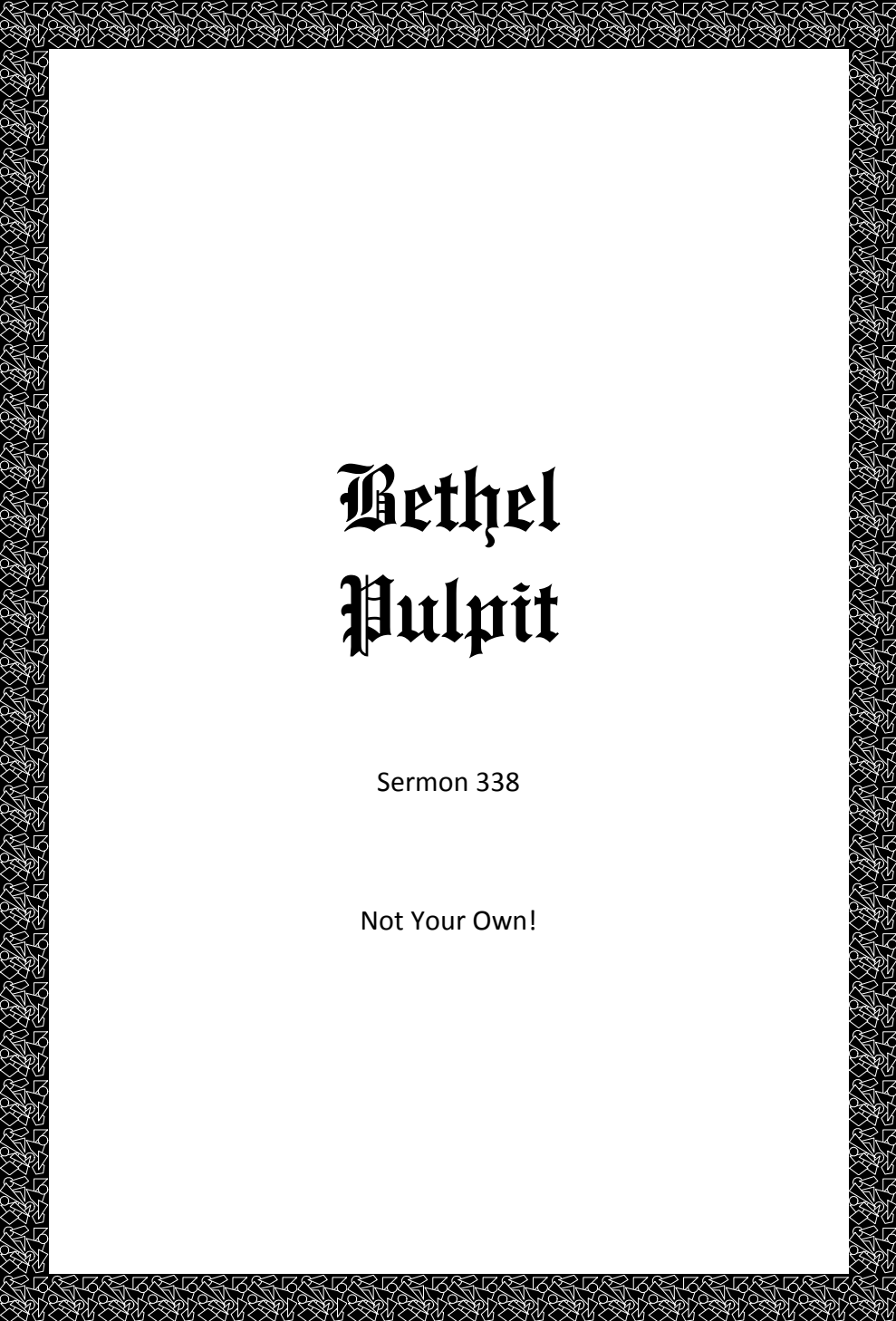




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 338

Not Your Own!

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 4th August, 2013**

Text: *"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20).*

What a wonderful, sacred truth this is, that the people of God are a blood-bought people!

"Dearly they're bought, highly esteemed;
Redeemed, with Jesus' blood redeemed."

"Bought with a price." "The price, His own heart's blood" – the ransom paid on the cross at Calvary when the dear Lamb of God suffered, bled and died; the price that was needful to satisfy divine justice; the price that was needful that the atonement might be made; the price that was needful that there might be a new and living way opened up whereby sinners, the chief of sinners, might be brought to heaven at last.

