

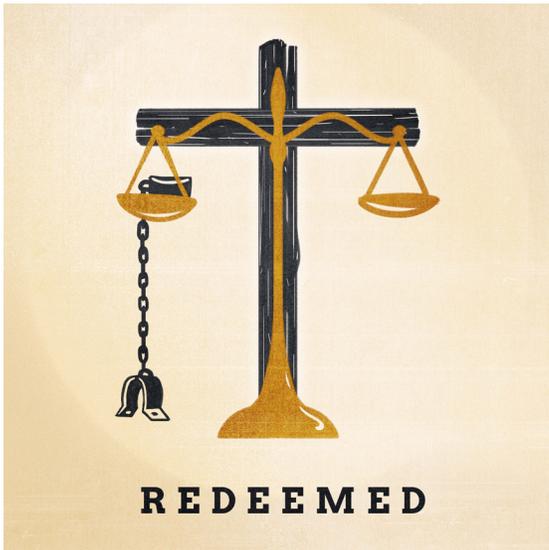


REDEEMED

Sermon Growth Guide

April 10, 2022

Redeemed - From Evil



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Romans 8:31-39

Key Verse: Romans 8:31-32 “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ”

Big Idea: Because Jesus redeems us from evil, we are more than conquerors.

Foundations

Pastor Tim asks, “How do you really know if someone is true in their concern for you? You measure it in actions, don’t you?”

An earthly father will go to wild extremes to protect his child from harm. Our heavenly Father “did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all,” (Romans 8:32). What did the Father not shield Jesus from? Today is Palm Sunday and this week we enter Holy Week wherein we remember the passion of Christ on our behalf.

Jesus won something by being “given up.” In Christ and through Christ’s work, God’s people are redeemed from evil. Though “the wages of sin is death,” (Romans 6:23) we have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and adoption to sonship because of what Jesus did for us.

Our passage goes on to say that “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us,” (v. 37). In a most real sense, the people of God have conquered sin and death. How? “Through him who loved us.” In Christ, the image of conqueror is only the beginning for you.

Open your time together this week praying deeply for the needs around you and for the time before you, that the Spirit would use this time to shape you even more unto His likeness.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read Romans 8:31-39

What point is Paul making in verse 33?

In verse 34, we find that Jesus intercedes for us. What does this mean? How does this make you feel?

Throughout verses 35-39, what can separate you from the eternal love of God?

Applying God’s Word

Because Jesus redeems us from evil, we are more than conquerors. Press into the application of walking as one who has beaten sin and death in Christ Jesus. What course-correction ought you take in this season of your life?

Take time to help one another develop a game plan to walk through Holy Week well this year. What do you need to cancel from your week’s schedule to be present with the One who has “given you all things” (verse 32)?

Witnessing God’s Word

How can you love those around you this week? Who can you invite to Easter? How might you jump in and volunteer this coming weekend? To sign up to serve, please go to firstprescos.org/easter

Abigail and I lived for a year in Oxford when our first two kids were 5 and 3. We took them to London and happened to catch the changing of the guard on a day when the Queen's Horse Guard, the calvary, were involved. It was impressive and majestic, with every boot and strap polished shiny black, red hats and jackets with gold braids and inlays. The horses themselves were uniform. All the same shade of black and kept perfectly to form, in step every step. Wow. I asked the kids that night what they liked about London. "I liked the horses." "Yeah, that was absolutely magnificent, wasn't it?" "I liked when one of them pooped in the street." Majesty. Majesty versus what is real. Is it all about exaltation or is it all about humiliation?

Jesus rode in on a donkey. Today is Palm Sunday. Holy Week begins. Passion Week. It starts with this famous moment the kids have helped us celebrate, the moment Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Do you know it's been three years since we had kids holding palms and helping us sing of Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem? April 14, 2019, was the last time we did it. Mark tells it this way: "When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'" (Mark 11:7-10). It was a parade. A processional. As Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he must have marveled to think of the kings and generals who had ridden into their cities as conquering heroes in triumph. Majesty. I wonder if he thought of what he had taught the disciples one chapter

earlier in Mark 10. His disciples had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and Jesus said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45). Jesus came to give his life as a ransom. He came to pay a price. Majesty or reality?

Our great confessions and theologians separate Jesus' ministry into two parts, his humiliation and his exaltation. His humiliation includes everything that happened from the moment Jesus stepped down out of heaven to take on flesh for us; to empty himself and take on humanity, to humble himself, even to death, even death on a cross, and to go down into death. As our creed says, "he descended into hell," "ad infernos," into everything it means to be dead. Humiliation. But then, exaltation. From there he rose. From there he conquered death. From there he regained his body, he was resurrected to life, he rose—he emptied the tomb, he walked among his followers, he emptied the graves of those who belong to him, and he ascended into the heavenly places to sit at the right hand, again, of God the Father Almighty. Exaltation. The parade into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, which was it? It is more humiliation than exaltation; more lamb than lion; more sacrifice led to the slaughter than a conqueror riding in with a sword. But in his defeat came our victory.

