

Christ is All in All

The Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ, to carry it up and down in the world. Indeed, his spirit was full of Christ. He desired to know nothing but Christ, to preach nothing but Christ, to be found in none but Christ. The very name of Christ was delightful to him. He seeks to magnify Christ in all of his epistles and, in these words I read to you, he omnifies Christ. He does not only make Him great but he makes Him all. There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. That is, there is no privilege in the one to commend them to God, and there is no lack of anything in the other to hinder them from God. Let men be what they will in their outward respects, what is that to God? Let them be never so mean in regard of all outward things, that can never hinder them from the enjoyment of God, for God does not look at these things, but Christ is all and in all to them.

As far as God sees Christ in anyone He accepts them. If Christ is not there, no matter what they have, He does not regard them. Christ is all in all, even in the esteem of the Father Himself. He was the delight of the Father from all eternity, Prov.8:30, and the Father undertook infinite contentment in Him upon His willingness to undertake this blessed work of the redemption of mankind. God the Father is infinitely satisfied in Christ. He is all in all to Him. Surely if Christ is an object sufficient for the satisfaction of the Father, much more, then, is He an object sufficient for the satisfaction of any soul.

But that which is the main scope of the Holy Ghost here is this high expression of Christ's transcendent excellency, which I will deliver in this doctrinal proposition: Christ is the only means of conveyance of good that God the Father intends to communicate unto the children of men in order to eternal life; He is all in all. This which I am to preach to you now, namely God's communicating Himself in His mercy to mankind through a Mediator, is the very sum of the gospel, the great mystery of godliness. It is the chief part of the mind and counsel of God that He would have made known to the children of men in this world. This is the great message that the ministers of the gospel have to bring, and it is the most absolutely necessary point in all theology.

That which I shall this day endeavor is to show you something of the glory of God shining in this truth: that God communicates Himself through a Mediator, through His Son. It is absolutely necessary for you to know if you would have eternal life. It is possible to be ignorant of many other truths and still be saved, but there must be something of this or there can be no salvation. The mistake in this very thing is the miscarriage and the eternal undoing of thousands upon thousands of souls. Many believe that they have need of, and can never be saved without, God's mercy. The light of nature convinces us of this. But they are ignorant of, and do not see the reality of, this truth: that God communicates His mercy through a Mediator. They miscarry and perish eternally with cries to God for mercy because they come to God, but not through a Mediator.

This is the sum of the gospel and the most supernatural truth revealed in all the Book of God. It is a truth that was hidden from nearly all the world for many ages. There is no truth revealed in all the Scriptures whereby we can honor God as much as this. This, indeed, is the great honor that God would have in the world, to be honored in His Son and in the great design He has of bringing forth glorious things by His Son and, therefore, though we know never so much of God and

would honor Him merely as the Creator of heaven and earth, yet God does not accept that honor. That is only to honor Him in a natural way. We never know what it is to honor God correctly so as to be accepted by Him until we come to honor Him in an evangelical way, to honor Him in His Son. Yet the greatest honor He has from most in this world, even from multitudes in the very church of God who hear the mystery of Christ opened to them, is offered to Him merely in a natural way and not in this spiritual, evangelical service of God.

There is no coming to the Father but by Christ. He is the way. The Apostle says in I Cor.3, All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. How is that? Mark it, All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. God the Father is the principle of all good. All comes from Him first, but it does not come from Him immediately. He does not say all are yours for you are God's, because you have an interest in God, all therefore comes to be yours. No, but all is yours and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. So you see here how Christ comes between you and God.

All good is in God, true, but how shall we come to partake of that good? There is such a distance between you and God that, were not Christ in the middle, you would never come together. But Christ has come between and joined you together so that all is yours because you are Christ's and Christ is God's. Think of God as the Fountain of all good, and Christ, as it were, the Cistern, and from Him are pipes converged to every believer. Faith sucks at the mouth of every pipe and draws from God, but it comes from God through Christ. The Father fills the Son with all good and so it comes from the Father, through the Son, by faith unto the soul of every believer. We have a notable expression of this mystery in Ephesians, the second and third chapters. In chapter 2:12, Paul has told them that they had been without hope and without God in the world, but, he says in verse 13, Ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. It is by the blood of Christ that you have anything to do with God. But especially in Eph.3:12, In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. In whom? In Christ we come to have boldness and access. The word "boldness" signifies liberty of speech. We can come before God with liberty of speech, and we also have access. We are led by the hand of Christ to the Father. There is no coming to the Father except by Christ, and Christ takes a believer by the hand and leads him to the Father, and so he comes to have boldness.

