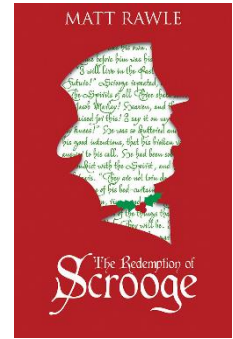


# The Redemption of Scrooge

By: Matt Rawle  
Week 1



## OPENING PRAYER

God of our past, present, and future, bless our time together over the next few weeks. Guide us as we draw inspiration from a great work of literature during this time of preparation when we anticipate all the ways you have, do, and will enter our world. May we benefit from the wisdom of your people and your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## VIDEO STUDY AND DISCUSSION

In A Christmas Carol, Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three ghosts—the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come. This idea of three ghosts is appropriate for the Christian season of Advent, which also brings together the past, present, and future.

- In what ways does Advent connect us with the past? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- In what ways does Advent connect us with the present? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- In what ways does Advent connect us with the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Advent helps us remember that, "Jesus came to save us from counting our past as our only reality. . . . Advent is like living in the wilderness between what was and what will be. Living into this tension, remembering God's promises, and depending on faith become spiritual disciplines that keep us from becoming Scrooges ourselves. Even though the Promised Land may seem far off, we hold tightly to the promises of our God, for 'he who promised is faithful'" (Hebrews 10:23 NIV) (The Redemption of Scrooge, pages 23-24).

## RELATING THE STORY TO SCRIPTURE:

**Galatians 6:7** - *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."*

- What do you think this verse means by, "A person will harvest what they plant" (CEB) or "You reap whatever you sow." (NRSV)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- How might this verse be used to justify someone's misfortune (or taking delight in someone's misfortune)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Ebenezer Scrooge takes a view of life that corresponds with this verse. Rawle says in the DVD segment that Scrooge lives according to Galatians 6:7 taken to the extreme. Because Scrooge feels as though every person is deserving of his or her circumstances (whether for good or for bad), he has little sympathy for those who struggle.

- How does this idea—that people reap what they sow—affect your attitudes toward other people? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- How might this verse alone be insufficient for understanding God's grace and judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Colossians 2:13-14** - *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*

- What do these verses tell us about how God responds to the mistakes we make? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- How do these verses give new meaning to the idea that people get what they deserve? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Matthew 20:1-16** - *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.*

*"About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.*

*"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'*

*"'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.*

*"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'*

*"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'*

*"The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'*

*"But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'*

*"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

- Would you say that the workers in this Scripture got what they deserved? Why, or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- How does God's understanding of what we deserve differ from our understanding? What does this parable tell us about God's grace? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Rawle, in the video segment, says that God's economy doesn't follow the same rules as the world. What does this parable tell us about God's economy? How do the "rules" in this parable differ from the economic rules of the culture in which we live? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## YOUR MARLEY'S GHOST

Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- To whom do you think the author is referring with the phrase, "great cloud of witnesses"? \_\_\_\_\_

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The first ghost to visit Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* was the ghost of Scrooge's old partner, Jacob Marley. Like Scrooge, Marley had been a miser. Only after his death had Marley come to terms with errors he'd made while he was alive. Though most of us would prefer not to be visited by ghosts, we all know people who have gone before us who could impart valuable advice to us.

- Think of one person who is no longer living who might be able to offer you valuable wisdom and guidance. This person need not be like Marley who regrets how he or she lived. \_\_\_\_\_

What wisdom might that person impart to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CLOSING PRAYER

God of Advent and Christmas, thank you for entering our world as a child many years ago; thank you for entering our lives today; and thank you for the hope of your promised return. As we travel through this Advent season, let us be mindful of your presence and your will. Empower us to bring the hope of Christ to all of your people. We pray all these things in the name of Christ, who is past, present, and future. Amen.