

**Sola Christus – The Only Mediator**  
**1 Tim 2:5-7, Col 3:1-17**

Well brothers and sisters – we are in the midst of an election right now and when the all the voting is finally done there are going to be some politicians looking for a new job.

Most of them will return to their former occupations and businesses – but some of them will begin another phase of working in gov't as lobbyists.

Back in 2014 the former Premier of Ontario, Mr. Dalton McGuinty, became a lobbyist when a children's educational software company hired him to make use of his government contacts and connections for their advantage.

In such a situation he might try to persuade the Minister of Education to give this company an exclusive contract to supply all the primary schools in Ontario with learning software...

Or maybe he will try to persuade the Minister of Business Development to invest in this company and help them expand into the international market...

Because that's what a lobbyist does – they use their connections and relationships with influential people in power to advocate on your behalf and influence them to make decisions and laws that work in your favor.

Why? Because it's not possible for the average person to simply walk into the Government's Offices and speak with a high-ranking gov't official about their concerns and specifically communicate to them what the Government could or should do that would benefit and help them.

At best the average person can try to set-up a meeting with their local MLA or MP and hope their concerns are significant enough to merit attention and the MP or MLA would look at responding to them.

But unless your MLA or MP is a mover and shaker in the gov't or an up and coming power player it's unlikely that anything will be done in response to your concerns.

So - if you have an issue to bring to the gov'ts attention and you want them to respond favorably - you need to hire a lobbyist so your concerns get to the right people and get the right results. As the saying goes *"It's not what you know, it's who you know!"*

So Lobbyists have become an integral part of how our political system works – both in Canada and in the United States.

Now if you feel there is something a bit undemocratic and unfair about using connections and influence to lobby gov't officials, you're not alone – lobbying leaves a bad taste in many people's mouths.

And if it you think it seems out of place in the government, then for sure it would seem out of place in the church, right?

Now brothers and sisters – when I speak about lobbying in the church I'm not talking about church politics, I'm referring to what developed in the Medieval Catholic Church in the 1500's.

There was a whole system of "spiritual lobbying" that had developed to help ordinary everyday people bring their cares and concerns before our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ and to assure the people of their forgiveness, salvation and eternal destiny.

Regular Christians were not confident that God would or could hear their prayers... and if He did hear, they weren't sure that He would be so inclined to help them, and if He did help, would grant them what they had specifically asked for?

So, medieval Catholic Christians began the practice of praying to and through other Christians whose lives were noted for their piety and holiness - Saints who were "closer" to God and Jesus than they were - and who could essentially "lobby" for the common Christian with God and get better results.

Additionally when people confessed their sins and were prescribed an act of penance – to help them reflect and come to contrition for their sin - they began to believe that the act of penance was the deed that you performed in order to be certain that you were made right with God once again.

So you can see in all this how the common Christian's relationship with Jesus Christ would begin to suffer because they were not confident to pray to Him or confess their sins to Him or receive assurance in Him that they were forgiven.

And in the midst of all this “lobbying” the Medieval Catholic Church began to emphasize the divinity of Jesus and his status as exalted risen ruler over all.. to the exclusion of his humanity and ability, as it says in Hebrews 4:15 *“to empathize with our weakness and temptations.”*

And so to compensate for a Jesus that was lofty and removed and hard to relate to – people began to identify more with his mother Mary.

She was gentle and meek and mild and kind and easy to approach, and besides we all know that if you really want to influence someone in your favor – you get their mother on side with your cause.

So, this was the situation for the common christian in the 1500's - they had to lobby through the Priests, the Saints or the Virgin Mary in order to bring their confessions, concerns or cares to Jesus, to God – and as a result sentimentality and superstition were flourishing - but the people's confidence, faith and obedience to Christ was suffering.

And brothers and sisters, when confidence and faith in Christ is overshadowed by sentimentality and superstition the message of the Gospel and people's eternal destiny is at stake.

However the Gospel and our eternal destiny belong to God and so God raised up reformers, Martin Luther John Calvin, John Knox - who called people away from this system of lobbying and exhorted them to put their faith and their trust in Christ alone – sola Christus!

