

"There Is Only One Mediator"
(1 Timothy 2:5-6)

Introduction: In the past several weeks, we have been looking at the gracious covenants which God gave to His people through the Covenant of Grace. Each of these covenants was a way of dispensing that grace which was merited by Christ in His mediatorial work. Christ is like a mighty river of grace which overflows in abundance. But unless that grace is conveyed to those who need it, it would be of no use to anyone. And so the covenants are like so many pipes and canals which distribute this grace to those to whom it belongs. In each of the Covenants of God, there were gracious promises and gracious means of bestowing God's saving grace as the Spirit was pleased to work through them. What we will want to begin to look at this evening is the person and work of this Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Larger Catechism, question 36, tells us this: "THE ONLY MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO, BEING THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD, OF ONE SUBSTANCE AND EQUAL WITH THE FATHER, IN FULNESS OF TIME BECAME MAN, AND SO WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE GOD AND MAN, IN TWO DISTINCT NATURES, AND ONE PERSON, FOREVER." First, we will want to look at the nature of mediation. What exactly is a Mediator? And why is it that we need one? Can't we just simply go straight to God? Won't He receive us if we come to Him? Or do we need someone who will stand in the gap between us? And is there only one such mediator through whom a man might approach God? The Bible tells us very specifically.

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul is giving to Timothy, his son in the faith, directions for the public worship of God. He says first that prayers ought to be made for all men, for those who are in authority, in order that there may be peace and tranquility for the church. Remember that whatever happens to the nation in which the church resides, will also happen to the church. Also, the nation itself may persecute the church. Either way, if this should happen, it would greatly obstruct the progress of the Gospel. Prayer must be continually lifted up to God, in order that the message of His Son may advance.

Such prayer is not only commanded Timothy, but it is also good and acceptable in the sight of God who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. There is a sense in which God "wills" the salvation of all. He has not decreed it, but He has commanded that all men everywhere repent and believe the Gospel. Paul argues that there is but One God who made everything that is, and all are His subjects and duty bound to Him. All are bound to keep His commandments, even if they have lost the ability to do so. But His command to believe the Gospel, points all men to the only one who can bring them to God, the only Mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus. If anyone is to be saved it must be by coming through this way, and it was for the proclamation of this way that Paul was appointed a preacher and an apostle, that he might fully carry out the preaching of the good news to the Gentiles.

What we want to zero in on this evening is this mediation that God has supplied in order that sinful man may approach this one Holy God. And what I want you to see from this text is,

No one may approach God without a Mediator, but God has graciously opened a way of access, only through His Son, Jesus Christ.

- I. First I Want You to See that Man's Fallen Condition Required that He Have a Mediator to Bring Him to God.
 - A. After the Fall, Man Could in No Way Come Near to God on His Own.
 1. You will recall that the Fall left man totally depraved.
 - a. He was created in the image of God, both like God in nature and in holiness.
 - (i) Man was created as a thinking being; he had a spiritual aspect as well as a physical one; and by God's decree, he was to exist forever. Once having been created, he was never to cease being.
 - (ii) But man was also created in the moral image of God, that is, he reflected God in true knowledge righteousness and holiness.
 - (iii) He had a love for God, he marveled at His holiness and found it to be a thing of great beauty. These were the things that were his greatest desire.
 - b. But when man fell, he lost the moral image of God, and he was no longer inclined toward God, but away from Him.
 - (i) Holiness was now something which he hated.
 - (ii) His heart was full of darkness, **so** that the Bible says, "THEN THE LORD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT ON THE EARTH, AND THAT EVERY INTENT OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY" (Gen. 6:5).
 - (iii) The result was that he shunned the light, and would not come to it, lest his evil deeds should be exposed (John 3:20).
 - (iv) Hence, even Adam and Eve hid themselves from God when He appeared in the garden in the Spirit of judgment.
 2. He was no longer capable, though he was still responsible, for doing the will of God.
 - a. Man by his fall lost the ability to serve and honor God, though it was still his responsibility to do so.
 - b. The situation may be illustrated in this way.
 - (i) The master of a certain servant gave his servant a task to perform while he was away on a trip which would last a day. He was to build a fence which would keep his livestock enclosed so that none of them would wander off.
 - (ii) But on the property was a pit, which if one was to fall into it, he would be unable of himself to climb out of it.
 - (iii) The master therefore warned his servant to stay clear of the pit, lest falling into the pit, he would be unable to accomplish the task which he had assigned him. And if he failed

to have the task completed by the time he returned from his journey, he would surely be punished.

