

Jesus Our Mediator

You were made for God. Do you know that? You were made for God. You were made to know and enjoy God. To love him and be loved by him. You were made to live before him in joy, gratitude, and obedience. But there is a deep problem. As deep as the Pacific Ocean. We are born with rebellious, sinful hearts. And sin flows from them like water from a spring. How sweet then is the office of Jesus as Mediator. A Mediator brings two parties at odds together (parents serve this role with their kids all the time). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. And as Mediator, Jesus came to secure for us all the rich blessings of God, the chief of which is God himself. But he had to die to secure the full, eternal inheritance.

The old or first covenant, with all its rites and sacrifices could never sufficiently provide what Jesus came to give. God required it, but it was all a shadow pointing to the true reality. Moses was a mediator that pointed to Christ the true and better Mediator. The sacrifices pointed to Jesus, the sufficient sacrifice. The purification of the flesh pointed to a time when Christ would come and purify our consciences. The holy of holies in the tabernacle was a copy of the true presence of God in heaven Jesus would open up to all his people.

All of this through Jesus our Mediator. He brings us to God and brings all the blessings of God to us. How does he do this? In our text, Jesus in his office as Mediator, does three things:

1. Jesus abolished sin (verses 25-26)
2. Jesus represents us now in the presence of God (verses 23-24)
3. Jesus saves us from future judgment (verses 27-28)

Jesus, our Mediator Abolished Sin (verses 25-26)

25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

These verses speak of the power of Christ's death in a way no other text does. It is so loaded. Jesus' sacrifice is powerful and decisively addresses the sin problem for everyone who trusts him for all time! Let's look at the last part of verse 26 phrase by phrase. He has appeared, "once for all." We've covered this at least a few

times in previous messages because the author wants to convince these Jewish that unlike the temple priests, Christ's sacrifice is finished and complete. And we need to hear this more often. The idea that Christ's sacrifice is insufficient and he needs to do something more, is horrific. Or maybe it is insufficient and you need to do something more. Listen, your tears can never atone for your sins. Your good works cannot merit your acceptance before God. Your family heritage cannot earn an ounce of God's favor. Only Christ crucified, once for all!

Next phrase: "*at the end of the ages*". NASB translates this, "consummation of the ages". The cross was not just one event in a string of events. It was not even *merely* the most important event in redemptive history. The cross is the culmination of all other events. It is the central event that everything else relates to. It is the climactic event. Effecting the past, the present, and the future. And I think this helps us to understand how saints before the cross were saved. There is no salvation apart from Christ. So how was Moses saved? How about Ruth, David, Deborah, Elijah? They were saved by the cross. Christ's sacrifice is so powerful it is retroactively applied to the saints prior to Christ's coming. The old covenant sacrifices were all pointing to the work of Christ. And whoever truly believed, not in the sacrifices themselves, but in the grace of God were saved through the work that Christ would do.

Next phrase: Jesus "*put away sin*" or "*set sin aside*". Not swept under the rug. The words "put away" could be translated "abolished". He took away all the sins for all who would ever trust him for all time. Jesus does not merely provide a way for sin to be put away. He put it away! There is a huge difference. One has potential, the other accomplishment. For all who would ever trust in him, Christ has actually put your sin away - abolished it! What does this mean? He took every one of them on his shoulders when he was nailed to the cross. All your sin - past, present, and future (1 Peter 2:24). If you are in Christ, there is not one sin in the past, nor one that you are struggling with this moment, nor one you will commit next week, which he did not take to himself, as though it was his own, and suffer and die for it. Amazing! Do we realize just how forgiven we are?!?! Martin Luther: "Jesus, I am your sin, you are my righteousness." Furthermore, the abolition of sin means we are no longer under sin's dominion now. We may struggle with it and against it (and every true Christian does - the key word is struggle, there is a fight). But you may be sure that the roots of sin's power, however deep and thick they are, have been severed (Romans 6:14).

Last phrase at the end of verse 26: "*by the sacrifice of himself*". There are different ways to talk about who is active in the death of Christ all of which are true. There were evil men who conspired against him. The Father planned the death of his Son, and Isaiah 53 says he crushed him. Here it says that Jesus sacrificed himself.

