

The Necessary Christ

Luke 24:44-47

(Part 2 of 2)

By Randy Wages

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

- I. Introduction: Today I'm presenting the second segment of a 2 part series I've titled, "The Necessary Christ." Our text again is found in Luke chapter 24, verses 44-47. And I'll begin by asking you to consider the same question I posed last week in keeping with the title, "The Necessary Christ." I would like for you to ask yourself, "Is the Christ I worship, in keeping with my understanding of how God saves sinners in or through Christ – Is that Christ and that understanding such that I now see the absolute necessity that He die and rise again from the dead?" So keep that in mind once again as we proceed this morning.

Now look with me again in Luke 24 where at this point the risen Savior has appeared where the Disciples had gathered together. He had shown them His nail pierced hands and feet and wounded side and then eaten with them, assuring them of His bodily resurrection. And then, picking up verse 44 we read...

- II. Verses 44-47: *And he <Christ> said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And <or even> that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

As I explained last week, the title, "The Necessary Christ" was derived from the 2 words which I emphasized in this passage: the word "must" and the word "behoved." As we discussed, in the original Greek, these 2 words are the same. It's the word spelled "d-e-i" and pronounced "die." And many times it is found in this same context as we see here, speaking of the absolute necessity of Christ's death and subsequent resurrection. So again know that the word itself denotes not that which should happen or might happen, but rather something that is binding, that is inevitable, that which must happen, or that which is absolutely necessary.

- III. That which is Necessary: Now you will recall that last week I gave you an outline of 5 things (5 R's to help us remember) – 5 things that we see from this passage are absolutely necessary for the salvation of any sinner. We see that...

In Salvation there is a Necessary:

1. Revelation to those who are saved
2. Redemption for those who are saved
(And that is where we left off last week. And beginning to today we will see from our text how that in salvation there is also a Necessary...)
3. Resurrection for those who are saved
4. Remission of Sins for those who are saved
5. Repentance by those who are saved

And all of this speaks of the necessary Christ – for it is His necessary work and the necessary, inevitable fruit and effects of that work.

So having already reviewed how in salvation there is (1) a necessary divine revelation (our understanding has to be opened by God the Holy Spirit), and in that revelation we are taught of (2) a necessary redemption by Christ's suffering and death whereby God purchased His church, all He saves. Now let us consider from our text how likewise in salvation there is ...

A. A Necessary Resurrection: As we read in Luke 24:46b, “...*it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.*” As with his suffering, His resurrection was inevitable in that it was prophesied and God cannot lie. But it was also absolutely necessary because a perfect satisfaction had been rendered to the justice of God the Father by God the Son – a perfect, everlasting righteousness which, before a just God demands everlasting life and that for each and everyone He represented – for whom He established righteousness as their Substitute.

1. The verse printed in our church's bulletin, Romans 5:21, teaches us that just as sin demands death, righteousness demands life. The righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel is that perfect satisfaction to God's justice which Jesus Christ (the God-man Mediator) alone could and did establish by His obedience unto death on the cross.

As it reads, “*That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign <how> through righteousness unto eternal life <by whose righteousness?> by Jesus Christ our Lord.*” In salvation, we must have a perfect righteousness to be acceptable before a holy God. We must have His righteousness – the merit of His perfect, justice-satisfying work of obedience, His obedience even unto the death on the cross. And because God is immutable, holy, and just Christ had to come out of the grave. The perfection of His offering demanded life for Him and for all for whom that perfection was rendered.

