

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 10

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[00:00:01] I have a question here, which I hope I can answer, if I can read the handwriting.

Redemption is the paying a ransom for the buying of a prisoner.

We have been redeemed from Satan, among other things. Both of these statements were made. With unbelievers, the man is in bondage to Satan. In what way is Satan paid a ransom? Well, firstly, perhaps we should just look at what redemption means, the two words that we had.

The ransom is paid, that aspect of redemption, is a ransom paid for the release of a prisoner, of a captive.

So it's not so much a ransom paid to buy a prisoner, that comes in the other word, of the buying of a slave and freeing him. [00:01:12] But with the ransom, it's more the thought of a ransom paid so that the prisoner, the demand is met and the prisoner is released. Now, is the ransom paid to Satan? Well, no, because the demand that is met is the demand of God's holiness. So the demand is God's demand and the ransom is the ransom that God demands to satisfy his own holiness. So in Job, he says, I have found a ransom. He's found a ransom for himself. He does not want to condemn the captive. He wants to ransom him. His glory demands a ransom and the ransom is found in Christ. [00:02:01] So the ransom is God's ransom. It meets his demand.

And the same could be said of the price paid for the slave. The slave is in debt. That's why a slave goes into bondage, because he cannot pay the debt that he owes and therefore he himself must become a bond slave. The debt again is to God. We have fallen short of his glory. And so he demands that debt is met and we cannot pay it. But Christ has paid it and therefore now we belong to him. So that's the thought there. Neither the price nor the ransom is paid to Satan. It's God's demand. Now, as to being redeemed from Satan, we have been redeemed from Satan, among other things.

[00:03:05] Well, it's certainly true that we were captive to Satan.

On account of the fact that we were in bondage to death, we were captive to death and in bondage to

sin, and therefore he had power over us because of that. If we read a verse from Ephesians, chapter two, verse two. In time past, we walked according to the course of this world. We could compare that to Egypt. According to the prince of the power of the air, we could compare him to Pharaoh. That's Satan. We could compare him to Pharaoh. The prince of the power of the air that now worketh in the children of disobedience. There we have the principle of sin, the children of disobedience. [00:04:01] This is the nature they have inherited, that we had inherited, and that's why we walked according to that course. We could not walk according to any other course, and therefore Satan had power over us. And in that sense, we were captive to him because we were part of that moral realm which was opposed to God.

Another reason we were captive to Satan, we get in Hebrews, chapter two, where it says, For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part in the same, that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. So another reason we were captive to Satan is because we were afraid of death. Why? Because death for us meant God's judgment, and therefore Satan had power over us. [00:05:06] He could, as it were, say to God, if I am judged because of my rebellion, then these also, they must be judged along with me. So in that sense, he had power over us, we were captive to him. But the death of the Lord Jesus has met the ransom, paid the price, therefore he has the power, he has the right to remove us completely out of that sphere of things over which Satan rules, and bring us under his lordship, under his rule, bring us to himself, into that new creation order. And this is the liberation of redemption, this is the power of redemption, this is that aspect of it, that he can redeem us from all lawlessness. [00:06:01] It's not their sins, that is true of redemption. We read in Ephesians, we have the verse read to us, Ephesians 1, In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. That's the blood, as it were, the forgiveness of sins.

But also, we have the power, we have been taken out from that sphere of things, that lawless sphere of things altogether, which we once walked. And we are now free to serve the Lord Jesus, because he has brought us into that new creation, he has given us a new nature, which loves him, and desires to serve him, and to please him, and he has given us the power to walk in accordance with himself, through the Holy Spirit dwelling within. So I hope that answers the question.

[00:07:05] Given one or two questions to attempt to answer, and I would like, in connection with these attempted answers, to turn you to some passages of scripture. And the first question is, considering how complete and perfect our justification is, could we explain it as being as just as if I'd never sinned?

Justification is equal to just as if I'd never sinned.

And I think that scripture shows us that this is an inadequate definition. [00:08:02] Because it comes far short of what we are to understand by the truth of justification.

And I'd like you please to turn first of all to Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3, and we're going to jump in toward the end of verse 8. That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith. And then secondly, and you'll see the connection hopefully with the passage I've just read in a few moments in Romans chapter 3. [00:09:11] The well-known verse, verse 23, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

We can see from what Paul says in Philippians chapter 3, that he desired to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness.

