

<sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>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 ancestors, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

### **You Were Redeemed!**

1. The Cost
2. The Payment
3. The Value

### **Time to Do Some Cost Analysis**

Have you ever seen the show "Shark Tank"? The premise is that savvy business leaders and CEO's, called sharks, with a whole lot of money get to hear sales pitches from hopeful guests with startup companies that are looking for partnerships and investments--a little extra money to take their company to the next level. So the hopeful contestants make their best pitch for their invention or their product and then the sharks start asking the important bottom line questions about *the cost, the payment, and the value*.

Now maybe those three terms sound similar, but the sharks' questions quickly reveal the details they're after. How much does it cost you to produce this new gadget? Then, what's the price that people are actually paying for it? And how much investment or payment do you need to help this out? And finally, what's the value? What do people get out of this? What's the value for us to partner with you? Based on *the cost, the payment, and the value*, the sharks make their decision to invest or pass. Sometimes, the contestants clam up, they can't answer the questions and the sharks eat 'em right up. Their pitch falls flat and their hopes are dashed.

Today, Peter's words help us do a bit of cost analysis so that we know, and know by heart, the most important truths we could ever know, about our ***Redemption: the cost, the payment, and the value***.

### **The Context**

The words we meditate on today were written by Peter, addressed "**to God's elect, strangers in the world.**" Peter first praises God for a new birth into a living hope that he has given us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He speaks of the grace and salvation brought about by Jesus the Messiah through his suffering and death. Based on those gospel truths that God accomplished for us, then Peter moves forward to talk about how the Gospel bears fruit in us and through us. He calls believers to live as God's obedient children, to not conform to our evil desires, and then he lays out the whole law in one stringent demand. "**Be holy, because I am holy.**" (1 Peter 1:16).

That isn't offered as a friendly suggestion with no teeth. Peter says God is going to hold us to it. "**Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially...**" (1 Peter 1:17). He isn't going to play favorites. It won't depend on how many years we've been members, or what we looked like on the outside. He's going to judge individually and fairly, based on the real truth, and that forces us to evaluate **1) the cost of sin**--first what it costs us.

### **1. The Cost to Us**

Sin costs us our lives, as the soul who sins is the one who will die. It puts us into a world of debt that we could never afford. It costs us our relationship with God, which is not what it promises to give us as we do it.

Sin promises pleasure or fun or relief, but it can only deliver death. So bottom line, how much does sin cost us? It doesn't just put us in debt, it actually pays us! **"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23).** It costs us the eternal inheritance of heaven, and any and every sin is enough to do it.

If the thought of a holy God fairly judging your sin makes you shake in your boots, that is what is supposed to do to the sinful flesh inside us. Peter says, **"Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners in reverent fear."** (1 Peter 1:17). The thought of our sins costing us eternal life and sending us to hell should terrify our flesh the next time the devil sweetly beckons us to take one little step over the line that always leads to more. God's law is there to curb us from zooming down the empty way of life that will kill us. That's a big cost for us.

### 1.b The Cost to God

The next thing we must consider in the cost analysis is the cost to God. Peter says, **"Live out your lives in fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you, but with the precious blood of Christ..."** (1 Peter 1:18,19). That passage starts with a law sense that sometimes we skip right past in our hurry to hear good news, but the hymn writer Thomas Kelly captures the law sense of this verse well in one of our favorite Lenten hymns, Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted. *"If you think of sin but lightly, nor suppose the evil great. Here you see its nature rightly. Here's its guilt may estimate. Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load. 'Tis the word the Lord's anointed, Son of Man and Son of God."*

Our sins racked up no small tab, the cost of which couldn't just be paid for with precious metals, as expensive as they are. The Old Testament sacrifices proclaimed over and over, **"There is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood."** (Leviticus 17:11) And of the thousands of bulls and goats that were slain on Israel's altar, not a one of them could actually count as the payment to redeem us from sin. It demanded something more—only one substance could ever be enough—the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without blemish or defect.

