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SHAPED BY THE SPIRIT:  
SPIRIT CHRISTOLOGY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR PREACHING SANCTIFICATION

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

By  
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April 2014

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## PREFACE

I grew up around preaching. I never had the opportunity to hear either of my great-grandfathers, Rev. E. Theodore Laesch or Rev. Louis G. C. Nuechterlein, but I did have the joy of hearing my grandfather, Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Laesch. I had, and sometimes still have, the wonderful opportunity to hear my uncles, Revs. Scott Malme, Paul Schult, and Ted Laesch Jr. But the preacher that has impacted me the most is my father, William G. Rusnak. In fact, I hear his voice in my own in more ways than one. These men were and are not just preachers, but preachers of the gospel, of Christ crucified. They taught me to love the gospel and it was hearing the gospel from them that made me want to preach it.

When I attended Concordia University, River Forest, Ill. in the pre-seminary program, one of my first courses had to do with Christian faith. The next year I took a course that had to do with Christian life. Both were taught by Prof. Brian Mosemann whose passion for doing the distinction between Law and Gospel instilled in me an appreciation for systematic theology and a deepening love for the gospel. At that time, shaped perhaps by the curriculum, I was intrigued by the various ways to think and talk about the relationship between justification and sanctification.

When I arrived at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Mo., my engagement with systematic theology grew through courses and conversations with Drs. Charles Arand, Robert Kolb, and Joel Biermann. In particular, their presentations of Luther's distinction between the two kinds of righteousness had immense influence on me for thinking about and talking about the relationship between justification and sanctification. Their perspective differed, however, from the one I encountered in college. In fact, for the first time, I began to be aware of two very different approaches to systematic theology and specifically to the relationship between justification and sanctification.

For lack of a better categorization, this difference seemed to me to parallel the old debate in Lutheran theology between the uses of the Law, particularly regarding the third use of the Law. On the one hand, my college education pulled me toward a two-use perspective while my seminary education pulled me toward a three-use perspective. It seemed irreconcilable as I saw that both sides offered important contributions to thinking and talking about the relationship between justification and sanctification; one emphasized the shaping power of the gospel, the other emphasized God's design and desire for the shape of human life. I was unwilling to let go of either perspective.

I reached something of a crisis when I travelled to Westfield House, Cambridge, for a year of enrichment during seminary. I rejoined Prof. Mosemann who was teaching there at the time and I delved into Luther's theology, carrying the distinction between the two kinds of righteousness into every reading and writing assignment during that year. I reached a conclusion at the end of that year that while two kinds of righteousness is extremely helpful for answering certain questions in systematic theology, it does not necessarily promote the preaching of the gospel in such a way that retains the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification.

From England, I went to St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Oviedo, Fla. where I vicared under Rev. Wally Arp. He taught me many things about preaching; particularly the wonderful and freeing fact that "It's not about you." I gained great experience in preaching that year.

When I returned to Concordia Seminary for a final year of M.Div. studies and a year of S.T.M. coursework, I took two courses that helped me greatly: one in the Word of God with Dr. Joel Okamoto and one in Pneumatology with Dr. Leopoldo A. Sánchez M. Those courses and those professors offered to me a new way to frame the old debate about the uses of the Law and

allowed me to account for and utilize the strengths of each side of that debate. This thesis that tests the usefulness of Spirit Christology as a way to preach Christ crucified for justification and sanctification has grown directly out of my love for the gospel and my engagement with the *nexus indivulsus* throughout my theological education.

I now have the joy of preaching the gospel that I have been so privileged to hear on a regular basis at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Garrison, Minn. I am grateful for the saints of God in this place who are willing to let me continue learning how to be a preacher of the gospel. They have also been very supportive throughout the process of writing this thesis.

I am very thankful for the many preachers and teachers God has given to me in my life. I would like especially to thank my father, my college professors, my seminary professors, and my vicarage supervisor. In particular, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Leopoldo A. Sánchez M. whose willingness to engage this topic with me has been invaluable. I would also like to thank Drs. Joel Okamoto and Victor Raj for their contributions as readers of this thesis.

Above and beyond all of this, though, I am profoundly thankful for my wife, Julie. She is, without a doubt, the greatest gift God has given to me apart from saving faith in Christ. She has been so patient and giving throughout this process and has offered abundant support and encouragement. I love you, Julie, and I dedicate this paper to you.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- BC Kolb, Robert, and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- AC Augsburg Confession (*Confessio Augustana*)
- Ap Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- SA Smalcald Articles
- SC Luther's Small Catechism
- LC Luther's Large Catechism
- FC Formula of Concord
- SD Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
- CD Pieper, Francis. *Christian Dogmatics*. 3 vols. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953.
- ESV English Standard Version of the Holy Bible
- LW *Luther's Works*. American Edition, 55 vols. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986.
- WA *Luthers Werke*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 57 vols. J.F.K. Knaake, et al. eds. Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff.

## ABSTRACT

Rusnak, Jonathan W. "Shaped by the Spirit: Spirit Christology as a Framework for Preaching Sanctification." S.T.M. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, 2014. 128 pp.

This thesis offers an account of preaching sanctification grounded broadly in the trinitarian economy of salvation and specifically in the person and work of Jesus Christ as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit. Grounded in atonement theory alone, other accounts of preaching sanctification are unable to address any number of concerns that arise in the sanctified life. In addition, atonement theory alone does not ground an account of preaching sanctification that maintains the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification within a broader view of salvation in Jesus Christ. Sanctification preaching tends to be either ignored by justification preaching or done as a secondary step disconnected from justification preaching. The account of preaching sanctification offered here, grounded in the Gospel narratives read through the lens of Spirit Christology, retains the *nexus indivulsus*, accounts for and addresses any number of concerns that arise in the sanctified life, describes the sanctified life according to Jesus Christ as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit, and gives sanctification preaching the goal of shaping the sanctified life according to Jesus Christ as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit. In this account, sanctification preaching is an instrument of the Holy Spirit to conform the church to the person of Jesus Christ and draw the church into participation with the work of Jesus Christ in order that the Spirit might shape the church into cruciform faith, hope, and love in Jesus Christ.