He realized that a personal righteousness that would be his, if he managed to keep the law perfectly, [00:10:02] would actually come far short with the righteousness that is ours by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because the righteousness that is ours by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is not a personal righteousness, it is the righteousness of God. We are clothed with the righteousness of God. And I read the verse in Romans chapter 3, because again the verse shows us two things. Not only that we have sinned, but that we have come short of the manifested excellence of God. Now, if it was just as if I had never sinned, it would be my own righteousness in which I stand before God.

[00:11:01] And none of us would say that an individual's personal human righteousness reaches to the same level as the manifested excellence of God.

Had I this personal righteousness by keeping the law, which as we all know in fact is impossible, but for arguments sake, had I such a righteousness as this, I would still come short of the glory of God.

But the righteousness of God with which we are clothed, the righteousness of God which is ours through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, reaches that level. It is consistent with the manifested excellence of the Lord Jesus.

[00:12:03] So I think we do often find that when we try and define something in scripture, and we don't use the words of scripture, that in some way or another we come short. And we're always best advised to keep close to the word of God.

The next question is, are we justified by blood alone, or by his life, the life of the Lord Jesus, or his resurrection? And the first thing I can say about that question is that we are absolutely not justified by the life of the Lord Jesus in this world.

Brother Mark was talking about that life as being a ministry of reconciliation. [00:13:06] It was a life in which the disposition of God towards us was made manifest.

But on the other hand, it was a life actually that condemns the sinner.

Because it is a life that was absolutely perfect.

A life that was lived in an environment that was altogether opposed to that life.

And at the end of that life, what did we do to the Son of God? We crucified him.

So that there is nothing there that can justify us.

There is only there that which actually can condemn us.

[00:14:08] But by the death of the Lord Jesus and by his resurrection, we are justified. Scripture shows that. And it shows us that the basis of our justification is his blood. He was delivered up for our

offences and he suffered in our place.

He suffered for our sins.

And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the proof that his work has been accepted by God.

That his love to us led him into death on our behalf.

And in that death, in his sufferings on the cross, prior to his death, he glorified God's righteousness.
[00:15:04] He met every claim of every attribute of God.

And glorified every attribute of God.

And the work being finished, he died. Now the first response of God in his righteousness to the Lord Jesus was to raise him from the dead. It was the action of divine righteousness.

And we must remember that whilst the Lord Jesus identified himself with us, our state and our sins upon the cross, when he suffered at God's hand, we are now identified with him.

So that when he came forth from the grave, we came forth from the grave in him.

[00:16:04] And by his resurrection thus we know that we are justified.

It is the proof, the demonstration of the truth of our justification.

There is a third question.

If I make a mistake or get angry, does that mean I am not delivered?

And I want you to turn to John's Gospel chapter 8.

And I'm going to read from Mr Darby's translation.

Chapter 8 verse 34. Verily, verily, I say to you, everyone that practices sin is the bondman or the slave of sin.

[00:17:11] Now the bondman abides not in the house forever. The son abides forever. If therefore the son shall set you free, ye shall be really free.

So the first part of the question, if I make a mistake or get angry, does that mean I am not delivered? No. It doesn't mean you're not delivered.

It means you've made a mistake. It means you've not been living as near to the Lord as you ought to have been.

You've let things slip.

And there's not one of us in this room who hasn't at some time or another let things slip. You

remember when the Pharisees wanted the woman taken in adultery stoned. [00:18:08] They all went out beginning with the eldest.

So if you think you've let things slip, if you think you've done things that you ought not to have done, believe you me when I tell you that those of us who are older have probably done many, many more things like that than you have. But I read the passage in John's Gospel chapter 8 because here we have a contrast. The one who is in bondage is the one who practices sin.

And when we think about this word practices sin, we're not talking about someone who slips away from the Lord [00:19:04] and while they're away from the Lord they do things that they afterwards regret. We're talking about someone who is completely under the power of sin.

And that isn't the situation with most believers.

I say that isn't the situation with most believers. We know from what Paul writes in the epistle to the Romans chapter 7 that it can be the experience of a Christian. But in these circumstances, the end of Romans 7, Paul says, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [00:20:02] And then immediately he says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord who giveth us the victory. If we find ourselves in such a state because we've never really understood the truth, we've never really understood what God has done in Christ in order that we might be delivered, if we cry to God about it, he will most certainly deliver us.

And then the final question, how do I go about getting delivered? Stroke deliverance. And I want you to turn to Galatians chapter 2.

Verse 20, and I'm not going to attempt to expound the verse, I'll perhaps pick out one or two things from it. [00:21:04] I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. In the talk that I gave earlier on, I spoke of four key words, knowing, reckoning, yielding and walking.

