Undertook This Office

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[0:00] Well, for the last two weeks now, we have been looking particularly at the person of Christ. As we've journeyed through chapter 8 of our Confession of Faith, we've looked at various paragraphs that all are relating to Christ as our mediator, our go-between for us and God, and we are seeing that He is thoroughly qualified for this office, in His person, qualified.

We understand that He is perfectly qualified being the representative of both God and man, for He Himself is truly God and truly man.
One person with two natures, a fully divine nature and a fully human nature. Now, we've already seen that's hard for us to understand as creatures with only the human nature.
How is it that Christ has two natures and yet He is one person? There's certainly mystery in this, and mystery that we may never fully grasp.
In my studies, I read this phrase, and I think it's very true. We're high in the Himalayas of thought. I will admit there are times that I feel like I could use some oxygen.
[1:15] I'm feeling a bit lightheaded. But this is good exercise for us. It's worth it. Like hikers summiting Mount Everest, it's hard, strenuous work, but what a wonderful view from the top there is.

And that's not to say that we'll grasp all of what it means for Christ to be the God-man, but in loving God with our minds and understanding more and more of who Christ is from His Word, we should be led to richer and deeper worship of Him.
So it's worth it to do the hard work of thinking deeply and striving to grow in a biblical understanding of who He is. So there's more for sure that we could say about the person of Christ.
I've even had good conversations with some of you where questions have risen up. Well, what about this as it relates to His person? I hope that we can address some of those questions. In perhaps later weeks, we have more paragraphs that will continue to draw us back to who the person of Christ is.
But for now, we need to hit pause on who He is, and we need to press on to consider what Christ has done. So there's an important relationship here between who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.
[2:29] R.C. Sproul points this out when he says, We make a distinction between the person of Christ and the work of Christ. We are concerned about who Jesus is and also about what Jesus has done.

Although we distinguish between the person and the work of Christ, we do not want to separate them. How we understand His identity as a person has tremendous impact on our understanding of His work.
So we must keep the person of Christ front of mind from paragraphs 2 and 3, even as we now go into paragraph 4. So we have seen Jesus is truly God and man.
We have seen that He is without sin. He is the chosen one of the Father, chosen before the foundation of the world according to the eternal purpose of the Father.
In taking on flesh, the Son gladly submitted Himself to the will of the Father. And the will of the Father was that His Son would be our mediator.
[3:29] So in a nutshell, that is who Jesus is. We needed a mediator, a thoroughly qualified one. And we've seen just how qualified He is based on who He is. So now let's see just what He did.

Well, 1 Timothy 2.5. We've seen this verse already as we kind of introduced this study. And though the confession doesn't give us a theme verse, this could function as our theme verse.
I would encourage you to memorize it. Maybe put it on a sticky note where you'll see it regularly and meditate on 1 Timothy 2.5. It reads, For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God

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and men, the man Christ Jesus.
So in that verse, 1 Timothy 2.5, the person of Christ is succinctly spelled out to us. But if we keep reading, in verse 6, we see what Christ has done as our mediator.
So verse 6 says, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. So verse 5, who Jesus is.
[4:36] Verse 6, what Jesus has done. A short, succinct couple of verses. They are not unpacking all of who He is and all of what He has done, but they are helpfully showing us the importance of both.

Who and what. So as you come to that verse in reading the Word, if you meditate on that verse, think, this is who Jesus is, and this is what He has done. He has given Himself as a ransom for all. So that ransom is at the heart of what we're going to study this morning in paragraph 4. So like previous weeks, we're going to look and read again paragraph 3 just to kind of refresh ourselves on what was covered, and then we'll read all of paragraph 4.
Just follow along as I read. Paragraph 3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature, united in this way to the divine in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure.
He had in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Father was pleased to make all fullness dwell in Him, so that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He was thoroughly qualified to carry out the office of mediator and guarantor.
[5:51] He did not take this office upon Himself, but was called to it by His Father, who put all power and judgment in His hand and commanded Him to carry them out.

