

Our Fall Gospel Meeting, September 13-18
Preaching by Donnie Rader of Shelbyville, Tennessee

Sunday AM: *The Fear of God* (class)

What is Happening to Your Ox? (assembly)

Sunday PM: *Wisdom and Judgment*

Monday: *Is One Faith as Good as Another?*

Tuesday: *Bible Authority*

Wednesday: *Stolen Gold and Second Rate Bronze*

Thursday: *The Seduction of Joseph*

Friday: *Who is to Blame? (Romans 10)*

Editor's Note: Our space in *Arkansas Weekly* will be an announcement of this work. Help others to find it, praying that it will assist them in finding God and all He offers.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, Joyce Ratliff, Ed Koettel, others with ongoing trials, new Christians among us, and Ben Calderon with whom we fellowship (share) in Conway.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley
September 13, 2015
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The Precious Christ

Donnie V. Rader

The Christ is called “precious” three times in 1 Peter 2:4-8.

The word translated “precious” in these verses is used five times in the New Testament. It means, “dear, more honorable,...in reputation” (Strong’s). Vine’s says it means, “held in honor.” Thus, Christ is said to be dear, held in the highest honor.

Let’s look closer at 1 Peter 2:4-8 to find the answer to the following questions.

1) **To Whom Is He Precious?** Christ is precious *to God* (v. 4). He is given a place of prominence and preeminence. He is considered valuable to one whose values count. While man rejects the Christ, God considered him precious.

He is also precious *to those who believe and obey* (v. 7). This verse shows that one who believes is one who obeys. Notice the contrast between “believe” and “disobedient.” This is a matter of top priority! Christ is the most valued to one who believes. This explains why some don’t obey or remain faithful. They don’t hold Christ as precious, esteemed and valuable! When one’s attendance is not what it should be and their interest is lagging behind, the problem is the value he places upon Christ.

2) **Why Is He Considered Precious?** He is *living* (v. 4). He has real life as opposed to the lifeless stones in the context. He gives life to those who hear (John 5:25).

He was *chosen by God* (v. 4). God chose him to be the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). God chose him to be the savior of the world (Matt. 1:21). God chose him to be the judge of the world (John 5:22).

Our *sacrifices are acceptable through him* (v. 5). He is our High Priest through whom our sacrifices are offered (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14). He is our mediator (1Tim. 2:5).

He is the *chief cornerstone* (vv. 6-7). The chief cornerstone is the most important stone in a building's foundation. From it all other stones are measured and laid. It unites two walls (Jews and Gentiles) together (Eph. 2:18-22).

It is an *honor to be in the same wall with Him* (v. 5). What an honor to be a stone laid in the same wall with the Christ, the chief cornerstone.

He *shed his blood for us* (1:18-19). Without the shedding of his blood, we could not be saved (Heb. 9:22).

3) What Do We Do With The Precious Christ? We are to *continually come* (v. 4). This does not refer one's initial coming to Christ in obedience, but to a continually coming to the Lord. Marshall translates this "approaching." Williams translates it "keep on coming to him."

Thayer says it means, "To attached one's self to Christ, to come to a participation in the benefits procured by him."

This verse is "Indicating a close...and an habitual (present participle) approach and an intimate association" (Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament).

To continually come to Christ is the idea of dedication and devotion. If we consider the Christ as precious, we will have no problem with diligent service.

If we do not hold Christ as precious, he will become a stumbling stone over which we will fall (vv. 7-8).

Let's Not Forget The Redemptive System

Donnie V. Rader

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a redemptive system. By that we mean that it is a system whereby man is redeemed from his sins. In contrast, some of the preaching we hear today, even among us, has robbed the gospel of its redemptive power.

1) The Need For Redemption. Man stands in need of being redeemed because of his sin. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 5:19). Sin (which is a violation of God's law) has consequences like the violation of any other law.

Sin causes one to die spiritually. That means man is spiritually separated from his God. "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death" (James 1:15). "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). "For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23).

Since our sin separates us from God, we stand in need of being redeemed.

2) We Are Redeemed By The Blood of Christ. Even a casual reading of the Old Testament will reveal that God has always demanded a blood sacrifice to atone for sin.

The blood of animals could not remove sin (Heb. 10:4). However, the blood of the sinless Son of God would be the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 8 and 10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Why did Christ have to die? Since man sinned (which is a violation of the law), justice demands that a payment be made for the sin. Since man cannot pay the debt himself, and the blood of animals could not remove sin, then only the perfect sacrifice of Christ would atone for sin.

Jesus shed his blood for the remission of our sins.

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22)." He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26).

That was the message that was preached as the apostles went forth preaching the word. They told of the Christ and how man could be saved through him (cf. Acts 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13-ff).

3) Preaching That Guts The Gospel Of Redemption. Any preaching that doesn't appeal to the gospel message as the message that redeems man from his sin, has gutted the gospel of its real power.

Much of the preaching in the denominational world today is a social message. Some of it sounds more political and patriotic than Biblical. Even among us (both the "liberals" and yes, even the "conservatives") there is preaching being done that addresses more social needs than spiritual.

I recognize that the Bible talks about aging and depression and human relationships. However, when our appeal in reaching out to the world is to help them with the difficulty of growing old or in having brighter days, then we have missed the redemptive system of the gospel.

May we get back to the basics of preaching the old Jerusalem gospel which is a redemptive message.