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SPEAKER

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Redemption

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Well, it is good to see all of you, even if it's through a screen. For those of you who are new with us, we are thrilled that you have joined us, but I want you to know Providence family that if we are gathered or scattered, we have reason to celebrate today because Jesus died on a cross for our sin, he was buried and three days later he rose from the dead. And so we have joy in our hearts, we have peace in our hearts, and it's because of Christ. If you are new with us, we're thrilled that you have joined us and I hope that you have had a good week, that God has used this time to draw your heart to him. I pray that this time will be encouraging to you and to all of us and so I would love to pray for us if I could.

Father in heaven, we come to you in faith believing that we have access to be able to pray to you directly because of Jesus Christ. We believe father, that your word is true and I pray that you would stir our hearts even this morning afresh, with insight and understanding of your amazing love that has been fully demonstrated for us. That even when we were walking away from you in sin, even when we were separated from you and not thinking about you, that you were thinking of us and you sent your son to rescue us. And I pray now father, as we look into your word, we thank you for the gospel of John. God, thank you for inspiring him to write. Thank you that you preserved his letter all these centuries for us to be able to read. And I pray now father, as we read that you would open up our eyes to see amazing things within your word, that you would help us to see how it matters to us, that you would pique our own curiosity for the things that you have written.

And I pray father, for those who know you and who love you, that you would use this morning and even this passage to remind them of the freedom that you purchased for them. And I pray that today, Lord, that you would stir within their heart, gratitude and thanksgiving and amazement and worship, and it would inspire them to love people as you have loved us. And God, I pray for who may be listening who have yet to trust Christ. God maybe even that the season and the uncertainty around the fear within their heart is causing them to be curious about spiritual things and about truth. And I pray, father, that in these moments that you would use your word to open their eyes, to help them to see that Jesus Christ matters, that he is consequential to life and death. And I pray father, that you would help them to trust Jesus Christ even in these moments.

So we look to you in faith. We love you. We're amazed at your power that has been poured out for our benefit and we pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. So I would love for you to look with me to John chapter 19. We're in a series. In fact, this is the last week of the series. It's called The Seven. And if we were to write down all the needs in our heart, and if we were to actually combine them with every person and then condense all the needs that we could imagine to the deepest and most significant of all, I believe that seven would remain. And Jesus Christ is aware of these seven, for when he was on the cross, he spoke seven times and each time he made provision for one of the needs. We've looked at various things such as satisfaction and peace and acceptance and forgiveness and belonging.

This morning we want to look at the last and that is the need that we have within our heart for redemption. Now, we don't use that word very frequently, but what it means is that somebody sets us free by paying our debt. You see, the Bible says that we have all sinned against a Holy God and incurred a debt that we simply cannot pay, and yet God in his love, he continued to look to us. But because we have a debt, we like this picture, are like a bird that is stuck in a cage. We feel trapped. We have wings, we see the sky, we see all that is outside, and yet we feel trapped within this cage of guilt or shame or insecurity. Always wondering why peace is so elusive. And whether we're aware or not as to why we feel trapped, we all feel trapped.

And so what we try to do is a number of things to try to be set free. Some of us, we try to escape this cage of our own doubt, of our own insecurity and guilt by actually being irreligious, by living hard and seeing how bad we may be able to live in the hope that maybe if we live hard enough that we'll be set free. For many others, it's just the opposite. They try to live a good life. They try to not be irreligious. They give themselves to religion. In one case, it's really interesting, some people live their life regardless of God, whereas other people, they live their life in the hopes that they would be regarded by God. And what we're told within the scriptures is that neither can unlock the cage. And this is why Jesus Christ came to this earth.

He came to set us free by paying our debt on the cross. And so in John chapter 19, what we find here is that at 9:00 AM Jesus was actually crucified. This was after he was scourged and mocked and humiliated and rejected and condemned. And here on this cross he hangs and attempts to breathe for six hours. And we're told that at 3:00 PM he gave up his spirit. But right before he did so this is what we're told. John chapter 19 verse 30 it says, when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished." And then bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now in our Bibles it says, "It is finished." In English, it takes three words, it is finished, in order to translate what is actually one Greek word tetelestai. It means to pay in full. It means that the transaction is now complete.

