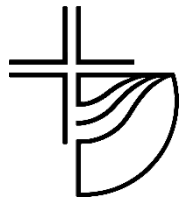


Compelling Vision

Together, as the Church of the Brethren,
we will passionately live and share the radical transformation
and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood
engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and
equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.

Bible Study Series

Session 7
Jennifer Quijano West



Session 7 *Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer*

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Focus Question

How do we understand Jesus as Redeemer?

Scripture Texts

Exodus 6:6-8; Colossians 1:13-14

Focus Statement

From the start of the biblical narrative, it is clear that humanity is in need of redemption. We can see God's redemption in many stories but in particular within the history of the Israelites. God redeems Israel from the bondage of Egypt and their periods of exile. God later sends into the world a son, Jesus, that will redeem the nations through his blood sacrifice and set the example of how to care for the slave, the weak and vulnerable, the children and family, and those who are treated unjustly. This serves as our model as we envision the role of the Christian disciple and the Church as it continues to follow Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Supplies

- Internet-connected device
- Newsprint or whiteboard
- Markers
- Four posters

Media Suggestions

- **Video:** ["What's A Kinsman-Redeemer?" by Daily Grace 459](#) (YouTube)
- **Article:** [Jesus the Messiah in the Four Cups of Passover](#), Chosen People Ministries
- **Songs:** [Since I Have Been Redeemed | Accompaniment](#); [Redeemed How I Love To Proclaim It](#); [Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It! | Accompaniment](#)

Reflecting on the Texts

The Easton's Bible Dictionary defines Redeemer as one who has “the duty of restoring the rights of another and avenging his wrongs.” The Hebrew Bible referred to such a person as “go’el,” the one who “go’al” or redeems. The word for redeem or redemption appears about 149 times alone in the First Testament and is an essential theme in the Israelites history. A “go’el” was one who would serve as a protector in four main aspects illustrated and named in scripture.

- A redeemer is one who would care for a slave and restore their freedom (Leviticus 25:48).
- A redeemer is one who would care for the weak and the vulnerable (Proverbs 23:11; Jeremiah 50:34).
- A redeemer is one who would step in to care for a widow or an orphaned child (Ruth).
- Finally, a redeemer is one who often offers blood as atonement for sins (Leviticus 17:11).

In the First Testament it is clear that God or YHWH serves as this redeemer as Israel is redeemed from Egyptian bondage, exile, and as their sins are atoned through the shedding of sacrificial blood (Exodus 6:6-8). Hundreds of years later we can see that these illustrations of God as Redeemer directly foreshadow the life, ministry and death of Jesus as he restores justice, cares for the weak and vulnerable, tends to the children, redefines roles in marriage and social power dynamics, and lays down his own life.

In the Second Testament, the book of Colossians, we encounter a church community who has fully accepted this message of hope and deliverance through Jesus Christ but Paul writes to them from prison to encourage them on the next phase of their spiritual journey and prays for their understanding and wisdom. Here the church at Colossae is being constantly pressured by the predominant religions of the time, Greek Polytheism and Judaism via the Torah, and Paul wants to encourage them to stay steadfast and dedicated to Jesus’ mission. “The Messiah is in you all, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Paul encourages the young church to keep living into the new humanity, ordained by Jesus to be merciful, generous, forgiving, and loving. He redefines the roles of the household—wife and husband, parent and child, slave and master. He provides an outline for them to reshape their Roman ways into the ways of the Redeemer who embodies a love that is self-giving. He reminds them that a life following Jesus means no part of human life goes untouched from his merciful and liberating rule. He has now experienced their suffering, their temptations to compromise their beliefs and morality and even the social dynamics of power.

Paul’s plea to the church at Colossae through Jesus’ example echoes God’s own actions as redeemer to care for the freedom of the slave, care for the weak and vulnerable, care for children and family, and bring justice to those who have been wronged. It is in Colossians 1:13-14 that we are again reminded that God has redeemed us from darkness and has brought into the Kingdom where sins are forgiven and justice restored. Paul reminds the church that they can be a new creation in their present time. I believe these words reverberate to us now in our present time. We must continue to represent God’s redemptive love, in all we do as a body in Christ, our Redeemer, and hold steadfast to our joined vision as God’s Church. Amen.

Gathering

As Christians, we feel great joy following a risen Savior who we proudly call our “redeemer” and friend. We sing songs expressing our joy and proclaiming we are cleansed of our sins because of this precious gift. As you begin this study of Jesus as Redeemer, reflect on what the words “redemption” or “redeemed” mean to you personally before diving into their biblical meanings and contexts. Choose one of these options to introduce today’s theme.

- *Option 1*—What does it mean for you to be redeemed? Using newsprint or a whiteboard, create a list of words that describe redemption. Reflect on how Jesus’ life, ministry and death have led to our redemption.
- *Option 2*—Listen to the popular hymn, “Redeemed How I Love to Proclaim It” (see links in Media Suggestions). Reflect on the following questions in small groups and allow time for sharing. What words or phrases stand out to you? What makes you feel joy about the word redemption or being redeemed? Why is redemption important to you?

For more on the author’s understanding of and personal experience of redemption, see “The Author’s Testimony” on page 35.

Discovering God’s Story and Vision

In Exodus, we see God acting as redeemer as God answers the cry of the Israelite slaves in Egypt and sends Moses as a leader and advocate to represent them before Pharaoh. In Colossians, Paul is writing to the church with encouragement that they seek wisdom and spiritual understanding to hold steadfast in their trials and become a new humanity in Christ, their Redeemer. In *Reflecting on the Texts*, the writer names four aspects of the role of the “go’el” or the redeemer.