So this wonderful truth that God's people are a purchased people, a people redeemed by blood. You know what the word *redemption* means. It means *to set free by the payment of a price*. As I have often told you, our English King Richard the Lionheart in the Middle Ages was captured in battle by the French army and he was in prison in France. There is a well-known story: no-one knew where he was, but his faithful minstrel Blondel went to France from castle to castle playing outside each castle until he heard his master's voice responding. But the English people loved him so much that they raised a tremendous ransom that the King of France demanded, and the ransom was paid, and King Richard was free. That is just an illustration of what this word *redemption* means. It is to set free, but there must be the payment of a price. "Redeemed with ... the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Now I say these few things this morning by way of introduction.

There are two sides to this text, two different sides, though they are related to one another. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." One is a very blessed side, and the other is a very solemn side. I will try to speak to you on the blessed side first. The people of God are not their own. They belong to Christ. They belong to Him because He has purchased them with His own blood. You know that if you have

something and you have paid a great price for it, you are very careful. You will not easily lend it. You will not easily give it away. You do not want it to be broken. You do not want it to be stolen. So on this sacred ground we have the eternal salvation of the people of God and we have their everlasting security. “Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” Despite all their sin and their weakness and proneness to wander and all the opposition of sin and Satan and the allurements of this world, they can never be lost. This is the ground of it, and it is solid ground, because the Saviour has bought them with His own blood. That means how dearly He loves them, and that means that He will never part with them, that He will never lose them, that He will never cast them away.

Look how close to falling away Simon Peter seemed to come. You feel he was almost going as close as Judas Iscariot. But he was not his own; he was bought with a price. He was built on this foundation. We have this glorious truth: “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” But whenever we mention that word: “They shall never perish,” we think of that awful, dark, black background, that by nature we are perishing sinners, and apart from this precious blood, we would perish, and left to ourselves, we should still perish, but the Lord Jesus says, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price” – belonging to the Saviour. He says, “And they shall be Mine ... in that day when I make up My jewels,” which means that they are very dear in the Lord’s sight, which means they are very precious in the Lord’s sight. May the Lord give some of you this morning, those of you who are confessing your sins, seeking after Him, begging for the assurance, may He give you that sweet assurance: “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Then, beloved friends, you will “enjoy a gospel day, and heaven begun below.” “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.” Really, in letters of gold you could write that one word across the text this morning: “*Mine.*”

At the end of chapter 3, the apostle says, “Ye are Christ’s.” You no longer belong to Satan. You never did in the purposes of God from everlasting, but you did experimentally. You belonged to the world; you belonged to sin; you belonged to Satan, but no longer. “Ye are Christ’s.” I

have mentioned that there is a grave somewhere in England, and it has the person's name on, and it has that one word: "Christ's" – belonging to Him. It would be a wonderful thing if when you and I come to the end that could be written concerning us, because it is the one thing that really matters. Do you belong to the Saviour? Do I belong to the Saviour?

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." There are multitudes and this can never be said of them. They belong to Satan. O may it never be said finally of any of you in this chapel that when you come to the end of your days, you have attended Bethel Chapel, but you never belonged to the Saviour. "Ye are not your own," He says to His beloved people. "Ye are bought with a price."

That price was paid at Calvary. But the Lord Jesus comes and He claims them as His own. They are rightly His. They belong to Him. And the time comes when He claims them as His own, and He sees of the travail of His soul and He is satisfied. In other words, He sees this sinner and He thinks of the price He paid for this sinner, but He does not count it too great a price. Can you stand before that? You are not satisfied with yourself, yet the dear Saviour is satisfied with you. He does not think the price He paid on the cross too great a price for you, and He comes and He claims you as His own.

He does this in various ways. He teaches you your need of Him and shows you you cannot do without Him. In the past, you have been able, so you think, to manage without Him, but now you have to meet your Maker; you have sins to be forgiven; you cannot do without the Saviour. He is claiming you as His own. So He brings you to Himself. You are made willing in the day of His power. You are brought to His feet. You are brought to pray. You are asking Him to save you, and then as a seeking sinner you long that personally and feelingly He will claim you as His own. That hymn we often start the service with at Bethel:

"Come, and claim us as Thy portion,
And let us lay claim to Thee."

