

I. Prologue

Good morning Crossroad. Today is Father's Day and we are gathered in the Father's house today with one mission. In the spirit of Psalm 145, our purpose is to extol the most glorious father who ever was, or is, and who forever will be. May we commend his works to another generation, meditating on the glorious splendor of his majesty together so that we would all be caught up in worship and declare his greatness to the fame of his abundantly good and righteous name. To this end my plan is that we would behold the glorious love of The Father in his costly sacrifice to redeem us.

Our sermon idea is that "The sacrificial love of the Father has deemed his purpose in Christ unstoppable." I am prayerfully expecting that this truth, once taken hold of, would have one of two impacts upon you...

The first would be that the believer's heart would sing and that the Holy Spirit would instill lion hearted courage in you as you face life's hardships and trials and as you suffer with Christ, knowing that the love of your omnipotent Father is set upon you and his purpose is unstoppable. The second impact we should pray for is that the Holy Spirit would graciously grant faith and repentance to the unbelieving so that some might make a saving call upon God and come to know the love of this Father. So how will we get there?

We are going to look at a particular piece of God's unfolding story that he has been telling since creation but I want to look at it with a special eye for what the Father is doing distinct from the rest of the Godhead, since it's Father's Day. We do not always give much thought to the importance of the unity of the Godhead and we may mistakenly picture Jesus being cross-purposed with the Father when he lays down his life to rescue us from the wrath of God. For this reason we will start by talking about the trinity and then focus in on the Father some. Finally we will move into exegesis of our main text in Deuteronomy 21 and a connecting text in Galatians 3 in order to consider his sacrificial love.

II. Theological Background

The Trinity in General

We have a triune God who is one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Our God is one in essence and three in persons. The persons of the Godhead are distinct yet each is fully God, not 1/3 of God but fully God. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Father is not the Spirit. The persons of the

Godhead are distinct but our great God is One. Each person of the Godhead is fully divine and shares the very same divine nature and attributes. Our God has worked redemption by wondrous triune works whereby the Father has elected and predestined us, he has sent his only Son, this Son, by substitution, accomplished our redemption, is our prophet, mediator, intercessor, and King, and the Spirit has applied this redemption to us, has sealed us, and empowers us in sanctification toward our bodily redemption on the Day of the Lord. It is only these particular roles and their relationships between each other that distinguishes each person of the Godhead. Like the shadow of marriage, the members of the trinity are equal yet there is a hierarchy of authority and responsibility seen.

The Father in particular

Moving on to the Father in particular...what else can be said regarding how the Father is distinct in the Godhead? I need to acknowledge that owe the structure and some content of this description I will give to Dr. Bruce Ware from Southern Seminary thanks to his book *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*.

First, it is the Father who is supreme among the persons of the trinity. In Psalm 2 God expresses his unchallengeable rule over all the nations. Then in verses 5-6 it says "Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.'" This King, his Son, will rule the nations. The Father does not merely rule the nations but he is supreme over the King of kings that rules the nations. It is he who sent the Son to reign and gave him all authority. He put the King in place.

Jesus himself declares that he came not to do his will but the will of his Father who sent him (John 5:30, 8:28, 12:49). He teaches us to pray for the Father's Kingdom and that the Father's will would be done (Matt 6). The Father has purposed to subject all things to his Son but even his Son subjects himself to the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28). Yes every knee will bow to the Son and confess him as Lord of all but it will be to the glory of the Father who has given his Son this position (Phil 2:9-11).

Second, it is the Father who is the wise and glorious designer and architect of all that occurs from creation through consummation. In Ephesians 1:1-12 Paul the Apostle makes it plain that the Father has set forth and actively works a wise plan determined before creation that centers around his Son and it is aimed at our redemption in order that in Christ all things would be united toward the good purpose of the praise of the glorious grace of God.

Third, it is the Father who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Jesus himself is a gift from the Father (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The Spirit is a gift from the Father (Acts 1:4, 2:33). James 1:16-17 tells us that absolutely every good and perfect gift comes from the Father so it must be noted that he is the source of all that is good.

