

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

**Announcement Slideshow
Countdown**

**Slide – Welcome
Call to Worship Song**

**Slide – Welcome
Greeting & Greeting Time
Announcements
Prayer**

Worship Song

**Slide – Welcome
Praise Report Time**

Worship Song – I Will Sing of My Redeemer

Slide – Title

Jesus Our Redeemer

Good morning. When Pastor Brian asked me to fill in for him this morning, I had an entirely different message in mind to share with you. I had that message ready to go, and then last Sunday God’s Spirit started gently urging me in a different direction.

Let me begin with a reminder of the great task that Jesus assigned to all His followers on the day He ascended back to His Father...

Slide – Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

Every follower of Christ is called by our Lord to be an evangelist of His Gospel. The very word “gospel” – **εὐαγγέλιον *euangelion*** – means “good news” or “glad tidings.” The “Good News” is that Jesus came in the flesh – God with Us, led the perfectly sinless life that we cannot, laid down His own life on the cross in our place, and rose again on the third day – all to rescue us out of death in our sins. The better news is that we too can partake of resurrection unto eternal life apart from sin simply by believing in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection and calling out to Him for salvation. Jesus Himself put it this way...

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

Slide – John 6:40

40For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:40 (ESV)

But as our pastor in California often said, “To have good news, there must be bad news. Otherwise, it’s just news.” If the good news is that Jesus – our Redeemer – has rescued us out of death in our sins, the bad news is that we needed a Redeemer in the first place.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s only commandment – not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – in the Garden of Eden, their rebellion brought death and all other forms of what we call “evil” into God’s Creation which up to that time had been perfectly good (Genesis 1-3). All of us have inherited that curse of death as part of our human nature. As King David wrote...

Slide – Psalm 51:5

5Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Psalm 51:5 (ESV)

ASIDE – Years ago, in the time of the Puritans and even up until the mid-20th century, some took this verse from Psalm 51 as a “proof text” that human sexual relations are inherently sinful. In fact, sex was sometimes called “original sin.” Nothing could be further from the truth. God created us as sexual beings and gave us the blessing of sexual relations as His means for obtaining godly offspring. In fact, after creating and blessing Adam and Eve, God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. The “original sin” that brought death into the world was rebellion against God’s command. To my knowledge, no one today still teaches the ridiculous notion that sex is the original sin that brought death into the world. The only reason I mention it at all is to show how easy it is for someone with a perverse mind to take scripture out of context and use that as the basis for false doctrine. We therefore need to be like the people in Berea - searching the scriptures daily to see if the doctrines being taught are true.

Furthermore, each of us chooses daily to sin by transgressing God’s moral law laid out in His Word. In fact, the very reason God gave us His law was to prove to us our need of redemption. Maybe you’re thinking to yourself that you’re “good enough” – not deserving of death for those “minor” sins we all commit now and again. But God’s standard for a “moral” life is utter perfection. In God’s eyes, there are no “minor” sins. There are no “little white” lies. There is no such thing as “justifiable” homicide. To God, there’s no difference at all between covetousness and murder, or between dishonoring our parents and adultery.

In essence, all of us have sold ourselves into slavery to sin and the death that sin brings. That’s the bad news, and it’s bad indeed. But God gave us in His Word a model of how He planned to rescue us out of our slavery to sin and death.

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

Slide – Leviticus 25:47-48

47“If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you or to a member of the stranger’s clan, 48then after he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brothers may redeem him, Leviticus 25:47-48 (ESV)

This idea of God’s redemption of mankind out of death is a thread that runs throughout His Word.

Slide – Psalm 19:14

14Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14 (ESV)

Slide – Isaiah 44:6

6Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Isaiah 44:6 (ESV)

ASIDE – Recall that Jesus calls Himself “*the first and the last*” several times in the book of Revelation. Jesus is **not** a created being as some religious denominations teach. In fact, Jesus – the Word of God – is the Creator as we learn in John 1 and Revelation 19.

Of course, redemption always carries a cost. In the case of our own redemption out of death in our sins the price was Jesus’ own life that He laid down willingly for us on the cross. As we sang in our hymn this morning, “*with His blood He purchased me.*” This gives us a glimpse of the depth of God’s love for us and His hatred of our sin – that He did not consider Jesus’ death on the cross too high a price to pay for our redemption.

Before we move on, let me make one thing perfectly clear. Jesus’ work on the cross was as the mathematicians say “*necessary and sufficient*” for our salvation out of death and into eternal life. If we believe in our hearts that Jesus is risen from the dead and commit ourselves to serving Him as the Lord of our lives, there is no further action that we must (or could) take to seal our salvation. Many people have come to a saving profession of faith in the Gospel on their deathbeds. The thief on the cross is the perfect example. Even though the man was hanging on a cross and about to die that afternoon, Jesus promised him that the two of them would be together afterward in Paradise. Jesus Himself, just before He died said, “*It is finished.*” (John 19:30) – speaking of our salvation unto eternal life. Jesus paid the price of our redemption on the cross and will therefore fulfill His promise to “*raise him [us] up on the last day.*”

Jesus Our Restorer

Slide – Happily Ever After

We teach our kids in Sunday school that we are new creations in Christ by faith in Jesus, and that’s the happy ending to the story. But Christians who have been around the sun a few times since being

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

saved know better. The problem is that we are still here on this Earth which is still temporarily the dominion of our enemy. In fact, from the moment we first believe until Jesus calls us to Himself, we are in the midst of a battle – with the spiritual forces of evil in this fallen world, and within ourselves.