## INTRODUCTION

The sign in front of a Missouri Synod church near my home states in big, bold letters, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). That is not an uncommon thing in North America, although it may be becoming less common. It is not a bad thing, either. Those are the words of the Apostle Paul. He also wrote that the word of the cross is the power of God for the salvation for the world (1 Cor. 1:18). In fact, Paul wrote to those same Christians in Corinth, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). But what does this mean? What is the message of Christ crucified?

That may seem to be a ridiculous question. Can it not be assumed? The word of the cross is the gospel (Rom. 1:1–17, 16:25–27; 1 Cor. 1:17, 15:1–2; Gal. 1:6–12; Eph. 3:1–13), the promise of God for the salvation of the world in Christ crucified either received by faith or rejected by unbelief (1 Cor. 1:18–31). So, in one sense, the word of the cross is the report about Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, who was crucified and raised on the third day (Luke 24:44–49). But in another sense, the word of the cross is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit, the power of God to kill and make alive, to do the cross to hearers through the Word of God in its various forms (1 Sam. 2:6; Rom. 6:5). In still another sense, the cross is what Christ gives his disciples to carry (Luke 9:23). Likewise, the Gospels, the narratives of Christ and him crucified and the ground for preaching him, cannot be reduced to a singular, formulaic explanation. Paul wrote to Timothy about the written Word, the Scriptures, that they are “able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15) and are also “profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). All this is to say that the

message of Christ crucified can refer to more than one thing and can function in more than one way toward more than one goal. Preachers of the gospel should not assume these things.

Instead, preachers of Christ crucified approach preaching with “fear and much trembling” as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” who are required to be “found faithful” by “the Lord who judges” (1 Cor. 2:3–5, 4:1–5).<sup>1</sup> So, preachers reflect on their preaching. Though this reflection often raises prideful and selfish concerns, this reflection also raises important questions requiring answers that are faithful to the Lord Jesus and his Word.<sup>2</sup> In fact, reflection on the faithfulness of preaching is the task of systematic theology.<sup>3</sup>

In my reflection on preaching, I have considered not *that* Christ crucified is preached, but rather *the way* Christ crucified is preached and *to what end*. What does it mean to preach Christ crucified and how does the cross function in the proclamation of the gospel toward various goals? As I see it, many of us preachers in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have assumed a certain narrow definition of the cross and its function in the Scriptures and in preaching. So, while there are many ways the cross might function in preaching and thus various goals that might be accomplished through that preaching, a reductionistic approach to soteriology coupled with a truncated Christology overemphasizes one biblical narrative, albeit a central one, to the exclusion of all others and to the detriment of the life of the church. Speaking specifically,

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<sup>1</sup> AC Article V, BC 40. “In the outward preaching, the Word meets us as something over which we never become master; it meets us as an alien power, which gives us what we could never take of ourselves: the living Christ as a gift. This applies not only to the hearer but also to the preacher.” Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator: Luther’s Concept of the Holy Spirit*, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1953), 116.

<sup>2</sup> “We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged, as it is written in Ps. 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” And St. Paul says in Gal. 1:8, “Even if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.” FC Epitome, BC 486.1.

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), vii. For example, C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel: Thirty-Nine Evening Lectures*, trans. W. H. T. Dau (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928) and Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

preaching Christ crucified in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod tends to be synonymous with the vicarious atonement. In its best form, preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement may promote a basic concern of the Lutheran Confessions, namely, the truth that justification is by grace through faith alone apart from works. The question I have considered, however, is not only how well preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement actually justifies sinners, but also sanctifies sinners, that is, both saves and shapes the church (1 Cor. 1:30).<sup>4</sup>

As I have reflected on the preaching of Christ crucified for salvation, I have returned to the Lutheran distinction between justification and sanctification as two aspects of salvation in Christ for the purpose of developing the connection between preaching Christ crucified and sanctification. Francis Pieper defines sanctification at the beginning of his third volume of *Christian Dogmatics* in both a wide and a narrow sense. In a wide sense, sanctification has to do with everything from conversion to final resurrection. In a narrow sense, sanctification has to do with the spiritual transformation that flows from justification and begins to take place here and now. Pieper relates sanctification in the narrow sense to justification in two ways: first, they are always together in an inseparable connection (*nexus indivulsus*), and second, though they are always together, justification always precedes sanctification.<sup>5</sup>

The concern of this thesis is the way preaching the cross maintains this *nexus indivulsus*, and specifically the way preaching the cross may be used by the Spirit for spiritual transformation, that is, sanctification in the narrow sense. The *nexus indivulsus* indicates that if it is by the word of the cross that the Spirit accomplishes the justification of sinners, then it is by the word of the cross that the Spirit accomplishes the sanctification of sinners, that is, their spiritual transformation here and now. I will call this kind of preaching “sanctification

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<sup>4</sup> For a classic Lutheran approach to sanctification, see Adolf Köberle, *The Quest for Holiness: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Investigation*, trans. John C. Mattes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936).

<sup>5</sup> CD III, 7.

preaching.” I am making a distinction in kinds of preaching, here, not because there is an essential difference between justification and sanctification preaching. They both follow from the one message of Christ crucified. I am making a distinction here, because, I see a particular problem with a certain kind of preaching that ruptures the *nexus indivulsus* by presenting the cross of Christ in a way that addresses the theology of justification without necessarily justifying and without justifying ceases to sanctify (John 17:18–20).

The distinction between justification and sanctification corresponds with other dogmatic distinctions I assume in this paper. For example, the doctrine of original sin not only defines the depth of humanity’s spiritual corruption as utter spiritual lostness and deadness, demanding that God work his salvation *extra nos* in Christ, it also teaches that even after conversion human nature remains corrupted by original sin until the final resurrection of all flesh.<sup>6</sup> Sanctification as the expulsion of sin from the believer and the process of spiritual transformation thus has an eschatological trajectory which will be an important aspect of this thesis. From the doctrine of original sin comes the teaching that, right now, the Christian is *simul iustus et peccator*, living in constant conflict between the human flesh and the Spirit of God (Rom. 7:7–25; Gal 5:16–25). When it comes to preaching, then, the Word of God addresses baptized people as both sinners and saints, demanding a final distinction assumed in this paper, namely, the “particularly glorious light” of the distinction between Law and Gospel.<sup>7</sup> That distinction describes the twofold function of the Word of God to kill and to make alive. That distinction is particularly aimed at the comfort of consciences troubled with respect to salvation, that is, at justifying

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<sup>6</sup> AC II, BC 36–39; AC Apology II, BC 111–120. FC SD II, BC 543–562. “Therefore, Christ also redeemed human nature as his creation, sanctifies it as his creation, awakens it from the dead, and adorns it in glorious fashion as his creation. But he did not create, assume, redeem, or sanctify original sin. He will also not bring it to life in his elect. He will neither adorn it with glory nor save it. Instead, it will be utterly destroyed in the resurrection.” FC Epitome II, BC 488.6.

