



## PREPARATION

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Spend the week studying Colossians 1:13-14. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

**DETERMINE** | which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group

**PRAY** | for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

**LANDING POINT** | Jesus paid the price for our freedom and redeems us out of slavery.

### ◦ Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion

1. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. **No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. **No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. **Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

## INTRODUCTION

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As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Previously, your group discussed two theological aspects of the cross—propitiation and justification. At the cross, Jesus turned away God's wrath by offering Himself as an atoning sacrifice for sin (propitiation). The cross shows how God dealt with the problem of sin for us. The cross also shows how Jesus' sacrificial death makes sinners right before God (justification). The cross displays God's justice and mercy at the same time. God is just, because He didn't let sin go unpunished. God is also merciful, because Jesus took our punishment and exchanges our disobedience for his perfect obedience to God. This makes us righteous (or without sin) before a holy God.

This week you will discuss a third theological aspect of the cross—redemption. The Bible says we are slaves to sin. This is the reality of everyone that doesn't have a relationship with Jesus. If you are a slave to sin, sin is your master; you obey its desires and allow them to rule your thoughts and actions. Sinners cannot free themselves from their master's enslaving grip.

The only way we can be released from slavery is if someone purchases our freedom for us. At the cross, Jesus purchased our freedom and redeems us out of slavery to sin.

How is the term 'redemption' used in popular culture today?

What characterizes someone who is a slave versus someone who is free?



## LEARN

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Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

### ◦ Redemption defined

Redemption refers to the release (or deliverance) of someone by a ransom payment. Jesus redeemed us out of slavery at the cross by paying the ransom price sin required. In Exodus, Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Jews in Jesus' day remembered this story and longed for a savior to come and free them from Roman oppression. But Jesus came to secure a greater freedom—freedom from the power and dominion of sin.

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing more than three million slaves in the American South at the height of a civil war that had divided the country in two. Lincoln would be memorialized as the “Great Emancipator,” who changed the course of history.

Jesus also gave an Emancipation Proclamation, but His wasn't signed with pen and paper. His proclamation was the cross. There, Jesus declared freedom from those held captive in their sin. The cross gives us hope that true freedom is possible in Jesus.

**Why do you think we are captivated by stories like the Exodus, Braveheart or The Shawshank Redemption where freedom is central to the plot line?**

**Take 5 minutes to consider areas where there isn't freedom in your life. This may be a difficult relationship, an addiction or anxiety over financial issues. Next, write how you think Jesus would respond to each of the areas. What would He say to you?**

### ◦ The end of fear

The Bible tells us, “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” In Jesus, sin and death no longer hold a claim on you, because your debt has been paid in full.

The cross means you no longer have to be a slave to fear. Fear and love cannot co-exist; they are incompatible. The Apostle John put it this way: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”

**Give an example of love that you have given or received without fear.**

**What's one thing you can do this week to remind you that Jesus sets you free from fear?**

## LIVE

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Select 2-3 question from this section to answer.



## ↻ LIVE [Cont.'d]

### ◦ Freed from the dominion of darkness

There are two main kingdoms in this world—the dominion of darkness (Satan and all evil powers) and the Kingdom of God.<sup>[1]</sup> The cross was Jesus' mission to rescue you out of darkness and bring you into the light of God's Kingdom, where there is forgiveness and redemption.

You are a citizen of God's Kingdom, which means you have citizen's rights. King Jesus frees you from the domain of darkness and its penalty (no longer condemned), power (no longer a slave to sin) and presence (sin will one day be no more).

**What differences can you identify between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God?**

**Make a statement you can use to claim your citizen's rights as a citizen of God's Kingdom whenever the enemy tempts you to fear and doubt God. Share your statement with the group.**

### ◦ Free to live in the kingdom of light

So far, we have explored the negative aspect of redemption. That is, we have explored what Jesus' redemption frees us from (i.e., sin, slavery and death). But the cross also has a positive aspect; that is, it frees us to something. In Jesus, we have freedom to live a full, abundant life now and hereafter in eternity. Jesus promised this life, but we must receive His promise.