And we can see from the beginning of verse 20, where Paul says, I am crucified with Christ. That Paul understood what God had done in Christ, in his work upon the cross, in relation to the fallen nature that we have. And Paul reckons in the light of it. [00:22:07] He doesn't say here, our old man was crucified with Christ.

He says, I am crucified with Christ.

In other words, he recognises that the place to which God has consigned our old nature, that is the place of death, is the place to which we are to consign it.

And instead of living in that old nature, instead of giving place to that old nature, we are to live in the life which is ours in Christ.

[00:23:02] Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. We have the life of Christ. And this is a perfect life. But practically speaking, this life in us is a dependent life. It's a life that needs to be fed. It's a life that needs to be nourished up. It's a life that needs to be given place to.

And the more we do that on a daily basis, day by day, week by week, month by month, we shall find that the new nature in us gets practically stronger and that the old nature in us gets practically weaker. Now the old nature will always remain the old nature. You can't change it. You can't improve it. Don't look to the old nature for anything because all it can do is sin.

[00:24:07] And one of the wonderful things about the fact that we are in Christ is that God no longer identifies us with that fallen nature. We're not identified with it. Paul comes to this in Romans chapter 7 where he says, well it's no longer me that's doing these things, it's sin that's in me. So he suddenly made this discovery where he's not identifying himself anymore with this old fallen nature. Instead he's identifying himself with a new nature. And that's the beginning of practical deliverance.

Another scripture that we could refer to in Romans chapter 8 is that we are not in the flesh, we are in the spirit.

[00:25:03] And the spirit will strengthen us and help us practically in relation to this matter until the Lord comes.

Well I've got four questions.

But Brother Robert has given an excellent introduction to one of them, what I thought he would do, so that's why I was keen to speak a little later. The first question is, is it true that our old nature will not be eradicated although we are sanctified?

In brackets, or delivered.

And if you've actually just heard the answer, it is true that the old nature will never be, will not be taken away from us as long as we live here.

[00:26:03] As long as we are on the earth, the old nature is there. And I'll give you two verses, one already referred to, Romans 7.17, which says, Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Now there you have a plain statement that this old nature, sin, still dwells in the person who already has the new nature, because you find just in the verse before that he has good desires. He has the desires of the new nature. The second verse is 1 John 1, which says very plainly in verse 8, [00:27:02] If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Now clearly, we means believers.

And if we say we have no sin, we don't have the old nature anymore, it would simply be self-deception.

Now in addition to these two very clear doctrinal statements, you can find plenty of examples. A little later, John speaks about the case, if, chapter 2, If any man sin, we have an advocate with a father. Now if you maintained that the believer does not have the old nature anymore, then you'd need to explain where the sin comes from, how he can sin. Or Galatians 6 verse 1, if one of you gets overtaken by a fold. [00:28:02] Or just think of examples like Mark going back from service and Paul having to withstand Peter in the face and so forth. You find many imperfections in the lives of

believers in the New Testament that essentially just go to prove the same point. So the old nature will not be eradicated.

I suppose the difficulty is, well, isn't it a contradiction to say on the one hand we are delivered and on the other hand we say this beast is still there. I suppose that's the kind of problem. And perhaps it's not that difficult actually.

If you think of an example where you have a boat that is run by a very bad captain. And one day there is a change of power.

The captain is bound and put into the cellar of the ship.

[00:29:06] And there's a new captain now who steers the boat. Now the old captain is still alive in the cellar of the ship and may be shouting, go back, go the other way.

But he has no power anymore. He's still alive.

And actually it's not really my example, it's an example from Romans because it says there about that old captain or master in Romans 6.

For sin shall not have dominion over you. So that old sin or sin nature is still there.

But the point is it shall have no power over you. We do not need to obey the codes of this old nature.

[00:30:05] Now then there was a question that said, if as a Christian we sin, how do we get re-sanctified?

Now if as a Christian we commit a sin, a Christian wouldn't be practicing sin as Brother Robert explained, but it could happen. A Christian falls into sin. Now if that happens, it's not only a problem with sanctification, but it's also a problem with defilement.

It not only requires re-sanctification, but it also requires cleansing.

And the thing to do is, and this was mentioned already as well, is self-judgment. We first of all have to come to an assessment of what we have done in the eyes of God.

[00:31:09] So our judgment becomes his judgment. And we actually say what I've done there was very bad. And the thing to do is to confess it. And what happens is that this sin is forgiven and we are cleansed practically.