<sup>7</sup> SD FC V, BC 581.1.

sinner by grace through faith on account of Christ.<sup>8</sup> A final teaching I assume in this thesis that follows directly from the distinction between Law and Gospel is the teaching regarding the third use of the Law.<sup>9</sup> This teaching has to do with both the shape and the shaping power of the sanctified life in Christ, and shows that while the Law of God establishes the shape of that life, the Spirit of God, working through the Gospel, is its shaping power.<sup>10</sup> These teachings will be assumed in this thesis that has to do with preaching Christ crucified for the justification and sanctification of sinners.

Aiming at drawing hearers of God's Word into the cross of Christ, I will assess the usefulness of Spirit Christology as a framework for preaching sanctification. I will argue that Spirit Christology, an account of the person and work of Jesus Christ in terms of his relationship to the Father in and by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, serves as a useful framework for preaching that not only describes the sanctified life but also shapes people into it. More specifically, this account of preaching acknowledges that an account of the person and life of Jesus Christ in the Spirit is determinative for an account of the person and life of the Christian in the Spirit. In addition, the Christian life in the Spirit, grounded in the life of Christ who receives, bears, and gives the Holy Spirit, may be further described as a life of cruciform faith, hope, and love. Sanctification preaching, then, as it is presented in this thesis, is that which shapes cruciform faith, hope, and love in the hearers of God's Word.

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<sup>8</sup> "Therefore, the Spirit of Christ must not only comfort but through the function of the law must also 'convict the world of sin' [John 16:8]. Thus, in the New Testament the Holy Spirit must perform (as the prophet says [Isa. 28:21]) an *opus alienum, ut faciat opus proprium* (that is, he must perform an alien work—which is to convict—until he comes to his proper work—which is to comfort and to proclaim grace). For this reason Christ obtained the Spirit for us and sent him to us. That is why he is called the Comforter [John 14:26; 16:7]." SD FC V, BC 583.11.

<sup>9</sup> SD FC VI, BC 587–591.

<sup>10</sup> "For the law indeed says that it is God's will and command that we walk in new life. However, it does not give the power and ability to begin or to carry out this command. Instead, the Holy Spirit, who is given and received not through the law but through the proclamation of the gospel (Gal. 3[2, 14]), renews the heart." SD FC VI, BC 589.11.

My argument for developing the function of the cross in describing and shaping life in the Spirit proceeds in three chapters. In the first chapter, I begin by establishing a theocentric, trinitarian, and cruciform account of the Word of God in order to clarify the nature and function of preaching. This broad account of the Word of God expands the word of the cross as a word which brings salvation in Christ to hearers; that is, both justification and sanctification. I establish this broad view of the cross in order to demonstrate the way in which some forms of preaching narrow the word of the cross and thereby inhibit its function in the lives of hearers.

Next, I will draw on Gustaf Aulén's analysis of atonement theories in order to demonstrate the weakness of relying on only one account of the work of Christ on the cross as grounds for preaching.<sup>11</sup> Aulén demonstrates that while Anselm considers the cross as a means by which God's wrath is assuaged, Abelard considers the cross as an example of love. Aulén himself considers the cross as Christ's victory over Satan within the cosmic battle between God and his enemies. As one reflects on the task of preaching, the goal is not to pit one model or theory against another, but to allow the Gospels to function as the narratives that they are.

In this first chapter, I will also engage Gerhard Forde and his work on proclamation.<sup>12</sup> In establishing proclamation as words *from* God rather than words *about* God, Forde not only shows a major weakness of preaching that is grounded in the vicarious atonement, but also demonstrates, albeit implicitly, the relationship between Christology and proclamation. Grounding Forde's account of proclamation is a Christology that resonates well with a dimension of Aulén's *Christus Victor* model which emphasizes the present activity of the risen Lord, namely, His divine and saving activity in and through his Word proclaimed in the present

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<sup>11</sup> Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: MacMillan, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> Forde, *Theology is For Proclamation*.

tense.<sup>13</sup> Forde wants to prevent the word of the cross from becoming a bad explanation of Anselm, in which Christ does something *as crucified man* to merit satisfaction for sin, and thus emphasizes what Christ *as risen Lord* does through the word of the cross now to justify sinners.

My critique is that while Forde does provide a helpful framework for preaching the Word of God, he does not help us move toward preaching that describes and shapes the sanctified life. These aims should not be antithetical, however. The problem is that while Forde is able to say *something* about the sanctified life, namely, that a constant return to justification is its shaping power, he offers neither a description thick enough to account for the various experiences within that life nor a way to address them. I do not wish to argue against Forde, but rather to build upon and broaden his understanding of proclamation for the sake of killing and making alive to include proclamation for the sake of describing the sanctified life and shaping people into it. Here, the argument will call for another Christological framework that promotes these moves of proclamation, description, and formation.

In this way, the first chapter leads into the second, which takes up the topic of Spirit Christology. Spirit Christology is an account of the person and work of Jesus Christ in terms of his relationship to the Father in and by the presence and power of the Spirit. As such, it offers a way to address the problem and affects of Christological minimalism in preaching. The first move in this chapter will be to define Spirit Christology as an account of the person and work of Jesus Christ through the lens of Christ's identity as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit.

