gives you \$10 - thanks a lot, right? But if you were to go to a millionaire and ask him for money, and went down to the bank and he gave you \$10 million, that would be according to his riches.

God saves you according to ... He takes it up a notch. This is at a higher level in salvation. And often times, we think we're going to sin past His grace. Anybody here think that way? You think, "If I mess up one more time, God is standing up in heaven with a lightning bolt ready to throw it." I have this dream sometimes, I am going to be in heaven and I'm going to make it about a thousand years and then God's going to say, "You have to go. You get on my nerves." Never happen. It will never happen because you're saved according to His grace, the riches of His grace.

One commentator said, "Sin has made us poor but grace has made us rich. Sin has put us in chains and left us locked up in prison, but grace redeemed us and bought us and brought us back into the family of God so that all the glory could go to Him."

This is important to talk about because the idea of forgiveness is so distorted today, because the idea of sin is so distorted today. We don't believe in sin anymore as a society. We don't think anybody sins. I mean the experts tell us that it's the mom's fault and it's the dad's fault. They tell us it's the fault of our DNA or the environment or those kinds of things. But the

Bible says that our sin is our own fault. You may be a victim of what someone did to you, but you're not a victim of what you do to yourself. You're responsible for it and God says, "But the good news with that is that you are saved according to the riches of His grace."

Which leads to a couple of things here. If you think about it, there's a couple of applications to this. One is this; you will always have grace from God. You have all the grace you need, amen? If you're saved according to the riches of His grace, if you're saved by an infinite God, an endless God, a perfect God, it means you will never run out of this. There will always be grace leftover to spare for you today.

I meet so many Christians who go around scared to death that they're going to lose their salvation. They walk around eggshells all day long: "If I mess up one more time, that's it." That's not the way this works friends. You're not saved according to whether you mess up or not. You're saved according to His grace, and His grace never runs out. Every time you sin, there's another grace. Every time you mess up, there's more for you.

An old man once told John Wesley that, "My God never forgives and my God never forgets." And John Wesley said, "Then I hope you never sin because you're going to have a real problem with your God."

Friends, the true God does forgive and He does forget because He always has grace for you. Which also means this - another application to this is that you have all the forgiveness you need. If you have all the grace you need, it means you have all the forgiveness you need. God will forgive you. That is guaranteed right here. He will forget your sin.

Verse 7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses." And that phrase "In Him we have redemption," it's in the continuous tense in Greek, which means that not only has God done this in the past, but He's still doing it today. Not only has He redeemed you, but you're still feeling the effects of it now. Jesus died once, the cross happened once, you were redeemed once. But the effect of that was so perfect, it was so complete, it was so powerful that 2000 years from now, every time you sin, you can be forgiven. Every time you mess up, you can look back at the broken, beaten body of Jesus and know that God has forgiven you.

I was counseling someone several years ago who said, "Can God still forgive me now? Can He still save me after all that I've done?" And I said, "Well, I guess it depends on who you're going to look to. Are you going to look at yourself or are you going to look at God?", because if you look at yourself, then God won't forgive you. If you look at yourself, then you have no salvation. But if you look at God and Christ and what He has done, there will always be forgiveness for you.

And that leads to one more application of this, and that is that you can have a hope. If you have grace and forgiveness, you can have hope this morning. You can have all the assurance.

I told you some time ago that a government study was done and it was discovered that one in four Canadians are depressed. And 9% of us are on antidepressants, which is one of the highest consumption rates of antidepressant drugs in the world. We're right behind Australia

and Iceland, which I don't get. I've never been to Australia and Iceland, but Canada is a nice place. I don't know why people are depressed like this. But the point Paul is making in this passage is you can have hope. You don't have to be depressed, you don't have to be upset, you can be saved and be forgiven and redeemed this morning.

One common cause of slavery was bankruptcy in the ancient world, and it was kind of a frightening thing because depending on how much in debt you were, depends on how many of your family members you had to sell, and that impacted how many could be bought back by the redeemer. You get the problem? If you had a big family and you had to sell seven or eight people, well, the redeemer only had so much money. It would be a horrible moment when he would come in and have to pick and choose who he could buy back. If there was eight people and he only had enough money to buy five, that would just be the worst experience in the world.

The good news in this passage, friends, is that God doesn't have that problem. Jesus doesn't have that problem. He never runs out of money, He never runs out of grace. He can buy you back this morning. You can have hope.

Which leads to one more point to consider today, one more reminder for our redemption. Well, the first one is that you've been redeemed according to the riches of God's grace. Not out of His riches, but according to them. Which means that your redemption is as high as God is. Your salvation is infinite, just as His grace is infinite.

It brings us to another point to consider this morning, another reminder for our redemption, and that is this (it goes right along with the first one, so we won't spend too much time on it) - but God has lavished this on you. Not only has He redeemed you according to the riches of His grace, but He has lavished this on you. Which means that not only is it sitting up there in heaven, but it's been brought to earth and given out generously and freely. It's what the word "lavish" means.

You don't often hear of a lavish redeemer, it's kind of an unusual phrase. Because again, redeemers only had so much money. You could be lavish in a lot of things, but if you're rarely ever lavish in redemption – nobody had that much money, not even wealthy people in Rome.

Lavish means "to exceed in something" or to "abound in it."

It means to give beyond the normal limits, over and above the top. "This is how God's redeemed you," Paul says. "This is how He saved you. He didn't redeem you halfway so that you did your part and He did His. He didn't save you halfway so that you did some and He did the rest. God did everything, lavishly. This was not a bargain God made with you, this was not a deal. This was a total and absolute gift of mercy. He was lavish."

