

Solus Christus, Part 2: Overwhelming Thanksgiving for Christ's Overabundant Grace
Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on November 21, 2010
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The tradition of Thanksgiving Proclamations by the U.S. President began in 1789 with George Washington and was carried on by John Adams and James Madison, calling on the American people to express their thanksgiving and gratitude to Almighty God for His favor and to repent of their sins. But in the years 1815-1861, there were no presidential proclamations by our presidents. It was in 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln revived the practice¹ of proclaiming a day for thanksgiving that became an annual holiday:

‘In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity [Lincoln begins and then takes several sentences to speak of the many reasons to thank God, and he said] No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people ... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent [loving] Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the [praises] justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence [repentance] for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers ... and fervently implore the ... Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore if, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose’ – Lincoln, 1863

The following years presidents were able to thank God for the end of slavery, and after the emancipation proclamation, thanksgiving proclamations followed every year, and you can read the various presidents calling on the American people to continually humbly repent of their sins and seek God's forgiveness and grace so that His favor might continue. In God's providence, we have much to be grateful for and thankful for, and even if things in our country grow worse, even as bad as the days of civil war or world wars or slavery, Paul in Ephesians 1:3-14 gives those who know Christ abundant reason to abound in thanksgiving for overabundant grace. Paul's proclamation begins: “*Blessed be God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*”!

Whether you are chained to a Roman soldier awaiting possible execution unjustly, as Paul was when he wrote these words, no matter what situation you're in, if you are in Christ, Paul goes overboard in this passage, demonstrating over and over again that God's grace overcomes and overpowers any situation or suffering. God gives above-and-beyond our need, over-abundant reasons to be overwhelmed by grace and to be overflowing in thanksgiving. There is a cornucopia of spiritual blessings at the Lord's Table, of lavish extraordinary extravagant grace, emancipating slaves of sin.

Ephesians 1:7 *In Him we have redemption [slave-emancipation] through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight*

Christ alone is the source of all these blessings (v. 3b, 6b, etc.). “*In Him*” is another way to say “in Christ” – He’s the only explanation for the extravagant grace we read in this chapter. Our forefathers would use the Latin expression *Solo Christo* for “in Christ alone” or “by / through Christ alone.” In the nominative case in grammar, “Christ alone” as the subject of the sentence is “*Solus Christus.*” Christ alone is the subject and object of Paul’s thanksgiving.

In the immediate context of v. 3-14 there are many reasons for gratitude and thanksgiving to God we could study and we have been studying for several weeks now. There are several more still to come. But in v. 7-10 let’s begin to look at five blessings in Paul’s thanksgiving proclamation of praise, five reasons to give overwhelmed thanksgiving for overabundant grace in Christ alone, five realities that should overshadow any darkness, including the prison cell Paul writes from, or whatever darkness you may be in.

1. Redemption from slavery (v. 7a)
2. Remission of sins (v. 7b)
3. Riches lavished (v. 8) - these 3 this week
4. Revelation given (v. 9) – next week
5. Re-unification of all things (v. 10) – next week as well

#1. Redemption from Slavery (v. 7a)

We looked at the beginning of v. 7 last time, “*In Him we have redemption*” – to review, that’s language for the paying of a ransom or slave price for a slave, in this case blood (i.e., death).

“To the Jewish mind ‘blood’ was not merely—or even chiefly—the life-current flowing in the veins of the living: it was especially the life poured out in death; and yet more particularly in its religious aspect it was the symbol of sacrificial death. The Passover lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts was the most striking feature of the Redemption from Egypt.”²

A messianic Israeli commentary *How a Jew Explains Ephesians*, describes the Hebrew connection between ransom and blood:

“*Pidyon* has in it the idea of exchange, of substitution. In the *Torah* the Law of Ransom ... Every firstborn male ... must be ransomed ... In 1 Samuel 14, Jonathan came under sentence of death for transgressing a public oath his father made in his absence. Yet although King Saul condemned him to die, the sentence was not carried out ... they ransomed him, and thus legally prevented his being put to death.