2. How does the merit of Christ's accomplishment become mine? It was made to be mine in the same way that the demerit of my sins were made His so that He might bear the penalty for them. We regularly refer to that in 2 Corinthians 5:21 where Paul wrote, ***"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*** God has graciously imputed or charged to the account of His dear Son all the demerit of all the sins of His chosen, adopted children in order that Christ might pay in full the sin debt due unto them. And for each of them for whom Christ died, God has graciously imputed (or credited to their account) the justifying merit of the very righteousness of God which Christ established by His perfect obedience unto death.
3. In I Corinthians 15, where Paul was explaining the certainty of the future bodily resurrection of all who are saved, we see the absolute necessity of the resurrection of the Savior. This is evident in that Paul's reasoning is based upon the inseparable connection, the union or oneness which exists before God between Christ and all those He represented – those He saves. Picking up in verse 12 Paul wrote, ***"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, <as Paul certainly preached> how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:*** <In other words if there is no bodily resurrection for any sinners, then Christ, who died and rose again as a Substitute and Representative so as to save some of them, must not have risen Himself. Of course these Corinthians knew Christ had risen from the dead. That was not in dispute among them.

But Paul continues his reasoning in verse 14 saying...> ¹⁴***And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*** <Christ arose because righteousness was established, demanding life and so if they presume there is no bodily resurrection unto eternal life for true believers, then their Representative must not have risen and if that were the case, then the preaching of the Gospel (wherein His justice-satisfying righteousness is set forth) is in vain. That would mean that none shall receive everlasting life.

He continues in verse 15...> ¹⁵***Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*** <That would mean Christ didn't completely get the job done and that God wasn't satisfied with His blood offering. And any faith that places hope in eternal life based on something more than (or in addition to) Christ's finished work – if according to your body of faith there remains anything more to be done to insure your eternal future, then that too would mean Christ didn't completely get the job done and so, as Paul declares here, that too is a vain or false faith that would leave you yet in your sins – still liable for the punishment which a just God must extract. That thinking imagines Christ's blood offering to be inadequate.

And so he continues in verse 18...> ¹⁸*Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* ¹⁹*If in this life only we have hope in Christ,* <In other words if there is no everlasting life hereafter> *we are of all men most miserable.* <I don't know about you but I would sure hate to think that the blessings (not to mention the difficulties) of this life was all there was>. But there's good news in verse 20 as he writes...> ²⁰*But* <to the contrary>*now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* ²¹*For since by man* <our representative Adam> *came death, by man* <the God-man mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ> *came also the resurrection of the dead.* ²²*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* ²³*But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*" – referring to the bodily resurrection of all believers when Christ comes again.

4. Do you see the necessity of His resurrection? Here Paul is teaching to those who imagined that when Christ comes again, that He would fail to raise unto heaven's eternal glory those for whom He lived, died and rose again. So consider the implication in Paul's reasoning. His entire argument is based upon the inseparable connection that exists in God's eyes between Christ and every one for whom He lived and died. And to imagine any for whom He died might not be saved is to deny the saving power of His shed blood. That forces you to look elsewhere for the remedy to your sin problem – not to Christ alone. His resurrection was absolutely necessary. All He represented shall live, they only live, because He lives! In salvation there is a necessary revelation, a necessary redemption, a necessary resurrection and now let us consider how there is...

B. A Necessary Remission of Sins: Look again at our text at verses 46 and 47 where Christ "...said unto them, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:* ⁴⁷*And* <or better translated, "even" so as to read "It behooved or it was also absolutely necessary even>*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

1. When you get a bill in the mail it often will have the words, "Remit to:" and then name the company and address that is to be paid. So when we remit something we pay for it. And that's similar to the meaning of the Greek word translated "remission" here. It's a word that is translated elsewhere as "forgiveness." And it actually denotes a complete forgiveness, as in a full release or a full pardon. So here when Christ says that it was necessary even "...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached..." He is communicating that repentance (which I'll discuss in a moment) and this release from obligation or debt due unto sin must be preached in His name. And you can see in that, the similarity with how we commonly use the word because when the money is remitted to pay a bill, we're thereby released from that debt or obligation to pay – The debt has been forgiven based on a full payment of all that was due! There is no forgiveness of the debt unless it has been paid in full.