**Why is it important to also focus on the positive aspect of the cross?**

**What would it look like for you to live a "full, abundant life" now? What would need to change to make this possible?**

## ↻ LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

### ◦ A redemptive community

God is in the business of redemption. It's His desire and will to bring many back into relationship with Him through His Son. Through the cross Jesus redeems individuals, but He also redeems communities. As believers, we are called to live in redemptive communities, where Jesus is our Lord and example. When people see a redemptive community up close, they should see believers making King Jesus glorious by redeeming their words, thoughts, situations and relationships for God's kingdom. When God's people live in the fullness of their life with Jesus, it makes the Gospel attractive to others.

1. The Kingdom of God is also referred to in the Bible as the Kingdom of Light (Col. 1:14) or Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 3:2).



## LEAD [Cont.'d]

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What areas in your relationships, families or marriage would you like to see God redeem? What can you do to seek redemption in those relationships?

Who in your life needs to hear the message of God's redemption through Jesus most? When and how will you share this message?

## PRAY

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Praise God for His redemptive work at the cross. Thank Him for redeeming you out of a dark and hopeless eternity without Him and bringing you into the light and life of His Kingdom. Thank God for Jesus, whose blood was spilt to pay the ransom for sin. Ask God for ways and wisdom to live out His redemption in relationships and community.

## FOLLOW UP

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Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

Memorize Colossians 1:13-14 and reflect on what being brought into the kingdom of the Son means. How does it change the way you look at day-to-day life?

Did you seek to redeem any situations or relationships this week? If so, what did you learn from your experience?

## COMMENTARY

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### ◦ Going deeper with redemption.

The concept of redemption in the Bible is consistent in that God is the one who brings redemption. However, redemption in the Old Testament was seen primarily as physical deliverance from an enemy. However, in the New Testament, the spiritual aspect of redemption is revealed in Jesus. John E. Alsup comments that, in the New Testament: "Emphasis is placed on the human need for deliverance and freedom (Rom. 5:9; 6:6; 7:6; 8:2; cf. 1 Cor. 2:6; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 2:14-15). Presupposed is the idea that alienation and bondage (e.g., to sin, death, or the devil) are endemic to the human condition and have far-reaching consequences. Thus, the Creator becomes the Redeemer, and redemption



## COMMENTARY [Cont.'d]

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itself is represented as being accomplished through the sacrificial death of Jesus (Rom. 3:23–25a; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; Rev. 5:9; 14:4) and as being verified by his resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3–7; 1 Pet. 1:18–21). In the Gospels, Jesus is presented as understanding the significance of his impending death in these terms (Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28; cf. Mark 8:31).” [2]

### ◦ Wages of sin (Romans 6:23).

Romans 6:23 makes it clear that what we have earned and deserve from God for our sin (wages) is death. If you obey sin, you will receive its just reward. However, the “gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus” stands in contrast with the wages of sin. A wage is something someone earns, but a gift is something someone doesn’t earn.

Each theological aspect of the cross is a gift from God. God freely gives us propitiation, justification, redemption and reconciliation through His Son. We did nothing to earn these blessings; in fact, we did everything to earn the opposite, which is sin and death. Salvation has a lot more to do with what God has freely done for us (grace) than what we have done for Him (works).

### ◦ The truth will set you free (John 8:12-38).

In John’s Gospel, Jesus gives seven “I Am” statements, which encapsulate the Gospel story. One of those statements comes in 8:12 when Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” He follows up this statement with another, equally powerful one: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (8:31-32).

What is Jesus telling us in John’s Gospel? That there’s something liberating about His truth. Jesus taught that everyone who sins is a slave to sin, but He also taught that, “if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (8:36). Jesus’ truth is found in a relationship with Jesus: “It is the revelatory truth of knowing Jesus for who he is. It is the truth that liberates people from the bondage of sin and sets them free to become the kind of people their Creator intended them to be.” [3]

2. John E. Alsup and Dennis R. Bratcher, “Redemption,” ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 870.

3. Robert H. Mounce, “John,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 479.