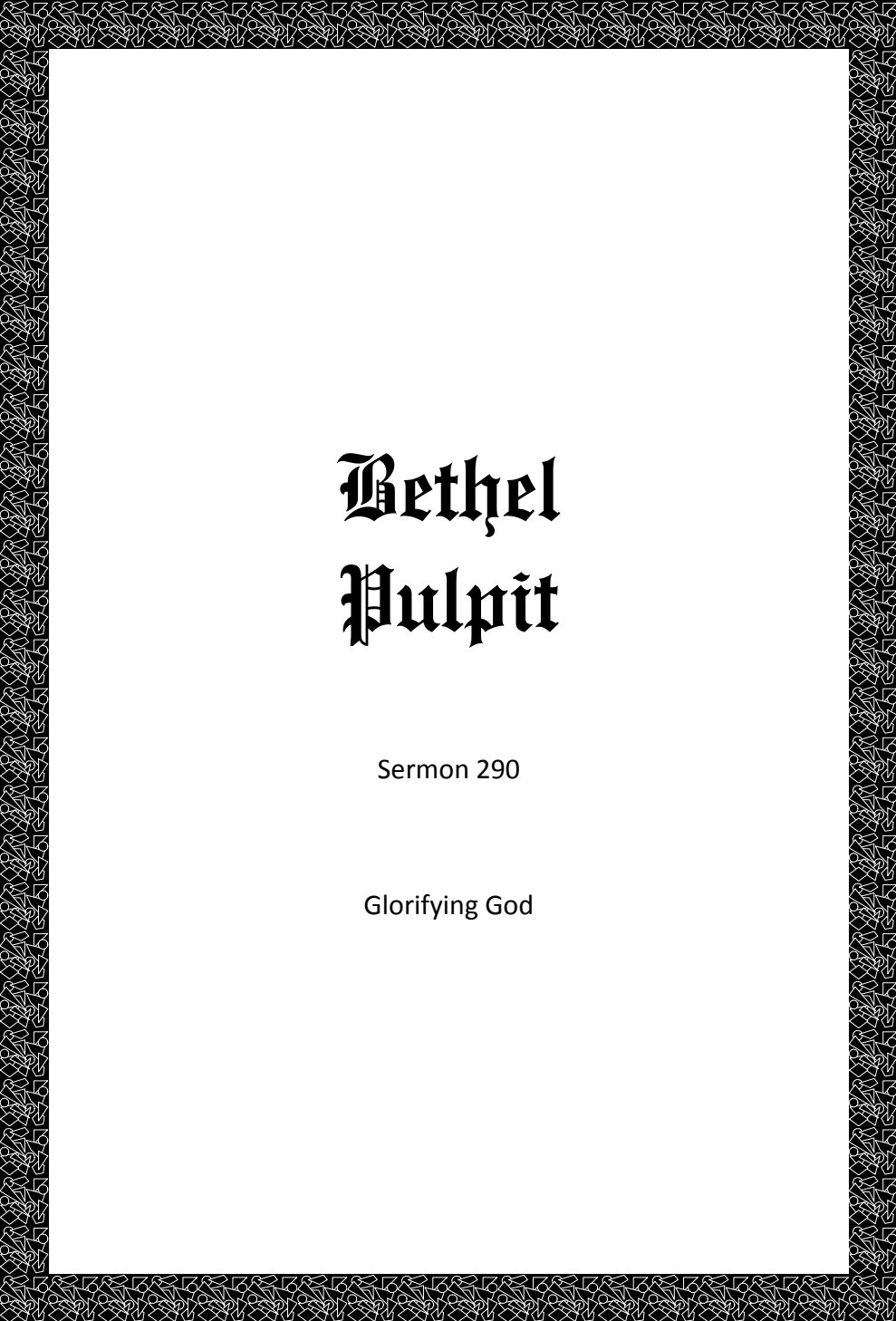




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 290

Glorifying God

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 13th September, 2009**

Text: *"Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20).*

No more blessed word could ever be spoken to a guilty sinner than this: "Ye are bought with a price." This is the blessing of redemption, to be redeemed from sin and death and hell. That is our greatest need – redemption, to be set free – because we have sinned. We are accountable, we are guilty in the sight of God. We can by no means pay the price of our own ransom. But how wonderful for the Lord Jesus to say to a guilty sinner, "Ye are bought with a price"!

