

Ephesians 1:7–10 | “God’s Cosmic Plan of Redemption”
Preached on March 16, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1, verse 7 this morning. *[pause]*

We are into the first section of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, which is just jam-packed with praise to the Lord. *[pause]*

It recounts so much of what God has given to us in Christ, and we have already seen that we are chosen and adopted through Christ.

Now Paul will expound further on the blessings found in Jesus here in verses 7–10. *[pauseeeee]*

Have you ever gotten to see behind-the-scenes of something? *[pause]*

Maybe it was behind-the-scenes of a play or behind-the-scenes of a concert or a movie. *[pause]*

When I was a kid, I got to see behind the scenes of the Herr’s chip factory, which was really interesting to see how they made chips.

And I can still remember the distinctive smell of that factory, and getting a free bag of chips was always the highlight of the tour for me. *[pause]*

It’s one thing to experience the end result of something, but seeing “behind-the-scenes” really opens up a whole new world...

You get to see the inner workings, the plan, the process of how it all comes together. *[pause]*

Well that’s what Paul does for us here, it’s as if he pulls back the curtain and lets us see behind-the-scenes of the whole universe. *[pause]*

He opens up the curtain to show us God at work and His purposes behind everything—it’s really an amazing thing to hear about! *[pauseeee]*

Do you remember the wizard in the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*? *[pause]*

He appeared to be this “great and terrible wizard” with amazing powers and the ability to grant wishes.

But once the curtain was pulled back, here it was this old, simple man using illusions, smoke, and mirrors to trick people. *[pause]*

Opening up the curtain to see the Wizard of Oz at work brought great disappointment, but pulling back the curtain to see God at work brings us to our knees in praise and admiration. *[pauseeeee]*

In our passage this morning, we are going to see God’s cosmic plan of redemption. *[pause]*

It's big, huge, monumental, and encompasses the whole universe.

And so we are not going to think of small matters this morning, so get ready to look bigger, expand your thinking, and be impacted with something of cosmic significance. *[pause]*

Let's READ the passage to begin. *[READ]*

In this amazing passage, we see a couple things, and the first is that...

I. In lavish grace, God has redeemed us.

Paul says in verse 7, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses." *[pause]*

Now who is the "him" mentioned here? It's of course, Christ!

In and through and because of Jesus, we who have trusted in Him have been redeemed. *[pause]*

To be redeemed is to be bought back and delivered from something.

So think of a slave...

A slave would be redeemed if someone paid for them to go free—they were now released from their bondage. *[pause]*

Well that's the sort of idea when it comes to our redemption...

Due to our sin against God, we were slaves to sin and death.

We couldn't get ourselves out of our enslavement, but sin had mastery over us, and we were condemned in our sins to eternal death. *[pause]*

We needed to be redeemed, and we were through Christ! *[pauseeee]*

Now *how* were we redeemed through Christ?

Note there that it says that we have redemption "through his blood." *[pauseeee]*

The Son of God took on flesh and lived a perfect life on this earth.

He then went to the Cross, shed His blood, and died for us and in our place. *[pause]*

His blood was the payment for our ransom, for He paid what we couldn't pay.

God the Father saw His sacrifice on our behalf, and accepted it as payment for our sin debt. *[pause]*

We are now free to go, redeemed, released from our penalty, and no longer condemned to eternal death.

And that's why Paul says that this redemption is "the forgiveness of our trespasses." *[pauseee]*

To forgive is to let go, or release someone from their debt—so we were forgiven through Jesus' shed blood, released from the massive sin debt that we could never pay. *[pauseee]*

Jesus paid for it all through His sacrificial death on the Cross for us.

And now, for those who trust in Christ, and what He did on the Cross, they receive forgiveness. *[pauseeeee]*

In our world, there is a diminishing understanding of the need for forgiveness, and many people wonder, "Why would I need to be forgiven by God?" *[pause]*

The reason many people have come to this conclusion is because there is a lack of an understanding about sin.

And if people don't realize that they are a sinner before God, why would they see the need for forgiveness by God? *[pauseee]*

Many church leaders avoid talking about sin, thinking that they are being more loving by not talking about sin and offending people.

