

Text

John 10 – Reading

Main Point

Christ Died for His People – His People Live for Him

Introduction (300)

Please turn to John 6.

Pray.

Hook

How many of you love the satisfaction of finishing a book or finishing a project?

Many of us are quick to start a book or a project, but oh, that feeling of finally finishing something is so good, especially when you had doubts if it would ever get done.

I remember a few times at university wondering if I would pass that paper, wondering if I would complete the course. Would I get this done? There was a lot at stake.

You may feel the same with what are currently undertaking.

Will you finish it?

Will you accomplish what you started?

Will you fulfil your endeavour?

The higher the stakes, the bigger the question looms...

Today we think about the task, the endeavour, the mission Jesus set out to do.

The stakes could not be higher, but unlike us, there was never any doubt that he would finish, that he would complete, that he would fulfil his endeavour.

From the confession

In our study though the 1689 we have come to paragraph 5 of chapter 8. *which talks of a particular work christ accomplished and completed.*

Paragraph 5:

The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

Outline

And we are really going to focus on that last line:

*[He] purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, **for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.***

To help us work through this topic we are going to look at three parts.

1. Mission Fulfilled
2. Mission Framework
3. Mission For all

Part 1 – Mission Fulfilled

Exposition

Mediator sent to rescue – from the confession

So let us begin with part 1: Mission Fulfilled.

You will remember, from one of our very first studies in chapter 8, we learned that the Father and the Son agreed to save a People in eternity past. We call this the Covenant of Redemption. An agreement within the Trinity to save a people.

God gave a people to the son to rescue. That was his mission from eternity past. To be The Mediator.

Mediator sent to rescue a people– From John 6

The Lord Jesus Christ is the great and only mediator between God and men. As 1 Tim 2:5 states for us:

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man^[a] Christ Jesus,

And what we will look at this evening is that Jesus fulfilled his mission. He rescued the people God Gave him. He died and intercedes for “*all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.*”

He was sent to rescue a people, and a people he rescued.

Look with me in John chapter 6. Starting at verse 35

John 6:37-40

*³⁷**All that the Father gives** me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

*³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, **that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day.*

⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

We can see from these few verses that Jesus is well aware of the specific mission he has.

The people he has come to bring eternal life to, those for whom he will die for and intercede for, those who will be raised up in the last day are “*all those whom the Father has given him*” (v37), and he will lose nothing of what he has been given.

Died for his sheep

That group of people, Jesus compassionately calls his “sheep”. He is the great shepherd, and those for whom he died are his sheep.

Turn forward to chapter 10 of John

John 10:14-16

*¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; **and I lay down my life for the sheep.** ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

Jesus lays down his life for his sheep. That included those who were alive in Jesus’ day, but it also includes “*other sheep that are not of this fold.*”

Sheep he will bring to the fold in due time.

Sheep he will bring out of the world in the centuries that followed.

Not all are his sheep

But as we read further in John 10, Jesus explicitly says that not all people are his sheep. He is not the mediator of all people without exception.

He is the mediator of his sheep.

The mediator of those whom the Father has given him.

The mediator of those he died for, and those who will believe in Him.

And not one of his sheep is snatched away. In verse 25-30 we read

John 10:25-28

*²⁵ Jesus answered them [The Pharisees], "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, ²⁶ **but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.** ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

Jesus clearly says to these Pharisees that they are not His sheep. His sheep hear his voice, and the Pharisees did not believe any of Christ's words. These men were not part of the people given by the Father to the Son. He did not die for these men.

He did not lay down his life for the goats.

It is important to note here, that the fact that some did not believe does not mean that Jesus did not fulfil his mission. He died for his sheep, not for the goats. He died for those the Father has given to Him.

Jesus' mission was to rescue the sheep, and Jesus fulfils ~~his~~ *his* that Mission.

Application

Assurance

As we think about Jesus dying for his sheep, this should fill us with assurance and peace. The mission of the mediator is fulfilled.

It is not a partial fulfilment. Or even a 99% fulfilment. No, every single one of his sheep will be saved.

And so those who believe in the promises of ^{Christ} ~~the messiah~~ can know, without a doubt, that He will give them eternal life.

We are his sheep, and he is our great shepherd.

We may stumble along the path and be discouraged in the struggle against sin.

We may stray from the flock for a time and be tempted to ^{separate} ~~seclude~~ ourselves from the people of God.

We may even fall in a pit where we see no way out as the trials of life seem to crush us from every side with no way of escape.

But remember, He is our great shepherd. He died for us! He will help our faltering steps, he will lead us home, he is with us even in the darkest times.

Do you think your weakness or the trials of life can flaw His plan? The plan which was established in eternity past? The plan which cost him so much? The plan which is fulfilled by the Great Mediator?