"Redeemed, with Jesus' blood redeemed,
His beauties called to trace,
No angel can be more esteemed
Than sinners saved by grace."

This price was paid by the incarnate Son of God. No-one else could pay the price. It was paid at Calvary when the Lord Jesus died. Eternally they are set free from the curse of a broken law, from God's condemnation, from the claims of divine justice, because the price has been paid. And do not just think of it as some legal transaction. It is that; it *is* a legal transaction; it is a covenant transaction; but remember the price was paid in suffering and agony and blood and death. Our hymnwriter puts it like this:

"He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, His own heart's blood."

If you and I are led and taught by the Spirit, we shall feel our need here, our need of a Redeemer, our need of redemption, and we shall see such an attraction in the blood of Christ. "Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We shall seek our forgiveness here. We shall seek cleansing here in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. We shall think of that dying cry, "It is finished," and that voice from heaven: "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." "Bought with a price," eternally set free. "Who shall lay any

thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" You say, There are plenty who condemn. Satan condemns; sometimes the world condemns; conscience condemns; my own heart condemns; the holy law of God condemns. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." That is it: "bought with a price." "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

O that word that the Lord speaks to His beloved people as He sees them redeemed by the blood of Christ: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." He claims them as His own. They no longer belong to sin; they no longer belong to Satan. Once they were Satan's blind slaves. They loved his service well. But they no longer belong to sin or Satan or self. "Ye are not your own." Why? Because "bought with a price," you belong to your Redeemer. How often He speaks of *My* people, *My* sheep, *My* church, *My* beloved. His as the eternal gift of His Father, His by redemption, and His by calling. Because all those for whom the Saviour has paid the price will be set free.

That rather mysterious word in the minor prophets – I have seen a beauty in it. The Lord says, "I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them." It is the figure of a shepherd. He has bought the sheep, but he hisses, or as the word means, he blows on his shepherd's pipe. And it is an irresistible call.

"There is a period known to God
When all His sheep, redeemed by blood,
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
Turn to the fold, and enter in."

It is a strange word: "I will hiss for them." The shepherd has bought the sheep. He wants it to follow him, and he blows on his pipe, and the sheep comes after him.

I have often told you the story of the poor shepherd who had only two sheep left. Because of his poverty, he had to sell them, but almost immediately somehow he received the money to buy them back. He went down to the sheep market where there were thousands of sheep. He paid for two, but he said, "I want my own." They said, "You can have them if you can find them." So he went a little way from the sheep market and blew on his shepherd's pipe, and one here came out and one there and went

after him. That is redemption. They were his; he bought them; he paid the price; but he did not leave them there. They were brought forth. They were led out. They followed him.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.” So this was beautifully prefigured, Israel in Egypt. There they were in darkness, bondage, captivity, slaves. But the price on the passover night, the blood of the lamb, the blood shed, the lamb slain, the blood sprinkled. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” – safety under the blood. But He did not leave them in Egypt. They were not their own; they were bought with a price. They had to be brought forth out of Egypt into the wilderness with a high and mighty hand.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.” No more sacred word could ever be spoken to a guilty sinner than this, that they belong to Christ. They are His now and eternally. There is one very blessed, beautiful truth hidden here, treasured up here, and that is their everlasting safety, their eternal security. *Because* He has paid such a price, because they no longer belong to self or another, because they belong to Him, He will never, never lose them. That is their safety; that is their security. “Bought with a price.” “The price, His own heart’s blood.” Then they can never perish, they can never be lost. Satan can never steal them from Him.

