

Revelation 14: 4 and 5; "Redeemed from among Men", Sermon # 101 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 2nd, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

This sermon is a continuation of previous sermons, relating to you the opening theme of this new section in the book of Revelation which we will term the pouring out of the vials, or the bowls of God's righteous wrath upon the Antichristian powers. It begins at Chapter 14, verse 1 which I believe represents the time in Church History when God so revived His people at the time of the Reformation that the true Church began to sing as it were a new song. This new vision of what God was doing in His sovereign wisdom and grace began in verse 1 with the Lamb, who is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ standing on Mount Zion; standing with His Church. Our Lord took the field spiritually and came to His true Church and His true people in an amazing way to revive His own cause of truth and righteousness. It was because Christ Himself was standing on, and with, the confession of such men as John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague; using their testimony, and the testimony of many others for Himself; that the stranglehold of Rome, trying to choke the testimony of the word of God, finally began to be broken. The Lamb was standing on Mt. Zion, just like He had literally stood in heaven and received the dying testimony of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church in the days of the early Church. Christ had promised that He would be with His Church until the end of the age, and He always was with her in the worst times of the Church's persecution and oppression by Rome. But now He was standing with her in a way of building upon her every confession of Himself; giving power to her witness which had been so long been suppressed and stifled. I told you in a previous sermon that it is the voice of Christ speaking through His true Church which will eventually cause the walls of the city of the New Testament Babylon to fall. People who are deceived by the Church of Rome must come to hear the voice of God's true worshipers. They must hear Christ's true brethren speaking of their adoption by God the Father; the Father's name being spiritually written on their foreheads as it says there in verse 1. They must, secondly, hear the voice of the sound of the preaching of Law and grace being distinguished. This is what most definitely happened at the Reformation. The doctrines of God's grace were clearly discerned by a few men; men who were specifically called and raised up by the Lord to be Reformers in the Church. As they read the Scriptures they were given grace by Christ not only to retrieve the doctrines of grace from the word of God, but they were also given the ability to powerfully and effectually convince many other people that Rome's sacramental ceremonies and works were an attempt to promote salvation by religious works; works which supposedly would bring salvation to those who had submitted to the false Papal teaching. They preached against legalism in all its forms. They were able to begin to preach the doctrine of justification by faith once again. Religious activities such as participation in the Mass, doing Penance, and submitting to Auricular Confession in the presence

of a priest were the practices that they exposed as unbiblical and false. The worship of the saints and Mary came to be seen by many as idolatrous and blasphemous. Even the music and liturgy of the Church of Rome's worship was exposed as dishonoring to the victorious nature of Christ's grace, and so new hymns were written and the psalms began to be sung in the congregations of the righteous. Now this afternoon we will look at the Fourth point of the original outline of Revelation 14: 1-5, which is this: - People who are deceived by the church of Rome must hear the voice of the Church's sincere spiritual purity which comes to them because of Christ's redeeming work. I pray that these truths may become a part of our witness to people around us who we would like to see come to Christ and out of the Church of Rome and into the light of the glorious gospel which frees people from empty forms and rituals. I would like to make 3 points concerning the voice of the Church's sincere spiritual purity to open up the proposition that I have made. 1st of all - Because Christ redeemed His people, all of His true saints are not defiled with women; they are virgins. 2nd - Because Christ redeemed His people, His saints follow the Lamb wherever He goes. And then the 3rd point which we will not have time to get into this afternoon will be that because Christ redeemed His people, no deceit will be found in them. They will be the first fruits of a greater harvest which is yet to come. May this sincere purity be found in each one of us, Christ's saints.

1st of all - Because Christ redeemed His people, all of His true saints are not defiled with women; they are virgins.

