

Redeem

To purchase and set free by paying a price—

A picture of “redeem” occurred one summer afternoon when my friend Dave and I were visiting friends living out in the country. Driving down a dusty road, Dave suddenly stopped the car. He grew excited as he got out of the car and ran over to a piece of junk.

Through the brush, sat a rusting pile of metal that once had been a car—I would guess sometime in the Mesozoic era! Animals were living in it. It had been ruined by every kind of weather. There were only shreds of upholstery. You get the idea.

Dave that day became the redeemer. He saw as valuable what others saw as a pile of trash lying in a field. But what he did next was unthinkable.

That day he gave away hundreds of dollars for this heap. It was (in my opinion) the greatest overpayment for junk to occur in the 20th century! They should have paid us to haul it off!

God redeems. He sees beyond people's unclean, broken and wasted lives that are fit only for destruction. And He too paid the greatest overpayment for our lives in the annals of human history. God gave His own Son as the purchase price for you and I. What could He have been thinking?

To redeem isn't just to purchase but it is to purchase with the idea of “setting free”. Dave set the car free from becoming a useless rust heap to become what it was meant to be—a limited edition Shelby GT. Today that car shines beneath it's five coats of paint and lacquer as it races down Southern California streets—every restored part a testimony to Dave's redemptive work.

God has also redeemed. He set us free from our sins, selfishness and corruption in order to be what we were always meant to be—a people called to worship, love and serve Him! Today there is a sleek, restored Shelby being driven thanks to Dave. But more importantly, today there are former prostitutes, witches, criminals, nice-guys, etc. who walk about redeemed. Know any?

A Word For the Wrecked

For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him—Romans 8:28

Jesus is a redeemer. Throughout our lives he acts redemptively towards us seeking to restore us back to his creation design. He does this at times quickly by instantly forgiving us, instantly placing hope and joy into us. But mostly redeeming is a lifelong process. Removing, sanding, priming, followed by more sanding are not just the tedious day-to-day work of the auto body specialist. It is

also Christ's patient work in us as He day to day works patiently at restoring us from the collision and wreckage of our lives.

Further, Jesus as our Redeemer can stand in the midst of the most tangled, wrecked, and disastrous of lives and redeems them. Here are a few examples of lives that were "totaled" before the Redeemer came upon the scene of the wreckage:

- The widow of Nain's son had a collision with death, but in the presence of the Redeemer death turned to life. Death loses its sting and the grave loses its victory, and the widow gains a son.
- Zaccheus meets the Redeemer and is **rescued** from his greed addiction.
- The streetwalker of Luke 7:36-50 is **restored** to pour forth her love as a worshipper of God.
- The greatest personality disorder of all time is found in the demonized Gadarene until He meets the Redeemer and is **renewed**.
- Much more could be said about the crowds of the blind, lame, and leprous who come under the touch of the Redeemer and **recover** their health and wholeness.

For Further Study:

The word redeem occurs in a 150 references in bible; 20of these are in the NT. See some of the references of redeem in the New Testament:

- Apolutrosis—Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7 We need a Redeemer to set us free, liberate, and deliver.
- Lytroo—1 Pet 1:18-19; Tit 2:14; Luke 24:21 to redeem or to ransom; a release won and the means by which it was accomplished. This word is found only three times in the NT. The idea here is that without a Redeemer we are burdened by an unpayable debt.
- Exagorazo—Gal 3:13 & 4:5; Eph 5:16; Col 4:5 To cause the release or freedom of someone which proves costly to the redeemer. This word is found four times in the NT.
- Agorazo-- 1 Cor 6:20 "you were redeemed with a price". The idea here is that of being bought from a slave market.

Questions:

1. Are there **people**—celebrities, teachers, friends or family that you think are too old, too rebellious, too far gone, too sick, too poor, too dysfunctional, too hardened, too lost, too broken or too addicted to be redeemed by Christ?
2. Do you have **situations** in your life that seem too impossible, incurable, irreconcilable, incompatible, irretrievable, irreparable, unrecoverable, or shattered even for God to redeem? Are you believing Christ to come and stand in the midst of the situation and redeem it?
3. Theologians like to put God's redeeming work in three phases:
 - I was redeemed from the penalty of sin
 - I am being redeemed from the power of sin
 - I will be redeemed from the presence of sin

Discuss what these three phases of redemption mean.

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