

STUDY GUIDE:

Are We there Yet? | Redemption — The Way Things Can Be

Last week we looked into all the things that don't work to eradicate our sin issue — family, commandments (in fact, law exposes our sin issue all the more), government and religion. All those things don't work, but we have God who does the work for us. The cross is the great intersection between God and humanity, and it is where God's plan of redemption comes to us in the flesh — Jesus, Immanuel (God with us), the Redeemer. In Christ we get to step into the way life *can be*, right here and now, by grace — because God's love pursues you and does all the work to reconnect with you.

INTRODUCTION

We would like you to just ditch this study and tell stories this week. Seriously.

This last weekend led us beyond religion (our way to God), to redemption (God making the way for us). We'd love for you to just share your stories of redemption, your stories of surrendering to Jesus. Recall that moment of surrender. That would be the best use of your time.

However, if your group isn't there, and if you didn't get the sermon, then read along through this study and I still hope it leads you to sharing your stories... or possibly beginning your story of redemption for the very first time.

Here's a good prompt to lead you into story/testimony time:

Do you have a moment(s) in your life that you can identify in which you believed in Jesus with an "I'm all in, here's my life" conversation with God? What did that look like? What were the circumstances that led to that moment and what were the feelings? What was the change?

CHAT

Without the realization that our best efforts don't work to be fully good (sin free), can we really grasp that we need to be redeemed or be saved?
How would you have a conversation with a friend who didn't grasp that sin is even an issue?
So, what then does this Savior offer?

READ & DISCUSS

Here is a journey through verses to lead you to redemption, the way life *can be* in Christ.

1. God is Creator (Rom 1:20)

We see this all over the world, even in the most remote corners of the earth, but we have a lot of diverse religions that start from this origin. God gives special revelation in Scripture to lead us to Him and to disclose his plans.

Some jump straight to sin here, but let's recount what God said of humanity from the beginning. We were created in God's own image, and his response to our being was love. Love and value from the start, this is what makes redemption even logical, for we don't redeem something without intrinsic value. You are more than sin. And, even with sin, we read in places like Psalm 139, Matthew 6, and even John 3:16, that LOVE is on the pursuit even with our imperfections and rebellions. Now let's go on.

2. All Sin (Rom 3:10, 23, Rom 5:12)

3. Effect of Sin (Rom 6:23)

God is consistent, he gave us that same message about death and sin in the garden (Genesis 3) See James 1:13-15 for scriptures explanation of the progress of sin to death.

4. God's Plan to Save (Rom 5:8)

Also, Ephesians 2:4-5, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." God's love pursues you, because you have original value!

6. God's Promise of Eternal Life (Rom 6:23)

Also read John 10:10 here! Why? By 'eternal life' we often think 'post-mortem life in heaven'. Heaven is very good. However, that perspective doesn't do much for purpose of you breathing right... now. The good news is *far better* than that. Jesus speaks of full life from here to eternity... today, right now, and onwards. He says the Kingdom is here.

7. Our Response (Rom 10:9-10, 13)

Even faith is a gift from God. Jesus explains in John 6:44 that God draws people to Jesus. Ephesians 2:8-9 says we're saved by grace through faith, and that's a gift from God. The miracle of your faith in Jesus is resultant of God pursuing you, and He was doing that far before you had your believing moment. Wrap your mind around that. That's how loved you are. What does it mean for us if we can't identify or recall surrendering to Jesus as our redeemer and savior? Is there an obstacle of faith that you can identify and reflect on?

8. The Sweet Result (Rom 8:1 and 5:1)

This is peace, shalom, completeness, because God pursued and did the work for us. Again, by grace we have been saved through faith, and that is a gift from God.

NO STOPPING AT HALF THE GOSPEL

A wise man (Dallas Willard) once said that we need to preach the gospel to ourselves everyday, re-hear it, re-believe it, re-pray it, renew and restart. Our prayer is that you seize this day.

Redeem this moment in your life and respond to God's redemption in Christ for your life.

Surrender for the first time, or Re-commit, re-connect, re-start with Jesus.

Jesus' work on the cross is the doorway into a movement, a new life of purpose and activity empowered by the Holy Spirit. This redemption is the *beginning* of what you were designed for, not the *end*. Often, just as we saw how the gospel message can start off in the wrong place, it can all too often end short when we have it communicated to us. There is life on the other side of death, there is purpose on the other side of salvation... resurrection means something for us, and the Holy Spirit *moves* you.

Next week we see how Jesus' LIFE modeled the way it can be as we live in the Holy Spirit. His meaning was so much more than dying. Then we move to the life of restoration that God draws us into!

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

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