Now I do not know how the literalist can make any sense of this verse at all. If this verse is taken literally and there are a hundred and forty four thousand persons who are not literally defiled with women during the time of the "great tribulation"; all of this special group of witnesses must of necessity be virgins in a literal sense. And only they could sing the new song of Christ's redemption, Christ's truth, and His saving grace. But this is not the meaning of the text. Does one have to be a virgin to be a minister? Do they have to be a virgin to be witness for Christ? No, it is only the Roman Catholic Church which would make her all of her priests virgins. And many of them have not the gift of celibacy. It is those who forbid marriage who are deceived and deceiving. The meaning of the words is not literal but spiritual in relation to all those faithful witnesses mentioned in verses 4 and 5. The one hundred and forty four thousand signify all of Christ's faithful Elect people during the entire time of this third period of Church History; the time period in which the Beasts of Chapter 13 seem to have triumphed over the true Church of Jesus Christ. This is the time period of the 1260 days prophecy, the time actually being 1260 literal years. These persons, these faithful saints of God are keeping themselves pure from the defiling influences of idolatry and spiritual fornication with the false religion of Antichrist. We are here seeing the triumph by God's true saints over the defiling influences of the false doctrine and sinful practices of the Roman Catholic Church, even though that false church does continue on throughout the 1260 years to promote what is false. "These are the ones who were not defiled with women." To "not be defiled with women" in the literal sense would mean not to engage in

physical or mental fornication with women; not to be participating in things which would sexually defile a person in the sight of God and men. Certainly any true Christian who believes in the word of God knows that the Bible clearly teaches that we are to "keep our garments". We are to "walk with Christ in white." "This is our sanctification; that we abstain from sexual immorality; that each of us should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man should defraud his brother in this matter because the Lord is the avenger of all such." "God did not call his people to uncleanness in sexual things, but to holiness," as it says in 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-7. A true Christian must surely make every attempt to disentangle himself from the filthiness of sexual sins in every respect in regard to his thoughts and conduct. Sexual desires are not wrong in themselves; they are given to you by God. But they must be held in check and directed into the single channel of marriage to one person; a man and a woman brought together in the bonds of holy matrimony. Hebrews chapter 13, verse 4 says, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

But very often in the Bible there is a spiritual unfaithfulness which is described for us as a going in to, or going over to, false religion that is described for us in terms of sexual fornication. We are going to see this kind of description amplified for us in Chapter 17. Let's turn there for a moment so that we can better understand spiritual fornication. "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.'" "So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness." "And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." "The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication." "And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." Here is spiritual fornication described for us. It is the "the kings of the earth"; political rulers who make laws and enforce them, joining together with those spiritual harlots; those churches which depart from the truth of the Bible, and are unfaithful to God and to Christ in the laws that they make and the spiritual truths and practices that they promote. It is also the inhabitants of the earth (the false visible church) who are drunk with the wine of her fornication. This has been the history, not only of the Roman Catholic Church but also of those Protestant churches that have compromised their marital vows to Christ. They are those who have come to believe that the Bible is not the word of God, that conversion is not necessary to salvation, and that moral purity is not essential to living the Christian life. The spiritual harlot of the Roman Church is the mother of these harlots, her daughters being any church who will even partially compromise and come to hold to some of Rome's doctrines. You see this kind of compromise, for example, in certain sections

of the Church of England, and the liberal wings of the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and Congregational churches, as well as in the liberal sections of the Lutheran churches of our day. They have become very ceremonial and sacramental in their worship; but conversion to Christ, repentance, saving faith, and the doctrines of God's grace and His sovereignty in salvation are largely unknown to both the ministers and the people of those churches.

Truly, we live in days of spiritual fornication. The truth that has been handed down to us in the Reformation; the truth that many men died for; the truth that salvation is through faith in Christ alone, apart from sacramental works, has largely been lost in our generation. If I am not mistaken, the great task that is being given to true Christian in this generation is to hold fast and to hold forth the truth of the Bible. It is; for those who are ministers, to be faithful to preach it, proclaim it, and explain it faithfully and repeatedly to everyone around them; not simply their own congregation. The great task of the people who are not teachers or preachers is to hold fast the truths of the Bible and to live them out, not growing tired of the preaching of the Bible, but promoting in your own life, the life of your family, and sharing your love of Christ and His word with everyone around you. It will be enough if we can be faithful in this. For if we are faithful in this, our love will not grow cold, and we will not apostatize. Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4: 1 - "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!" "Be ready in season and out of season." "Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned to fables." (That is spiritual fornication) "But you be watchful in all things...." This is what we are to do to be faithful to Christ as our spiritual husband; to hold fast the truth. "He who has My words and keeps them; he it is who loves Me...." But take heart my friends and brethren. When Christ died for sinners at the cross; He died to redeem you; to purchase you back from all that is false and sinful. And what He died to redeem you from, is from is all spiritual fornication. Will you not see that everything good, everything holy, everything pure and true and right is with Him? Holding out against the defilements of false religion and sin is what it means to be a virgin spiritually speaking as this text is talking about. It is not keeping company with the Devil in trafficking in spiritual fornication which is being unfaithful to the doctrines of Christ's word; taking pleasure in that which defiles and debauches the soul. Therefore pursue what is good and righteous in terms of what you believe and how you live. Therefore believe in God, believe also in Christ and keep yourself pure in word, doctrine, and actions.