The Christianese term for Jesus' finished work on the cross is "justification." We have been made righteous (just) in the sight of God despite our sinful nature by Jesus' cleansing blood. But our justification is just the beginning of our journey as Christ followers that will culminate in our final redemption unto eternal life. In the meantime, God has indwelt His followers with His Spirit sealing our salvation and empowering the next step in our perfection into the image of Jesus – Sanctification.

A few weeks ago, Pastor Brian encouraged us to stop thinking of ourselves as "**sinner**s saved by grace" and to start considering ourselves "**saint**s saved by grace." The word "saint" has been widely abused causing a great deal of confusion, but its true meaning couldn't be any simpler. A saint is someone whom God has set apart to Himself. As His saints, God calls us apart from the world of sin and death into God's Kingdom of righteousness and holiness. By our profession of faith in Jesus' Gospel, we are reborn in His Spirit.

Slide – 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

The problem is that even though we are justified by Jesus' blood, and therefore our eventual redemption unto eternal life is assured, we are still creatures of the flesh albeit with His Spirit dwelling inside us. These two aspects of our new character are in opposition to each other.

Slide – Galatians 5:17

¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. Galatians 5:17 (NKJV)

One Friday evening in California, we were driving home from a small group Bible study with a dear sister, and she asked a pointed question. "How do I know that I am doing the will of God?" The fact of the matter is that none of us gets it right all the time as much as we might wish to and as hard as we might strive to. I asked her whether she thought the apostle Paul was someone who did the will of God. She replied that of course he did. Then I asked her to read to us from Romans 7 – Paul's desperate cry about his inability to "get it right."

Slide – Romans 7:18-24

¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:18-24 (ESV)

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

The process of sanctification by which God’s Spirit is perfecting us into the image of Christ isn’t one of slow steady progress. Christians who are truly born again in God’s Spirit do experience great joys and victories along the way, but we also go through times of spiritual drought and even renewed rebellion against God. When we don’t seem to hear from God, we find ourselves wondering whether God has truly called us, or we have just been fooling ourselves with a false hope. Even worse, sometimes we fall back into those same sinful behaviors out of which we believed Jesus had redeemed us. When we fall into such temptations, we question whether we have really been born again by faith in Jesus’ Gospel.

In these times of spiritual weakness, our enemy – the accuser of the brethren – stands ready to pounce on us. He is always waiting for us to fall, knowing that eventually we will. Then time and again he whispers his poisonous lies:

You’re not a new creation at all! If you were truly devoted to God, you wouldn’t do the things you do. You wouldn’t think the things you think. You wouldn’t say the things you say.

You say you want to serve the Lord, but you don’t serve Him or His people. You’re just continuing in same old ways you followed before you were supposedly “saved.” You’re a hypocrite. You say you’re devoted to God, but you’re not. Your so-called “new life” in Christ is all a lie.

God’s done with you. You couldn’t live up to your commitments to Him, so He’s moved on to find someone else who will.

You might as well just forget about serving God and go back to the things that give you pleasure. You can’t resist them anyway. What’s the point of struggling? If Jesus has truly redeemed you, He’ll forgive you, right?

In such times, and in the face of our enemy’s lies, we need to always remember what Jesus said on the cross – ***“It is finished.”*** Our redemption out of death is certain. God’s love for us is eternal and unconditional. Yes. When we fall down on the road of sanctification, it breaks God’s heart just as it breaks the hearts of all parents when their children rebel and get into trouble. But just as we parents don’t abandon our children in their times of trouble, God will never abandon us – His re-born children. Remember the last words Jesus spoke before He ascended back to His Father – ***“I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***

Our accuser has been granted great power in his dominion over this fallen world, but he can never take away our redemption that was purchased with Jesus’ blood. Jesus Himself said this.

Slide – John 10:27-30

²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one.” John 10:27-30 (ESV)

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

ASIDE – If anyone ever tells you that Jesus never claimed to be God, take them to this verse. In fact, the Jews to whom Jesus spoke these words immediately sought to stone Jesus to death for blasphemy because He had claimed to be God – One with the Father.

What should we who have been redeemed by Jesus do when we fall into temptation? Firstly, there is the added temptation to simply give up. After all, Jesus has redeemed us out of sin by His sacrificial death on the cross in our place. His redeeming blood covers all our sins – past, present, and future. We who have called upon the Name of Jesus for salvation by His grace through our faith in His Gospel have been forgiven of our sins and clothed with His righteousness despite our sins. This begs a direct question that Paul brought up in his letter to the church in Rome.

Slide – Romans 6:1-2

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Romans 6:1-2 (ESV)

Jesus is not only our Redeemer. He is also the Restorer who draws us back into fellowship with Him when (not if) we fall. John wrote about this.

