

# Christ Alone

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thanks for your kind welcome. I'm back in a place of very happy memories, but God is no memory.

God is here. The Holy One is here. And in that context, I want to turn to this theme, Christ alone, and to begin by looking at the words of 1 Timothy and chapter 2 and verse 5, referred to our very earlier on.

And we have a reminder here. There is one God and there is one Medi-Britain God and mine, the man Christ Jesus.

There is one God and one Mediator. You have discussed already the great issues of Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide and Sola Gratia.

And now we come to Sola's Christos. In many ways, the most fundamental of all of these alone words and reformation, the only because at the end of the day it all does come back to Christ.

[ 1 : 16 ] The Bible points to him, her faith is in him, and God's grace incarnate in him, as her Lord and her Saviour.

We have the emphasis here on Christ's own Mediatorship. There is one and only one Mediator. And it is, of course, a Bible doctrine before it ever was, or a formation doctrine, were told a month ago, some would say it's a rediscovery, not an invention of the Reformers.

The word Mediator, or Medizites, in this context refers to Christ as a middleman, the one between God and the human species.

He speaks for God to us and speaks for us to God, and that's for God in the work of our salvation. And we have the context in the Old Testament, of course, we read in the Pentateuch where we saw that great vision, almost sighing at that dramatic moment that mountain had burned with fire.

[ 2 : 35 ] Even how the people then said to Moses to come and act on their behalf, because they said or thought, we don't want that mountain to speak to us, that fire to speak to us.

So when you go and speak to them and then come and tell us what the fire is saying, we can't go close to him, we can't ourselves approach him.

So when you go and learn from him, we have to say to us and speak for us to God. It's a very fundamental human instinct, the sense of the awfulness of deity, the distance between ourselves and God, because of our creativeness, because also more fundamentally of our sin.

And how can we in finitude and in sinfulness, how can we approach the fire, this mountain that burns?

And so in all cultures we have a need for a mediator, some person or the class who act for humans in relation to God.

[ 3 : 51 ] And the Reformation, of course, the Pima Reva Reformation Church, there was a large number of such mediators. We had saints and angels, we had the priesthood, we had the papacy, all of these acting as go between us, between God and the members of the church in Western Christendom.

And above all, of course, the Virgin Mary, the so-called Mother of God, who spoke to her to her August son on her behalf, a seawater, as a seafie, as some kind of burning mountain.

Luther comes and protests against that whole emphasis on a multi-mediatorship and says there is only one mediator, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, only one go between, between ourselves and God, only one who can speak for God to us and for us to God and in Him alone, God's grace is incarnate. And we have this great, almost simple concept of Christ as the one and only way to God. We come to God through Him and there is no other way but this one way to God.

And so we come to this foundation concept, Christ as the one go between, between ourselves and God. But then, as Calvin began to reflect on that idea and to focus on the Messiah, she would use

it, he saw that he was anointed as Messiah for this specific role.

[ 5 : 40 ] The Messiah is the Anointed mediator and God's best on him for the purposes of his mediatorial work.

And Calvin ponders and sees that the Messiah should be linked to three great offices, the prophet, priest and king. All of these were anointed as specific offices.

So Christ has one office, that is mediator, but within that there are those three subdivisions, those three functions of prophet, priest and king.

And so let's grasp that this one mediator, this one bridge builder, this one go between between ourselves and God.

But as such, he functions in those three different ways as prophet, priest and king. And he is eventually the only prophet and the only priest and the only king.

[ 6 : 41 ] But that's linked to three other concepts, our needs, our human spiritual condition, our need for knowledge, our need for forgiveness and our need for divine protection.

And in all these, we have a link between the theses, prophet, priest and king, the prophet brings knowledge, the priest forgiveness and the king brings protection and deliverance.

And I want to build my thoughts, such as they are, around those three notions. First of all, in Christ we have the knowledge of God.

And it is fundamental to a reformed religion. Because without knowledge, it can be no faith and no godliness.

Augustine said famously, how can I call on you unknown? If we don't know God, we cannot call upon God.

[ 7 : 50 ] How can we trust someone that we don't know? Or as Paul says, how do we believe in someone of whom we haven't heard? So knowledge is fundamental.

I want to come back for a moment to Luther here because Luther began to be very concerned about the tendency among Protestants to focus on the abuse of the papacy on such things as the corruption of monasteries and the immorality of priests and the papal abuse.

