

No man, says Jesus, comes to the Father except through me. And I want to try and point that out to you in this passage, really by using three questions.

The first is the obvious question. Why do we need a mediator? Why do you need a mediator? So it speaks of a necessity. Why do we need a mediator? The second is, who is the mediator that we need?

And God has provided that mediator. It speaks of God's provision. And then the third question is this, what does the mediator do? It's so important. So we'll think about the necessity of the mediator, the identity of the mediator, and the ministry of the mediator.

[4 : 39] So first of all, the necessary, the necessity of the mediator. Why do we need him? And that's a great problem, isn't it, for lots of people. Because the one thing that people refuse to see is that they have a need.

They have a need for a mediator between themselves and God. They're completely unaware of the necessity of anybody having a mediator between themselves and God.

So let me illustrate it to you. On Friday morning, I went to the rugby club. I was chatting to one of the men there. And I asked him, would you call yourself a Christian? And he said, no, I wouldn't. But I often talk to the man upstairs.

That's how he described God. The man upstairs. He says, I'd often pray to the man upstairs before games. And the idea that there was any problem in this guy relating to God was unthinkable to him. It had obviously never entered his mind that there was some issue and some difficulty between him and God. He just called him the man upstairs.

[5 : 56] But there are multitudes of people, don't they, of people who think that they can draw near to God through the kind of natural beauty of the world, or art, or literature, or music, or culture, or mystical contemplation, or they think religious acts, that that's how they can draw near to God.

The idea that there is a barrier between them and God, which is impenetrable, that there's a barrier between God and men and women and boys and girls, that makes it necessary for them actually to be introduced into his presence by a mediator, that is a massive shock to people.

They just don't accept it. They're unwilling to accept it. They think that all they need to do is to come to him. I drove past the church recently, and the church had a poster outside, and it said this, Don't worry, God is on your side.

Call on him any time. Don't worry, God is on your side. Call on him any time. And so the great question is, is that true? Is it? Call on him any time?

Don't worry, God is on your side. Is that really right? Because what Paul is telling us here is, in fact, there is an impenetrable barrier between you and God.

[7 : 27] And from our point of view, it makes it absolutely impossible for somebody to contemplate God, even to think right thoughts about God, for it to draw near to him.

And so he tells us that three times in this passage. He tells us what we were before we were brought to God by Jesus Christ. He tells us what we are this morning if we're without Christ. And he emphasizes that. So just look with me at verse 6. It says, while we were still weak. The better word there is powerless.

While we were still powerless. If you look at verse 8. It says, while we were still sinners. And then in verse 10, you see the same little phrase again.

While we were enemies. While we were powerless. While we were still sinners. While we were enemies. Let's take them in reverse order.

[8 : 34] Let's look at verse 10. It's a very difficult truth to accept, isn't it? That while we were God's enemies. But when you see it, you see the need for a mediator between you and God.

There exists between you and God. Between every man and woman and every boy and girl and God. Not a kind of state of amicableness. Not a state of kind of mutual buddies.

But a state of total hostility. And that's one of the fundamental things that I need to grasp. And you need to grasp. That it was when we were God's enemies. That through the death of God's son.

We were reconciled to him. We were brought to him. But by our state. By our natural state. By nature. It was this. We were enemies of God. And the primary reason that there is this hostility. Is that God is infinitely holy. And infinitely pure. And infinitely lovely. And infinitely righteous. And we by our sin have become infinitely unholy.

[9 : 46] And we've rebelled against him. And we've sought to usurp his place in our lives. And we've become guilty of transgression. And what that means according to the New Testament.

Is that we by nature are under God's wrath and anger. And I wonder if we've really grasped the importance of that. Because the thing that really matters.

In our relationship with God. Is not how I like to think about God. So we hear that don't we.

When we talk to people. I like to think of God as this. I like to think of him as a gentle loving father. A kind of father Christmas. Grandfatherly type of person. Who never points out any of our faults.

And he's just well disposed to you. Turns a blind eye to everything wrong. That you may do. I like to think about God like that. And what's happened there.

[10:47] People have created a God for themselves. Who suits them. But he's only a figment of their imagination. When I was growing up. I had an imaginary friend.

