

Christ as Man Christmas Day December 25, 2005 Text: LSC #120 & #122.

This year our theme for Advent and Christmas has been *Christ as God/man, Prophet, Priest and King*. Last night we proved that Jesus was and is truly God as He had to be in order to be perfect and holy in order to do for us what we are unable, in and of our selves, to do. This morning we will look at Jesus as true man and why He had to be truly human. In order to help us with this theme we go, again, to our catechism and under the question, “How do you know that Jesus Christ is also true man?” and, “Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true man?” In answer to the first question, “How do you know that Jesus Christ is also true man?” we are told that we know Jesus is true man, “Because the Scriptures A. clearly call Him man; 1 Tim. 2:5; B. say that He has a human body and soul; Luke 24:39; Matt. 26:38; C. speak of His human, but sinless, feelings and actions. Matt. 4:2; John 11:35; John 19:28; Heb. 4:14-16; Bible narratives: Jesus suffered and died (Matthew 26-27). Jesus slept (Mark 4:38). Jesus was born (Luke 2).” In answer to the second questions, Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true man? we are told that, “Christ had to be true man in order to A. act in our place under the Law and fulfill it for us (active obedience); Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 5:19; B. be able to suffer and die for our guilt because we failed to keep the Law (passive obedience). Col. 1:22; Heb. 2:14.”

We know that Jesus is truly human because He possesses human names. Certainly His name is a human name as He is called “Jesus.” Paul, writing young pastor Timothy speaks of Jesus as, the man, Jesus Christ, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus refers to Himself as the son of man, “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home” (Matt. 9:6). And as we pointed out last night, this same passage shows Jesus is truly God as well in that He performed the miraculous sign of healing the paralytic, which only God can do.

Not only does Jesus possess human names, He also possesses human characteristics. We are told by the Gospel writer Matthew that Jesus was hungry, “And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry” (Matt. 4:2). We are told by the Gospel writer John that Jesus exhibited the human emotion of sadness when he says that Jesus cried (in the shortest verse in the Bible), “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). And John also tells us of Jesus being thirsty, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst’”(John 19:28).

Above all this we know that Jesus was conceived in a human woman and born of a human woman, the virgin Mary. Thus, He shows Himself to be truly human. While on this earth and before His resurrection and appearing in His glorious body, Jesus was subject to all the laws of nature with which all human beings are subject. Gravity held Him to the earth. He was not able to go through walls or doors unless the door was open. He could only be at one place, in the body, at a time. And as we said last evening about His limiting the use of His divinity, so He limited His use to the point of subjecting His humanity to its earthly parameters. And please notice that we say that He limited Himself. Certainly, as God, as we proved He was last night, He could have done anything He wanted, but for our sakes and because He came to save us, He did limit Himself according to His human nature, subjecting Himself to all that we as humans are subject.

We spoke last evening of the fact that Jesus was true God and the fact that He had to be true God so that He could be born perfect. This morning we see that Jesus is truly human and He had to be a man in order to be our substitute. Last Sunday we talked about how we cannot compare unlike things, like apples and oranges, but we must compare like things, oranges to oranges and apples to apples, this reminds us that in order to be a substitute, we must substitute like things, a human life

for a human life.

There is the story of the two friends who met each other at the courthouse. Each had received a speeding ticket and each had gone to take care of their ticket. The judge declared both persons guilty and charged them each with a \$50 fine. The first friend looked in his wallet and found he had no money with which to pay his fine. The second friend looked in his wallet and he had \$50 to pay his fine, yet, he offered to pay the other friend's fine. The judge said he could not pay the other fine, because he himself owed his own fine. The story continues with a third friend arriving on the scene. This friend did not have a ticket and owed no fine for himself. He looked in his wallet and he had \$50 which he offered to his friend. The judge said he could pay for his fine because he himself did not owe a fine. We, each one of us, you and I, owe. We owe because of our sin. We owe the price of our very lives. Remember, the price for sin is death, eternal spiritual death and eventual physical death. In order for our sins to be paid, someone had to pay for us and that someone had to be someone like us except without His own debt. Jesus came as that someone. Jesus came, not simply to pay the debt, but also to act for us in our place under the Law and fulfill the law, that is to completely fulfill all the law for us. We call this His active obedience. Jesus actively did everything we are supposed to do and He did it perfectly. Jesus obeyed all the commandments, perfectly, never sinning in thought, word or deed, never sinning sins of commission, doing anything that is prohibited by the commandments and never sinning sins of omission, not doing anything required by the commandments. This is what we mean when we speak of the fullness of the Gospel, that is that not only did Jesus die for us, but that Jesus lived for us. We are to obey the commandments and we cannot so Jesus obeyed them for us, in our place. We are to be perfect, right, and holy and we cannot so Jesus is perfect, right and holy for us, in our place.

And, of course, because we are unable to pay our debt, Jesus also came to suffer and die for our sins and our guilt, because we have failed to keep the Law. This is called His passive obedience. Jesus passively allowed Himself to be taken to the cross and crucified for us, in our place. He could have resisted. He could have simply presented Himself as holy and perfect and gone to heaven, but He did not. Instead, He passively, without any fight or struggle, without any attempt to save Himself, allowed Himself to be mocked, beaten, stricken, smitten and afflicted. He allowed Himself to be crucified for us, in our place.

What does this mean? This means we can celebrate. We can celebrate because what God promised He has brought to fruition. God promised to mend the broken relationship between Himself and His creatures, His creation, us and He has fulfilled that promise. God promised to send a Savior and Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. God promised that He would take care of our sins and He has fulfilled that promise.

Jesus is truly God meaning that He was conceived and born without sin, perfect, and holy. And Jesus never sinned. Even as a man Jesus never sinned. It is important that Jesus never sinned, because only a sinless person could be a substitute for sinful people, only a sinless person could be our substitute.

And Jesus is truly human. Jesus had to be human in order to trade His life, in order to substitute Himself, for us. This is what redemption is all about, the fact that He traded His life, He took our place, not only in life, but also in death.

Jesus is our substitute and we are His substitute. By grace, through faith in Jesus, when God looks at us He sees us as perfect and holy, because He sees us as Jesus. When Jesus was on the cross, God saw Him as us, completely sinful and that is why He was punished, for our sins (God forsook Him on the cross).

This morning we celebrate “mission accomplished.” We celebrate that Jesus is our prophet, priest and king. We celebrate that He is truly God and truly human. We celebrate that Jesus continues to be our prophet as He continues to proclaim His message of salvation, giving, strengthening and keeping us in faith through His means of grace (the Word and Sacraments). We celebrate that Jesus continues to be our priest as He offers His body and blood for us to eat and drink in His Holy Supper and He is at the right hand of the Father where He is interceding for us. We celebrate that Jesus continues to be our King, watching over and ruling over us and on the last day He will be our Judge and King forever in heaven. We celebrate that Jesus continues to be both human and divine, and that He is now using His divine powers to their fullest so that He is indeed everywhere present and He is with us always, even until the end of the ages. Thanks be to God for His great and wonderful gifts. To Him be the glory, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.