

# The Cross of Christ, Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 5: Redemption: Bought with a Price

### 1 Peter 1:18–21

#### Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The doctrine at stake in this lesson is redemption, one of the great pictures the New Testament uses to explain the cross. Redemption is rescue by the payment of a price, the ransom that frees a captive or the purchase that buys back what was lost. Make sure the class grasps both halves: we were in genuine bondage, and we were set free at genuine cost. Peter is emphatic about the price: not perishable silver or gold, but the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without blemish. The cross was not a cheap pardon that cost nothing; it was a costly purchase that cost the lifeblood of the Son of God.

Hold together the two things Peter says about our redemption. First, what we were redeemed from: the futile, empty way of life inherited from our forefathers. Redemption is not only rescue from the penalty of sin but liberation from its futility and bondage, the empty patterns that enslave a life. This connects the lesson to the deep pastoral aim of the whole study, that people be not merely forgiven but freed and changed. Second, the value the price reveals: no one pays such a ransom for something worthless. The blood of Christ as the purchase price is the measure of both the seriousness of our captivity and the worth God places on us. Let both truths land.

Aim the lesson at gratitude and ownership. Two responses flow from being bought with a price. The first is security and worth: we are loved and valued beyond measure, for the price tells the truth about how God sees us. The second is belonging: we are no longer our own, but his, which reorders how we use our bodies, our time, and our choices. Tie it all to the resurrection in verse 21, for the One who paid our ransom was raised and glorified, making our redemption secure and our faith and hope rest in God himself. Send the class home resting in their worth and living as those who belong to God.

#### Question 1

##### Student Question:

*Peter says, “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers” (v. 18). What does it mean that redemption is a ransom, a price paid to set a captive free, and what does this reveal about the condition we were in before Christ?*

#### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin by recovering the meaning of redemption, because the word has grown faint to modern ears. In the ancient world it was concrete and familiar: the price paid to free a slave, the ransom to release a prisoner of war, the sum laid down to buy back a forfeited inheritance. To redeem

was to set free by paying. When Peter says we were ransomed, he is using this everyday commercial and legal language to explain the cross.

The word ransom assumes a captivity. You do not ransom the free; you ransom those held in bondage. So the very language reveals our condition before Christ: we were not merely flawed but enslaved, held captive by sin and by the empty way of life Peter goes on to name. Help the class feel that the cross addresses bondage, not just guilt. We needed not only to be forgiven but to be freed.

Clarify what kind of bondage Scripture has in view. Jesus said that everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. Paul speaks of being enslaved to passions, to fear, to futility. This is the captivity from which we are ransomed, a slavery often invisible to the slave, who may feel perfectly free while bound to patterns he cannot break. The gospel announces that a price has been paid to release us.

Make the point that this rescue is not self-achieved. A captive cannot ransom himself; the price must come from outside. So too, we could not free ourselves from sin by trying harder. Redemption is something done for us, at cost to another, and received as a gift. This guards the class from turning the Christian life into a self-improvement project and roots it instead in the liberating work of Christ.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Redemption as rescue by the payment of a price (1 Peter 1:18; Mark 10:45)
- Our pre-Christian condition as genuine bondage, not mere imperfection (John 8:34)
- Slavery to sin as often invisible to the one enslaved
- Redemption as something done for us from outside, not self-achieved
- The cross addressing bondage and futility, not only guilt

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What does the word ransom assume about our condition before Christ?
- Why can a captive never ransom himself, and what does that teach us about the cross?
- What kinds of bondage does Scripture say we needed to be redeemed from?

### **Question 2**

#### **Student Question:**

*Peter names what we were redeemed from as a “futile” or empty way of life. Where do you most feel the pull of an empty pattern, a habit, a pursuit, or a way of coping that never quite satisfies, and what would it mean to be truly free of it?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This self-examining question takes Peter's phrase, the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, and presses it into the student's own experience. The word futile means empty, purposeless, leading nowhere. Peter describes a way of life that promises much and delivers nothing, handed down through generations until people simply assume that is all life is.

