

Christ the Mediator - Rev. Andrew Coghill

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[0:00] 1 Timothy chapter 2, we read verses 5 and 6, 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.

Now, the subject of Christ the mediator is absolutely foundational. It is downright essential to our very salvation. We can't be saved without Christ as our mediator.

Now, our forefathers recognized this to such an extent that the church's confession of faith, that all the office bearers sign, ministers, elders, deacons, we all have to sign it and subscribe to it in full.

They put a whole chapter just to this subject of Christ the mediator, chapter all to itself. So, these verses that we read, you know, there is one God, one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

This is absolutely basic. It's foundational. It's key to our relationship with the Lord. Indeed, there would be little point in having such a mediator if he were not, it says, you know, testimony given at the proper time. If he was not being testified to, there's no point having a mediator if we're not able to know about him. By the testimony given at the proper time, declared, made known, we understand from Scripture that God desires to be made known to his people.

[1:41] You might think, well, I suppose he always did, didn't he? Surely, surely that's what God wants to know. But some people would think, oh no, God wants to be kept secret. God wants just a very precious few to know about.

No, God wants to be known. God desires to be known by a lost and needy human race. He especially desires to be known by his people. And he has given his son, Jesus Christ, as the mediator for all. That's what it says. One God, one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Now, does that mean that all are going to be saved?

Well, no, of course not. We know from Scripture that many, perhaps we might even say most, are not going to be saved. Many are going to be lost. Jesus himself said, you know, broad is the way and wide is the gate that leads to destruction. Many there be that go into that.

But straight as they get means narrow is the way that leads to salvation, leads to life. And few there be that find it. Many are called, few are chosen. The implication is the vast majority of humanity just won't get this. But it's not for want of God desiring to be made known. So all are not going to be saved. We know from Scripture, of course, and our Savior gives us to understand that many will be lost. But the point is that there is just one Savior. For everybody who's going to be saved, there is only one Savior. For those who want to reject Him, there's still only one Savior, one means of grace to be given, a Savior given to all mankind, not a variety of gods and gurus and prophets and prophetic leaders, just one Savior. Whoever and wherever you may be, this Jesus Christ is the only one who can save you. And those who put their faith in Him shall be saved by Him.

So we read, you know, if we turn to 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 10, For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hopes set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. And you think, well, either you're the Savior of all people or you're not. You know, how can it be, especially of those who believe? Well, it's because He's the one Savior for all, and only those who actually believe are going to be saved, but still doesn't alter the fact that Christ is the only Savior that God has provided for all mankind. And especially those who believe and receive and accept of Him, they will, of course, be saved, for there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. Now, in Galatians chapter 3 at verse 20, we read, a mediator or intermediary is not a mediator of one. In other words, it implies there is more than one, but God is one. In other words, there'd be no need for any mediator if God's intention was just to keep

[4 : 56] Himself to Himself. You only need a mediator if you intend to communicate with, to enter into relationship with those who are by nature outside of you. You don't need a mediator unless you're wanting to do that. The very fact of a mediator proclaims and underlines God's desire to reach out to fallen mankind and to be in relationship with them. Now, I know it's been said so many times, you know, God doesn't want a religion. He wants a relationship with us, and that's all true, but you can never say it too many times, because this genuinely, honestly, is what God is about, having a relationship with His children. That's what He desires. That's what makes Him Father, is that He has children. Yes, He's Father, God the Father, there's God the Son too, but He desires children for His relationship with

