

GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ♦ DEO ♦ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Crucifixion of Christ, Part II

'It is Finished!'

John 19:25-30

October 1, 2006

- I. The Isolation of Christ
- II. The Obedience of Christ
 - a. Active Obedience
 - b. Passive Obedience
- III. The Victorious Death of Christ
 - a. Spiritual Death
 - b. Physical Death

I. The Isolation of Christ

- During His horrific ordeal, Jesus isolated Himself from every human relationship, in order that He might focus on His primary mission – fulfilling the will of His Father.
- It is not that Jesus did not love His family, friends, and disciples; however, His supreme love was for His Father. This most definitely fulfills His own words concerning the greatest commandment [Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and the *second* ...].
- It is absolutely essential to realize that Jesus was completely **unique**. Only He could satisfy the wrath of the Father...and He **ALONE!** No one could 'hold His hand' through the ordeal.
- In John's account, this truth is quite clear. In Verse 26, John states, 'When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!''

- These words are quite similar to the ancient legal adoption verbiage.
- Yet, one of the significant truths revealed here is that Jesus, a very real sense, separates Himself from His mother, finishing the work of Atonement alone.
- There are several interesting truths here.
 - First of all, Jesus assigns John [assuming he is the ‘beloved disciple’], not His brothers, the responsibility of caring for His mother in His absence.
 - This is, quite possibly, because Jesus’ brothers were most likely not believers in Him yet.
 - Further, they may not have even been in Jerusalem at the time, as they were from Capernaum, in Galilee.
 - Secondly, it forms an interesting parallel with Jesus’ gentle rebuke of His mother during the Wedding at Cana, recorded in John 2:1-11.
 - “In John 2:1-11, Mary approaches Jesus as a mother and is somewhat rebuffed. If she demonstrates the first signs of faith, it must be the faith of a disciple, not a mother. Here she stands near the cross with other disciples, and once she has assumed that stance she may again be assigned a role as a mother – but not as mother of Jesus, but of another fellow-disciple.”
 - In other words, Mary does not have an ‘inside-track’ to Jesus. She must come to Him as everyone else – by grace through faith in Him and His finished work.

“This seemingly detached incident implies that the bond that Mary has had with Jesus, though from now on it will be terminated, will be continued in another way.” Hermann Ridderbos

- Thirdly, in the midst of finishing all He came to accomplish, Jesus fulfills His duties as a Son down to the very letter and spirit of the fifth commandment.
 - Note: Jesus was not married and virtually all scholars agree that Mary was widowed by this point.
- Fourthly, as William Barclay once noted, “There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the Cross, in the moment when the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of His mother in the days when He was taken away. Jesus never forgot the duties that lay to His hand.”

- Fifthly, John becomes Jesus’ substitute with respect to His earthly Mother, Mary; while, Jesus becomes John’s substitute with respect to His eternal salvation.
- Most significantly, however, is that Jesus isolated Himself from us, because He became our substitute, suffering the full, exhaustive, infinite wrath of the Father in our place!
- In few places is this clearer than in Matthew 27:46: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?”

Jesus knew that he could still call God ‘my God.’ This cry of desolation is not a cry of total despair...Jesus, who knew the words of Scripture as his own, knew well the context of Psalm 22. In quoting this Psalm, he is quoting a cry of desolation that also has implicit in its context an unremitting faith in the God who will ultimately deliver him. Nevertheless, it remains a very real cry of anguish because the suffering has gone on so long and no release is in sight.

With this context for the quotation it is better to understand the question, ‘Why have you forsaken me?’ as meaning, ‘Why have you left me for so long?’ This is the sense it has in Psalm 22. Jesus, in his human nature, knew he would have to bear our sins, to suffer and to die. But, in his human consciousness, he probably did not know how long this suffering would take. Yet to bear the guilt of millions of sins even for a moment would cause the greatest anguish of soul. To face the deep and furious wrath of an infinite God even for an instant would cause the most profound fear. But Jesus’ suffering was not over in a minute – or two – or ten. When would it end? Could there be yet more with of sin? Yet more wrath of God? Hour after hour it went on – the dark weight of sin and the deep wrath of God poured over Jesus in wave after wave. Jesus at last cried out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Why must this suffering go on so long? Oh, God, my God, will you ever bring it to an end?

Then at last Jesus knew his suffering was nearing completion. He knew he had consciously borne all the wrath of the Father against our sins, for God’s anger had abated and the awful heaviness of sin was being removed.
 Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* [pp. 576-577]

II. The Obedience of Christ

- The obedience of Jesus Christ is directly related to His fulfillment of the Law and His righteousness obtained through that fulfillment.

