

## Of Christ the Mediator (Part 5)

Ex 21:1-11; Rom 3:21-31 WCF 8.5

Reformed Church of Wainuiomata, 23 June 2019, 16:30

(Sermon put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)<sup>1</sup>

### Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
The WCF 8.5 reminds us of at least three things regarding our Mediator.  
Here's the first one...

### Perfect Obedience

My brother & sister, Jesus came to earth to redeem God's loved ones.

What does *redeem* mean? Well, sadly, in our day and age, *redeem* got the meaning of *come collect your prize* – yes, the prize you have won through a raffle or lotto or whatever way of chance!

But that's not the Biblical meaning of *redeem*. You see, in the Bible *redeem* means to *purchase at a price*! And let's face it, the price at which Jesus redeemed God's loved ones (also you & me, insofar as we are in Christ) – *that price* was costly; yes, enormously dear!

Question: What did this redeeming work of Jesus involve? How did He redeem?

Well, you'd say, "Pastor, the answer is easy!" "Jesus' redeeming work means He died for us on the cross!"

Now, such an answer would of course be correct! But it's telling only *half* of what Jesus did to redeem us!

You see, for Jesus to redeem us, God not only required of Him to *die* for us, but to also *live* for us – yes, to live a life of *perfect obedience*; indeed, to fulfil all of God's Law – yes, each & every one of its stipulations – like the first Adam never did or ever could do (neither you or I)!

So, Jesus had the obligation as our representative not only to *die* for us, but also to *live* for us – to live in perfect & complete obedience to God, fulfilling all the requirements of the Old-Testament covenant!

You say, "But why?"

Well, remember that God made a covenant with Ancient Israel? And remember what God wrote into that covenant document – yes, towards the end of that contract? He wrote a whole list of *blessings* and *curses*, which means that if God's people would obey all the covenant terms/stipulations, then God would bless them. But the covenant *curses* would come upon all who fail to keep the covenant terms/stipulations!<sup>2</sup>

Could Israel – can you & I – keep God's covenant terms perfectly?

No!

Could *Jesus* keep all God's covenant terms perfectly? Yes, He could and He did!!

So, see the *twofold* redeeming work of Jesus?

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<sup>1</sup> In writing this sermon, I am greatly indebted to my two main sources whose guidance I appreciate: 1) Van Dixhoorn, Chad. 2014. *Confessing the Faith: a reader's guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Carlisle, PA : The Banner of Truth Trust. 484p.

2) Sproul, R.C. 2006. *The truth we confess*. (In: Sproul, R.C. ed. *Truths we confess: a layman's guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith – in three volumes*. Vol. I (chapters 1-8 of the Confession) Phillipsburg, NJ : P&R Publishing. 279p.).

Many words & phrases I have written, I have gladly borrowed with great thankfulness from this source.

<sup>2</sup> For these blessings and curses, please cf. Deut. 28 (the whole chapter)

- In Jesus' *death* He took upon Himself the curse God had promised for all covenant breakers!
- But in Jesus' *life* of perfect obedience He achieved/earned the blessing that God had promised to those who keep the covenant terms/stipulations!

Indeed, in His death, Jesus got the curse which *we* should have received. And in His perfect obedient living, He earned the covenant blessing! Thus, He had both the curse and the blessing!

So, what do we see?

Well, we see that everyone who is in Christ (yes, everyone who has received Jesus by grace through faith, to the point of loving Him) – that such persons have a *double reason for joy*, i.e. that for them Jesus' death took their covenant *curse* away; and, re the blessings Christ had earned through His perfect obedience, they now also *share in these blessings*!

See? When Jesus lived an active life of perfect obedience, He did it for us!

Can you & I now see why we make a distinction between the covenant of *works* and the covenant of *grace*?

You see, in the beginning, God entered into a relationship with Adam and Eve – a relationship which was based upon *works*. But they failed the test God had set for them, and so they lost the blessing of that covenant!