Fourth, the Father often provides and works through the Son and Spirit. We must know the divine humility of the Father and the joy that he has in his Son. All blessing or good gifts that he gives is delivered through the Son. Later we will read Ephesians 1:3-12 where it says that God has blessed us “in Christ” with every spiritual blessing. The Father has chosen us “in Christ”. He has predestined us to adoption “through Christ”. He promised that the Holy Spirit would seal us forever “in Christ”. The Father spotlights the Son and calls us to worship him. Look at my Son! See his glory! See his grace! Notice the beauty of my Son! See his compassion. See his love. See his obedience. See his lion-like heart. He is the radiance of my glory! Despite the Father’s supreme authority he does not take the spotlight but does all this through his Son and through his Spirit. He shared the work of creation. Now he shares the work of redemption and displays the beautiful unity of the Godhead working together for the purpose that the Father has set forth.

Father and the Son

Moving past roles let’s consider the actual relationship enjoyed between the Father and his eternal Son. We only have time to briefly consider this but was there ever a Father than had greater love and sheer adoration for his Son? Was there ever a Son who had greater love and reverence for his Father? Listen to Jesus speak with confidence in the the undying love of his Father who would potentially scrap redemption itself if Jesus was not to go to the cross willingly for the joy set before him. This statement is in response to Peter trying to fight to protect Jesus when they came to arrest him...

“52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:52–53, ESV)

That is 72,000 angels. Now I don’t claim to know how many angels God made but that is a lot! Does this remind you of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6? Where the mountain was covered with unseen angels with horses and flaming chariots that stood by ready to defend them against the massive Syrian army that was surrounding them? Jesus knew the love of the Father for him indeed. Jesus prayed that the Father would make known to us this love in John 17:20-26. Of course Jesus had already laid his heart bare that night in the garden and we know where his allegiance is despite his flesh that can barely endure the internal struggle...he has his

Father's warrior heart and he is on mission. We will not take the time but you can see his prayer in the Garden in Matthew 26:36-42. Having discussed the trinity and the distinction of the Father along with his relationship with the Son we will move on to the epic story of redemption.

We should always look for this big picture when we study a passage in the Bible. This is because God has revealed himself and his purpose in the world not by writing a book with a topical index like an encyclopedia or a bulleted list of steps to follow. God has written a book consisting of an epic story. One of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. We ought to read the Bible watching for this grand narrative and seeing our own place in this story.

We are looking today at a relatively obscure passage in the OT but it bears upon the great storyline and it tells our story as well. We are going to look at what our text says, what it means, and what its implications were in its original context. Then we are going to see how Paul the Apostle saw this passage in light of the life and death and resurrection of Christ. After examining what is said in this connecting NT text, and interpreting its meaning, we will then draw conclusions regarding the implications for today...which is to answer the question- How does this matter in my life or how does this message hit the ground and become practical to me on Father's Day or any other day?

III. Setting / Context

Moving into our setting / context- We are continuing our short series in Deuteronomy today and if you need a Bible you will find your place on page 164 of the pew Bible in the seat in front of you. But quickly I also want to encourage you to take notes on the back side of the insert where you will find our primary and connected texts printed for you. Please draw on this as you think about the text and look at the back with me...I have headings there that will help you remember to engage in this text so you get the most out of it. Essentially this is to help you journal during your meditation upon the word. The first section is for you to note what the text says. Then the next is what it means. Then why it matters are the implications that you can legitimately derive from the meaning. You have space to respond prayerfully to God there and finally a spot for your thoughts on what you will do differently when you get out of your chair today.

Now we need to understand the context of our passage today as we get started... Pastor David has explained that we are following the children of Israel and they are about to enter the promised land but Moses is first giving them the same law that was delivered to their fathers who died in the desert under the judgment of God

during 40 years of wandering. Moses is exhorting them to understand the conditional nature of the covenant God made with them at Sinai, which promises blessings and life with obedience but curses and death with rebellion. Now considering the immediate context of our particular passage today we should know that Moses had been outlining laws concerning warfare in chapter 20 and he then transitions into a section in the middle of chapter 21 dealing with difficult domestic matters. Here he speaks about marriage and the right of first-born children and about dealing with rebellious sons.

Our passage follows directly on the heels of God's direction to stone (that is kill) any son who is stubborn and rebellious in order to purge evil from their midst so that all Israel would hear and would fear the LORD. So following this death sentence upon the rebellious son let's hear what the LORD says to us in Deuteronomy 21:22-23. [READ Deut 21:22-23]

IV. Exposition

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

Now moving into our exposition- let's make Observations and Interpret our text. First what does the text say... what can we observe? Please scan the text with me as I speak...I would love to preach to the tops of your heads...that would be just fine. We can see that there is a scenario of capital punishment given. We can see that this scenario resulted in the public display of the criminal's dead body on a tree. Finally we can see that God's command is to remove and bury the body the same day in order to keep from defiling the land that God has given to his people.

