

Redeeming Relationships
Weaving God's grace into the fabric of every relationship
A study through the book of Ephesians

There is a powerful passage in Ephesians chapter six that is devoted to spiritual warfare: what it is, why it is important and how to do it well. I have reserved that passage for a new series that we will explore through the month of November. You may hear growing excitement over the newest Star Wars episode that will be debuting in December. In this passage from Ephesians 6, we will explore the ultimate force of God's Holy Spirit that helps us take our stand against the forces of darkness, against Satan himself, and his efforts to attack and sabotage the people of God.

For the past two months we have looked at the challenge of redeeming relationships. God is the great redeemer. No one does redemption like God! He desires to redeem every person and restore them to a right and rich relationship with him. But we have learned that redeeming relationships has real boundaries. Even God cannot redeem relationships when people are unresponsive or resistant.

We are redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ. Once we experience the glory of a redeemed relationship with God, we can then follow God's lead in redeeming the relationships in our lives. The book of Ephesians deals specifically with redeeming your relationship with God; redeeming your marriage; redeeming your family and redeeming your work.

This final message is all about redeeming your witness. Every disciple has a witness. However, unless we learn to redeem our witness, it will inevitably become ineffective and unproductive. Paul reveals the secrets of a redeemed witness at the close of his letter to the believers at Ephesus.

"Redeeming your Witness"
Ephesians 6:19-20

"Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

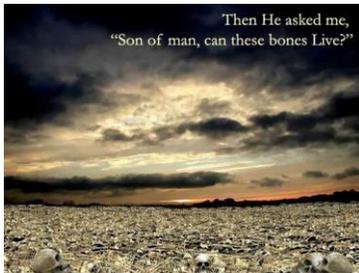
1. An effective witness for Christ is redeemed from corruption and compromise.
 - "... I am an ambassador ..." v. 20a
 - "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."
2 Corinthians 5:20a
 - "having a form of godliness but denying its power" 2 Timothy 3:5b
 - "Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."
2 Corinthians 7:1
 - "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited."
2 Corinthians 6:3 NIV
 - The power of repentance in the life of King Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:12-13)
2. An effective witness for Christ is redeemed from fear, frustration and silence.
 - "... words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known ... the gospel" v. 19



- “But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”
Matthew 10:19-20
- “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:49-50
- Lock-jawed Jeremiah
Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. ⁹ But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.
Jeremiah 20:8-9

3. An effective witness for Christ is redeemed through prayer.

- “Pray . . . pray” v. 19-20
- “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us— whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.
1 John 5:14-15
- Six evangelistic prayers:
 - the prayer of preparation: “Lord, make me clean and whole”
 - the prayer of inspiration: “Lord, give me a divine opportunity”
 - the prayer of declaration: “Lord, give me the words to speak”
 - the prayer of revelation: “Lord, open their hearts”
 - the prayer of preservation: “Lord, keep the witness fresh on their mind”
 - the prayer of dedication: “Lord, help them choose Christ”
- The vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:1-10)



How is your witness for Christ today? Do you have a salvation story to tell or are you in need of taking that first step of faith toward Christ? If you are already a disciple, has your witness been compromised or even silenced? God can resurrect and redeem your witness today if you will ask him.