The next move will be to demonstrate the way this Christology grounds proclamation. I will engage Leopoldo Sánchez and his dissertation on Spirit Christology which connects this

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<sup>13</sup> For a fuller description of an approach that emphasizes the living Lord's presence and activity in and through His Word, see David W. Lotz, "The Proclamation of the Word in Luther's Thought," *Word and World* 3, no. 4 (1983): 344–354.

theological model with Forde's concern for proclamation.<sup>14</sup> While Sánchez shows that Spirit Christology is a useful ground for preaching that proclaims the cross, he also points to the fact that this framework might ground and foster the move toward ethical aspects of the church's life in the Spirit. In some of his most recent work, Sánchez has argued for baptismal, dramatic, and Eucharistic models of sanctification in the framework of a Spirit Christology. But the models are not explicitly aimed at the preaching task. An important contribution of my thesis will be to continue the work of Sánchez by asking how proclamation fosters the type of life in the Spirit he has rightly sought to describe.<sup>15</sup>

In the final move of the second chapter I will engage J.D.G. Dunn's work on the Christological Pneumatology of Paul as a way to further describe the life of the church in the Spirit based on a description of Christ's own life in the Spirit.<sup>16</sup> Dunn clarifies an important distinction between continuity and discontinuity in the relationship between Christ and the church as bearers of the Spirit. The point, here, is to emphasize the continuity between the life of Jesus and the life of the church toward a Christoform description of the sanctified life.<sup>17</sup>

In the third and final chapter, I will demonstrate the way Spirit Christology not only promotes proclamation and description of the sanctified life, but also promotes formation, that is, shaping hearers of God's Word into the sanctified life in the Spirit. Here I will engage the work

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<sup>14</sup> Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit: Jesus' Life and Mission in the Spirit as a Ground for Understanding Christology, Trinity, and Proclamation" (Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "Life in the Spirit of Christ: Models of Sanctification as Sacramental Pneumatology," *Logia* 22, no. 3 (2013): 7–14; Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., *Teología de la santificación: La espiritualidad del cristiano* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology*, vol. 1 of *The Christ and The Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998); James D. G. Dunn, *Pneumatology*, vol. 2 of *The Christ and The Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> For example: "Since Jesus was the image, the model and pattern of divine sonship, it is natural that all Christian character should be measured against him and that the test of the character-forming work of the Spirit at both individual and corporate levels should be the sonship of Jesus." Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 350.



of Regin Prenter on Luther's theology of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> I will do this for three reasons. First, Prenter grounds Pneumatologically Forde's concept of proclamation. Prenter makes explicit what Forde assumes, namely, the presence and activity of the Spirit through the Word of God. Second, Prenter stands firmly in the Lutheran tradition and offers a bridge between Lutheran theology and the field of Pneumatology. Third, Prenter provides language to speak about the work of the Spirit in the life of the church from a Lutheran perspective of sanctification. For Prenter, the Spirit operates through the Word in order to make Christ a present and active person rather than a mere idea to be cognitively appropriated or an ideal to be moralistically followed.<sup>19</sup> Instead, Prenter emphasizes the way Christ made present by the Spirit conforms people to himself and draws them into participation with God in his work in this world.<sup>20</sup>

Building on Prenter's description of the sanctified life as *theocentric* and *cruciform*, I will clarify that while there are important points of discontinuity between the life of Christ and the life of the church, the life of the church in the Spirit has a theocentric character that is in continuity with the cross of Christ. With this description of the Christian life grounded in Spirit Christology, the argument will move toward shaping people into the sanctified life. Here, I hope to show that Spirit Christology promotes preaching that shapes people into the Christian life.

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<sup>18</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*.

<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, "when Christ by the witness of the Spirit is proven to be reality as apart from a mere idea (thought, word, fancy), this is the experience of faith." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 57. On the other hand, "the outward Word does not become the Word of God until the Spirit causes the risen Christ to live his life in that Word. It is this living presence mediated by the Spirit which produces the previously mentioned motion of faith from the law to the gospel, from *verbum imperfectum et dilatatum* to *verbum abbreviatum et consumatum*, from the imitation of Christ as an ideal to the accepting of Christ as a gift." *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>20</sup> "Conformity with Christ is not accomplished by imitation of his humble humanity. It is not a result of ascetic technique. It is not at all the work of man's free will. It has no marks of the law at all. It is God who does his work in us, not we who imitate Christ. God by his Spirit makes us conform to Christ, so that we like him can become God's work and in this passive sense conform to his will." *Ibid.*, 10. "It is only when man is under the power of the Spirit that he becomes active in his relation to God. But it should be noted that this activity is not directed toward God, for before God man can only receive. Instead, the activity is in the direction from God against the world, that is, *ad extra*. The activity within the realm of the Spirit is not man's activity before God but his participation in God's activity in the world." *Ibid.*, 250.

In order to bring together proclamation, description, and formation in preaching, I will draw on the Pauline language of *faith, hope, and love* (1 Cor. 13:13). This language not only describes the sanctified life in dynamic, relational, and cruciform terms in complementarity with Spirit Christology, it also describes the goals of preaching that might form hearers of God's Word into the sanctified life. So, cruciform faith formed by the Spirit in relation to God involves spiritual death and resurrection. Cruciform hope involves the ongoing struggle between all the enemies of God and the Spirit of God which continues until Christ returns at the final resurrection. Cruciform love formed by the Spirit in relation to the world involves servanthood and other outward-looking aspects of the church's participation with God in his work in this world. It is my contention that these relational, dynamic, and cruciform virtues of faith, hope, and love account for the many and varied experiences of the sanctified life and give the preacher a way to address them Christologically.

In short, building on the work of Forde, Sánchez, and Prenter, I hope to demonstrate the way a Spirit Christology not only promotes the preaching of Christ crucified for the proclamation of justification but also for the description and formation of sanctification. Because Jesus gives to the church the same Spirit whom he receives and bears, Spirit Christology provides points of continuity between the life of Jesus and the life of the church. This continuity allows for two moves. First, it grounds a description of the life of the church in the life of Jesus. Second, it grounds preaching that shapes people into that sanctified life in the gospel, and specifically in the cross of Christ. In the end, I will show that Spirit Christology serves as a helpful framework for preaching sanctification and that the language of faith, hope and love offers a concrete way to account for both the life of the church in the Spirit of Christ as well as the kind of preaching through which the Spirit shapes that life.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE ECLIPSE OF THE CROSS: THE FUNCTION OF THE CROSS IN PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED

In this chapter, I analyze the perennial Lutheran problem of preaching sanctification by relating it to a tendency in Lutheran preaching to minimize the function of the cross.<sup>21</sup> I begin with a theology of the Word of God that flows from the person of Jesus Christ and extends by way of the divine economy into spoken and written forms. I demonstrate that an account of the Word of God in all its forms (personal, spoken, and written) must be trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform. I then outline various functions of the cross in the biblical narrative, highlighting the vicarious atonement, in order to demonstrate that while the cross may function as vicarious atonement, it also functions in other ways within the biblical narrative. Finally, I turn to a discussion of the function of the cross in preaching, that is, the spoken Word of God.

