

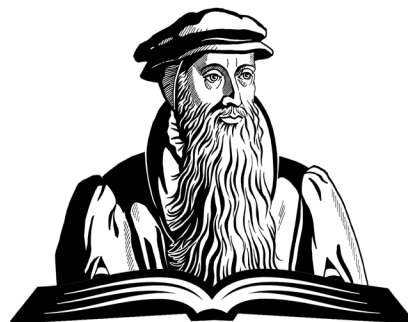
VIDEO SERMON SERIES

# Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

*Sermon #8, Lord's Day 6*

## The One Mediator Between God and Man



The John Knox Institute  
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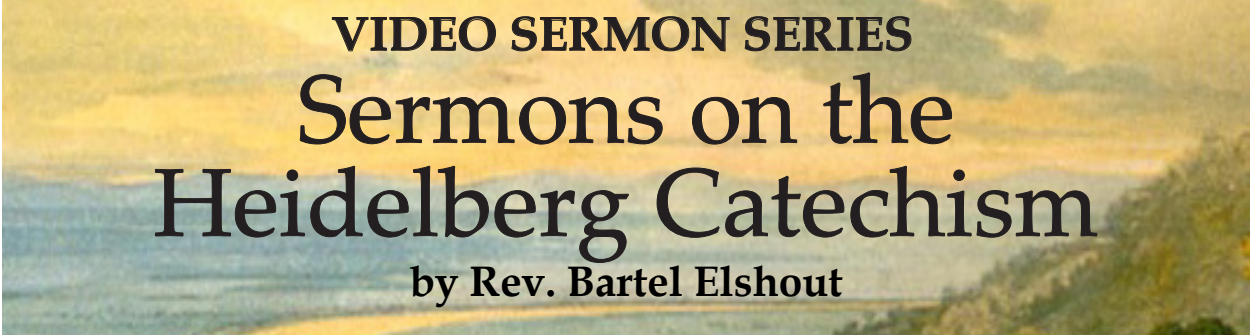
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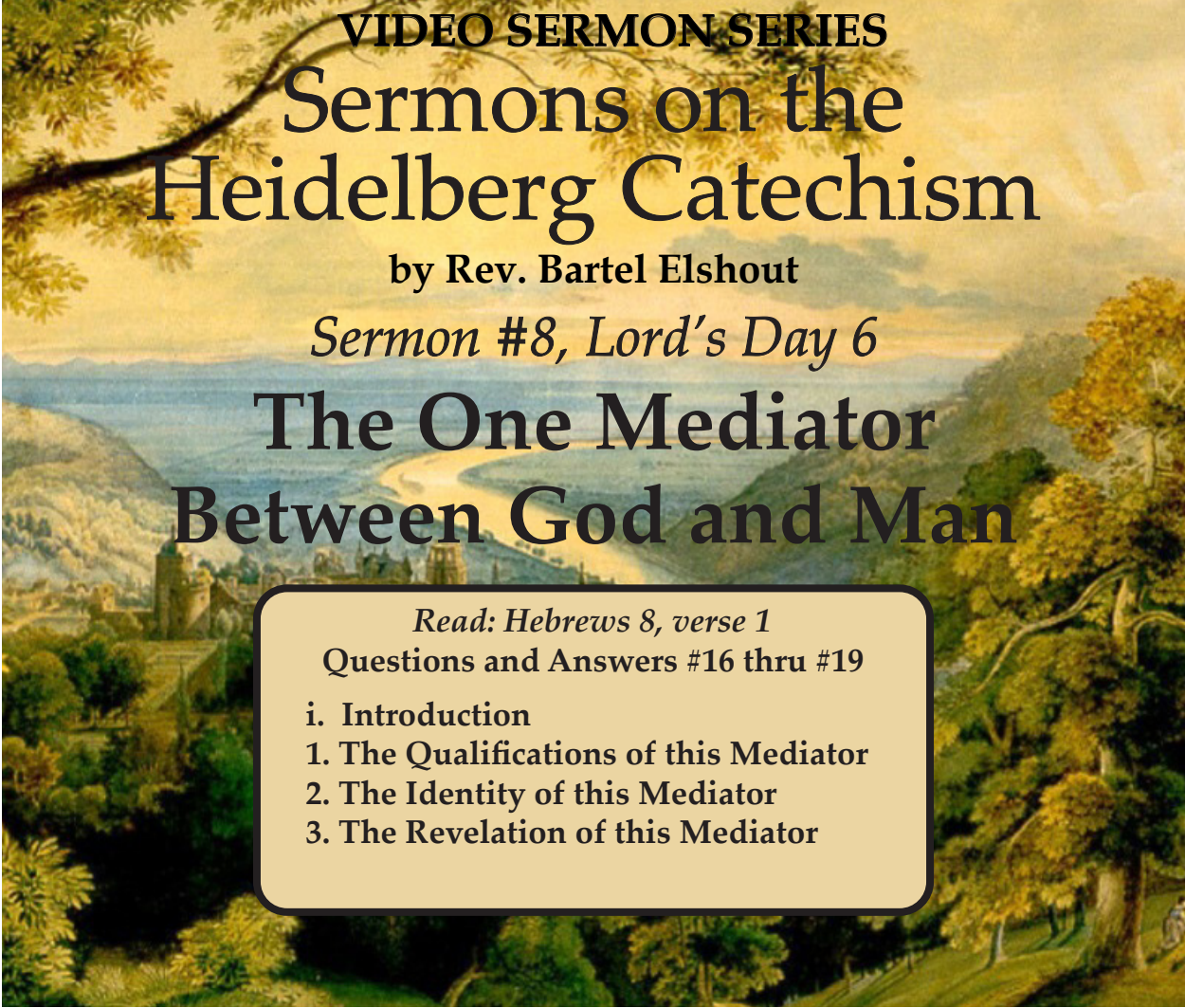
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# Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