Him. That's why we were made in God's image, so that we could have relationship with Him. This genuinely is what God is about. That is what He desires to be about. How can man ever be naive enough to think that he can somehow please God? He can earn salvation by what He does or by the things He qualifies for. You know, sometimes a child might try to earn their parents' approval. I suppose we've all tried to do that, you know, maybe when we're young or whatever, wanted our mom or dad or whatever to like us better, so we tried to do things to make them like us better. They might have appreciated what we did, but it's not going to alter their love for us. They're going to love us just the same whether we're really badly behaved or whether we do lots of good things. We're not going to in any way alter the fact that we are their son or daughter. God loves His children anyway. We can't earn salvation. We can't impress God by what we do. We can't merit being in His presence or certainly not without entering into such a relationship. How can just trying to do my best, trying to be sincere about the religion I do follow, or being spiritual but not being sort of religious? How can that ever cut it with God? He doesn't want you to be religious. He wants you to be His son or daughter. He wants you to be in relationship with Him. Sometimes we hear of Christ referred to by His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. Now, obviously, we could trot out any number of scriptural examples that will just back up all these statements of prophet, priest, and king. But more importantly than having sort of proof texts is understanding what we mean by these particular phrases. Now, a prophet, by definition, speaks from God to man. And I think, oh, no, wait a minute. A prophet is somebody who tells you the future.

No, it's not a crystal ball. A prophet is one who speaks from God to man. They declare what God is saying. Sometimes what God is saying is right then in the present. It's about to happen there and then.

Sometimes it's a bit further down the line. And God is giving you warning. And that's what the prophet is doing. He's declaring what God is saying is going to happen. It doesn't mean the prophet is a future teller. He just declares God's Word from God to man, delivering God's message in God's words in the ears of men. A priest, by definition, intercedes for man to God. He comes from our side, if you like, and he goes to God with what we need, with offerings, with intercession, what have you. He intercedes for man to God, and he needs must offer sacrifice. You can't have a priesthood without sacrifice of some kind to God on behalf of men. That's a prophet. That's a priest. A king, by definition, rules over men and women, having his authority from God. Even our own king, whatever be his qualifications, whatever for the office, is anointed. That's part of the coronation ceremony. He's anointed, and the implication is he's anointed as the Lord's anointments. So that, you know, this kingship is meant to be from God. A king, by definition, rules over men and women, having his authority from God. Now, obviously, different people have occupied offices such as these down through history. But the one ultimate prophet, the one true priest, the one king of kings is Jesus Christ. And in his one person, he embodies all these functions. And as we talked earlier, you know, with the children, you can, in one person, embody lots of different functions, lots of different statuses. If he does not speak to us from God, then we do not hear God speak. I'll say that again. If he, Jesus, does not speak to us from God, then we do not hear God speak. We can make things up. You know, sometimes people might be tempted to say, oh, I've got a word from the Lord, and the Lord has told me to say such and such to you.

Well, maybe he has, and maybe he hasn't. And maybe they, sometimes people do just make it up in order to make it seem like they've got a hotline to the Lord, and other people don't. But if Christ does not speak to us, then we do not hear God speak. Now, we can put our trust in other people and say, oh, this is my prophet. These are our leaders. These are whatever. But, you know, if they're saying, oh, the Lord has told us to say this. The Lord has told us to say that. And if it's different from what God has revealed in his written word, then you can know that they're just making it up as well. So, putting your trust in people who just make things up is never going to be safe. All the true Old Testament prophets were speaking from God, pointing men to God, pointing men to Christ.

[11:17] Every true prophet pointed people to Christ. You could say that Christ himself is speaking through all the Old Testament prophets. And that's what he himself said. I mean, if we look at what it says in Luke chapter 24, when he meets the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he said to them, all foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And then a little further on in the same chapter of verse 44, then he said to them, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. Everything written about me. That's what he's saying to them. Everything written about me had to be fulfilled. It's all about him in the law, in the prophets, in the Psalms.

It's all pointing to Christ. So I say again, if Christ does not speak to us from God, then we do not hear God speak, because he will not reveal himself through any other. There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Likewise, if we have not Christ as our priest, then we have no access to God. Again, all the priesthoods that men invent, and most religions in the world have some kind of priesthood. They have some who supposedly offer sacrifices to the gods they worship, and whether garlands or incense or candles or animal sacrifices or whatever it might be. Almost every kind of religion in the world, you know, all the pagan ones, all the druids and everything else, they've all got priests in with them. But they're made up priests in that sense.

