

Christ the Mediator

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[0 : 00] Great. Okay, let me pray for us as we come to have a look at God's Word together. Let me pray. Father in heaven, we do want to pray and ask for your help this evening.

We're conscious of just the weakness of the moment, and we know that we need your help. So please, Lord, enable us, enable me that we might all benefit from our time together this evening. Lord, just persuade us even more of the greatness of the Lord Jesus. This evening we pray in his name. Amen. If you look down at Psalm 91 that you've been looking at with Nathan, you can see, can't you, that the Lord, being with the Lord, is our refuge.

And so the question really for us over these last two Sunday evenings when we've been thinking about Christ the Mediator is, how do we get there? We've been thinking, haven't we, that heroes in stories take us to the places that we want to go that we cannot get to in our own strength.

And so the kind of character of the hero tells you the kind of place that they can take you to. So Superman can take you to a place where no disasters happen. Spider-Man and Batman can fight crime.

[1 : 22] You can think of it. I don't know. I run out of superheroes at that point. But anyway, you can imagine, can't you? And so Jesus Christ is a unique hero or mediator because being both fully God and fully man, he alone is able to take us to the place that we all want to be, which is in the presence of the Lord.

The Lord is our refuge. The Most High is our dwelling. So we want to be with the Lord, don't we? And the only way we can be with the Lord is if there is a hero to take us there because we cannot get there on our own.

Jesus Christ is uniquely able to fix what was broken in the fall, which is that we were excluded from God's presence. He is able to reach down to our humanity, come alongside us in sympathy, in our weakness.

He is able to provide a sacrifice for our sin. And he is also able to reach up to the divine so that in encountering him, we encounter God himself. And we ended, you might remember, a couple of weeks ago in John 17 with a prayer of Jesus that we would be in the Father and in the Son by the Spirit.

So that was two weeks ago, right? Jesus, fully God, fully man, our divine man, human mediator. Okay? That's the God-man mediator.

[2 : 45] That's what we were looking at two weeks ago. And this evening, we're going to think just some more detail about how then does this mediator go about his work? So part one, what kind of mediator?

Fully God and fully man. Part two, what kind of work does this mediator undertake? Now, before I go any further, I want to just caveat that we're not going to look at everything that the confession says about the work of the mediator.

There's just way too much for that. So we're just going to focus in on a few things on it. And I want to suggest to you, so this book here was bought for me for a birthday present.

Well, I was given vouchers and I bought the book, but there you go. And this is a book and it contains creeds and confessions and catechisms. So it's got the Baptist confession in it.

It's got the Westminster confession in it. It's got the Apostles creed in it. It's got the Nicene creed in it. It's got the larger and shorter catechism. I read this in the morning alongside my Bible, just a few paragraphs.

[3 : 48] It's really, really helpful. So I am not going to cover everything that the confession says. So you might want to get hold of something like this and read it devotionally. It's a great birthday present if you want one.

There you go. The title of the book is Creeds, Confessions and Catechisms, a reader's edition edited by Chad Van Dixhorn. There you go.

Great. Okay. So let me read what the confession says about Christ the mediator. Paragraphs 9 and 10. It's on your handout. This office of mediator between God and man is appropriate for Christ alone, who is the prophet, priest and king of the church of God.

This office may not be transferred from him to anyone else, either in whole or in part. The number and character of these offices is essential.

Because we are ignorant, we need his prophetic office. Because we are alienated from God and imperfect in the best of our service. We need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us to God as acceptable.

[4 : 59] Because we are hostile and utterly unable to return to God. And so that we can be rescued and made secure from our spiritual enemies, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, sustain, deliver and preserve us for his heavenly kingdom.

So there you might notice three things that this mediator does for us. He is our prophet. He is our priest. He is our king. And those three roles match up to the three needs that we have.

Now for the most observant of you, you'd be going, oh, that sounds vaguely familiar. I recognize these three offices from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, you come across these all the time, don't you?

The prophet, the priest and the king. And that's right, isn't it? The confession points out humanity has always needed these three offices. And although Christ alone accomplished them in time when he died on the cross victorious, still before that time, these three offices were shadowed in the Old Testament.

So that even before the arrival of the Lord Jesus as the mediator, people might be saved through Christ by the things that are fulfilled in him ultimately. This is really important for how you read your Bible.

[6 : 13] And I've scribbled a diagram which is on your handout, which hopefully will work. We are saved, aren't we, by looking to Jesus and having faith in him. That is how we're saved.

Now we look to Jesus and have faith in him because we read God's word about Jesus and who he is and what he has done. And so we read about him. We know what he has done.

We put our faith and trust in him. Or someone tells us what Jesus has done and we put our faith and trust in him as we are called by God to put our trust in him. In the Old Testament, salvation is in exactly the same manner.