*Sermon #8, Lord's Day 6*

## The One Mediator Between God and Man

*Read: Hebrews 8, verse 1*

Questions and Answers #16 thru #19

i. Introduction

1. The Qualifications of this Mediator
2. The Identity of this Mediator
3. The Revelation of this Mediator

### Introduction

*Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?* Congregation, I ask you again, can you relate to that Question? Has that ever become the burning concern of your soul? Has God's Word ever become so real to you that you realized that, as a sinner, you were undone before God; that, as a sinner, you were worthy, worthy of temporal and eternal punishment? Do you understand that the yearning that is expressed by that Question, How may I, a sinner, having offended God, how may I, how may I escape such punishment, and be again received into favor?

As we pointed out last week, that is such an important component of that Question. Then, as we pointed out last week, that those who are savingly wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, not merely desire to escape hell, not merely desire to be delivered from the consequences of sin, but for those wrought upon by God's Spirit, the greatest concern is, How may I, How may I be restored into the favor of the God against whom I have sinned? How can I be reconciled with that God after whom my heart yearns.

And so, true believers are never just heaven seekers. True believers, wrought upon by God's

Spirit, yearn after the living God; they yearn to be reconciled with God. Congregation, when that becomes experientially real in our lives, oh then, the gospel becomes to marvelous; the gospel becomes so precious; then, it becomes such a joy to our soul, and the Spirit then unveils to us that precisely for such a sinner as we are, God has appointed a perfect Mediator. We already alluded to that, of course, at the conclusion of last Sunday evening's sermon, but this will now be unpacked for us by way of *Lord's Day 6*.

So please turn to *Lord's Day 6* of our Heidelberg Catechism.

Question #16: *Why must he be very man, and also perfectly righteous?*

The Answer: *Because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin; and one, who is himself a sinner, cannot satisfy for others.*

Question #17: *Why must He in one person be also very God?*

The Answer is: *That He might by the power of His Godhead sustain in His human nature the burden of God's wrath; and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life.*

Question #18: *Who then is that Mediator, "who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man?"*

The Answer is: *Our Lord Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*

Question #19: *Whence knowest thou this?*

The Answer is: *From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son.*

And so, this *Lord's Day*, again, which echoes the witness of Scripture, we learn about this *One Mediator Between God and Man*. First of all, we will consider *The Qualifications* of that Mediator, that is unpacked for us in Questions and Answers #16 and #17. Secondly, we will consider *The Identity* of This Mediator, first asks Question #18: *Who then is that Mediator?*—namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. And thirdly, we will then speak about *The Revelation* of that Mediator. How do we know that there is such a Mediator, such a fully-qualified Mediator? And the Answer is, *From the holy gospel*. So, *The One Mediator Between God and Man: His Qualifications, His Identity, and His Revelation*.