It means that, "Whatever agreement there was between us, it's been totally resolved." You see, when a tax bill or a debt bill was actually totally paid off, the word tetelestai would be written at the bottom of the note in order to indicate to everyone that this has been paid in full. You see the word tetelestai was therefore good news to everybody involved. For one party it meant that they were now out of debt and totally free. And for the other, it meant that they received what was due to them. It was good news for everyone. And this is what Jesus said just before he gave up his spirit and died. So the question that I want to seek to answer this morning briefly is why did Jesus say this as he prepared to die? And I believe that the entire Bible answers that in a number of ways and I want to show you three of them.

The first thing we see is that Jesus' death completed his promise to redeem us. You see, in the beginning we're told that God created the heavens and the earth, and he created us in his image that we could have a relationship with him. And we enjoyed for a season freedom, absolute freedom, absolute peace. And God wanted to protect that. And we knew that God's instructions to us were backed by his promise to actually give us freedom and to protect our freedom. And yet in our freedom, we sinned against God by choice. We

broke our relationship with him. And suddenly, as you see in this picture, we were trapped in a spiritual cage, longing for peace that was just out of reach through a door that would only open when our debt to God was paid in full.

And so God in his unimaginable love for us, at the moment when he was offended, at the moment that we sinned against him, at the moment that he was even telling humanity of the consequences, God made a promise to redeem. And not just to redeem, but to actually send a Redeemer. And then as you continue to read through the Bible from the very beginning to the end, what we find is that God continued to give clues as to who this Redeemer would be in order to help us understand who we should be looking for. And we're told that the Redeemer, that he would be called the son of God and the son of man, that he would be fully God and fully man, that he would be able to identify and sympathize and mediate between God almighty and us as human beings. We're told that this Redeemer would be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem. That he would eventually grow up and he would become a teacher.

And as he would teach, he would proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prison to those who were bound. You see, he knew that we were captives, he knew that we needed to be freed. The Redeemer would come and when he came he would heal the sick and he would restore sight to the blind. But the Bible says also that he would live his entire life without any sin against God. And yet in the end we're told that he would be rejected, that he would be condemned, that he would be falsely accused, that he would be scorched. And we're told that he would be pierced for our transgressions. And then we waited, and generations waited. Hundreds of years passed. Generation after generation after generation waited for this Redeemer to come. And then Jesus was born. And we're told this in the New Testament, it says, when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, that's Jesus Christ, born of a woman and born under the law to redeem those who were under the law.

You see, there was just one promise remaining, the Redeemer must die. Therefore, just before taking his last breath in order to complete his promise, Jesus said, "It is finished. Transaction complete." Not only did his death complete his promise to redeem, it also completed his payment for our debt. You see, God is just. That's one of the attributes that we read about in the Bible about who God is. He is just, and what that means is that he requires just payment for our sin. Well, he tells us what that payment is. In Romans chapter six verse 23 he says, "The wage of sin is death." In other words, for a just God over all of humanity to be sinned against. He said, even before we sinned, "In the day that you sin, you will surely die."

His justice declared that somebody must die for every sin, but being merciful, God made the payment himself. You see before sending Jesus Christ, God in his grace and his mercy, waiting for the day when the Redeemer would come, he gave a sacrificial system, where animals would actually be killed, their lives would be taken, their blood would actually be spilled as an atonement, as a covering for the people and their sin. But the Bible tells us that there was a problem with the animal sacrifices. There was a problem in that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. You see sacrifices in the Old Testament,

when somebody would come to the temple knowing that they had sinned against God, and they would bring with them an unblemished lamb, not just one of the worst ones, but the best lamb that they had, that lamb would actually be slain in order to cover the sin problem that they were acknowledging they had before God.

And yet the sacrifices in the old Testament were actually more like paying with a credit card. When you swipe your credit card, it actually isn't payment at all, it's only a promise to pay when the bill comes. You get to take the stuff, you get to bring it home. It's yours and you get to enjoy it, and yet nothing is actually paid for until the bill is paid. Each time in the old Testament a sacrifice was made, God's account was being charged, waiting for the day when the bill would come and someone would have to pay that. People were covered and yet someone still had to pay. And this is what the new Testament says in completion. First John chapter four verse 10 it says, in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sin.