And so he said, these things don't matter. They're not the real issue. It's not these corruptions that are the problem.

The problem he said is not the apiety of these men, but their ideas. It's what they preach and teach that does the damage.

They teach against the Bibles being the only authority against justification by faith alone, against Christ alone, and it's in those errors that the poison lies.

[ 9 : 08 ] And he used that word deliberately. He said, we always said, a little poison spoils the whole drink.

And therefore he says, it's the ideas we must focus upon. And we owe our ideas, as believers, of course, to our great prophet, to the Lord Jesus Christ because he comes as God's own spokesperson, as a prophet who has had an audience with God as the son who alone knows God the Father.

He comes from that intimacy, from that eternal familiarity with God his Father, and comes and tells us, gives us an idea of who and what God actually is and what God wants and what God offers.

And so he comes as, at one level, the revelation of God, and another, he has revealed God, but above all for the moment, he is the self, the revealer of God.

It tells us what God is like. Now he's done it, of course, through the Old Testament prophets because he endorses all that they teach.

[ 10 : 32 ] And again he does it through the apostles after resurrection, again commissions them to be his own mouthpieces, but also in his own life and ministry we have the same emphasis on Christ as speaking.

And the remarkable thing is, the emphasis here on the orality, on the spoken word in the Lord's life and ministry.

Horace Fox said to me, why don't you write an okay, that's in its own way okay, but the Lord wrote nothing. But the word spoken through its own personality, in its own unique way of communicating and sharing with us some of what he knows about God his Father, that's the glory of Christ as the mediator, as her prophet gives us a correct idea about God.

Now of course, I used to do that in this postmodern world, we don't, he doesn't tell us all he knows and we don't grasp all he teaches us, but yet he gives us the truth, I am the truth, and he speaks the

truth.

And he does that as I said orally through the spoken word, I can't go through the various ways he does that, but just give us some examples to remind us of what he did come and teach us, what ideas he left us with, for example in the Lord's Prayer.

[ 12 : 15 ] I mean also well since we're three, four years old, our Father was art in heaven, and yet the glory, the sheer glory and uniqueness of these words, because no Jew before Jesus ever, ever, ever addressed God like that and called God Abba.

But Christ is to us, you call God Abba, the burning fire, this terrifying mountain, call it, call him Abba Father.

His vision of God's paternal care, and as Calvin said, that's what faith is.

It is the persuasion, it is the certainty of God's goodwill towards us, and that's so basic to the Lord's teaching that on our knees, yes, we know we're approaching the mountain that burns with fire, and yet this very same God is my Father in heaven.

This one who gives me daily bread, who gives my sins, protects me from evil, that God is our Father in heaven, who cares for us in every aspect of our lives, and so there we share in the measure of faith, in the intimacy and boldness that God's eternal Son has with His own Father, and it's so important to grasp that, because sometimes we see God only as the holy other, as the awesome, dreadful, tremendous God who makes us trembling, and I don't want to lose that altogether, but still this God of uncompromising integrity, this God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, this God is my Abba in heaven.

[ 14 : 27 ] That's what Christ, the only mediator says to us, that is what God is like, He is your Father. I'll take another key moment in the Lord's teaching ministry.

The parable of the prodigal son, or has been called the waiting Father. It may refer to the prodigal son in the far country of unbelief, or of rejection of God, or to the believer, Bachsludin, who comes to herself or himself.

And we go back to God, we've all been there in the far country in one form or another, but however far we've gone, or far the distance, or deeper degradation, or at feminist or heartless return, or at hesitant interpace, still we find this not a burning mountain, not a fire, but the waiting Father who comes to worship us, to worship penitent in the embrace of his own love.

That's the idea that God gives us. Now I know it's not the whole truth. Let's say again, Christ endorsed the whole of the Old Testament, but there is nothing there comparable to that parable of the waiting Father.

I don't know how lousomous we get in our spiritual despair, or how we think it unimaginable that God would welcome us back, but the Lord is saying go back, because you're guaranteed a welcome.

[ 16 : 30 ] If you've never been before, never come to yourself till now, then having come to yourself and done the most difficult thing a man can do, that is, face the truth about yourself, and then go home.