Preaching proclaims salvation by grace through faith on account of Jesus Christ. Salvation means justification, the promise that the Father forgives the sinner on account of Jesus Christ; a promise either rejected by unbelief or received by faith. Broadly speaking, salvation also means sanctification, the expulsion of sin from the life of the sinner. While justification preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone has its own complications, sanctification preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone has two particular complications. On the one hand,

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<sup>21</sup> While this problem is not difficult to observe, it is difficult to address: "A survey of 'Justification and Sanctification in the Lutheran Tradition' is similar to the famous final examination question: 'Write a history of the universe, with a couple of examples.' . . . Bookshelves groan with the weight of volumes on justification and sanctification. Indeed, the author of Ecclesiastes might have had our topic in mind when he wrote: 'Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh' (12:12). Yet, the preacher also addressed our topic in the next verse where he concluded that our whole duty is to 'fear God, and keep his commandments.' How simple our duty is! Yet, the question of how to 'fear God and keep his commandments' has fueled perennial theological controversy, social conflict, and personal anxiety." Carter Lindberg, "Do Lutherans Shout Justification But Whisper Sanctification," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1999): 1.

preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone may assume that sanctification is accounted for and addressed within justification, placing emphasis on the way the gospel shapes the sanctified life to the exclusion of its actual shape. This kind of preaching is antinomian. So, while sanctification must *follow* justification, it also *must* follow justification. On the other hand, preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone may account for and address sanctification without connection to justification, placing emphasis on the description or shape of the sanctified life to the exclusion of the power that shapes it. This kind of preaching is nomistic.<sup>22</sup> These complications rupture the *nexus indivulsus* between justification and sanctification.<sup>23</sup> It is my contention that these issues in preaching sanctification follow directly from a certain use of the basic biblical narrative, and particularly a certain use of the cross within that narrative. More specifically, the vicarious atonement narrative does not readily promote preaching that both describes the sanctified life and shapes Christians into it.

At the same time, it is the word of the cross that must ground all Christian preaching. On the one hand, it is by the cross that we are justified. On the other hand, Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Like justification, sanctification, the life lived by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20), has to do with the cross. Therefore, sanctification preaching cannot leave the cross behind but must rather draw hearers of God’s Word into it not only as the means of their justification but also as the shape and shaping power of their sanctified life in Christ.

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<sup>22</sup> On the one hand, when sanctification is not preached it tends to follow from the misunderstanding that the sanctified life is an automatic result of preaching justification and needs no explicit directive. On the other hand, “When justification, the doctrine that God saves the sinner freely through Jesus Christ, becomes an item which is now seen through the rear-view mirror as something which has happened and sanctification or the Christian life is seen as something which is viewed through the windshield as a current or future action, sanctification is bound to deteriorate into moralism.” David P. Scaer. “Sanctification in the Lutheran Confessions,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1989): 165.

<sup>23</sup> CD III, 7. See section 1.3.1.

In order to preach the cross as the shape of the sanctified life and to shape hearers of God's Word into that sanctified life by that preaching, the cross must function in more than one way, that is, in a way other than one that which arises from the mere explanation of the vicarious atonement. In order for the cross to function in any way in preaching, however, it must be grounded in the Gospel narratives. This chapter concludes by calling for another way of reading the Gospel narratives, another narrative account that promotes sanctification preaching. While many narrative trajectories are possible, it is necessary that a framework for a theology of the Word that fosters sanctification preaching be trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform.

### **1.1. The Word of God**

In this section, I establish a trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform account of the Word of God. The Word of God is trinitarian not only in that its content is the divine narrative of salvation from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit, but in that it functions as an extension of this divine mission for the salvation of the world. The Word of God is theocentric in its movement from God to the world. The Word of God is also cruciform as the word of the cross, a message that proclaims the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world. These designations describe the subject, object, content, and function of the Word of God and specifically address preaching as the spoken Word of God which carries the authority of the personal Word grounded in the written Word (Luke 24.44–49). The spoken Word is the present-tense address of God to this world through a preacher (2 Cor. 5:20–21). The purpose of this broad theological framework for preaching the gospel is to address the assumption that the vicarious atonement is the only function of the cross within God's Word to the world.

### 1.1.1. The Word of God as Trinitarian, Theocentric, and Cruciform

The Word of God comes to the world from the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, a proper account of the Word of God is trinitarian. Within the divine economy, the Word of God is first and foremost the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.<sup>24</sup> Jesus came speaking a message of salvation for the world (John 3:16). He upon whom the Spirit remains (John 1:34) “utters the words of God” (John 3:34) so that his words are “spirit and life” (John 6:63). Therefore, the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God on whom the Spirit rests, and the message of salvation in him is the content of God’s Word and the object of saving faith (cf. John 3:16, 36; 6:40). Salvation, then, is the goal of the divine economy. Broadly speaking, salvation is God’s rescue of those who belong to him from the eschatological destruction and judgment of the creation that rejected his Word and fell away from him with all of its implications for eternal life in the present and the life of the world to come. So, the Word of God breaks into an old, dying world with the promise and beginning of a new creation in Christ. This account of the Word of God is trinitarian in that it comes from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit.

A theology of the Word of God is also theocentric in that it moves from God to the world and then draws people from the world back to God.<sup>25</sup> While God certainly deals with the world and humanity as the object of his divine economy, the Word of God is not anthropocentric; not contingent upon humanity’s movement to God at any point. Thus, when it comes to salvation, God is active while humanity is passive. The Word and the salvation it bears are theocentric.