We don't use that word very often, but propitiation simply means a payment to pay off a debt in substitute for another. That Jesus Christ, while we were not loving him, God almighty says that he loved us and he showed his love and that he sent his son to be the final payment, to pay off all sins that had ever been committed before and after. And therefore just before taking his final breath, knowing that he was about to complete the payment for our own forgiveness, Jesus said, "It is finished. It is now paid in full." And then there's another thing, it's amazing that God's death, that Jesus' death on the cross, not only did it complete his promise to redeem and his payment for our debt, but Jesus' death also completed his victory over evil. When we sinned against God, the Bible says that there was this tidal wave called brokenness that literally swept over not only our hearts and even our relationships, but even the world in which we live.

It was God's creation, God's design. It was God's beauty, and our sin ruined it. And do you know who did not grieve the brokenness that swept over God's universe? The Bible says Satan did not grieve. No, it says the very first rebel of heaven named Lucifer, he rejoiced when he saw what had been ruined. And then he purposed to keep things broken. And this is how the devil Satan works today, is that he aims to keep things broken. And he uses things like accusation where he reminds you of your past and all of the sinful things that you have done, that you have said, that you have thought in order to sideline you and to say that there's no way that God would ever allow you into heaven. He uses things like temptation where he places things before us that are so tempting.

He uses these things called lies where he promises that sin is going to make us happier than God and God's promise. And so what we're told is this, is that even as Satan sought to keep things broken, that God would have none of it. And so in his very first promise, when he was giving out his consequences and he interrupted himself and he said, "I want you to know one day there will be a Redeemer that will be sent to the earth, be born of a woman, and Satan is going to strike at his heel. The seed of this woman will crush the head of the serpent." And so we've been waiting. In fact, if you read the Bible, you're supposed to read it waiting for the day when evil will actually receive its death blow. And so God in all of his grace, he sent Jesus Christ,

and can't you imagine the joy in hell?

Can't you imagine the joy that filled Satan's heart when Jesus Christ was actually being condemned, when he was being scourged and when he was being crucified and he looked so weak and so vulnerable and so defeated. And yet like a champion wrestler, God almighty used Satan's strength and momentum to crush his head when he rose Jesus from the dead. This is why. If you continue to read through the New Testament, you'll get to a book called Romans. If you've never read the New Testament or if you've never read Romans, the book of Romans is probably the clearest and most thorough explanation of the victory of Jesus Christ and what it means for us. We call that the gospel. And it's amazing that if you read through the whole book of Romans, the name Satan is actually only used one time. In Romans chapter 16 verse 20 it says, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

This is his only mention in the greatest explanation of the gospel, and where we find him is somebody who is defeated and who is doomed. You see, I realized that he still exercises power through accusation today in our life, and yet even he knows that he is defeated. And the Bible declares that the day of his doom is imminent because Jesus died and rose again. And therefore just before taking his last breath to complete his victory over evil, Jesus Christ, knowing that the promise had been said that his head would be crushed, he said with his own mouth, "It is finished. It has been paid in full." You see, everything has been paid in full. For those of you who know Christ, I want you to know everything is paid in full. There's nothing that we can do to add to his payment.

And for those of you who are outside of Christ, who have yet to trust Christ, who maybe are just learning about this for the very first time, I want you to know that Jesus Christ has paid the entire amount in order to set you free, to erase the debt that your sin has brought between you and God. But it's interesting that we have to ask this question then, and that is that what is the proof that Jesus' death all those years ago, what's the proof that his death was sufficient? What's the proof that his death was sufficient to actually conquer evil and make a payment for our debt and to fulfill his promise to redeem and to set us free? And the answer is the resurrection. And that's what we celebrate today on Easter, it's the resurrection. The resurrection is God's receipt that our debt is paid in full.

When you go and you purchase something and somebody gives you a receipt, they're verifying that you have paid in full for the item that you are taking. And this is precisely what Jesus did on the cross, and this is what God the father gave to us when he rose Jesus from the dead. It was a receipt. The resurrection is God Almighty's receipt to you that your debt has been paid. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God Almighty's receipt to you that evil has been trampled, that victory is sure, that heaven awaits those who trust in him. It's the resurrection.