Slide – 1 John 1:6-9

⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:6-9 (ESV)

The famous Biblical example of Jesus restoring His followers is found in the life of Peter. We identify with Peter because we see so much of ourselves in him. Peter wasn't a rich or well-educated man. He was a simple working man whom Jesus called out of his earthly occupation as a fisherman into a new life of fellowship with Jesus and service to His Kingdom. Peter seemingly always said whatever was on his mind. He was the first of Jesus' apostles to boldly affirm faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah, and for this profession of faith Jesus blessed him.

Slide – Matthew 16:15-17

¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 16:15-17 (ESV)

That was certainly a “mountain top” moment for Peter. But just a few verses later, Peter opposed Jesus when He told His disciples that He would soon go to Jerusalem and be crucified. Jesus' response was scathing.

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

Slide – Matthew 16:23a

***23a** But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me... Matthew 16:23a (ESV)*

Peter must have been devastated to hear his beloved Savior compare him to the great enemy of our souls.

Of course, we all know the story of Peter’s denial that he even knew Jesus when he was confronted at the fireside outside the high priest’s house while Jesus was being tried (Matthew 26). How devastated Peter must have been when the rooster crowed, and he realized that he had failed to live up to his promises to his Lord just as Jesus had foretold.

Jesus – God with us – understands our human weaknesses, having lived among us in the flesh of a man and been tempted in every way just as we are. His compassion and empathy for us are limitless. So, Jesus knew the state of despair that Peter had fallen into through his denial. On the day of His resurrection, the angel who appeared to Mary emphasized that she was to tell **Peter** that Jesus was going before them into Galilee (Mark 16:7). Jesus knew that in their devastation over the seeming loss of their Messiah, His disciples would go back to the fishing life He had first called them out of. So, He appeared to them in the morning after they had fished all night and caught nothing. He particularly needed to have a little father-son talk with Peter before He could use Peter mightily for service to His Kingdom (John 21:15-19).

After Jesus restored Peter into fellowship following his denial, God did use Peter mightily in spreading His Gospel. On the day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended back to His Father, Peter preached a powerful sermon after which over 3,000 came to know Jesus as their Lord and their Redeemer (Acts 2). It was Peter who first brought the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

Everyone who has committed to following Jesus will fall down now and again. It’s part and parcel to our sinful human nature. No one is immune – not me, not you, not Pastor Brian, not Billy Graham, not Paul, nor any other truly redeemed servant of the Lord we might care to name. But when we do fall down, Jesus our great Restorer stands ready to pick us up and dust us off to prepare us for continued service.

This process isn’t always easy. Often, it can be quite painful. When someone restores a piece of furniture that has fallen into disrepair or been marred or burned during its service, the restorer must first cut away and replace the parts that have rotted or been broken and sand or grind away the scratched or burned places before applying a new finish and restoring the piece into service. God needs to burn away the dross of our sinful selves as He refines us like precious metal into the image of Jesus.

Paul put it this way in my very favorite passage in all of God’s Word. Speaking of our promised redemption out of death, Paul said...

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

Slide – Philippians 3:12-14

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

Jesus is our Redeemer and our Restorer, but in His work of restoration, He often uses our brothers and sisters as His tools. None of us can or should strive to accomplish restoration on our own. Certainly, God's Spirit dwelling within us is the power behind our restoration, but often He uses others whom He has redeemed to accomplish that work. This is why it is so important for us to strive in fellowship together for the sake of Jesus' Gospel. Our great enemy seeks the wounded outliers of the flock to attack. In union there is strength against him.

Slide – Psalm 80:17-19

¹⁷But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!

¹⁸Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!

¹⁹Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!

Let your face shine, that we may be saved! Psalm 80:17-19 (ESV)

Slide – Logo

Invitation

God knows everything about us – even those things we fool ourselves into believing we hide – and He loves us anyway. He loves us and desires companionship with us so much that He was willing to come to Earth in the flesh of Jesus and die in our place on the cross so that we might be redeemed out of death in our sins and welcomed into God's family as His adopted daughters and sons.

If you don't know the Lord Jesus today as your very own Savior & Redeemer, the Bible says that **today** is the acceptable day of salvation. If you feel Him reaching out to you today to draw you to Himself and you know deep down in the bottom of your heart that Jesus died willingly on the cross in your place and is now risen out of death and glorified today at the right hand of His Father, don't harden your heart. Call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus for salvation and accept His welcome into His family.

Maybe you're here today having already been reborn into new life by the Spirit of God because you once called upon the Name of Jesus as your Redeemer, but you've fallen into some shameful temptation and you're feeling lost, alone, ashamed, and irredeemable. Rest assured that you are never alone. Jesus stands ready as our great Restorer who is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Your brothers and sisters in Christ are called to come alongside you and help you in the process of restoration.

The altar is always open for you to come and lay your burdens before the Lord. While this next song plays, I'll be here ready to talk with you, pray with you, and help you any way I can.

Jesus – Redeemer & Restorer

Invitation Music –

Slide – Logo

Prayer & Invocation