Link

Now as we talk about Jesus dying for his sheep and not for the goats, this may bring ^{to mind} ~~to mind~~ some question in your mind. Questions along the line of:

But did Jesus **only** die for a set number of people? Did he die for the Elect only? ^{Is his atonement for a particular people?}

As a Confessional Calvinistic church, we confidently and humbly say “Yes, Jesus died to pay the sins of his people only”.

This of course is one of the Doctrines of Grace. This is the L in the acrostic TULIP. Commonly known as Limited Atonement, but better described as Particular Atonement.

There is nothing that limits the worth or merit of the atonement, but it is extended to a particular people.

But what about all those texts that say that Jesus died for the “world”, or for “all people”?

And what does that mean for our evangelism and missions?

Before we look at those questions, let us take a step back and remind us of three important doctrines that help us think about this. Three doctrines which create a framework for these questions.

Which brings us to the second section of our study.

Part 2 – Mission Framework

Exposition

Not all are saved

The first thing to remember is as sober as it is simple.

We know some people will go to Hell.

Our Lord
The Bible is very clear on that, Jesus is very clear.

Matthew 13:40-42

*⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather **out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,** ⁴² **and throw them into the fiery furnace.** In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

There is no biblical basis that all people without exception will be saved in the end.

This is not believed by any serious scholar or Christian, even those who disagree with particular atonement

Atonement is efficacious

The second thing to remember is the nature of Jesus' Death on the cross.

His death was a penal substitute.

We had a debt to pay. Jesus paid it in our place.

In other words His death was a propitiation. It was a wrath-satisfying sacrifice.

1 Pet 2:24

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

When Jesus died, his blood wiped away the debt that we had before God. The slate is clean. All sins. Past present and future sins paid for in full. This is the nature of the atonement. It legally pays for sins.

Knowing this truth about the nature of the Atonement, we can confidently say that Jesus did not pay for the sins of anyone in Hell. He did not die for anyone in Hell.

If that was the case, they would be paying a debt that had already been cleared. God would be enacting double payment for them, which is at total odds with the righteousness of God.

People in hell are facing the right punishment for **their sins** against God. There is no injustice with God. He either gives people justice where they pay for their sins in hell, or he gives them mercy and Jesus pays on their behalf.

Gospel Plea

And this offer of mercy is extended to all people.

What about you? Have you received his mercy by faith? Do you believe the promises and the work of Jesus?

Do you trust Jesus as your mediator? Do you believe that he died to pay for your sins?

He extends this gift of mercy, will you take it?

Hell is a real place with real suffering. The greatest pain we experience in this world is nothing compared to the torments of hell.

If you reject his gift of mercy, you will receive justice. You will pay for your own sins and be cast into Hell, as Jesus tells us.

But turn to Jesus, believe in him and be saved!

His sacrifice is effective to save, trust in him and you will be saved!

One will in the Trinity

The third and final doctrine we must remember as we think of particular atonement is that there is one will in the Trinity.

This is fundamental to the doctrine of the Trinity.

There is one will in the Trinity.

John 6:30 says

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

John 6:39

³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

There is no question that the father has given a set number of people to the son. So who does the Son ransom? Who does the son die for?

Does he ransom those whom he knows the Father has **not** chosen? And then intercedes for those whom He knows the father has **not** given him?

This notion creates division in the Trinity who has one will, which is absurd.

There is one will in the Trinity, and so the Son purchased the people the Father gave him.

He died for the people the Father gave him.

Application

Worship

Even as we are reminded of these doctrines, these pillars firmly grounded in the depth of scripture,

1. that not all people are saved,
2. that the atonement is effective and
3. that there is one will in the Trinity,

Let these truths stir and move your heart.

Let them drive you to your knees in fear and wonder. Let them drive you to worship and humility.

There is no reason within yourself why God chose you. You were chosen simply because of his loving kindness, by his grace.

- Consider the magnitude of the work to save you.
- Consider the impossible odds against you,
- consider the justice you deserved,
- consider the majesty of our Triune God, far above you, *who condescended to save you.*

And marvel at the wonder that you are redeemed!

Heartfelt Gratitude

Glory to him. Prais to him. Thanks giving to him.

Let our response always be one of worship and heartfelt gratitude.

Let us not forget who he is and who we are.

Let us not forget where we were headed before he ~~chose~~ *chose to* save us.

Link

With these big truths in place, in both our minds and our hearts, the truths

1. that not all people are saved,
2. that the atonement is effective
3. that there is one will in the Trinity,

Let us briefly look to one or two of these texts that talk of Jesus dying for “all” and for the “whole world”. How do we read these? What do we make of them?

