

THIRD SUNDAY of LENT

February 24, 2008

[] = Instructions for worship planners and worship leaders: delete from the worship folder
() = Information for the congregation: include in the worship folder and/or PowerPoint.

[Note: **Worship Alive Plus!** is designed to be useable/adaptable in planning contemporary, blended and “fresh traditional” worship.]

[Lutheran Lectionary © 2008 Fellowship Ministries,
by Kelly Ferrari, Julie Koenemann, and Rev. Maxwell Quinn]

WORSHIP THEME: “Forgiven and Changed Forever”

Most likely you have seen someone being “made over” on a TV show. Maybe it was a dad who looked pretty outdated and grungy, only to be made over and look like a new man. Or maybe it was a single mom of five children who hadn’t had time for herself and looked worn out and frazzled, only to be made over into a glamorous model. Have you ever wondered what a makeover could do for you? The truth is you have already received one through Christ. Today Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that because of Christ we have been made new – a makeover! We are forgiven and changed forever! While we were at our worst – while we were yet sinners – Christ made over the world. The question for you today is simple: are you living as the “new you?”

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

[Worship Planners: A Worship CD and/or the praise team can play in the background 10-15 minutes before the service. Then the first congregational song can begin at the scheduled service time.]

WELCOME AND FELLOWSHIP¹

OPENING SONGS²

[choose 2 or 3 of the songs listed below or from elsewhere in this service]

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

[www.musicnotes.com; www.praisecharts.com; www.wordmusicnow.com; www.worshiptogether.com]

Chris Tomlin / Edwin Othello Excell / John Newton / John P. Rees / Louie Giglio

Chorus

**My chains are gone I've been set free My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns Unending love amazing grace**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found Was blind but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear And grace my fears relieved

¹ Welcome everyone; briefly announce the theme of the service and offer an opening prayer on that theme; have them rise and greet one another. A Praise Team member can *lightly* play harmonies in the background, building gradually into the first song.

² For Traditional or Blended Music suggestions, see the options which come after the contemporary songs.

How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed

The Lord has promised good to me His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine You are forever mine

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Nothing But The Blood

[WT 7:49;

Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com;
church charts on www.iwillworship.com and www.pwarchive.com]

Matt Redman

Chorus

**What can wash away our sins What can make us whole again
Nothing but the blood Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can wash us pure as snow Welcomed as the friends of God
Nothing but Your blood Nothing but Your blood King Jesus**

Your blood speaks a better word Than all the empty claims I've heard
Upon this earth Speaks righteousness for me
And stands in my defense Jesus it's Your blood

Your cross testifies in grace Tells of the Father's heart
To make a way for us Now boldly we approach
Not earthly confidence It's only by Your blood

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Beautiful News

[Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com;
Church charts on www.iwillworship.com]

Matt Redman

(PRE-CHORUS)

I heard Your beautiful news Grace so amazing so true

Chorus 1

**Shout it out let the people sing Something so powerful
Should shake the whole wide world Make it loud make it louder still
Savior we're singing now To celebrate Your beautiful news**

Joy is the theme of my song And the beat of my heart
And that joy is found in You For You showed the pow'r of Your cross
And Your great saving love And my soul woke up to You

Ending 1

There's a God who came down to save Showed the world His amazing grace

There's a God who came down to save And He calls your name

Chorus 2

**Shout it out let the people sing Something so powerful
Should shake the wide whole world (Shake the whole wide world)
(Shake the whole wide world) (Shake the whole wide world)**

Ending 2

To celebrate Your beautiful news Beautiful news

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[Traditional Options]:

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty [ELW 533; LSB 901; LW 198; LBW 250]

Lord Jesus Christ Be Present Now [ELW 527; LSB 902]

Oh That I Had A Thousand Voices [LBW 560; LW 448; PH 475]

TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS³

Pastor: It is hard for us to wrap our minds around the Scriptures that tell us Jesus died for each one of us – while we were yet sinners. Like the songwriter said, “I’ll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.” None of us is righteous. Not one. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So, what is this wondrous love? How can we ever comprehend what it cost Jesus? We really cannot. But we *can* begin to walk, talk, and live like the new creations He has made us, through His blood. If the goal is for us to become more like Him every day, let us start today by confessing our sinful state, and resolving to live like we really *are* being made new in Him.