Well, congregation, some of you might wonder, why does the Catechism seem to proceed so slowly, and perhaps you think, tediously? It's because, congregation, the authors were so concerned that we would understand why we need such a Mediator as is unveiled to us in the gospel. That's why on the previous *Lord's Day*, before unveiling him to us, before revealing to us the identity of the Mediator, the *Lord's Day* systematically showed us all those options that are no options. It showed us that we ourselves cannot possibly satisfy the claims of God's justice. And what does the justice of God require from me, the sinner? God requires from me a perfect righteousness and full payment for my transgression of the law. And we saw that that is a complete impossibility. Then we considered other options, whether someone else could be our Mediator, whether there is another solution. And we looked at angels, we looked at creatures, we looked at all other options, and the bottom line was that all those options are unacceptable options. And that brought us to the conclusion of *Lord's Day 5*, when already, very briefly, it set before us that in order for us to be reconciled with God, in order for the claims of God's justice to be satisfied fully and completely, we need a Mediator who is a perfectly righteous man, and who, at the same time, is also very God.

## 1. The Qualifications of this Mediator

And this is so important that *Lord's Day 6* begins by unpacking for us those two foundational requirements that this Mediator must meet. I don't know if you noticed, but in both Questions appears the word "must". *Why must he be very man? Why must He in one person be also very God?* And of course, that relates again to the justice of God. And because the Answer to Question #16, it says, *Because the justice of God requires this*. Let me, again, briefly review—very briefly—what we mean by "the justice of God". The justice of God is that attribute of God that demands that the integrity of God's law be fully upheld and be fully vindicated. The justice of God is that attribute that makes it impossible for God to compromise in any way. The justice of God is that attribute that reminds us that the character of God is such that every transgression of his law must be and shall be punished. And that's why we, as sinners, we cannot possibly meet the requirements of that justice. That's why we have seen in the past, that's why there is a hell. Hell is that place where God's justice will forever be exercised towards the ungodly. And therefore, you see, in order for us to be right with God, there has to be a way in which we can be reconciled with God; not at the expense of his justice, but in full conformity with the character of God.

And so the first requirement of God's justice is that this Mediator must be fully human. Because it says here, *that the same human nature which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin*. It is man who has sinned, and therefore, it is man who must pay the price. And it is for that reason that the eternal Son of God became a Son of man. He truly became a Son of Adam. We can say that his humanity is so very real. We can say that Christ, as he was born in the fulness of time, conceived in Mary's womb, born in the fulness of time in Bethlehem's manger, that his humanity is real. His humanity is genuine. In other words, this Mediator must have our DNA. This Mediator must have Adam's DNA. This Mediator must truly be one of Adam's race, in order to qualify as the Mediator. But not only must that Mediator have the nature that we have, our nature, the nature in which we have sinned, but at the same time, he must be a perfectly righteous man, because one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others.

That's one of the points the Apostle makes in the letter to the Hebrews. He makes the point that the reason why the Aaronic priesthood ultimately had to be replaced with the priesthood of Christ, is because the priests who performed the sacrifices, they themselves were sinners. That's why, when you read the book of Leviticus, you will notice over and over again that sacrifices not only had to be made for the sinful nation, but sacrifices had to be made for the priests themselves. That's why, of course, that sacrificial system, the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again. That's why that could not be the ultimate solution. And so God's justice requires one who is perfectly human. In Romans 5, verse 12, we read, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And therefore, this Mediator must be bone of our bone. He must be flesh of our flesh. He must be made like unto us, except for sin, because he must be perfectly righteous, and perfectly sinless.