So it is a very beautiful, blessed, sacred truth. The figure is this, very simply. If you have something and you have paid a large sum for it, you will not easily lose it; you will not lose it at all if you can help it. You will keep it safe; you will guard it. And how much more the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with the purchase of His own, precious, sin-atonement blood! “None, none can e’er be lost.” That glorious truth, the eternal safety of the people of God, all of them, every one of them, even the most sinful, the most unworthy, the weakest, the most helpless. “None, none can e’er be lost,” because they are a purchased possession, because they are bought with the blood of Christ.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.” Well, it is that beautiful truth, that glorious truth, what Christ has done for His people, shedding His precious blood for them at Calvary, redeeming them, claiming them as His own. “Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation”; sure of reaching heaven.

But then there is another truth, a second truth, a different truth that the Holy Spirit through the apostle builds on this, and that is the truth of sanctification. If you have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, if He has done all this for you, if He has suffered, bled and died for you, all this that you might be His and His eternally, then how you should seek to honour Him in return, and to love Him, and to obey Him, and to walk worthy of Him, and not grieve Him, and not offend him. It is not legal ground; it is gospel ground. Like that famous missionary said, “If Christ is God, and I know He is, if He died for me, and I believe He did, then there should be no sacrifice too great for me.”

That is the point here. “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God.” There are not any harsh conditions. There are not any legal requirements. The Lord has done all this in love for His people, and in return He asks for their love and their obedience. He asks for their hearts. “My son, give Me thy heart.” Do not give it to the world; do not give it to Satan. “My son, give Me thy heart.” When these truths are brought home in our conscience by the Spirit of God, as we are enabled to walk in the light and liberty of them, we do not want to dishonour that worthy name by which we are called. We do not want to sin against the Lord. We are sad when we do. We do not want to grieve Him who has done so much for us.

Now it is on this ground that the apostle appeals to the church at Corinth. Corinth was a most evil, wicked, immoral city, and the church of God was planted there. Doesn't Paul begin when he writes, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.” The church was *in* Christ and it was *at* Corinth. But it is an identical circumstance with you and me today. We are living in an evil world, an ungodly world, and sadly the church at Corinth was being influenced by the standards of the world. How easily the standards of the world begin to creep in, even into the church of God. Things which even the world frowned on fifty years ago are now being accepted by people who call themselves Christians. Things which caused general grief even in society fifty years ago, now people take them as things for granted, things which do and will happen. Now the Lord has never lowered His standards, and He has said, You are as a city set upon a hill; let your light shine upon the dark places. “Ye are My witnesses.”

But the appeal is made on this ground: what the Lord has done for them in mercy. When you think what they deserve and what the Lord has done and His great love wherewith He loved them, even when they were dead in sins, and even in going to the cross to die, to shed His precious blood. And because of this, He calls His people to walk worthy, to glorify His name, to be separate from the world which lies in wickedness, to be distinguished from the spirit of the world. As the apostle says, to keep their very clothing untarnished by the world.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: *therefore*” – because of this, on this ground, constrained by love – “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.” You would think he would start by saying, Glorify God in your spirit, wouldn’t you? “In your body.” Because in this and in the previous chapter he has been warning them about bodily sins especially, the terrible sin of fornication, sexual perversion, sex outside marriage, things that are forbidden by God. These are the sins of the body. Almost the whole of chapter 5 and the whole of chapter 6 are solemn warnings against this. It had even crept into the church, and people were even beginning to make excuses for it, and people were even beginning to take it for granted.

Now God will never lower His standards. He has some most awful things, some terrible things, some solemn things to say in this chapter. But to His beloved people He makes this appeal. It is on the ground of His grace. It is on the ground of His love. It is because He shed His most precious blood, because “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: *therefore* glorify God in your body.” And this awful sin and all the associated sexual sins are the very opposite of glorifying God in the body. They are dishonouring God in the body. They are disobeying God in the body. They are grieving God in the body.

So he starts here: “Therefore glorify God in your body.” You young people do not have it easy today with the awful fall in standards in everything all around us. O but the Lord still calls us to glorify His name.

“This should be His people’s aim,
Still to glorify His name.”

