

Sermon Notes
“God the Son”

Material for this message was drawn from a series of sermons by Dr. Calvin Wittman (2009)

Focal Scripture References: Hebrews 1:3, & 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

There are many religions and denominations in the world and if you were to study them all, you might find many ethical teachings, some with even an element of truth in them. In fact, one of the things that attracts so many people to false religions is the perceived morality of their teachings. We live in a secular and self-centered culture where people live according to how they feel rather than by what they know, so it is easy to see why so many are deceived by the “feel good” versions of religion so popular today.

It is because of this, God's word is clear; we are not to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. That is, we are not to live by that which simply seems to satisfy our base desires; we are to live according to the truth God has given us in His word. A Christian, one who has been transformed by the renewing of his or her mind, who has been made a new creation in Christ Jesus, will see the world differently than a non-Christian. Christians will have a different outlook than they did before, they will adhere a different worldview. As Christians, we are instructed to think biblically and to filter our feelings through that truth.

With this in mind, let's talk about a word with which you may be familiar: "orthodox." In the Greek language, it is a compound word, the first part being "ortho," which literally means straight. The second word primarily means to believe or think. So literally, orthodox means to believe or think straight. As Christians, we need to think right if we are going to live right.

Let's take a look at what the Bible reveals to us about the person of Jesus. We'll start by examining His nature, then we'll consider the work He accomplished on our behalf, and finally how all of this impacts your life and mine.

1. The Nature of Jesus

The one belief which sets orthodox Christianity apart from all other religions and cults in the world; the one belief which determines whether or not we are really Christians or not; the one belief which is essential to our salvation, is the unwavering belief that Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God, He is the Messiah, and He is the second Person of the Trinity.

The Baptist Faith and Message (2000), puts it this way.

"Christ is the Eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed

and did the will of God, taking upon Himself Human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and present Lord."

This teaching about the nature of Christ is so very important because if Jesus is not Who He says He is then He could not do what He said He could do. And if He could not do what He said He could do; we cannot become who He said we can become. If you study church history, you will find that during the fourth and fifth centuries, controversies surrounding the person of Christ were widespread. Many different doctrines about Who Jesus was were being taught by various religious teachers.

There were those who affirmed the Divinity of Christ, but denied His humanity. They said His human body was nothing more than a ghost, and that His sufferings and death were merely an illusion. Some taught that all things spiritual were good, and all material things were evil. Thus, they denied the incarnation of Christ, reasoning that if flesh was evil and Jesus was perfect and good, He could not have had a physical body. Others claimed Jesus was two different persons living in one body. Still others denied the trinity and said that God simply took on different forms at different times. There was also a widespread false teaching that Christ was a created being and there was nothing Divine about Him.

Sadly, many of these false teachings continue to influence the beliefs of many today. We have but to look around and we will find cults and false religions whose flawed beliefs are rooted in these ancient errors. It seems the devil is still telling the same old lies about Jesus. He's just repackaging them for today's generations of the lost and led astray.

While the mystery of Jesus' two natures, both fully God and fully man, is beyond our full comprehension, it does not change the reality that this is clearly what God's Word teaches. Jesus has two natures, one divine and one human, and yet, He is one Person. According to the **John 1**, Jesus is the Word who was God, was with God, and was made flesh. Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity.

Hebrews 1:3 puts it this way, "**The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.**"

After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

Jesus' two natures are separate yet act as a unit in the one person of Jesus. Now, let's move on to the work of Christ.

2. The Work of Christ

Perhaps the most plain and simple explanation of what Jesus came to do is found in **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** where Paul summarizes for us the message of the gospel. Paul writes:

"³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

Notice several things Paul mentions here about the work of Christ. Paul says that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures - This is the foundation of the gospel and the fundamental purpose why Jesus came.

Romans 5:8 says that God, **"...demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

Then there's **Romans 6:23**, which says, **"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Jesus did not die simply to set an example of sacrifice for us, or because He was powerless against those who nailed Him to the tree, or because He was misunderstood and an innocent a victim, or because ungodly people murdered Him. No, Jesus willingly laid down His life, in obedience to the will of the Father. It was, after all, the reason He came. When we talk about Jesus laying His life down for us there are three terms with which we should be familiar.

A. Propitiation

The bible says Jesus died as a propitiation for our sins. Simply put that means that on the cross, Jesus died to satisfy the just demands of God against sin. Because God loved us and knew that we could not pay that debt ourselves, He gave of Himself and sent His Son to pay the debt in our place. We owed a debt we could not pay, and Jesus died to pay a debt He did not owe. The Bible says we are all

sinners and that the wages of sin is death. Because Jesus lived a sinless life, He was an acceptable sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, Jesus Christ died for you and me and with His blood; He met the just demands of a righteous God for sin to be punished.