But instead of looking back at what Christ has done, you are looking forward to what Christ will do. So what Christ will do is shadowed in the prophets, priests and kings of the Old Testament.

Sometimes because they are pointing forward to him because they are like him. And sometimes they're pointing forward to him because they are not like him. And you're looking for a better prophet, a better priest, a better king.

[7 : 14] But essentially you're saved in exactly the same way because you believe the promises that are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. So you have faith in the promise that Christ alone fulfills. We have faith in Christ as the fulfillment of those promises.

And so our salvation is effectively the same. The confession puts it like this. The price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after his incarnation.

Yet the virtue, efficacy and benefit of it was imparted to the elect in every age since the beginning of the world. I don't know whether that makes it clearer or less clear for you.

But essentially what the confession is saying there is that in promises, types and sacrifices, Jesus is revealed. And so by putting your faith in those promises and seeing him in those types and in those sacrifices, you are essentially putting your faith in Jesus Christ.

So if you believe the promise that God will crush the serpent's head, you are putting your faith in Jesus Christ because that is who God is referring to in Genesis 3.15.

[8 : 45] And Jesus comes in time but has since the beginning of time been pointed to in that way. Okay. Does that make sense? Right.

Right. Okay. So as you read the Old Testament, it doesn't automatically pop out. No. No. No. No. It doesn't mean to be explained. It doesn't have credibility and it has some confidence.

Great. Well, yeah. No, thank you. That's helpful. I think this is exactly how Paul views the promises of the Old Testament. They all have their yes and amen in Jesus Christ, right? So everything that's

promised in the Old Testament is pointing forward to Jesus.

Sorry? So I want to be coming to the Old Testament. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. So yes.

And so let me say, let me, how am I going to put it? So Paul, I think, would preach the Old Testament evangelistically. Yeah. But he would, he would preach Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

[9 : 56] And so, so we can't, so Jews now can't just be saved through believing the Old Testament as if it's unfulfilled. Right. Yeah.

Because they need to see the fulfillment in Christ to be saved. Yeah. And it's interesting, isn't it? When Peter preaches in Acts, he says that you need to believe in Jesus or you will be cut off from among God's people.

So there's a sense in which you cease to be Jewish if you don't have faith in Jesus Christ because you've been removed from the Old Testament people. Yeah. Yes.

Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Great. Thanks, Andrew. He's hidden and then revealed. Yeah. Great. Good.

We, we all, we all there? Great. Right. Let's go through these three offices then. Prophets. Why does our hero need to be a prophet? What is the problem that he is fixing?

[10 : 59] Now that's hinted at in some of the stuff that I've read in the confession, but I want you to talk to the person next to you and come up with your best answer to that question. You've got one minute. Okay.

I know that I've not given you very long, but we don't have super long tonight. So I'm going to interrupt your conversations. The confession says that we need a prophet because we are ignorant of God.

Yeah. Some of you are excited because that's what you got. But I think that the idea that it's trying to capture here is that we are unable in our humanity alone to think our way up to God.

You cannot know God just by the thoughts of what God might be like in your imagination. In fact, one of the great enemies of our Christian faith is that we shape our understanding of who God is largely just by our own imaginations and not by God's word.

We need a prophet. We need God to speak to us in words that we can understand that we might actually know what he's like. Anything else is just a sort of projection of our imaginations or an invention that we might have.

[12 : 22] So we need God to reveal himself to us, which is what he does. So Hebrews 1 puts it like this. This is on your handout. In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways.

But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed as heir of all things and through whom he also made the universe. The son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Analogies don't really work in this, do they? But you can imagine that here's God. He's sent the prophets at various times and in various ways. So some of them have modeled the message.

Others of them have preached the message. Others have preached to great crowds and demonstrated God's power through great miracles, calling down fire from heaven. But none of them are fully able to capture what God is like and who he is until God himself comes in the person of the son, who is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being.

And in some senses, you look like it's kind of the mic drop moment, isn't it, for God? Because what else is there to say now? I've been. I've come in the person of the son. You have heard me.

[13 : 35] John 1 18 puts it. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only son who himself is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the father has made him known.

It's exactly the same idea, isn't it? God has come. Now, again, it's not hard then, is it, to see this is uniquely Jesus. Fully God means that he knows God and fully man means that he is able to speak to you and me in a way that we can understand.

He is able to accommodate God's word to our limited ears. One of my lecturers at seminary used to put it like this. He is with the Lord Jesus now, so I can butcher his illustration without him having a go at me.

He used to say, right, I would like you to imagine, because he had this vivid imagination, that there is a great king and he has this huge, vast land and on his land live these really little people and they live right down the bottom of his garden, right?

