

Redemption in Christ Romans 3:19-26

by J.R. Miller

We are all guilty before God and cannot be justified by our own works, but through Christ's sacrifice and redemption, we can be justified freely by God's grace.

Scripture: Romans 3:19

Topics: "Redemption", "Justification By Faith"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the concept of redemption in Christ as outlined in Romans 3:19-26, illustrating that all humanity stands guilty before God's law, unable to justify themselves through their own works or morality. He explains that while the law reveals our sinfulness and inability to meet its demands, the gospel offers hope through the righteousness provided by God, which is accessible through faith in Christ. Miller highlights that justification is a gift of grace, made possible by Christ's sacrificial death, which redeems us from our sins and allows us to stand before God as if we had never sinned. He stresses that all people, regardless of their moral standing, are in need of Christ for salvation, as no one can achieve righteousness on their own. Ultimately, the sermon conveys the profound truth that redemption is freely given through Christ, who bore the penalty for our sins.

Transcript

After a trial and conviction, before the judge utters the sentence, he asks the prisoner if he has anything to say, why sentence should not be pronounced upon him. So every human soul is tried at the bar of divine law and convicted and stands speechless. "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God." No one can claim to have kept the law, without ever breaking it. We have but to read this chapter from the beginning, to see where we all stand. We are all guilty before God. The man without the wedding garment, when he stood before the host, was speechless. He had no excuse to offer for his lack of proper dress. He was guilty and could not say a word in extenuation of his guilt. So do men stand before the divine law. They are dressed only in rags; they have not on a wedding garment. They are speechless, too, when accused, for the garment was provided for them and offered to them--and they rejected it!

Some people imagine that their morality is enough to save them. They do not know what they are saying. Paul said, "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." As well hope to climb to the stars by going up the tallest mountain, as to gain heaven by the best moralities! Moralities are only a few tinsel garments, put on a dead body! No man can live well enough to merit salvation. No one can

live without sin, and wherever there is sin, even the least, the law is broken and its penalties are incurred. "The wages of sin--is death."

There have been some very holy people in this world, who have lived very close to God in faithful obedience and loving service; but there never has been one who was received into heaven on the ground of his own good works. The law of God is so broad and deep, extending not only to acts and words--but to thoughts, motives, feelings and affections, that is utterly impossible for any sinful being fully and perfectly to meet all its demands. If this verse were the last word of the Bible; if the book of inspiration revealed to us only the law and our sinfulness, inability and guilt, declaring that by our own works none of us ever can be justified in God's sight--it would be a dark and terrible finality. But thank God, this is not the last word. We are not left without hope.

A Christian left a Bible in a godless home. As the man and his wife sat together in the evenings, the man took up the book, and reading in it began to feel its power. "If this book is true," he said one evening to his wife, "then we are wrong!" He read more, and a few evenings after said again, with deep concern and alarm, "If this book is true--then we are lost." He read still further, and through the darkness the light began to break, as he caught a glimpse of the cross and the Savior, and at last he said to his wife with glowing joy, "If this book is true--then we may be saved." That is the story always of the work of grace in the heart. First there is the law-work, which shows us our guilt and hopelessness in ourselves. Then the gospel comes, showing us salvation and life.

Verse 20 is not the last word of inspiration; this verse comes after with its blessed revelation of mercy: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." We have no righteousness of our own--but God has provided for us righteousness. No flesh can be justified in his sight by the works of the law--but there is a way of justification which is not dependent on our obedience.

And all must take this way--if they would be justified. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." That seems a strange teaching. Surely there is a difference between the cultured moralist and the profligate sinner. Yes, in a way. The moralist is not so repulsive to us--but perhaps his sins are as bad in God's sight as the profligate sinner. But in another sense there is no difference. Both men are sinners. Neither is able to save himself. "All have sinned." There are degrees of sinfulness, yet all "come short of the glory of God." Sin means missing the mark. Whether one misses the mark by an inch or a foot; whether one comes short of the goal one foot or one mile--it matters little. Both "come short," and so cannot be saved by their own works. Let us not lose the solemn teaching, that there is no difference in sinners so far as getting along without Christ is concerned. We all need Christ must have Christ--or we shall perish eternally!

No one can be justified by his own works, yet there is a way of justification whereby a sinner may appear before God as if he had never sinned, and as if he had faithfully performed every duty. It is by grace that this is possible. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That is our justification. It is only an act of mercy on God's part. It is not something we can claim or demand--but something that is given out of the great love and kindness of the Lord. Yet we must not think that this justifying of sinners costs no one anything. It is not merely an act of clemency on the part of the great Ruler of the universe. While we enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty, we should remember what these blessings cost our forefathers in hardship, toil, blood and money. And while we rest secure in the hope of forgiven sins--we should never forget that these blessings all come to us "through the redemption

that is in Christ Jesus" and what they cost him!

Nothing is clearer in the bible--than that it was by his death, Christ redeemed his people! "God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins--and to satisfy God's anger against us." His teachings were important; his words are the seeds of the world's life. His example was important; he lived out a perfect human life to show us how to live. His daily obedience all his thirty-three years was important; he kept the law and fulfilled all righteousness. But after all--it was in dying that he wrought the great act of redemption through which salvation comes to sinners.

"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." There is a reference here, no doubt, to his expiatory sacrifice. Then Christ's own words assert the same. "The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many." "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you, which is shed for many unto the remission of sins." He died: the just for the unjust, the holy for the sinner. That great act on Calvary was the expiation of our sins. Our justification comes through it. All our hopes spring out of the darkness of those hours!

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