The Lord Jesus most willingly undertook this office. To discharge it, He was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it. He also experienced the punishment that we deserved and that we should have endured and suffered.
He was made sin and a curse for us. He endured extremely heavy sorrows in His soul and extremely painful sufferings in His body. He was crucified and died and remained in a state of death, yet His body did not decay.
On the third day, He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered. In this body, He also ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of His Father, interceding.
He will return to judge men and angels at the end of the age. So the first section here, as we do like we've done in previous weeks, breaking this into different sections, the first section of paragraph four really does pick up where we left off in paragraph three.
[7:01] Near the end of paragraph three, we read, He did not take this office upon Himself. He was called to it. Well, then paragraph four just completes that thought. Christ, who was called to this office, most willingly undertook it.

You see there that the confession cites Psalm 40, verses seven to eight, and it also cites Hebrews 10, five to 10. We're going to read Psalm 40, and we're going to see that Hebrews 10 is simply the author of Hebrews saying, Jesus fulfills what Psalm 40 says.
So Psalm 40, verse seven reads, Then I said, Behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book, it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God.
Your law is within my heart. And then the writer of Hebrews says, this is Christ. Because he says, beginning in verse 10, Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, and then what does the writer of Hebrews give us next?
Psalm 40. He said, Jesus said, I have come to do your will. So God the Son shared the same will as God the Father.
[8:14] This is a demonstration to us of the unity of the divine will of God, the divine will within the Godhead. Though God exists in three persons, the triune God does not have three separate wills.

Because three wills would mean three desires. And perhaps those three desires would be competing against each other. There would exist potential opposition.
As though the Father and the Son might then have a disagreement within the Godhead. And one would say, no, I want this. And the other would say, no, I want this. And we would quickly be evolving into something of pagan religion where you have multiple gods competing with each other. You see it actually in ancient Mesopotamian religions. The Enuma Eilish is a Babylonian myth. And there are gods that are fighting against each other in conflict with each other.

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And humanity is actually born out of that conflict. Out of the carcass of one of the dead gods comes humanity. And the gods look upon humanity with disdain.
[9:20] And they say, well, what are we going to do with them? Let's force them. Let's enslave them to make them feed us. So we don't have any of that within the Godhead. We don't have multiple gods competing against each other.

We have one God and there's one will within the Godhead. Father, Son, Spirit share that same will. What the Father willed, so too did the Son.
To put it very simply, what did Jesus say in John 10, 30? I and the Father are one. Not one person, but one shared will by the three persons of the one God.
So when the Father called the Son to take the office of mediator, without hesitation, he undertook the office. And it was no small thing to undertake. This was a great undertaking of the Son.
And we see in the next verse or the next sentence of the confession that God the Son took on flesh. He was born of woman. And he was born under the law.
[10:31] So Jesus, God the Son, stooped down. He lowered himself. He condescended. 2 Corinthians 8, 9 says it very succinctly.

Though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor so that you, by his poverty, might become rich. So Christ was rich in every way.
He was rich in power. He was rich in possessions. All things belonged to him and were under his authority. He was rich in honor as well.
One of Charles Spurgeon's more famous sermons is entitled, The Condescension of Christ. And it was a sermon preached on this text, 2 Corinthians 8, 9.
It's worth reading in all of its entirety. I'm just going to quote you a little bit this morning. Spurgeon helps us to consider the richness of Christ here. He says, Our Lord Jesus had honor.
[11:33] Honor such as none but a divine being could receive. When he sat upon his throne, before he relinquished the glorious mantle of his sovereignty to become a man, all earth was filled with his glory.