Help students locate the empty patterns in their own lives. For one it may be the endless pursuit of more, money, status, approval, that never satisfies. For another it is a coping habit that numbs but never heals. For another it is simply going through religious or daily motions with no living connection to God. Futility wears many faces, and most of us have a familiar one.

Show that the gospel speaks precisely to this. We are not merely redeemed from punishment in the next life but from emptiness in this one. Christ buys us out of the treadmill and into a life with purpose, a life that belongs to God and is therefore meaningful at its core. This is good news for the many who feel free and yet trapped.

Aim at honest naming and a first step toward freedom. Invite each student to name one empty pattern they sense in their life, and to consider what it would mean to be genuinely free of it. The cross does not just forgive the futility; it purchases our release from it, and the Spirit gives power to walk in newness of life.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Redemption from futility and emptiness, not only from punishment (1 Peter 1:18; Ecclesiastes 1:2)
- The inherited, unchosen quality of many enslaving patterns
- The cross as the purchase of a meaningful life that belongs to God
- Freedom in this life, not only the next, as part of redemption

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Where do you most feel the pull of an empty pattern that never satisfies?
- How does it change things to hear the cross was meant to buy you out of futility?
- What would it mean to be genuinely free of one such pattern this week?

### **Question 3**

#### **Student Question:**

*Peter contrasts "perishable things such as silver or gold" with "the precious blood of Christ" (vv. 18–19). Why does he insist that even the most valuable earthly things could never have paid this ransom, and what does the price of our redemption tell us about both the seriousness of our captivity and the value God places on us?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Peter sets up a deliberate contrast to make us feel the magnitude of the price. He names silver and gold, the most valuable things most people can imagine, the very measures of wealth, and then calls them perishable. Even the treasures the world prizes most are too cheap and too temporary to ransom a human soul. The contrast is meant to stop us in our tracks.

Over against perishable metal he sets the precious blood of Christ. The word precious means costly, of surpassing value. The ransom that freed us was not a quantity of treasure but a life, the lifeblood of the sinless Son of God. Help the class feel the difference in kind, not just degree. No amount of silver could ever have done this, because the debt was not financial but moral and spiritual, and only a life could answer for lives.

Draw out the two truths the price reveals. First, the seriousness of our captivity. The greatness of the ransom tells us how deep our bondage was; we were not in a predicament a little effort could fix, but in a slavery that cost the blood of God's Son to break. Second, the value God places on us. No one pays an extravagant price for something worthless. The price is the measure of how God sees us. We learn our worth not by looking inward at our own qualities but by looking at the cross and asking what God was willing to pay.

Guard against a misunderstanding of worth here. Our value is not an independent merit that obligated God to redeem us; it is a worth conferred by his love, displayed in what he chose to pay. This keeps the class from pride while still granting them the deep security of being treasured. We are valuable because we are loved at the price of precious blood.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The precious blood of Christ as the ransom price, surpassing all earthly wealth (1 Peter 1:18–19)
- The price as the measure of the seriousness of our bondage
- The price as the measure of the worth God confers on us
- Worth grounded in God's love and the cross, not in independent human merit
- The moral and spiritual nature of the debt, payable only by a life

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why could even silver and gold never have paid this ransom?
- What does the greatness of the price tell us about the depth of our bondage?
- How does the cross teach us our true worth in God's eyes?

### **Question 4**

#### **Student Question:**

*If you truly believed you were worth the precious blood of Christ to God, what would change in the way you see yourself and the way you treat your own life? Where do you most need that truth to take hold?*

## Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question takes the truth of the price and turns it toward the student's self-image. Many believers know in theory that Christ died for them, yet live with a quiet sense of worthlessness, self-contempt, or shame. Peter's words confront that directly: you were ransomed with the precious blood of Christ. The price tells you the truth about how God values you.

Help students see the difference this makes. If our worth depended on our performance, our appearance, our success, or others' approval, it would rise and fall and never be secure. But the cross fixes our worth in something unchanging: what God was willing to pay. On your worst day, the price did not drop. This is a stable foundation for self-understanding that no failure can erode.

Be careful and pastoral, especially with those who struggle with shame or self-hatred. The point is not vanity or self-flattery but receiving the verdict of the cross over our lives. To despise ourselves is, in a sense, to despise what God treasured enough to buy with his Son's blood. Learning to see ourselves as God sees us is part of being healed by the gospel.