There's a famous painting of Martin Luther preaching from the time of the Reformation that hangs as part of the Triptych on the altar at St. Mary's church in Wittenburg, Germany. It's a picture that illustrates the two senses of this verse in poignant fashion. Luther stands in the pulpit of the castle church preaching and across from him are the people gathered to listen. Between them, right in the front of the church planted in the stone tiles is the cross, with Christ pierced and nailed to it. The walls behind look as though striped and spattered with blood. Luther preaches, with one hand holding his place in the word of God and the other pointing at Christ. What was he saying? Well, it's a painting not a movie, but I imagine him preaching the thoughts of this passage. *"See what our sins cost God? Not silver or gold. My sin cost God his Son. Your sin cost Jesus his blood. Our sins nailed our Savior to a cross."*

### 2. The Payment Made

Over in the crowd, there's some that are looking at the ceiling or the floor or even backwards, it's not really hitting home. But then there's those whose eyes are fixed on Christ crucified. They know they put him there and then you could imagine Luther preaching the thoughts of this verse a second time. **"You know that it was not with perishable things that you were redeemed, but with the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without blemish or defect."** Yes, your sins drove a hard bargain, and God paid it in full, with nothing left for you to pay. From the riches of his grace, he took the cost on himself and made **2. the payment for your redemption.** See who hangs there, it's the eternal and beloved Son who was given for you. It's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Lamb who was slain to purchase you for God. **"He was chosen before the creation of the world,"** for this very purpose, **"but was revealed in these last times for your sake."**

The cost was great and God's grace was greater, his pockets deeper, and his love so boundless that he should give his only son for us. In the savvy business wisdom of the world, this would have been a harebrained decision—to spare no expense, to give up so much, even his own Son, the heir, for lost and condemned creatures who had rebelled against their Creator. But that's payment he made to redeem you.

### 3. The Value

We've considered the cost; we've taken to heart the payment that was made. Now let's see the result and the value that God brings about through death and resurrection of his Son. Peter says, **"Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God."** (1 Peter 1:21). Peter answers an important question there, "How did you come to faith?" "Through him (Christ) you believe in God." It wasn't your hard work or determination to climb up the ladder, or the good decisions you made. It was through him. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, he raised you from the dead so that you now have faith and hope and value.

The funny thing about value is that often lies in the eye of the beholder, and what they will pay for it. There's a painting called "Salvator Mundi," (that's Latin for Savior of the world.) In 1958, it was sold for \$45, not much at all. It was heavily touched up and painted over to the point it was almost unrecognizable. Many decades later, there was someone who suspected what it was and purchased it, they restored and resurrected it so that it could be recognized as the original work of Leonardo da Vinci, and the painting sold in 2017 for 450 million dollars.

When God looked at us, his rebellious creations headed for hell, and he made the priceless payment of his Son to resurrect us, he re-established our value. He had created us in the image of God, and even from the foundation of the world, he had declared our value when he chose the Lamb without blemish or defect to be our Savior. Sin stripped that value away, until the Beholder proved our worth to him when he paid the price which makes us priceless, valued at the blood of God.

That my dear friends is the value with which God wants you to live your life—basking in the glow of being his dearly loved, deeply prized children. He wants you to live as his holy children, treasuring the garment of salvation he purchased for you, and being careful to keep it clean and pristine.

There's weird trend that has come about among some brides on their wedding day. Maybe not super common, but enough that even I've heard of it. It's called, "Trash the Dress." The bride gets all prettied up for her wedding, she puts on her expensive dress, and when the ceremony is over, well that's enough of that. Then it's off to go take pictures jumping into the ocean or rolling around in the mud, or having a paint and powder fiasco, in the wedding dress. Apparently, it's supposed to be fun or freeing or something. I don't get it.

Except that I do, because it's what my sinful nature wants to do every day with the garment of salvation that God has dressed me in. It wants to roll around in the mud unless I remember the cost of sin, until I remember the price and the payment that was made for me, and I treasure again the value God set on me. These are the truths by which you and I were redeemed. They raise us to life and empower us to live as God's holy people, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to life everlasting. Amen.