

August 27, 2023
The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Pastor Matt Duerr

The Seven C's of Faith—"It is Finished"

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. Let's do a quick review of the 5 C 's that we have had so far of our Christian faith; and of God's history or narrative as found in the Bible. It begins with creation, and we see there is a God, He is creator. This is His world, not ours. That of course leads us to the second C – corruption. We are the problem; we are not the solution. Our hearts are deceitful above all things. And that corruption leads to catastrophe, judgment. Our sins lead to judgment. Not only do our sins lead to judgment, but because of our human pride, and our propensity, shall we say, of Balal; we want to confuse. Confuse people through the mingling of man's truth (our truth) with the truth of God. Last week we saw real truth, the Christ. The great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King.

Today we look at the sixth and seventh “C.” The sixth C is not a pretty one, it's the cross. Why the cross? One of the most horrific means of execution ever created by mankind. Well, first of all, let's just address the need for the cross and for death. Hebrews 9:22 tells us without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Why? Inquiring minds want to know! Well, first of all, it, the shedding of blood is clearly a representation or symbol of death. And it goes right in line with what we read in Leviticus. Leviticus 17, verse 11: “The life of a creature is in the blood.” And when you think about it, our movies today make a real point of that. Because if someone is shot or whatever, you see a lot of blood shooting all over the place. Why - it emphasizes they are close to death; because life is in the blood.

So, the shedding of blood is what is necessary for forgiveness because again, Romans 6:23; the wages of sin is death, that which we have we have earned from our sin, the wages of sin is death. And then we go to both the Old Testament and New Testament. Deuteronomy

22:13, or Galatians 3:13, where Paul quotes Deuteronomy, “cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” Cursed, condemnation, judgment. Isn't it ironic too, that Deuteronomy, this is back at the time of Moses, this is said? The people would have been saying, “what, cursed is anyone hung on a tree; if someone's executed, we stone them.” Right there, we already see God putting a plan in place. But when we look at John 3, verse 14. Jesus ties it all together as He speaks with Nicodemus. He says, “Just Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the son of man must be lifted up.” Why the cross? Well, it's death, and it's the fulfillment of prophecy. And yet it's fulfillment of imagery that God gave us in Genesis 22, where Abraham was tested with the sacrifice of his only son. And it was a symbol, a foretaste, a prefigure of what God would do with His son. Abraham of course, was stopped. Nothing would stop God.

The cross, it's an ugly reminder, of our sin, of God's judgement, of our deserved death, of the unwavering word of God. But that leads us then to the seventh C – consummation, which means to finish, to complete, or to perfect. And it is summed up in what is possibly the three most powerful words found in scripture. I'd like you to memorize this, “it is finished.”

Have you ever asked yourself what is it? What was Jesus referring to when He said, “it is finished?” It is a loaded question. What was finished? The covenant is completed. Christ has been bruised, just as God said He would be in Genesis 3, when speaking to Satan, the serpent. Christ is bruised, He's hurt bad, Satan is crushed. It; all, prophecy, is complete. The multiple prophecies about the Messiah coming and dying. Even to that point of on a tree. It's all finished! God's word is fulfilled and the Word, capital WORD, Christ the WORD in the flesh is the one who does the fulfilling. And that WORD, Christ is the consummate, the perfect complete Prophet. It=Full payment is made. The blood of the Son of God.

That's why we read this morning in Hebrews 9, verse 12; “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but He entered the most holy place once for all, by His own blood.” That is the consummate Priest. He doesn't need the blood of animals; no, His blood satisfies for

all. And we continue in the Hebrews 10, “But when this Priest, the consummate Priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.” And that is a very important place, because the Prince after going into battle, and being victorious, when he came back, he sat at the right hand of the king. This was the place of victory. This was the heir apparent. It is perfected.

It's perfected, I guess, you know, to put it into COVID language, PPP. Kind of like our sermon series back before my vacation. But this time; “promise or covenant, prophecy and price.” Christ fulfilled them all in a consummate, perfect manner. And death is defeated by the consummate King of kings. And because He lives, we live.

How do we know? Because he's shown he can do it again. I always like to say, “what's harder, to raise someone from the dead, or to raise yourself from the dead?” Wait a second, if you're dead, how can you raise yourself? At least, if you're alive and you have some power, you might be able to raise somebody from the dead. But when you're dead, to raise yourself, that's impressive. Christ, the consummate Sacrifice, consummate Prophet, consummate Priest, paying the consummate price through the consummate sacrifice!

It is finished! Why, because of His love. And that's where we go to Hebrews 10. We used it for the introit this morning. Feel free to get your bulletins out and look at it. We now, because of Christ, the consummate Sacrifice, Prophet, Priest, King, Savior, because of the cross, we have confidence to enter the holy places, that's heaven, that's God's home. We have confidence to enter the holy places, by the blood of Jesus, who opened for us through the curtain (that is His flesh.) You see, our bodies, are bodies of sin are separated from God, but through Christ opens it up for us.

Here at Zion, we have these two pillars, and they represent where the curtain of separation was in the temple; between the holy place and the most holy place, where the Ark of the Covenant was, where God resided. We now, can we walk through that curtain to God. We can draw near with a true heart, one that is sprinkled. And what happened when

the priest crossed through that curtain? He would go to the Ark of the Covenant and sprinkle the blood of the atoning sacrifice on the mercy seat at the top of the Ark. And our hearts are now sprinkled with the blood of Christ, the blood of atonement. As the people got ready for that day of atonement, they went through a seven-day preparation of washing and everything like that. And so, the author to the Hebrews picks that up; “We draw near with a true heart, with heart sprinkled, bodies washed, prepared for atonement, because Christ has opened the curtain, we can go to God. We go to God, ultimately to heaven. But we can come before Him and His throne of grace and talk to Him directly now because of the blood of Jesus.

And so, what should we do? The author to the Hebrews continues, and notice what he says, “Let us.” He doesn't say ‘I will,’ no he says, ‘let us.’ This is God's love, our response, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” It is standing on the Word of God and not getting into any of the balal, the mingling of man's ideas with God's. No, we hold fast to the seven C's that are outlined in God's Word. Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. We're to be looking at each other, and encouraging one another, and saying, ‘come on let's do it! Let's do what God has called us to do!’

And then notice from let us, let us, he goes to not, do not. Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some. That's called going to church. Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some but encouraging one another. How can we stir up one another to good works, to faith, if we aren't together? You can't. And that's part of why we come together to encourage one another, to stir one another up, to say, ‘Let's go, let's take the love of God into this world, to each other and let's make a difference today.’

So, we go to the tomb. The Christ went to the cross. If it ended there, He wouldn't be the consummate Prophet, Priest and King. But He rose. When you look at Matthew 28, I love how Matthew records it. Because after announcing the resurrection, what does the Angel say? ‘See I have told you.’ In other words, I've told you, now what are you going to do with it? Those disciples did not just go home and say ‘well

I'm glad Jesus did that. It sure makes it easy for us.' No, they responded. As did the author to the Hebrews. he says there in Hebrews 4:7. Please listen carefully; "Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it today." When is today? **Today** is today. Therefore, God again set a certain day calling it today; when a long time later he spoke through David as was said before; today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

Dear brothers and sisters, it is today. It is finished. God has done everything for you, and He has said, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works and let's meet together and encourage one another to walk in faith in action in this world." Let us be the consummate disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In His Name, Amen