

Sermon #28 — *Isaiah Series*

Title: **CHRIST OUR SANCTUARY**

Text: Isaiah 8:13-14

Subject: *Christ Our Sanctuary*

Date: Sunday Evening — July 16, 2017

Readings: *Allen Kibby and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

You will find my text in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of Isaiah — Isaiah 8:13-14.

(Isaiah 8:13-14) “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

We know that our text refers to the Lord Jesus Christ because both Paul and Peter, by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, tell us that the text is talking about Christ (Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8). To the proud, self-righteous religionist, Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. But to sinners who flee to him and find refuge in

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him, the Lord Jesus Christ is our Sanctuary. I want to focus our thoughts on the statement found at the beginning of verse 14. — “*He shall be for a sanctuary.*”

(Isaiah 8:13-14) “Sanctify (**Honor him and him alone as**) the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be your fear (the object of your reverence, praise, and faith, the Governor of your life), and let him be your dread (fall down on your face before him).* ⁽¹⁴⁾ And he shall be for a sanctuary.”

I want to show you that Christ is a sanctuary for poor, helpless, guilty sinners like you and me. The title of my message is **CHRIST OUR SANCTUARY**. I want, by the grace of God, to persuade you to come to Christ and find sanctuary in him.

Proposition: Christ is a sanctuary for all who trust him.

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Divisions: Our Lord Jesus Christ is a sanctuary in three respects. He is...

1. A Sanctuary for Safety.
2. A Sanctuary for Worship.
3. A Sanctuary for Life.

SANCTUARY FOR SAFETY

1st — **The Lord Jesus Christ is our Sanctuary for safety. That is to say, he is a place of refuge for guilty sinners. He is a hiding-place, an ark of safety, a sanctuary from the wrath of God.**

We frequently use the word “*sanctuary*” this way. Many cities are bird sanctuaries. It is against the law to kill any bird within their limits. Certain places have been set aside as game sanctuaries. You dare not, under penalty of law, hunt wild game in those places.

In the Old Testament God appointed **Six Cities of Refuge** (Joshua 20:1-9) where men who were guilty of manslaughter might flee for sanctuary. Within the

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City of Refuge, within the appointed sanctuary, the avenger of blood could not touch the man-slayer. There the guilty one was under the protection of God's own law.

Like those cities of refuge, our Lord Jesus Christ is a place of secure refuge and sanctuary for every sinner who flees to him.

The moment a sinner believes on Christ, he is safe. Believing on Christ he is safe in life, safe in death, safe in judgment, safe in eternity.

The wrath of God cannot touch any sinner who takes refuge in Christ by faith

(Hebrews 6:18-19; Psalm 90:1).

(Hebrews 6:18-19) “That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: **(19)** Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

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(Psalm 90:1) “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.”

Illustration: *Noah’s Ark*

Faith in Christ gives sinners refuge and sanctuary in him. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if you trust his blood and righteousness for your acceptance with God, if you forsake all confidence in yourself and put your confidence in Christ alone, your immortal soul is secure, saved, and safe forever. Nothing can destroy you (Romans 8:32-39).

- No harm can come to you.
- No sin can be laid to your charge.
- No condemnation can be executed upon you.
- Nothing can ever separate you from the love of Christ.

(Romans 8:32-39) “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ⁽³³⁾

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. ⁽³⁴⁾ **Who** *is* he that

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condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ⁽³⁵⁾

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ⁽³⁶⁾ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ⁽³⁷⁾ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ⁽³⁸⁾ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ⁽³⁹⁾ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Do you ask, “How can faith in Christ give me eternal salvation?” It is right that you should. True faith is not a leap in the dark, true faith walks in the light. I want you to know why you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and know what faith in Christ is.

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God is angry with man because of sin. His anger and wrath are justified, because we have broken his holy law. And our sins against God must be punished. Every sinner must be slain forever under the wrath of God. — *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* — *“The wages of sin is death.”*

But the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, interposed himself. He stepped in between an angry God and guilty sinners. And the blows of vengeance and wrath which should have fallen upon us fell on him. The debt which we owed to God was charged to Christ, and the penalty of sin was exacted from him. Yes...

“Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owed.
Sin had left a guilty stain,
He washed me white as snow!”

“He bore, that we might never bear,

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His Father's righteous ire.”