(A time of personal reflection and confession)

People: O Lord Jesus, we see our sin. We see our unworthiness. We see our nakedness. Time and time again You warn us not to take wrong paths, but we go our own way and disobey You. Now there is nothing we can do but ask Your mercy, Father, trusting in Your unfailing love, and in the blood shed for us on the cross by Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending Him into the world that we might receive our salvation by faith. And by the power of Your Holy Spirit, strengthen us for the journey that we might begin to truly live Christ-like lives, being transformed into His image. In Jesus’ name we pray.
Amen.

Pastor:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven you. Your salvation is assured by your trust and belief in the One who died to save you, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[Optional: Children’s Message and/or Dismissal to Children’s Church]

³ Alternative to group recitation and placement: Don’t print or project these words. Have the leader make use of some of the thoughts above, loosely and freely paraphrased on behalf of the whole congregation. ***It is also effective to weave confession and absolution between a couple songs of the opening set.***

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

[It is suggested that the introductions be read out loud as well as the Scripture itself]

FIRST READING Exodus 17:1-7 (NIV)

The Israelites' suffering in Egypt had been of a different nature than what they are experiencing wandering in the desert. Now they complain about the lack of water. They had stopped trusting God and were looking to Moses – the man – as their source and provider.

¹The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" ³But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" ⁴Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

SECOND LESSON Romans 5:1-8 (NIV)

The whole Christian life is the result of God's grace in which we stand – His favor and provision in Christ that we do not deserve. We did not have to make ourselves perfectly righteous before God decided to send His Son to pay the price for our salvation – He did it when we were at our worst!

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. ⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

GOSPEL John 4:5-26 (NIV)

In the first lesson today the Lord tells Moses that He will be standing on the Rock to give the people water. In today's Gospel lesson Jesus offers living water to the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He was that Rock in the wilderness, He revealed Himself as the true Messiah to the woman in Samaria, and He is still the Living Water poured out for us in our own day, as we learn to trust in Him alone for our provision and our salvation.

⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It

was about the sixth hour. ⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" ¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." ²⁵The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

MESSAGE "Forgiven and Changed Forever!"

[See "Sermon Starters & Seasonings" provided at the end of this service]

+ WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD +

[Optional location for Confession/Absolution, using materials found earlier in this service]

SONG OF RESPONSE (choose one)

You Are My King (Amazing Love)

[ATBS 2:249; MSPW2:82; SD 209; WT 2:72; WT 3:73; WT 5:76; www.worshiptogether.com]

Billy Foote

I'm forgiven Because You were forsaken
I'm accepted You were condemned
I'm alive and well Your Spirit is within me
Because You died And rose again

Amazing love How can it be That You my King Would die for me
Amazing love I know it's true It's my joy to honor You

You are my King You are my King
Jesus, You are my King Jesus, You are my King

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Amazed

[www.songselect.com; www.pwarchive.com; www.iwillworship.com]

Jared Anderson

Chorus

**Lord I'm amazed by You Lord I'm amazed by You
Lord I'm amazed by You How You love me
Lord I'm amazed by You (O) Lord I'm amazed by You
Lord I'm amazed by You How You love me**

You dance over me While I am unaware
(And) You sing all around But I never hear the sound

You paint the morning sky With miracles in mind
My hope will always stand You hold me in Your hand

Ending

How wide How deep
How great Is Your love for me
How wide How deep
How great Is Your love for me

Oh

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[Traditional Option]:

Chief of Sinners Though I Be [ELW 609; LSB 611; LBW 306; LW 285]

Rock of Ages Cleft for Me [CH 342; ELW 623; H82 685; HFG 108; LSB 761; LW 361;
LBW 327; NCH 596; WC 227; UMH 361]

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – Apostles' Creed

[NOTE: The following are contemporary song options for speaking the Apostle's Creed: *Because We Believe* ATBS 119; SPW 6; INTEGRITY 12 **OR** *This Is What I Believe* GB 249 **OR** *The Apostles Creed* Integrity 8]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen

[OR]...