So what does the text mean? Considering the context of this narrative being the time following the Exodus and just before the conquest of Canaan around 1400 BC we can consider what meaning the author intended and what implications those first readers may have drawn from the text during Israel's occupation of the promised land. First of all we need to understand that the Jews did not apply capital punishment by hanging the criminal on trees or by crucifixion. We can see in the verses right above that capital punishment was by stoning. This penalty was to purge evil rebellion from the people and to remind the living to fear the LORD. The importance of this is displayed in the case of Achan where he and his family were killed for taking idols for themselves that were supposed to be destroyed. His sin was a corruption that was bringing judgment upon the whole camp in Joshua 7.

The public display of the bodies of those punished under capital penalty of the law evidenced God's curse upon the law breaker and the added shame was a warning to keep others from transgressing the law. This was

typically reserved for the most serious crimes. Remember that the law promised both blessing and curses that depended upon their heeding of God's word (Deut 11:26-28; Deut 28). We have an example of this public display in 2 Samuel 4:12. Here two brothers who wickedly murdered Saul's son (Ish-Bosheth) and foolishly presented his head to King David. David's response was to order their execution, dismemberment, and the public hanging of their bodies. So the curse is really the wrath of God upon the rebel, at the hand of God-ordained human authority (Rom 13:4), and it is demonstrated to all publicly by this hanging on a tree. And the main point of this passage is not the hanging on the tree but the removal from the tree because of the defilement that it would be for the land if it remained into the next day. Notice that the language is passively describing the situation until it gets to the removal of the body and now it is an imperative. It is a command. What is removed by execution and burial is the corruption among the living and the corruption of the land. But now remember what the land represented to them and why this corruption must be avoided. God had promised to dwell with them in the land and this represented their communion with God, which would be disrupted or hindered by open rebellion or the continued presence of what is guilty and unclean.

“34 You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel.” (Num 35:34, ESV)

Therefore looking at the end of v 23 we should understand that this text is not just about a curse...it is about preserving a blessing. So we should now have some understanding into what the text means and what implications it had to a reader back then but are there any different implications for a reader in the time after the death and resurrection of Christ? To answer this we need to expand our view to include all of the Scriptures because God has chosen to reveal himself and his purpose progressively through the time of the Apostles.

Jumping forward about 14 centuries in God's unfolding story, we will take Paul's letter to the Galatians and look at a connecting text found in chapter 3 vv 10-14. It is also printed on your insert or you can turn with me to it. [Read Gal 3:10-14]

You can see I am not identifying a connection here because I am super smart or because I am adding something unwarranted... but because Paul the Apostle cites Deut 21:23 in this very passage. Paul draws our connection under the inspiration of the holy Spirit.

So now looking at Galatians 3:10-14

Let's make Observations and Interpret our text. So what does the text say...what can we observe? There is a ton here so for our purpose today I will basically use restatement of each verse rather than stack up a whole bunch of individual observations.

In v 10 we see that those who rely on works of the law are under a curse since it is evidently impossible to keep the whole law.

In v 11 we see that no one is justified by the law since "the righteous shall live by faith" citing Hab 2:4. To this point, however there is no object of faith identified. Of course faith is a trust or a hope in something or someone.

And in v 12 the law (as Paul is using the word here) is not of faith but of obedience, citing Lev 18:5 when he says "the one who does them shall live by them". By context he is referring to doing "works of the law" as described in v 10 when he says the one who does "them". Now Paul changes from a negative description of what does not work at removing the God's curse to what does work.

In v 13 we see that Christ redeemed us, or delivered us, in a manner that frees us from the curse of the law. It says that he did it by becoming a curse in a manner that accords with the way that the criminal in Deuteronomy 21:23 is cursed since Paul cites that verse here.

Then in v 14 Paul gives the reason or purpose for this redemption being that in Christ the blessing promised to Abraham would indeed reach the rest of the world. And this blessing would then mean that all peoples might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. The specific way that the Father was fulfilling his promise would bless the whole world and not just the Jews. With these observations then, what does the passage mean? And how does Paul's reference to our original passage improve our understanding of both?