2. And here Christ is telling them of the necessity that this be preached – that if we preach His Gospel, we must preach that the debt has been paid in full so as to be remitted, forgiven. A parallel passage to our text in Luke 24 recording this same occasion is found at the end of Mark 16 where Christ tells the disciples to go into the world and preach the Gospel and he that believes it shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned. Here, Luke’s record of this occasion more specifically communicates that the preaching of God’s Gospel must include the preaching that sins have been remitted, forgiven, the debt paid in full. And that is necessary in order that the necessity of His suffering and death (His redeeming work) be revealed to those who are saved, so that God realizes His chief design and purpose in salvation – that He (not the sinner) might receive all glory. And that glory (the revelation of what He is like) is revealed in the hearts and minds of those He saves.

So again, for those who imagine that Christ failed to fully remit the payment due unto the sins for which He died – so much so that supposedly some for whose sins He died shall still be held accountable for those sins – not fully released from that debt owed to the justice of God – then clearly they have to be relying on something else, not the blood and righteousness of Christ alone. They should stop singing, “Nothing but the Blood.”

3. But the Bible tells us that God’s dear children have the remission of sins, that they are forgiven through His redeeming blood. Look at that with me in Ephesians 1 where I’ll begin reading in verse 3, Paul writing to the believers at Ephesus...***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;***
4. The word translated “forgiveness” here is the same Greek word translated “remission” in Luke 24:47. This forgiveness of sins is sure and certain for all for whom that blood payment was made. And to rely on anything other than (or in addition to) that (whether it’s your good intentions, your act of faith, your church going, your baptism, your decision for Jesus, whatever) – if the difference maker is something done by or through you instead of solely owing to the blood of Christ, then you are denying and refuting what Christ said to His disciples in Luke 24:47 – that the message of the Gospel that is to be preached and believed upon unto salvation must of necessity include the preaching of the remission of sins. That means we are to preach (and true believers will believe) the proclamation that Christ has truly cleared the sin debt owed for each and every one for whom He lived and died. So in salvation there is a necessary: 1) Revelation, 2) Redemption, 3) Resurrection, and 4) Remission of sins for all who are saved and lastly we see there is...

- C. A Necessary Repentance by all who are saved: Look one more time at verses 46 and 47 where Christ “...*said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:*”⁴⁷ *And* <or again better translated, “even” so as to read “It was also absolutely necessary even>*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name*”
1. I found it interesting that repentance and remission of sins were linked here together as that which must be preached in the name of Christ. And after thinking about the nature of the initial repentance as that which always accompanies genuine, God-given faith, it seems very fitting. These 2 (repentance and remission) go hand in hand because we repent as a result of having our understanding opened to see with the God-given eyes of faith what we could not and would not see before – the absolute necessity that our sins be remitted, that we be completely released and fully pardoned from that sin debt we owed but could never pay, seeing the necessity of forgiveness by the blood payment made for us by our Substitute and Savior.
 2. The Bible speaks of the believer’s repentance as being a repentance from dead works and from idolatry (just as Paul commended the Thessalonians for having “...*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*” (I Thessalonians 1:9b). Yet many only think of repentance as a reformation of character, a turning from a life of spiritual indifference or immorality to a new lifestyle where we perhaps get religious, maybe join a church and proceed to walk what some call “the straight and narrow,” cleaning up our act and deciding to live right. And certainly there is the sense of repentance that involves the continual sorrow and ashamedness that believers have over sin and it should and does impact our behavior. But the command to repent in belief of God’s Gospel involves a turning away from that which we previously didn’t even realize we needed to repent of. Our understanding to this need to repent must be opened by God’s divine revelation of faith, whereby we believe His preached Gospel.
 3. The other day I heard an old “country gospel” song, “I Saw the Light.” I’m sure many of you are familiar with that song in which the last line of each verse ends with, “Praise the Lord I saw the light.” Well, there’s one stanza that goes like this:

*I was a fool to wander and a-stray
Straight is the gate and narrow the way
Now I have traded the wrong for the right
Praise the Lord I saw the light.*

Now I know that when most hear this they relate it to someone sowing their wild oats so to speak, living “wrong” as in an immoral life, who then decided to turn over a new leaf whereby they traded that “wrong for the right.” But do you realize that kind of reformation or repentance does not require a new understanding of things (a necessary revelation from God) but rather just a resolve to do what our natural conscience already knows is right to do, instead of that which we naturally know is wrong?