At that stage, God could have destroyed the whole human race in the bud! But He did not! Instead, He gave us an opportunity to be redeemed!

So, this new agreement between God and Adam & Eve, we call the covenant of *grace*, because man (also you & I) are now saved *by grace* on the grounds of what *Someone Else* did for us!

Thus, it is not because *we* have earned anything!

However – and here is an important point – although *we* have not earned anything ourselves, the *basis* for our redemption still remains *good works*!

Yes, the only way *anybody* is saved is by *works*! But it's *Jesus'* good works, not *ours*!

So, that's good news – yes, that's the Gospel! But this redemption only applies to those who have received Jesus by God's grace through faith; yes, to those who have a personal & living relationship with Jesus Christ who is our Mediator, our Champion, and our Substitute in the eyes of God!

See why WCF 8.5 says, "*The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself... has fully satisfied the justice of his Father*"?

See why Rm 5:19 says, "***For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous***"?

Well, so far re point 1 "Perfect Obedience"

## **Pleasing Sacrifice**

My brother & sister, why did God's Old-Testament people bring sacrifices to Him? Yes, why did Cain & Abel do that? Why did Abraham, Isaac & Jacob do that? Why did Moses & Aaron & Joshua – why did David and all the rest do that?

Well, was it not because, by means of a sacrifice, they sought to please God – to appease His wrath on them – and so, to (through a gift-offering), *worship* God!?

You ask, "But how did people worship God *before the Fall*?" "Yes, how did Adam and Eve, *before their Fall*, offer God glory, honour, reverence and adoration?"

My brother & sister, before the Fall, God's people worshiped Him by *submitting to His authority* – yes, by, out of love for their Creator, *obeying* Him!

But after the Fall, due to man's inability to please God, worship took on the form of *sacrifice*!

And the first record we have of that is the sacrifices which Cain & Abel brought in worship to God!

And immediately we see something very important! God look favourably at *Abel's* offering – yes, God was *pleased* with *Abel's* offering, but He was not pleased with *Cain's* offering. Why?

Well, the book of Hebrews tells us (in Heb 11:4)!

It says, “***By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, ... And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.***”<sup>3</sup>

See? *Abel's* offer was pleasing to God, because *Abel* brought his offer *in faith!* But *what was unacceptable about Cain's offering* was not *what* was offered, but *who* offered it – i.e. someone lacking faith!

Indeed, offerings that are acceptable to God are *heartfelt expressions* of the giver's love, submission and reverence to/for God!

Yes, remember what God said through Amos (in Amos 5:21-22) ...

***I hate, I despise your religious feasts;***

***I cannot stand your assemblies.***

***22Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.***<sup>4</sup>

Why did God hate Israel's offerings in Amos' days?

Because the Israelites' worship was insincere! People just went through the motions – they just brought empty lip service, but were not making an authentic and heartfelt sacrifice of praise to God!

My brother & sister, thankfully not all Old-Testament sacrifices were displeasing to God! Yes, there were Old-Testament sacrifices that *were* pleasing to God, like e.g. *Abel's* offering. Yet, even *Abel's* good offering would not last *Abel forever!* If *Abel* were not instantly killed by *Cain* – yes, if *Abel* had lived longer, then even *Abel* would have to, again & again, sacrifice *pleasing sacrifices* to God!

And the same was true for every other Old-Testament sacrifice!

But, in God's mercy and grace, God provided the perfect Sacrifice! He provided His beloved Son – the Darling of heaven!

That's why the WCF 8.5 says, “*The Lord Jesus, by his ... sacrifice of himself... has fully satisfied the justice of his Father.*”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, *Jesus* brought a sacrifice *from the heart* – and He brought it *willingly* and in full *obedience* and *submission* to the Father!<sup>6</sup> Yes, He was a sacrifice without blemish!<sup>7</sup> You

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 11:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Am 5:21–22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>5</sup> Emphasis mine

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. Heb 5:7 ***During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission*** (Emphasis mine).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. 1 Pt 1:18-19 ***For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect*** (Emphasis mine).