“Now someone asks, how has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favorable and kindly toward us. To this we can in general reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience.”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.xvi.5

Martin Luther commented [on Galatians 4:4-5]: ‘In a twofold manner Christ put himself under the Law. First he put Himself under the works of the Law...circumcised, presented and purified in the temple...subject to father and mother...;yet...not obligated to do this for he was Lord of all laws. But he did so willingly...In the second place, He also put himself under the penalty and punishment of the Law willingly’
 (Sermon on Galatians 4:1-7)

1 Corinthians 1:30: “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,”

Wayne Grudem writes, “It is not just moral neutrality that Paul knows he needs from Christ (that is, a clean slate with sins forgiven), but a positive moral righteousness.”

a. Active Obedience

“The active obedience of Christ was necessary to make His passive obedience acceptable to God, that is, to make it an object of God’s good pleasure.” Louis Berkhof

“Christ merits more for sinners than the forgiveness of sins.” Berkhof

“If Christ had merely obeyed the law and had not also paid the penalty, He would not have won a title to eternal life for sinners; and if He had merely paid the penalty, without meeting the original demands of the law, He would have left man in the position of Adam before the fall, still confronted with the task of obtaining eternal life in the way of obedience. By His active obedience, however, He carried His people beyond that point and gave them a claim to everlasting life...His passive obedience consisted in His paying the penalty of sin by His sufferings and death, and thus discharging the debt of all His people.” Berkhof

- ❖ Christ, as the ‘second Adam’ ‘reversed the curse’ as it was, by being everything that Adam was not – perfectly obedient to the will of the Father, perfectly fulfilling the Law of God.



- The Scriptures clearly declare the ‘active’ obedience of Christ [this list certainly is not exhaustive]:

Romans 5:18: So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Matthew 3:15: But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

Matthew 5:17-18: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

John 15:10: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”

Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Hebrews 10:7-9

Romans 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

2 Corinthians 5:21: He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Philippians 3:9: and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

Galatians 3:13-14: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

b. Passive Obedience

“The real use and purpose of the formula [active and passive obedience of Christ] is to emphasize the two distinct aspects of our Lord’s vicarious obedience. The truth expressed rests upon the recognition that the law of God has both penal sanctions and positive demands. It demands not only the full discharge of its precepts but also the infliction of penalty for all infractions and shortcomings. It is this twofold demand of the law of God which is taken into account when we speak of the active and passive obedience of Christ. Christ as the vicar of his people came under the curse and condemnation due to sin and he also fulfilled the law of God in all its positive requirements. In other words, he took care of the guilt of sin and perfectly fulfilled the demands of righteousness. He perfectly met both the penal and the perceptive requirements of God’s law. The passive obedience refers to the former and the active obedience to the latter. Christ’s obedience was vicarious in the bearing of the full judgment of God upon sin, and it was vicarious in the full discharge of the demands of righteousness. His obedience becomes the ground of the remission of sin and of actual justification.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*

- ❑ Through His ‘passive’ obedience, Christ suffered the exhaustive, infinite wrath of God – the just penalty for the breaking of the Law.
- ❑ **NOTE: The ‘amount’ of wrath that Jesus suffered was, indeed, infinite – as God is infinite. Therefore, the ‘value’ of the atonement, and the ‘sufficiency’ of the atonement to save men, was also infinite. In other words, had Christ died for ten people, or ten billion, the ‘amount’ of suffering would be the same – infinite.**

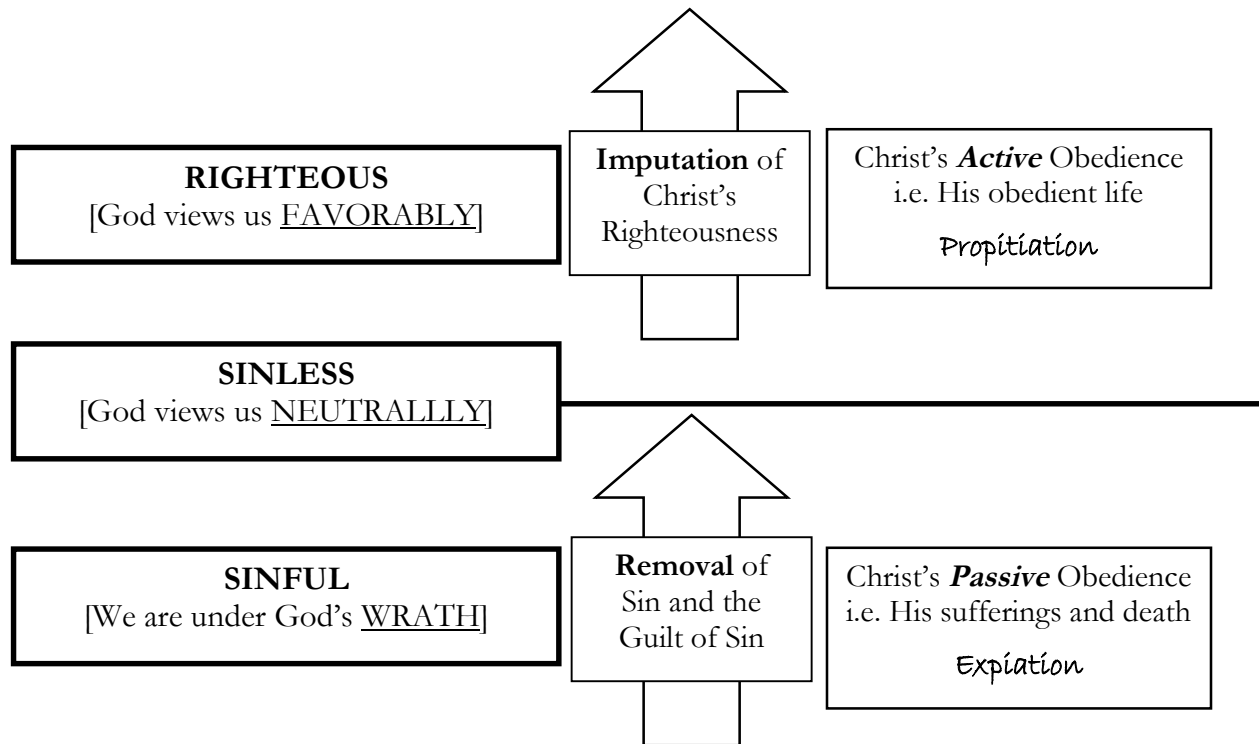
“The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him. (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25, 26; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15)”
2nd London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 [as well as the Westminster Confession of Faith]

