

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 8, 2019
Second Article

In Christ Jesus, the very Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit; and the very Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary, our Redeemer and Savior, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

If I asked people, “How does one get to heaven,” or “How are you saved,” how would the majority of them respond? No doubt, “By being a good person.” How would you respond? How are you saved? How do you expect to get into heaven? By keeping the Law? Being good?

We spent 9 weeks this past summer carefully investigating all 10 commandments of our God. What was our conclusion to everyone of them? Broken, everyone of them we have broken by our sins in thought, word and deed. And everyone we continue to break because of our sinful nature. Trying to obey God’s commandments, keeping the Law will save absolutely no one! For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and the payment for sins is not life in heaven but death, eternal death in hell.

Salvation comes alone through Jesus Christ. He has earned it for us. He has done everything needed for us. Therefore God has declared us to be justified—not guilty and in fact righteous through Christ. That fact is the heart and core of Christianity. It is what all of our services, our prayers, our ministry, our worship is all about, Without Christ there would be nothing, nothing but death to look forward to.

This morning we are studying the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed. This second article has to do with our Savior, Jesus and the subject of **REDEMPTION**. This morning for our study we have printed out passages which we will be reading to teach us **who Jesus is, what Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us**.

Our first portion of this morning’s sermon is entitled—The Person of Christ (Who He is). This is divided into two parts a) The Son of God b) The Son of Man.

The Second Article contains the most important words for every sinner. It begins **“I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord.”** Who is Jesus? He is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. We have five passages listed in our insert. Many more can be found throughout the Scriptures to prove that Jesus is more than just a man, a good man; but that He is God the Son. Luther captures that truth in his first line in the explanation: **“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity...”**

Now don’t expect me to explain those words, for neither can I explain them, nor can I understand them. But I do believe them. **“Begotten of the Father from eternity”** is just using human terms to say what we can’t explain. It is our way of saying that Jesus is **“very God of very God,”** with all of the qualities and attributes of God the Father in all their fullness.

How can this be? How can the infinite God be confined in human skin? How can He who belongs to eternity become part of finite history? To the human mind and reason such a teaching is preposterous and can only be rejected. But not for those who have been led to poke out the eyes of their reason and believe what God’s Word has to tell them. How do we know? Let’s look at God’s Word.

Jesus asked His disciples, **“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”** They told Jesus, **“Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”** That is the same answer given today. Most people look upon Jesus as one of if not the greatest prophet of God. But then Jesus asked them again, **“But who do you say that I am?”**

And that brings us to our first passage. So I would ask you now to take out your bulletins and turn to the inside back page entitled “Sermon Passages—The Second Article: concerning Jesus Christ.” Let’s read this first one together: Matthew 16:16-- **SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, “YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.”** Peter, one of Jesus’ disciples teaches us Jesus is God’s Son. To this answer Jesus replied, **“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”**

In our next passage we hear someone greater than Peter also tell us that Jesus is the Son of God. The Father Himself. Let us read Matthew 17:5--**WHILE HE WAS STILL SPEAKING, BEHOLD, A BRIGHT CLOUD OVERSHADOWED THEM; AND SUDDENLY A VOICE CAME OUT OF THE CLOUD, SAYING, “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. HEAR HIM!”** God the Father attests to the truth of Jesus’ divinity by saying, “This is My Son!”

Modern day liberal Bible scholars like to say that Jesus never proclaimed Himself to be God, to be divine and God the Son but that it was the disciples who made up these teachings after Jesus’ death. But Jesus does testify about Himself in these words from John 3:16-- **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** Jesus again clearly testifies to that fact that He is from the Father in or next passage from John 16:27-28--**“for the**

Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

And finally the Apostle Paul also teaches us this same spiritual truth when he writes in Romans 1:1, 3-4-Read together: **PAUL, A BONDSERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE, SEPARATED TO THE GOSPEL OF GOD...CONCERNING HIS SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, WHO WAS BORN OF THE SEED OF DAVID ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, AND DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD WITH POWER ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.** Jesus proved that what He said about Himself was true when He rose from the dead. He is God the Son.