Also Heb 9:14, “***...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...?***” (Emphasis mine)

see, in the Old Testament, people's sacrifices to God had to be without blemish – a lamb (or whatever other animal) with no defect!<sup>8</sup>

Well, Jesus was true God and true man – yet man *without sin*! Thus, He *was* without blemish!

And, with a pure & willing heart, in full submission to the Father, He offered Himself! See why Eph 5:2 says, "... **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God**"?<sup>9</sup>

See the most pleasing sacrifice? See the perfect sacrifice – the perfect worship?

My brother & sister, you & I live in the New-Testament era! We live *after* Jesus' complete sacrifice has been made! If you & I are in Christ (if we love Him and have a personal relationship with Him), then the guilt of all our sins have been washed away by Him!

So, here's a question: Do you & I now still have to bring sacrifices in worship to God?

Yes, indeed! Not so much because we *have* to, but because we *want* to; yes, not to make ourselves right with God, for Jesus has already done that for us!

So, we still bring offerings to God!

You say, "What for?"

Well, don't we have the greatest reason to bring offerings to God? I mean, He gave His *Son* so that you & I could live!

So, what's the reason for our offering?

Thankfulness! Yes, gratitude coming from a heart moved by love for God Triune! God's Word says (in 2 Cor 9:7), "**Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**"<sup>10</sup>

You ask, "But what sort of offerings do we bring?"

Well, don't we give our tithes & offerings here during the worship service? Don't we give privately for God's cause, whether it's an online payment to the Barnabas fund, or Voice of the Martyrs, or UNICEF, or our neighbour next door in need?

Is that all?

No!

You see, my brother & sister, what's the best offering you and I can bring to the Lord?

Is it not *ourselves* with all our God-given talents & gifts?

Look, is this not why Paul says (in Rm 12:1), "**Therefore** (yes, in light of Jesus' perfect, God-pleasing sacrifice for you & me), **I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship**"?<sup>11</sup>

Well, in order to be this thankful sacrifice to God, what will you & I do?

Well, we will (as Paul says) *no longer conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind.*<sup>12</sup>

Again, why do we give ourselves in a spiritual worship as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God?

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. Ex 12:5 "**Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats...**"

<sup>9</sup> Eph 5:2 **And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God** (Emphasis mine).

<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (2 Co 9:7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>11</sup> [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ro 12:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>12</sup> Rm 12:2 **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

Out of sincere & heartfelt gratitude for what the most God-pleasing Sacrifice – our Lord Jesus Christ!

### **Purchased Bride**

My brother & sister, the WCF 8.5 uses the word *purchase*, when it says that Christ **purchased** our salvation.<sup>13</sup>

Well, there's a beautiful way of illustrating Christ's purchase of our salvation!

You see, the Old Testament tells us that a Hebrew male slave had to serve his master for six years! But in the seventh year, the slave had to go free – without him paying anything to his master!<sup>14</sup>

But what about *female* slaves? Well, it says that if an impoverished father had to sell his precious daughter as a slave (maidservant) to a fellow Jew, then, if this young woman's master did not want her for himself as a wife, she should nevertheless work for him for six years, but, in the seventh year, unlike the male servants, she could not just go free! No, her master had to let her be *redeemed*,<sup>15</sup> but not by a non-Jew; no, she had to be redeemed by a Jewish man – yes, a Jewish man had to *pay a costly price* for her! He had to *purchase/redeem* her!<sup>16</sup> Yes, he had to pay the bride price to buy his wife out of slavery!

Well, look, is that not the picture Paul had in mind when he says (in 1 Cor 6:20),<sup>17</sup> that we are not our own, but have been purchased at a price – even the price of Christ's blood!

Yes, Jesus purchased us for His bride!

Now here is a sad thing! You see, some people think that when Christ purchased us at that costly Redeemer's price, He paid the *devil*!<sup>18</sup> But no! Christ did not pay the *devil*! Granted, He did purchase us from slavery to sin and the devil, but He did not pay the *devil*! No, Christ paid His own *Father*, for His Father's wrath had to be appeased!

