

# Christ Our Only Mediator

SERMON

By

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**October 27, 2002**

**TEXT:** I Timothy 2 (5,6)

**PROP:** Jesus Christ is the true and only mediator between God and man, therefore we must come to him alone for grace and through him alone we come to the God the Father for help and comfort as we face our many trials.

## 1 Timothy 2

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. **3** This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. **7** For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle ( I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

It is that time of the year when we once again remember our great heritage from the Reformation. Accordingly I want to focus your attention on one of the great issues Reformers, namely the singular Mediation of Christ so clearly taught in the Bible but denied by Rome. Our appeal today is to the teachings of the word of God not the edicts of the Pope. The Bible is involved in every phase of our salvation and it was the foundation and motivator of the Reformation. Without the Bible there would have been no Reformation. Iain Murray wrote in *The Puritan Hope* "the Reformation was itself the greatest revival since Pentacost -- the singular position given to Scripture and the transformation of the morally careless, are all effects of revival. When the Holy Spirit is poured out in a day of power the result is bound to affect whole communities and even nations. Conviction of sin, an anxiety to possess the Word of God, and dependence upon those truths which glorify God in man's salvation, are inevitable consequences." The Reformation was not only the inevitable outcome of regeneration wrought by the Spirit of God through the Scriptures but it produced Bible reading nations and creeds such as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* which were "so unflattering to human nature and hateful to human pride." The Reformation in all the lands where it took place was marked by a great thirst for the Bible.

The Tyndale translation 1526 produced a number of great preachers and a great number believers. Then in 1560 the newly translated Geneva Bible appeared and as

Murray notes, it was read in all the Presbyterian and Puritan homes in England and Scotland. It was a revision of the Great Bible, very scholarly and very popular for many years. It was not until the next century that the King James Version was prepared. Luther prepared the classic German translation of the Bible as well as a German catechism. In due course Dutch, French and Spanish translations were prepared and reformation came to these lands as well.

The “Morning Star” of the Reformation, however, was John Wycliffe. Born in 1320, two hundred years before Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of Wittenburg castle, Wycliffe was an outstanding teacher in Oxford University and began to question the authority of the Pope and many of the doctrinal positions of the Roman Catholic church. He was responsible for the translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into English and sent it out with a number of itinerant preachers whose followers were known as “Lollards”. These were people who were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ through the Bible which was now available in their own language and they were the vanguard of the Reformation.

The Reformation was very complex as were the religious, economic and political factors that led to it. When the power of the pope finally disintegrated it had a profound effect on all of society not just the church. Historians concern themselves with these general and secular aspects of the Reformation and do not seem to see the Reformation as a great revival, a great repenting and turning to the Lord. Because such emphasis is placed upon the political and social aspects of the Reformation little attention is given to the translation of the Bible. Essential to the Reformation, however, was the translation of the Bible into common modern language. And as we consider the issue before us today I do not apologize for the many quotations from Scripture that I will use. I want you to see clearly that the Bible teaches that Christ is our only mediator.

I want to call your attention this morning to verses 5 and 6 of our text in 1 Timothy chapter 2 where we read, "*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*" (ESV)

What a glorious work is the temple of the body of Christ, namely His own dear saints and what a glorious work is His mediation between God and man. The greater the project the greater the preparations. David's gold, silver and brass were used in great quantities to build the temple in Jerusalem that was beautiful beyond compare, yet the temple in all its glory was a mere shadow of Christ and His kingdom. Jesus said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" *The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body.*" (John 2:19-21, ESV)

Peter, speaking of the saints wrote, *"you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."* (1 Peter 2:5-6, ESV) Paul takes this concept even further as he writes, *"What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* (2 Corinthians 6:16, ESV)

The preparation for the temple in Jerusalem took a few years but the temple of Christ, that which is his own body, was foreordained from all eternity. Peter told his hearers on the day of Pentecost, *"This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."* (Acts 2:23, ESV) and Paul wrote, *"Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love"* (Ephesians 1:4, ESV) Thus is it a matter for praise for eternity to come. What a glorious work therefore is the temple of the body of Christ, His own dear saints and what a glorious work is His mediation between God and man.

Our text describes Jesus in four ways, as Mediator (His work, His office), as uniquely singular (one), with quality of person (the man) and with the name Yeshua ha Meshiach (Jesus Christ). The word Mediator translates the Greek word *mesiteis* which means a middle person or a go between. Such a person is capable, unbiased and fair. He resolves differences and makes peace. He is an ombudsman, a daysman, an attorney who arbitrates and gives God His due without the destruction of a poor, wretched, sinner. Our recent school teachers strike illustrates the need for an arbitrator, one who can reconcile the differences between the two opposing positions. Both the teachers and the school board failed to achieve their goals. But when it comes to the far greater issues that separate us from the living and true God, our only hope for reconciliation lies in Jesus who is our only Mediator. When it comes to differences between people, it often takes many mediators to resolve them, yet to reconcile God to man it requires only one. It is as needless to require many mediators as it is to require many gods. Furthermore we must understand that both young and old require the mediatory ministry of Jesus for children, young people and adults are alike in their need for peace with God.