He could look both beneath and all around him and the inscription, Glory be unto God, was written over all space. Day and night, the smoking incense of praise ascended before him from golden veals held by spirits who bowed in reverence.
The harps of myriads of cherubim and seraphim continually thrilled with his praise. And the voices of all those mighty hosts were ever eloquent in adoration.
Christ was exalted. He was admired to the highest place. He was lifted high. And then he came down. And for our sake, he became poor.
From exaltation to humiliation. Spurgeon then in that same sermon imagines what it must have been like for the angels as God the Son left heaven and came to earth.
[12:40] Spurgeon says, Do you see him? As on that day of heaven's eclipse he did ungird his majesty. Oh, can you conceive the yet increasing wonder of the heavenly hosts when the deed was actually done, when they saw the tiara taken off, when they saw him unbind his girdle of stars and cast away his sandals of gold?

Can you conceive it when he said to them, I do not disdain the womb of the virgin. I am going down to earth to become a man. Can you picture them as they declared they would follow him.
Yes, they followed him as near as the world would permit them. And when they came to earth, they began to sing glory to God in the highest on earth, peace, good will toward men.
So it was on the night that the angels were declaring the praises of Christ that he was born. And he was born under the law. We see that phrase in the confession.
Born under the law. Meaning that he was born under the authority of the law. He was not exempt from keeping the law. And his law keeping was actually crucial to our salvation.
[13:51] So when we think about ourselves, and we think about being born under the law, that leads us on a path of despair. The thought of being born under the law and therefore held accountable for keeping it is a fearful thought.

Because to be born under the law means that in order to have right standing with God, we must obey that law to a T in every single way, every single command. And the Bible is clear.
We have failed. We came into this world as rebel sinners. We are lawbreakers. And it only takes one breaking of that law to be held accountable for all of the law.

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James 2.10 says, For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. So the idea and understanding being born under the law, that is like a death sentence for sinful human beings like us.
Romans 3.20 says, For by works of the law no human being will be justified in God's sight. And why is that? Romans 3.23, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
[15:04] These are elementary truths, but they're essential truths for us to continue coming back to. So being born under the law is a great problem for us as sinners. But being born under the law is not a great problem for Jesus Christ because he is without sin.

And that means he kept the law perfectly in every way. Not one single sinful thought, not one single sinful word or deed. He was, as we've already seen from our confession of the study, our study of the confession, Hebrews 7.26.
He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. So that being the case, he was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it.
Now when we talk about Jesus fulfilling the law, we are talking about his active obedience throughout his life. Sometimes we might only think of the obedience of Christ as his being obedient in going to the cross and dying in our place.
But his obedience didn't begin when he went to the cross. His obedience began from birth every single day, obeying God in every single way. Just as Psalm 40 says, Behold, I have come.
[16:21] In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. Jesus' heart beat with obedience for the Father.

This active obedience in his earthly life was absolutely necessary. If not, why did Jesus live for 33 years here on this earth? Why not just come down from heaven as a fully grown man and land right there upon the cross?
Because his active obedience was necessary for our salvation. Through that obedience, Christ earned righteousness for us. If he had not lived a life of obedience, but he had simply dropped down out of the sky onto the cross, there would have been none of those positive merits of obedience to the law that he would have to give to us.
We often speak of the great exchange that occurred on the cross. Our sins to Christ and Christ's righteousness to us. There are positive demands of the law, such as, very broadly speaking, loving God, loving neighbor.
Christ kept those positive demands, and that righteousness was then counted to us. Sproul says, it is not enough for our sins to be removed by the atonement.
[17:41] We also need a positive record of righteousness, obedience that fulfills the demands that God gave mankind to take dominion over the world for his glory.

So we need that positive record of righteousness. That's what the confession is saying when it says that Christ was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it. That's what theologians call his active obedience.
But we also need to consider his passive obedience. And we're going to see his passive obedience here in the next section of our paragraph. So having lived a life of obedience, including obedience to the point of death on a cross, as Philippians 2 says, Christ experienced the punishment that we deserved.
The punishment that we should have endured and suffered. He went as a substitutionary sacrifice. He went and he died in our place. And this is what theologians call his passive obedience.
It doesn't mean passive. Sometimes we think of that in a very negative way as like instead of being one to really go after something, you kind of hang back and you're a little apprehensive. That's not the sense in which this word is communicating to us.
[18:57] It simply means in his suffering, Christ took our sins upon himself and was punished in our place. So we need to see the active and the passive obedience of Christ. I've heard them distinguished in this way.