So, Jesus gave His life as a substitute for us!

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<sup>13</sup> WCF 8.5 (MESV) *The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself—which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up to God—has fully satisfied the justice of his Father. He purchased not only reconciliation but also an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father has given to him* (Emphasis mine).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Ex 21:1ff (two footnotes further down below)

<sup>15</sup> The word used in Ex 21:8 is הַפְּדוּתָא – a Hif'il Waw-Consecutive Perfect 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Masculine Singular with a 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Singular Pronominal Suffix of the verb *padah* (הִפְדָּ) **to ransom**.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ex 21:1-11 (especially v.7-8), ***“Now these are the rules that you shall set before them. <sup>2</sup> When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. <sup>3</sup> If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. <sup>4</sup> If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone. <sup>5</sup> But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ <sup>6</sup> then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.***

<sup>7</sup> ***“When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. <sup>8</sup> If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her. <sup>9</sup> If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. <sup>10</sup> If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. <sup>11</sup> And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money”*** (Emphasis mine).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:19b-20, ***You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.*** Also cf. 1 Cor 7:22-23, ***For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. <sup>23</sup> You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men*** (Emphasis mine).

<sup>18</sup> For mention of this sad view, cf. Sproul (ibid:264)

Of course, liberal theologians don't want to have a bar of that! They say God simply loves everybody unconditionally!

And like these liberals, there are those who say, "I like the God of the New Testament because He is a God of love, grace, and mercy." "It's the God of the Old Testament that I struggle with, for He is so revengeful and angry, and concerned about law and justice!"<sup>19</sup>

Well, have such people then forgotten? Yes, have they never seen that the most vivid display of God's wrath and justice is seen in the New Testament – yes, at the cross!? Have such people then not seen that, in that brutal act of violence on Golgotha, God's wrath was poured out on Someone who was, in & of Himself completely innocent, but who had taken upon Himself our transgressions and guilt!?

Granted, the cross was indeed the greatest expression of God's *love* – His love for you & me! But, at the same time, the cross was the greatest expression of God's *wrath* for our sins!

Yes, *the Father executed His full vengeance! On the cross, Jesus endured Hell, was cursed, was forsaken precisely because God would not compromise His justice or set aside His own righteous demands!*<sup>20</sup>

Look, is that not why our New-Testament passage does not only say (in Rm 3:26) that God "***is the justifier of those who have faith in Him,***" but why it also says in the same breath that God ***is just!***?<sup>21</sup>

Yes, because God is just, He required that our moral debt be paid – and it *was* paid!

How do we *know* it was paid?

Well, because, on the cross Christ said, "It is finished!"<sup>22</sup> The Hebrew translation of the New Testament has translated this as *nishlam*,<sup>23</sup> i.e. "It is paid!" which means, *the ransom has been paid!!*

And, of course, Jesus paid this ransom only for those *whom the Father has given unto Him* (as He says in Jn 6:37).<sup>24</sup>

And here is a very comforting truth – that our Lord Jesus, when He prayed that high-priestly prayer, said that He was not praying for those whom the Father had not given Him, but for all whom the Father did give to Him!<sup>25</sup>

Question: Have you received Jesus in faith?

AMEN (2522 words excluding footnotes)

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<sup>19</sup> Well-described by Sproul (ibid:264)

<sup>20</sup> Well-said words of Sproul (ibid:264)

<sup>21</sup> Rm 3:26 ***It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*** (Emphasis mine).

<sup>22</sup> Jn 19:30 ***When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.***

<sup>23</sup> In Hebrew, נִשְׁלַם – a Nif'al Participle Masculine Singular, a word used on receipts, i.e. just like a stamp saying "PAID" is used in New Zealand.

<sup>24</sup> Jn 6:37, ***All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*** Also cf. Jn 6:44 ***No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.***

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Jn 17:9 ***I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.***