Aim at one area where this truth needs to take hold. Invite students to name where they most need to receive their worth from the cross, whether in how they talk to themselves, how they treat their bodies, or how they let others define them. Then encourage one concrete way of living this week as someone valued at the price of precious blood.

## Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christian identity and worth grounded in the price of redemption (1 Peter 1:18–19)
- The instability of worth based on performance or approval
- Self-contempt as a failure to receive the verdict of the cross
- Healing of self-image through seeing ourselves as God sees us

## Discussion Prompts

- How would believing you are worth the precious blood of Christ change how you see yourself?
- Why is worth grounded in the cross more secure than worth based on performance?
- Where do you most need this truth to take hold in your life?

## Question 5

### Student Question:

*Peter calls Christ "a lamb without blemish or spot" (v. 19). How does this tie our redemption to the Passover and the sacrificial lambs, and why does it matter that the price of our freedom was a spotless, sinless life?*

## **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Peter describes Christ as a lamb without blemish or spot, and the class should hear the echoes ringing back through the whole Old Testament. The Passover lamb had to be without defect; the animals offered at the altar had to be unblemished; Isaiah's Servant had done no violence. Peter gathers all of this and says: Jesus is that lamb, the spotless one to whom every previous lamb pointed.

Explain why the spotlessness matters for redemption. The ransom had to be of infinite value to free us, and only a sinless life qualifies. A lamb with a blemish was rejected because it pictured an imperfect, insufficient offering. Christ, without sin, is the perfect and fully acceptable sacrifice, the only ransom adequate to the debt. His sinlessness is not incidental to the price; it is what makes the price sufficient.

Connect this to the Passover specifically, since redemption language is rooted there. At the first Passover, the blood of the lamb on the doorposts secured Israel's release from slavery in Egypt; the lamb died so the people could go free. Peter presents Christ as the true Passover Lamb whose blood secures a greater exodus, our release from slavery to sin and futility. The pattern God established centuries earlier finds its fulfillment here.

Let the class marvel at the unity of Scripture. From the Passover in Exodus, through the daily sacrifices, through Isaiah's Servant, to Peter's spotless lamb, one consistent picture has been building: redemption comes through the blood of an unblemished substitute. In Christ, the picture becomes reality. This both strengthens faith in the coherence of God's plan and deepens reverence for the costliness of our freedom.

## **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Christ as the spotless lamb fulfilling the Passover and sacrificial system (1 Peter 1:19; 1 Corinthians 5:7)
- The sinlessness of the offering as essential to a sufficient ransom
- Redemption rooted in the Passover pattern of deliverance by the lamb's blood (Exodus 12)
- The unity of Scripture in the picture of redemption through an unblemished substitute
- A greater exodus from slavery to sin accomplished by the true Passover Lamb

## **Discussion Prompts**

- How does calling Christ a spotless lamb connect the cross to the Passover and the sacrifices?
- Why does it matter that the price of our freedom was a sinless life?
- What does it strengthen in your faith to see this one picture building across Scripture?

## **Question 6**

**Student Question:**

*Paul says elsewhere that “you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20). If you no longer belong to yourself but to the One who redeemed you, what specific part of your life, your time, your body, your choices, most needs to come under that new ownership?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This self-focused question draws out the practical consequence of redemption: new ownership. Paul states it directly elsewhere, you are not your own, you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body. If a ransom has been paid for us, then we now belong to the One who paid it. Redemption is not only liberation from an old master; it is transfer to a new and loving one.

Help the class feel that this is good news, not a loss of freedom. We were never truly autonomous; we belonged to sin and futility. To belong now to Christ is to be owned by the One who loves us and gave himself for us, whose service is perfect freedom. Coming under his ownership is coming home, not into a new bondage.

Press for specifics, because ownership is abstract until it touches concrete areas. Paul applies it to the body, but it extends to our time, our money, our relationships, our ambitions, our private choices. Ask each student to identify the one area they have most kept for themselves, as if it were exempt from Christ's lordship, and to consider bringing it under his ownership.