I believe in God as Father and Creator of all things that are.
I believe that out of His love for us, He sustains life in sorrow and in joy.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son.
I believe that through His death and resurrection, He paid the ransom for the sins of many, and accomplished the great redemptive plan of God to reconcile sinful mankind to Himself.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who invites and empowers everyone to seek closer communion with God.
I believe He is the Living Water that is poured out to refresh, restore, and refine a people for God.

I believe in the sanctity of life, the finality of death, and the hope of the Resurrection.
Thanks be to God!
Amen.

OFFERINGS

[Anthem for soloist or praise team]

Emmanuel

[www.songdiscovery.com;
Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com;
Church charts on www.pwarchive.com]

Reuben Morgan

Chorus

**Emmanuel Jesus Christ
You'll never let me go My Shepherd King
You're watching over me Emmanuel**

Holy holy I will bow before
My Lord and King Hallelujah
You have come to us You make all things new

So amazing You have named the stars
Of the deepest night Still You love me
You have called my name I will follow You

Ending

Holy holy God Almighty
There is none like You Holy holy
God Almighty There is none like You

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PRAYERS⁴

[Prayer Topic Starters]

- Thanks for:
 - The incomparable gift of our salvation, paid for by Your death on the tree.
 - Still loving us, even when we complain and gripe in our wilderness times.

- Please give us:
 - The living water You offered to the Samaritan woman – the water that poured out of the Rock in the desert – the water of life, that saves us out of sin and death.
 - A deep wellspring of gratitude for all Your grace and mercy towards us.
 - A “makeover” so that we begin to look and act like You, Lord!

- Cause us by Your Holy Spirit and Your Word to:
 - Spend time with You at the well – in prayer, in conversation, in relationship with You.
 - Begin to live as “new creations” in Christ, so that others will want the living water that they see in us.
 - Speak with honesty and integrity, telling the truth always to You and to others.
 - Freely offer forgiveness to those who have offended us.

- Local congregational and individual concerns

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[A communion option to insert for churches celebrating the Lord’s Supper on this day]

+ The Lord’s Supper +

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

WE PREPARE

Pastor: Lord, Jesus, thank You for the cross.

Thank you for Your Spirit which gives us life.

Thank You for the Living Water poured out for us.

Thank you for this body here present, who comes forward to dine at Your table.

By Your grace we partake of this feast, and share in eternal life.

For on the night...[Words of Institution]

⁴ Formal language and “perfectly read” prayers are not recommended for contemporary worship. People appreciate the touching sincerity of informal prayer. “Heartfelt” prayer also teaches/models simple prayer language that anyone can use at home, in the car, the office, etc. These “**Prayer Topics Starters**” are offered to help facilitate spontaneity.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: **And also with you.**

(Worshippers turn to one another and share the peace which comes from the Lord with words such as, "God's peace to you.")

DISTRIBUTION SONGS – [choose as many you need]

Unashamed Love [HMS 18:1470]

Lamont Hiebert

Chorus

**Of a childlike faith And of my honest praise
And of my unashamed love Of a holy life
And of my sacrifice And of my unashamed love**

You're callin' me to lay aside The worries of my day
To quiet down my busy mind Find a hiding place
Worthy You are worthy I open up my heart and let
My spirit worship Yours I open up my mouth
And let a song of praise come forth Worthy You are worthy

Ending

Worthy You are worthy (2X) You are worthy (3X)
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Purified [MSPW2 89]

Deborah D. Smith / Michael W. Smith

Chorus 1

**That I will open up my heart Search me in the deepest part
And I will stand in cleansing fire By You purified By You I'm purified**

Where the angels see You are praised as You should be
But how can I express My yearning for Your holiness May it be

Savior of my soul To Your strength I yield control
Purge me from my stain Sin will lose its mortal reign Make me free

Chorus 2

**And I will open up my heart Search me in the deepest part
And I will stand in cleansing fire By You purified
By You I'm purified I'm purified for You**

Ending

You are holy You are holy You are holy You are holy holy
You are holy Oh oh oh oh oh

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[Traditional Options]:

Jesus in Your Dying Woes [LSB 447; LW 112]

My Song is Love Unknown [ELW 343; FWS 2083; (Love Unknown) H82 458; LSB 684; LW 345;
(Rhosymedre) LSB 430; LBW 94; LW 91; PH 76; RS 572; WOV 661; NCH 222]

COMMON DISMISSAL

FINAL COMMISSIONING

Pastor: Today is the beginning of your “makeover” in Christ. May you look new. May you act new. May you smell new! May others SEE what it is that changed you! And if others ask who you are, may you respond:

People: I am a friend of God – He calls me friend!