Another way to say this, is He was extravagant in this. God gives and gives and gives again. If you go to a man, you say he's extravagant. That's what it means. It means he just never stops giving things away. God is that kind of God.

John Newton, the author of “Amazing Grace,” it says, “Our righteousness is in Christ and our hope depends not upon the exercise of grace in us, but upon the fullness for the lavishness of grace in Him.” We are saved by believing in His fullness, not ours. It’s what this says.

We might add, the invocation Paul is drawing here, the point he's making is that because of God's lavish nature, everyone can be saved, he believes. That's the point here. Because God is like that, everyone who comes to Him for forgiveness can be saved. This is available for anyone who trusts in Christ. There is no limit to this, there is no limit to who He can rescue - He can save anyone. Which means if you want to be saved today, you can be. If you want to be redeemed and forgiven this morning, this is for you. This mercy is for you, this forgiveness is for you, this adoption and redemption and salvation, it's all for you.

You know, when I saw the word “lavish,” I thought of the one lavish party that I went to in my lifetime. I don't really like lavish parties, they make me nervous because you show up and you're hungry, and they give you the little finger sandwiches and a little bit of beanie weenies. And then you go home and have to eat again on the way home. It's depressing. Wear uncomfortable clothes - you guys know what I'm talking about. Nobody knows what I'm talking about- okay, maybe not.

But I did go to one in Los Angeles a long time ago. I wasn't a guest; I was a waiter, because that's where I belonged with those things. Seriously, I served tables at this event. A friend of mine threw lavish parties in their ministry and they said, “Hey, would you like to make a couple of extra dollars?” And so I got involved in this. And they had fancy music there and they had tuxedos and an ice sculpture, which blew me away, because why you would have an ice sculpture in the desert was the weirdest thing. It was going to melt in minutes.

But I'll never forget - this one actually surprised me because of how much food they actually had. They were overrun with food. The guy was a realtor trying to impress clients. And so everything at this party, including the ice sculpture, this big old thing, was just over and above the top of what was needed. It's what the word “lavish” means. In fact, they had so much food, they gave it away in bags. And again, I was a poor seminary student at the time, and I took five two-gallon bags of soup home. It fed me for weeks. It was wonderful.

Paul says, “The grace of God is like that, His mercy is like that. There's more than enough for you. You can take bags of this stuff home. You could eat on it for days, but you have to see yourself as a poor person. You have to see yourself as someone who needs it. You have to see yourself as someone who's a sinner. If you come to God hungry, He will leave you full.” That's what this is saying. If you come to God and say, “Well, I only need a little bit,” it's not for you. This is for those who need a lot.

And so the question you need to answer today is, do you want this? Do you need this? I need to clarify that question because I'm not asking, do you think you're good enough for it - because you're not. I'm not asking would you like to earn this, because you can't. That's not what this is about. The question is do you want it? Do you want the grace of God? Do you want His mercy? Do you want his forgiveness? Not just a little bit but a lot. Not a bite here or there, but bags and bags and bags full of them.

Because if you do want it like that, Paul says, you can have it. If you want His grace in an infinite degree, it is yours if you will trust in Jesus Christ. Remember, God doesn't want to give you the only second blessing of the Spirit, He wants to give you the second and third and fourth and fifth. He doesn't want to show you a little grace here or there or give you just one book of the Bible, He wants you to have the whole thing. And you can't have it if you won't trust in Jesus.

The story is told of a skeleton that was found in the wilds of Alberta, Canada. You've heard about this in preaching websites. And the skeleton was hunched over a desk with a pen in his hand. Apparently, the man died while writing. It was kind of a frightening thing to discover. But he died while he was penning a letter to his mother. Which said this, it said;

The sun is shining mother, but I feel cold. I can walk a little, but that's about all I can do. There's no blood in me because I have not eaten in a long time. I have not seen another human being for 40 days now. There are some magazines here, but they're so silly. I have some cards, but I don't care about that. The only thing I worry about is this; can God forgive me for my sins?

It's all he wanted to know. That's the only thing that mattered. And I could tell you this, that's the only thing that will matter at the end of your life - can God forgive me for my sins? Cards won't matter, magazines won't matter. The only thing that's going to matter is will God have mercy on you.

And friends, I don't know where everybody's at on this today. I don't know where you're at on the issue of salvation and forgiveness and mercy. But I'm here to tell you that the answer to that question is yes. The answer to this issue is God will forgive you, God will have mercy on you if you come to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will save you if trust in Him whether you're in the wilds of Alberta, Canada or right here in Chilliwack, because He has more than enough grace.

Paul says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us." Let's pray and thank God for this lavish redemption.

Lord, we thank you this morning for what You have promised here in Your Word. We thank you for this lavish salvation. And Father, I thank you for it because I know there's not a man, woman, or child in this room or anywhere that doesn't need what this passage is talking about. Whether someone has been saved a long time or a short time, we all need Your grace. Lord, I thank you for those who have come to Christ and realized they need this, and they're born again, they're adopted and redeemed and all this stuff in this passage. Lord, I rejoice in the new life in Christ that's represented in this room.

But for those who don't have it - I don't even know who they are, Lord, but for those who have never come to the cross for forgiveness, I pray this morning You'll change them. I pray this passage would change them. They would see what Jesus has done and be saved. Lord, thank you for You're a wonderful Lord to us. Father, thank you that You do have riches for

us, riches like this. We don't need cars and land and money. We need grace, and You've provided it, Lord. Thank you for that. May You be glorified as we take this to heart and go out and live it out this week. We pray this in Christ name, for His glory, for the grace comes from Him, amen.