Aim at one concrete surrender. Spiritual formation here means yielding a specific domain of life to the One who bought us. Invite each student to name one part of their life, this week, that they will deliberately offer to God as belonging to him, not their own. This is how the doctrine of redemption reshapes daily living.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- New ownership: we belong to the One who redeemed us (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Titus 2:14)
- Belonging to Christ as freedom and homecoming, not a new bondage
- The lordship of Christ extending to body, time, money, and choices
- Stewardship of the whole self as the response to redemption

### **Discussion Prompts**

- If you are not your own but Christ's, what changes about how you live?
- What part of your life have you most kept for yourself, as if exempt from his lordship?
- What is one area you will deliberately offer to God this week as belonging to him?

### **Question 7**

#### **Student Question:**

*Peter says Christ “was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you” (v. 20). What does it mean that our redemption was planned*

*before creation, and how does this guard us from thinking the cross was an emergency measure rather than God's eternal purpose?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Peter now lifts our eyes from the price to the plan: Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world but made manifest in these last times for your sake. Our redemption was not an improvised response to an unforeseen disaster. Before God spoke creation into being, the cross was already in his heart. The Lamb was, as Revelation says, slain from the foundation of the world in the purpose of God.

Draw out why this matters. It guards us from a mistaken picture in which sin caught God off guard and the cross was his emergency repair. Scripture presents the opposite: God knew, before he made a single thing, what it would cost to redeem us, and he chose to create and to redeem anyway. The cross is not God's plan B but the eternal purpose at the center of his plan A.

Help the class feel the love in this. God did not stumble into redeeming us; he set his heart on it before we existed, knowing the full price. The deliberateness magnifies the love. This was no reluctant rescue but a settled, eternal intention to buy us back, formed in the mind of God before time began.

Note the phrase made manifest in these last times. The plan was hidden in God for ages and has now been revealed in history at the coming of Christ. We live on the far side of the unveiling. What patriarchs and prophets longed to see, the actual accomplishment of redemption, has happened in our era, and we are the privileged recipients of a purpose as old as God himself.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Redemption planned before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20; Ephesians 1:4)
- The cross as God's eternal purpose, not an emergency measure (Acts 2:23)
- The deliberateness of redemption magnifying the love of God
- The unveiling in these last times of a plan long hidden in God
- The privilege of living after the accomplishment of redemption

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What does it mean that our redemption was planned before creation?
- How does this guard us from thinking the cross was God's emergency repair?
- How does the deliberateness of the plan magnify the love behind it?

### **Question 8**

**Student Question:**

*It can be hard to believe that God was thinking of you, personally, before the world began. How does the truth that Christ was made manifest “for the sake of you” speak to the times you feel forgotten, overlooked, or insignificant?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This self-focused question takes the cosmic phrase for the sake of you and makes it intimate. Peter says Christ was made manifest for your sake, for you, personally. It can be hard to believe that the eternal plan of God had us in view, that before the world began God was thinking of you. Yet that is exactly what Peter asserts.

Speak to the experience of feeling forgotten or insignificant, which most people know. In a vast world it is easy to feel overlooked, a face in the crowd, unnoticed and unimportant. The gospel speaks a different word: the God who made the galaxies set his heart on you before there was a galaxy, and paid the price of his Son’s blood for you in particular.

Help students hold the personal and the universal together. Christ died for all, as later lessons will stress, and yet his death is also for each one, for you. The love of God is not diluted by being spread across the world; it reaches each person fully, as if there were only one to love. You are not lost in the crowd of the redeemed; you are personally bought and personally known.

Aim at letting this truth answer a specific lie. Invite each student to name where they most feel forgotten or overlooked, and to bring that feeling under the truth that Christ was manifested for the sake of them. This is not sentimentality; it is the application of the cross to the wounds of insignificance and self-doubt.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The personal scope of redemption: Christ manifested for the sake of you (1 Peter 1:20; Galatians 2:20)
- The love of God reaching each person fully, not diluted across the world
- The gospel answering the experience of feeling forgotten or insignificant
- Personal assurance grounded in God’s eternal intention toward us

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How does it strike you that God was thinking of you before the world began?
- Where do you most feel forgotten or overlooked, and how does this truth speak to it?
- How can the personal love of God steady you when you feel insignificant?

