

# Redeemed! How I Love To Proclaim It!

Joe Slater

**“in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins”** (Colossians 1:14)

Ever since Eden, sinful humans have needed redemption. To redeem something is to buy it back; in many cases, it is the equivalent of a ransom. We enslave ourselves to sin; once we have done so, how can we ever be free again? We have nothing with which to redeem ourselves. All the good works we could pile up in a thousand lifetimes couldn't pay the first penny of interest on our sin debt. The price is too high! *“The wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23).

Fortunately for us, our loving God doesn't want us to suffer the penalty for our sin. While we cannot redeem ourselves, He paid the price Himself, giving His precious Son to die on our behalf and in our place. The blood Jesus shed on the cross purchased our redemption. He freed us from the slavery of sin!

Redemption from sin includes forgiveness, also known as remission. To forgive means to “send away.” First, our sins are sent away – we no longer have to bear them. Under the Mosaic Law, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest put his hands on a goat's head, confessed Israel's sins, and sent the goat away. We commonly call it the “scapegoat” (one who takes the blame for another's wrongdoing). Jesus literally did for us what the scapegoat symbolically did for Israel.

But second, we ourselves are “sent away,” not in the sense of being banished, but being released. God no longer holds our sins against us (see Hebrews 8:12, 10:17). We are forgiven!

Only “in Christ” is redemption found. Are you “in Christ”? (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27)

# With A Name Like Epaphroditus

What is in a name? (Thanks to William Shakespeare for his contribution to this article!) Today we might choose names for our children that have a good ring to them, or carry on a family tradition. In ancient times, many names were common, but more often than today they bore a significant meaning.

In Philippians 2:25-30 & 4:18 we meet Epaphroditus. What were his parents thinking when they chose that moniker? His name was common among Greeks and Romans, but so was devotion to false gods! Do you detect the name of a false god in the name Epaphroditus? You have heard of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. His parents might have been praising her for giving him to them, or they might have been dedicating this newborn to Aphrodite. It would have been hard to hear that name back then without thinking of her.

Somewhere along the way, Epaphroditus made his own choice to dedicate his life to the living God. Like Lydia, the jailer, their households, and others in Philippi, he heard the truth about the Lord Jesus, believed in Him, and was baptized (Acts 16:11-15, 25-34).

How devoted to Christ was Epaphroditus? Paul wrote this about him to fellow-Christians at Philippi: *“I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also . . . So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life”* (Philippians 2:25-30).

Might there be a message for you in the name Epaphroditus? Family heritage does not have to hold you back. Wrong religion need not trap you. You are not a captive of your culture. You decide! Christ, who died for you and arose from the dead, is worth your life. Nothing else is. That's what Epaphroditus thought. What about you?

Danny Boggs (Neosho, MO) via Old Paths (adapted)

# TRUE GLORY

“. . . even Solomon in all his glory was not as arrayed like one of these" (Matthew 6:9).

What do the lilies of the field have over the glory of Solomon? Certainly it isn't the distinction between the beauty of nature and the product of human ingenuity, although that's worth considering. The flower has glory naturally without any effort of its own. It's glory is simply being what God meant it to be.

A Solomon may use his potential and gifts from God to promote his own pride and ambition. One scholar wrote concerning man: " . . . the more he becomes what he desires to be the less he resembles what God meant him to be." Solomon had glory for sure, but his glory came short of the glory revealed in a flower!

Solomon's glory, unlike the flower, was imperfect because, like the rest of us, he had a competing will that brought him lower than even the beasts of the field. But, unlike the flower, we have the capacity to choose to become what God wants us to be.

We are challenged every day to be what God wants us to be. God wants us to be what He created us to be, and that's obedient children who trust in His guidance. Instead, we are often full of pride, and ambition, and seek our own glory rather than God's.

As God's children, we need to take in the glory of the flowers of the field, and realize that we must submit our will to His, and become more like Jesus. We are given the resources for this aspiration.

*“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)