In Psalm 24, in verses 3 through 5, we read this: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?... He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;...He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." So what that is saying is that the only one that God can admit into his presence, is someone who is completely compatible with himself; someone who is as holy as he is holy; someone who has clean hands and a pure heart. And congregation, we realize that we are the very opposite. Our hands are defiled, our hearts are impure. But thanks be to God, God has provided such a Mediator, whose hands were clean, whose heart was pure, who was perfectly holy and perfectly righteous, perfectly compatible with God himself. Because,

“Cursed,” the well-known words of Galatians 3, verse 10: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

That’s why, congregation, if Christ has failed but once; if while he was on earth, while he walked on earth, if but one sinful thought had but crossed his mind; if but one sinful desire has arisen from his heart; if for but one moment, he would have yielded to temptation, he would have instantly been disqualified as the Savior. But the beauty, the wonder of the witness of the gospel is, congregation, that he never failed; that his obedience was perfect; his obedience was flawless. He was a Mediator without any blemish. That’s why I already pointed out last week, that’s why the requirements for all the sacrifices were that they had to be without blemish. And such a Mediator we need, who is absolutely without blemish. That’s what God’s justice requires—nothing less.

And of course, the third requirement of God’s justice, the third “must,” if you will; the third “must” that reveals to us God’s logic, that’s what’s being set before us here in this *Lord’s Day*—God’s logic, God’s way of thinking. That’s ultimately what has to happen, congregation. That’s what the Holy Spirit does when he works savingly. He makes us surrender to God’s logic. And God’s logic runs directly counter to our logic. That’s why the gospel, the biblical gospel about this Mediator is truly counterintuitive. That means it runs directly contrary to our natural way of thinking. That’s why, without the saving work of the Spirit, we will attempt, by our own efforts, to make things right with God. That’s why the mark of every false religion throughout the world is that by your own efforts, you have to make things right with whatever god you are serving. That’s our logic, that somehow by our own works, and by our own doings, we can make things right. That’s why it takes a mighty work of God to teach us, and to instruct us that we have nothing to show for it before God; that according to God’s logic, according to God’s “musts,” we come short of God’s glory, and we cannot meet those requirements.

So, the third requirement of God’s justice is that this Mediator must be very God. And congregation, if that were not the case, if he had not been very God, if this Mediator would not be God, he still could not have been the Savior. *Why must He in one person be also very God? That He might by the power of His Godhead sustain in His human nature the burden of God’s wrath*”—that’s the negative reason why he has to be very God. But also, there’s a positive reason—that *he might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life*. And so, if this Mediator would not be very God, he could not possibly sustain the wrath of God against sin, the wrath of God to which he has been provoked by our sin. Again, congregation, we do not even begin to fathom the extent of the wrath of God. Because we do not understand, really, do we, that God is infinite in all of his attributes. He is infinite in his holiness, infinite in his justice. Everything about him is infinite. And therefore, his wrath provoked by sin, that wrath is infinite. And a human being could not possibly endure that wrath without being utterly crushed and destroyed by it.

That’s why it is remarkable that the altar of burnt offering was made of two materials. It was made of shittim wood. The shittim tree was a tree that grew in the wilderness, and it had this remarkable quality, that it was a wood that could not decay or did not decay. And so, God directed Moses to use shittim wood to build that altar of burnt offering. But boys and girls, just imagine now, if that altar had only been built of shittim wood, what would have happened the very first time a sacrifice was performed in that altar. Well, you would know the story, of course, that in one moment, the entire altar would have been consumed by the fire. And so, the altar, therefore, was overlaid with copper. The basic structure was shittim wood overlaid with copper. And now you see, the altar, the wood of the altar was able to endure the intensity inn of the heat of the fire without that wood being consumed, because it was protected by the copper. It’s interesting that

Theodore van der Groe,<sup>1</sup> a Dutch divine, in his exposition of *Lord's Day 6*, begins his exposition by using that very example. And so therefore you see a beautiful symbolism, because everything about the tabernacle—we read that, of course, in Hebrews 8—that everything had to be made exactly according to the pattern that God showed to Moses in the mount. And so, therefore, that altar made of shittim wood, which, of course, points us to the human nature of Christ; and the copper, which points us to the divine nature of Christ. And so, because of the copper, the shittim wood was not consumed.

And so, we need a Savior who is able to sustain the burden of God's wrath. Which is precisely what he was able to do on Calvary's cross. And so this points us to what is called "the passive obedience of Christ"—his suffering obedience, that which he endured on Calvary's cross especially, when the wrath of God was poured out upon him.