And then I think you can think about the other step, which is what is called in the question re-sanctification practically. Of course positionally we are always sanctified, but practically you then also have to step back from this and say if I fell into the sin of not paying my tax, just fudged my tax return, Brother Jonathan would take a very hard line on this I think. [00:32:02] Now it's not enough for me to just confess this and say it was wrong, but I keep fudging my tax in the same way. So I have to step aside from this practically and say I want to be set apart for God and I want to live here for him and part of that is that I give to Caesar what is Caesar's and so forth. So in other words I want to practically be set aside again.

Incidentally both sides, the cleansing and the sanctifying, come out very nicely in Mr. Ironside's silver goblet example, which was dirty in the kitchen and it got clean and then it was taken to the lounge, it was set apart and then it was sanctified and fit for the master's use. Now the other two questions really go together.

[00:33:04] The first one is, in what way is an unbelieving person sanctified by their believing spouse? 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14.

And the second question is, or the unbelieving apostate sanctified by the blood of the covenant?

Hebrews 10 verse 29.

We might just want to look at this very quickly. 1 Corinthians 7 says, We should start perhaps in verse 12.

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord, if any brother has a wife that believeth not [00:34:03] and she is pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which has a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. And now verse 14.

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.

Else were your children unclean, but now they are holy.

So what you have here is that either the partner, the wife or the husband, is sanctified. And in addition, if there are children from the marriage where one was a believer, one was an unbeliever, the children are sanctified as well.

Very glad the question came up.

[00:35:05] I believe, or at least I hope, that when we talked about sanctification, I said there are two main meanings.

The first one is positional sanctification.

That's the main meaning.

And the other main meaning is the practical sanctification. But there is another sense in which the word is used in the New Testament, as the questioner very ably brings out in his questions, which is an outward sanctification.

Clearly, when the unbelieving husband is sanctified, it cannot mean that he is a believer, obviously. And the same applies to the children. But the unbelieving partner lives in a household where there is a believer, [00:36:02] where God is known, where Christianity is known.

And in this sense, he is different from the people who are still in idolatry, who have no contact, even outwardly, with the truth of Christianity. So nothing to do with life, with eternity, with redemption, with new birth, anything like that. It's outward sanctification.

Now, similarly, in the other passage we read, or the question alluded to, in Hebrews 10, Hebrews 10, verse 20.

Let's read from verse 28.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. [00:37:06] Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace. Now, two cases compared.

One is under the law of Moses, and one is under the covenant, and the blood of the covenant is mentioned, so it is a matter of the new covenant. Now, if there was a severe punishment on someone who transgressed under the law of Moses, that was clearly what had to occur, but the writer says it's an offense that is far worse [00:38:07] if you despise, if you turn away from a far greater blessing.

Now, if you were an Israelite, you were outwardly connected with that new covenant because you belonged to the people of Israel.

But if you had just made a profession of Christianity, and then, and this is what much of Hebrews is about, you were about to turn your back on the Christian profession and say, I go back to that which is visible, to the visible sacrifices and altars and high priests and what have you, then you were really doing what is called here doing despite or insulting the Spirit of grace. So again, the sanctification here is an outward sanctification of one who has professed [00:39:04] and who has then turned away from Christianity and has in this way insulted the Spirit of God. So in both cases, 1 Corinthians 7 and Hebrews 10, it's sanctification of an outward kind. The next question picks up on some words that are used in 2 Corinthians 5.19. So I will read out the particular words that the question concerns and then read out the question itself. So 2 Corinthians 5.19 contains the statement, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

The question asks, what does it mean that God was in Christ reconciling the world? Are not some in the world in enmity with God?

[00:40:05] The second part of that question, the answer to that is a definite yes. People who do not believe in the Lord Jesus are at enmity with God. And that comes out from our verse in Romans chapter 5 and also in Colossians as well, where it refers to us having been enemies, alienated from God and enemies. So that's the position of everyone in the world who does not know the Lord Jesus. So there certainly are some in the world who are at enmity with God. I think what the question is really asking is, can that be reconciled, if I can use the word in a different sense, with the statement in 2 Corinthians 5.19 that God was in Christ reconciling the world. [00:41:04] And perhaps the questioner has based their question on the understanding that that statement that we read from 2 Corinthians 5 is a statement that God has reconciled the world unto himself.

Those words on their own, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, they sound quite nice when we quote them like that. We have to be careful though when we're quoting words from the Bible that we are quoting enough to give them their full meaning. And just to quote those particular words on their own might not give the full understanding of what the writer was getting at in this particular passage in 2 Corinthians.