There is a sense in which the sinner lovingly and graciously and willingly gives himself to the Saviour. O this blessed truth, that Christ died for sinners, that He shed His precious blood as the ransom price, and so His people are safe, eternally secure! They belong to Him. They are

His now. They must be His and they shall be His to all eternity. It will be to sing the praises of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” and hath “washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Blessed truth: “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” That is the blessed side of it. Now the solemn side of it. If you and I are not our own, if we belong to Christ, what a standard is here set up concerning what our behaviour should be. We no longer belong to ourselves. We belong to Another, our Friend, our Saviour, our Lord, our God. So that we might never be lost, never perish, in the love of His heart He gave Himself in sufferings to death for us. Then what returns should there be from us? Yet how ashamed we are of our poor returns! But you do not want the standard lowering, do you? You would honour the Saviour.

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price,” that henceforth you should not live unto yourselves, but unto Him which died for you and rose again. “Ye are *not* your own.” There is an emphasis here: “*Not* your own, for ye are brought with a price.” The willing bond slave of the Saviour. The old prayer book prayer used to say this: “Thy service is perfect freedom.” “Not your own” – the willing bond slave of Jesus.

“Thine is the power; behold, I sit,
In willing bonds, beneath Thy feet.”

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Now as always in the epistles, Paul goes into the life of a believer. He sets forth the beautiful doctrines of the gospel; he sets forth the gracious experience; but he does not end it there. There is something that follows: how the believer should live. “Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” So he follows it here: “Therefore.” Why? Because you are not your own, because you are redeemed, because you are bought with a price, “*therefore* glorify God.” He starts off, “In your body.” “Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Really, the reason why Paul emphasises this, “In your body,” is because he is dealing with a terrible sin which had begun to appear in the church at Corinth, and that was the sin of fornication. That is why he says,

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” In the context he says, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the *body*; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own *body*. What? know ye not that your *body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and 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.” That is why he begins there, because he is specially warning them against bodily sins, and our young people especially need to be warned against these bodily sins, and the horror, if that is the right word, the horror with which the Word of God speaks against them as being sinful in the sight of a holy God.

Just lingering here, and this is a point of spiritual interest. You find so often in the epistles the Apostle Paul has to deal with a problem, he has to deal with a difficulty in the church, he has to deal with some sin. How does he do it? Perhaps not just the way you and I would. But almost immediately he firmly plants the cross of Christ in the midst, and he points them to the cross of Christ, and in the light of the cross of Christ, how can they be doing these things? and in the light of the cross of Christ, how can they be sinning against Him? But in the light of the cross of Christ there is forgiveness, and in the light of the cross of Christ there is power to deliver. He says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation,” and not just the power of God in the beginning when the Lord first deals with you, but right through your life. That is why he says, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” That is why in the preceding chapter to this when he is dealing with terrible things in the church – how does he deal with it? “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

“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.” Now this comes close. “Ye are not your own.” Our eyes are not our own. We need to pray that prayer: “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” We need to hear that exhortation: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red.” Look not upon it. Your eyes are not your own, to read evil things, to watch evil things, to look at evil things, to see evil things. Your eyes are not your own. “Ye are bought with a price.” And your tongue is not your own, to speak any slander, or to speak wrong things, or to speak unkindly.

But there is a blessed opposite: “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,” because if they do not, no-one else will. There is not so much of our tongues speaking of the glories of the gospel. What did we sing just now?

“Let Zion, in her songs, record
The honours of her dying Lord.”

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” And their tongues were not their own. They spoke as the ransomed of the Lord. “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine.” It is this very same point. “They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.”

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Your ears are not your own to listen to evil things, to listen to gossip, to listen to slander. I wish some of us had the grace that Mr. Clement Wood had. It was at one of our special services here and he was sitting at the tea table, and someone came up to him and said, “Mr. Wood” (I was sitting next to him). They said, “Could I have a word with you?” and Mr. Wood said, “Certainly.” They said, “Have you heard what has happened at So-and-so?” Mr. Wood said, “Is it nice, what you are going to tell me?” They said, “Not really.” Mr. Wood said, “Well, I would rather not hear it.” O for grace to say, “I would rather not hear it”! But self and sin and Satan love to listen to some account of gossip.

