

EASTSIDE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

SERMON: "JESUS THE REDEEMER"

TEXT: Isaiah 53:1-10

On the May 3, 1965 episode of the game show "I've Got A Secret," an 11-year old boy by the name of Keith appeared. The celebrity panel was challenged to guess his secret. It was revealed that Keith was the youngest singer to get a 5-year contract with Decca Records. Decca represented many celebrities from Judy Garland and Bing Crosby to Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton.

Keith was being groomed as the next up-and-coming teen idol. He had already written 40 original songs, was recognized for his talent in live theatre, and had even made a tv pilot. Even though the company was grooming him to be a star, his career stalled. Why? Another young heart throb was taking the world by storm by the name of Donnie Osmond. Keith was quickly forgotten by the world.

By his early teens, Keith ran away from home having felt like he failed everyone. He was a Jew by birth and was raised in the Christian Science cult. He started to experiment with the vices the world had to offer. Marijuana, psychedelic drugs, Eastern mysticism...he tried them all looking to fill a spiritual void in his life. After having a bad "trip" with the drugs, he started looking into religion and theology for answers.

When he was 19 he met a young Jewish woman with many of the same life experiences by the name of Melody, and they were soon married and looking for meaning in life together. In 1975, at the age of 22, Keith said that "through all his skepticism and searching, God's love broke through," and he became a Messianic Jew. Not long after his wife Melody became a believer as well.

AS Keith and Melody started to minister to those on the fringe of society, Keith's music career started to take off. This time, he focused on his experiences with Jesus. He signed in 1976 with Christian label Sparrow Records and took the Christian world by storm. Often he gave away his music to concert goers and in Christian bookstores, his cassettes would be double bundled, one for the buyer

and a free copy for the buyer to give to a friend. Through this new found success, he and his wife started “Last Days Ministries.”

Sadly, in the afternoon of July 28, 1982, at the age of 28, Keith, his four-year old son, and 2-year old daughter boarded a private plane with 7 other people. Just moments after take-off from the private runway of their ministry headquarters, the plane crashed killing all on board. Melody had not gone on the flight, choosing to stay at home with their 1-year old daughter and she was 6-weeks pregnant with their fourth child.

The story is of Keith Green, a pioneer of the modern contemporary Christian music scene. In just 6 years, his obedience to Jesus impacted the world and it is still being impacted today by his music and ministry that is still run by Melody.

We sang two of his best known songs already today, “O Lord, You’re Beautiful” and “There is A Redeemer.” Melody wrote the first two verses for “There is A Redeemer” and Keith was inspired to write the last one. This last verse was written only several months before his death:

***When I stand in glory,
I will see his face,
There I’ll serve my King forever,
In that holy place.***

Today we look at the simple yet not simple message of “There Is A Redeemer.” On this, the second Sunday in Lent, how does the fact that Jesus is your redeemer impact how you live?

Our scripture for today is taken from Isaiah 53:1-10:

53 Who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?

**² My servant grew up in the LORD’s presence like a tender green shoot,
like a root in dry ground.**

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,

nothing to attract us to him.

³ He was despised and rejected—

a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;

it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,

a punishment for his own sins!

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion,

crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.

He was whipped so we could be healed.

⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.

We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the LORD laid on him

the sins of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly,

yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,

he did not open his mouth.

⁸ Unjustly condemned,

he was led away.

No one cared that he died without descendants,

that his life was cut short in midstream.

But he was struck down

for the rebellion of my people.

⁹ He had done no wrong

and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal;

he was put in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰ But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him

and cause him grief.

**Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,
he will have many descendants.
He will enjoy a long life,
and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.**

“do something that compensates for poor past performance or behavior.”

“(of a person) atone or make amends for (error or evil).”

“save (someone) from sin, error, or evil”

“gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment.”

These are just a few of the definitions you will find if you google “definition of redeem.”

From an everyday existence, we redeem many things. Coupons, gift certificates, tickets from an arcade game, all of these things are said to be redeemed. We trade them in for something else...usually a benefit of some type, like a discount on a product, or a stuffed animal as a prize.

On a spiritual level, the fact that we acknowledge Jesus Christ as our “Redeemer” has incredible ramifications for our daily and eternal lives. Theologically, redemption refers to the saving work of Jesus, who came to accomplish our redemption by giving his life in substitution for our own. It was his life for ours!

Why do we need a redeemer?

In Romans 3:22-25, Paul explains:

²² We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for

our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,

Regardless of whether you are religious or not, you know in your heart of hearts that you have broken written or unwritten rules in some way, shape or form. Put it into religious terms – “we have all sinned.” There has always been a penalty for sinning...whether it was carried out or not. When you do something wrong...justice is demanded. This is the problem. We are sinful...God is not. Our sin separates us from God who is holy and perfect and there is nothing we can do about it. You can't forgive your own sin and only someone with authority can forgive you. Payment...restitution is demanded!

God in his great love for us, made a way that we could have a place with Him in heaven! Jesus, through his death on the cross, redeemed us and became our Redeemer!

Some of you listening today may be embarrassed to say you don't understand what it means that Jesus is our Redeemer. Please don't be! If you have been in the church for any length of time, you have probably heard about redemption over and over...so much so, you know how to use it in a sentence. We often call that “Christianeses.” Words and concepts we use specifically in a church/religious setting that when pushed for a definition, we aren't quite sure...

Let's go back to basics. If you are caught do 130 on the 401 highway (which in reality is slow for many) and the limit was 100 kilometers per hour, the signs posted up and down the highway inform you that you will get a pretty pricey fine. You go to court and the judge upholds the ticket and now the sentence. You must pay \$500. You don't have that kind of money. The judge decides that instead of the money, you must spend a week in jail. As you start into a panic attack, suddenly a voice from the court is heard saying, “I'll pay the fine.” This is the what Jesus did for us. We were guilty and there was a price to be paid. The Bible tells us in Romans 6:23:

“For the wages of sin is death...” It is pretty straight forward, but God in his mercy continued the thought... **“...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”** We owed a debt we could not pay – Jesus paid a debt he did not owe!

Not only did Jesus pay our debt, but his sacrifice also paid the price for all humanity, past, present, and future!

Some have argued that if Jesus’ sacrificed forgave the sins of the world, then why isn’t everyone going to heaven regardless of their actions?

Sadly the Bible is clear that even though the plan is in place for all people to be saved, not everyone will be. In the court room scenario, the defendant can refuse the gift. It sounds silly, but it happens all the time. People who are in need, refuse free gifts for many reasons. Guilt, shame, pride, mis-placed beliefs...all reasons that people might reject a gift. The sacrifice was made, redemption has been offered, are you willing to take the gift?

The gift is free, but God is a God of relationship. He requires a relationship that is governed by the fact that we must:

- Admit that we are sinners and have made mistakes.
- Believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross for you, and rose up from the grave on the third day.
- Confess Jesus as Lord of our lives. Commit ourselves to a life of following Jesus and serving others.

As simple as ABC!

“There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God’s own Son. Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One!” Thank you o my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving your Spirit ‘til the work on earth is done.”

What prevents you from accepting your gift of life today?
Let’s pray...