Now hear me well. — If the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in our place the wrath of God, we cannot ever be called upon to suffer the penalty of the law. If Christ paid our debts, they are canceled, and we are no longer in debt. If Christ became my Substitute and died in my place, then God's justice will not allow me to be punished for sin.

“Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding surety's hand,
And then again at mine!”

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* everyone that hangeth on a tree: **(14)** That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

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(John 11:47-52) “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. ⁽⁵¹⁾ And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; ⁽⁵²⁾ And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

But for whom was this great sacrifice made? For whom did the Son of God suffer and die? For whom did he shed his precious blood? I know this...

- Christ did not die for those who suffer the wrath of God in hell.

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- Christ did die for and redeem God's elect (Isaiah 53:8; Hebrews 2:16; 9:12).

But who are those elect men and women for whom Christ died as a Representative and Substitute?

They are all who believe on him! Any sinner, in all the world, who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is God's elect. Faith in Christ is both the fruit and the evidence of election, redemption, and effectual calling.

Let's look at **John 3:16**. — "*For God so loved the world.*" — Most people stop right there and interpret the whole Bible by those words, declaring that the love of God extends to all people without exception. But read the whole verse. And read the verse in the light of the whole Bible. — "*For God so loved the world*" — this much, no more, and no less — "*That he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" **The love of God and the work of Christ extends to and is limited to "whosoever believeth in him."** If you do not trust Christ, and you

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die in your unbelief, the death of Christ has nothing to do with you, and you have no part in the love of God.

- God loves none but those who have believed and those who shall believe on the Lord Jesus.
- Christ died for believers, believers and no one else. But for every sinner who believes on the Lord
- Jesus Christ atonement has been made. Christ has born the wrath of God for every believer.
- And God cannot, in justice, punish any believer for sin. If you are a believer, Christ died for you. He has paid your debt. Your soul is secure before God and always has been.
- We read our names in the Book of Life by faith in Christ.
- We prove our election and calling by faith in Christ.
- And we know our interest in the Savior's blood by faith alone.

To believe on Christ is to hide in him and find sanctuary in him. Fearing God's anger, I take refuge

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in Christ, trusting the blood of his cross to protect me from the wrath of God. And **justice itself puts a canopy over my soul. Justice will not allow a ransomed sinner to be slain under the wrath of God.** This is substitution. It is the very heart and essence of the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:21). **Christ is a sanctuary from the wrath of an angry God.**

(2 Corinthians 5:18-21) “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ⁽¹⁹⁾ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ⁽²⁰⁾ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. ⁽²¹⁾ 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.”

SANCTUARY FROM FEAR

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The Lord Jesus Christ is also our Sanctuary from all fear.

When you think of the sins of your past life, the failures of the day, and the sin that is in your heart, do not hang your head in morbid fear. Rather, cast your soul upon Christ and take sanctuary in his precious blood.

- The Fear of Sin
- The Fear of Death
- The Fear of Judgment
- The Fears of Life

Illustration: The anchor of your soul is not within you, but in Heaven. Cast anchor upon your exalted Substitute, and fear not.

And Christ is our Sanctuary from all our cares

(John 14:1-3).

(John 14:1-3) “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ⁽²⁾ In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place

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for you. ⁽³⁾ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

None of us live without trouble. Worry, anxiety, fretfulness, and fear shake the most immovable men of the world. No man is so strong that he does not know the meaning of fear. Bodily pains, troubles of soul, and an aching heart are things we all know. But Christ is a refuge and sanctuary from care.

APPLICATION

There is only one sanctuary for your soul — Christ Jesus. It is a very easy thing to find sanctuary in him.

- He is accessible (Hebrews 4:16).
- He is very near.
- The way is clear — Faith.

Illustration: “*Jump Son! Jump! I’ll catch you!*”

If you have fled to Christ for sanctuary, let others know that there is a place of asylum and safety for

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sinners. That is the first meaning of our text. — Christ is a Sanctuary for safety.

SANCTUARY FOR WORSHIP

2nd — **The Lord Jesus Christ is our Sanctuary for worship.** I often hear people talk about holy places, and holy things, and holy lands, as though one place is nearer God than another. Sometimes people call church auditoriums sanctuaries. Such talk is nothing but a relic of Jewish ceremonialism, or the result of Roman Catholic idolatry and superstition. — Christ is our Sanctuary (John 14:6; Hebrews 7:25).