The text also informs us that our Mediator is the man Christ Jesus. His nature is both unique and human especially to encourage us. The Arians say that Jesus is 'philos anthropos', mere man, and the Roman Catholics say that He performs His mediation only as a man and not as God. But the reason for this reference to His being 'the man' is to say that He alone is our ransom. He bled and died for all types of people. He draws sinners unto Himself. *"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself,"*

(John 12:32, ESV) he said. He invites attention yet gives comfort to flesh and blood people "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17, ESV) Tried as we are, yet he gives sympathy. He is a tender high priest as he mediates the miseries of this life.

Finally there are the Lord's names, Yesus (Greek), Yeshua (Aramaic), Yehoshua (Hebrew) all of which refer to Jesus' work of saving His people. His names Christos (Greek) and Meshiach (Hebrew) refer to the office to which Christ was anointed. Glassius wrote, "*In nomine Iesu totum latet evangelium hoc nomen est lux, cibus et medicina animae.*" (In the name Jesus the whole gospel resides, which name is light, food and healing for the soul.) Thus is Jesus Christ the true and only mediator between God and man. Paul writes "*and to Jesus, **the mediator** of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*" (Hebrews 12:24, ESV) And again, "*Therefore he is **the mediator** of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, --*" (Hebrews 9:15, ESV) There are many such passages to this point that Christ is the mediator between God and man. So in the time remaining, I want to address the meaning of the word mediator as it applies to Christ, how Jesus is the only mediator and in what capacity He performs his work.

So then, what is the meaning of the term *mediator*? A mediator is a middle person. He is one who interposes between two parties at variance, to make peace. Satan is a medium of discord but Christ is a medium of concord. Because He is God, Jesus stands in God's presence without sin, beheld there as God Himself and with all the powers and privileges of Deity. Because He is man He represents us and atones for our sin in order to propitiate God. Jesus as our mediator is an umpire or arbitrator, the messenger of peace and the interpreter of all that is true.

Job says of God, "*For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.*" (Job 9:32-33, ESV) But Christ lays His hand upon God the Father saying 'admit them into your favor, if you will. Be fully satisfied for all they have done against you.' Who but God himself could do this! Laying His hand upon the poor sinner he says, 'do not be discouraged, you will be justified and saved.' God who is true man thus sublimely comforts us. As our messenger, Jesus presents our desires to God. As John writes, "*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, **we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.***" (1 John 2:1-2, ESV) Jesus is the advocate with the Father not only for the elect to whom John writes, but for the elect in every nation.

Another aspect to Jesus as our Mediator is Paul's reference to Jesus as the, "--*guarantor of a better covenant.*" (Hebrews 7:22, ESV) As our mediator He provides the covenant between God and man with good security because Christ is the very adequate pledge. He satisfied our obligation to keep the law, on the cross.

That Christ is the only mediator between God and man implies that there is a terrible breach and barrier between God and man. Indeed, God hates sinners, workers of iniquity according to Psalm 5:5. And on the other hand people are "haters of God," according to Romans 1:30. This obviously brings an end to fellowship with God. Adam's sin was by no means a small sin. As the first man whom God had created perfect with the best mind and will to withstand temptation, Adam yet sinned against God. He walked with God in the garden, in the cool of the day. He was not reprobate, callous and hard but Adam was pure and undefiled. He had a most happy situation. There was no necessity or need. He was perfectly blessed in physical and spiritual pleasures and delights for the Yahweh God walked with him. With Eden so wonderful it was the height of ingratitude for Adam to do this sin. It was horrible and wretched and it deserved the lowest pit of hell.

Thus we can see that satisfaction and reparation for our sin is absolutely necessary. The scripture never says that God simply declares to the sinner "I forgive you." Whenever it is spoken of in the Bible, pardon is always declared "through Christ." In Ephesians we read that God blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heaven places through Christ. He chose us in Christ. He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. God freely bestowed grace upon us in the Beloved (in Christ). We have redemption through His blood. God must be satisfied and that only through Christ for He forgives and justifies through Christ alone, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*" (Romans 3:23-24, ESV)

That there is one mediator between God and man implies that there is infinite value in the blood and sufferings of Christ which alone are sufficient to satisfy the justice of God and bring about his good pleasure with those who were formerly his enemies. "*And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*" (Colossians 1:21-22, ESV) In fact, God welcomes his enemies with joy, because of Christ. Zephaniah writes, "*Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.*" (Zephaniah 3:14-15, ESV)

That Christ is the only mediator between God and man implies further the great love God has for sinners. Jesus not only mediates by pleading our cause before God the Father as our advocate, but he places Himself under obligation for our own debts. How

compassionately Christ delivered us from the wrath of God. Even as Jonah cast himself into the sea to still the storm, so the Lord Jesus delivered us from the wrath of God's justice. Marcus Curtius was celebrated in Roman history because, when informed by an oracle that a gaping earthquake fissure could not be closed unless something of value was cast in, passionate for the Roman Commonwealth, he cast himself into the breach. The breach closed by Christ, however, was no mere hole in the earth.