We too, like Jonathan, have come under the sentence of death ... Like Jonathan, we must either die or be ransomed. Jonathan and the Israel firstborn were ransomed with money. Money equals blood. One of the names for money in Hebrew is *damim*, plural of *dam*, blood, because it represents man’s labor and risks ... “But money cannot redeem from eternal death. Man has nothing with which to ransom [or redeem] himself or others (Psalm 49:7–8); God himself must redeem him from the power of the grave (v. 15). But of God it is written, ‘I have found a ransom’ (Job 33:24); and that ransom is the blood of the Messiah.”³

A 1st century Christian Jew Peter: “*you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but **with precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the **blood of Christ*** (1 Pet 1:18-19)

Our Jewish Messiah said “*the Son of Man came ... to give **His life a ransom for many***” (Mk 10:45). The many in Eph 1:7 includes us. “*We have redemption through His blood,*” Paul says of the church, the saints (v. 1). This is particular redemption, it’s not universal. The Muslim in Iran cannot sing “Redeemed how I love to proclaim it”—it’s only those who trust Christ alone who are the “we” in v. 7.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that as a result of our being redeemed, we are no longer slaves of sin, but our body and soul now belongs to Christ: “... *you are not your own. You have been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body*”

Redemption frees us from the chains of sin to follow / glorify Him

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quick’ning [life-giving] ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth and followed thee! (Wesley, “And Can it Be?”)

J. I. Packer writes: ‘When Charles Wesley found Christ his experience overflowed into some marvelous verses (“The Wesleys’ Conversion Hymn,” ...) in which the transition from slavery to sonship is the main theme.

*Where shall my wondering soul begin?
How shall I all to heaven aspire?
A slave redeemed from death and sin,
*A brand plucked from eternal fire,
How shall I equal triumphs raise ...
Father, which thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God,
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
*Blest with this antepast [foretaste] of heaven!***

Three days later, Charles tells us in his diary, brother John burst in with “a troop of our friends” to announce that he too was now a believer, and “we sang the hymn with great joy.” Had you been there, could you sincerely have joined in? Can you make Wesley’s words your own? If you are truly a child of God and “the Spirit of his Son” is in you, Wesley’s words have already drawn an echo from your heart; and if they have left you cold, I do not know how you can imagine that you are a Christian at all.’⁴

Martyn Lloyd-Jones applies these verses this way: ‘A simple way of testing yourself as to whether you are a child of God, and whether you have a spiritual mind, is to ask yourself whether all this [adoption / redemption teaching] seems to be a waste of time, or whether you see in it the most wonderful and glorious thing you have ever looked at in the whole of your life. Paul here brings us face to face with the most astounding thing that even Almighty God has planned and done for us. As you look into the scheme and plan do you delight in it? ... If this means nothing to you, it means that you are a ‘natural’ man, not a ‘spiritual’ man. As the Apostle says, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him’; he sees nothing in them and is utterly bored by them.’⁵

Let me read a little more of Wesley’s conversion hymn, and see if it resonates with your soul. Are still a slave of sin, or have you been redeemed and adopted from a slave of sin to son of the king? Charles Wesley’s journal for May 21, 1738, says: ‘At nine, I began a hymn upon my conversion, but I was persuaded to break off for fear of pride. Mr. Bray, coming encouraged me to proceed in spite of Satan. I prayed Christ to stand by me, and finished the hymn’ (widely thought to be “Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?”):

And shall I slight my Father’s love? Or basely fear His gifts to own?
 Unmindful of His favors prove? Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,
 Refuse His righteousness to impart, By hiding it within my heart? ...
 Jesus, the sinner’s friend, proclaim; Jesus, to sinners still the same.
 Outcasts of men, to you I call, Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!
 He spreads His arms to embrace you all; Sinners alone His grace receives;
 Come, O my guilty brethren, come, Groaning beneath your load of sin,
 His bleeding heart shall make you room, His open side shall take you in;
 He calls you now, invites you home; Come, O my guilty brethren, come!
 For you the [bloody] current flowed In pardons from His wounded side,
 Languished for you the eternal God ... the Prince of glory died:
 Believe, and all your sin’s forgiven; Only believe, and yours is Heaven!