But not only does God's Word call Jesus the Son of God, God in human flesh and blood, but Jesus also did things only God can do. Who but the almighty God could raise a dead young man being carried out to the cemetery? Who but the all-knowing God could tell Nathanael before they ever met, **"I saw you under the fig tree?"** Who but the ever-present God could assure His disciples shortly before He left this earth with His bodily presence, **"I am with you always?"** And who but the all-gracious God could tell the woman who was a sinner, **"Go in peace, your sins are forgiven?"**

That is part of what it means when we say **"I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."** He's not just a person about whom I know something or about whom I learned something in my catechism days. He is true God from all eternity, come down to this earth to make it possible for me to go to be with Him forever in heaven. Beyond our understanding? Absolutely! Beyond our believing? No! Thanks be to the Holy Spirit and His work in our hearts through His Word.

B) Luther's explanation continues, **"and also true man, born of the virgin Mary..."** Jesus is also flesh and blood like you and me. He, as the Son of God, came into this world and became incarnate—that is He took upon Himself the form of our human being. How did this happen? The Second Article tells us from God's Word, **"He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary..."** God the Holy Spirit miraculously placed the Son of God into Mary's womb as a baby boy and nine months later the human baby was born. We are also told in this article, **"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."** All of these things prove that Jesus was a real human being. In the Bible we read that Jesus hungered, thirsted, grew in wisdom and in stature, slept and wept. He did everything we human beings do for He was human like you and me in every respect except for the wonderful fact that He was perfect, without sin. So He could be the Mediator. We read our next passage from 1 Timothy 2:5--**For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.**

And so Jesus is both Son of God and Son of Man. Two natures present in one person—the divine and the human. Why Both? There was no other way. The Son of God had to come to this world to pay for the price of our sin, to conquer death and to destroy Satan's hold over sinful mankind. No human being could do that. But Jesus had to be human in order to be placed under the Law and keep it perfectly for us and to be placed under the curse of the Law and pay the punishment for us, which is death. Praise God the Lord, Ye sons of man. *Let us rise and join in singing Hymn 78.*

II: The name Jesus means Savior or literally "Jehovah saves." This name tells us what Jesus would do—save us, be a Savior to the whole world. But Jesus was given another name, Christ. Christ is a title, like pastor, doctor, governor. It is Jesus' title. It means "the Anointed One." Jesus was anointed, that is chosen by God to be our Savior, to fulfill a three-fold office for us: Prophet, Priest and King. Our second truth this morning is: The Office of Christ (What He is)

A. Old Testament prophets came to the people with God's Word. God through inspiration revealed to them what He wanted His people to hear and to know about Him and about their salvation. Therefore the prophets were God's mouthpiece. In our first Scripture reading from this section we hear of a future prophet, who would be The Prophet. Let us join in reading Deuteronomy 18:15--**"THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR MIDST, FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR,"** Moses here is speaking of Jesus, the Prophet who came to this earth and proclaimed His Good News for all to hear. Remember what the Father declared on the Mt. of Transfiguration about what we should do with Jesus: **HEAR HIM, HEAR HIS WORDS!**

In our second reading we see that Peter did just that and said that in this bold declaration of his faith from John 6:68--**But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**

Because Jesus is the Word, He established the Gospel, the Good News of Peace on Earth; peace between God and man alone through Him and He continues to preach this same Gospel today through His called children—

you and me. We find His command to us to do just that in our next passage from Mark 16:15--**And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."**

Jesus has chosen us "earthen vessels" to continue His work, to proclaim for Him His message about His salvation to all of lost mankind. We are to proclaim what He has done for us. And what He did for us was He also became our High Priest.

B. The High Priest of the Old Testament offered up sacrifices for the people and offered up prayers for the people. These sacrifices pointed ahead to the coming sacrifice of God's Son, the Messiah. When they were offered in faith the Lord forgave the people their sins. But now The Sacrifice has come. Jesus as our High Priest went into the temple of God, the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice for us. However He did not take a lamb or bull or goat, He took no animal to sacrifice. He gave Himself. He willingly went to the cross to be sacrificed for all people.

Our High Priest came to redeem you and me, lost and condemned creatures — lost in sin and death and without a knowledge of who God is and what He has done for us and condemned to an eternity of damnation because of our sins. What a terrible thing it is to be lost, and to be lost from God is even worse. What a terrible thing to be condemned to death, but to be condemned to eternal death is far worse. That is what we deserved. That is what our High Priest saved us from by His sacrifice for us.