But there is also a positive reason why we need a Mediator who is also very God. Look at this beautiful, simple statement of the Catechism. It says that he *might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life*. There, you see the positive aspect of what this Mediator must accomplish. Because not only do our sins have to be removed, not only do our sins have to be banished from the sight of God, but we also need to get back what we have lost in Adam. In Adam, we were righteous. In Adam, we were completely compatible with God. That's why Adam could dwell in the presence of God. And because he was righteous, he was able to enjoy life to the fullest. And what was Adam's life? What was the life that Adam and Eve enjoyed? Well, they lived in union and communion with God. They lived a life in which God was the very center. Their whole life revolved around God. They enjoyed communion and fellowship with their Maker every day, until they sinned. And so, because of sin, because of our fall, we've lost both. We have lost righteousness, and we've lost life, as a result of it.

And so, the Catechism, as it echoes the Word of God, tells us, it is only a divine Mediator, who is also very God, who is able to obtain and restore for us righteousness and life. In other words, we need a Savior, we need a Redeemer who is able to bring us back to God, to restore us into his favor, and only a divine Mediator is capable of accomplishing that glorious work. Because only a divine Mediator could suffer and die on the cross.

And of course, we have to understand that he did not suffer in his divine nature. In his Godhead, he cannot suffer. He suffered in his human nature. And yet that divine nature upheld and sustained him, and thereby gave eternal value to what he accomplished. That's why Jesus, by hanging on the cross for six hours, accomplished something that has eternal value. Christ endured on Calvary's cross the equivalent of eternal judgment upon sin precisely because he was a divine Mediator. And therefore, being a divine Mediator, he is able, and he was able to obtain for us the righteousness we lost, and to restore us into God's favor and into God's presence.

## 2. The Identity of this Mediator

And then comes this wonderful Question: *Who then is that Mediator, who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man?* I'm hoping, congregation, as we've listened to this, I'm hoping that your own hearts are stirred by this. Because, there you see how fitting it is to refer to the author of the Catechism as our instructor, which is very traditional in our background. Because that's the goal. The goal is to so lead us, to so direct our thinking that we arrive at that question, "Is there then such a Mediator?" Yes, we understand; we understand the logic; we understand God's

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<sup>1</sup> Theodorus van der Groe (1705–1784), a Dutch Reformed minister and theologian who published several religious works, best known as a penitential preacher.

logic. We understand that his justice requires such a Mediator. But then, congregation, the Spirit of God has taught this as well. Oh, how we then begin to long for a divine solution. That's why I began my sermon again by quoting the first Question of *Lord's Day 5*. Because that becomes the deep yearning of our soul: "Is there such a Mediator for me?" And how utterly amazing it then is that the Spirit of God opens our eyes for God's solution; when he opens our eyes that there is indeed such a Mediator, who meets all the requirements of God's logic; a Mediator, who is the ultimate revelation of God's logic; a Mediator who reveals to us who God is and how he thinks; and how precious it then becomes when the Spirit of God leads us to this glorious person that is set before us in the Answer. The Answer is so short, and so powerful, and so profound: *Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Here we have this Mediator unveiled to us in all of his fullness.

And congregation, that name in itself, is the gospel. That name is the embodiment of the good news of the gospel. Each of those names unveil to us why this Lord Jesus Christ is indeed that suitable Savior, is indeed that suitable Mediator, that qualified Mediator, that Mediator that meets all the requirements of God's justice.