Not bad theology for a 9-year old? A lot better than 29-year-old or older song-writers today with inane lame 24/7 choruses of a Jesus who sounds more like a girlfriend than a glorious Redeemer!

There are some good modern songs. Sovereign Grace Music just came out with an album⁶ last year that celebrates spiritual adoption, called “Sons and Daughters” (here’s some of its lyrics):

The greatest of all transactions, The costliest purchase price
 Father, Your Son’s atoning death Was given in payment for mine
 To buy me back from slavery To set me free from my chains ... [song “The Greatest of All”]

Broken and defiled, Clinging to our filth We gloried in our shame
 Running far from You Still Your mercy sought and saved ... [song “Precious Children”]

How has the sinner been forgiven, How has the rebel been made clean
 Or blinded eyes been made to see
 How have the orphans been adopted, Who hated Your love and ran from grace
 Despised and rejected all Your ways ...? [song “The Father’s Love”]

You chose us to be the objects of Your love In spite of all we have done
 You gave Your beloved Son to die for us To make us daughters and sons [song “God Delights in You”]

So as you think of what to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Day, there is abundant reason just in this first point, to praise the slave-delivering, bondage-breaking, eye-opening, sin-atoning, rebel-rescuing, orphan-adopting Redeemer ... and that's not all in v. 7!

#2. Remission of Sins

v. 7 *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the remission / forgiveness of sins"*

In NASB, "remission" is used in OT of pardoning financial debt:

Deuteronomy 15:1-2 *"At the end of every seven years you shall **grant a remission of debts.***

² *"This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the **LORD'S remission has been proclaimed.**"* [other versions have "release" or "cancel of debts" rather than remission, same idea]

Now I'll never know Your judgment You ransomed and saved my soul
Jesus, Your death and Yours alone **Has canceled the debt that I owed** [song "Greatest of all"]

"Remission" is another word for release or forgiveness, the pardon or taking away so that it's no longer there. When we say a person's cancer is in remission, we mean it's gone. It was there, now it's not, PTL. Owen said "sins are so remitted as if they had never been committed." This same Grk word in v. 7 for how God deals with sin, forgiveness/pardon, is often translated "remission" in the KJV:

Matthew 26:28: *"For this is **my blood ... which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**"*

Heb 9:22 *"... **without shedding of blood is no remission.**"*

Luke 1:68 *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; For **he hath visited and redeemed his people ...***

⁷⁴ *That he would grant unto us, that we **being delivered out of the hand of our enemies Might serve him without fear ...*** ⁷⁷ *To give knowledge of salvation unto his people **By the remission [same word] of their sins,***

The Messiah redeems his people, including remission of their sins, and rescues or delivers them from their enemies, not to free them to do their own thing, but to serve the Lord without slavish fear. There is a healthy fear and reverence of our Master, but not the fear of a slave who cowers under a cruel or abusive slave-owner.

J. Vernon McGee tells a story from the pre-civil War South: 'in the days of slavery—there was a beautiful girl who was put on the slave block to be sold. There was a very cruel slave owner, a brutal [master], who began to bid for her. Every time he would bid, the girl would cringe and a look of fear would come over her face. A plantation owner who was kind to his slaves was there, and he began to bid for the girl. He outbid the other fellow and purchased her. He put down the price and ... said [to her], "... I didn't buy you because I needed a slave. I bought you to set you free." She simply stood there, stunned for just a moment. Then she suddenly fell to her knees. "Why," she said, "I will serve you forever!" ... that illustrates the basis on which the Lord Jesus wants us to serve Him. He loved you. He paid a price for you. He gave Himself and shed His blood so that you could have forgiveness of sins.'⁷