And these little people living at the bottom of this great king's garden have no idea that the king is there because their world is so small and they are so small, they cannot possibly begin to imagine the existence of this great king in the great castle who owns everything that they have.

[14 : 54] And so what does this great king do? How can he communicate to them? Of course, he can't just speak to them because they would die instantly because his voice would be so loud that they just would not be able to bear it.

He is of a totally different substance to them. So if he tried to speak to them, they would just not even be able to comprehend it. He doesn't even speak the same native language.

So what does he do? Well, in an amazing act of condescension, this great king becomes like one of those little people and says, this is who I am.

This is what I'm like. Know me, your maker and your creator. And that's it. Here, isn't it? Jesus is the mediator because he is fully God and fully man. So he's able not only to reveal God perfectly to us, but also speak in such a way that we can hear without being consumed by God.

Okay, so Jesus is the prophet, a hero for the ignorant, and we are ignorant on our own. Secondly, he's the priest. Let's skip the group question because...

[16 : 03] Okay, sorry. We're going to have more later on. But anyway, okay, it is clear, I think, from the Bible that our big problem before God is not only that we are ignorant of him, but that we are also hostile to him.

We show that, don't we, in our hostility to his rules and his pattern of living. And we are alienated from God, as the confession puts it. And so we find ourselves not only that we are unable to think of this great creator, but we are actually under the active judgment of the creator.

There is a price owed by us to him for our sin. And that price is our lives. We owe him our lives. We deserve to die.

And so the sacrifice for sin cannot be a bull or a goat because they can never take away sin. They are not equivalent to us. And so Christ comes in full humanity, is fully obedient to the Father's will, and in his death faces the punishment that we deserve.

And because of his full divinity, that punishment was not only sufficient for the salvation of just one other individual, but because there is nothing of greater value than the Son of God, he is able to save all who come to him.

[17 : 21] Have I ever told you my illustration of the hamster sitting in the detention? You heard this illustration? Okay, let me tell you this illustration.

So a little boy at school gets into terrible trouble in class. And so the teacher says to him, at the end of the day tomorrow, you need to come back to my lesson and you're on detention for an hour.

So the kid goes home, comes to school the next day, and he brings with him his hamster. And he says to the teacher, don't worry. My hamster is going to sit my detention for me.

It will sit there. It will even stay for longer than an hour if you want it to. It will be there for the full length of time that you want me. What does the teacher say? Of course a hamster can't sit your detention.

It is not an equivalent to you. And so then you go, okay, no, don't worry. I will speak to somebody else in the class. And he bullies a friend into sitting the detention for him. He says, no, they're in trouble.

[18 : 21] They're already in detention. They can't sit detention for you because they are already here. In order for someone to sit your detention, they need to be both innocent and equivalent.

And that's exactly Christ, isn't it? He is equivalent to us in his humanity. But because of his divinity, he is innocent of sin. And so he is able alone to pay the price for our sin.

The confession summarizes it like this. Point four. The Lord Jesus most willingly undertook this office. To discharge it, he was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it.

He also experienced the punishment that we deserved and that we should have endured and suffered. He was made sin and a curse for us. He endured extremely heavy sorrows in his soul and extremely painful sufferings in his body.

He was crucified and died and remained in a state of death. Yet his body did not decay. On the third day, he arose from the dead and with the same body in which he suffered.

[19 : 26] In this body, he also ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of his father interceding. He will return to judge men and angels at the end of the age. Jesus is our priest.

The preciousness of Christ is the reliability of our salvation. It's because of who he is that he's able to do that for us. Okay, final one. The king.

And I will let you discuss this. Why is our hero a king? What is the problem that he is solving as our king? Okay. Is that all right, Lola? Yes, great.

Okay. Talk to the person next to you about that for a minute or two. Great.

Again, notice how the confession puts it. Our problem is not only that we are ignorant of God and needing a prophet. It's not only that we are in sin and under his judgment, but it's also that we are enslaved.

[20 : 35] We are spiritual enemies who need redemption and rescue and liberation and leadership. And Christ provides all of those. He convinces us to live for God. He liberates us from the bondage of sin, rescues us from the clutches of evil.

Colossians 1 puts it like this. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So we are in the kingdom of the son. He is our champion and our king and our leader. It's Hebrews 12, 2 that says, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

It's the image of he is the one leading the charge, going over the top. He is the one in whose wake we follow. It's his victory that we all share in.

He is our king and our champion. Revelation 19 puts it like this. I saw in heaven standing open.

There before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True.

[21 : 40] With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Don't tame the Lord Jesus. He is our king and our champion. 1 Corinthians 15 says, Then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death when he has put everything under his feet. Now when it says that everything has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself who put everything under Christ.

[22 : 53] When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him so that God may be all and in all. The idea is that Jesus is ruling and reigning and all things are being made subject to him.