Isaiah 53:6: All of us like sheep have gone astray,
 Each of us has turned to his own way;
 But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
 To fall on Him.

Romans 4:25: He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

1 Peter 2:24: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;



III. The Victorious Death of Christ

“It cannot be too strongly emphasized that for John the cross is the instrument and point of victory, not the point of defeat which has to be reversed on Easter morning.” Marsh

“[The sufferings of Christ] were followed by His death on the cross. But this was not all; He was subject not only to physical, but also to eternal [spiritual] death, though He bore this intensively and not extensively, when He agonized in the garden and when He cried out on the cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ **In a short period of time He bore the infinite wrath against sin to the very end and came out victoriously. This was possible for Him only because of His exalted [divine] nature. At this point we should guard against misunderstanding, however. Eternal death in the case of Christ did not consist in an abrogation of the union of the Logos [divine nature] with the human nature, nor in the divine nature’s being forsaken of God, nor in the withdrawal of the Father’s divine love or good pleasure from the person of the Mediator.**” Louis Berkhof

- ❖ The victory of Christ occurred by Christ being everything that Adam [and most certainly Satan] was not – perfectly obedient to the will of the Father. And if there was ever anyone who had the ‘right’ to disobey the Father’s will, it was Christ Himself – equal in essence with the Father. Yet, only Christ was perfectly obedient.
- ❑ It is essential to realize, as Berkhof explains, that the death of Christ was not only **(1) PHYSICAL**, but was also **(2) SPIRITUAL**.
- ❑ Christ experienced spiritual death as He bore the infinite wrath of the Father vicariously for us.

“God was punishing His own Son as if He had committed every wicked deed done by every sinner who would ever believe” (MacArthur, *The Murder of Jesus*, 219)

- ❑ John reveals the *end* of Christ’s spiritual death when he wrote, “Jesus, knowing that **all things had already been accomplished**, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty.’”
 - Dutch theologian Hermann Ridderbos wrote, concerning this Verse, “The intent is not to add something to the preceding ‘all was now finished’ but to show how Jesus, even in his final moments when there was nothing more left for him ‘to do,’ still in his thirst, one of the most terrible torments of death by crucifixion, fulfilled Scripture...Psalm 69:21 is clearly in mind here...”
 - Psalm 69:21: “They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
 - It is also fascinating to realize that John is revealing that Jesus even further fulfills the Old Testament shadow of the Passover Lamb, as Exodus 12:22 states, “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts...”

- In the accounts of Matthew and Mark (Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23), Jesus refused to drink ‘wine...mixed with gall.’ This drink was intended to dull the pain and agony of crucifixion; however, Jesus was determined to drink fully the cup of wrath the Father had given Him, and to do so with a clear mind.
- However, as Jesus Christ is just about to give up His spirit, He requests a drink, saying, ‘I am thirsty.’
- Here, Jesus was given ‘sour wine’ which was used by soldiers and would have prolonged one’s life [as well as pain]. This drink of sour wine also would have moistened His parched and dry mouth so that He could clearly make His final statement... ‘It is finished!’

- Far from being a cry of defeat, Jesus’ last saying, ‘It is finished!’ is a cry of victory!

“...the loud shout of victory, is in the Gospel text the single word *tetelestai*. Being in the perfect tense, it means ‘it has been and will for ever remain finished.’ John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

- Immediately after this saying, Jesus dies physically – that is He separates His physical body from His soul.

“In the exercise of self-conscious sovereign volition, knowing that all things had been accomplished and that the very moment of time for the accomplishment of this event had arrived, he effected the separation of body and spirit and committed the latter to the father.” John Murray

- When Jesus ‘gave up His spirit’ He did so as an act of God. Only God can separate the body and the spirit merely by willing it.
- This also fulfills the words of Jesus who, Himself, said, ‘No one takes My life, I lay it down willingly.’ (John 10:17-18)
- In other words, a medical examiner would have found no cause of death for Christ, as He died by an act of His will, in perfect accord with the will of the Father.
- Furthermore, **this becomes the supreme High Priestly act of Christ, as Christ is not only the One offering the sacrifice, but is the perfect sacrifice Himself.**
- ❖ Colossians 2:15 states, “When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him.”