[Note: If using traditional song option, amend the last sentence of the pastor’s commissioning to read: “And if others ask, ‘How are you?’ may you respond: Then change the people’s response to: “It is well with my soul!”]

CLOSING SONG

Friend Of God

[HMS 20:1581; MSPW 3:165; SD 49:7]

Israel Houghton / Michael Gungor

I am a friend of God (3X)
He calls me friend

Who am I that You are mindful of me
That You hear me When I call
Is it true that You are thinking of me
How You love me It's amazing

Bridge
God Almighty
Lord of glory
You have called me friend

I am a friend of God (3X)
You call me friend

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[Traditional Option]:

It is Well With My Soul [CH 705; ELW 785; HWC 493; HFG 495; LSB 763; LBW 346;
NCH 438; UMH 377; WC 519]

Musical Notes

Music charts downloadable through:

www.Praisecharts.com

www.Worshipleaderassistant.com

www.musicnotes.com

www.songselect.com

www.Wordmusicnow.com

www.worshiptogether.com

www.musicnotes.com

Chord charts free downloads available at:

www.Iwillworship.com

www.pwarchive.com

Mp3 downloads available through:

www.Songtouch.com

www.Walmart.com

www.Worshiptogether.com

www.Itunes.com

New Songs to consider:

Our God Saves (Recorded on *Paul Baloche's Our God Saves*)

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Lead lines on www.songselect.com and www.praisecharts.com, and church charts on www.Iwillworship.com and www.pwarchive.com.

Keep your eyes on Songselect for this amazing new song:

You Are My God

Adam Cunningham © 2007 High Hurdle Music (Adm. By Fun Attic Music) Over Fork

SSS – SERMON STARTERS & SEASONINGS

The following ideas are merely intended to help get your own creative juices flowing and prepare your heart for God's Spirit to inspire and speak through you.

“Forgiven and Changed Forever!” ***Romans 5:1-8 (9-11)***

Most likely you have seen someone be “made over” on a TV show. Maybe it was a dad who looked pretty outdated and grungy only to be made over and look like a new man! Or maybe it was a single mom of five children who hadn't had time for herself who looked worn out and frazzled and ended up looking like a model! Have you ever wondered what a makeover could do for you? The truth is you have already received one through Christ! Today Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that because of Christ we have been made new - a makeover! We are forgiven and changed forever! While we were at our worst - while we were yet sinners - Christ “made over” the world. The question for you today is simple: Are you living as the “new you”?

Theological Reflections and Practical Applications

5:1–11 Justification brings peace with God (v. 1), grace for present living (v. 2), hope for the future (v. 2), victory in tribulations (vv. 3, 4), and assurance brought by God's love put in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (v. 5). Because of God's great justifying love (vv. 6–8), we can rejoice that our hope of eternal reward will be fulfilled (vv. 9–11).

5:1 Peace here is not a subjective feeling of peace. Rather, this peace is the state of being at peace instead of at war. The hostility between God and the believer has ceased. The believer has been reconciled to God.

5:2 To have access means “to approach,” as if by introduction into a king's throne room. Believers have been granted admission to stand before God. Even though they were once rebels, they do not have to face His judgment. Instead they approach His throne in the realm of grace, or in the King's favor. Rejoice means “to boast” and hope means “expectation.” Believers boast in the sure expectation of the glory of God. They are confident, for God Himself has placed the Holy Spirit in their hearts (v. 5).

5:3 Glory is the same Greek word that is translated “rejoice” in v. 2. Believers can rejoice, glory, and boast not only in their future hope (v. 2) but also in their present troubles. Tribulations refers to physical hardship, suffering, and distress. Perseverance means “endurance.” Trials and tribulation produce endurance when we exercise faith during those difficult times (James 1:2, 3). Such faith produces its own reward (Matt. 5:10–12; 2 Tim. 2:12).

5:4 Perseverance produces character, the quality of being approved. As believers endure tribulation, God works in them to develop certain qualities and virtues that will strengthen them and draw them closer to Him. The result is fortified hope in God and His promises.