Or if having once gone home, you have backslidden, and you know the depths of your own unworthiness, then again go back, because you have this Christ-given idea, the idea of the waiting Father.

And again, go back to that enacted word on the cross of Calvary. It has, of course, its own orality. And all the Lord said about it before it's happened, and the words he spoke on the cross. But it's also itself an enacted word where Christ says, not only, this is how much I love you, you, and the world, but also this is how much God loves the world, because he gave us one and only Son. And all he asks is a response and faith. Now, whether conditioned or not, I leave aside for the moment.

[ 18 : 14 ] But there is such a disproportion between what God has done for us and what God acquires of us. He gave us Son, of us, of me and you, who requires only faith.

And I add just one more thing to this, and that is, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

There is no bondage, there is a bondage of ignorance, every dictator and tyrant knows that. But the truth makes free, and Christ, through the above all truths, makes free. It frees from the burden of guilt.

It frees from the fear of death and judgment, and it frees from the tyranny of human opinion, and the peer-grip pressure and prejudice, know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

[ 19 : 27 ] And then secondly, in Christ alone, we find forgiveness. And go back again to Luther, and what a problem that was.

How can I, Martin Luther, how can I be right with God? And he knew as few people post Moses knew, he knew that terror and dread, or that mountain that burned with fire, this God of infinite and demanding rectitude, this God of whom one said, God forgives but condorns nothing. How can that God, how can he forgive me? I'm Luther of course, as you've been told him, shoot him in again.

He did so, try. He tried so hard to earn that righteousness before God. He struggled in self-denial, sleeping on stone floor, self-flatulation, fasting up to the point of death, to earn righteousness before God, and to struggle through of him only to despair and almost broken to the point of insanity. So then gradually, and it was gradually, comes to see what you've seen already, justification by faith alone.

[ 21 : 05 ] And in that discovery, gradually dawning the dawn breaking, there he found his peace with God.

And that idea, and again it is an idea of faith alone, it's an incomplete idea, because then we ask, well, faith in whom?

Or faith in what? And that brings me back again to Christ alone, faith in Christ alone.

Now the medieval church of course had faith, but here we have this emphasis on faith in Christ alone, not in my own works, my own experience, my own sincerity, my own doing my best, but on Christ the solid rock I stand.

My faith is in him as the one person on whose activity by standing before God depends and depends absolutely and exclusively, nothing else but what Christ did, harsher bearing on my standing before God as a judge of all flesh.

[ 22 : 42 ] But of course that leads to the second idea I mentioned of Christ as priest, because our faith here is above all faith in Christ as priest.

And what does a priest do? We find the word priest, or used to Christ only in Hebrews, and it also tells us that a priest as one great thing he offers gifts and sacrifices to God.

And that's what Christ did. He didn't come and simply teach, though that of course wasn't indispensable.

But he comes and gives himself an offering for sin, if I can go back further. He didn't only negotiate as mediator between God and the human race, and which in agreement with God about our salvation, but he stands surety and he says, I will pay their debts, and I will bear their sin.

I'll atone for their sin, and by that atonement I will reconcile God, my Father, to the human race and on the cross.

[ 24 : 15 ] That's what he does, that's what he did. And Luther goes on to tell us, oh Christ becomes the greatest sinner that ever was, and when Simon Rutherford there read that he shattered and disagreed.

And I think it's tremendous and it's so, so important because he's bearing this sin of the world as an entity, as an organism.

And Luther goes on to say that he became David's sin, and he became Peter's sin and Manasseh's sin, and you can mention all the most deeply abandoned sinners that God's grace reached, and then you know Christ became the sin of each of these and on that cross.

My burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin. And in Hebrews we have this great contrast between the Aaronic priests of the Old Testament and Christ our great high priest. And one fundamental difference is this, they went in with blood, indeed they did.

[ 25 : 46 ] The blood of dumb animals, and he goes in with blood, but not the blood of a dumb animal, but with his own blood.

With a ball called so boldly the blood of God, the blood of his own person.

And if I can go back again to the covenant idea, which I don't want to linger on too long, in that agreement between God the Father and God the Son that lies behind us coming into this world, the negotiated price of redemption, that is of irredemption comparts, which has your name on it.

The price is the blood of the mediator, doesn't only negotiate but says that he will meet the conditions, and on that cross the blood of God's eternal Son, that blood is shed.