Secondly - Because Christ redeemed His people, His saints follow the Lamb wherever He goes and they are the first fruits of a much greater harvest which is yet to come.

"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes." "These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb." You can see that the symbolic name given to Christ twice here in this verse is "the Lamb". Christians follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Why isn't the symbolic word, "the Lion", used in this passage? It would seem to convey the strength of the risen Lord; the strength of His leadership, and the power that He has to accomplish all things concerning His kingdom and cause. I believe that the Lamb is used here because it is a more fitting symbol to convey more of what our Lord intends that His saints learn as they walk through this life trying to glorify Him. The word, "the Lamb" conveys truth about what Christ came to do in His first coming, which was to give His life as a ransom for many. He was to do good, to teach, and to suffer for righteousness sake. He mentions it in John Chapter 10, verse 11. "I am the good Shepherd." "The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep." And verse 27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." These verses show the sacrificial care of Christ as the good Shepherd, but in our verse here in Revelation it is speaking not of following the Good Shepherd, but of following the Lamb. I believe that this means that you and I who believe in Christ; in our following of Christ, we become more and like Him in terms of our sacrifice of ourselves in living the Christian life. The Shepherd became a lamb in His loving us all the way to the cross. Therefore we, out of love and thankfulness to Him, pick up our cross and follow Him. To follow the Lamb means that we are learning more and more, to give of our lives to preserve and proclaim the truth, and to love the brethren. Following the Lamb means that it will be the Lord Himself who will lead us, His people, into various situations in which we will have opportunity to act sacrificially to give of our time, our attention, our strength, and our resources in order to do what Jesus would do in that situation if He were physically there. This is surely a matter of our learning to deny ourselves. But it is more than that. It is learning, by His grace to follow Him willingly and joyfully, looking to see what we ourselves can do for Him, now that He has saved us. The Lord leads us by taking us where he finds us before we are converted and leading us into the truth and a greater revelation of Himself; His power and His grace, which are sufficient for us in every situation.

I like what Spurgeon says in his sermon on this passage. "Young Christian, I should recommend to you, in starting out in the Christian life, to aim at obeying your Lord's commands in every particular." "If you have believed in Him, the first thing that you ought to do is to be baptized." "Follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and I am sure that he went down into the waters of the Jordan, and was baptized by John, and then the Holy Spirit rested upon Him, and His Father said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" "When you have done that, go and give yourself to the Church of Christ, for the Lord Jesus Christ, from the very first, began to gather round about him those who feared God, and he had a company of disciples who

constituted his Church." "Still keep on following the Lamb wherever He goes; and if you do, you will be a very amiable, loving, generous, hearty, self-denying, laborious Christian." "If you follow the Lamb wherever He goes, you go about doing good; you will lay yourself out in service for the Master." "Perhaps you will teach little children, for he said, 'Suffer the little children to come to Me, and forbid them not.'" "Perhaps you will stand and preach in the streets, for he, by the hill-side, and on the mountain, and by the sea, spoke ever the things of God." "But if you follow Him, you will do good in one way or another, and not be a lazy lie-a-bed in the kingdom of Christ, expecting to be honored and rewarded for doing nothing at all." I like what Spurgeon says here. Let us as Christians be up and doing. I pray that the Lord will see each one of us living this way; following the Lamb, doing good, taking our stand for truth, and laying down our lives for it and the brethren. I hope that God will give each one of us that kind of grace. We will look at verse 5 more closely next month.