They're not really intermediaries. They're not accessing God and representing man to God. All the priesthoods men invent are both imitators and imposters. The true priests of the Old Testament interceded for the Lord's people and offered up the sacrifices which spoke ultimately of the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. This is what we read if we go to Hebrews in chapter 8, and we see from verse 1. Now, the point in what we are saying is this. We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places in the true tent or tabernacle that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Thus, it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

Verse 6, but as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is much more excellent than the old way as the covenant. He mediates his better since it is enacted on better promises. Better promises, better priesthood. This is what we have in Christ, our ultimate and great high priest. All priesthoods are pointing to that if they are true priesthoods. All the Old Testament priesthoods are pointing forward to the ultimate priesthood in Christ. And likewise, the one true king is Jesus Christ. If we say that he is not our king, we will not have this man to rule over us, as Jesus pointed out in some of his parables, you know. If we will not have him as our king, if we say he is not our king, then we by definition declare ourselves not to be citizens of his kingdom. Now, think about that for a moment of what it means. Instead of being strangers and pilgrims in this world, having our true citizenship in heaven with Christ the king, we are declaring, this man is not our king. You know, sometimes you see in London people with the yellow placards or whatever protesting against King Charles. Well, that's one thing. But they say Christ is not your king. That's quite another thing. If we're saying that Christ does not rule over us, we are not citizens of his kingdom. We're not going to be citizens in heaven. Then we have no king but Caesar. We have nothing but this world as our king. Thus, when the word of God is fulfilled, and if you look ahead to Revelation chapter 11 at verse 15, it says,

[16:07] Then the seventh angel blew his trumpets, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. So, there's no longer any kingdom anywhere left to us on earth that is not his. So, we say, no, don't believe in Jesus. He's not my king because I'm a citizen of this world. I'm a citizen of humanity. But this world and the kingdoms of this world are in the fullness of time going to become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. And if we are not citizens under Christ, well, our citizenship isn't here. We don't have citizenship upon earth if Christ is not our king. We don't have citizenship in heaven if Christ is not our king there. So, it's not in heaven, and it's not on earth. So, where does that leave?

Oh, dear. Who is going to reign over us there, I wonder, in what is left to us? In order then to be the mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus must represent both sides of the relationship. As God, he has been God the Son, the second person of the Trinity from all eternity. But he has been man only since the time of his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. God was always a Trinity. But manhood was not always part of the Godhead. There was a time when the Trinity was pure Spirit in all three persons. Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well of Samaria, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. That doesn't just mean the Holy Spirit is a Spirit. But the Father also is pure Spirit. God the Son was pure Spirit from all eternity until such time as He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin. And then manhood became part of that Trinity, part of that Godhead. He became holy God and holy man. How can He be both?

Think back to what we said earlier. It's possible to be a daughter, a niece, a cousin, a sister. It's possible to be a son, a nephew, a brother. It's possible to be a grandson, a granddaughter at the same time as all these things. Later on in life, my wife becomes a bride. She becomes a wife. She becomes a mother. She becomes a grandmother. She becomes a mother-in-law, and so on. I become not only a son, not only a brother, a nephew. I become an uncle in the fullness of time. I become a husband. I become a father. I become a grandfather. I become a father-in-law. All these things change the status to which I have access or what I am, but they don't change who I am. And Christ does not change who He is, even when, if you like, the status that He enjoys becomes adapted, becomes altered, because manhood has now become part of the Godhead. Obviously, no human relationship describes it perfectly, but He is both fully and completely. To God, He fulfills the perfect sonship that man was unable to offer because of sin.