5:5 The hope that believers have of their future glory with God will not disappoint them by being unfulfilled. They will not be put to shame or humiliated because of their hope. The reason the believer can be so confident is that the love of God has been poured out. The moment a person trusts in Christ, that person receives the Holy Spirit (8:9), who constantly encourages them in their hope in God.

5:6 Paul now explains the nature of God's love. God loved us when we were still without strength and ungodly. God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us (v. 8). God loves us just the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us the way we are (John 15:16; Phil. 1:6).

5:7, 8 God's love is truly remarkable. It is unlikely that anyone would die for a righteous man (Gk. *dikaiōs*); the just man; the upright, respected citizen; or a good man (Gk. *agathos*); the helpful, benevolent man. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Gk. *hamartolos*): This is a clear demonstration of God's love. He receives us just as we are and then begins to make something beautiful.

5:9, 10 If God loved us when we were helpless, ungodly enemies, how much more will He love us now that we are His children? By His blood ... through the death of His Son we have been justified, that is “declared righteous,” and reconciled, meaning our state of alienation from God has been changed.

Believers are no longer enemies of God; they are at peace with God (v. 1). we shall be saved: Many take these verses to refer to final salvation from the presence of sin. But in this context, Paul goes on to discuss being saved from the power of sin (ch. 6). Thus, *wrath* here is God's present wrath (1:18), and *His life* is the life of Christ in believers (v. 18). The point is that since God's love and the death of Christ have brought us justification, then as a result of that love, we can also expect salvation from God's wrath. To experience this truth, the believer must fully cooperate with the process that is explained in 6:1–14 (John 8:32). The believer must die to sin and present himself or herself to God as an "instrument of righteousness" (6:14).⁵

Quotations

While We Were Still Enemies

I saw a woman coming out of Loblaws this week with a t-shirt that said "I'LL LOVE YOU WHEN YOU ARE MORE LIKE ME"

That's often how we do it – once people get redeemed, then we will love them, it is not that (like God) we love them first and then call them into redemption.

Mike Wilkins, Sermoncentral.com

Forgiveness

Mingle the tears of the sinner with the cross of the Savior and the result is a joyful escort out of the canyon of guilt.

Max Lucado, A Gentle Thunder

Sin without Redemption

Those of us who were brought up as Christians and have lost our faith have retained the sense of sin without the saving belief of redemption, This poisons our thoughts and paralyzes our actions.

Chris Connolly

Intentional Love

Jesus was born crucified. Whenever he became conscious of who he was, he also became conscious of what he had to do. The cross-shaped shadow could always be seen. And the screams of hell's imprisoned could always be heard.

This explains the glint of determination on his face as he turned to go to Jerusalem for the last time. He was on his death march (Luke 9:51).

This explains the resoluteness in the words, "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:17–18 niv)....

So call it what you wish: An act of grace. A plan of redemption. A martyr's sacrifice. But whatever you call it, don't call it an accident. It was anything but that.

Max Lucado, God Came Near

Purchased by His Love

At the cross, God wrapped His heart in flesh and blood and let it be nailed to the cross for our redemption.

E. Stanley Jones

⁵Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Ro 5:1-10

Illustrations

Joy of Redemption

When missionaries in the northern part of Alaska, where the Eskimos are, were trying to get the Bible translated, they had some difficulty. When you go to translate the Bible in any culture, there's a difficulty in translating some words because cultures and languages don't always have the same words. There was no word in the Eskimo language for joy. And as they were trying to translate joy, biblically, they drew from experience. And as they watched, they saw that the happiest, the most joyful moments in those Eskimo villages were in the evening when they fed their sled dogs. They'd go out, and the dogs would yelp and wag their tails and get all excited. And so, out of that experience, they pulled the word for joy: "wagging their tails." When you translate the passage where it says, "The disciples, after the resurrection, saw Jesus and they were full of joy," for the Eskimos, it would read, "When the disciples saw Jesus, they wagged their tails."

John Maxwell, Sermoncentral.com

Love Re-Makes Us

Jack Kelley, a reporter from USA Today tells the story of a trip to East Africa in which he was taught a very valuable lesson. He was in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, to cover a terrible famine. It was so bad that as he walked toward the village he saw many people already lying on the ground dead. In his retelling of the story he recalls how the smell of death is something that gets into your hair, onto your skin, onto your clothes, and can't be washed off.