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<sup>24</sup> “Christ as the Word is thus God’s agent of creation as well as God’s decisive act of revelation and redemption (Footnote: LW 1.17, 12.312). And it is this very Word to whom all the Scriptures point. He is their essential content and heart.” David Lotz, “Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* XXXV, no. 3 (1981): 261.

<sup>25</sup> Regin Prenter describes the entire order of salvation in terms of three steps: 1. the continued preaching of the Word, 2. the mortification of the old man, and 3. the good works toward the neighbor. When these steps are regarded as stages in man’s spiritual development, the entire order becomes anthropocentric. Instead, for Prenter and Luther, “the whole *ordo*, the particular steps which we have followed, is one, single, concrete act of God. All the elements of this act are included in that which takes place when God by the Spirit speaks his Word.” Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 251.

Finally, a trinitarian and theocentric account of the Word of God is also cruciform in that the content of that Word, the salvation of the world, hinges on the cross event, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. In its most basic, historical form, the cross is the world's rejection of the Son of God since the personal Word of God came from the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit preaching a message of life and the world rejected him (John 1:11, cf. 1 Cor. 2:8). This personal Word of God, however, did not simply come to this world to talk about salvation. He came to accomplish it (Luke 4:18–21). So, when the Father raised his Son from the dead in the power of the Spirit (Rom. 1:4), vindicating Jesus as the Son of God and validating his Word as true, he overcame the rejection of the world and accomplished its salvation. In this regard, the cross is the work of Jesus by which the Triune God accomplished the salvation of the world.

Before the Son returned to the Father, he sent apostles into the world as the Father had sent him into the world that they might be his witnesses in the power of the same Holy Spirit he himself bore (Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:8, 2:1–4). He sent them to continue the divine mission for the salvation of the world through the ministry of the Word of God by breathing the Holy Spirit upon them (John 20:21–23). In this way, God not only speaks about salvation through those he sends. He also saves those who hear and receive his Word through his Son and in his Spirit (Rom. 10:13–17). This is the spoken form of God's Word.

Therefore, there are those Christ sends today in the same Spirit to speak God's Word within the Office of the Holy Ministry.<sup>26</sup> On the basis of this Office, we may regard preaching as one instance of the spoken Word of God and as a participation in the divine economy for the salvation of the world. As David Lotz writes:

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<sup>26</sup> AC V, BC 40.

To say that the gospel is the real presence of the exalted Christ is to say that salvation is a present event of preaching, and is thus a “Word event.” God’s historical deed of redemption in Christ, though finished and complete, avails nothing apart from the preached Word. Hence salvation is rightly understood not as a past event but as one that occurs whenever, in the economy of God, Christ and his Spirit awaken faith in the auditors of their spoken Word. “Today Christ is still present to some” says Luther, “but to others he is still to come. To believers he is present and has come; to unbelievers he has not yet come and does not help them. But if they hear his Word and believe, Christ becomes present to them, justifies and saves them” (LW 26.240). For Luther, accordingly, the faithful preaching and hearing of the gospel constitute the present event of salvation, and the justification of the ungodly ever and again occurs when Word and faith meet, because Christ himself is truly present in the gospel and truly present in the faith that comes by hearing.<sup>27</sup>

At its most basic level, then, preaching is the present-tense address of the promise of the gospel which brings to the hearer the salvation accomplished by the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit with all of its implications for faith and life, past, present, and future. In other words, God deals with the world by means of his Word through his Son and in his Spirit so that he might save those who hear and believe.<sup>28</sup> To put it yet another way, “*Verbum Dei est opus Dei.*”<sup>29</sup> Preaching, then, takes place within the divine economy of salvation and seeks to draw people into that economy. Some receive that message by faith for their salvation. Some reject it to their condemnation. If Jesus is received as Lord and Savior by faith, it is a result of the activity of the Holy Spirit who brings him to us and brings us to him.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Lotz, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought,” 349.

<sup>28</sup> As Luther states in the SA, “God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil.” BC 323. Luther places the sacraments under the category of the spoken Word of God. This allows us to understand the spoken Word more broadly than a strict identification with preaching and further allows us to understand preaching itself more broadly than a strict identification with sermons spoken from pulpits within the Divine Service. Speaking the Word from the pulpit is, however, the most concrete form of preaching and, for that reason, is the object of our current inquiry.

<sup>29</sup> Lotz, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought,” 353.

<sup>30</sup> “When you open the book containing the gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him. For the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him.” LW 35.121.



### 1.1.2. The Spoken and Written Forms of the Word of God: The Gospel in the Gospels

Grounding this spoken Word of God is the written Word of God which is the only rule and norm of faithful teaching and practice.<sup>31</sup> The Old Testament Scriptures tell the story of the relationship between the Creator and creation, God's dealings with his creation in the history of his people Israel, and the anticipation of the revelation of God's salvation through his Servant, Jesus the Messiah, who fulfills that story and, in a sense, begins a new story by ushering in a new creation. The New Testament Scriptures tell the story of the crucified and risen Jesus and offer authoritative instances of preaching Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. For this reason, the Scriptures function as the only rule and norm for faithful teaching and preaching.

More specifically, the Gospels are trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform. So, while the Scriptures are, broadly speaking, the narratives of God the Father who accomplishes the salvation of the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth by the power of his Holy Spirit, the Gospels, narrowly speaking, are the narratives that tell the story of Jesus. Therefore, the Gospels have a unique role as normative for the preaching of the gospel.<sup>32</sup>

The Gospels, however, weave a number of different trajectories together within their broad trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform narratives. In his work, *A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels* from 1521, a dedicatory letter written to Albert, count of Mansfield, as an introduction to a collection of Christmas, Epiphany, and Advent sermons, Martin Luther presents the gospel this way:

Gospel is and should be nothing else than a discourse or story about Christ, just as happens among men when one writes a book about a king or a prince, telling what he did, said, and suffered in his day. Such a story can be told in various ways; one spins it out, and the other is brief. Thus the gospel is and should be nothing else than

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<sup>31</sup> FC Epitome, BC 486.1.