Very briefly, of course, in subsequent *Lord's Days*, we're going to look at each of those names. In *Lord's Day 11*, we're going to look at the name "Jesus"; *Lord's Day 12*, we're going to look at the name "Christ"; *Lord's Day 13*, we're going to look at the name "Lord". But just for a moment here, also for the children's sake, let's just focus on those names. What does "Jesus" mean again? "Jesus" means "savior"—he will save us from our sins. The angel revealed that to Joseph. His name shall be JESUS, for he will save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). The name is also "Christ"—the anointed one. And we will just see, in a moment, how the Catechism beautifully unpacks this by quoting 1 Corinthians 1, verse 30—"Christ," the anointed one. And so, as Jesus, he delivers us from sin and all its consequences. That's the negative aspect of his mediatorial work. But as the Christ, he restores us to be what God originally created us to be. So, as Jesus, he saves; as Christ, he restores; and as Lord, he governs us. That's the beauty of his saving and redeeming work. And those who are saved by this Mediator, those who believe by grace in that Mediator, they become the willing subjects of that Mediator. And so, this Mediator is both Savior and Lord—*our Lord Jesus Christ*. But also, the beautiful little word "our". See, that's the language of faith, because it is by faith that we respond to that Mediator as he is unveiled to us in the gospel. It is faith that embraces this precious Mediator. This precious Mediator is *my* Mediator, *our* Mediator. And let me stress again, congregation, that that is God's ultimate desire. God's ultimate desire is to lead his children by his Spirit to embrace that Savior as *my Savior*. To own him as my own—*Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

And then it says here, "*who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Corinthians 1:30). This is so beautiful. This unveils to us what a perfect fit this Christ is for sinners such as we are. I've used this illustration before, but I'll use it again also for the children's sake. Boys and girls, think again of a lock. Think of a key that fits into the lock. And you know if you put the wrong key in the lock, you can try all you want to, but you can't open the door. The only way the door will open is if you have a key that fits that lock precisely, and when the key fits, the door opens. And so it is. The Holy Spirit so works in the hearts of sinners that this Mediator becomes the precise fit for my soul, that this Christ fits my soul as precisely as a key fits a lock. By nature, there's no room for this Savior at all. The Pharisees were so offended by Christ. They were offended by his preaching. They were offended by the fact that he said, if you have no more to show than your righteousness, you will in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven. And the Spirit of God deals with us. And I hope, congregation, that you understand this,

not only theologically, but I hope you understand this experientially. And what a precious Savior!

So why do we need a Savior who has been “made unto us”? The Dutch version says, “who has been given unto us.” That’s what he is. He is a given Savior. Why do we need a Savior who is “made unto us wisdom”? Because we are utterly foolish. As a result of our fall, we have become spiritually completely ignorant. And so, we need a Savior who delivers us from our foolishness. We need a Savior, who by his Spirit, makes us wise unto salvation. Why do we need a Mediator who is made unto us as “righteousness”? Because, not only are we a foolish people, but we are a guilty people. We need a Savior who is made unto us as righteousness, in order to reconcile us with God; to grant us the righteousness we need to be reconciled with God. Why do we need a Mediator who is made unto us “sanctification”? Because we, as sinners, we are unholy. So we are foolish, we are guilty, we are unholy, and finally, “made unto us...redemption” is because we are lost. There, you have it, you see.

What the gospel does, and why the gospel is so offensive to the natural man is because the gospel confronts us with our true state. The gospel reveals who we really are in the sight of God, and by nature, we don’t want to know that. But the Spirit of God, when he works in us, when he enlightens us, then this becomes real, this becomes painfully real. I am foolish, I’m guilty, I’m unholy, and I’m lost. Then how precious it then becomes, that this Savior fits exactly my need. This Savior is wisdom for my foolishness; righteousness for my guilt; holiness/sanctification for my unholiness; and redemption for my utterly lost state.

Of course, hopefully our older children would have recognized something in this text here. Because I think that, especially the older ones, you will have learned in Catechism, you will have learned about the image of God. *What does the image of God consist of?* I’m hoping that, if I would be able to ask questions, which I cannot do that right now, that some of you would be able to say to me, “Well, Pastor, the image of God consists of knowledge, of righteousness, and of holiness.” Knowledge, righteousness, and holiness—that’s how God made us, created us in his image. He created us with the faculty to know him, to have a right relationship with him, and to live in perfect obedience to him, in perfect holiness. As a result of the fall, not only have we become transgressors, but we have lost the image. That’s why I said earlier, that Savior, this Mediator, is Jesus Christ. He deals with the negative aspect of our sinner-ship, but also the positive aspect. And so, he’s been made, of the Father, to us sinners, who in Adam have lost that image of God in which we were made; and as the Christ, he restores that image. So listen carefully, boys and girls. So again, what are those three things?—knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. And so, as Prophet, he restores the knowledge of God. As Priest, he restores the righteousness of God. And as King, he restores holiness.

