



There is One Mediator and Redeemer

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Sermon for May 15, 2022

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We are studying the 52 questions in the New City Catechism this year, because it is a great summary of what we believe as Christians. I'm going to read Question 20 now, and then let's read the answer together.

Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?

The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.

Jesus is our Redeemer who gave his blood to purchase freedom for us. Jesus came to earth to build a bridge between us and heaven. We are going to talk about that bridge today. We will look at some verses from Paul's first letter to Timothy. Timothy is a young pastor. Paul is Timothy's mentor, helping him grow as a shepherd of God's people. Let's look together at the Word of God.

1 Timothy 2:1-8

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people.

Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.

2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.

3 This is good and pleases God our Savior,

4 who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

5 For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity--the man Christ Jesus.

6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

7 And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I'm not exaggerating--just telling the truth.

8 In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

Together we read Isaiah 40:8:

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we come to you because you are the source of life and truth. Jesus, we worship you because you are full of mercy and love. Holy Spirit, please open our hearts and minds to be transformed by the word of God.

Amen.

Let's walk through these verses together and see what the Lord wants us to understand today from his word. Here are verses 1 and 2 again.

"1 I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.

2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity."

Looking at verse 2 makes me think of a question. How can we live a peaceful and quiet life? That sounds very nice doesn't it? Is it possible in a city like this? Is it possible in a world like this, full of conflict and hardship?

To live a peaceful and quiet life, you must be saved from conflict and chaos. We must escape the anger and controversy that Paul mentions in verse 8. Those are the things that interrupt our pursuit of a peaceful and quiet life. But here's the problem we face. Where do conflict and controversy in our lives come from? They come from ourselves, and the other people around us. Because human beings caused all the conflict and chaos, we cannot defeat them. They have been a part of the human race since Adam and Eve. If we want to live a peaceful and quiet life, we

need someone from above, from the outside, to come in and save us.

This is the one that God promised to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. God said this to Satan after Satan deceived Eve:

"15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

God promised that a descendent of Adam and Eve would defeat Satan. This man would be wounded severely by Satan. But this man would have victory over Satan by crushing his head. Sin and death became the curse of every human being because Adam and Eve listened to Satan instead of God. But God solves the problems that we make. He sent Jesus to bring peace to everyone who follows him, through his own death.

Notice the times that Paul mentions "all people" or "everyone" in verses 1, 4, and 6. Sin makes us all enemies of God. There is conflict between people and God vertically. Sin also makes enemies here on earth. There is conflict horizontally. The only one who can resolve both the vertical and horizontal conflict is someone who represents both sides. A mediator who is fully God and fully man. A mediator is someone who enters into conflict or controversy to help both sides. A mediator gets right between two other people or groups. We saw a good example of mediators in last week's sermon.

Here is part of the text we looked at, in Luke 5:17-26.

"17 One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby.

(It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the

Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus.

18 Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus,

19 but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles.

Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

20 Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

Verse 17 said "the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus." Jesus and his power to heal are there in that room.

There is a paralyzed man in town who wanted to be healed, but he can't walk. How can he get to Jesus? He needed mediators. Thankfully, this paralyzed man had good friends.

The friends could have interpreted the obstacles as a message from God that they should stop. But the Holy Spirit apparently gave these guys a faith-filled determination, and hopeful confidence, to persist. They saw the roof as a possible way to help their friend. Because these men didn't give up, they were effective mediators. They built a bridge between the paralyzed man and the healing power of Jesus.

No one in this room is paralyzed, that I can see. But we all have a disease that is serious. We are crippled morally, and we cannot cure ourselves. In his letter to Rome, Paul describes his crippling struggle with sin. Paul was a follower of Christ, but in Romans 7:18-24 he says:

"18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.
19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.
20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.
21 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.
22 I love God's law with all my heart.
23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.
24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?"

Paul describes sin as a parasite, alive inside of you and me. It's like a disease that takes over. It's a disease we cannot cure. Instead we actually make it worse because we choose to sin. We hurt other people, and we hurt ourselves. We are helpless and powerless to change. Who will free me and you? We need a rescuer, my friends. We need a redeemer and mediator.

I want you to imagine with me a courtroom. There is a judge and a guilty person. God is the judge, as we read in Psalm 50:6. "The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge!"

God is perfect and holy, and his laws are good and true. You are the guilty person. You have disobeyed the 10 commandments and other laws of God. Sometimes you disobey with your actions. Sometimes you disobey in your mind or heart. But we are all guilty.

If we look around the world to see all the conflict and chaos, we know that everyone is guilty. Paul says it like this in Romans 3:10–12.

"10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous--not even one.
11 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.
12 All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.""

One day everyone will stand before God and he will judge our lives. The apostle John saw a vision of judgment day in Revelation 20:11-12.

