

God Redeems: Redemption
God Reigns: Kingdom
God Sends: Mission
God Gathers: Church
God Returns: New Creation

Big Question: How Does Jesus Save Us?

Ephesians 1:4-6

For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

This week we continue to explore the wonderful theme of salvation – how God has acted to save us from the mess we have made of life, from the mess and evil of our sin and the penalty we deserve from him. And this week we see the wonder that he not only saves us from the mess of our sin, but he brings us to himself and makes us his people.

Jesus is the great salvation story of the New Testament. What would you say is the biggest and best Old Testament story of salvation? Is it Jonah and the whale? Is it Noah and the flood? The Old and New Testament mentions one salvation story from the Old Testament more than any other. Which one is it? The Exodus of course. What a powerful story of salvation THAT is. Epic plagues rivers turning to blood, frog and gnats and flies and hail and FINALLY God's judgement poured on Egypt as every first-born son dies – and FINALLY Pharaoh let's God's people go. God takes them to the Red Sea, chased by the Pharaoh's mighty army but in yet another great act of saving power God parts the sea, God's people cross on dry ground, and the biggest scariest army the world had ever seen is swallowed up as God poured the water over the chasing chariots of the Egyptians. But God isn't finished with this mighty act of salvation. He brings his people to himself, to Mt Sinai, and gives them his wonderful word and makes them his people. The Exodus is the Old Testament story of salvation. The Exodus is a story of redemption.

Redemption is one of those big words that end in shun. It is not a word we use a lot these days, but the salvation story of the Exodus helps us see what redemption is. What it means that God saves his people by redeeming them. Redemption, being redeemed, is about being brought out of a terrible situation – out of slavery – and into a wonderful relationship with God as his people. This is what God did for his Old Testament people, and this is what he does for us. So we begin this week looking again at our wonderful salvation by reading one of Paul's many powerful statements that speak of what God has done for us in Jesus. Ephesians 1:4-6 is like a waterfall full of blessings. One blessing after another flowing through the words of Paul. Paul says he has blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing. God has kept nothing back. Every good gift is ours. What are these wonderful gifts God gives us in Jesus, in our salvation in him?

Verse 4 - before the world began he chose us to be his people. Not because we were special, just because he loves us. He made us holy and blameless. We were guilty, unable to come close to God. But in Jesus we are holy, able to come to God and be his children. Which brings us to the next one in verse 5 – he adopted us as his sons, as his children. God not only becomes our God, our creator, he makes us family, deeply loved and nurtured and cared for as HIS children. Finally, verse 6 – he lavished grace on us. We did not deserve any of this. We deserved the anger of God, but in God's great salvation in Jesus, he lavishes grace on us. Grace overflows in abundance – it gives God great joy to give us so many good gifts.

And one of the words that captures all these ideas is redemption. We were slaves of sin, captured by sin, controlled by sin, under sin's power, deserving the to be punished by God for our sin, the eternal anger of our God and creator. But in the death and resurrection of Jesus we are redeemed, freed from the power and penalty of sin, and brought to God as his people, as his children, deeply, powerfully, eternally loved. The Exodus is an amazing act of salvation. God performed so many powerful and wonderful miracles to redeem his Old Testament people. But our salvation is even more wonderful, even more powerful. Even more glorious. We have so much to thank God for. To praise Jesus for.

Living and Active Prayer

Gracious Father,

You have saved us with a wonderful and powerful salvation.

Your Word is living and active. Today, we have heard you speak,

So help us to not harden our hearts but to live it out.

Forgive our failures, renew our wills, awaken our joy, and transform our lives.

Make our faith living and active.

In the name of your Son and by your Spirit, Amen

Reflection questions

How does the knowledge that God has adopted you, shape your identity and purpose in life?

How does adoption cultivate your love for your heavenly father?

How would you explain the beauty of God's adoption of sinners, to a non-Christian friend?

Resources

Things All Children Should Know – Part 6

The-Ology Chapters 39-44

PTC Course: Doctrine 2

Tuesday

John 3:3-8

What does it mean to be being born again, and what did this look like in your spiritual journey to faith in Jesus Christ?

Wednesday

Romans 5:6-10

How does understanding that we are "justified... while we were still sinners" influence our perspective on grace and my relationship with others who might not yet know or accept this grace?

Thursday

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

If God has already made me holy through Jesus, then what is the purpose of his continued transforming work? What steps can I take to cooperate with His work in my life to keep my spirit, soul, and body blameless?

Friday

Philippians 3:20-21

How does the promise of our citizenship in heaven and the transformation of our lowly bodies into glorious ones influence the way I live my daily life and view my present struggles?"