B. Atonement

The word atone means to cover over something. When we talk about it in reference to the work of Christ, we are saying that by Christ's blood, shed on the cross for you and for me, our sins have been covered and our relationship with God has been restored.

C. Substitutionary

When we speak about the substitutionary atonement, we mean that He died in our place, paying the price for our sins. In **1 Corinthians 15:4** it says that He was buried and raised on the third day. You see, the work of Jesus did not end at the cross. It is the resurrection that gives us hope and assurance that death is not final and that the life we have in Jesus is eternal. The cross was where Jesus paid the price, but the empty tomb is where Jesus defeated death and demonstrated His victory as Lord over life and death. And the Apostle Paul drives home the point that Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead, by listing all of the people who were witnesses and saw the risen Lord.

When this letter was written, it had been about 20 years since Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Paul is saying, "Look, Jesus did rise from the dead and here's proof: Many people who saw Him are still alive." Paul wants his readers to understand that the resurrection was no myth; it was not simply some fanciful dream of a few committed disciples.

The resurrection of Christ was a verifiable fact that could be corroborated by eyewitness still alive at the time this letter was written. This is important, because the resurrection is also central to our faith. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then He was not Who He said He was. Furthermore, Jesus ascended into heaven and someday will come again in glory to take His believers home to Heaven with Him.

As the angels told the disciples in **Acts 1:11**, "**Men of Galilee,**" they said, "**why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**"

The New Testament refers to the second coming of Christ more than 380 times, making it one of the most clearly taught doctrines in scripture.

Jesus is coming again, and because we don't know when, we should live as if it could be any day. So, there you have it. Jesus, both God and man, the Alpha and the Omega, came to earth, lived a sinless life, died a vicarious death and rose in glorious resurrection. And He offers the free gift of salvation to all who will receive it. Someday He will come again in glory with His Holy angels to judge all the earth.

This is what we believe but where does that leave us? What are we to do with Jesus?

3. What will you do with Jesus?

A. Reject Him

There are many people who know a great deal about Jesus but have never made the decision to accept Him as Savior. They may even believe everything the Bible says about Him, but they do not know Him as Savior and Lord. James tells us that even the demons believe and tremble, so it is simply not enough to believe that Jesus is God, you've also got to receive Him as your Savior and your Lord. And if you haven't, you have chosen to reject Him.

B. Believe Him

If you want to be a Christian, you must believe He is who He said He is. You must believe that He is God and man. Jesus gives us no choice but to accept Him as the Son of God, the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, or to reject Him completely. There is no in-between, no compromise. He is either Lord of all or not Lord at all.

C. Receive Him

Each of us must individually trust Him for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. If Jesus is who He says He is and only He can do what He can do, it is imperative that you place your trust in Him and in Him alone. He is the only person who can save you. Jesus Himself tells us in **John 14:6**, "**Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."**

The great concern I have for some of you is that you would become so accustomed to being in church and around the people of God that you would somehow be deceived into believing you are a Christian when in fact you may not be. That is why Jesus says that not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of His Father who is in Heaven. In each of your lives there must come a point and a time when you ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and to give you eternal life. There must be a time when you surrender control of your life to Him and allow Him to be the Master, the One who has authority over your life.

If you will ask Him He has promised to forgive your sins, to give you eternal life, to place His Holy Spirit within you and to never leave you or forsake you. Finally, if you choose to believe Him and receive Him, you must also ...

D. Share Him

The good news of Jesus is something far too precious to keep to ourselves. It is meant to be shared. Knowing who Jesus is and realizing that there is salvation in no other except Him, we have been entrusted with a serious responsibility. We have been given the job of telling others about Him.

In **2 Corinthians 5**, Paul tells us that we have been entrusted with the word and ministry of reconciliation. He says we are ambassadors for Christ. Jesus tells us that if we are truly His disciples that we will seek first His kingdom and that we will take up our cross, the instrument of death that spoke to His total surrender to the will of the Father, and we will, in like manner, subordinate everything else to His kingdom's cause and follow Him.

Conclusion

I ask this: "Who Jesus is to you?" You see, at the end of the day while it is important to know about Jesus, it is most important to know Jesus. You can know a lot about Jesus and still miss out on eternal life. What's important is that you know Him personally. Who is Jesus to you? If He's not your Lord and Savior, you can change that today.