And I had an imaginary friend called Sam. Sam lived a tragic life. His wife had died. His five children had died. He used to follow us in the car behind us.

And he would always be getting lost. And I would get upset. And my older brothers and sisters would roll their eyes. And my father would get more frustrated. And one day we were driving along the road.

And I said. With a car full of our family. I said. Oh Sam lives back there. And my father slammed on the brakes. And said. Let's go and see him. And turned the car around.

And said. Where should we. Where's Sam's house. Sam never appeared. In our family again. My father killed off Sam. At that point. Because he was a figment of my imagination.

[11:49] And when it came to the reality. My cruel father ruined it. But that's what we do with God. You see. And so. It's quite possible.

That you may have created a God. Of your imagination. And he lives in your imagination. And he suits your imagination. But the God of the Bible. says that. The wrath of God.

Is being revealed from heaven. Against all. Godlessness and wickedness of men. People who suppress the truth. By their wickedness. That's you.

And that's me. And however you may feel about God. That is the state of the affairs. That is the state of the affairs.

The Bible describes. That exists between God and you. That there is hostility. And so you and I are unable to approach him. And we need someone.

[12:45] To step in. And intercede on our behalf. And mediate for us. We were God's enemies. The second thing is. We were sinners. Verse 8. That is.

We were guilty before God. Made unclean. By sin in his presence. And that debar us from God. And it makes it impossible for us to approach him.

And sinners cannot approach God. The best illustration of that is in the Old Testament. Isn't it? The Jews had a temple and a tabernacle. And it was illustrated vividly for them. That in that temple and that tabernacle.

There was a great thick curtain. Curtain. And there was a curtain which separated off the Holy of Holies. And that was the place where God dwelt.

And it separated everyone else from God. Man and God were cut off from each other. They were separated from each other. And what that curtain said.

[13:42] And it said all the time. Was keep out and keep away. Keep out and keep away. Or you will be destroyed. By the burning holiness of God.

And into that place. That God dwelt. A mediator went. A mediator went. And he went once. Every year.

He was known as the high priest. That's not important this morning. But he went into the presence of God. On behalf of the people. To bring their needs. Before God.

And Paul says. We were enemies. We were still sinners. We were kept out. And away from God. The third thing. Verse 6. Why are we still powerless? And that's significant. Because not only are we God's enemies.

By nature. And sinners by nature. So that God is hostile. Towards us. In his wrath and judgment. And not only are we debarred. From his presence. But God says. We're absolutely powerless.

[14:42] And that's the most difficult thing to accept. There's nothing you can do about it this morning. There's two senses. By which. We're powerless.

We're powerless intellectually. And you need to take this in. That it doesn't matter how clever you are. It doesn't matter how many postgraduate degrees you might have. I need to tell you this morning.

Each one of us is intellectually powerless. To think right thoughts about God. And that's why people in their imaginations. They produce a gross and a distorted idea of God.

Of the God of the Bible. That's why we need the Lord Jesus Christ. To die for our sins. As our saviour. And as our mediator. But Jesus needed to come.

To reveal to us. What God was like. Because we are mentally powerless. And we cannot think truly about God. That's why the Christian message is so offensive.

[15 : 44] To so many people isn't it? But we're also morally powerless. We can't make ourselves fit for God's presence. It's the great era of many people.

That we think that somehow we can make ourselves fit. In to enter God's presence. And God says we were powerless. We can't change. And that's what we're like apart from Jesus Christ.

We need an intermediary. That's the necessity of a mediator. And it's very unwelcome news isn't it? But the second question is. Who is this mediator?

What is the identity of the mediator? Who is he? And verse 1. Therefore since we've been justified by faith. We have peace with God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We saw in the first sermon in this series two weeks ago. We saw that all the spiritual blessings God has for us are in Christ. And now we see that all those spiritual blessings are dispensed to us.

[16 : 48] They are given to us through Christ. And God never dispenses any spiritual blessings to any man or woman or boy or girl except through Jesus Christ.

And the only way to have peace with God is through Jesus Christ. And the reason for that is he is the only mediator. God has appointed him and there is no other.

And so remember Paul speaking about the uniqueness of this. He says the uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of the mediator. There is one mediator. There is one mediator.

And so there is one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. That is Jesus Christ represents both sides. He is the only mediator because he represents both sides.