And so, therefore, the ultimate outcome of the redeeming work of this Mediator, is that we will finally, at last, in glory, again be bearers of God’s image. Now, we know from Romans 8, that that image is ultimately the image of God’s Son. Because, in Romans 8, verse 29, we’re told that God’s children have been predestined for what purpose?—predestined to go to heaven?—no, predestined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29). That’s the image in which Adam was created, and that’s the image that will be restored.

And so, here, in this wonderful verse, 1 Corinthians 1, verse 30, how beautifully, how beautifully the Apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, how beautifully he captures the very essence of what this Mediator came to accomplish, the very essence of what this Mediator will do—a Savior who saves to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him—we read it together from Hebrews chapter 7—a Savior who is given to us also in the gospel; a Savior who is offered to us freely without

money and without price; a Savior who draws near to us in the gospel. Why? To encourage us to come to him, and to believe in him, and to put our trust in him. Oh, it's because of his finished work, because his perfect work. It's in the gospel that Christ comes to us, and he reasons with us, through the gospel, he reasons with us on the basis of his accomplished work. Oh, it is this Mediator who comes so near to us, and he says, in the words of Isaiah 1, verse 18, "O sinner, come. Come now. Come now. Consider who I am. Consider what I have accomplished. Consider my qualifications. Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool." That's the holy argument of the gospel.

And congregation, that Christ is offered to you freely. Do you know what that means? That because of that offer, because of that sincere offer of Christ in the gospel, you have the warrant to believe in him. You have the warrant to believe in him. That warrant is not rooted in anything in yourself. That warrant is rooted in the very person of Christ. It is rooted in the very fact that it is he, this Mediator, who is offered to you freely without money and without price. Therefore, don't let anybody ever tell you that you can steal this Christ. Don't let anybody ever tell you that you can steal the promises of the gospel that set before us this Christ. The very suggestion that you can steal Christ is heresy. It is absolute heresy. There is nothing in the Word of God that even remotely suggests that you can steal the Christ who is offered to you freely without money and without price. You know what stealing implies? Stealing implies that you should have paid for it, that you should have paid a price for it. Now, I realize that there will always be presumptuous Christians. There will those that presumptuously claim this Jesus as their Savior. That may very well be. But the notion that you can steal a Christ who is offered to us, again, is heresy. No, I stand here as the servant of this Mediator. I stand here to proclaim him to you. I stand here to offer him to you freely. I stand here to encourage you to come to this Christ. You may come to him, you may come to him today, you may come to him at once, you may come to him without delay; you may come to him as you are, with all the sins and baggage of your life. You have a warrant to come, a warrant rooted in the fact that he's freely offered to us.

How do we know? Question #19—how do we know that there is such a Christ? And again, this is a logical question, and yet it's an experiential Question. Because it is as if the inquirer, the person who's asking the Questions, as if he's saying, "I need to be absolutely certain. I need to be absolutely sure that this is the Savior, that there is this Christ, this Lord Jesus Christ." How do we know this? The Answer is simple: *From the holy gospel*—the holy gospel. The word "gospel" comes from two old English words; *gōd*, spel. So our word "spelling" is related to that. But the word "spel" is an old word for "word." So *gōd* [good] spel [word]. So really, it means a "good word." But more than that, it is God's word. It is God's good word, God's glad tidings. It's a holy gospel. What does that mean? It's a gospel that completely conforms to the character of God. It is a gospel that unveils the character of God. It is a gospel that is completely consistent with the character of God. It is a gospel that reveals to us the very heart of God. It is a gospel in which we literally hear the heartbeat of God.

### **3. The Revelation of this Mediator**

And then, when has the gospel been revealed?—already in Paradise. God truly is the original evangelist. He was the first evangelist. He evangelized the first two sinners there ever were, Adam and Eve. And he came to them when they were not seeking for him at all; they were hiding from him. And then when God called them on the carpet, as you know, they had the audacity

to blame him. And to those people, to those two unrepentant sinners, God proclaimed the first gospel promise—Genesis 3, verse 15. Because, you see, thereby he unveils his character. That's the beauty of the gospel, that God has eternally been prepared for man's fall, has eternally designed a way of redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's why, no sooner does man fall, and God cannot refrain himself. Out of the fulness of his being, he declares the gospel to our first parents, in Genesis 3, verse 15.