Turn to Luke 4 for a good example on how this word “forgiveness” or “remission” is used by Jesus in describing his gospel ministry, using the analogy of freeing or emancipating captives. It was the homecoming of a carpenter-turned-miracle-working-rabbi, in the region where the saying was “can anything good come from there?” The hometown boy is back and synagogues are packed and the village and region where He grew up is in a small-town fervor:

Luke 4:14 *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.* ¹⁵ *And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.* ¹⁶ *And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.* ¹⁷ *And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,* ¹⁸ *“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM **RELEASE** [same Greek word in Eph. 1:7 “remission / forgiveness” others translated it “freedom” here] **TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO **SET FREE** [same word from Eph. 1:7] THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,*** ¹⁹ *TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”* ²⁰ *And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.* ²¹ *And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

But if you keep reading and study this, you realize that saying this is fulfilled in their hearing is also saying that’s them (captives, etc.). Another saying is fulfilled that day, a prophet not being accepted in his hometown. They didn’t mind seeing him do miracles of physical healing but they didn’t want to be told they needed spiritual healing. You may need to heal yourself, Jesus, but don’t tell us we need to be healed, or we’re the poor spiritually in v. 18a. This is also how he began His first sermon in Matt 5:3. The gospel is good news to people who first understand *they* are the bad news, that they are spiritually poor, broke, bankrupt, destitute of spiritual resources.

In the next phrase, when He proclaims “*release to the captives,*” that remission or release can only come to those who know they’re captives spiritually (like we saw in John 8 last week). And when He offers sight to the blind, also in v. 18, it’s only those *who know they’re blind* and who call out “Son of David, have mercy on me!” And when Christ says at the end of v. 18 He came to set free (same as Eph. 1:7 “remission”) we must know *we need to be set free!*

²⁷ *“And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”* [in that story the gentile soldier saw his need for cleansing and humbly obeyed the prophet] ²⁸ *And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things* [and it goes on to say they tried to kill Him! What a warm homecoming!]

Jesus is saying ‘you need grace just like your Gentile enemies!’ He hadn’t read *How to Win Friends and Influence People* or a church growth book on preaching. You’re spiritual lepers, spiritually poor, blind, captives, Slavery isn’t a popular subject (especially if it’s us)! It’s a dark part of our past in the history of America. Lew Wallace lived in that era of slavery, once a general in the Civil War in our land. He was not yet born again then and once had a famous conversation in 1875 with an agnostic, and wasn’t sure of the facts of Christianity afterwards. So Wallace sought to study the life of Christ, some think originally to disprove the faith.

But his study of history and the holy land and the life of Christ led him to write a book of his journey and about Christ. “When I had finished, I said to myself ... ‘God only is so great.’ I had become a believer.”⁸

The book was published in 1880 and surpassed *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as the best-selling American novel for decades, until temporarily surpassed in 1936, but it became bestseller again after a 1959 film adapted the book to the big screen: *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. Lew Wallace had seen the emancipation of slaves in America, and studied much about slaves in ancient Rome for the book, and he understood from this book, that spiritual slavery to sin is man’s present condition. All of us need liberating emancipating grace in Christ alone for remission of sins and redeeming of spiritual slaves

His book takes place in the same world Ephesians was written in, and shows historically redemption/forgiveness/adoption (Eph 1:5, 7). Judah Ben-Hur had become a slave, at one point a galley slave pulling his oar with the rest (Paul uses that Grk word for himself in 1 Cor. 4). The slaves aboard didn’t know they all would soon die.

By providence, Judah survives and is united with a Consul who would have been his enemy apart from grace working in his heart. A Consul was the highest elected official of the Roman Republic, and the Emperor gives this slave Ben-Hur as a gift to him, as an act of grace, because of the victory that had been won by the Consul. In the court of Rome before emperor and senate, the Consul becomes advocate defending Ben-Hur, asking Caesar Augustus to drop all charges and grant him full forgiveness, remission, pardon, and he announces his desire to grant full sonship to his new slave.