But by God's saving grace, God's children actually do "see the light" so to speak. Believers are those who at some point in time are providentially brought to a place like this, put under the sound of this, God's Gospel of sovereign grace in the Person and saving work of Christ. As 2 Corinthians 4:6 puts it, in salvation God shines into the heart of His people the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face – the person and work – of Jesus Christ. And with that divine revelation we behold God's glory. That means we see what He is really like – how He is both a just God and a Savior. And with that God-given faith and repentance we do trade a wrong, God-dishonoring understanding for a new, right understanding – for that which is right according to the only One who matters, God Himself who requires a perfect righteousness for any to be accepted before Him. And that's why His justice-satisfying righteousness was absolutely necessary in the place of (and on behalf of) all those He came to save. The preached Gospel sets forth the necessity of the work of Christ in our place for the remission or forgiveness of our sins which we only have (and fully have) by His shed blood for us. And in belief of that Gospel we turn from the wrong – from ever imagining that we might contribute even one iota to our own salvation. We trade the wrong (our own self-righteousness) for the right – the very righteousness of God in Christ!

4. As Paul describes in Philippians 3, in salvation we repent (not just in sorrow for the sins we already knew were displeasing to God) but of the very things we before thought were gain – things we erroneously presumed would gain us favor and fellowship with God. Look at that with me beginning in Philippians 3:7 where Paul, after having listed all these things He previously thought counted for something, then wrote...***"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, <my law keeping or my obedience> but that which is through the faith <or faithfulness> of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"***
5. And so in God-given faith, we repent of those dead works and of the false notions we had of God, wrong thoughts of God that necessarily accompany the natural religion of man. We naturally assume that there must be some contributing factor which we can add to the mix (or bring to the table) so as to make a difference in our own salvation. This mistaken assumption is exposed in the question we naturally ask ourselves when we first get serious about our eternal destiny. We think, "What do I need to do to be saved?" In other words, by nature we think we there is something we can do to save ourselves. That's salvation by works. And our natural, sinful pride recoils at the thought that it might be out of our hands, at the thought of being reduced to a mercy beggar who can do nothing to save himself – in other words in true need of the mercy of God.

6. And that, man's natural religion of works, carries with it a mistaken and God-dishonoring understanding of God, views of God which stand opposed to the character of the true and living God of the Bible. As I stressed last week, consider again how we must assume that God (though described to us in God's Word as perfectly holy and just) must set aside His justice and His holiness if He actually accepted us based upon our own sin-tainted offering, that which we sinners presume to be able to do in order to save ourselves. And so our repentance includes a repentance of this false concept of God, of this unjust god, the idol of our own imagination.
7. In genuine faith we come to behold God as He is. We behold His very redemptive glory, that which we only can know of Him in the redemptive work of Christ by the divine revelation of faith in belief of this, God's Gospel – His way of saving sinners by Christ alone. Thereby we see that God doesn't have to dispense with His holiness and justice in order to save sinners, but rather we see how He remains true to Himself as both a perfectly just God and a merciful Savior. That redemptive glory of God is only revealed to us through the God-given understanding of the Person and redeeming work of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – the absolutely necessary Christ.
8. Can you see then how repentance and remission are connected? If you now truly believe that the remission or the forgiveness of sins is fully accomplished by the redeeming blood of Christ, then you will have repented of having ever dared to think something else could accomplish (or even contribute to) your being forgiven – your being saved. Listen – God knows your every thought so don't dare (not for 1 minute longer) to place your act of faith, your so-called free will decision, or anything else which proceeds from you (a sinner) in a position of rivalry with His way of salvation, with what it actually took – the precious blood of the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ!
9. Truly in salvation there is a necessary repentance – a complete reversal as it pertains to our understanding of God and how He saves sinners. And that repentance cannot be separated from the revelation of faith which is given to all who are saved. When by God-given faith we gain a new understanding so as to believe a new truth, we of necessity repent – turn to what we now know is right, turning away from what we now know to have been wrong. We do trade the wrong for the right!
10. In Luke 13:5, Christ is speaking to a group who thought they were better than certain other sinners they considered to be lost. So He declared to them, “...*Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” If we think we're saved because we were willing to make a decision which would others would not, doesn't that equate to a presumption on our part that before God we are better than they are – willing to do what they won't – perhaps less obstinate, more pliable, somehow better. Hear God the Son. He says that unless we repent of such, we too will perish.