He is anointed and he is appointed by God. And yet he is truly man. He is the perfect man. And he is the perfect image of God.

[17 : 52] He is the only mediator. He alone. He alone has died a death that has brought reconciliation, has brought God and man together.

He's brought sinful man and a holy God together. And that has something to say, doesn't it, about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. It has something to say to us in all manner of ways about the church and the world.

Because the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is assaulted and denied and blurred. It has something to say to us about the kind of multi-faith jumble that goes on.

And so people say to me, well Muslims and Buddhists and Jews and Hindus and Christians, they can pray together to God.

Apostle Paul says, there's one God and there's one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. And so there's no other way to God except through Jesus Christ.

[19 : 14] That is intolerant. That is dogmatic. Let me give it to you from the lips of Jesus. You might say, well that's the apostle Paul.

He's a bigot anyway. Let me tell you what Jesus said. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. So the simple question is this.

Was Jesus right? Was Jesus wrong? Is there another mediator between God and men besides the man Christ Jesus? And the answer very simply is, there's not.

And you say to me, that's so narrow minded. Let's say you were to phone me this week and you didn't have my number and you didn't know how to work the Church Suite app.

So you ring Jess for my number. And if Jess agreed, she would give you my number. And you would find Jess to be really narrow minded about it.

[20 : 20] She would insist to you that there are 11 digits that you have to put into your phone. And if you do not put in those 11 digits into your phone, you will not get through to him.

To me. And you might say, well, I don't want to do that. I'm going to try some numbers that I want to try. And so you try that and you don't get through.

And you run back to Jess and you say, I keep putting the numbers in and I keep getting the wrong person. And what would she say? She would say, it is because you've not put in the right numbers.

The number that I gave you. There is one number by which you will reach him. And if you dial other numbers, you will get through to other people and not to him.

And you slam the phone down and you say, she's a narrow minded bigot. She's so narrow minded. Of course he wouldn't.

[21 : 22] But do you see there's something absolutely exclusive about the New Testament's insistence that Jesus Christ is unique and he is the only mediator between God and man. The necessity of the mediator, the identity of the mediator.

And thirdly, what's the results of this mediator? What's the ministry of the mediator? Notice how Paul begins in chapter 5. He says, therefore, since we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the first ministry of the mediator. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The hostility between God and us is taken away. Here's the second one.

Verse 2. Through whom we have obtained access by faith, by trusting into this grace in which we stand. We live by God's undeserved favor.

And then possibly he goes on to a third and he says, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Do you notice what he says?

[22 : 34] We have peace with God. There's an end to hostility. And when Paul says we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, he's speaking about now, right now. He speaks later in the New Testament about the peace of God.

That is that experience that we Christians have of God's peace, that we feel it. It's not talking about that here.

It's talking about something far more important. It's talking about peace with God. That is the hostility of God is at an end.

The enmity is over. The war is over. The alienation is done. We are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We're not enemies anymore. And the next thing it says, we have faith in him. We have access to this grace in which we stand. It is grace which gives us access to God through Jesus Christ. And as sinners and enemies of God, we need peace.

[23 : 44] And as sinners, we need access. And he says, we get access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. It's through his death that we have access. Into this grace in which we stand.

And the grace of God is his free mercy for Jesus Christ, for sinners. Once we were banished. Once we were far off. Once we were powerless. But the person who's trusted in Christ is brought near. And has the radiant hope of the glory of God. And has prospects. And has a future that your mind can't begin to fathom. And it all comes to us through Jesus Christ.

Through his coming and through his rising and through his dying. Through his dying and his rising. And through his ascending. And through his present work of intercession. At the right hand of God. He is our mediator. And so the great question this morning. Is do you have the mediator? That's a great question, isn't it?

[24 : 53] Do you have this mediator? Have you heard the very simple lesson that Jesus teaches?

That I am the way. That no one comes to the Father but through me. I am the way. And I am the truth. And I am the life. And it is through Christ. And that through Christ.

Our enmity between us and God is done away with. And that our exclusion from the presence of God is dealt with. And our powerlessness is changed into the most glorious, radiant hope.

And it is to Christ that we therefore need to come. And so we join with the hymn writer. And we say you, oh Christ. Let's pray. Let's pray.