

4th Sunday in Lent**Date: 15-3-2015**

Introduction: I praise and thank God for the privilege and opportunity to worship with you and also to share God's word with you this morning. Today is the fourth Sunday in lent.

Based on the two texts, let us meditate two important themes, that we often times remember during this Lenten season: They are ***“Christ's redemption and Christ's compassion and Passion”***.

1. From the epistle text [Galatians 4:21-31] Paul talks about how the sons of Israel were considered redeemed by the covenant of promise. Paul gives a list of things that made Galatian believers under bondage. How were they before redemption?

1. They were under the bondage of elementary things of the world: v3- while we were children we were held in bondage under the elementary things of the world.
2. They were under the law: v4 you were redeemed when you were under the law to receive adoption as sons. Now you are sons of god because the spirit of His son has sent into your hearts.
3. They were slaves to the idols: v8 at that time you were slaves to the idols but now you come to know god. how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless things? Enslaved all over again?

While explaining the gospel, Paul argued with the believers of Galatian church from the point of the covenant of promise. Paul was trying to remind them about the O.T story how the children of promise were freed by the free-woman, Sarah from the hand of bond-woman, Hagar. It began when Isaac was mocked by Ishmael, Sarah saw this and told Abraham to drive away Hagar and her son. [Gen21:9]. Paul compares he two children of the two women as follows:

--the son[Ishmael] by the bond-woman was born according to the flesh, and the son [Isaac] by the free-woman was born through the promise.

--allegorically, these women are two covenants. Covenant of Mount Sinai and the covenant of Jerusalem.

--Children who are to be slaves and children who are to be free. Children born by the flesh and children born by the spirit.

Paul says he who was born according to the flesh [Ishmael] persecuted [Isaac] who was born according to the Spirit. So what the scripture says, cast out the bond woman and her son.[Gen21:10,12]

Therefore Paul reiterating the fact that now:

1. You, {the Galatian church} are freed/redeemed children of the free-woman, Sarah, but not the children of the bond-woman, Hagar, the Egyptian, the Arabian.
2. You are now redeemed by the spirit of His son, sent into your hearts: V6. Just as you are freed/redeemed physically by the free woman so you are redeemed /freed spiritually by the spirit of His son.
3. Christ has set you free from the slavery of sin and punishment: VGal5: —it was for freedom that Christ set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

During the Lenten season, what we remember in Christ is the great sacrifice that has been offered to the human kind. What is the great sacrifice? His precious body and blood that are broken and shed for the remission of sins. Here there is no need of circumcision of the flesh but certainly there is a great need of circumcision of the heart and soul. True freedom for the soul from the sin—A spiritual freedom. Therefore, Paul concluded saying, we are the children of Christ, redeemed and freed by His precious blood.

Quotations on redemption.....1. Our redemption through the suffering of Christ is that deeper love within us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also secures for us the true liberty of the children of God, in order that we might do all things out of love rather than out of fear - love for him that has shown us such grace that no greater can be found. [Peter Abelard](#)

2.The idea of redemption is always good news, even if it means sacrifice or some difficult times. [Patti Smith](#)

Saint Augustine once was a slave to the sin of adultery in Bombay red-light area. Through his mother's prayers he was saved and redeemed by the blood of Christ. After some time he came to India, to Bombay and walking alone in the streets of red-light area. Suddenly, a woman was shouting aloud, running after him and said- Hi! Augustine! Don't you remember me? It is I. But Augustine replied saying –It is not me. I am not the same Augustine whom you have met before. Friends! It is the power of Christ, the redeemer who redeemed Augustine on that day but now He will redeem you from the slavery of sin.

Application: Friends! Are we redeemed by Christ with His precious blood that cleanses all your sin, transgression, filth?

We may be freed or redeemed from many things: physically from sicknesses, religiously from idolatry, morally from disgrace, financially from corruption, socially from the caste system, mentally from the pain and suffering. We praise and thank God for all kinds of redemption. But what about your spiritual redemption?