1. Care for and give freedom to the slave.
2. Care for the weak and vulnerable (See the video listed in Media Suggestions for a description of the Kinsman-Redeemer in the story of Ruth as an illustration of this aspect of redemption).
3. Care for children, marriage and family heritage.
4. Avenging wrongs and restoring rights.

Have volunteers read Exodus 6:6-8 and Colossians 1:13-14 while keeping in mind these characteristics of the “go’el.”

Exploring God’s Story and Vision

Dig deeper into the texts with these questions.

- Name where in the texts you see language pointing to any of the four characteristics. What similarities in language are there between the two passages?
- With Jesus as our Redeemer, what is our role as disciples through the authority given in the great commission (Matt 28:16-20)?
- What does a church look like and what does a church do when it is committed to restoring justice and caring for the weak and vulnerable?
- Colossians speaks of a new humanity that embodies mercy, generosity, forgiveness and love. What might this new humanity look like to you?
- What about Jesus’ characteristics as Redeemer can be labeled as innovative, adaptable and fearless?

Responding to God's Story and Vision

There are many in need of redemption in our neighborhoods, communities, and countries. One example throughout history is that of the refugee seeking asylum from violence, politics, or extreme poverty. Following the instructions below, read the excerpt from the poem "Home," written by Kenyan born, Somali-British poet Warsan Shire in 2018 from page 36.

1. Read it aloud once and then sit in silence for a moment.
2. Reread the poem (in a group or individually), imagine, and name what redemption would look like for this author and the people she describes.
3. What other scenarios come to mind that require Jesus as Redeemer of the slave, of the weak and vulnerable, of children, marriage and the family, of wrongs and restoring justice?

Empowered by God's Story and Vision

To wrap up, choose one of these activities.

- *Option 1*—Reflect on the similarities and differences between the Church of Colossae and the Church of the Brethren. Keep in mind the four aspects of the redeemer that Jesus embodied. How can the church act as the hands and feet of Christ to the next generation, and what things should we focus on as a denomination that worships Jesus Christ, our Redeemer?
- *Option 2*—Invite a volunteer to read the Compelling Vision Statement aloud. Set up four posters around the room or if virtual, set up four breakout rooms. Each poster (group) should name one of the four aspects of redemption listed above in *Discovering God's Story and Vision*. Draw a line down the middle of each poster, and on one side, name how the church addresses or has addressed that aspect. On the other side, write descriptions of what the church can do to address the aspect of redemption in the future.

If you are meeting in person, participants can walk around writing their ideas on the posters or, if meeting virtually, groups can take turns discussing each of the four aspects of redemption. Allow time for sharing the visions for the church from the posters or group discussions. How do the visions shared from the activity align with the Compelling Vision statement, and how do they affirm one another?

Sending

Close your time by listening or singing one of the songs listed in Media Suggestions. Share the following commission from Colossians 3:1-2.

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Amen.

The Author's Testimony

For as long as I can remember, I have heard the old story of the sacred redemption I have been gifted and given through the risen Savior, Jesus. Since I first started attending the Brooklyn First congregation at the age of three years old, I remember the hymns, scriptures, and testimonies shared about this redemption. I also remember growing up in a congregation dedicated to serving one another and the community around us in a way that I knew was radical because it was so different from the world around me. It is this very dedication to radical service that eventually led me into a personal relationship with Christ, studying the word of God and the calling to ministry on my life.

After studying Education and Chemistry in college, I felt led to Bethany Theological Seminary where I was able to dive into the word of God, the history of my faith tradition, and the rich theology of my denomination. I love being part of the denomination because I believe we, as humans, are stronger together when united in our work for Christ's mission. I know there are often many differences among God's people—backgrounds, cultures, and experiences that lead to different opinions and thoughts but I have seen a group of people put those things aside over and over again to do the work of Jesus—peacefully, simply, together. I also believe there is vast beauty and strength in these differences. Scripture tells us we are one body with many parts and often one part cannot understand another but all are equally needed and important (1 Corinthians 12).

More than ever as I navigate the world as a Christian Minister, High School Teacher, Mother, Daughter, Sister, and Wife, I see the need for the redemptive love of Jesus Christ and the message of unity in a body of believers. I have faith that as that body we will continue to find unity in the idea that Jesus is our Redeemer and it is our job to continue this work until he comes again.

Home—a poem by Warsan Shire

No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.

You only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well.

Your neighbors running faster than you, the boy you went to school with is holding a gun bigger than his body.

You only leave home when home won't let you stay.

No one would leave home unless home chased you, fire under feet, hot blood in your belly.

It's not something you ever thought about doing, and so when you did – you carried the anthem under your breath, waiting until the airport toilet to tear up the passport and swallow, each mouthful of paper making it clear that you would not be going back.

You have to understand, no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.

Who would choose to spend days and nights in the stomach of a truck unless the miles travelled meant something more than journey.

No one would choose to crawl under fences, be beaten until your shadow leaves you, raped, then drowned, forced to the bottom of the boat because you are darker, be sold, starved, shot at the border like a sick animal, be pitied, lose your name, lose your family, make a refugee camp a home for a year or two or ten, stripped and searched, find prison everywhere.

I want to go home, but home is the mouth of a shark...home is the barrel of the gun and no one would leave home unless home chased you to the shore—unless home tells you to leave what you could not behind, even if it was human. No one leaves home until home is a damp voice in your ear saying leave, run now, I don't know what I've become but I know that anywhere is safer than here.