

The background of the entire cover is a monochromatic, sepia-toned abstract image. It features intricate, swirling patterns that resemble smoke, ink, or perhaps tangled hair, creating a sense of movement and depth. Scattered throughout this background are numerous small, dark, circular dots of varying sizes, giving it a textured, almost particle-like appearance.

THE SAYINGS

vGroup Study

VINTAGE  PRESS

The Sayings: vGroup Study

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REDEMPTION

Everyone likes a good redemption story. In fact, that is how the University of Virginia's recent win in the NCAA basketball tournament is being described. This championship team actually lost their first game in last year's tournament. They were the number one ranked team, and they lost to the lowest ranked team in the tournament. Broken dreams can be good encouragement for extra effort, and that seems to have paid off for them. Sports reporters are saying that their victory this year redeemed the embarrassing loss from last year.

Sports teams with embarrassing records are not the only ones who get redemption stories. We almost always enjoy seeing a villain get the chance to redeem himself. Think Darth Vader in *The Return of the Jedi*. We also use the word redeem when we talk about coupons at the grocery store, or really any offer that a seller makes to a buyer. When we talk about redeeming we are talking about gaining or regaining possession of something in exchange for payment. The UVA basketball team regained possession of their reputation at the cost of effort and sacrifice. Usually a villain is able to rejoin the good guys at the cost of his life, or something else he holds dear. Much like the villains in a story, we also need to be redeemed so that we can live with Christ. Today we are going to look at what it means for Christ to redeem us.

- What are some stories of redemption that you can think of?
- What are some sacrifices that people in those stories had to make in order to be redeemed or to redeem what they had lost?
- What is it about redemption stories that we identify with?

We are now going to look at how the idea of redemption works within our discussion of the atonement. Through the Jesus' death and his shedding of blood we are redeemed. In Galatians 3:10–14 Paul gives us a look at what redemption means for us.

¹⁰For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."¹²But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged

on a tree"—¹⁴so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:10–14

- What does Paul say about those who rely on the works of the law in v. 10?
- Law and faith are major themes in Galatians. What does Paul mean when he talks about "the Law?" (Hint: Think Old Testament).
- How does Paul describe the fate of those who do not do all that the law requires of them?
- How effective is the law for justifying us? What does that tell us about our own ability to find favor before God?
- What does Paul say in v. 11 about those who have faith in Christ?

The wording in v. 12 can be confusing. Paul is expecting his opponents to quote Leviticus 18:5 back at him. Paul anticipates this tactic in their argument and reaffirms that the law does not lead to life because it is not of faith.

- According to v. 13, what has Christ done for us?
- What is the price that Christ had to pay to redeem us?
- To whom was the price paid and why? (Hint: God).

- What do we receive through redemption? (Hint: Look back to [Genesis 12:3 and 28:3–4](#) for more on the blessing of Abraham.)
- In addition to the promise of Abraham, what else are we promised in v. 14?
- How do we receive the redemption and promise that Christ offers us? (Hint: Look at verse 14).

When we reflect on our redemption in Christ we should be brought to a place of gratitude and rejoicing. We have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb and we are no longer under the curse of the law. We are no longer slaves to sin, because our price has been paid. This new reality not only affects how we relate to God, it should affect how we interact with others.

- How can shifting your focus to faith in Christ and the redemption he offers change the way that you think about your relationship with God?
- Rather than guilt over our failures, how should this freedom from redemption impact our desire to be obedient to God?
- Through faith we received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence should inspire confidence in us. How ought this confidence impact the way that we pursue holiness and endeavor to share the gospel with those around us?