

Christian Education Sunday
September 16, 2012
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Pastor Chip Wilke

1 Peter 1:17-19

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold 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.

A father and son worked for months to build a toy sailboat. Every night the boy and his dad would disappear into the garage for hours. It was a labor of love - spending time together and building the boat the boy always wanted. When it was done it was a thing of beauty, bright red with gleaming white sails. All finished it was time to see the boat in action so they traveled to a large lake nearby. Before launching the boat the father tied a string to its stern to keep it from sailing away from them. The boat sailed like a champion, even better than they imagined. They watched it go and go until suddenly a motorboat crossed by and cut the string sending the sailboat out of sight. They attempted to find it but it was lost and the boy began to cry – even the father's eyes watered with some tears.

A few weeks later as the boy was walking home from school he passed his favorite toy store. He looked and couldn't believe his eyes, for there in the window was his sailboat. He ran inside the store to claim the boat, telling the store owner what happened to it. The store owner found it on a fishing trip and told the boy: *"You may be its maker but as the finder I am the legal owner. You may have it back—for fifty dollars."* The boy was stunned at how much it would cost him to regain his boat for that's a lot of money for a young boy. Yet, this boat was so precious to him the boy quickly went about earning the money to buy it. Collecting cans, mowing lawns, whatever it took, until weeks later the boy joyfully walked into the toy store and handed the owner fifty dollars in exchange for the sailboat he and his father had made. The boy never felt as happy as when he left the store holding the boat up to the sunlight. Its colors still gleamed as though newly painted. *"I made you, but I lost you,"* he said. *"Now I've bought you back. That makes you twice mine, and twice mine is mine forever!"*

This is what the Lord says – He ***"who created you...who formed you...Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine"*** (Isaiah 43). The Lord could say of each and every one of us: *"You are twice mine."* For the God who made us has also bought us back! But it was not with gold or silver. Yes, there is a Redeemer. We will consider this truth today and throughout this year of Sunday school and Bible study. We are: **Bought Back by the Blood of Jesus.**

In several minutes our Sunday school teachers will come up front and make a promise about being faithful in the teaching of our children this year. But what will they teach our children? What will our children hear in their classrooms? The same questions can be asked about those who will come to our adult Bible studies. I pray our children learn many things – about God's power – about God's promises. Our adults as we strive to teach the whole will of God will dig into more doctrines and Biblical truths. But there

will always be two main teachings as God's word is faithfully taught here at Amazing Grace.

We will teach the law. Sin will be called sin. When we lie, when we get angry and fight with our friends or family, when we are selfish, when our thoughts are impure, when we take things that do not belong to us, when we gossip, when we disobey our parents, when we dishonor our government leaders, when we don't hear the word of God and obey it, we'll point out that these are our sins. We will teach what sin does – it separates us from God. Sin is the reason for every problem on earth. Sin enslaves us and makes us captive to the devil. Sin earns us death – eternal death. Sin is the reason every one of us were, as Martin Luther called us, lost and condemned creatures. And the price to make things right again with God is more than any of us could ever pay. The Psalmist writes: ***“No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough” (Psalm 49).*** We will not hide these truths in our classrooms this year because faithfulness to God's Word means teaching the law. It means proclaiming the truth even when it is bad news.

But this is where it gets good and why every one of us will want to keep being students of God's Word. There is a Redeemer. Peter writes: ***“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold 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.”*** We have been bought back – from sin – from the devil – from death and hell. The God who made us did not want us to stay lost forever so He paid the price to get us back. The price was costly. Not all the gold and silver in the world would have been enough. It took blood – precious blood – innocent blood – the perfect blood of the Lamb of God. God's sinless Son shed His blood on the cross to pay for all the lies, fights, gossip, selfishness, disobedience, and every other sin we have done or will commit. Christ died so that we can live. Christ lives again so we will never die. We have been bought back by the blood of Jesus. That is why Christ's blood is so precious – it saved us. This is the good news – the gospel which dominates every class we teach here at Amazing Grace. There is a Redeemer.

So this is what you can expect your children to hear and the good news you will keep hearing from God's Word. We have sinned and deserve punishment and death. Yet, there is a Redeemer so we are free and will live. The devil once had us where he wanted. No longer – for there is a Redeemer! You and I were lost and condemned, but there is a Redeemer. He purchased and won us not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death. We will teach the beautiful truth that the Lord has made us His own once again – through baptism – through the power of His Word. He says: *“You are twice mine and twice mine is mine forever.”* There is a Redeemer.

The story is told of a gentleman who had visited a slave market. He was deeply touched by the mental agony of a slave-girl, who had been thoroughly trained to expect to fall into the hands of a rough master. The gentleman inquired of her price and paid it to the slave-trader. Having paid the price he then placed the bill of sale into her hands. He told her *“You are free...you can now go home.”* The slave-girl could not realize the change at first, but, running after her redeemer cried, *“He has redeemed me! He has redeemed me! Will you let me be your servant?”* How much more should we serve Him who has redeemed us from sin, death, and hell? How much more should we as Peter

writes live our lives as strangers here in reverent fear, that is in awe and respect to our Lord and His Word? There is a Redeemer. We have been bought back by the blood of Jesus that we might be God's own and live in His kingdom. This is a message that is definitely worth teaching and hearing. Amen.