We will also briefly explore how particular atonement impacts our evangelism and our mission.

Which brings us to the third and final part of our study.

Part 3 – Mission for All

Exposition

Illustrate how “All” can be used in a limited sense

Now imagine a hot summers’ day at Caroline Bay.

There I am with my nieces and nephews playing on the playground.

Wanting to be the favourite uncle in their eyes, I make a rash decision and tell them: “We are going to have a special treat. I am going to buy you all an ice cream.”

Their faces light up, I get uncle brownie points, and the ~~chocolate fund~~ *Petty Cash* for that month is put to good use.

But now imagine if someone recorded me, and played the recording here at church, and you all heard “I’m going to buy you all an ice cream”

You would hear it to mean that I will buy everyone at church and Ice cream. But that was not my intention. That misunderstanding would cost me more than the ~~chocolate fund~~ *Petty Cash*.

Or imagine if that recording was then played on the radio. All Timaru would think I will buy them an ice cream. My family and I would be eating plain rice for the rest of the year.

When I said “all” I was meaning my nieces and nephews, not all people of Timaru.

Apply illustration

So we can see in this example that the word “all” is not self-defining. It is very important to let the context define the word.

Important for my wallet in the case of our example, and important for our faithfulness when it comes to understanding the Word of God.

We must be careful to read what the author is intending to say, not put words in their mouths.

Let’s look at two examples to illustrate this.

Texts referring to All being saved

1 Tim 2:6

*the man^[a] Christ Jesus, ⁶**who gave himself as a ransom for all,** which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

If you were trying to build a case that Jesus died for all people without exception, this seems like a good passage to turn to.

But when we realise that Paul is refuting Jewish elitism, it changes things. He is talking in a context where people think that only the jews can be saved.

And so Paul says “no no no, God desires all kinds of people to be saved, he gave himself as a ransom for all without distinction. People from every tribe and nation.

Texts referring to Jesus dying for the world

Or think of 2 Cor 5:19

*¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling^[a] **the world** to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

Again at face value this seems like a good proof text to say Jesus died to pay the penalty for the whole world without exception.

So how do we interpret the word “World” here.

Let’s use scripture to interpret scripture.

Look at Rev 5:9. The 24 elders and angels are worshipping the Lamb of God.

⁹And they sang a new song, saying,

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,*

*for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for
God*

from every tribe and language and people and nation,

The lamb ransomed people from all the world. That is how we are to read “World” in 2 Cor 5:19 and other such passages.

Whenever we look closely at texts of scripture talking of salvation for the “whole world” or the like, we will see that these are talking about all without distinction, not all without exception. . .

And remember in an exclusive Jewish mindset this is outstanding! This is revolutionary and mind blowing.

Jesus died for people from throughout the whole world, not just the Jews! He died for the whole world!

Free offer of salvation must be made to all

This is very important as we think of Particular Atonement. The offer of the gospel is for all. It must be made to all. To the whole world, to all, to everyone.

In Luke 24:46-47 we read

⁴⁶and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance for^[c] the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

We can know that no one who turns to Christ is rejected. All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

That is the will of the Father as we read in John 6:40

⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Application

Evangelism Strengthened

So what does this mean for our evangelism and our mission? It means we go out. We proclaim. We persuade. We preach.

We teach the good news that Jesus has died to pay for the sins of his people, and anyone who believes in him will be saved. The work of Jesus on the cross is effective. Those who believe will be saved.

We do not proclaim a potential atonement, where half was purchased by Christ, and we have to somehow complete the rest. We proclaim news that is truly good. Truly finished and truly effective.

And so our evangelism and mission is strengthened by this doctrine.

Confidence in Missions

But it also gives us confidence in evangelism and mission. There are lost sheep to be found. These sheep hear his voice, wherever they may be. And they are in all the world. His sheep, don't merely have the potential to be saved, they will be saved.

And by his grace, he chooses to use redeemed sinners to proclaim his redemption.

Conclusion

And so as we bring this study to a close, let us keep in our minds the majesty of our mediator.

Let that word, "Mediator", be a window to gaze at the mighty person and work of Christ.

He fulfilled his mission. He redeemed the people given to him by the father.

Not all people are saved, but that is not because his atonement is ineffective. Those he died for have their record wiped clean and they are declared righteous.

The Trinity decided to rescue a people and this has been fulfilled.

And his mission is for all. He died and redeems people from all nations, and all tribes and all countries. He rescues from the whole world.

And all Christians are called to proclaim this good news. We are strengthened in this and confident in this because he has sheep all over the world, in all places without distinction who will hear his voice and follow him.

He Died for His People, and now His People Live for Him.

Let us pray