

# ROOTS

## HE SETS US FREE

Pastor Derwin L. Gray – September 18, 2016

1. Read Ephesians 1:7-8a. Open in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to implant and root this Gospel-reality deep in our souls.
2. What did you think of the illustration of Pastor Derwin preaching from the prison cell? What insights did you gain?
3. The Messiah (Jesus) has set us free! Discuss what we are free “from” and what we are free “to.” (hint: the Bible does not say we’re set free just to fulfill our own dreams.)
4. Read this commentary on Ephesians 1:7-8 and discuss the practical implications for your life.
  - “Redemption” This is literally “to be delivered from” (cf. Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:14). It is a synonym of an OT term (gaal) meaning “to buy back” sometimes with the agency of a near kin (go’el). This term was used in the OT to refer to buying back slaves and military prisoners. Paul uses this term four times in Ephesians and Colossians (cf. 1:7, 14 and 4:30; Col. 1:14). It reflects a personal agency by which God brings salvation. It does not focus on to whom or the amount of the payment. Mark 10:45 states clearly that Jesus came to pay the ransom for fallen mankind (cf. 1 Pet. 1:19). Humans were slaves to sin (cf. Isa. 53:6; several OT quotes in Rom. 3:9–18; 1 Pet. 2:24–25).<sup>1</sup>
  - “through His blood” Blood is a metaphor for death (cf. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11, 14). This refers to Jesus’ vicarious, substitutionary, sacrificial death. He died in our place for our sin (cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:22).<sup>1</sup>
  - “the forgiveness” This is literally “sending away.” On the Day of Atonement there were two scapegoats involved in the yearly ritual of Lev. 16: (1) one was sent away, symbolically carrying away Israel’s sins (cf. Ps. 103:12; Isa. 1:18; 38:17; 44:22; Jer. 31:34; and Micah 7:14); (2) the other was sacrificed, symbolizing the fact that sin costs a life. Jesus took fallen mankind’s sin away by dying in their place (cf. Col. 1:14) thus combining the two meanings.<sup>1</sup>
  - “trespasses” This is the Greek term for sin, (paraptōma), literally “to fall to one side.” It is related to the OT words for sin which meant a deviation from a standard. The term “reed” was a construction term used metaphorically of God’s character. God is the only standard by which all humans are crooked and perverted (cf. Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:9–23; 11:32; Gal. 3:22).<sup>1</sup>
  - “according to the riches of His grace” Our forgiveness in Christ cannot be earned (cf. Eph. 2:8–9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5). The term “riches” is used often in Paul’s prison letters: “riches of His grace,” 1:7; 2:7; “riches of His glory,” 1:18; 3:16; “rich in mercy,” 2:4; “riches in Christ,” 3:8; and in Gal. 3:27; 2:2; Phil 4:19. In Christ, redeemed mankind has been granted the riches of God’s character!<sup>1</sup>
  - Ephesians 1:8 “lavished” Paul uses this term (perisseuō) over and over again (cf. Rom. 5:15; 15:13; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 1:5; 8:2, 7; 9:8; Eph. 1:8; Phil. 1:9; 4:12, 18; Col. 2:7; 1 Tim. 4:1). It expresses Paul’s sense of the full measure and beyond of God’s grace and provisions in Christ. God’s love in Christ is like an overflowing fountain or an artesian well!<sup>1</sup>
5. Read Galatians 5:16;22-25.
  - a. Pastor Derwin said, “Behold Jesus, walk in the Spirit, and God will overcome your sin. By thinking about not sinning you take the focus off of Jesus and His redemption and put it on yourself. We must think about (worship) the One who overcomes our sin with His redeeming blood and indwelling life. Discuss how this has been true in your life.
  - b. During the sermon, Pastor Derwin talked about the importance of community in this process of walking by faith. A friend came on stage and helped him out of his prison suit. Referencing Galatians 3:26, discuss this analogy and how it can apply to your own life.
6. Close in prayer.

<sup>1</sup> Utley, R. J. (1997). *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, then later, Philipppians)* (Vol. Volume 8, p. 76). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.