<sup>32</sup> "While Scripture, therefore, is properly designated Word of God, it holds this dignity because it witnesses to Christ the Word who is in Scripture as its matchless content and because it contains the gospel through which the risen and exalted Christ still speaks and acts redemptively on behalf of his church." Lotz, "Sola Scriptura," 263.

chronicle, a story, a narrative about Christ, telling who he is, what he did, said, and suffered – a subject which one describes briefly, another more fully, one this way, another that way. For at its briefest, the gospel is a discourse about Christ, that he is the Son of God and became man for us, that he died and was raised, that he has been established as a Lord over all things.<sup>33</sup>

Simply put, then, the spoken Word of the gospel and the Gospels that norm it simply present the story about Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord of all.

As a designation for the spoken Word of God, the term “gospel” may function in one of two ways.<sup>34</sup> In a broad sense, the gospel is the entire story, the judgment and the salvation of God in relation to the world. In a narrow sense, the Gospel (here capitalized) is the promise of God’s forgiveness that stands distinct from the condemnation of the Law. This thesis will deal with the gospel in the broad sense as it is used the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

“[T]he sum of the preaching of the gospel is to condemn sin and to offer the forgiveness of sins, righteousness on account of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, so that having been reborn we might do good. Christ includes this in a summary of the gospel when he says in the last chapter of Luke “that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in [my] name to all nations.”<sup>35</sup>

The first four chapters of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians demonstrate the way the apostle applies this trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework to preaching the gospel. In the first chapter, Paul identifies the gospel, the message of good news he preaches, as the word of the cross. He writes that though the world regards the word of the cross as folly in contrast to its own words of wisdom, the word of the cross is the power of God (1:17–18; cf. Rom. 1:16–17).

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<sup>33</sup> LW 35.117–118.

<sup>34</sup> “Because the word ‘gospel’ is not used in just one sense in the Holy Scripture – the reason this dispute arose in the first place – we believe, teach, and confess when the word ‘gospel’ is used for the entire teaching of Christ, which he presented in his teaching ministry, as did his apostles in theirs (it is used in this sense in Mark 1, Acts 20), then it is correct to say or to write that the gospel is a proclamation of both repentance and the forgiveness of sins. When, however, law and gospel are placed in contrast to each other – as when Moses himself is spoken of as a teacher of the law and Christ as a preacher of the gospel – we believe, teach, and confess that the gospel is not a proclamation of repentance or retribution, but is, strictly speaking, nothing else than a proclamation of comfort and a joyous message which does not rebuke nor terrify but comforts consciences against the terror of the law, directs them solely to Christ’s merit, and lifts them up again through the delightful proclamation of the grace and favor of God, won through Christ’s merit.” FC Epitome, BC 500–501.6–7.

<sup>35</sup> Ap XII, BC 191–192.29–30.

That designation of power indicates that the word of the cross, the gospel, is not only the word that describes the cross, but the word that delivers the cross as the salvation of those who hear and believe the good news. It is the word that presents Christ “who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1:30).

In the second chapter, Paul again identifies the gospel as the word of the cross: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (2:2). The significant logical advancement in this second chapter is Paul’s connection between this word of the cross, the gospel, which he has already called the power of God, and the Spirit of God. The world, in its wisdom, rejected the wisdom of God and “crucified the Lord of glory” (2:8). But there are those to whom God through his Spirit has revealed these things (2:10). So, Paul writes, “we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” (2:12). Therefore, the power of the word of the cross cannot be separated from the presence and activity of the Spirit of God.

In the third chapter, Paul presses this connection between the word and the Spirit even further, indicating that he does not address the Corinthians as “spiritual people, but as people of the flesh” (3:1). In other words, divisions among them indicate that they are operating as fleshly people and regard one another as such rather than operating and regarding one another as spiritual people. So, Paul asks, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (3:16). While they certainly know this, their behavior reveals their reluctance to live as though it were true. Paul therefore addresses these Christians and their divisions with their relationship with the Spirit and the gospel, the word of the cross.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, Paul addresses the way hearers of the word of the cross should regard the messengers who speak it since it appears that those messengers actually

provide the lines of division among them: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1). Paul pushes the designation of a servant even further when he describes himself and the other apostles as “fools for Christ’s sake” (4:10). Like the message of folly they carry, Paul and the other apostles “have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things” (4:13). Thus the word of the cross, the gospel, the power of God to save, the instrument of the Spirit, and the mystery of God, does something to the preacher. In fact, God conforms the preacher of the gospel to the message of the cross so that it is his Word, power, and Son that is proclaimed by the power of his Spirit, and not the preacher.

While Paul uses this broad trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework to address divisions in the church with the gospel, he provides a helpful framework for addressing preaching today in terms of both its content and function. Contemporary Lutheran preaching tends toward emphasis on the preacher and on correct explanation.<sup>36</sup> To overcome this tendency, two aspects of Paul’s framework are particularly helpful: the word of the cross as *power* and the word of the cross as *mystery*. First, the word of the cross as the power of God stands in contrast to the power of man, particularly the human preacher. The word of the cross is the power of God because it is God’s Word and through it God the Holy Spirit is present and active for the salvation of those who hear it and receive it in faith. More will be said on this later. Second, the

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<sup>36</sup> Willimon employs effective sarcasm: “Fill in all the gaps. Make sure that there are no awkward clauses as you move from one abstraction to another in a sermon. Conceive of the sermon as whatever you say, or more to the point, whatever you write down. A sermon is whatever you have on the page. A sermon is the Word of God because I declare it to be so. Sermons are primarily products of fertile, homiletical minds, hard work, the skillful application of good interpretive and rhetorical technique. People in our congregations may be ‘saved by grace,’ but we preachers know that we are saved by hard homiletical work. Spend one hour in study for every one-minute you spend in the pulpit, etc. Again, the essential issue is control. Although biblical writers, and later Christian artists, represented the Holy Spirit as a descending dove, we religious professionals know that this Spirit is a bird with claws. Give it room in your sermon and the next thing you know, it will take over. Your sermon will become something else than you intended; the congregation will experience uncontrolled interpretive slippage, seepage. All sorts of unfortunate, unintended consequences can happen. In preaching, as in any other area of pastoral work, unintended consequences are always to be avoided.” William Willimon, “Overcoming Pentecost in Our Preaching,” *Journal for Preachers* 24, no. 4 (2001): 32–33.

word of the cross as a mystery stands in contrast to formulaic explanations.<sup>37</sup> In this vein, one should note that Paul's presentation is void of any explicit or specific explanation of the significance of the cross. The apostle simply presents the word of the cross as the work of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ who is Lord and Savior as a word of power and mystery. It is the wisdom of the Spirit. It is perhaps arguments over specific signification that sparked the division in Corinth in the first place. So, Christ, his person and his work, cannot be misused or bound.