And the New Testament, it does not mince words when it comes to the importance of the resurrection. In first Corinthians 15 verse 17 it says, if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. You see what it means? If Jesus Christ has not been raised, it means that you do not have a receipt in hand that your sins have been paid for and therefore you and I are still in them. But he has risen from the dead. Jesus' body was undeniably dead when they laid him in a grave. And Jesus' tomb three days later was undeniably empty, even from the words of his very enemies. And Jesus' eye witnesses were undeniably numerous. You look at first Corinthians chapter 15 and it says that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people, and at the time that first Corinthians was written, most of those people, it says are still alive so that skeptics could go and talk to somebody and say, "Now really, did you see the resurrected Jesus Christ with your own eyes?" 500 eye witnesses.

And Jesus' own disciples were undeniably changed, the core of their heart as all but one of them died a martyr's death refusing to budge or yield on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You see this as all evidence that demands a verdict. It demands faith one way or the other. Am I going to place my faith in Jesus that he is going to make the payment, that he has made the payment for me? Or am I going to rely on myself? And so let me encourage you as I close with just a few applications. The first is this, is let's trust Christ and be redeemed. For those of you who are listening right now, whether you're a part of providence or not, whether you live in Raleigh or not, this invitation is for all humanity from God himself, that we don't have to live in the cage.

The cage is a terrible place to live and there's only one key, and that key is not being irreligious nor is it being religious. It's not being hard and evil, nor is it being good. The Bible says in Revelation chapter one verse five these words, that Jesus loves us and has freed us from our sins. And then he tells us what the key is that unlocks the cage. It says by his blood, that is the only payment that God almighty accepts. Everything that the father required, Jesus rendered. And all that we now long for most in our hearts, it's all been paid in full. You want to be forgiven of your sin? It's been paid in full. You want to have a sense of belonging with the people? It's been paid in full. You want to be accepted, it's been paid in full.

You want to be justified and be given righteousness so that you don't stand before him empty handed, it's been paid in full. You want eternal life so that you can go to heaven, it's been paid in full. You want a peace that passes understanding so that when you go through significant times of crisis and storms of adversity here on the earth so that you can still feel peace within your heart, it's all been paid in full. But I want you to know that the benefits of Jesus' payment are limited to those who put their trust in him. The Bible describes how we put our trust in him. He talks about the first thing that must take place. We have to admit, we have to admit that we have a debt before God. We have to admit that we feel guilt towards God and indeed we have sinned against God.

We also have to admit that we cannot save ourselves, that no sense of religion or goodness or good works are ever going to cause God to look at us and say, "You have earned your way." We have to admit we have a need and that we cannot save ourself. And he says, we have to believe in Jesus Christ. It's one thing for us to recognize that we're not our savior. It's another thing to say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is strong enough, that his works and his accomplishments are sufficient." And so we have to believe that Jesus Christ is who the Bible says that he is, that he is the son of God and the son of man, that he's the Redeemer that was promised, that he's the one who came to set us free. That he lived without sin and he died on a cross in order to pay for our sin.

He was buried in a grave and three days later he rose from the dead. We have to believe this. And then third, the Bible says, we must confess. We must confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. When a man rises from the dead, he has authority over life and over death and therefore he has all authority. And so to trust him with our life, it means to lean, it means to put all of our weight upon him as though maybe last night when you fell down into your bed, you were convinced and you trusted that that bed would take and hold all of your weight. Well, so it is with Christ. And so my question for those of you who have never trusted him is, is there any reason why you wouldn't do that right now?

Right now in your home, you can actually pray to God right now. You can confess with your mouth and you could pray to him right now. Something like this, "Father in heaven, I believe what I hear. I believe and admit that I'm a sinner. My entire history confirms the fact that I have made really bad decisions in life and that I have violated your word, and that I have sinned against you and I admit that I have a debt that I cannot pay. But I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe that he was your son, that he is your son. I believe that he did come to earth and I believe he did die for my sin. I believe he was buried and I believe he rose from the dead, and I confess him as Lord. Would you forgive me of my sin? Would you give me your righteousness and all the benefits that Jesus paid for? Would you give them to me out of mercy? I pray this in Jesus name. Amen."