The Consul goes beyond the *redemption* of this slave he has set his favor upon to the *adoption of this slave to become the son of the consul*, legally, completely, publically, in a ceremony with rings and other things and Roman bling and inheritance (v. 13-14 uses language with similar connotations to the original readers). The slave has now become a son of the highest order, honor, heir. And when the adoption is made public, Judah Ben-Hur is speechless, he doesn’t even know what to say, he’s just overwhelmed by grace.

In the book *Ben-Hur*: "My benefactor was loved and trusted by the emperor, who heaped him with honorable rewards. The merchants of the East contributed magnificent presents, and he became doubly rich among the rich of Rome ... The good man adopted me his son by formal rites of law; and I strove to [honor him]: no child was ever more dutiful to father than I to him ... Oh, ask you why I accepted any of the benefactions of the Roman? I loved him..."⁹

Rick Phillips says: “The day comes when he says to his slave, “I want to adopt you as my heir.” How powerful that is. And he gives ... his signet ring, and he [now] bears the identity and the family name and the identity and the wealth of the Consul of Rome.

There are these great scenes where this recent slave is now walking around Rome and when people want to ask him who he is, he smacks down his signet ring, “the son of the Consul.” Whoa! ... It was a radical and legal change of status. Ben Hur was a slave, and he is now a son with all the rights to sonship ... One of the things involved in Roman legal adoption was a radical break with the past. If you owed money, once you’re adopted, you don’t owe money.

Literally all your debts were eradicated. Your previous allegiances were gone. You are not the person you once were ... the first privilege is access to God, the second is God's care and provision, the third is God's discipline ... fourth is inheritance'¹⁰

It's a beautiful picture of redemption, forgiveness, and adoption and the climax of the movie is Ben-Hur experiencing it spiritually. Paul wants his readers to know, and God wants us to know as we read Ephesians 1, that this is what every believer in Christ alone as Lord and Master has received! The Lord came and chose us (v. 4) out from other slaves to pay in full for us (v. 7) and He brings us into His service in His house and in v. 5 adopts us as sons, freeing us from our slavery to sin, treating us as sons! And none of this to our credit, but as v. 6 says it is all to the praise of the glory of grace of Christ alone that He has highly favored us with in His Beloved!

We all would have and should have died with the rest of the slaves. We were and still would be His enemy apart from grace working in our hearts, but we now have his seal, the HS (v. 13-14), his mark: *son of the King of Kings!* And because of the victory Christ won at Calvary, we are granted to Him as a gift to do with as He pleases. And for His good pleasure, He has removed all charges from us, full forgiveness, remission of sin, a cleared record, and He stands in God's Supreme Court as our Advocate and Defense Attorney to protect His adopted brothers from the accuser of the brethren!

Calling every daughter, Calling every son
All who've been adopted Through a sacrifice of love

There's no need for you to fear Your debts have all been cleared ... [song: "God Delights in You"]

The same word for "remission" in Eph. 1:7 is used in Lev. 16:26 in the Greek translation of the OT for the cleansing of the one who sent the scapegoat outside the camp, never to be seen from again. That symbolizes what has been done with our sins upon another.

The Bible speaks of God's forgiveness as sending sins away for good, or covering them to never be seen again, hiding sins in the small of His back, where they can't be reached again, it talks about him blotting out our sins, it describes them being put as far as the east is from the west or being put in the bottom of the ocean.

When I bring my sins to the Lord Jesus He casts them into the depths of the sea—forgiven and forgotten. He also puts up a sign, "No Fishing Allowed!" —Corrie ten Boom

Some of your Bibles have the word "sins" in v. 7 – others have the word "trespasses." We all know what trespassing is; crossing a line or boundary that we're not supposed to, like when you see a sign at someone's house or property: "No Trespassing Allowed." God has every right to take us out every time we trespass His boundaries. When we violate His Law in our hearts and His external Word, a just and holy judge can't just let things slide. If a human judge were to say, "I know this criminal should receive the death penalty for his crimes, but hey, nobody's perfect, we'll let him go free ..." we would consider that judge unjust. God is an infinitely just and perfect judge. We all have committed an infinite number of crimes.