And for man, He offers up that sonship, freely inviting man to enter into it and to be part of this now perfected relationship. Now, that's a key thing. Our relationship with the Lord is tainted by sin, but Christ's relationship with His Father is completely perfect, and He invites us to be part of that perfection. Now, this was no light or easy accomplishment. To this, He was called by His Father from all eternity. We know we go back to, for example, what it says in Hebrews 5 about the priesthood. Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins, just as he does for those other people. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. Now, this is what we have. And then at verse 9, being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

No one takes this honor to himself. Christ didn't take this honor to himself. He was called to it, and yet He was willing to take it up for Himself. He was willing to take it on board, and He was willing to lay down His life. If He does not do this, if He is not the one who is our mediator, our intercessor, then we don't have one. We can't imagine what it was like for Him on the cross, the agony, the excruciating pain and suffering. We might think we could imagine it, but what we almost certainly can never imagine is what must have been the well-nigh torture of a boy, a youth, and a man with all the normal inclinations and desires and hopes and longings, tempted in every way like as we are, yet without sin. Now, in all fairness, I don't believe Christ was ever tempted with anything that was unclean. I don't believe that any desire of that ever entered his head. But I do believe there would have been occasions, you know, do we think there was no pretty girls in Nazareth? Do we think that it never crossed his mind? Well, you know, he really could have fallen in love with one in all chastity and matrimonial purity, and the whisper in his ear could have been, well, you could still have a wife and a family, just sanctified relationship, and you could still honor God. You could still be the Messiah. You could still fulfill your calling, and you could have all this domestic happiness as well. A temptation, not to a particular sin, but a temptation to deviate from that which the Lord was calling him to. So, yes, tempted like in every way as we are, except his temptations would have been a lot more pure than ours. There wouldn't have been anything unclean or lascivious in it, but still temptation, still genuine temptation. And never once, was he guilty of gluttony or malice or disobedience or lust or envy or greed. Notice how it says in the

[23 : 06] New Testament that the Pharisees found fault with his disciples. Oh, they didn't wash their hands before they ate. Oh, they plucked the corn as they went through the cornfields. Oh, why do your disciples transgress the law of the elders and so on? They could never actually find anything wrong with Jesus.

They could never actually say, you didn't wash your hands before you ate. Oh, you didn't do this. You didn't do that. It's always his disciples they find fault with. They don't like his teaching. They don't like his example, but they can't actually find fault with him on any actual transgression of the law.

Temptation Jesus would have had on every side to transgress in even the slightest, least, most harmless seeming of ways. Just once to act for self and pride and personal gain. He didn't do that. Never once.

Such a life of utter selflessness and perfect obedience, perfect love. It's impossible for us to imagine. Every day the temptations would be there afresh. All it would take is one solitary sin. Oh, you've been fasting for 40 days. You must be hungry. Come on, turn these stones into bread. There's nothing sinful about eating, but it would have been a sinful use of his powers, a temptation. Every day the temptations would be there afresh. All it would take is one solitary sin. Such total perfection would only be achievable at the very highest personal cost. Never think it was easy for Jesus. Never think, oh, well, it's okay. He was God the Son. So it wasn't really a temptation like it is for us. Yes, it was.

He was tempted like as we are. The temptation to give in, to gratify the self would be there every single day. It only came at the very highest personal cost, and that sacrifice, it almost, and I hesitate to even speak it, but do so with reverence, it almost would put the cross in the shade if such a thing were possible. And indeed the cross itself had its fulfillment only because of the perfectly sacrificed life which preceded it. If Christ's had not been a perfect life, a perfect divine life, the cross would not have had the power that it did. It has its fulfillment only because of the perfectly sacrificed life which preceded it. But the ultimate power of the cross is not the mere, I won't say it's likely, mere six hours of physical crucifixion, but the spiritual desolation, the utter emptying out of self as the Father turns away from the sin being put to death there, as the Lamb of God takes upon Himself, and so takes away the sin of the world from His own elect children. This is the work of the mediator. This is what He does. And it is blasphemy indeed to suggest that any other who ever lived could even come close. And now having risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, God the Son sits enthroned on the right hand of the Father, making intercession by God the Holy Ghost for all His children here upon earth.