They think that talk of sin will just make people have a low view of themselves or just walk around in guilt and shame.

But here's the thing, if you do not talk about sin, you cannot talk about forgiveness! *[pause]*

If you do not realize that you are sinner, you will never experience the freedom and release from sin and guilt that forgiveness brings! *[pause]*

So it's absolutely *loving* to tell people that they are sinners, for you can show them the solution!

It's absolutely *loving* to tell people that they are sinners, if you lead them to the place of forgiveness.

So talk of sin should never be severed from talk of forgiveness through Christ's shed blood. *[pauseee]*

You can only find the right remedy, if you first understand your problem. *[pauseeeee]*

We need to renew a theology of sin in our day, not to simply bash people over the head with it.

No, we renew a theology of sin in order to show people the beauty and wonder of forgiveness! *[pause]*

We needed redemption, and God redeemed us through Christ!

You can only find redemption through the blood of Jesus. *[pause]*

Look high or low, and you will not find redemption anywhere else. *[pause]*

Look far or near, it's only found through Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

We have been delivered, ransomed, saved!

God is a redeeming God—just consider the lengths that He took to do so. *[pause]*

He gave His only Son, so that we could be redeemed.

Christ sacrificed His very life for us, so that we could walk free in the freedom of forgiveness.

And we are told that this redemption is “according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us.” *[pausee]*

It's because God is gracious that we are forgiven.

It's because of His grace that we are redeemed, for it was all “according to” his grace. *[pauseee]*

Forgiveness and redemption accords with God's grace—it's who He is—He is a gracious God, so that means He's a forgiving God. *[pauseeee]*

Yet it's not just a little grace that He has, but He is *rich in grace*. *[pause]*

God is not poor in grace, having only a meager, limited supply to give—no, God has “riches of grace”! *[pause]*

He has an abundance of grace that flows from His heart to ours.

God's supply of grace doesn't run out like grocery store shelves sometimes—no—He's too rich in grace for that to even come close. *[pauseeee]*

Some people think that God is hoping to give some grace, but He's like, “Sorry, I only have a limited amount to give.”

But that's not the Lord!

He is wealthy when it comes to grace—He's got infinite stores of grace to give needy people like us. *[pauseeeee]*

You know sometimes someone wants to give you something, but they don't have enough, and that's no help to you. *[pause]*

God isn't like that, He has more than enough. *[pause]*

But also, there are some people who have way more than enough to give, but don't want to or they are stingy in giving it.

That's not the Lord, either! *[pause]*

The verse says here that God “lavished” the riches of His grace upon us—God gives His grace liberally! *[pause]*

Out of His abundance of grace, God gives it abundantly. *[pauseeee]*

Not only did He do all of this, but He did all of this “in all wisdom and insight.” *[pause]*

God used all of His perfect wisdom and insight to determine how to show us grace. *[pause]*

His wisdom destroyed the wisdom of the world,¹ and His insight came up with the best possible way to give us grace.

And what an amazing way that He chose! *[pauseeee]*

The lavish grace of God is shown prominently in the forgiveness of our sins. *[pauseeee]*

Sometimes Christians can think, “God hasn’t seemed to be gracious to me, just look at my life.” *[pause]*

When we think that way we have lost sight of what’s true.

And all you have to do is remember that you are forgiven through the blood of Jesus and marvel. *[pause]*

When you truly reflect upon how you are forgiven, how could you ever think that God hasn’t been gracious to you?

He has already lavished the riches of His grace upon you through the forgiveness of your sins! *[pauseeee]*

So many people live in guilt and shame because they haven’t been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

If you have never trusted in Jesus, do that today and find the full and complete forgiveness of your sins through Him. *[pauseeee]*

Some of us have been Christians for a long time, but we need to be reminded of our redemption...

God freed us from slavery to sin and death, and has forgiven us once and for all. *[pauseeee]*

There are many people living life bore down with guilt and shame, and they think that if only they could just forgive themselves, they would find freedom.

But that’s not Biblical, nor is it the way to find the blessed relief of forgiveness. *[pause]*

¹ A reference to 1 Corinthians 1:18–31.