Drawing most of our context from the immediate passage and then moving outward to other Scripture in the NT penned by Paul and of course OT passages cited by Paul here, we will look to understand the main points he is making in this passage.

In vv 10-11 Paul helps us to understand the way he uses the term "law" later in the passage by making it clear that it is those who rely upon their works of the law who are cursed. So the law is not bad (nor is law keeping) but relying on one's own work of keeping the law as our means of being justified or said another way, "declared

not guilty” in God’s sight,... it is this proud and deceitful reliance upon self that is bad. It is also a hopeless effort since our text tells us that a single broken law leaves the criminal under the curse still.

In v 11 we also learn the correct way to relate to the law. Legalism is what happens when our fallen flesh (or the indwelling sinful inclinations of our heart) meets the law apart from faith. This is how the rich young ruler met the law...as if it was something he would conquer rather than falling down and asking for mercy. Paul tells us in Rom 9:30-32 that righteousness comes by faith and that Israel was guilty of responding to the law with works rather than with faith.

In v 12 we can better understand Paul’s language of the law not being of faith because of the way the Israelites were responding to the law “as if it was based on works” (Rom 9:30-32) or here he says “rely on works” in v 10. Law keeping as a means of getting right with God is a loser and Paul has already said that the person who does this is cursed.

But now in v 13 Paul turns our attention to the object of our faith, which is the identity and work of Jesus, as the only way to remove the curse of the law. Here is where we need to meditate upon what God has done in order to redeem us and in order to deliver on all of his promises. The Greek word in this verse for redeemed is transliterated “Exagorazo” is a figurative extension of the word “Agorazo” which means to buy or purchase. Remember also that the concept of redemption relates to the Jewish practice of buying back or exchanging something that was set aside to be sacrificed or devoted to God. It is an exchange of one thing for another in accordance with the law as explained in Exodus 13:11-13.

“11 “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, 12 you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord’s. 13 Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.” (Exodus 13:11–13, ESV)

So how is this exchange or redemption price paid exactly by Christ? How exactly does he cover our cost in a way that justly removes the curse that is upon us? Paul describes it saying that Jesus “becomes a curse for us” and he ties us into the guilt of the criminal in Deut 21. Do you see that Paul has placed you and I into the story here as the rebellious son or at least as a guilty sinner deserving to be stoned and hung on a tree? Do you see that connection that he redeemed us from the curse and referenced our Deut text as if we were the one on death row? But what God did here is far different than paying a fee to redeem a child or substitute a lamb for a

donkey. In this case the redemption fee was covered by the flesh of Christ in exchange for you, Christian. Christ bore our sin and shame in his own flesh and he suffered the full penalty of the law in place of each one who would be united to him by faith. The Father put upon his holy and righteous Son, who deserves nothing but praise from man and the enduring adoration and love of his Father...upon this Son the Father has laid our guilt and shame and curse. Elsewhere Paul describes this great exchange using different words when he tells us that the Father caused Jesus to become sin on our behalf so that in him we might become the righteousness of God...do you see the righteousness by which we are justified? It is not my own righteousness and therefore can only be by faith and not by my works. Many have called this an alien righteousness and Paul says in Phil 3:8-9...

“8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law (which would be that legalistic reliance upon the law), but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—” (Philippians 3:8–9, ESV)

And finally in v 14 we see the clear tie-in to the epic story God has been telling since creation. He is fulfilling his promise to redeem his people and he is doing it in glorious fashion. So the curse is contrasted to the blessing again here. Instead of receiving wrath according to the curse we have earned, by faith in Christ we receive the blessing according to the promise of God as if we had kept the law perfectly (Rom 8:1-4; Gal 3:14, 29). Ultimately in our consideration of these two main texts in Deuteronomy and Galatians we cannot lose sight that Jesus came as a man and suffered in our place because he was sent for this purpose by his Father.

Listen in the following verses for the action of the Father and consider the sacrifice being made by him in order to redeem us.

