

## ICE BREAKER

What kind of trade have you made with someone, where you felt you got the better end of the deal?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What did You notice about God in the passage? What did you notice about yourself and other people in it?

## GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPITIVE WORK)

*Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.*

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

## ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



## Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

November 5, 2023

“How to Live Free”

Ephesians 3:20-4:3

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 am and 12:15 pm on the Lowell Patio

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The point of the first few chapters in Paul's letter to the people living in the ancient Roman city of Ephesus was to explain the mystery of God's infinite and unlimited grace, which is being poured out on us finite and limited human beings, in every moment of our lives.

Now, Paul is going to help us discover how to receive and practice God's grace in our daily living. Redemption is the biblical word we use for this spiritual practice. What is redemption? How do we incorporate it into our daily living? Paul helps us answer these questions in the next verses.

**3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.**

The church is not a building. It is us. We are designed to receive and reflect God's immeasurable glory. What is God's glory? It's Him. It's who He is. God is infinite love. God is unending humility. God is limitless patience, gentleness, and generosity. And God generously gives Himself to us, in all His glory, in each and every moment of our lives.

*We reflect God's glory to the degree we choose to receive Him in each moment.* That's what redemption is. It's exchange work. God invites us to exchange the things that are killing us and receive His glory in return, not just for our best, but for the benefit of those around us. Paul's words in the next chapter help us see what that spiritual practice of redemption looks like, practically speaking.

**4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**

Notice how Paul describes himself as a prisoner of the Lord, not as a political prisoner of the Roman government. Unlike our modern prisons, Paul was chained 24/7 to a Roman guard. Yet he considered himself to be chained only to Jesus, in all His glory. In other words, Paul chose to focus on and receive Jesus' glory, His life and freedom 24/7, despite his physical chains. He may have been a Roman prisoner externally, but Paul lived free in his inner being – mentally, emotionally, and spiritually!

This is what it means to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Jesus calls us to walk in His freedom. He came down into this world of death, took that absence of life on His shoulders, and in exchange, gave us the fullness of His eternal life. That's redemption.

What Jesus called us with is also what He calls us into. Therefore, redemption is the continual practice of exchange work, giving Jesus the burdens we carry that are killing us – the lies we believe about God and us, our negative emotions, the wounds we've taken on, even the concerns for those we care about – allowing Jesus to carry them for us.

What Paul writes next is key to helping us be consistent in that practice. His words are meant to reveal how we can continually experience God's glorious grace, beyond what we can ask or imagine in our daily living.

**4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.**

Each of the qualities Paul mentions is God's gracious gift to us. Each one also has a polar opposite - pride, harshness, impatience and hatred. When we choose to hold onto them, they become heavy burdens, keeping us from receiving the gracious gifts God is pouring out on us.

But the good news is, God is always working to make us aware of the things we're carrying which are killing us. Awareness of our burdens is God's gift to us, which comes with the invitation to give them to Him to carry for us. Practicing this exchange work of redemption helps us grow to experience the freedom God has for us, as well as everyone we know.

**4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

Experiencing God's freedom in our lives is not just for us. The more we choose to put His redemptive exchange work into practice, the more people will see the changes in us. As they see God doing more than we can ask or imagine, it draws them in, uniting us in Him. That's freedom!

**GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: Tips for great conversation**

- We aren't here to teach/fix each other, but to share our experiences.
- Show respect by listening to one another, asking clarifying questions.
- If you're quick to share, allow space and time for others to speak up.
- If you're slow to speak, your experience is valuable so please share.