

Jesus Christ - Our Great High Priest (Part One)

I. Introduction

- Today I am speaking directly to those who are believers in Jesus Christ
- Today's proclamation is the most important message we will hear concerning our relationship with God as believers in Jesus Christ
- The message this week and next will answer the following critical questions:
 - Where is Jesus today?
 - What is He presently doing today?
 - Why is that so important for my present life and more so after my death and resurrection
- Today, we will be focusing our attention on what the Apostle John and the author of the letter to the Hebrews said almost two millennia ago
- Jesus present ministry enables us to confidently approach a Holy God by cleansing us from our sin

II. Our Need: Cleansing from Sin

- The Apostle John is writing to believers
- Some former believers have departed
- Because of worldly influence, they were not keeping Jesus' commandments, in particular the commandment to love one another
- John is writing to encourage believers who remain
- Read 1 John 1:5-9 (1:1-4)
- We: those who had personal contact with Christ, were taught by him & witnessed his resurrection
- John uses powerful literary technique & figures of speech to make his point - we learned from Him

A. Walking in the Light

- First, John proclaims to them that (1 John 1:5)
- God is light; "no darkness is not in Him"
- **Light** refers to His divine nature of righteousness
- Righteousness is His nature
- He can't help but act righteously
- I can sin; God can not
- **Darkness** is absence of light
- Thus, it is the absence of righteousness
- There is absolutely no darkness in God
- Because He is Light - He is inherently righteous

B. Fellowship with God

- John says that if "we" say they have **fellowship** with God and are living in darkness
- They are lying to themselves, i.e. not living according to the truth (v. 6) - greater to lesser
- If that is true for them, how much more for us!
- **Walking** refers to our daily behavior; how we live
- Thus, walking in darkness is the absence of behavioral righteousness
- John says impossible for "we" to have fellowship with God & walk in darkness
- If that is true for them, how much more for us!
- John says for "them" - "There is no grey area"
- Either "we" behaving righteously or unrighteously
- If that is true for the "we" how much more so us?

- What is the idea of **fellowship**?
- We think in a social context; "hanging out"
- Biblically, term denotes the idea of "commonality"
- When by faith we are walking in the light we are living in realm of God's righteousness, and thus have commonality with God's righteousness
- We are avoiding evil and pursuing righteousness
- If I am walking in darkness, I am not walking by faith in God's divine nature - righteousness
- So I don't have commonality of God's righteous
- God does not adjust Himself to our unbelief - our unrighteous behavior - to have fellowship with us
- By faith, we must adjust our behavior to have fellowship with Him - to walk righteously by faith
- Christian life by faith maintaining fellowship with a Holy God - i.e. behaving righteously before Him
- If we are behaving unrighteously - behavior that misses mark of God's righteousness - that is sin

III. The Only Solution: Confession of Sin

- There is a only one solution to sin for believers
- To confess sin; Read 1 John 1:9
- If "we" have to confess, how much more us!
- John does not give any other possibility
- The solution for sin is not talking to our best friend, or a supposed earthly priest
- It is not thinking that we can do something good to overshadow our sin
- Or going to building or putting money in the plate
- Or mulling it over, rationalizing, ignoring, denying
- How well does that work? None of that works!
- Because that is not what God mandates us to do
- God mandates only one course of action - so that my sin may be forgiven
- We must confess our sins and stop behavioral sin
- This method alone restores fellowship with God
- We must stop being angry, lying, stealing, being jealous, committing adultery, being greedy, etc.
- When we sin, God has the only viable solution
- No pastor, priest, institution does
- We sinned against Him; He has the only solution!
- When by faith we confess our sin, we are now walking in light - that is we are partaking of his behavioral righteousness.

A. What is Confession of Sin?

- Confession of sin is more than being sorry for sin
- More than I was wrong/I failed to do what is right
- Confession is agreeing with God about my sin
- How does a Holy God view sin?
- Read/Describe Isaiah 6:1-4
- Sin is anathema to God whose very nature is Light
- God desires His people to not just to say we are sorry for our sin, but turn away from it; to repent
- The first word of Jesus ministry: Repent
- The prophets called God's people to repent
- Confession of sin means that we have repented
- That we have stopped our behavioral sin

- God desires us to repent
- Otherwise, He would not have provided a means to stop our behavioral sin
- By faith we repent because He has provide the solution to walk in behavioral righteousness
- Then are forgiven/cleansed from unrighteousness
- Then have communality with God righteousness

B. How Does A Holy God Forgive Sin?

- However, how is it possible for a holy God to be faithful and just to forgive us of our sin?
- Absolutely impossible for a God who is holy and righteous to just forgive sin
- His grace will not allowed. He is immutable.
- God appointed Jesus as the only means by which our sin can be forgiven and our conscience can be cleansed from our behavioral sin
- Read Hebrews 1:1-4; discuss
- Today, Jesus is in heavenly sanctuary, in Holy of Holies, seated at God's right hand on His throne
- After Res. He ascended/passed through heavens
- He entered the heavenly tabernacle, not made with human hands, not of this creation into HoHs
- And what is He presently doing in the HofHs?
- Read 2:17; after he left earth
- Having addressed that Jesus is flesh and blood because he represents those who are flesh and blood, the author proclaims that JC is HP
- Functioning as our High Priest
- He is presently making propitiation for sins - that is, cleansing us of our sins
- And on what basis is he able do that?
- Based on his one time, perfect sacrifice for sin
- Because we are Gentiles, High Priest, propitiation is unfamiliar to us; some background necessary