The way to find relief is to trust in and rest in the forgiveness that God provides through Christ!
[pause]

We don't forgive ourselves, we rest in the forgiveness that God says that we have through Jesus, and we can know that we are truly and surely forgiven. *[pauseeee]*

So when you feel those times of guilt and shame, as you lay in your bed at night with tears streaming down your face. *[pause]*

When you feel that weight, as you have your head between your hands in agony...

Remember the riches of God's grace lavished upon you through Christ's shed blood on the Cross that secured your redemption and forgiveness—and rejoice! *[pause]*

Find relief, find joy, find true blessedness, and praise Him for it. *[pauseeeee]*

Not only are we told here that in lavish grace, God has redeemed us, but also...

II. In lavish grace, God has made known to us His will.

As humans, we long to know the truth about mysteries.

We hate not knowing things, but want everything tied up nicely so that we can understand it.
[pause]

I know for me, when there's something that I don't know much about, I just research it and research it until I can better grasp it. *[pause]*

We are always seeking knowledge, for we want to know things—and God has made us with this longing to know. *[pause]*

Well here in verse 9, Paul tells us that God has “[made] known to us the mystery of his will.”
[pause]

God has revealed to us something that was previously a mystery to mankind. *[pauseeee]*

Before, the Lord determined not to reveal His plan in Christ, and so it was unknown to humanity.

And He did this in wisdom, and there was no way for us to find it out, but *now* He has revealed it to us who believe. *[pause]*

This plan was previously veiled, but now it's unveiled through Christ, so that we can know God's plan for the ages. *[pauseeeee]*

Sometimes we do not realize the privilege of living in the time that we are living in after Christ has come. *[pause]*

In the Old Testament time, they didn't have this knowledge in its fullness, but now we do!

So be thankful and grateful for the privilege of living in the New Testament age—we have heard of Christ and we have heard of God’s plan in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

We need to remember that God didn’t *have to* reveal His plan to us—He was under no obligation to do so. *[pause]*

He is the Creator and Lord over all, and we are not.

So the fact that He has made known to us what was a mystery before shows us His grace. *[pause]*

It was simply out of the riches of his grace that He revealed His glorious plan.

And that just shows His grace and love for us that He would do that for us, for who are we to experience such knowledge? *[pauseeee]*

Isn’t it the people that you love the most, who are the ones that you make yourself most known to, and who you reveal your inner thoughts and plans to? *[pause]*

Of course! You love them, so you want to share with them about yourself and your purposes.

Well in gracious love, God has revealed to us His great, cosmic plan of redemption! *[pauseeee]*

God is a God who reveals Himself and His plan to “lowly us”.

And so this knowledge is not for some select, elite group of Christians, who have made it up to a certain rung on a spiritual ladder.

No, this knowledge is given to all those who simply believe in Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

To think that we get to know the will of God is astonishing. *[pause]*

We get to know God’s plans and purposes and ultimate desire!

Stand amazed at that fact—this is God Almighty, Lord of the Universe that we are talking about! *[pause]*

And yet, God has revealed this great and glorious plan to us, who are simply recipients of His grace. *[pauseeee]*

Now looking further, what are some things that we learn about this mystery revealed to us? *[pause]*

Paul says that this was “according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ.” *[pause]*

So it’s Jesus, who is the central and primary component of this great plan.

God the Father has purposed, planned, and intended that Christ would be central to it. *[pauseeee]*

Oh, the priority and primacy of Christ!

May we never forget, neglect, or diminish Christ's role in the world! *[pause]*

Any individual or church that gets away from Christ is getting away from what's most important.

May we always be Christ-centered here and in our hearts. *[pauseeeee]*

When it says that this was all “according to his purpose,” the word translated as ‘purpose’ is actually “according to his good pleasure.”

So God delighted to make Christ central to His plan! *[pause]*

Jesus was no ‘plan B, plan C, or plan D,’ for the universe.

God didn't think, “Well, I guess we shall use my Son, then?” *[pause]*

No, according to God's good pleasure, He set forth Christ, and Christ went willingly in love for us. *[pause]*

What loving heart of God that He would send His Son to redeem us and forgive us, but also what wisdom and glory of God that He would make His Son central! *[pauseeeee]*

This all was done “as a plan,” and what's interesting is that the Greek word used for plan isn't actually technically ‘plan’.