There are false teachers who call the cross divine child abuse (blasphemous). No, the Father did what he did. And the Son willingly laid his life down. It was personal. He gave himself out of love for the Father and for us.

Two emotions are appropriate here. We should shudder to think that it required the death of the eternal Son of God to deal with your sin. Our sin is that bad! And at the same time, what love! That the Savior would give himself for us!

Jesus Represents us NOW in the presence of God

Sin abolished, now Jesus represents us in heaven. In the very presence of God. Verses 23-24 say,

*23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, **now** to appear in the presence of God **on our behalf**.*

Having dealt with sin in the past, what is Jesus our Mediator doing now? He appears in the presence of God on our behalf. Right now. Have you ever gone somewhere you felt out of place? Well, in ourselves, the most out of place we could ever be in is the presence of God. Paul says that God dwells “*unapproachable light*.” Habakkuk 1:13 says, “*You are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong*”. But through Christ, we may come. We may come now and come boldly. Not apart from him. And not by giving him a token nod.

Notice the phrase “on our behalf” - I love it! This speaks of the idea that is all throughout the new testament that Jesus is our Substitute. He died “on our behalf” or here, Jesus appears in the presence of God “on our behalf”. Also notice the word “now”. Jesus “now” appears in the presence of God on our behalf. Right now, Jesus our Mediator represents us before the Father - our names are engraved on his hands and written on his heart.

Did you notice in verse 23 it says that the presence of God in heaven needs to be purified with the sacrifice of Jesus? Why? So that we, unclean, may come. Right now. **Now** you may know full acceptance in heaven. **Now** you may know the full and free love of God in Christ. **Now**, you may draw near with confidence. How can this be? Because Christ is there... on your behalf. He is there for you. When you draw near to God through Jesus, you are as accepted as Christ himself is.

Paul says that the Christian's life is hidden in Christ. Christian, you could not be more accepted. You could not be more loved. You could not be more welcome to the Father than you are in Christ, hidden in Christ. The question is, are you?

Jesus saves us from future judgment (verses 27-28)

27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Do you ever think about judgment? You should. This text tells us that after death comes judgment. Paul says "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." He includes himself. But it's important to see the point the author is making here. Verses 27-28 work together to make a larger point. And the point is made through comparison.

The first parts of verses 27 and 28 go like this. And just as... so Christ. Just as we die once, Christ died once - offering himself to bear the sins of many. And after we die, later we will come into judgment - "appointed for man to die once and then comes judgment". Christ died, and later will save us from judgment "[he] will appear a second time, not to deal with sin (he already did) but to save..."

For the Christian, judgment day will lead to final and complete salvation, because the righteous Judge, Jesus Christ, is also our gracious Savior.

For Whom?

Who are the beneficiaries of Christ's work as Mediator? Jesus appears "in the presence of God on our behalf." Who is the "our"? Jesus bore the sins of "many". Who are the many? They are described a two ways: "those who are called" (verse 15). I don't think this is talking about the general call of the gospel to every single person who hears, "here is what Christ has done. Repent and believe!" I think this is talking about what theologians call the effectual call. This is when one hears the gospel, and the Spirit of God works and

awakens them to more than just the call they can hear with their physical ears. He raises them and enables them to hear the voice of the Shepherd calling them... and they come!

It also describes them as “*those who are eagerly waiting for him*” (verse 28). Paul says something similar in 2 Timothy 4:7-8:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Those who love Jesus and want to see him. What boldness this would produce. And humility and love and joy in the Holy Spirit! How do you know if this is you? Are you trusting in the once for all, sin-bearing work of Jesus? Not passively, but as your only hope. Do you have confidence to draw near to God the Father now through Christ? Do you long to see Jesus? If the answer is no, I urge you to come to God with a humble heart and seek his mercy. If the answer is yes: Well then, the eternal inheritance is all yours!

Let's pray.

Benediction - God's blessing (Hebrews 13:20-21)