"11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done."

What is our hope, when we are standing before God who is our judge? Some people hope that God will just forget about our sin. They hope God will say, "Don't worry about it. It's not a big problem." Do you say that when someone harms you? What do you do when someone lies to you, or hurts you physically, or betrays your trust? Can you just ignore it? No, of course you don't. God is holy and cannot simply forget about our sin. This means we are in trouble. But because God loves his children, he has a solution. God the Son steps into the courtroom as our mediator. Jesus the Son of God speaks to God the Father. Jesus says, "Father, I love this person very much. I don't want him to suffer and die for his sins. Please punish me instead, so he can be free." That's what our mediator and redeemer does.

Look with me again at verses 5 and 6:

"5 For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity--the man Christ Jesus.

6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time."

Jesus is the only one qualified to be a mediator between us and God. Because only Jesus is both God and man. We sometimes call the work of Jesus on the cross a Great Exchange. An exchange is when two people give something to each other. If I want to buy a car from Jorge, I give him money and he gives me the car. An exchange happens when we both give something and we both receive something. Verse 6 says that Jesus gave his life so we can receive freedom.

Look at this picture please. Jesus is on one side, with no sin at all. He is the only human being ever to live without sinning even one time. I am on the other side, stained red by my sin. I am a stubborn and independent human being, like my parents Adam and Eve. We all try to solve our problems ourselves. But we cannot solve this sin problem by ourselves. The stain of sin runs through our entire body, and it is also in our soul. It stains even our good deeds and corrupts our good intentions. How can we be washed of our sin? It requires a Great Exchange.

God is a holy and righteous judge. Our sin can't be simply forgotten. Jesus told the Father that he was willing to be punished for our sin, so we could be forgiven. The stain of my sin was transferred to Christ on the cross. Our guilt was put on Jesus the innocent Lamb of God, who suffered and died like a guilty person. That's good news!

My sin, shame, guilt, and punishment were washed away when I trusted in Jesus and believed in his name.

And there is even more good news. We need more than forgiveness. We are spiritually dead without Jesus. We need new life before we can be reconciled to God. Jesus receives our sin and shame, and we receive holiness and honor from Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:6 says:

"6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time."

The Great Exchange reversed the problem that began in the garden. Sin and shame entered the world through the sin of Adam and Eve. But if you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then your sin and shame were buried with Jesus in the grave. When Jesus rose to life again on Easter morning, our sin and shame remained buried in the grave. Jesus was resurrected and his shame was replaced with honor. And he shares that honor with us.

That's why we can walk in freedom and joy with Jesus. We can pray to the Father just as Jesus did. Because we pray in the name of Jesus, based on his perfect record. That's why Paul can say this in verse 8:

"8 In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy."

You and I have holy hands if we have been washed clean by Jesus. You and I can live free from anger and controversy when we walk with Jesus. And we can pray confidently to God our Father, knowing he hears our prayers.

Let's talk about prayer to finish this sermon. Look with me again at verse 1.

"1 I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them."

Do you see that verb "intercede"? When you intercede for someone, you are a mediator. Do you remember our courtroom scene? Jesus came into the courtroom to intercede for you. He prayed to the Father, and served as our mediator.

That is what we are doing when we pray for people. We cannot do the things that Jesus does, of course. He is the perfect Mediator and the only one who can forgive our sins. But we can intercede for people who are lost and hurting, and ask the Father to help them. In other words, we first allow Jesus to bring us to the Father. And then because we

are His sons and daughters, we can bring others to the Father also. Those two elements are both captured in this passage that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 says:

"18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ.

And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.


20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

Brothers and sisters, God has given us an incredible privilege and responsibility and joy. We feel helpless when we look at the anger and controversy around us. But there is something we can do. We can intercede for our lost and hurting neighbors. We can be ambassadors who represent Jesus to the world. God makes his appeal through us, using us to speak words of truth to our unsaved neighbors. We don't have the power to save anyone. We cannot heal anyone. But we can bring people to Jesus, like those men who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. We bring people to Jesus through prayer, by showing them the truth in the Bible, and by inviting them to worship.

Our commitment to do those things flows from the commitment of Jesus toward us. Let's now thank him for our salvation, and for the privilege of participating in his Kingdom work on earth.

Jesus, thank you for the Great Exchange. We were helpless and guilty. We were chained by our own sin. The judge had to punish us. But then you stepped in. You volunteered to be the perfect Mediator, fully God and fully man. You absorbed our sin into your body. And you gave us your holiness and honor. Therefore we can pray confidently in your name, knowing the Father will hear our prayers when we pray for ourselves and for other people. Holy Spirit, please remind us to value and use this gift of prayer. We ask all this in the powerful name of Jesus.

Amen.

 One Voice Fellowship