



Redemption

Perhaps you are familiar with statements like these from the world of sports: “Michael Irvin really redeemed himself with that catch!” “The Mavericks have earned a little redemption with their performance on the court tonight.” We understand the play-by-play man to be telling us that the athletes have somehow managed to “pay” for past flubs in their performances.

Or perhaps you have heard people talking about someone for whom they had little respect, and one person quipped, “He has few redeeming qualities.” You understand him to mean that there are hardly any good things about that person to make up for, or “pay” for, his faults.

It is interesting to note that the Bible rarely uses the words “redeem” or “redemption” like that. Except in the case of a few Old Testament civil laws in which a person could pay a price to get himself out of slavery, or pay a fine instead of facing a stiffer penalty for breaking the law, “redemption,” the payment to rescue oneself, is always paid by someone else.

And only one person can make the payment demanded to set things right when God is the one who has been offended by our failures. Psalm 49 makes it clear, “No man can redeem the life of another or give God a ransom for him—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—that he should live on forever and not see decay” (vss. 7-9).

Since most of us have been Christians most of our lives, since we have lived most of our lives “on the other side of redemption,” so to speak, we may not always be impressed with the gravity of our situation.

But our unmanageable debt of sin, our spiritual bankruptcy, have always been foremost on our Lord’s mind—not because he is some sort of greedy spiritual banker waiting to foreclose, but because he determined to pay off our debt himself.

We can better appreciate the seriousness of our sins and the passion with which God loves us when we consider again the price he was willing to pay for our redemption. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as gold or silver that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

How fitting, then, that we call Jesus our “Redeemer,” especially when Peter tells us here that he not only made the payment that bailed us out of sin’s prison. He became the payment. No higher price could possibly have been paid for us.

In Christ, Pastor Vieths