They said the scriptures teach us that we do not need others to lobby for us, we do not need penance to assure us of our forgiveness - Christ alone is the mediator between God and us – there is no other! And that is still true today friends.

Look at 1 Tim 2:5 *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5)*

And in Hebrews 4:14 *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”*

1 John 2:1-2 *“But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

And Jesus himself says in John 14:6–7 *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well.”*

So we see that the scripture teaches us Christ alone – Only Jesus goes between us and God - so there is no need to add any other mediators, and in fact... it simply won't work.

Any other mediator will not connect you with God because they are just human – but Jesus connects us with God because His nature is both fully human and fully divine.

Now thank the Lord that the Reformers were successful in recovering this truth from scripture and Re-forming the Church around it so that we can be confident that God hears our prayer when we pray in Jesus name. (John 14:13)

So you won't find us praying to Mary, nor do we pray to any of the Saints or the Church Fathers, and we don't teach that assurance of forgiveness comes from doing the right penance.

However, it can be easy to pat ourselves on the back for this and forget that the reason these superstitious practices developed and took root was because people were looking for assurance; they wanted to hedge their bets.

They were not confident that God had heard their prayers, they weren't certain that their sins were truly paid for and forgiven - and brothers and sisters we still struggle with this.

We still look for assurance, who doesn't want to hedge their bets; many people still wonder if God hears us and how we can be certain that we have connected with Him in our needs.

The temptation to add another mediator alongside Jesus or look to other things aside from Jesus is always there and can take many different forms aside from praying to Mary and the Saints. (e.g. we think music connects us God, the intensity by which we pray, or our sincerity, or a methodology...)

So how does learning about Christ Alone - Sola Christus - help us today – so that we are not deceived by a sentimental or superstitious faith, and encourage us to reform what we believe and how we act with regards to connecting with God and receiving his blessings – so that we can be confident in our faith instead?

Well friends let me highlight three things;

First, ourselves and those whom we are called to disciple will most certainly have been shaped and influenced in some way by our pluralistic Canadian culture and its popular belief that all religions and expressions of spirituality are equal and lead to God.

Sola Christus contradicts this false belief. If we are solidly grounded in Christ alone then at some point in the process of our discipleship and/or in discipling others we need to reject this false belief and confess that only Christ leads to God.

And this isn't because we somehow think we are superior, this is the message of the scriptures; it is the very message of Christ himself! *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Of course we can't just go around saying Jesus is the only way... without explaining why. If we are trying to help people put their faith and trust in Jesus we need to show them why they can and should trust in him as opposed to someone else.

So an important part of the discipleship process is helping people understand how Sin blocks humanity from full and clear access to God, how it has twisted our relationship with our Creator so that we either ignore Him, or we try to impress Him, or we outright rebel against Him - so that we are separated and disconnected from God.

The good news is that Jesus was the only person to ever exist that was both fully human and divine and so He can function as the one to go between, the mediator.

So, as enlightened as Buddha was – he is not a mediator, as much of a prophet as Mohammed claimed to be – he is not a mediator, for all his spiritual simplicity the Dhali Lama is not a mediator... and even though he is our Christian brother and a good example for us, Pope Francis is not the mediator... only Jesus Christ fully God fully human brings God and humanity together.

So we teach, explain, give illustrations, share life examples and testimony as part of discipling others so that they will come to

believe Sola Christus and say *“I confess in faith that Christ alone connects me with God, no one else!” Amen!*

And this confession of faith in Christ is terrific, but it needs to be expressed in people lives.

So, the second way Sola Christus helps us is in pushing us to live out this truth in faith through our actions...

Faith in Christ alone must be expressed, because as James says *“faith without works is dead”* (James 2:17) So what does that look like?

We as we mentioned we don't pray to the saints or Mary or do penance to assure ourselves that we're forgiven – and if you're coming out of a nominal or superstitious Catholic background perhaps those can still be temptations for you and its very much an expression of faith in Christ alone for you to pray and confess your sins directly to Him.

But friends, I think it has more to do with each of us copes with that God-sized hole that we have at the center of our lives.

You see we were created to have fellowship – not just a “relationship” – but fellowship; intimate friendship and companionship with God – that’s what Adam and Eve had with God before the consequences of their disobedience ruptured that connection.

