 1 : 7 ‘you are redeemed’

For our ‘ALL-IN’ Services (1st Sunday of the month), we will be looking at this wonderful chapter that Paul wrote to Christians in Ephesus. It tells us a lot about who we are in Christ and the blessings we will receive.

Paul is more expansive in his writing about being ‘redeemed’. In Ephesians 1 he tells us how Jesus redeemed him

***‘ …. through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.’*** (1:7 & 8)

Paul’s own experience of redemption started on the Damascus Road (Acts 9) where he met with the risen Jesus in a blinding vision whilst on his way to persecute Christians. Not all of us will have such a dramatic conversion experience.

1. Spend some time talking about the time you realised that you had been redeemed by the work of the Lord Jesus.

Paul spent the rest of his life telling many people about this first experience. It changed his life – it changed his values – it changed his activities. The word ‘redemption’ would be understood in the 1st century as being the release from bondage through the payment of a price. The price was clearly the ‘blood’ of Christ which is a shorthand way of pointing to his sacrificial death and the New Covenant it established with God.

1. Why was a sacrifice necessary for redemption? Wasn’t there an easier way for our sin to be dealt with?

Redemption was the language of the market place – Boaz redeemed the land belonging to Ruth’s husband but the most common use was to describe people sold into slavery because of poverty who could be redeemed by a relative.

Where do you find modern 21st century examples of redemption – how does it help you understand God’s redemption in Christ?

The ‘riches of God’s grace’ is worth exploring. It is a phrase that focusses on the mercy of a superior to an inferior and stresses covenant faithfulness. God’s promises to save his people come from his heart of love but we must never even think for a minute that we deserve his blessings. This leads us to the idea of God’s acceptance of us. It’s not just a gift from God – it is the gift of himself. As one commentator put it – ‘it is like the judge of the universe asking criminals to sit down to a meal at his home’

1. How do you see God’s grace at work in your own life?

Have we lost the deep sense of gratitude for God’s giving of his son to die for us?

Do we see God’s actions as a good thing or vital to our eternal salvation?

1:7 talks about lavishing his grace on us – that is a total commitment.

If you feel you can, it might be good to stop and thank God for the gracious gift of his son

Paul experienced that on the Damascus Road. The most obvious thing to do with Paul would have been to have him killed to stop further persecution. But God was gracious and could see that this man could be greatly used to further gospel ministry.

Read Paul’s own account of his experience as he testified before King Agrippa (Acts 26:12 to 18)

Read the account in Acts 9: 5 & 6

1. What does this account tell you about the change that Paul experienced in his own life?

What does it tell you about how God deals with disobedient people?

As soon as God speaks to Paul, he is given directions as to what he should do. Should we be more purposeful in asking God to direct us?

Paul needs some help after his blinding experience. It comes from Christian friends in Damascus who needed some encouragement to visit a former persecutor. (Acts 9:13 to 19). Ananias’ visit was very pastoral and ministered to Paul’s physical and spiritual needs.

1. Once someone has become a Christian, they are only a ‘baby’ Christian. What should we do to make sure that new Christians are given all they need to grow up into maturity?

Do we assume they will be fine and allow them to make their own way?

After this, Paul became very active in telling people about what God had done for him. Some have suggested that there are two main tracks we can go down in our conversations

1. We can share the truth of the gospel story and try to tell people why Jesus’ act of redemption is vital for every human being
2. We can also share our own story of how Jesus came into our lives – our testimony
3. We’re not all like the apostle Paul but how should God’s gracious act in our lives motivate us to share

the good news?

For those that feel able to do this, you might want to briefly try to

1. Tell the story of Jesus’ work on the cross.
2. Tell the story of how Jesus changed your life.