His active obedience is his will of God obeying work and his passive obedience is his penalty bearing work. We needed a Savior who did both.
Who obeyed the will of God and thereby earned the blessing of God for us by his righteousness. And we needed a Savior who bore our sins upon the cross and took the penalty of death that we had earned from our own unrighteousness.

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So what we have here is what theologians call double imputation. Imputation simply means to credit or to ascribe to another. So Christ's righteousness is credited to us though we don't deserve it and our sin is credited to him though he didn't deserve it.
You see what the confession says here. He was made sin and a curse for us. And then 2 Corinthians 5.21 is cited.
[20:11] This is what that verse says. For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Another verse that teaches us the double imputation principle is 1 Peter 3.18. For Christ also suffered once for sins the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God.
So Christ suffered for sins but wait he is sinless so why is he suffering for sins? He has no sins to suffer for. Those are ours. So he suffers in our place.
That's our sin given to him. And yet we also see that he was brought to God in 1 Timothy 3. That we are brought to God in 1 Peter 3. Brought to God.
Well how can sinners be brought to God? Because we have a righteousness not of our own but a righteousness given to us by Christ so that we can come to God.
[21:11] Colossians chapter 1 verse 22 says Christ has now reconciled us in his body of flesh by his death in order to present us holy and blameless and above reproach before God.

So Christ brings us into God and he presents us to God as holy and blameless and above reproach. How can that be? Because his righteousness has now been credited to us.
Martin Luther called this the glorious exchange. It's at the heart of our salvation. And at the heart of this glorious exchange is the death of Christ. This is where the exchange took place at the cross.
So having suffered and died Jesus was buried and we see here that the confession says his body did not decay. Just as God foretold by David in Psalm 16 you will not let your Holy One see corruption.
And Paul affirmed what was foretold in Psalm 16 that it had come to pass in Acts 13 37 he whom God raised up did not see corruption.
[22:22] So this lack of decay is a reminder to us just as Psalm 16 says God had not abandoned his son to the grave. And so the confession continues.

He was raised up raised up on the third day and then having ascended into heaven where he now intercedes we can say with confidence he will return again.
and he's going to return to judge the living and the dead. As the confession says he's going to return to judge men and angels and he will be shown on that day to be exactly who he is the exalted Lord of all.
Revelation 1 7 says behold he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him even those who pierced him and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.
So every eye will see him every unbelieving voice will wail because Christ is returning as the just judge from heaven. Jesus himself says in Mark 13 26 then they will see the son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
[23:36] He is going to return with that great power and glory to do what? To execute his righteous just judgment. The most vivid portrayal of this is found in Revelation 19.

We read of Jesus coming with the armies of heaven. His robe is dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is the word of God.
And then in verse 15 we read from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the almighty.
So the risen exalted Christ will return as the righteous judge and he will swiftly and he will finally execute that judgment on all men and angels. As the confession cites 2 Peter 2 4 says God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.
So that mediator of our salvation is also the mediator of God's judgment. The one who will bring judgment and execute it in perfect order.
[24:53] So as we come to the end of our study of this paragraph I want to ask did you notice the emphasis in this paragraph on the body of Jesus Christ?

The confession says he endured extremely painful sufferings in his body. The confession says his body did not decay. It says he rose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered and in

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this body he ascended into heaven where he now sits at the right hand of the father interceding. From the moment of his conception as man to this present moment right now Jesus has had a body and he will forever have a body.
God the son became man and he will forever stay the God man for all of eternity. David Mathis says it wasn't a mere 33 year stint as impressive as that would be.
Jesus is forever the God man. He is glorious not merely in assuming our human nature but in remaining our brother and continuing as the visible image of the invisible God.
[26:07] Colossians 1.15 Mathis goes on to put it in the apostle John's language the word became flesh his humanity isn't a costume the eternal divine son didn't simply make a cameo in the created world he forever joined our humanity to his divinity and so in that human body Jesus will forever be our mediator it wasn't as though God became man to be our mediator on earth but he is our mediator in heaven now what does the confession say he's at the right hand of the father interceding continuing his mediator work on our behalf in heaven with a human body that's a comforting thought Jesus didn't shed his human body when he returned to heaven as though he was glad to be rid of it and its limitations he kept it so God the son never stopped being God when he became a man and