The Apostle Paul tells us that this sacrifice was fully accepted by the Father. Let us read in our next passage from Ephesians 5:2-- **AND WALK IN LOVE, AS CHRIST ALSO HAS LOVED US AND GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US, AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR A SWEET-SMELLING AROMA.**

This High Priest was not like the ones of the Old Testament. Jesus had to be perfect and holy and He was. His sacrifice was not first for Himself and then for us, it was only for us. He needed no sacrifice for Himself. Let us read of that in our next passage from Hebrews 7:26-27--**FOR SUCH A HIGH PRIEST WAS FITTING FOR US, WHO IS HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS, AND HAS BECOME HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS; WHO DOES NOT NEED DAILY, AS THOSE HIGH PRIESTS, TO OFFER UP SACRIFICES, FIRST FOR HIS OWN SINS AND THEN FOR THE PEOPLE'S, FOR THIS HE DID ONCE FOR ALL WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIMSELF.**

Even today Jesus continues to serve as our High Priest by pleading our cause, taking our prayers to the Father, mediating between us redeemed sinners and our God.

C. The third office of Christ is King. He established His Kingdom here on earth, not in some location, like downtown Jerusalem, but in the hearts of His people. His Church has been established here on earth. It is found in the hearts of all believers. Our King has not only set us free from the slavery of our sins, but He now rules over us with His loving Gospel message of forgiveness, life and salvation. When Pilate asked Jesus if He was a King, Jesus replied in John 18:36--**Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."**

Still today our Ascended King is seated at God's right hand ruling over us through His Word, with His loving protection and care, controlling all things and sending His angels to watch over us. Some day our victorious King will return and judge all people and take His believers to be with Him forever in heaven.

Let us join our hearts and voices in singing to this beautiful Savior Hymn 657

III: Finally we see in the Second Article--The Work of Christ (What He has done). As we said the work of Jesus is called Redemption. This means that He has bought us back, back from what? Martin Luther explains it this way: **He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.**

Our first passage from 1 John 1:7 tells us--**But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57-- **"O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" Jesus Himself comforts us with these words from John 11:25-26—Read together: **JESUS SAID TO HER, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, THOUGH HE MAY DIE, HE SHALL LIVE. "AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?"** And let us read what John in his first Epistle writes 1 John 3:8--**HE WHO SINS IS OF THE DEVIL, FOR THE DEVIL HAS SINNED FROM THE BEGINNING. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SON OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED, THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.**

Jesus has gone before us, to take our place. He humbled Himself to be born in human flesh and blood. He suffered under Pontius Pilate. He was crucified. He died and He was buried. He endured God-forsakenness on the cross for us. All of that is what we deserved because of our sins. Thankfully all of that is what Christ did for us.

A great writer who was a widow once wrote to a friend who had just lost his wife and now had experienced the same sorrow, "I have been through it all, and nobody knows what it is like but those who have been through it." Those who have been through it. It is hard for us to feel the pain of someone else when they have lost a loved one, or when they are experiencing loneliness, sickness, suffering and pain unless we have suffered the same thing. And that is why we so very often feel so inadequate in comforting others, for we have not suffered the same loss and do not know what they are feeling. But here is One who has—Jesus Christ. He has endured and suffered all things for you and for me. The sorrow of rejected love—both by His disciples in fear and by His Father in justice. The bitterness of loneliness, the pain of torture and finally death. And worst of all the damnation for all people's sins loaded on His own soul.

The enormous debt we owed to God has been paid in full. We are free. We are forgiven. What is our response? **STS=Saved To Serve**. Martin Luther closes out his explanation by writing: **He did this that I should be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy.**

The Second Article, what a marvelous piece of literature. It sets before us in simple, clear, concise words our lost, sinful state and our free salvation; our redemption from sin earned for us by Jesus; and His victorious rule over all things. May the Holy Spirit daily apply these truths to our lives so that we live them with our hearts and confess them with our lips. Jesus, yes, Jesus, the God-Man lived and died for me! **I AM SAVED!** Amen.

In closing let us rise and join together in confessing our faith in this beloved Savior and all that He has done for us with the words of the Second Article and the meaning printed for you on page 3 of this morning's bulletin.