Ref. Romans 3:24 says- redemption which is in Christ Jesus, through His blood[Eph 1:7] Christ redeems us from every deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession[Tit2:14]

Friends! Let us remember, Christ is our redeemer who can cleanse from the bondage of all our sins.

II. From the gospel lesson [John 6: 1-15] we notice here Christ's compassion over the people and His passion for the kingdom of God but not for the kingship.

The Context is more clear in Mark6:31,33,34: Jesus was tired of His day's work, and they did not have time to eat.[v31] so he invited his disciples to come to a lonely place and take rest for a while. But people recognized Him going and ran together on foot from all the cities, ahead of them.

Jesus went ashore and saw great multitude and he felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without shepherd [Mark6: 34] How did he feel compassion? First, his compassion satisfied their spiritual hunger [v34c] he began

to teach them many things, then his compassion satisfied their physical hunger by doing a miracle of multiplying five loaves and two fish to five thousand.

When it was quite late, His disciples came up to Him and said [v35b and 36] Lord, send them away so that they may go out and buy something to eat. Jesus said you must give to eat. Then Jesus did this miracle. This is the miracle story in which we see Christ's compassion first to their hungry souls and then to their hungry bodies.--The miracle of feeding the five thousand.

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” — [Dalai Lama XIV, *The Art of Happiness*](#).

Before he did this miracle, Jesus tried to test the faith of the disciples.

1. The faith of Philip:

--very discouraging: It is already late in the evening. Lord, send them away to go to the villages nearby and buy something to eat. Jesus said you must give them food to eat.

--his dependence of ignorance: human calculations, facts and figures and money rather than Christ and His mighty power.

--he failed in his test of faith in spite of his past experiences seen, and done by Christ. It is a question of impossibility—200 denaries not sufficient for them to eat a little. For men it is impossible but for God nothing is impossible.

--he is totally forgotten that the Lord would do a miracle for them? Or forgotten that He will give them what is required of them?

2. The faith of Andrew:

--First he tried to solve the problem. He searched for something to eat in the whole crowd, at last he could find a solution saying [v6:9] there is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?

--he had a doubting faith: But's and what's questions and doubts? He sets his eyes and mind on the circumstances rather than the providence of God.

--he also failed though he had seen and experienced many wonders and miracles done by Christ before.

3. The demonstration of Jesus' faith:

--he knew what he was intending to do: v6

--notice these words of faith: Have the people sit down: v10

--then he took the loaves, blessed them [Mark6:41], having given thanks and distributed the bread and fish: v11.

--they were filled, ate as much as they wanted:v12. And the disciples gathered up and filled 12 baskets of left over fragments.

Here what Jesus did was demonstration of His faith in God the Father. We see here not only God's providence but also His abundance. Jesus did all this because he felt compassion for them as they were sheep without shepherd.

Friends! At the end something interesting has happened? When people saw this miracle, they came to a conclusion that Christ is the true messiah. They were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him King, but Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone to pray. [Mark6:46].

In other words he declined to be the king of this world. Because he said, the Son of Man has come to seek and save which was lost and give His life as a ransom for many. He did not come to establish an earthly or a political kingdom but to establish the kingdom of God- a spiritual kingdom.

It is very clear that he had overcome the temptations of worldly powers, positions and glory. What did he do? He withdrew/ran away from them to a mountain to pray.

What a model our Lord left behind for all of us to follow, really a true model to the universal church. This is exactly fitting to our church situation.....to the Bishops, to the pastors, to the elders who are running after positions, powers, money, name and fame. We are running towards powers but Jesus running away from them.

Application: During this Lenten season, friends! Let us try to practice the virtue of compassion: both spiritual and physical. Also try to have passion for building God's kingdom, not certainly an earthly kingdom to become a king over it.

Let us also ask God's grace that the precious blood of Christ must cleanse/redeem us from the slavery of sin and punishment. Amen.