- (iv) Now, as soon as his master was gone, the servant rushed over to the pit and jumped into it, where he remained all day long.
- (v) When the master returned in the evening, he found that the job was not completed, and, looking for his servant, found him in the pit.
- (vi) The master asked the slave, "Why didn't you finish the task I gave you to complete while I was gone?"
- (vii) The servant replied, "I couldn't, for I was in the pit and couldn't get out."
- (viii) "And how did you get into the pit?" the master asked.
- (ix) "As soon as you left, I jumped into it, so I wouldn't have to do the work."
- (x) Do you think that the servant was not blameworthy because he was incapable of doing the job from the pit. No. Because the servant of his own will jumped into the pit in the first place.
- (xi) The master therefore took him and punished him according to his word.

c. And so it is with man. Man by his Fall lost the ability to do the will of God, but he was still responsible to do God's will because it was his own fault.

B. Therefore, Man Needed a Mediator if He Was Ever to Draw Near to God Again.

- 1. A Mediator is one who stands in the middle.*
 - a. Normally, when we use the term "mediator" we think of one who arbitrates between two parties, one who is an intermediary.*
 - b. That is, when there is a debate or a controversy between two parties, then they find someone to stand in the middle, in order to help them reconcile, like a marriage counselor, who helps a husband and wife reconcile their differences.*
- 2. But the Mediator that God supplied did more than simply arbitrate between God and man, He actually did what was necessary to bring them back together.*
 - a. He did more than simply try to persuade both parties to reconcile their differences.*
 - b. He actually came, armed with everything that He needed to remove the offense, and reconciled them, in two ways.*
 - c. First, He ministers before God to make us acceptable to the Father.*
 - (i) He offered Himself as a sacrifice to remove our sins and to satisfy the wrath of God against us.*

- (ii) He is continually before the throne of God making intercession for each of His servants.
- (iii) And he makes those whom He represents acceptable to God, along with their works.

d. *And secondly, He ministers to man by teaching him and enabling him to please the Father.*

- (i) He reveals to us the truth of God concerning how we might know Him and serve Him.
- (ii) He persuades us of that truth and gives to us the ability to receive it.
- (iii) And He directs us into all righteousness and sustains us daily through His own power so as to bring us in the end to heaven.

e. *This is what man needed to bring him back to God, and this is what God graciously provided for him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

f. *So man had a need which God provided for through the mediation of His Son.*

II. *Secondly, I Want You to See that the Bible Declares that there Is Only One Mediator that God Has Supplied for His People.*

A. *Man Believes He Has Devised Many Ways to God.*

1. *The common philosophy today is that there are many ways of approach to God.*

- a. *Life is like a wheel with many spokes to the center.*
- b. *The different spokes are different religions, all of which worship the same God, all of which make one acceptable to God.*
 - (i) *Some of these religions seek to approach God through other means which men who are self-proclaimed prophets taught, such as Joseph Smith in Mormonism, or Mohammed in Islam, or perhaps Jim Jones in his church, all of which are works oriented.*
 - (ii) *Others seek to approach God through sacrifices, such as the worshipers of Molech in the Old Testament, who offered up their own babies in order to please their god.*
 - (iii) *Still others seek to approach God through idols, such as the Hindu worship of animals, or the animist worship of trees or stones in Africa.*

2. *And as long as you are a faithful adherent to your religion, then you will make it to heaven.*

- a. *Those who teach this believe that God accepts the sincerity of the worshiper.*
- b. *He's not hung up on our coming in any particular way, its a matter of the heart.*
- c. *But again, aren't they making a god of their own desire and worshiping that? Are they truly seeking to please the true God of the Bible?*

- d. No one has ever denied that man is a religious creature, only that man by nature cannot and will not come and worship the true God in the way that He demands of them, the only acceptable way.
- e. Man does not want to, and therefore he will not unless his heart is changed.