But we still yearn for it – even if we don’t quite know what it is that we are longing for. We just somehow feel there should be more, that we want to be part of something bigger than ourselves, and we are drawn to things which make us feel healthy, happy and fulfilled and truly alive.

And yet Sin will still twist this... and we become preoccupied with “wellness” and those things in God’s creation which make us feel “well” and we put those things at the center of our life instead of God, and they become idols.

We’ve been deceived into believing that one of God’s good gifts such as “being balanced” or “healthy” or “pursuing our dreams” or “being loving” or “spending time with our family” is what really gives us life and makes us feel alive and we center ourselves and our identity on it.

Sola Christus challenges this and helps us reform our actions to express faith in Christ alone.

So, a very simple way of expressing that Christ should be at the center of our lives - because He alone connects our life to God - can be expressed in how we center our lives around the practice of spiritual disciplines and making them a priority.

So making a priority of reading the scriptures and spending time in prayer on a daily basis, attending worship each week with your fellow Christians, giving 10% back to God, helping others and serving those who don’t deserve it...

Friends, re-arranging our schedules and routines so that these actions and activities are getting priority in our lives – is one

way to express our faith in Christ alone and it's a good place to start with people whom we are discipling as well.

However growing in centering your life this way doesn't always mean going from spending 10 minutes a day reading scripture and praying to spending 3 hours in devotions... or that you go from attending worship on Sunday morning to being at every church function that happens from Monday through Saturday...

Growing in expressing our faith in Christ alone means integrating Christ into the center of all the rest of our daily activities so that our whole life and everything in it is built on Christ.

Christ in your relationships, Christ in your job, Christ in your recreation, Christ in your hobbies, Christ in your sports, Christ in your possessions – so that as Paul says in Colossians 3:17 *“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

Friends, the life and salvation that we receive from God through Jesus Christ is an amazing gift- you know this, anyone who is being discipled knows this – and so the only appropriate way to say thanks is to do everything in the name of Jesus... and I do mean everything... as an offering back to God. As Paul says in 1 Cor 10:31 *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*

He gave us everything so we give back everything – but it only counts... and we can only really give it back to God for His glory by doing it in the name of Jesus Christ alone. We have to trusting in faith that Jesus not only makes our religious life with God possible – but also and maybe even more importantly – He makes our everyday life give glory to God as well. So we should intentionally say to God when we do something like playing football or driving our cars or being a parent or going for coffee – that we are doing it in Jesus name

And this is because Christ is the Word by which everything was created – so not only does he function as a mediator



between us and God, he also mediates between God and everything else in our life. Do you see how that works?

So friends when Apostle Paul writes in Col 3:1-3 *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God...”*

It doesn't mean that we shift our focus from day to day things and think “heavenly / spiritual” thoughts instead.

Rather setting our hearts on things above is the practice of taking ordinary everything things and bringing them up into heaven – through Christ alone – into God's presence so they are made holy.

And that's the third thing friends... only Christ has ascended into the very presence of God Almighty and He has been given all glory, power, and authority over everything!

So not only is He the mediator because He is the Word of God made flesh – Human and Divine - but He is also the mediator because of his location – He is in the presence of God

Almighty – at his right hand... You don't get closer to God than that!

You know it's kind of ironic that everyone is looking for evidence that Heaven is for real... when we ought to be concerned and looking for evidence about whether or not humanity is fit to be in the presence of God in Heaven.

But the ascended Jesus Christ is that evidence – he has taken our very humanity where it has never been before – face to face with God Almighty!

And He is there to lobby for us! To represent us – to prove to God that Humanity can be redeemed, perfected and glorified and made fit to dwell in the presence of God forever!

Where Christ has gone we shall follow – that is our hope.

As Paul says *“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Col 3:3-4)*

No one else, nothing else - can make a way for us to go through death, through the grave, and into the presence of our Creator...

No one else, and nothing we've done outside of Christ can survive and be purified through the final judgment...

and no one else is our guarantee that one day we will receive a resurrected glorified body in the new Heavens and new Earth – only Christ is, only Christ can, only Christ will

Christ Alone – Sola Christus! Friends how amazing is this?!

Praise God, Praise Jesus, Praise the Spirit – Amen.