

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

Christ the Mediator (3)

A. Introduction

1. Two things we are commanded to do as elders are to watch and to hold.

We are to watch what we believe, to make sure we are believing what God's Word says.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

We are to hold firmly to the truths taught in God's Word.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

It is vital we do these two things, not just for our own sake, but also for the members of this church and in fact those who live in the community God has placed us in.

To help us to watch and to hold, we are spending our elders' meeting working through the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith a paragraph or so at a time.

2. For Christ to establish the covenant of grace, He needed to be our mediator.

For only He can remove the enmity we have toward God and satisfy God's wrath towards us.

"It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified."

This opening paragraph of Chapter 8 of the Confession reminds us that Christ was appointed to this role of mediator because of God's purpose and because of God's pleasure.

It also tells us that the way Christ becomes our mediator is by fulfilling the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

In the concluding line, the focus shifts to the object of Christ's mediating work as prophet, priest, and king.

B. Jesus was given a people in eternity

1. The Father has given a gift to His Son.

"...unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed..."

The gift is a people to be His seed.

"Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand." (Isaiah 53:10)

This gift was given in eternity when the Father made a covenant of redemption with His Son.

"For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." (John 17:2)

"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they obeyed your word." (John 17:6)

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." (John 17:24)

2. The Father has given a surprising gift to His Son.

The gift is a people who have sinned and rebelled against God.

C. Jesus has saved this people in time

1. The Father has ensured that this gift would be received by sending His Son to redeem them.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"...and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified."

"And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8:30)

2. All who believe in Jesus are this gift from the Father to the Son and have been redeemed by Him.

They have been called.

"Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." (Baptism Catechism Q34)

They have been justified.

"Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." (Baptism Catechism Q36)

They have and are being sanctified.

"Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." (Baptism Catechism Q38)

They will be glorified.

"The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body." (Westminster Larger Catechism Q87)

D. How then shall we lead?

1. Recognise that you and the other members of the church are a gift.

The Father has given His Son a gift of a people that includes you.

He looks upon you with pleasure.

"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Our leadership should be marked by joy, gratitude and wonder because of this.

2. Recognise that you and the other members of the church are secure.

The Father has ensured that His Son will have a people that includes you.

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:39-40)

Our leadership should be marked by confidence and a willingness to take risks for the good of His people and the salvation of the lost because of this.