(John 14:6) “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

(Hebrews 7:25) “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

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We come to God only in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. All true worship is spiritual, Christ-centered worship. He is our Ark. He is our Altar. He is our Mercy-seat. We have no use for...

- Religious Symbols — (Pictures of Christ, Saints, Angels, etc.).
- Superstitious Emblems — (Crosses, Stars, etc.).
- Idolatrous Relics — (Shrouds, Robes, Collars, etc.).
- Pagan Holy Places, Days, or Things — (Holy Lands, Sabbaths, Altars).

Christ is our Sanctuary for worship. You may worship God anywhere, if you come to God through Christ. But if you do not come to God through Christ, you can worship nowhere! You and I can have nothing to do with an absolute God. We must come to God by way of a mediator. And the only mediator God will accept is Christ.

- **We offer sacrifice to God only in Christ.** — *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up*

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spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

- We pray only by Christ’s merit.
- We gather for worship only in Christ’s name.
- We render service to God only by Christ.

Jesus Christ is our only sanctuary for worship. We cannot approach God in any other way.

In the Old Testament, the Holy of Holies, the Inner Sanctuary, the place of God’s presence symbolized Christ our Sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1-5).

(Hebrews 9:1-5) “Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. ⁽²⁾ For there was a **tabernacle** made; the first, wherein *was* **the candlestick**, and **the table**, and **the shewbread**; which is called **the sanctuary**. ⁽³⁾ And after the second veil, **the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all**; ⁽⁴⁾ Which had **the golden censer**, and **the ark of the covenant** overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* **the golden pot that had**

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manna, and **Aaron's rod that budded**, and **the tables of the covenant**; ⁽⁵⁾ And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing **the mercy-seat**; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

- The Golden Censor — Christ’s Intercession.
- The Mercy-Seat — Christ’s Propitiation.
- The Golden Pot that had Manna — Christ the Bread of Life.
- Aaron’s Rod that Budded — Christ the Power of God.
- The Tables of the Covenant — Christ our Righteousness.

Christ is our Sanctuary for safety. Christ is our Sanctuary for worship. And...

SANCTUARY FOR LIFE

3rd — **The Lord Jesus Christ is our Sanctuary for life.** He is the believer’s Dwelling Place (Psalms 90:1; 91:1-2).

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(Psalm 90:1) “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.”

(Proverbs 18:10) “The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

(Psalm 91:1-2) “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ⁽²⁾ I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

We are priests of God who live in the sanctuary, in the holy place.

We live in Christ. Christ lives in us (Colossians 1:27). And we live in Christ. He is our dwelling place. We live...

- In his presence.
- Under his watchful eye.
- In his fellowship.
- In the place of mercy.
- Feasting on his sacrifice.

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And soon, we shall enter into Heaven's glory. — But we will be no nearer Christ, and no more fully in Christ, than we are right now.

APPLICATION

I want you all to know and use Christ as our Sanctuary ...

- For Safety!
- For Worship!
- For Life!

Illustration: Joseph Scriven — “*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*”

Joseph Scriven was born in Ireland into a wealthy family on September 10, 1819. He was well educated, graduating from Trinity College in Dublin.

After graduating, he fell in love with a young lady who was eager to spend her life with him. But, just a day before their wedding, she fell

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from her horse, while crossing a bridge over the River Bann and was drowned in the waters below. Scriven stood helplessly watching from the other side.

In an effort to overcome his sorrow, he began to wander. By the time he was just 25 years old he was living in Port Hope, Canada. He became highly regarded by the people of that area. He tutored some of the local children in their school work. And, there, he met another young lady, Elisa Roche, and again fell in love. They had exciting plans to be married. But she, too, died (of pneumonia), before they could be wed.

Scriven spent the rest of his 66 years on earth teaching and laboring in Port Hope among the impoverished children, widows, and sick people there. He often did so for no wages and even shared his clothes with those less fortunate than himself.

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Just a year or two before he, too, drowned to his in a river, Scriven became very ill, and a friend who was visiting with him discovered a poem near his bed and asked who had written it. Scriven replied, “The Lord and I did it.” He wrote the poem for his Mother, who still lived in Ireland. He had not intended that anyone else should see it. But we all know it well, cherish it, and sing it often.

“What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!”

“*He shall be for a sanctuary!*” Oh, may God graciously make him your Sanctuary!

Amen.