We have been talking about redemption. Redeemed. Jesus came to pay a price, and He knew what He



was buying with the price He paid on the cross. Today, He bought our freedom from the victory of evil. Evil doesn't get to win. Because Jesus came and died and rose again we have been **Redeemed from Evil**. The passage we read today assumes that we are a people enduring suffering. It assumes that evil is ranging the world and having its way. Will evil win? When we are suffering, and when we are watching evil powers tear this world apart, we wonder, has God abandoned us? Will evil win in the end? Maybe it isn't so much for you about watching the news unfold in the world. Maybe there is a battle in your life right now, and you are tempted this morning to wonder. Will evil win? Has God left me for dead? Has God abandoned me?

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32). It is hard to tell who is on your side sometimes. Sometimes people say they are for you, but then they surprise you. How do you really know if someone is true in their concern for you? You measure it in actions, don't you? How about with God? Measure the veracity, the truth, of God's advocacy for you. He gave His own Son. Now, we know too that Jesus took on the task willingly. Don't just sit with a Father who pushed his son off a cliff. Jesus, who is also God, took on the cross with a willing spirit. But when you are tempted to ask, is God really for me? Is God really still on my side? Remember this. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” God is for you, not against you.

Next comes the question, who will condemn? There are powers, evil

powers, that wish to discourage you. Evil powers wish to accuse you and make you turn away from God in guilt and shame. You know these voices. They come from the world, they come from inside you sometimes, and they even come from the devil, from dark, spiritual forces at work to drive you away from God. The devil is an accuser, but he has no authority to judge. Look at this in Revelation 12: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Revelation 12:10-11). Those who gave their lives for Jesus triumph over the accuser by the blood of the Lamb. Hold on to that. The devil wants to accuse and has no authority. Jesus, on the other hand, Jesus, who lived a perfect life before God, Jesus has the authority to accuse and to condemn, but what does Jesus do? “Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34). Who is in a position to condemn? Only Jesus. And Christ died for us. And Christ rose for us. And Christ intercedes before the Father for us.

Is God for me or against me? He gave his Son Jesus. So then, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered’” (Romans 8:35-36). Life includes trouble. Life includes hardship. Life, faithful life in Jesus, it includes persecution. They



might come at you as sheep to be slaughtered. There might be famine, nakedness, danger; there might be sword. It can't beat you. It can't overtake you. Evil cannot separate you from the love of Christ. It cannot win.

My heart is raw with the images from Ukraine. The Russian army under Putin, there is no other word for it, it is evil. It is perpetrating evil. Evil such that European soil has not seen since World War II. Now, there are government statements and there are individual spiritual statements. As for governments, in Christian terms they must remember that they are vested with power to restrain evil, and they should do all that they can. Spiritually, think of this. It is much more ground level. More individually, Christianly speaking, standing on the soil of Ukraine as a believer one can say, "You can kill me, but you cannot take my life." If you are in Christ, wherever you stand, when the sword is over your neck, when the famine and trouble is at your door, you can say, "You can kill this body, but you cannot take my life." "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). "The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; His Kingdom is forever." That doesn't mean lying down before evil when you have the power to stop it. But that is the supernatural truth, the otherworldly encouragement, the heavenly reality—you can kill me, but you cannot take my life. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-39). No matter what happens, no matter how

high the waves of turmoil, how forceful the evil powers amassed against you—it cannot separate you from Christ's love and eternal life.

Why? Prove it. Why? The answer rides into Jerusalem today on a donkey. To shouts of "Hosanna," Jesus knows he rides in to be crucified. Why can I say that God is for you? How can I say that your life is safe in him despite the evidence you experience to the contrary? Because Jesus underwent the humiliation to become a ransom, a payment, a sacrifice. Jesus went through the humiliation so that you and I could be included in the exaltation. Jesus wasn't riding in to claim glory by power; he was riding in to sacrifice his life and pay a price. But once that price was paid, he could promise all his followers freedom from the terrorizing powers and horrors of this life. Even when they are "considered as sheep to be slaughtered" by this world of terrorizing power and violence, they will nevertheless be conquerors.

Jesus became as a sheep to be slaughtered once for all so that we could be forever kept in the love of God. Persecution, famine, nakedness, sword. Jesus was persecuted. Jesus was condemned so that you could be justified, made righteous, and set free. Famine. Jesus emptied himself so that you could be filled with the fullness of life. Nakedness. Jesus was stripped and shamed so that you could be clothed with the cloak of righteousness. Sword. Jesus was pierced with steel. He shed his blood. So that you, and I, could be redeemed. Evil does not win. Not in the end. Not even in the present. In Christ, we are more than conquerors, more than conquerors! And everything that gets pushed down by evil rises up in Him! In the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord! We are redeemed from evil.