*And afterwards*, it says, *it's published by the patriarchs and prophets*. Jacob, on his deathbed, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,"—Genesis 49:10—"nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Later, Moses declares in Deuteronomy 18, verse 18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren,"—like unto us—"like unto thee,"—referring to his human nature. Then, of course, the light begins to shine more brightly, in Isaiah. Isaiah receives extraordinary insight into who this Redeemer will be. And he prophesies, in Isaiah 9, these wonderful words, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God"—a child who is the mighty God, the two natures of Christ—"The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

And, it says, *and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law*. And of course, the ceremonial law, especially the book of Leviticus, was really the gospel of the Old Testament. The book of Leviticus is the central book of the Pentateuch, those five books of Moses, but it's the gospel of the Pentateuch. And in Galatians 3, when the Apostle Paul says that the law is a schoolmaster unto Christ, he's referring to the ceremonial law. He's saying, "By means of the ceremonial law, God taught the people of Israel the gospel. He taught them that there was salvation on the basis of shed blood. He taught them that on the basis of that sacrifice, he could be reconciled to them, he could be their God, he could dwell in their midst. He taught them the gospel.

And then, *lastly*, [he] *has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son*. And how beautiful the letter to the Hebrews begins, when the Apostle Paul writes, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners"—in various ways—"spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1–2). And there, we have it. Now, the Sun of righteousness comes fully above the horizon (Malachi 4:2). He has spoken unto us by his Son. Because Christ is the ultimate revelation of the gospel. Christ himself is the gospel in his very person. That's why it is Christ himself who is offered in that gospel.

The Question is, again, so personal, is it not? *Whence knowest thou this?* Do you know this, not just intellectually, but do you know this experientially? Is this real to you? Is this a matter of unspeakable joy to you, that the gospel unveils to us this qualified Mediator, whose name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Because unless you believe in that Mediator, unless you trust in that Mediator, you will perish forever. Because God will have his justice satisfied. And if we don't find refuge in this Mediator, you will have to deal with the justice of God forever and ever. And in the same letter, the letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31)—a fearful thing. And Peter trembles when he says, in 1 Peter 4, verse 17, and he says, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" Think about that—"that obey not the gospel of God."

And so, if you're unconverted, if you're an unbeliever, you are living a life of disobedience. That means you are disregarding this gospel; you are disregarding this free and unconditional offer of salvation in the very person of Christ. *Whence knowest thou this?* Oh, may God grant that you know this Christ; that you know him personally; that you know him experientially; that this Christ

has become to you the altogether lovely one and the chiefest among ten thousands. For there is salvation in no other (Acts 4, verse 12): “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” There’s that word “must”—“must be saved.”

So, congregation, I hope that you will find no rest for your soul, until you know that you too, as a wretched, undone sinner, foolish, guilty, unholy, and lost, have taken refuge to this Savior, who is so willing to receive you with wide open arms; so willing to embrace you in the arms of his love—a Savior who has declared that “He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Amen.

**Let’s pray.**

Our gracious God, our human words are so inadequate to render thee the worship thou are worthy to receive, for the unspeakable and inexpressible gift of thy beloved Son, to be that fully-qualified Mediator, whom thou has made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and complete redemption. And oh, the wonder that thou art giving him to us in the preaching of the gospel; that thou dost continue to offer thy Son to us, encouraging us to come to him without delay; to come to him without money and without price; to come to a Savior, who says so lovingly, “Come unto me and I will give you rest.” O Lord, bless us. We pray that none among us would perish, having heard this gospel, having had this Christ freely offered to them, oh, to perish, having known about this only name, and yet not to have believed in him, it shall be indeed a hell in hell. Remember us, all together. Go with us to our homes, that we may reflect on what we have heard today; that we may carry thy Word into the week that has begun; that thou wouldst bless the labor of our hands; that thou wouldst bless our children in school; that thou wouldst keep and protect us. But also, on Thursday evening, we may meet here again, as we observe the National Day of Prayer. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.