John 3:14-17, “14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:14–17, ESV)

Is 53:10-11, “10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his [the Son’s] soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of

the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul [the Son’s] he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant [the Father’s servant], make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isaiah 53:10–11, ESV)

2 Cor 5:21, “21 For our sake he [The Father] made him [The Son] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV)

Finally in Rom 8:1-4, “1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1–4, ESV)

You see it was “in Christ” that The Father planned from all eternity to rescue his people, not with a law...he ordained that God himself would suffer under the curse of this law in order to become a substitute for his bride and to suffer shame and death and wrath and divine abandonment in her place...to the praise of his glorious grace.

V. Implications

Now lets understand why this all matters, seeing how this bears upon our lives and makes a difference to us in the deepest way. We need to know the value of this truth that the greatest Father sacrificed his beloved Son, sentencing him to suffer divine and omnipotent wrath and shame and abandonment on that cross for a purpose. But what purpose? Ephesians 1:3-14 displays God’s as a series of wonderful things all aimed at the praise of his glorious grace by a people redeemed and made holy like his Son. [READ Eph 1:3-14]

Knowing this grand purpose of God that he set forth to accomplish in his Son we can see a powerful implication of this curse that he put upon him. For the believer I want you to turn to Romans 8:29-39. What we are looking for here is an idea of how the level of the Father’s commitment to his purpose, which he set forth to accomplish in Christ, impacts his determination to complete the mission. Now I want to make my specific case of our sermon idea that “The sacrificial love of the Father has deemed his purpose in Christ unstoppable.” This is the single implication I am drawing for us today. It is far from an unfounded or purely emotional, but I do hope you

will hear it with your heart. Even as an evil Father, as Christ called best human father, even being infinitely below the Father of lights...Consider for a moment that your only son, the perfect child whom you love, has willingly sacrificed his life to fulfill your holy and beautiful plan that you raised him to believe in...I wonder, to what ends would you go to to ensure that his life was not given up in vain and that this purpose was accomplished? If the Father has placed the curse upon his Son and sentenced him in our place already there can be nothing that would stop him now. I get this from verse 32 in what I will read to you now...turn with me to Romans 8. [READ Rom 8:28-39]

Can you hear in this text that the omnipotent God of all creation has set his heart and soul upon his cause of redemption and he will not fail? In Christ he has set his heart upon your sanctification and your bodily redemption Christian and he will not fail. Speaking about keeping his promise to Israel in Jeremiah 32 he said "41 I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul." (Jeremiah 32:41, ESV)

VI. Response & Action

To the Christian...

Do you, Christian, have confidence that The Father of lights, the giver of every good gift is going to give you everything you need to grow into the image of his Son as the joyful inheritance to Christ that the triune God purchased on the cross? What is your response to God?

Christian- you are the inheritance that Christ saw from the cross...you are the joy in which he was satisfied and for which he endured the shame of the cross! I am asking you, what is your response to God? What will stop this Father from finishing what he has begun? Please take away a lion-hearted confidence and be courageous in the fight of faith, in working out your salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that there is no one and no thing that can stop our Heavenly Father who works in us to will and to work for his good pleasure. What difficulty are you facing, what physical suffering are you under, what anguish do you have in your relationships? Do you think for one moment that the omnipotent Father is not pouring his heart and soul into doing you good in all that he allows to come upon you? Can we trust him and hope in him? Find any purpose that he puts forth to accomplish...find any promise toward you in his word and know what he has already spent toward it Christian...what would he not spend to finish it? Elevate your confidence in the enduring love of the Father. Christian what is your response to God and what are you going to do?

To the unbeliever...

I want you to know that we are all born under the curse of the law and under the wrath of a holy God. But despite this just judgment against us, this glorious Father is eager to receive you, at the highest imaginable cost to himself, if only you will trust in his Son and surrender your life to him. This means having faith in the person and work of Christ as your only saving righteousness. Trusting in his revealed identity as the divine Son of God who came as the promised offspring to deliver the children of Abraham from sin. Trusting in his perfect life and his sacrificial death to conquer the guilt and power of sin and his resurrection to conquer death and bring new life to those who are united to him by faith.

This means turning from your sin and following Christ and his cause from this day forward, no longer living your life as you knew it but trusting that your life is now hidden in God with Christ (cf. Col 3:2-3). So you who have not yet turned to Christ for hope, what is your response to the Father?

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, I invite you all to marvel at the Father... And know that “The sacrificial love of the Father has deemed his purpose in Christ unstoppable.” And I urge you to respond to God in prayer and take action toward him.

“20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20–21, ESV)