He is the way of conveying good to us by His intercession, for He is now and shall forever be at the right hand of the Father in glory making intercession for His people. That is, He is continually presenting before the Father the work of His mediation, His merits, what He has done and suffered and is, as it were, pleading with His Father for the conveyance of all needful mercy and good unto the souls and bodies of His people whom He has redeemed. It is as if He should every moment eternally speak thus to the Father: "Father, behold, here is My blood, My merits, My death, all My sufferings, the work of My humiliation. It is for these. Yea, for this poor soul and for that poor soul particularly." Know that Christ thinks not only of the lump of believers in general, but particularly of every believer, and is continually presenting His infinite merits before the Father to plead with Him to supply of all grace and mercy to us. Thus He becomes an infinite way of conveying good to the souls of His people, and to be all and in all to them both here and eternally.

In the point of justification and the pardon of sins, the great thing we stand in need of from God is the acceptance of us as righteous. Christ is all in all to us here, that is the tenor of the gospel, Rom.3:24, ...being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Our justification is not made up by what we have done or all that we can possibly do. You will say, "True, we have done little." But suppose any of you should do your utmost in any particular that God requires. You will say, "I hope if I can do what I can that God will accept it." No, you made a great mistake if you think this. People are very apt to look upon God as if the terms between God and them were no other than this: God is full of pity and mercy and we are weak and can only do a little, but if we do what we are able, God will accept the will for the deed. No, God does not

accept the will for the deed in the point of justification. It is true in those that are already justified that God accepts the will for the deed in the performance of a duty, so as to take delight in them, but in the point of justification, pardoning sin and acceptance to righteousness, He must there have perfect obedience. Though we endeavor never so much, unless we can bring God to a perfect righteousness, we are undone forever.

Therefore, it is not for you to rest upon the fact that you do what you can, have good wishes and desires and the like, for if all the righteousness of all the righteous men who ever lived were in one man, it would not be sufficient for his justification. It is not what God enables you to do either, that can be the formality of your justification. Such are the terms between God and you that there is nothing you can do of yourself, or be enabled to do, that is accepted by Him for your righteousness to eternal life.

He is all in all in point of adoption, Gal.3:26, For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and chapter 4:4-5, But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And especially John 1:12, But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. The word translated "power" is another word in the Greek. He gave them authority to become the sons of God. It is a word that imports more than the bare power. Everyone will challenge a part in sonship who is a child of God, but only those who are in Christ have authority to challenge it as their due.

In point of reconciliation and peace with God, Christ is all in all there, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom .5:1. All the created power in heaven and earth cannot bring peace to a troubled soul. There is no salve for a wounded spirit but the blood of Christ applied to it. He is that brazen serpent that only is able to cure the strings of conscience. As Luther says, it is a harder matter to comfort an afflicted conscience than to raise the dead. I tell you, were there not a mighty Redeemer, the conscience of a man or woman could never be pacified once they apprehend the wrath of God against them. So Christ is all in all here.

Again, He is all in all in the lack of things, whatever it is that we lack. Do we lack grace, do we lack gifts, do we lack outward comforts in the world? There is enough in Christ. It is Christ that is instead of all, that is better than all, and that will supply all in His due time. Those who know Christ and have acquaintance with Him, though they have this and that comfort taken from them, they still know how to make supply out of Christ. They have that skill and art and mystery of godliness that they can make Christ to be all in all in the lack of all, and it is a great skill and mystery of godliness to know how to make up all in Christ in the lack of all.

Again, to the saints, Christ is all in all in the enjoyment of all. When they enjoy never so much of the creature comforts, Christ is all in all to them. The satisfaction that their souls have is not that they have larger estates, more friends, or greater comforts than others, but that they know how to enjoy Christ in all, and can look upon it as a fruit of the covenant that God made with them in Christ and as coming down from the fountain of God's eternal love and mercy in His Son, Zech.9: 11. God says there, As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water. That which is spoken there of the deliverance of the prisoners may be applied to all the mercies that a believer enjoys. Whatever deliverance he has from evil, whatever good he is possessed of, is by the blood of the covenants.

A believer can look upon every bit of meat he has, and upon all the good he enjoys, and can see it all come streaming to him in the blood of Christ. And so it comes more sweetly. The sun does not shine as warm through the air as it does through a magnifying glass. Take a magnifying glass and hold it between you and the sun and the glass will contract the beams of the sun so that it shall have an efficacy of heat, even to burn again. So the goodness of God that comes to people through the general bounty and patience of God does not have an efficacy to warm and heat

their hearts, to draw them to God. But now Christ is, as it were, the magnifying glass that is held between God and the soul, and how the mercy that comes through this magnifying glass warms and heats outward comforts! Therefore, there are no people in the world who can enjoy outward comforts with as much fulness of contentment as do the people of God, because they all come to them through Christ. Christ is all in all in the enjoyment of all.

