

"Ransomed"

1 Peter 1:17-23

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1 Peter 1:17-23

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Prayer.

Sometimes, it is just easier to pray.
Will you pray with me?

Our ways were futile,
O Lord.
We were given the law.
We were told how to live,
If we wanted to stay close to you.
Yet, we've been prone to wander.
We love to muck around in sin.
Knowledge's fruit was just the
beginning.
Purification pools
And absolution granted or with-held
By temple authorities
Just didn't cut it
For either of us:
You or humankind.

We were given a new covenant.
Free; without costs.

Lord, you promised to be our God,
And the God of every generation that
follows.

We were to be your people;
But, so often
we have acted as if we don't know
you.
It isn't hard to see why
We've angered you over the years.

Inheritance has its price.
It may be the dysfunction of family;
Pride, ego, or the expectation of
privilege;
The burden of wealth;
Or Love of the bottle, bong, or baggie.
But in our case, O Lord,
Not only have we inherited our faith
From those who have gone on before
us,
We've also inherited
Our propensity to sin
And to live outside the promise

You've made with us.
We've inherited these futile ways
And for a time
It appeared as if there was no hope,
No possibility for solution,
The elusive unified field theory,
not of physics,
But of faith.
What, or who, or how could we be
saved?

Sin had captured us.
Once lured into the den of sin
It becomes nearly impossible
To escape.
We begin to accommodate it,
Tolerate it,
Justify it,
Sometimes in the name of liberalism,
Other times in the name of
conservatism
But always,
To appease our selfish motives.
"Mother always did it" we tell
ourselves.
"Father always did it."
"There's always been a little scandal.
Why shouldn't I grab what I can
While I can get it?"

Prosperity also has a price.
It brings with it the delusion that
we can make it on our own.
We live as if we don't need to be
Covenantal partners with our Creator.
We find ourselves jailed by the very
ideals
That were promised to free us:
Capitalism, democracy, and justice.
One day it dawns on us
That there is much to be desired
living in a Wal-Mart world,

where gasoline is three thirty-nine a
gallon,
our clothing was sewn and sneakers
assembled
by children in third world sweatshops,
polar ice caps are melting,
the landscape is filled with strip malls,
and the militarism of the planet
has only accelerated since the end of
the Cold War.

We are imprisoned by our
independence,
By our failure to place our trust and
faith
In you alone, O Lord.

We used to repent of our sins
Sometimes at the hand of a
charismatic preacher
Baptizing with a baptism of
repentance,
Other times after punishment
And the humiliation of Exile.
We used to sacrifice animals, O Lord.
We had the belief that their life could
be a substitution
For our infidelity to you.
We could never break the cycle.
We were always left hollow,
Empty,
Superficial.
Less we dwell on it,
We'd return to our old ways
As soon as we left the temple
Or drove out of the church parking lot.

There is no human solution.
It is only now, O Lord,
That this has become crystal clear.
There is nothing we can do,
Short of our complete and absolute
Surrender of our lives to you.
If there is going to be a solution,

It isn't coming from us.

Peter tells us:

The only solution to our imprisonment
To sin and infidelity of faith
Was the ransom of your Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.
He paid the price to secure our
release.

In place of animal blood
It was his blood on the cross;
His life drained out
That paid the ransom for our souls.
In place of a blood that stains,
The blood of Jesus Christ washes clean
Every stain of the soul
And makes all necessary preparations
One needs to face death and judgment
day.

The cleansing blood of Jesus
Makes resurrection and eternal life
possible.

The precious blood of Christ
Saved our life, O Lord.

In reflection,
We now can see, O Lord,
That this has been your plan
Since before the big bang;
Before the foundation of the world.
It has only been revealed to us
To build our faith
And to reach out to others
you may be calling.

No longer need we place our trust
In our own clever schemes or
devices;
We can place our complete trust in
you.

We are freed from all earthly
Anxiety and pain,
So that we are able to love;
Love completely,

Love you, O Lord,
And love our neighbors.
We are able to love
Without the expectation of being loved
back,
Freed to practice prevenient love,
Before it is anticipated,
Freed to love extravagantly,
Beyond expectation,
Freed to love without fear of it coming
to an end.
We are freed to love
Just as you first loved us.

It is as if you've given us a second
chance,
A second opportunity to live life over
As if we had never strayed or sinned in
the first place.

So today, O Lord,
We have set a table
As a memorial tribute to the ransom
Paid on our behalf
By your Son, Jesus Christ.
The bread and wine remind us
That, though we strayed,
You never strayed from us.
While we were content to be prisoners
To the sin and infidelity of this world,
You were not content
to lose even one of your children.
May the love and devotion symbolized
in this meal,
O Lord,
Be reflected by our ransomed and
changed lives
As we leave today's gathering.

Hear this, our prayer, O Lord. Amen.