[00:42:04] So I think it's helpful actually to read verses 18 and 19 together. So we'll do that now. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. At the beginning of verse 19 in the authorised version there's those two words to wit which we don't use in everyday language today. But we could substitute for them perhaps the word namely. And we'll come back to that in a moment. But it brings before us that there is a link between verse 18 and verse 19, and verse 19 builds on verse 18. [00:43:02] So we need to read the verses together to understand every phrase that's used in them. Now it's also just worth mentioning a few other things in those verses before coming back to the particular phrase that is the subject of the question. Verse 18 states that God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. God has reconciled us.

Now that's consistent with Romans 5 and Colossians chapter 1, our other key verses from this afternoon. God has reconciled.

So what God has reconciled is a past work, and the people that God has reconciled is us. It is a limited class of people.

If verse 19 of 2 Corinthians 5 then went on to say that God has reconciled the world, that would be slightly curious writing [00:44:06] because there wouldn't be any point in having the initial statement that God has reconciled us. In fact, God's word does not say that God has reconciled the world.

That's not the language that's used in 2 Corinthians 5.19, and it's not language or a statement that is made anywhere else. The language in verse 19 is that God was reconciling the world to himself. So it was a past event, but it wasn't a single or an instantaneous event. It was an ongoing thing. That's why that tense is used. God was reconciling the world unto himself.

In one of my slides from this afternoon, [00:45:03] I was hoping to make the point that what is spoken of in verse 19 is God's ministry of reconciliation, a presentation of God's reconciliation, or I think Robert put it quite aptly, that Christ's life was a display of God's disposition towards us, and that is what is meant by this expression that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. In everything that the Lord did and said, he was displaying God's disposition towards us, not wanting to in any way denigrate anything that the Lord said or did, other than not wanting to denigrate those things. Nothing that the Lord said brought about reconciliation. [00:46:01] Nothing that the Lord did brought about reconciliation, save his death. So Christ's life was not bringing about reconciliation, but it was presenting reconciliation, and the Lord was presenting reconciliation to the world.

We can take that in a number of senses. The Lord's ministry, the Lord's life, the Lord's words and actions were not limited to Israel, but were limited to other parts of that region of the world. But more than that, everything that the Lord said and everything that the Lord did was a message from God to every person in the world that they need to be reconciled to God.

Just one last thing about the verses. At the end of verse 19, and hopefully this will help emphasise why I'm saying [00:47:07] the first part of verse 19 means what it does, the second half of verse 19 says that God has committed to us the word of reconciliation. So we have the message, the verbal message of reconciliation to pass on to the world. But through Christ, God was able to do something much greater because in addition to his words, every action that Christ did was a presentation of God's message of reconciliation.

So to summarise, the statement that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself does not mean that God has reconciled the world to himself. But when we look at it in context, it tells us that wonderfully God was willing to send his son, [00:48:10] the Lord Jesus, to be that perfect display not only of himself, but that perfect display of his disposition towards the world, which was that he wanted every member of the world to be reconciled to himself. The last question for our attention this evening is, what is the exact difference between forgiveness and justification? I'm sure I can be very brief because Robert's reiterated what he's already said about justification. Forgiveness of our sins. We can think we know that all our sins are forgiven. That if we can think of that account sheet with all the wrong things that we have done are completely forgiven, blotted out, there's a clean sheet. [00:49:05] But perhaps it's right to say that justification is a far higher thought. Robert's explained to us that we're clothed with the righteousness of God. Not only are we a forgiven, pardoned sinner, but through the death of Christ, God has clothed us with his own righteousness. Not our righteousness, but he's clothed us so that we can be viewed as perfectly righteous, as perfectly just before him. Truly that is wonderful, isn't it? That we're completely righteous, that God has made us completely righteous before him. So there is a difference, and an important difference, and I would suggest even a higher difference in what the work of Christ by his death has done for us. [00:50:03] I believe that when it says God will be all in all, it's referring to all three persons of the Godhead.

We are reconciled to God. We are not reconciled to the Father.

We are reconciled to God.

We are reconciled to God. We cannot be reconciled to one person of the Godhead without being reconciled to the Godhead. Three persons in one.

God will be all in all.

That will be displayed in a coming day. But now what position then will the Lamb take in relation to worship? We know at present we worship the Lamb, and indeed Revelation 5 is full of worship to the Lamb.

[00:51:01] Now in the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21, we read in verse 22, And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Two persons. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Now that is true is speaking of millennial conditions, but I see no reason to suspect a change between that and the eternal state. So to answer the question shortly, yes God will be all in all, because all evil will have been done away. But God and the Lamb will be the centre of our worship, I believe, in eternity.