He is our king and our champion. Think what is going on in history, right? What is going on in the world right now? It seems totally chaotic, doesn't it? But actually, as the Father sees what's going on, he sees the Son ruling and reigning and all things being put under his feet.

And the last enemy to be put under his feet is death itself. And then he will return and come again. So there you go. Jesus is our prophet. He is our priest. And he is our king.

For the last couple of minutes, I just want us to think about what that actually means in practice. So what does it actually mean for me tomorrow morning or even this evening that Jesus is my prophet, my priest, and my king?

What are the concrete applications of that for you and for me? Now, I've got some ideas written down here, but I want you to talk to the person next to you about those. What are your ideas on the concrete applications of Jesus, our prophet, priest, and king?

[24 : 16] Okay. I'm really sorry. I know that you haven't had long enough to talk about it, but it is nearly half past seven. And I try to be on a promise to finish by half past seven.

If you want longer to discuss it, you need to arrive earlier so that you can drink tea and coffee earlier. Isn't that right, Pesh? Yeah. Great. What is the practical application of Jesus being our prophet?

Any suggestions? Yes. Okay. So what authority has God's word got in our lives? Yeah. I mean, I think you could say read your Bible would be a pretty concrete application.

Yeah. Yeah. Reading your Bible in the morning or in the afternoon or in the evening or whenever you read it, it shouldn't, it's not a dry duty, is it?

It's an encounter with God. It is listening to God speak to you about who he is. And it should be full of joy and refreshment. It's not always like that, is it?

[25 : 19] Right? Particularly when you're reading through chapters of Leviticus, it might be more difficult than that. But actually, that's what it's supposed to be for us, isn't it? We encounter God.

Yeah. Yeah. If you're not reading the Bible regularly, you're essentially living as if Jesus' prophetic office doesn't really matter.

As if you could do without it. I don't really need the Bible. I can just think, I can think, I can think my way to God, which is not true. Yeah. What about priest? Concrete application of Jesus our priest.

Yeah. Confess our sins. Yeah. And stop beating ourselves up about them. Right? Because Jesus has paid it all. Right? He is the full and final payment for all of our sins.

So, we're really funny about this, aren't we? So, when we do something wrong, and we are convicted about what we've done wrong, often our reaction, rather than to take it to the Lord, is to withdraw from the Lord until we sort of slightly feel better about it.

[26 : 30] And then we will maybe come and talk to the Lord about it. But actually, if Jesus is my priest, who has paid the price for my sin, the instant reaction of me to my, does that make sense grammatically, of me to my sin?

Anyway, is to take it to the Lord straight away, because he's paid the price fully. And I should, Jesus should, it should be the easiest person to talk to about my sin, should be the Lord Jesus, because he's paid the full price for me.

Yes, and he intercedes on behalf of us. Yes, yes. I suppose we read and hear his word, we probably, throughout the day we're aware that we are, we usually speak to our spirits as a priest and let us speak to ourselves.

yeah yeah yes and so um wow there's so many different things in there but i just think so as i'm as i'm reading god's word i'm expecting him by his spirit to be making god's word alive to me and i'm expecting as even as i walk down the street for me to be prompted to think on those things um he might put thoughts in my mind which take me back to god's word to uh to test those and to see what god is like yeah great king any concrete applications of jesus being our king yeah yeah great yeah so we serve him we want to do what pleases him we want to follow him yeah brilliant um yeah surrender yeah yeah yeah that's that's a good word isn't it surrender to him i think the other thing is um we don't need to stress about everything do we because actually jesus is the champion that he's the champion of our lives he's the champion of god's kingdom you know i i know you're all very important people with very important responsibilities but none of you have this responsibility okay this is the one that really matters and it's already done and already won right and that's great news right the thing that really the victory that really matters has already been fully and finally secured in jesus christ and so whatever it is that you're facing you know that he is ultimately victorious over all things so you don't need to you don't need to stress you don't need to worry he is king of kings he's the champion he's gone over the top for us and is leading the charge so praise his name there you go jesus is our mediator let me close in prayer heavenly father thank you that the lord jesus is not our mediator in a past tense way but in a present tense way thank you that the lord jesus speaks to us through his word in an ongoing way that we might continue to hear from you thank you that he is our priest who lives to intercede for us to speak to you our father on our behalf presenting his finished work on the cross to you and saying they're forgiven i have paid the price for their sin thank you that king jesus rules and reigns this is your story this is the story of the rule and reign of jesus thank you that's happening right now and lord we pray uh please that you would help us to grasp and understand these things we pray that they might liberate us from lots of the stress that we feel and the guilt that we feel as we understand more and more that jesus is the great hero of our lives as we pray in his name amen amen