Our rap sheet wraps around us and runs out the door of the court-room and is a continual roll of paper that just keeps going, all the time all our life we sin and fall short of the glory of God (Exhibit A and B is all the evidence needed: the 2 greatest commandments alone we all violate).

In God's Supreme Court, the Book is thrown at us, God's Law shuts us all up as guilty, Romans 3 says. The full penalty, the fine must be paid, and we have no ability to pay it. God's gavel is ready to come down, life sentence eternally, with no possibility of parole – the only hope: *Christ alone*. Solus Christus. In Christ alone my hope is found.

Verse 7 says “*In Him ... there is pardon / forgiveness*” –how so? Christ alone can raise His hand and say “Your honor, my client is guilty, and deserves the full extent of judgment, and cannot pay the fine that is owed. Your honor, I have the payment with me. Let the court know I've paid in full what was owed and also I am here to transfer all my assets and accomplishments to my client's record. Scratch from the record, your honor, what my client is guilty of and put that all on my record now, based on the precedence law of the OT, and the transfer and substitution principles in said Law. I take the public execution in his place. The defense rests its case.”

The judge brings down the gavel, “Justice is served. Sinner, you are now declared righteous.” I need no other argument and no other plea. It is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me!

2 Cor. 5:21 says God ‘*made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*’

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;* ²⁵ *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;* ²⁶ *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea,
a great High Priest whose name is love who ever lives and pleads for me
... Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me.
One with Himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high, With Christ my Savior and my God! [song “Before the Throne”]

An older hymn by Phillip Bliss says it this way [“Free from the Law”, 1873]:

Free from the law, O happy condition, Jesus has bled and there is remission ... Now we are free, there's no
condemnation, Jesus provides a perfect salvation.

“Come unto Me,” O hear His sweet call, Come, and He saves us once for all.
Children of God, O glorious calling, Surely His grace will keep us from falling
Passing from death to life at His call; Blessed salvation once for all.

Refrain: Once for all, O sinner, receive it, Once for all, O brother, believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall, Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

But that's not all that Paul celebrates. There's more in Eph 1:7-8! Redemption, remission, and...
#3. Riches Lavished

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.

NKJV “*which He **made to abound** toward us ...*

Our Father in heaven gives abundant, super-abounding grace, over-abundant grace I’m calling it. It should produce overwhelmed thanksgiving in our hearts and on our lips and it should affect the way we live. It’s not just “grace” at the end of v. 7, it’s “the riches of His grace.” And He doesn’t give “*out of His riches.*” John Rockefeller, America’s richest man ever, I’ve heard was famous for giving a dime to poor boys, which was a big deal in those days for them, but not for Rockefeller giving out of a little pocket change. God gives in a different way and measure.

Ephesians 1:7 is more like Esther 1:7: *wine was **lavished according to the bounty of the king.*** [NIV “in keeping with the king’s generosity”]

God gives “*according to His riches*” – He gives a vast estate and inheritance of massiveness and lavishness; adopted heirs in Christ!

1 Jn 3:1 (NIV) *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

In Luke 15 the Prodigal Son repents and returns, hoping to just be a servant at his father’s house, anything better than pig leftovers ...

²⁰ ... while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him ... ²² the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; ²³ and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;

Tun in closing to 2 Sam. 9 for an OT picture of lavish grace.

Daniel 2:48 (NIV) *Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and **lavished many gifts on him.** He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all ...*

Isaiah 25:6 (NAS) *The LORD of hosts will prepare **a lavish banquet for all peoples** on this mountain ...*

2 Samuel 9:6 *Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul [David’s former enemy], came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. [in the context we also learn he was orphaned and crippled – his dad died and a nurse dropped him, and now he couldn’t walk] And David said, “Mephibosheth.” And he said, “Here is your servant!” ⁷ David said to him, “Do not fear [he was apparently afraid as a family enemy of David, he may now die, but David says instead], for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and **you shall eat at my table regularly.**” ... [end of v. 11] So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table **as one of the king’s sons** ... ¹³ So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he **ate at the king’s table regularly.** Now he was lame in both feet.*