The Bible says that if you just made that decision, that that's the most consequential important decision you've ever made in your life. And even as a church family, we want to be able to celebrate with you. You've heard it earlier in the service, but if you just trusted Christ or if you would like to talk further about Jesus Christ, would you send a text to us? That text is simply PBC1 and you can send it to 313131. We would love to be able to start a conversation with you about what it looks like to follow Jesus.

But I know that many of us who are here this morning listening, you already have trusted Christ and if you just trusted Christ, well then what's next? Well, let me encourage you. Let's keep trusting Jesus Christ when we feel trapped, and indeed we will. When we trust Christ, the cage is absolutely unlocked, it is forever unlocked and yet oftentimes overcome by Satan's continued accusations against us. Many people resign to continue to live in that cage. There's a lot of people, maybe you live in that cage, maybe you know somebody else who lives in that cage. They've already trusted Christ. The door's propped open and yet for whatever reason, living and remaining in a place of fear and guilt and shame is the choice of their life.

You don't have to live there. Jesus died to set you free. There's an entire world out there that is not marked by fear and defeat and shame that he has purchased, that you would be able to experience not only in its perfect form in heaven, but even in its imperfect form here on the earth. And so how does Jesus help us when inevitably every single one of us from time to time return to live in that cage? Well, the Bible says that what Jesus does to help us is he tells us to listen to him and to continue to trust him as he speaks the truest things about us. Romans chapter eight says it this way. He says, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. And who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died and more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."

Do you see what that says? It says that even though Satan continues to accuse us, that God almighty in heaven, he allows no accusation from his enemy or from anyone else against us. Why? Because he's justified us. For those of us who were in Christ, he's taken away our sin, he has given to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ and therefore no accusation sticks. It says that Jesus is the one who died and more than that was raised, and this Jesus is at the right hand of the father. And it says, do you know what Jesus is doing for us right now? It says that he is interceding for us. He is praying for us. This is the hope that we have and what a difference it is to be assured in the darkness of our own sin that our righteousness is in Christ and not ourself.

And then lastly, let me encourage us as a church family and for everybody who's listening, who knows Christ the savior and Lord, we need to tell this good news. You see when Jesus says, "It is finished." And then he rose from the dead in order to remove all doubt, he was completing his mission on the earth and he was launching ours. In John chapter 20 verse 21 it says, "As the father has sent me, even so I am sending you." People in the world all over the world are dying. Even if this virus was not quickly moving through the earth, people are quickly dying all over the earth. They all need to hear about the one who conquered the grave.

Providence family we can do this. We can tell somebody that Jesus Christ finished it all, that the price has been paid. So let me encourage you to aim to love somebody and to share what you have with somebody and tell of your hope with somebody. Here this morning we've just finished the series called The Seven. Next Sunday we're going to start a new series. It's called Finding Peace. Seems pertinent in this day and age that when you look at things like adversity and anxiety and you look at things like crisis and sickness and judgment, we need peace within our heart. So we're going to look over the next several weeks of how Jesus Christ, our risen Lord gives us peace. I hope that you'll be able to join us next week.

So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we thank you for your great love for us. We acknowledge that you accomplished a great victory for us in sending Jesus Christ to the earth. We acknowledge that we have sinned. And Jesus, we look at your words and in faith we believe that it's true that you have paid our debt in full. So I pray now for us as a people that you would help us to be active in loving people, in looking for people and serving people and sharing what we have with people and in telling what we know about Jesus Christ with people who are in need. We know father, we know that people need Christ. And so would you give us courage? Would you give us boldness and would you give us opportunities?

And God, I pray for those this morning who trusted Christ. God, that you would not allow the hope that has been born in their heart, Lord, to be robbed by distraction. I pray now, father, that by your spirit who now fills their heart, that you would direct them to a place where they can grow in their faith and be encouraged where somebody can stand with them and stand near them and stand next to them, and help them through the trials in their life. God, we look to you in faith. And now we sing to you. You're the King of Kings and you're the Lord of Lords. And so it's with victory in our hearts because of the victory that was accomplished by Jesus Christ, that we pray these things and then we now sing these things in his name. Amen.



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