It's actually literally, “as an *administration* for the fullness of time.” *[pause]*

The idea is that God is over the world, administering the world in the way that it ought to go.

So He had a great, grand, and cosmic plan for the administration of the world to bring it to its intended purpose and goal. *[pauseeee]*

This shows us that God is truly over all, managing and controlling things.

He is not sitting there, astonished at how things are going, but rather, He's the supreme Administrator—planning, purposing, and directing things to the way that He wants it to go. *[pauseeeee]*

You see, as Christians, we know and believe that we are a part of a story and a plan that is directed and governed by God. *[pause]*

This world is not a chaotic world with no plan, like some people believe.

Things in the universe are not the result of random and chaotic processes. *[pause]*

Neither do we believe that it's all just guided by some generic idea of “fate”.

Nor do we believe that the world is governed by karma. *[pause]*

We certainly do not believe that we are in control, manifesting and speaking into existence what we want.

No, the world is governed, administered, and directed by God, who is working His sovereign will. *[pauseeee]*

What an encouraging truth!

As we live in this world, it sometimes *feels* like it is chaotic and out of control. *[pause]*

We look around us, and think, “What’s the purpose? What’s going to happen?” *[pause]*

We see evil thriving, and we see sinful people triumphing.

We experience tragedy, pain, and trial.

And we go through the hardest moments, and wonder what’s going on. *[pause]*

Yet we must point our hearts and minds back to verses like these, and say, “No, the Lord is on His throne! He is in control, He has a plan that He is working through Christ!” *[pauseeee]*

Although it’s hard to see how His plan will turn out good, we know that it will.

So in those moments, turn your hearts to this truth—God has a purpose and plan, which He set forth in Christ. *[pause]*

He is administering and managing it all to bring it to completion for the fullness of time.

And He will truly work all things together for good in the end!² *[pauseeeee]*

We are all caught up in the glorious plan of God in Christ—this life is not in utter disarray or mayhem. *[pause]*

We are a part of a big story, and God is working the purposes of His will, and the main character and hero of the story is Christ! *[pause]*

We are not the main character or hero, but Christ is.

The world doesn’t revolve around us, but it revolves around the Son, that is, the Son of God. *[pauseee]*

Way too often, we act like we are the big deal of the universe, and live that way.

No, it’s not true—we are the ones who needed to be redeemed, remember? *[pause]*

We were the ones who needed to be forgiven of our sins, or else we would be condemned forever.

² A reference to Romans 8:28.

We were the hopeless, needy ones, who *needed* a Redeemer. *[pauseeee]*

Let's always remember never to put ourselves up on a pedestal, as if we were great. *[pause]*

No matter how many good things we do for the Lord, we must always repeat to ourselves—we are redeemed people. *[pause]*

May we never forget that!

We are the redeemed, and there is one Redeemer, Christ the Lord.

He is supreme, He is ultimate, He is what this lost and dying world needs. *[pause]*

They don't need us as if we were enough, but they need us to point them to the Redeemer, who shed His blood, so that they could be forgiven and redeemed. *[pauseeeee]*

Now what *is* this plan that involves Christ? *[pause]*

Well let's reread verses 9–10...

“Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” *[pause]*

There you have it, the purpose was “to unite all things in [Christ].” *[pause]*

What does that even mean, though?

It sounds massive and big, and it is, but what does it actually *mean*? *[pause]*

Well the word translated as ‘unite’ is actually a word that means to sum up, encompass, or gather under one.

And it's actually a literary term used for a book summary. *[pause]*

So think of a book summary—all of the words and ideas of a book are brought together to be summarized under one thing called the summary. *[pause]*

So Paul is saying that God's purpose and plan is that *all things*, and that encompasses everything, whether in heaven or on earth...

All things are to be brought or gathered together under Christ to be under Him. *[pause]*

Everything is to be brought to be subordinate to Him, as the One true Head over all.