That Christ is the only mediator between God and man implies further that only the Lord Jesus has the moral perfection and the authority to mediate the enmity between ourselves and God. Paul writes "*Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that **there is no God but one.**"*" (1 Corinthians 8:4, ESV) And again we read, "*-- there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12, ESV) One sun provides light for the whole earth and one Savior mediates the sin of all kinds of people.

In what capacity does Christ execute His mediatorial work as both God and man? Consider the power of Jesus seen in his statement, "*For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*" (John 10:17-18, ESV) Jesus told His disciples that He had all authority in heaven and on earth. He has all the power necessary to keep those that the Father has given Him. (John 17:12) Jesus has all the power necessary to raise His people up at the last day. (John 6:54) The capacity, therefore, in which the Lord Jesus executes His mediatorial work is as the "only Redeemer of God's elect, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever." (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q21)

All of this leads us to the conclusion that it is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus Christ as the only mediator. We have no other protection from the tortures of hell and it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. (Hebrews 10:31) Who can endure the everlasting burnings? (Isaiah 33:14) If there were some other way to escape hell, if there were some way to excuse ourselves for sin against the holy God, but there is none. We are starving beggars who have come to the last door.

The priest, Eli, told his wicked sons Hophni and Phineas, "*If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?*" *But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.*" (1 Samuel 2:25, ESV) Hophni and Phineas therefore had no more recourse. Luther noted that the devils have no mediator. Therefore apart from Christ, there

is no mediator between God and man and if we reject the only Mediator, we have no further recourse. We are lost in our sins.

Spurgeon noted, "If Christ is the only mediator between God and man, it is a great evil to join any other mediators either of reconciliation or of meritorious intercession, with Christ. What a desperate sin. Roman Catholics seem to rely more on the intercession of Mary than on Christ. **If this be so it is blasphemous impudence.** For example, the Catholic scholar Vincent writes, "What is that which the Lord saith, 'I have trod the wine presses alone, and of the people there was no man with me?' True Lord, there was no man with Thee, but there was a woman with Thee who received all these wounds in her heart which Thou receivest in Thy body." The council known as Vatican II declared that Mary was not only the mother of God but that she is and continues to be co-mediator with Christ. Spurgeon was entirely right in saying that Rome commits blasphemous impudence.

Rome joins Mary with her son Jesus Christ as co-mediators between God and men, but the scriptures say that Jesus the prince enters alone. Ezekiel wrote, "*And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut. Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."*" (Ezekiel 44:2-3, ESV) Jesus the prince enters into the presence of Yahweh God of Israel alone. He alone enters the eastern gate of temple seen by Ezekiel in his vision of the city of God because Jesus alone has the moral perfection and authority to do so. "*He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*" (Hebrews 9:12-14, ESV)

If Jesus is our only mediator then we who have been reconciled to God should thankfully attribute all our benefits of redemption to our Lord Jesus Christ. After Adam communion with God was restricted to men like Moses and the prophets, but now, as Paul says, "*We have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.*" (Ephesians 3:12, ESV) And again, "*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,*" (Hebrews 10:19-20, ESV)

Because Jesus is the mediator, the believer is hedged about and delivered from evil. According to Paul, "*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Romans 5:1, ESV) By His power we are kept and

our inheritance in heaven is reserved for us. Job was a happier man on the dunghill than Adam in Eden because Job's safety was secured by the only Redeemer of God's elect. Adam's Eden, being secured by his own will, was lost. Thus Adam's fall had happy results for his descendants -- "*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*" (1 Corinthians 15:22, ESV)

Jesus Christ is the true and only mediator between God and man, therefore we must come to him alone for grace and through him alone we come to God the Father for help and comfort as we face our many trials. Because Christ mediated God's wrath, how quickly we should give our lives to Him. Jerome, hearing of the revilings and blasphemies of many against Christ and His truth, said, 'Oh that they would turn their weapons from Christ to me, and be satisfied with my blood. But ten thousand names are not worthy of His. It is the least we can do to interpose ourselves and all that is dear to us, between Christ and the wrath of men, seeing that He interposed Himself between us and the wrath of God.'