

142. Whom Did Christ Redeem?

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 1 Tim. 1,15.

Jesus Christ came to save sinners. What sinners are meant? What are their names, and how are they described? By the word "sinner" every man, woman, or child is meant, everyone who has a soul to lose and to save. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." They are all gone aside; *all men* are sinners. And Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for *all*. And the Savior addresses all, saying: "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden." Every man is meant. No one ever has reason to say that Christ has slighted him. Christ's invitation means: No matter how long you may have sinned; no matter how often you may have sneered at *My* gracious invitation; no matter how black your record may be, – *you* are meant.

Christ came to save sinners. He came to save *every* sinner. "All" excludes none, but includes everyone. Men are lost only if they will not have the salvation Christ has procured for them. He has redeemed all sinners. They are lost only if they exclude themselves by unbelief. Do not think that your sins are too many and *too* great to be forgiven. Paul does not only say that Christ came to save sinners, but He adds: "*Of* whom I am chief." And he was a great sinner. He had blasphemed Christ. He had persecuted the disciples of Christ. Yet this enormous sinner was right in saying that Christ came into the world to save also Him, the chief of sinners; Christ came to save sinners, none excepted. In Him there is salvation for all.

Already at the birth of Christ the angel said that the Christmas-tidings of great joy should be "to *all* people." Trust in this faithful saying and accept the Savior as your own. Rejoice in your Savior, believe in your Redeemer, cling to the Lord Jesus Christ, and peace and salvation will be yours.

Prayer.

Dear heavenly Father, grant me grace to look upon Christ Crucified, who was delivered also for my offenses and was raised again for my justification. Open to me, as a safe refuge, His bleeding wounds, in which so many a poor sinner has found comfort and salvation. Create also in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Do not let me perish under the load of my sin or despair, but do Thou turn to me and be gracious unto me. Look upon my misery and distress and save me. Amen.

Delay not, delay not, O sinner, draw near,
The waters of life are now flowing for thee.
No price is demanded, the Savior is here;
Redemption is purchased, salvation is free.

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