The obedience given in our place is that of God's own Son, the one enduring the curses God's own Son, the one who in those enigmatic words he sends into hell before he dies or in dying is God's own Son.

[ 27 : 34 ] It is, yes, my sinners obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from you, but it's not simply that official my sake, it is also God's beloved Son, this person of divine grandeur who obeys in my place, obeys my debts, and cries on the cross of Calvary last night, it is finished, tetelestes, I paid in full, he cries, our debts paid in full.

That tremendous idea that when we stand before God as judge, do you know that you owe him nothing, cancelled, paid in full, hide all my transgressions from you, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and now a risen Saviour and a glorified priest, but still priestly active in their sitting for you and for me, and just a word of that, he does was one who has touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who are stood in the stream of all our human tribulations, all the crushings that our human spirits know, all the emotional turmoil he has been there, and so tonight many of you prostrate me with remarkably problem-free lives, but not all of us, and it is so important to know that the high priest can turn to his father and say, I know how he is feeling, and I know how she is feeling, because I have been there, I have been flesh and blood, I have been tempted and tested, I have suffered loss, I have suffered fear, and so I remember them graciously and give them what I have earned for them by my death on the cross, and then at last the emphasis on earth salvation requiring divine protection and deliverance, because we are the king, because we live in a world where we are subject to so much danger and so much temptation and so much pressure, not only secular, but demonic, because every day the parliament of pandemonium meets to planet strategy, and it has one core element that is your spiritual overthrow and your apostasy, that is the whole policy of pandemonium, and here we are so frail, so fragile, experience isn't enough, knowledge, ideas even aren't enough, where then is there an enough, in that great principle, a sovereign protector I have unseen, yet always at hand, and I come back again to Martin Luther, he speaks at one point of the wonderful jewel between himself, between Christ and the devil, how on the cross you have this mighty battle between the mediator and the powers of darkness, because here Satan thinks that he has him, and he will pull him down to death and hell and hiddies and pull all his children down with him, why? Because the devil sees Christ as bearing sin, and as a sinner he has to go come down with me to hell, but Christ fights the battle, and the battle is to complete an atonement for our sin, to bear the curse, to go to that dereliction, that place that love cannot reach, to face and bear his own person what our sin deserves, and you know it's not in the pain of pain or in suffering or suffering that the wonder and the virtual eyes, but in this, in the quality of that dying, its quality as obedience, its quality as loving obedience, because right through that struggle, that titanic struggle between Christ and the demonic, he loves, his love for God doesn't waver, and his love for humanity doesn't waver, and his love for you as a believer doesn't falter or waver, and so at last, that obedience, it robs the devil of his power. He is no longer the prince of this world he is cast out, and what is so glorious is that, yes we live amid many dangers, toils and snares, and sometimes we think oh here we are, poor believers living in enemy territory, you know it's a wonderful thing that's not true, because this world is not any longer the devil's territory, there's been a change in regime, and now every inch of this planet and all this almost infinite universe belongs to you Lord and Savior, he has bought it with his own blood, and you can never be in a place that doesn't belong to Christ, and furthermore I can say government forces are never far away, I think some would neglect to think of the angels so often, but they're there too, the glory of the Lord is shining all around, we have indeed the sovereign protector, but then this king is a Davidic king, he's a shepherd king, that shepherd, that king who carries the lambs in his bosom un-gently leads those that are with young, and how as a good shepherd he says to John chapter 10, the Father has given him to me, God in his eternal, invincible, infallible determination gave you to Christ, and said to him, hold her and bring her safely home, and no one is able to pluck them out of my hand.

Of course we are kept by God's power through faith, and you must exercise our faith, and you must keep and step with the Holy Spirit, and you must follow the voice of the good shepherd, but still your confidence lies in those almighty hands.

[ 38 : 09 ] When I read these words, my mind goes back to the broadcast made by George VI through the Christmas day 1939, when the world faced the dark present and even darker future, on the speech closes as a king stammers these great words from the 20th century American point, and

few in Alaska and so I think it was, and these lines came with John 10, no one could pluck them out of my hands.

I said to the man standing in the gate of the way, in the gate of the year, give me a light, that I may thread my way safely through the darkness, and he replied, go out into the darkness and put your hand in the hand of God, and that shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way. Put your hand in the hand of God. May God bless to us His word and to you. Amen. Thank you.