B. But the Bible Here Declares that there Is Only One Mediator Between God and Man, only One Way, through Christ Jesus.

- 1. All of the other mediators or ways of mediation are futile; they are empty; God will only accept that way which He has authorized.
 - a. Even if you are the most sincere and devout follower of Allah, that will not be acceptable to God.
 - b. Even if you should pour gasoline over your body and set it aflame out of devotion to Krishna, it will not gain heaven for you.
 - c. Even if you should work all your life for the Jehovah's Witnesses telling others about a coming paradise on earth and the necessity of joining the local Kingdom Hall, it will not profit you anything in the end.
- 2. The only Mediator that God has ever appointed, and the only mediation which He will ever accept, is that of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. In the Old Testament, God gave Moses and the Aaronic priesthood to be mediators between He and them.
 - b. But their mediation was only acceptable as it pictured the work of Christ.
 - c. Everything in the Old Testament pointed to that One who would come, to His person and His work.
 - d. Christ has always been the only way to God.
 - e. And if anyone wishes to be saved, he must come through the way which God supplies, or he cannot come at all.

III. Use: And So If You Are to Come to God, You May Only Approach Him Through the Mediator that He Has Chosen. Any other Way Is Only Pure Presumption.

- A. You May Only Be Made Acceptable to God in the Beloved.
 - 1. To come any other way is futile.
 - a. You cannot approach God by your own works, by any supposed mediators, or by any other way than Christ Jesus.
 - b. God has appointed no other means; there are no other bridges across the chasm of sin besides His own Son.
 - 2. It would be like trying to cross the San Francisco Bay without using the bridge.
 - a. You might say, "I'm going to get across that bay without the bridge," and drive your car into the bay, but you'll never get across.
 - b. A woman I spoke with several years ago down in San

Diego said that when she gets to the gate of heaven, she was planning on sticking her foot in the door until they had to let her in.

- c. But she won't even get to the door, if she doesn't come through Christ, because HE IS THE DOOR.
3. Or its like trying to gain an audience with the President of the United States, by simply walking into the building without an appointment.
 - a. The president is heavily guarded.
 - b. They're not going to let anyone come in without the permission of the president.
 - c. And unless you have someone you can go to to gain the ear of the president, you will never gain that permission.
 4. Christ is that only door to God, the only One who can gain His ear.
 - a. Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE; NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH ME" (John 14:6).
 - b. Jesus said that He was the only WAY to God.
 - c. In Him is the truth which leads to God.
 - d. In Him alone is life, you cannot attain life in any other way.
 - e. And you must come to the Father through Christ by faith, or you cannot come at all.
- B. But Not Only Is He the Only Way to the Father, He Is also the Only One Who Can Make Anything You Do Acceptable to Him.
1. Therefore, when you pray, you must offer up your prayers in the name of Christ.
 - a. You have no right to ask God for anything in yourself. Why should He listen to you?
 - b. But when you ask, not for your sake, but for the sake of His Son, then you have gained His ear.
 - c. Jesus said, "TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, IF YOU SHALL ASK THE FATHER FOR ANYTHING, HE WILL GIVE IT TO YOU IN MY NAME" (John 16:23).
 2. When you offer up your works of love to God, you must do so through his Son.
 - a. Even your very best works are mingled with sin.
 - b. Yes, there is true love in the heart of a Christian when he does what his Lord commands, and this is good in the sight of God.
 - c. But it is still mixed with so much imperfection as to make it ugly.
 - d. Chrysostom likened Christ's work to a boy who picked flowers for his father who was returning home from a war. He brought them to his mother, who looking at them recognized his genuine act of love, but saw that the boy had put together a hopeless assortment of flowers and weeds. So she picked out the weeds, and arranged the flowers nicely and gave them back to the boy to present to his father.
 - e. In the same way, Christ takes the works we perform for the Father out of love, cleanses them by His

blood, and presents them to the Father for us.

3. And when you ask God for forgiveness of sins, you must do so pleading the merits of Christ.
 - a. All that we have merited by our life and works is only death. Nothing in our hands we bring, only to His cross we cling.
 - b. But when we come in the name of His Son, then He accepts us, forgives us, and gives to us the riches of the kingdom.
4. People of God, your life is in Christ, your acceptance to God is in Christ, everything that God has for you is in Christ. Outside of Him there is nothing for you. Come to Him, cling to Him, love Him, serve Him, and offer everything you do through Him to God the Father, and He will graciously accept your labors of love in Him. And give praise to God for so great a Mediator! Amen.