**WORDS OF SALVATION (#3)**

***Redemption***

Have you ever heard the incredible story of when Julius Caesar was captured by pirates? The famous Roman historian Plutarch tells the story in his book *Parallel Lives Of The Caesars*. Julius was not yet ruler of Rome. Far from it. He was just 25 years old and only a Roman nobleman with no military authority. He had taken a ship on the Mediterranean Sea toward Rhodes in order to study oratory. Pirates, which had infested the Sea, causing problems for Rome’s commerce, took this young important looking man as captive and held him for ransom. They told him they demanded the sum of 20 talents for his life. He laughed at them and told them to raise it to 50 talents, telling them the had no idea who they had captured.

After sending a few men from his entourage with the ransom note, Caesar refused to behave like a captive. The pirates were dumbfounded, never having heard a captive actually raise his ransom, then spend the next 38 days acting like he was their commander! He ordered them around and told them to hush when he couldn’t sleep due to their loud talking. He made them listen to his poems and speeches. He even threatened to have them crucified if they didn’t obey him. They thought he was just a crazy lunatic. Soon the ransom was paid and he was released. Only he didn’t go quietly. He, without any military command, somehow raised a ship full of armed men and sailed back to the same island they had held him. He found them, captured them, then fulfilled his threat and crucified them! They kidnapped and ransomed the wrong man!

King Richard the Lionheart of England was captured by the King of Austria while returning from the Crusades in 1190 A.D. The ransom note demanded 150,000 marks, equivalent to $3.3 billion today, which was over twice the entire annual revenue of England in that day! They somehow paid it. (Source: Guinness Book of World Records)

We too have been kidnapped and held for ransom. Sometime in our youth we gave in to the pleasures of sin for a season and thereby sold our soul to the devil (Heb. 11:25; Rom. 3:23). We were held hostage after being entrapped by “*the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will*” (2 Tim. 2:26). Figuratively speaking the devil sent a ransom note no one could pay. The redemption price was astronomical, beyond anyone on earth could afford. But Someone in heaven could, thank God.

Researching in *Strong’s Concordance* and *Vine’s Greek Lexicon* I read that the word “Redemption” is defined as “a releasing effected by payment of ransom.” In my mind I’ve always had two things pop into my brain when I hear the word Redemption. One is a slave block in which a man stands against his will and is “redeemed” by the highest bidder and taken for life to do his master’s bidding. The second image I think of is a pawn shop in which the owner gives you a redemption ticket for your item you “sold” him in order to get fast cash. He will hold your possession for a specified period of time, at which time he will sell it back to you at an inflated price (he has to make a profit), or, sell it to others after the period of redemption is past.

In both cases you see the idea of “buying back” something of value. After selling my soul to the devil for a bowl of beef stew, ala Esau and his birthright (Gen. 25:29-34), I was destined to a life of slavery to the taskmaster Satan. Incredibly, at my auction, what King Jesus paid for my worthless head was worth far more than what Rome paid for Julius Caesar, and what England paid for King Richard the Lionheart. I was literally bought with a King’s ransom.

*“In Him we have* ***redemption*** *through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* (Eph. 1:7).

The immense riches, the unfathomable wealth, of God’s grace was enough to pay the ransom note for my sinful soul. Standing on that slave block and hearing the enormous price Satan demanded for my ransom I gave up all hope of freedom. I seemed destined to the devil’s hell for eternity. At that terrifying moment I would have gladly been sold as a slave to Captain Blackbeard and served my life on a pirate’s ship swabbing the deck. Instead, I heard the Lord Jesus raise His voice to pay the full price. Then, to my astonishment, He immediately unshackled my hands and feet to make me a freeman forever! I was now “*delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*” (Rom. 8:21). Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty I am free at last!

The second image of the pawn shop is also my way of seeing my Lord’s redemption. After bargaining my soul to Satan’s Pawn Shop for pennies on the dollar in order to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25), I now wanted to “buy back” my soul from him. When I offered him double his money back, a 100% profit, he merely laughed in my face. The price was now 10,000 talents (see Jesus’ parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-27). Think of that staggering statistic for a minute. It would take a common day laborer 20 years at one denarii a day to pay back just one talent. That means it would take 200,000 years to pay back 10,000 talents. In the parable I just mentioned Christ said the servant begged for mercy and promised “*I will pay you everything*.” That was impossible, and he knew it. Neither I, or anyone, can pay the redemption price for my pawned soul. No one, that is, except Jesus and His blood.

“*In whom we have* ***redemption*** *through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:14).

Redeemed how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
Redeemed thru His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am.

Redeemed and so happy in Jesus, No language my rapture can tell.
I know that the light of His presence with me does continually dwell.

I know I shall see in His beauty the King in whose law I delight,
Who lovingly guardeth my footsteps, and giveth me songs in the night.

Redeemed. Redeemed. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
Redeemed. Redeemed. His child and forever I am.

 Today, let’s live joyfully as redeemed souls. – Rick