Once an enemy, now seated at his table ... once an orphan now as one of the king's sons! David is here a man after God's own heart, the God of adopting grace to special-needs spiritual cripples, to the disabled and unable spiritually, who have to be carried to the table

- to prodigals with pig-slop stains on clothes, having wasted their life, but coming to the Father hoping to be his lowly servant
- to spiritual lepers who shout out "unclean" but who come to Christ to be cleaned, willing to be washed or do what He says
- to the spiritually poor and bankrupt and destitute who can't even lift up their head to beg for grace but keep their head down as they say "Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner"
- to spiritually blind who cry "have mercy on me son of David"
- to spiritual captives, prisoners, slaves rescued and redeemed and released and ransomed all by rich lavish matchless grace!

If you have not yet experienced that grace, recognize yourself that way today spiritually and sinfully, and repent and trust Christ alone and the Father has open arms for broken hearts with humble faith.

Ligon Duncan applies it to those already saved: '... remember that when you go to your heavenly Father, you're going to the Father who gave His Son for you. Don't you ever doubt the greatness, the magnitude, the beneficence, the generosity ... the lavishness, of His love. He's given His Son for you. Don't you ever go to Him thinking, 'Well, will the Lord give me what I need? [or does He love me?]' He's given you His Son! The cost of your redemption was His Son, and everything else, all of it rolled up together doesn't equal the value of His Son ... **And he's reminding you that as He has given you a costly love, He's calling you to give a costly love.** As He has extended to you a costly grace, He's calling you to show a costly grace to others. Perhaps you're in a relationship right now that has been fractured. It may be with a family member, it may be with a friend, it may be with a fellow member of this congregation. And there's so much hurt because of the injustice that has been done, that you continue to cycle through. The bitterness lays hold. You're not able to let it go, and the cycle of bitterness perpetuates the continued break in the relationship. And you know, the only thing that will ever break that cycle is if somebody steps out with costly love.

But how can you do that when justice has been wounded? When your own reputation has been besmirched, and your own honor has been called in to question? Or when you have been deeply wronged, irreparably wronged? You can only do that if you realize that a greater costly love, a greater costly grace, has been given to you that frees you from your bitterness and enables you to display the same kind of costly love to others.'¹¹

One other song on the *Sons and Daughters* album ["You Made us Your Own"] says it this way:

You sought out the wanderers Made the prodigals come home
 With a lavish feast You welcomed us For You made us Your own
 You have loved us like You love Your Son
 We are heirs with Christ, bought by His blood
 Oh how great the love that we've been shown
 We're Your children now, You made us Your own ...
 And forever we will be amazed That You made us Your own

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- ¹ For more of the history and full text of various presidential proclamations, see www.pilgrimhall.org
- ² J. Armitage Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians: Exposition of the Greek Text* (Kregel, 1979), p. 29.
- ³ D. H. Stern. *Jewish New Testament commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament*. Clarksville, Md.: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992 1st ed., citation adapted from Moshe Ben-Maier, *How A Jew Explains Ephesians*, (Netivyah, P.O. Box 8043, Jerusalem 91080, 1978), pp. 23–25)
- ⁴ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, chapter 19.
- ⁵ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose*, chapter on Adoption.
- ⁶ <http://www.sovereigngraceministries.org/blogs/cj-mahaney/post/2009/09/11/Sons-and-Daughters-mp3-cd-album.aspx> (lyrics and samples available online).
- ⁷ J. V. McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1981), Vol. 5, p. 221-22.
- ⁸ Wallace, Lew. *Lew Wallace; an Autobiography* (Harper & Brothers, 1906).
- ⁹ From book edition at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2145/2145-h/2145-h.htm>
- ¹⁰ Rick Phillips, “The Good News of Adoption,” Together for Adoption Conference 2009, www.togetherforadoption.org
- ¹¹ http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/Ephesians/03a_ephesians_1.7_8.htm