So there will be a grand, cosmic “bringing together” or “summing up” of the universe someday, when it will all be reconciled under Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

To understand what this truly means is to remember that this world is a fallen world. *[pause]*

Adam and Eve sinned and plunged not only humanity, but all of the universe into a fallen, corrupted state.

So what the universe needs is to be restored back to unity, and that's what Christ will do. *[pause]*

When Christ returns, everything is going to be brought into subjection to Christ...

All rebellion against God will be quelled, and every knee will bow to Him someday.³ *[pause]*

People will either bow in loving subjection or forced subjection, but all will be brought under Christ.

Unity in the universe will once again be restored under the sovereign Lordship of God. *[pauseeee]*

When Christ returns, He will make all things right, and put everything back into its proper relationship to the Lord. *[pause]*

Those who never trusted in Christ will bow to Him in forced subjection, and justice will prevail. *[pause]*

Christians will see Christ, bow to Him in love, and receive glorified bodies, and even Creation itself will be set free from its corruption.⁴*[pause]*

All will be united and subordinate to Christ, who will be over all.

And that's why 1 Corinthians 15 talks about Christ and says...

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’”⁵ *[pauseeeee]*

This is God's grand, cosmic, and glorious plan in Christ!

He wants all to be united, subjected, and subordinate under Christ as head, so that Christ is the focus! *[pause]*

He is the Hero, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Reconciler.

And this is so important to remember, so that our focus is never lost on the importance of Christ for the world. *[pause]*

³ A reference to Philippians 2:9–11.

⁴ A reference to Romans 8:19–22.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:24–27a.

He is to be our prime focus, so we lift up Christ over all! *[pause]*

We lift Christ up in our hearts, we lift Christ up in our church, but we also lift Christ up to the world, so that would see, believe, and bow the knee to Him in love. *[pauseeeee]*

Jesus isn't just nice to know and believe for those in the church, but we see that Christ has cosmic significance. *[pause]*

ALL THINGS will be encompassed and subordinated under Him someday.

So how foolish of us to try to separate the sacred and the secular,⁶ for Christ is to be the focus and goal of all of life for all people and all things. *[pauseeeee]*

Have you bowed the knee to Christ in repentance and faith, knowing what He did for you on the Cross? *[pause]*

If you have, do you constantly bow the knee of your life under His Lordship, knowing that He is to be over all?

And do you point others to Christ, who will someday come again and be the ultimate focus of the universe? *[pauseeee]*

In lavish grace, God has made known to us His will, and what an amazing plan it is!

And so all of this shows us that...

Our redemption is a part of God's gracious, cosmic plan through Christ.

We have been redeemed through Christ's shed blood on our behalf. *[pause]*

Now we are forgiven, and free from the dominion of sin and death—praise God!

As that one hymn states, "I think of my blessed Redeemer, I think of Him all the day long; I sing, for I cannot be silent; His love is the theme of my song."⁷ *[pauseeeee]*

We don't have to be enslaved to sin and death anymore, and we don't have to walk around in guilt and shame, for Christ has freed us from all of that through His death on the Cross.

And if you have repented of your sins and trusted in Christ as the way to be forgiven, then you can claim that and know that and experience that. *[pauseeeee]*

But what's amazing is that our redemption is a part of something bigger. *[pause]*

Sometimes we think of our forgiveness as just an individual thing and a smaller thing, not thinking of the huge work that Christ is doing in the world.

⁶ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 62.

⁷ "Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!" by Fanny Crosby, 1882.

But our redemption is a part of something bigger—we are a part of a large, grand, cosmic plan!
[pause]

Through Christ, God has provided redemption from our sins, and through Christ someday He will bring everything to its intended purpose and goal. *[pauseeee]*

Life and this universe isn't random or chaotic and going nowhere, but it's all going somewhere—God is drawing it towards a climax, purpose, and goal. *[pause]*

God is doing something great and all-encompassing through Christ, so that when Christ returns, it will all be made right and be made right *forever*, never to be undone. *[pauseeee]*

All of this is done in lavish grace.

We were forgiven in lavish grace, and we were made aware of this amazing plan in lavish grace.
[pause]

So what else can we do but stand in gratefulness for our redemption, and long for the final redemption of this whole world—all with a look to Christ—our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord.