

August 20, 2023
The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
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The Seven C's of Faith-Why Christ?

Grace and Peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Amen Well, let's do a quick review of where we've been on our Seven C's of the Christian Faith; a sermon series designed to build an effectual apology or defense of what we believe. It all begins with the first "C" creation. There is a God. He is creator. Therefore, the Psalmist is correct when he writes in Psalm 24, verse one: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it." He made it. It's His. We are His.

But then I want you to think about that creation. How many of you can stop and think and go, gosh, it'd be great to make a universe and have everything move perfectly well together around it. And then within that universe, you got life on it and then design that life and then speak and bring it into existence. That's where Isaiah picks up in Isaiah 55, puts us in our place. God says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." When you contemplate creation, suddenly God, He is big and He's way above us.

And that's very good because our next "C" is corruption. You see, we are the problem. We are not the solution. And we hear a lot about that today about us being the solution. We're not! No, we read in Romans 8 verse 7, that the sinful mind is hostile to God. And in Jeremiah 1:7, we read 'the heart is deceitful above all things.' And let's be honest, whether you're Republican, Democrat, Independent, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, Buddhist, I don't care. I think we've all seen deceitfulness from everyone. That's man we're corrupt. And beginning with Adam and Eve we brought this corruption and continue to bring this corruption into this world.

And of course, that leads to catastrophe-it's a result of our sin. Sin leads to judgment. So, we read in Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Roman 6:23, just three chapters later says "the wages of sin is death." And we saw that God's not kidding about that as He flooded the earth. And well, look through the Bible; Sodom and Gomorrah, and time, and time again, God judges. And He promises He will judge one last time.

Of course, Satan doesn't want us to think about that and that leads to confusion; and we saw that last week the tower of Babel. The word babel in the Hebrew language, it means confusion, it is the mingling of false truths or false things with the truth. We tend to do that. We want to water down God's word, so it matches up with what we'd like it to say. That is "Balal," that is Babylon and there's a warning against that in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:8 "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the Great.

You might, at this point in time, be saying "Boy, that recap just gives me a warm fuzzy Pastor, is that all?" Well, I'll quote that great theologian John Wayne in the movie big Jake, "Not hardly." Because we have the fifth "C" Christ. In Greek, it is Christos. It means the anointed one. It is a title. Don't go on the Internet and do a Wikipedia search. It's just absolutely ridiculous what's on there! It is assumed to be a title some would assign it to Jesus, some think this... and it's just garbage.

Christos, it is a Greek word when the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek, we call that the Septuagint, this was done before Jesus was born. Those people translated the Hebrew word that we have as Messiah, to Christos, the Anointed One.

And so, in the Old Testament, we have some phrases using Christos. We have Hoi Christos Theos, the anointed of God and that's a reference to the prophets and the priest. We find that in Psalm 105:15 for itself Psalm 2, verse 2, and also quite a bit in second Samuel we read Christos tou Kuriou the anointed of the Lord. This is a reference to the kings. And so as we come to the New Testament, we see a shift. Instead of Hoi Christos Theou, or Christos tou, we have simply Ho Christos, the Christ.

Ironically, it was first used by Herod. And in Matthew 2, verse 4 when the Wisemen come and they're searching for the One whose birth is proclaimed by the star that they saw in the East. Herod calls on the priests and wants to know, and inquires of them "Ho Christos? the Christ was to be born."

Peter uses it when Jesus asks his disciples, "and who do you say that I am? Peter says; you are 'Ho Christos' the Christ. And then he uses that terminology again in his Pentecost sermon in Acts chapter 2. When he speaks it says the Christ would rise as David had foretold.

In the New Testament we also have another unique phrase "Estin Christo," is Christ. It was first used by the angels as they were singing to the shepherds, "He is Christ the Lord." Ironically again, at the end of Luke chapter 23, the priests say, "He claims He is Christ in the flesh." Jesus Christ, that's the name of Jesus put together with the title. And that's what Jesus uses in John 17:3 in His high priestly prayer ..

Probably the greatest usage of Christ is found in Mark 14:61-62 where Caiaphas asked Jesus, "are you the Christ the son of the Blessed One?" Jesus response is, "I AM, and you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power coming with the clouds of heaven." What a unique play on words, or just bold statement by Jesus. Because when we look at that his answer, He begins "I AM," and it's not like for us, 'are you working today? Yes, I am.' No, no, no, there's a different Greek phrase for that.

This "I AM" is "Ego Eimi" it is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh. So, when Caiaphas asks Jesus, are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? He responds with, "Yahweh, I am God, I am the Blessed One, and you're going to see me the Son of Man, the Christos, God in the flesh at the right hand of power coming on the last day with clouds of heaven! He's speaking judgment day. Caiaphas gets it, and we know this is what Jesus said because Caiaphas tore his robe; which is against the Mosaic Law for the high priest to tear his robe. But he tears it dramatically and says, "blasphemy! He's claiming to be God.

Christ, Ho Christos the anointed One. Why that title for Him? Because He is our Prophet, our Priest, our King. The ones who bore that title in the Old Testament. He is our Prophet. Why prophet because the prophet came to speak God's word. When Moses was you know stuttering "I can't go down and talk to Pharaoh, I don't know what to say. That doesn't work. God says your brother Aaron will be your prophet. Aaron's going to do the speaking. He'll speak my word to pharaoh for you.

Luke 11:49 Jesus talking to the Pharisees who had created all sorts of new laws and everything. Jesus is saying to them, woe to all you Pharisees, you teachers of the law, for you bind up the people with so much. He says to them, it's because of you Pharisees that God wrote and said "I will send them prophets." What did you do? You killed them for what they said. Then you build monuments for them.

Deuteronomy 18:18 God tells Moses, I will raise up for them people a prophet like you. Jesus, someone who will lead them as Moses led them to the Promised Land. Well guess what? Jesus leads us. And this is why Jesus says in John 18:37 "For this reason I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." He claimed to be our prophet. He, Himself is truth. And that's why John begins his gospel; "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning and through Him all things were made that were made.

Jesus is our prophet but that dovetails right into Jesus is our Priest. Because one of the two jobs of the priest is to preserve knowledge. And Jesus is the knowledge. In fact, in John 14 when Thomas says to the Lord, "we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life." Jesus is the very preservation of knowledge and for this reason he was born as to testify to the truth.

He's our Priest, preserving knowledge. But the priest also is the one who made atonement for the people. He was the intercessory person who would intercede and take the blood into the most holy place and sprinkle it before the Ark of the Covenant. Why? Because of sin and the

wages of sin is death. And the Bible tells us that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” And all of those sacrifices that took place in the temple were all pointing forward to there's an ultimate sacrifice coming. Your ultimate priest, Ho Christos, the Christ, the anointed One. He's going to come. And this is what the author to the Hebrews writes, “the high priest carries the blood of animals in to the most holy places as a sin offering; but He, Jesus, entered the most holy place once for all, by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. You see, when you made atonement, you paid the price for sin, you bought back, you redeemed. Jesus, our Priest, has redeemed us.

And He is our King. Why King? Because kings lead. And so we read in first Samuel 8:5, “The people come to Samual and say, now appoint a king for us to lead us. And he does and there's a problem. And what is his response when there's finally a problem with their king? He says, ‘the LORD was your King, you should have just stayed with Him.’

But Zechariah picks up on that concept of the King and the Christ would be the King. When he says, “Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion shout daughter Jerusalem see your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” And it is why we are singing all of those Palm Sundays hymns today. Because Jesus entered Jerusalem as our King to lead us.

And so, this Sunday the 5th “C” Christos, the Christ who is our Prophet, Priest and King, He has come! He is the Christ! He came to bear witness to the truth, for He Himself is the truth. And as He prayed in His, high priestly prayer for us, “sanctify them in the truth, your Word is truth.” And in doing so He shows us He's our Priest, preserving knowledge. But then we also see Him going to the cross, bearing our sin, making atonement for us. The ultimate Priest, redeeming us, and making us His own. And as our King, He leads us. He leads us in service of God. He leads us in the ways of righteousness, and He leads us home.

Later at today memorial service, we're going to sing: ‘I'm But a stranger here, heaven is my home, earth is a desert drear, heaven is my

home. It is my hope and my prayer that we all look at that way. This isn't my home, this world. No, heaven is. Because we have a Prophet, we have a Priest, we have a King, we have the Christ who has bought us with His own blood. And made us His own.

And what an honor it is today to be here as we now celebrate communion and the Christ, Ho Christos, He comes to us. He comes to us physically here today now in the bread, in the cup. and He says come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Because all that other stuff, the corruption, the catastrophe, the confusion, He's taken care of all that. If we will just drop all our defenses and let Him be the Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King. In His Name, Amen.