But to give you one more particular. As He is all in all in the good we have from God, so He is all in all in whatever we offer up to God: as in descent from God to us, so in ascent from us to God. Christ must come in here. He must be all in all in our services. Though our services be never so good, though they are spiritual, they must still find acceptance with the Father through Christ. That text in I Pet. 2:5 is very remarkable for this, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Mark, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. But though the sacrifice is spiritual, that is not enough to make it acceptable. Christ must come in. Therefore he adds, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

If Christ is all in all, then let us bless God that ever we knew Christ, and that the great mystery of the gospel has been revealed to us. For otherwise we would have been without God in the world, and what would have become of us had not this grace of God in the gospel been revealed to us? Could it ever have entered into your heart? Certainly not, nor into the heart of any creature in heaven and earth. Therefore, blessed are your ears that hear the things you hear. Blessed are your eyes which see the things you see, and know that when you come to live under the ministry of the gospel, you enjoy the greatest mercy that you have enjoyed since you were born.

This shows how dear Jesus Christ should be to us. Oh, how we should delight and take contentment in Him who brings the treasures of grace from the bosom of the Father and opens them to us. And He not only opens the mind of God the Father to us, but comes and lets out the treasure of God's goodness to us. It was stopped before, but Christ opens the floodgates and lets the current of grace and mercy in upon us. Oh, how dear, then, should Christ be to us?

It was the speech of that martyr, Master Lambert, "None but Christ, none but Christ." Yea, when he suffered martyrdom for Christ. then none but Christ was dear to him because he saw that Christ was the way of conveying all good to him. If God were now to make a man the means of conveying a great deal of good to a nation, every man will be ready to have his eye upon that man. But there was never such a way of conveying good to us as Christ. Therefore, how should our hearts love Him, prize Him, and rejoice at the very thought of Him?

If you have a dear friend, and God makes that friend an instrument of mercy to you, how does it endear you to that friend? If the husband is an instrument of good to his wife or the wife to her husband, if a minister to his people or people to their minister? And so it is in all relations. And if it does so between man and man, how should it do so much more between us and Christ, who is indeed the Husband of His church, and through whom the fulness of God is let out to His people? Oh, how dear and precious, therefore, ought He to be to us!

Is Christ all in all? Then if we have an interest in Him, it should satisfy and content us though we have nothing or though we are nothing. Why? Because if we have Christ we have all. Though you lack parts, friends, estates, outward comforts, know Christ is to be your all, and is He not enough? As He said, Am I not better to thee than ten sons? So Christ says to the soul, "What do you lack? You lack this comfort and the other comfort, but am I not all in all to you, and better than all?" Yea, be willing to be made nothing, for all is made up in Christ.

Again, it should have put us upon this, to be willing to give up all we have to Christ. Alas, our all is but a poor all, yet give it to Christ. Our parts, our estates, our names, let Christ have all because He is our all.

Let Him be the rule of our prizing things. As far as we see anything of Christ, prize it suitably. It is reported of Master Bucer that if he could see anything of Christ in any man or woman, though they were never so poor and mean, his heart would close with them. It is said of Austin that before his conversion he took great delight in reading Cicero's works, but afterward he said, "I did not find the name of Christ in all of Cicero," and that took his heart off of him. So in all you enjoy, look how much you see of Christ in it. So far let your delight and esteem be carried out towards it and no farther.

With what mighty intention of spirit should the heart be put forth towards Jesus Christ in all things! Though God gives you an estate and honor in the world, if you have not Christ you have nothing. You have not that which makes way for you to eternity. Therefore, do not be satisfied with anything without Christ. As Abraham said, What wilt Thou give me Lord, seeing I go childless? So you say, "Lord, You have given me a portion in this world. You have given me credit and reputation among men, but, Lord, what is all this to me if I go Christless and do not have Him that is the conveyance of grace to my soul, Him that is all in all? Oh, Lord, You have taught me this day that such is the distance and breach between You and me that, unless it is made up through a Mediator, I must eternally perish. Therefore, give me Christ, whatever else You deny me."

Do not satisfy yourselves with anything without Christ! Many hypocrites satisfy themselves with gifts. If they have gifts, then they are contented. Consider that parable in Matt. 13:45-46, The merchant man sought after goodly pearls, but when he had found the pearl of price, then he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Now gifts and parts and other achievements are these goodly pearls, but Christ is the Pearl of price. Therefore, whatever you have, be willing to part with it for Him. If God has revealed to you the Pearl of price, let no goodly pearls satisfy you. Many souls perish eternally because they are satisfied with goodly pearls and do not endeavor to obtain this Pearl of price. In your seeking God, be sure to take Christ along with you.

I will give you just this note: if it were your last time to pray to God and your everlasting estate depended on God's mercy, should you seek God never so earnestly, if it is only in a natural way as your Creator, your condition would be very dreadful and you would perish eternally. If God should lay any of you upon your sick or death beds and you should cry to God for mercy, be sure to take Christ along with you and look upon God through Christ, or else all your cries will be of no avail. Luther said that God looked upon outside of Christ is most dreadful and terrible. And it proves a great deal of ignorance in us when we think we can go to God and find mercy in Him without considering Him as a God that will be reconciled to us only through His Son.

To conclude all, as Christ says, If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me. So this is the work of our ministry. We have spent time among you so that we might labor to lift up Christ to you, and oh, that God would be pleased to draw all your souls to Himself.



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