When God created man upon earth, He created him for this purpose: that His name might be glorified. And Adam did in unfallen innocency. But when Adam fell, then he dishonoured God instead of glorifying Him, and

by nature we do not glorify God. In our lost condition, we have no desire to glorify God. But when grace intervenes, when we have a sweet hope in Jesus and in His great salvation and in His precious, sin-atoning blood, then, “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God” – and he starts, “In your body.” Why? Because our bodies, if redeemed, are not our own; they belong to Christ.

But there are many things bound up with this, associated with it. “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God *in your body*.” Your ears are not your own to listen to evil things, lascivious things, God-dishonouring things. Yours ears are not your own to listen to slander, listen to gossip. “Ye are not your own ... glorify God in your body.” Your tongue is not your own to speak wrong words, careless words, slanderous words, unclean words, false words, untrue words, unnecessary words. Your tongues are not your own. “Therefore glorify God in your body.” Your feet are not your own to take you to wrong places where you should not be going. Your hands are not your own to do wrong things, sinful things, things that dishonour the Lord. Your eyes are not your own to look at evil things, to watch evil things. “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,” was the cry of the psalmist.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” The way you dress, the way you behave, the way you are seen by the world, the way you are seen by the people of God – now it touches everything. It touches the whole of our little lives. And the standard: to glorify God. There is a pair of balances here, the balances of the sanctuary. You are wondering, should you do it, or should you not do it? Can you go there? Can you not go there? Do you say, Yes, or do you say, No? Then, does it glorify God or does it not glorify God?

“This should be His people’s aim,
Still to glorify His name.”

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and *in your spirit*.” Now we do not always glorify God in our spirit, do we? Sometimes we have a bad spirit, a wrong spirit, a hard spirit, a worldly spirit, a God-dishonouring spirit, an unkind spirit, and that does not glorify God. You know, two of the epistles end like this: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” Most of the epistles end, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all,” or something like that; but two of the epistles end, “With your spirit.” “The

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be *with your spirit*.” Now we do need to pray for a gracious spirit that will honour God, that will glorify Him, and how we need the grace of God in all this! For, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Because in all these things we falter and we stumble and we fail, and yet if we have a believing view of our Saviour and the blood that He shed, then we shall be ashamed of these things. We will seek His forgiveness, we will want His cleansing, but we will not want Him to lower the standard.

“Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” And then an obedient spirit, to obey all that the Lord has lovingly said in His holy Word, under a principle of love as constrained by the love of Christ, as led by the love of Christ. So what a word is this! Really, this is the sanctifying effect of the death of Christ. The death of Christ justified His people. Through it they stand completely cleansed, completed righteous in the sight of a holy God. But we have our lives to live. We are still in the body. Then there is the sanctifying effect of the death of Christ. We think of that word, “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” “Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Body and soul, soul and body, all the redeemed people of God alike belong not to themselves, but belong to their God.

So there are the two sides to this: “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.” That blessed, comforting side of it: the safety, the everlasting security of the people of God; and then the other side, that when our hearts are right, we will love it just as much, this gracious effect that the Lord lovingly asks for in the hearts of those He has redeemed by His blood.

So may there be these two things: our desire to glorify our God and Saviour, to glorify Him when we come to the house of God, to glorify Him in our worship, to glorify Him in our praise, in our thanksgiving, to glorify Him in our homes, to glorify Him when we mingle with the world, to glorify Him day by day in our lives, to flee from everything which would dishonour Him. The honour and the glory of God. And then secondly, the source of it, a crucified Saviour who shed His precious blood that His

people might be redeemed. It is to have faith given by the Spirit of God, looking to Him, fearing to dishonour Him, walking in love before Him, desiring to go after Him, to follow after Him, the purchase of His blood. “Surrendered to the Crucified.” But then seeing all our life and our hope and our strength and all our supplies in Him, because it is only as He upholds us, preserves us, keeps us, strengthens us, supplies our need, that we are ever able to stand, that we are ever enabled by faith to walk before Him.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”