IV. Closing: In Acts 17, Paul concluded his sermon on Mars Hill saying this, beginning at the end of verse 30, “...*but now <God> commandeth all men every where to repent:* ³¹*Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*”

I know I often refer to these same verses but I couldn't think of a better passage to conclude this 2 part series with because just as we see in Luke 24, we also see here in Acts 17 the necessity of Christ and His work. Here also we see that in salvation:

1) There is an absolutely necessary divine revelation concerning how God saves sinners that would bring us to repentance. How can any obey this command to repent (experience this 180 degree change of mind as it pertains to God and how He saves sinners) apart from having something new revealed that would prompt such a reversal? According to God's word, in salvation there is a necessary revelation. We also see here that in salvation:

2) There is an absolutely necessary redemption for us. His establishment of righteousness (that's the perfect satisfaction Christ made to the justice of God) – that righteousness was completed by His finished work of redemption on the cross. And that righteousness is declared here to be the standard by which we all shall be judged. We must be found righteous and that requires a necessary work of redemption for us. We also see here that in salvation:

3) There is an absolutely necessary resurrection for us. We're told here that all of us shall be judged by the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we read, it is the righteousness of the One God ordained, the One He appointed from all eternity as a Surety and a Substitute to come in time to save His people. And it is further described as the righteousness of the One He raised from dead. And there's no need for us to be in doubt about this for He assures us all that this is precisely how we all shall be judged. How does He assure us? – by having raised Christ from the dead, proving He truly got the job done, satisfaction to justice was made, demanding His resurrection from the dead along with the future resurrection of all for whom He lived and died. Here we also see that truly:

4) There was an absolutely necessary remission of sins that took place. The satisfaction He made to God's justice was accepted – righteousness was established and demanded He live, just as it demands that all whom He represented shall live – be raised from the dead and that both spiritually (in the new birth) and eternally. And so we see that any that are saved must stand accepted in Him, forgiven of their sins, released from that sin-debt – a necessary remission of sins. Without that we cannot stand righteous before Him, yet we see here that we must be forgiven and have His very righteousness imputed (put to our credit) because that is how we all shall be judged – in righteousness. And lastly, going back to verse 30 again, we see that in salvation:

5) There is an absolutely necessary repentance. God commands it. And so repentance is both necessary and inevitable for those who are saved because it always accompanies the blood-bought revelation of faith. Thereby the believer repents, turning away from that which they now see as wrong (even evil), repenting of ever having imagined that God could possibly save them based upon anything other than (or in addition to) the imputed righteousness of Christ.

If you've yet to have your understanding opened to see from the scripture the absolute necessity of these things, I pray that God will use this series of messages toward that end, and by His saving power grant you the eyes of faith that will have you turn to Christ for all your salvation, in repentance of having ever imagined something done by you might accomplish or even contribute to what actually took His doing and dying to accomplish, in repentance of having such a low regard for His precious shed blood, regarding it as inadequate to save His people from their sins.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – this necessary Christ of scripture, placing all your hope and trust in Him – in His doing and dying alone. God cannot lie and He says that those who believe on Him shall be saved. So believe on Him, the Lord Jesus Christ as He has described Himself to be in Luke 24 – “The Necessary Christ!”

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.