### **Question 9**

#### **Student Question:**

*Peter concludes that through Christ we “are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (v. 21). Explain how Peter ties our*

*redemption to the resurrection and roots our faith and hope in God himself rather than in ourselves. Why is it essential that the One who paid our ransom was not only crucified but raised and glorified, and how does this make our redemption secure?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it keeps the cross from being separated from the resurrection. Peter does not end with the blood of the Lamb; he says that through Christ we are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that our faith and hope are in God. Redemption is secured not only by a death but by a death followed by resurrection and glory.

Explain why the resurrection is essential to redemption. If Christ had died and stayed dead, we could never be sure the ransom had been accepted. The resurrection is God's public declaration that the price was sufficient and the debt fully paid. The Father raised him and gave him glory, vindicating the offering and proving that death and sin had been conquered. Our redemption rests on a living, glorified Redeemer, not merely a dead martyr.

Show how this makes our redemption secure. Because the One who paid our ransom is risen and reigning, our freedom cannot be reversed. The Redeemer lives to keep what he purchased. This is why Peter can speak of a living hope; it is anchored in a living Lord. The same resurrection that began this letter underwrites the redemption described here.

Press Peter's conclusion: so that your faith and hope are in God. The whole point lands on where we place our trust. Redemption is designed to lift our confidence off ourselves, our performance, our worthiness, our striving, and to rest it entirely on God, who planned the rescue, paid the price, raised the Redeemer, and gave him glory. Faith and hope are in God, not in self. This is the freedom of the gospel: our security is outside us, in him.

Let this connect to the obedient response of faith without collapsing it into mere mental assent. The faith Peter commends is the living trust that lays hold of Christ and walks with him, the same faith that hears, believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized into the risen Lord. It is faith in God, in the One who raised Jesus, and it expresses itself in a life surrendered to him. Our hope is secure because its object, the risen and glorified Christ, is secure.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Redemption secured by the resurrection and glorification of Christ, not the cross alone (1 Peter 1:21; Romans 4:25)
- The resurrection as God's public acceptance of the ransom (Acts 2:24, 32–36)
- A living, reigning Redeemer who keeps what he purchased
- Faith and hope rooted in God himself rather than in self or performance
- Saving faith as a living trust expressed in obedience to the risen Lord (Romans 10:9–10)

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why is it essential that our Redeemer was not only crucified but raised and glorified?
- How does the resurrection assure us that the ransom was fully accepted?
- What does it mean for your faith and hope to rest in God rather than in yourself?

## **Question 10**

### **Student Question:**

*Look back across 1 Peter 1:18–21 as a whole, a redemption planned before creation and purchased with precious blood. Name one specific way that knowing you were bought at such a price is reshaping how you value yourself and your life, and one concrete way you will live this week as one who belongs to God.*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The capstone question gathers the lesson and asks for a personal response. Remind the class of what they have seen: a redemption that frees us from futility, purchased not with silver or gold but with the precious blood of the spotless Lamb, planned before the foundation of the world, accomplished for the sake of each of us, and secured by the resurrection so that our faith and hope rest in God.

Invite each student to name one specific way that knowing they were bought at such a price is reshaping how they value themselves and their lives. For one it may be a new security in God's estimate of their worth; for another, freedom from an empty pattern; for another, the wonder of being personally and eternally loved.

Then ask for one concrete way they will live this week as one who belongs to God, whether surrendering a specific area to his ownership, turning from a futile pattern, or resting their worth in the cross rather than in performance. End by looking ahead: having seen the price of redemption, the next lesson goes to the heart of what that blood accomplished Godward, in the great word propitiation, where Christ bears the wrath our sin deserved.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Redemption reshaping our sense of worth and belonging
- Living as those who belong to God, not their own
- Freedom from futility as the fruit of being bought with a price
- Faith and hope resting in the risen Redeemer

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How is knowing you were bought at such a price reshaping how you value your life?
- Which part of this redemption moved you most, and why?
- What is one concrete way you will live this week as one who belongs to God?