God the son will not stop being a man even when he returns and is rightly recognized by all as God he is forever the God man the same body the confession says and that is true it is the same body it's not a completely different body that he now has from the one that he had on earth we see the evidence literally in Jesus hands what does John 20 tell us there Thomas is doubting that Jesus really rose from the dead and Thomas says in verse 25 unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side I will never believe eight days later Jesus came to the disciples and what did he say to Thomas verse 27 put your finger here and see my hand and put out your hand and place it in my side so same body but not in the same state that it once was it is now a glorified body it is no longer subject to suffering and pain no longer subject to hunger or thirst it's able to ascend into heaven that's new and different it's able to take flight and it's able to ascend into heaven as we see in
Acts without burning up in the atmosphere thank you to John MacArthur for pointing that out not burning up as he goes into the atmosphere because it is not a normal human body and though after the resurrection Jesus does seem to have masked the actual outward manifestation of glory we still capture a glimpse of his glorified body as it is now back in the mount of the transfiguration when Jesus appeared there in glory the appearance of his face was altered his clothing became dazzling white so he is radiant in glory now even as he has the same body it's a body that's been transformed and Philippians 3 says that our lowly bodies will be made one day to be transformed to be like his we too will receive glorified bodies incredible realities to think on
I hope that we do and as we do we can't overlook something stunning Jesus in his glorified body retains the scars on his hands and his side and his feet even as he sits at the right hand of the father in glory he still has those scars now we might be tempted to think that's too bad that's a shame scars are defects they're blemishes if you look at my son Bodie's forehead you will see he has a large scar across his forehead because he truly did go flying through the air and landed on the coffee table and that moment that evening I had immense regret I had thought no more truly no more than 30 seconds before I had thought I really should get the boys to bed they're getting a little crazy and it's probably time to go to bed and that's when he hit the coffee table and I remember just thinking if only I had just gotten up and not been lazy watching that game and just put those boys to bed this could have all been avoided he wouldn't have that scar on his head
I really beat myself up for a while because I regretted that I hadn't done it because Casey and I will sometimes look at pictures of Bodie pre-scar and say we wish he didn't have that scar but that's not the way we should think about the scars of Christ they are part of his glorified body he continues to carry them with him I think we should have more the mindset of Matthew Bridges Matthew Bridges wrote crown him with many crowns a song we often sing and in that hymn a joyful hymn of praise to the exalted Christ this is what we sing crown him the Lord of love behold his hands and side rich wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified not defects but wonderful reminders look at the love of Christ for us there are his hands as Isaiah 46 says behold I have engraved you on the palms of my hands
[31:51] Christ will never forget us and the price that he paid for us and as we look on him in all of eternity we will never forget him and the love that he showed for us so as we remember Christ our

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mediator as we think on his work we must never forget what he did he went to the cross he bore our sins in our place he suffered in his soul he suffered in his body and he did it to fulfill the father's plan he did it to execute the father's will and he did it out of love for us so reflecting on the work of Christ that should move us to wonder and amazement what a savior what a mediator we have who loved us he loved us so that he died in our place John Ruther who wrote that chapter in the exposition of the confession on Christ the mediator John Ruther says this if Jesus suffered the deepest anguish for us in his death should we not offer the highest praise and thanks for our new life in him we can say amen to that can't we but that shouldn't end just with our words reflecting on

Christ as our mediator should also move us to get to work and to kill sin in our lives it should move us to a fresh hatred of our sin and a fresh desire to live to the glory of Christ so here's a simple pattern he died for us he died to sin we live with him we die to sin and now we live to him and one day we will live with him forever forever

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