[26 : 37] So, before Christ came upon earth, before Christ was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, well, who was the mediator then? Well, it was still Him. It was still Christ, still the same covenant of grace, different methods, different sacraments and sacrifices and ceremonies, but they meant the same thing. And they pointed to the same mediator. You know, like your credit card that you pay for, and ultimately it's the credit card company that buys your fridge or your car or whatever it is, you're presenting a wee token. You're presenting a wee plastic token which is accepted by the salesperson, not because they're saying, oh, well, you must definitely have the money in your pocket. But what they're going to look at it and say is, oh, yeah, well, Barclays Bank or American Express, well, they've got the money, so that's okay. We'll hand over the purchase to you. The confidence is not in the individual presenting the token. The confidence is in the purchasing power the token represents.

The power does not consist in the goat or the ox or the lamb that is being sacrificed. The power consists in the purchasing power behind the God who guarantees that life, that sacrifice, that purchasing power of that blood over against when the final price will be paid on the cross.

All these goats and lambs and oxen are pointing forward to the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. Now, this is what the Lord does for His children. They buy the purchase. They stand guarantee all these sacrifices. And this which the Lord does for His people, He sets against all these Old Testament tokens, it's purchased for them by what Christ is going to do. Now, people might say they don't feel the need of it. They don't believe it can be all that simple.

How can it possibly be that free? You know, there must be a catch. Well, there must be a sting in the tail. Why must there be a sting in the tail? Why must it not be free as Christ offers it? Well, because that's human nature. That's the world we live in. That's what I am like.

But this is a mediator between God and man, offering God as He is to man, just as He is being God to man, and being man to God, and offering up to God not just man as He is, but man as He was meant to have been. Adam represents man as He is, sinful and fallen. You and I, sinful and fallen. Christ represents mankind as He was meant to be man as He was at the beginning, perfect, whole, sinless, made in God's image for relationship with God. You could never do this. No disrespect. I could never do this. You can never buy this. You can never suffer this. You can never afford this. And God knows that.

[29 : 46] So, He offers you it free. It's not what you and I are like, but it's an offer of what we can be, of what He offers us to be. And because He wants sinners to be part of this, to have access to this, to enter into this holy joy, He makes it known to them. It is part of His work of mediation that He makes Himself known to His children. He tells them about what He has done, and what He wants them to be part of. He uses other mouths, lesser mouths, lesser voices, impure souls, fellow sinners, but still He makes it known that He is the one mediator. 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. The proper time, friends, is now. He is testifying it here. He is telling you now.

Never mind about the impurity of the one testifying. He is the one giving the message. He is the one stating it. There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

So let us pray. Our gracious and beloved Lord, we thank Thee that Thou art the one who does go between us to the Father and represents the Father to us. Help us then in this day, and make us to be more like Jesus. As we put our trust in Him, so may we be conformed more and more to His likeness. Grant us Thy blessing on Thy word. Help us then and continue with us in this Thine own day, and forgive us for all our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We close our worship this morning singing to the Lord's praise and sing Psalms number 104. Sing Psalms 104. You'll find this on page 138 of the Blue Books, and we'll sing these three double stanzas, verses 27 to 36. All your creatures look towards you for their food to be supplied. What you give to them, they gather with your goodness satisfied. When you hide your face, they're troubled. Lifeless, they return to earth. When new life comes from your spirit to earth's face, you give rebirth. And so on to the end. But may sinners flee before Him, and the wicked be no more. Praise be to the Lord Almighty, O my soul, the Lord adore. These three double stanzas from St. Sam's number 104 to God's praise.

All your creatures look towards you for their food to be supplied.

What you give to them, they gather with your goodness satisfied. When you hide your face, they're troubled. Lifeless, they return to earth. When you hide your face, you give rebirth. May the Lord's Lord's majestic glory, always lost and never fade. May the Lord rejoice and thrive in the works that He has made.

[34 : 09] When He kisses on creation, earth begins to shake in fear. But His touch, the mountains tremble, smoke and flames of fire appear.

To the earth. To the Lord throughout my lifetime. To my God I will sing praise. May my meditation please Him.

As to Him my song I raise. But may sinners flee before Him, and the wicked be no more.

Praise be to the Lord Almighty. O my soul, the Lord adore.

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Heavenly Father, and the communion of God the Holy Ghost, rest upon you, and remain with you each one this day and forevermore. Amen.