



## **GRACIOUS REDEEMER**

BY GREG BREAZEALE

Someone has likened the gospel to a pool in which both a child can wade and an elephant can swim. It is simple and profound, easy and hard, clear and mysterious. Children can understand it, and yet theologians can write volumes on its depths.

“Gracious Redeemer” captures the mysteries and complexities of the gospel, and yet it is simple enough for us to sing in corporate worship. We don’t have to be trained theologians to sing it, but we become profound theologians when we do.

The song reminds us of all that Jesus has done, leading us away from a posture of selfishness and toward one of gratitude. It leads us out of self-centeredness into God-centeredness.

When the Bible talks about our standing before God without the gospel, it pulls no punches. We were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1), enemies with God (James 4:4), captive under Satan’s domain (Colossians 1:13-14), and enslaved to our passions and lusts (Titus 3:3). These are hard truths to consider, but it’s hard to read our Bibles without doing so, and less meaningful to sing this song if we don’t.

“Gracious Redeemer” begins by acknowledging what we were before Jesus extended His grace:

*I was lost in sin, held captive by my fear*

This is our state before the gospel, before knowing Christ. We were filled with guilt, shame, chained to sin, and owed a debt we could not pay. We were dead and lost, but not without hope, as the next lyric remembers:

*’til Your mercy showed Your hand was reaching near*

The goodness and kindness of our God appeared as His mercy and grace were lavished on us. Our God came near in Jesus. Now there is no guilt or shame or curse or chains. Our debt is paid, our souls are saved. We have moved from death into life. We are no longer enemies

with God, He is now our friend. “Gracious Redeemer” reminds us this is a love, a friendship, a grace unending:

*There’s nothing like Your love without end  
My hope was purchased by the blood of the Lamb  
My Jesus, Redeemer*

Our King, out of an indescribable love for His children, drew near to us. Therefore we too must turn away from ourselves and into His loving arms. This is why we must sing this song.

When Paul said the Word of Christ was to dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16), he meant for these kinds of words—gospel words—to dwell in us. This song helps drive the gospel deep in our hearts as we sing it.

C. S. Lewis said, “The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God.”

This is what all of us long for. We long to be drawn out of self-absorption, self-pity, and self-aggrandizement. We need and want God. We need our gaze fixed on Him. We need to be mesmerized and amazed by Him. We need His beauty and worth to capture our affections.

And while one song cannot magically usher us into the presence of God, it’s hard to sing these words while thinking about ourselves. One would be hard-pressed to think of his own skill and achievements and sing words like these:

*My Jesus, gracious Redeemer and Friend  
There’s nothing like Your love without end*

This song helps lead us out of our self-centeredness, into the gospel, and ultimately to God. Let us sing it—and believe it—with all our might.