As he made his way down the road he came across a little boy. He could tell that the boy had worms and was malnourished; his stomach was protruding. His hair had turned a reddish color and his skin had wrinkled as if he were 100 years old, both signs of malnourishment.

The photographer who was traveling with the reporter had a grapefruit which he gave to the boy. But the boy was so weak that he couldn't hold the whole grapefruit for himself. And so they cut the grapefruit in half and gave it to him. He took the grapefruit, looked up at the two men as if to say "thank you" and began to walk back towards his village. What the little boy didn't realize was that the photographer and reporter were following at a distance.

As he entered the village, there was another little boy who looked to be dead. His eyes were completely glazed over. As it turned out, this was his younger brother.

The older brother knelt down next to his younger brother, bit off a piece of the grapefruit and chewed it. Then he opened up his younger brother's mouth, put the grapefruit in, and worked his brother's jaw up and down. The reporter and photographer later learned that the older brother had been doing that for the younger brother for two weeks.

A couple days later the older brother died of malnutrition, and the younger brother lived. I wonder if this is what Jesus meant when he said, "There is no greater love than to lay down our life for somebody else." Love changes everything. It changes our hearts and causes us to do things for others that we would never have done before.

Keith Manry, Sermoncentral.com

Forgiven and Forgiving

Barbara Brown Taylor tells the story of her nephew Will's first birthday party. The family was gathered around for the usual traditions of birthdays, the cake. And the presents. Will let them know how pleased he was by doing his new dance—a slow twirling movement that he had invented several days before with lots of fancy arm work.

The whole family was circled around Will, admiring his dance when little cousin Jason couldn't stand it any more. He charged through the circle, put both hands on Will's chest, and shoved. Will fell hard, hitting his rear end first, and then his head, with a crack. He looked utterly surprised, and then let out a howl of pain. His mother hugged him, and helped him to his feet, and he calmed down. The first thing Will did was to totter over to Jason. He knew Jason was at the bottom of this thing, only since no one had ever done something like this to him before, he didn't know what the thing was. So he did what he had always done. He put his arms around Jason and lay his head against the mean little boy's chest.

Leonard J. Vander Zee, quoted in Sermoncentral.com

On the Lighter Side 😊

Self Help

It kind of reminds me of when my three year child decides that he wants to “do it himself.” He’ll lock me out of the room with his clothes on the floor and then begin trying to clothe himself. Inevitably he ends up coming out 90% naked with a pants leg in his arm and a shirt sleeve around his leg with his private parts being displayed for the whole world to see. It’s funny when it happens. But it isn’t funny when we stand before God on Judgment Day with our own clothing on. He doesn’t laugh when we say, “I’ll do it myself.” He regards it as arrogance and foolishness.

Joel Pankow, Sermoncentral.com

What Comes Before Forgiveness?

A Sunday School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, “Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?” There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. “Sin,” he said.

David Moore, Sermoncentral.com

It’s About the Prunes

A little girl refused to eat her prunes. Her mother sent her to bed with an admonition – “God doesn’t like little girls who won’t eat their prunes.” That night a terrible thunderstorm awoke the mother. Going into the daughter’s bedroom, she found the little girl standing at the window, looking skyward and saying, “My, my – such a fuss to make over a few prunes.”

Unknown

Video Resources

I’ll Take It [During Offerings, or within Message, or to begin a Call to Faith/Altar Call]

A powerful video that demonstrates how we are made new. This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$20 and runs 1:30. This video can serve as an offertory, or as an insert within the message, even as a prelude to a call to faith.

How Often [Introduction to a Message]

A video in which a woman asks how often she must forgive. She lists all those in her life who have in some way hurt her. The conclusion is powerful. “Lord, help me forgive in the way You’ve forgiven me.” This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$12.99 and runs 2:24. This video would work well as an introduction to a message on how those are forgiven, forgive.

NuParable

Have one of those old Sunday School/meeting room tables placed in the middle of the chancel. The uglier and more beat up the better. After the message, place the elements of the Lord’s Supper on the table, and use it as an altar. It is made new. It still looks the same, but it serves a holy purpose – just like those of us who have been made new.

Maxwell Quinn