(1) The Earthly Shadow

- Law, earthly tabernacle/temple; copy of Heavenly
- Earthly was shadow of good things to come (8:5)
- That is - JC present ministry - help us understand
- Author describes activities of HP in the tabernacle
- Read Hebrews 9:1-7
- Under Law, the earthly HP entered the earthly H of Holies only one day a year - Day of Atonement
- Holy Convocation; all Israel required to attend
- First, offer a sacrifice for himself, because his sin
- Then, return: sacrifice for the sins of the people
- Why did the Law required a HP to do this?
 - Because no one can approach God directly to ask for forgiveness of sin
 - A mediator always required between man/God
 - AND atonement for sin always requires a blood sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22)
- And while HP was mediating the sacrifice for sins of the people, people were confessing their sin
- In so doing, atonement was made for their sins, so their sins could be forgiven
- This ritual was repeated, year after year

- Important: What if the HP did not mediate the sin sacrifice for His people in the Holy of Holies?
 - The sins of God's people were not forgiven!
 - It was not enough to make a sacrifice for sin
 - Sacrifice had to be mediated before Holy God

(2) The Heavenly Reality

- Now, earthly shadow replaced with the heavenly reality which includes Js' present ministry as HP
- Read Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:24-26
- Jesus didn't need to offer a sacrifice for His sin
- Because He was sinless
- Entered heavenly H of Hs, through His own blood
- On that basis able to make propitiation for sins - to cleanse us from our sin and all unrighteousness
- 1 Timothy 2:5: Only one mediator - God and man
- And like people of God under Law, what are we supposed to do while our great HP is in H of Hs?
- We are to confess our sin!
- Today is the Day of Propitiation
- If you have heard, if we have heard from God's inspired word in this message, by faith we will confess our sins and God will cleanse us

C. Why Must I Confess My Sins?

- Some may be thinking:
 - When I believed In Jesus, I confessed my sin
 - I thought Jesus died for all of my sins?
 - So why do I need to confess my sins?
- Why is the Apostle John saying that we must confess our sins to be forgiven and cleansed?
- On the cross, Jesus made a sacrifice for sin
- His sacrifice - perfect; Matt: 27:1: "It is finished"
- While sacrifice finished, work of propitiation is not
- While Jesus' sacrifice was finished, it would have been useless if He didn't mediate that sacrifice
- Like the people of God under Law, we must confess our sins to received forgiveness of sins!
- If we don't confess our sins, we are not forgiven, and we are out of fellowship with God

IV. God's Provision: Cleansing Our Conscience

- However, not only does Jesus' HP ministry make it possible for us to be forgiven
- Hear this, His ministry makes it possible for our conscience to be cleansed from it
- Read Hebrews 9:11-14
- Under Law, the result of the work of the HP was atonement of sin
- Atonement: covering; sins were covered with the blood of animals and God's wrath was appeased
- Read Hebrews 10:1-4
- Blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin
- Jesus's blood can take away sin and cleanse our conscience from sin
- Sins's devastating stain in our mind & conscience is removed
- IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS
- That is only means that God has provided

V. Review

- So let's review what we have looked at
- God's desire is for His people to have fellowship - commonality - with Him
- Christian Life is walking in fellowship with God
- That is, to behave righteously before Him
- God's desire is that we not sin
- Sin should be the exception in our life
- But when we do sin, God has mandated only one way for our sin to be forgiven/cleansed
- That is through the present ministry of our Great HP, Jesus Christ
- IF we confess our sin, our HP present ministry will cleanse us of our sin based on his perfect one time sacrifice so that:
- We can be forgiven
- Our conscience cleansed
- And our fellowship restored with a Holy God
- What a great and merciful God we serve that has provided us the means through our great HP to no longer walk in the darkness of unrighteousness, but the light of His righteousness

VI. Conclusion

- Some of us may be thinking:
 - How can a sinful person like me approach God?
 - I have been sinning and not confessing my sin for so long, how can I approach a Holy God?
 - The consequences for my sin have been so great, there is no hope for forgiveness with God
- Because of unbelief, We underestimate the position and power of our great HP, Jesus Christ
- Read Hebrews 4:14-16
- For every believer here this morning, the solution for our sin, our unrighteous behavior
- Is to draw near to the Throne of Grace
- That is where God has designated His Grace
- What throne?
- The Throne that Jesus is seated on and functioning as our HP
- Grace is only found at that throne
- If we think that grace is found anywhere else, we are sadly mistaken
- If you/I don't avail ourselves of JC present ministry, there is no Throne of Grace for us
- But if we have heard and understand this message, Today, we have the privilege and duty to seek that throne of Grace
- By God's grace, His unmerited favor, He has mandated the only way, for my sin to be forgiven and for me to behave righteously before a Holy God who by nature is righteousness
- For almost 2,000 years JC has been faithfully fulfilling his present ministry - cleansing His people - and His people only - from their sin
- Forgiveness & cleansing of sin is available, IF we humble ourselves, confess our sins - stop sinning

- Therefore, I want to call us to faith today
- Let us not leave this assembly today without confidently approaching a Holy God through Jesus Christ present ministry as our Great HP - and confess our sins so we can be forgiven, our conscience cleansed from sin, and behave righteously before our great, Holy God