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Your hands are not your own to do sinful things, to do things which are not to the honour and glory of God. Especially your feet are not your own. Where do your feet take you? Where have some of your feet been taking you during this past week? O beware of your feet taking you to wrong places, places where you would not be found, places where you would not like to be if the Lord were suddenly to come as a thief in the night, and the heavens be rolled up as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat.

O there is a standard here, but the Lord does not lay this standard upon them in a legal way. This is not the taskmaster’s whip, beloved friends. This is the gospel, which is a higher standard than the law. This is Paul speaking to an erring church. He is speaking to them so lovingly, and

it is not the whip; it is not the scourge. It is love. It is because of what the Lord Jesus did. It is because He loved His own who were in the world; He loved them unto the end. It is because of love to the Saviour in return. It is because of this: you do not want to wound Him and put the Son of God afresh to an open shame. You do not want to dishonour Him. It is in love that the apostle is speaking these things. It is on gospel grounds, and it seems when he wrote his second epistle, these things had had a gracious effect. It was a different church. The Holy Spirit had used these things. They had fallen under them. They were not offended by them. What does our hymnwriter say?

“Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.”

“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.” He says, “In your body.” Your lips and your ears and your eyes and your hands and your feet – now they are not your own. “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” But then also he says, “Glorify God ... in your spirit.”

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Your time is not your own to spend it on yourself, especially to spend it in carnal things. O how we have that warning: “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,” and that word the Lord so solemnly but lovingly speaks. He says, “Occupy till I come.” He is going to come. If it is not His glorious second coming, it is the day of our death. And until then, “*Occupy* till I come.” It perhaps seems a strange expression. Perhaps we would say, “Be occupied.” But what are we to be occupied in? Well, glorifying God. Of course, this does not mean that a believer can always be on his knees, or always reading the Word of God, or reading good literature. There are solemn warnings in Paul’s Epistle to the Thessalonians, his first Epistle, on this. Some thought the end was in sight, the second coming was immediately taking place, so they sat down and did nothing, and said, Why bother? Spiritual things are the only things that matter. They had awful, solemn rebukes for that. How easily the truth can be perverted by Satan. But, “Occupy till I come.”

“O may my single aim be now
To live on Him that died;

And nought on earth desire to know,
But Jesus crucified!”

Now is this your spirit? When the way you spend your time is weighed in the balances, are you found wanting?

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” And then our money. You say, This is very carnal, isn’t it? The Lord Jesus had a lot to say on this subject. I remember Mr. Gascoigne saying at Haslingden before the collection, “If the Lord has opened your heart today, He will open your pocket.” In the best days of the Strict Baptists, O the way God was glorified in this! I think if ever a biography affected my life, it was that of William Tiptaft, Philpot’s friend. He was a wealthy man, but he said, “If we really believe that wealth is filthy lucre, what do you do with filthy lucre? You get rid of it as soon as you can.” So what did he do? He built the chapel himself that was needed. He paid for the chapel. He never received a salary. He took a poor, indigent minister in and looked after him for twenty years or so. In the end, he had not got a penny. He is the only minister I have read of who sacrificed as much as that.

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” But to come to the vital point, which is this: not just our hands and feet and ears and eyes and mouth and time and money – it is ourselves; it is our lives. Our lives are not our own. In a sense this is true of every person, whoever they are, whatever their religion or lack of religion. The Lord never gave a person a life to live on this earth to live for himself. Under the holy law of God, which all humanity are, it is to glorify God and it is to obey His law; and the law of God, the covenant of works under which the whole human race are by nature, is this: that we are not to live to ourselves. Our little lives for a few years on earth, what are they given for? Well, there is a God in heaven. We should be seeking that God. This is under the law, and this is our condemnation, because all of us, everyone of us, are building for eternity. Even the wicked who do not believe there is an eternity, they are building on that false foundation. They believe there is not a God, but they are still building for eternity, and everyone is building for eternity, but O to be on a solid foundation, on the Rock of Ages.

So in a sense it is true of the whole human race. Man was never created to live for himself; he was created for the honour and glory of God. O but the people of God, those for whom the Saviour died and rose again,

those He loved so dearly, those for whom He suffered so much, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God – “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” Then to seek to spend our lives to His glory, “that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.” The well-known verse:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

It is the sweet constraint of love. It is the loving response of a sinner to the Saviour for all that He has done.

“Ye are not our own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God.”