Richard Lischer provides a concise summary of Paul's framework for preaching when he writes,

All that we can conclude about preaching from the apostle's comments is that he told the story simply from the Scriptures, that he trembled at the implications of his own message, and that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was the heartbeat of his homiletics.<sup>38</sup>

The reason for emphasizing the power and mystery of the word of the cross is to challenge our tendencies to domesticate and explain the gospel. In terms of domesticating the power, we begin believing that the power rests in the preacher rather than in the Word. In terms of explaining the mystery, we fall into formulaic presentations of the Word.

Within our trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework, preaching is broadly defined as the spoken Word of God, grounded in and normed by the written Word of God, through which the person of Jesus as present Lord has come, will come, and comes from the Father and in the Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world. To preach the gospel, then, is to preach Christ. To preach Christ faithfully is to preach Christ crucified. In other words, the content of the personal, spoken, and written instances or forms of the Word of God is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The function of these forms of God's Word is the death and resurrection of the sinner

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<sup>37</sup> "The Bible offers no explanation of or rules for preaching but only the affirmation of a mystery in which we are privileged to participate." Richard Lischer, "Cross and Craft: Two Elements of a Lutheran Homiletic," *Concordia Journal* 25, no. 1 (1999): 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

with Christ for his or her forgiveness, life, and salvation. The sinner is thus brought into the narrative of the cross. In short, the content and function of the Word of God may be aptly summarized by the term “gospel.” As Luther writes:

[T]he gospel should really not be something written, but a spoken word which brought forth the Scriptures, as Christ and the apostles have done. This is why Christ himself did not write anything but only spoke. He called his teaching not Scripture but gospel, meaning good news or a proclamation that is spread not by pen but by word of mouth.<sup>39</sup>

There is another form of the spoken Word of God that has gone unobserved up to this point. The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are also forms of the spoken Word of God, means of grace through which the Holy Spirit brings Christ to people and people to Christ for their forgiveness, life, and salvation. Connecting the sacraments to the spoken Word of God has important implications for preaching sanctification that will be explored in chapter three.

In summary, the Word of God comes from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit for the salvation of the world. A theology of the Word may speak further of Christ as the personal Word who speaks through the preached Word of the gospel grounded in the written Word of the Gospels in order to lead the world to salvation in him. That salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus has any number of implications. It means the forgiveness of sin, justification, sanctification, and the hope of final eschatological fulfillment of all the promises of God for those who receive Christ and his Word. It is the mystery of the cross event and the salvation that it brings to the world that forms the sum and substance of the trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform Word of God in all its forms. This story of the cross has implications for describing and fostering the shape of the sanctified life. But before we develop this point further, let us look at a way in which a certain Christological minimalism in the preaching of the cross has led some LCMS circles to an eclipse of the cross with respect to sanctification.

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<sup>39</sup> LW 35.123.

## 1.2. The Eclipse of the Cross: Atonement Theory

Paul's clear statement, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23), can be confusing if lifted out of its context and assumed without reflection on the *way* we preach Christ crucified. There is, within the broad framework just outlined, any number of ways to understand the function of the cross with respect to the salvation of the world as well as all of its inexhaustibly wonderful implications. It is my contention that we in LCMS, however, assume that the word of the cross, the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, functions primarily as an explanation of the cross in terms of a sacrifice accepted by the Father as payment for the sins of humanity, that is, as vicarious atonement. This narrative does not contradict the preceding trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework, and it does promote certain kinds of preaching aimed at certain goals, such as the doctrine of justification by grace through faith on account of Christ, but it does not promote other kinds of preaching, particularly preaching sanctification.

### 1.2.1. The Work of Christ: The Cross as Vicarious Atonement

The first appearance of the term "gospel" in the Augsburg Confession is in Article V: *Concerning the Office of Preaching*, reflecting Luther's understanding above. This article, of course, follows from the first four articles: Article I confesses the Triune God, Article II confesses humanity's original sin, Article III confesses the person and work of Christ, and Article IV confesses justification by grace through faith. For our purposes, we will look more closely at Article III which speaks about the work of Christ on the cross in a very specific way:

He is true God and true human being who truly "was born, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried" in order both to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins and to conciliate God's wrath.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> AC V, BC 38.2. I have provided the German text above because it more clearly articulates an emphasis on the function of the cross to conciliate God's wrath. The Latin text from the same source is as follows: ". . . Christ, truly God and truly a human, being 'born of the Virgin Mary,' who truly 'suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried' that he might reconcile the Father to us and be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of human beings." I will quote from the German text in all subsequent references.

Therefore, AC III defines Christ's work on the cross as a sacrifice on behalf of human sin and the means by which a wrathful God is reconciled to sinful humanity. Article IV describes this work of Christ in terms of the grace of God that is received by faith and justifies sinners before God. So, when Article V goes on to speak about the work of the Holy Spirit through the *Predigtamt* as the location of the spoken word, the gospel, it defines such gospel in this way:

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit, when we so believe.<sup>41</sup>

The phrase "Christ's merit" refers unequivocally to the cross as Christ's sacrifice which functions as propitiation for the sin of the world, satisfying the wrath of God against sin and promising forgiveness of sin and salvation for those who believe in Christ as Savior. Thus, the vicarious atonement is the foundation for the Christology of the Lutheran Confessions, the starting point for our discussion regarding the function of the cross.

When it comes to our use of the vicarious atonement narrative in the Missouri Synod, David Maxwell observes that the Missouri Synod's explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, Question 139, solidifies this narrative as central:

How does this work of redemption benefit you? Christ was my substitute. He took my place under God's judgment against sin. By paying the penalty of my guilt, Christ atoned, or made satisfaction, for my sins (vicarious atonement).<sup>42</sup>

Connecting this confessional emphasis to the written Word of God, Maxwell identifies this as the Day of Atonement narrative from Leviticus 16 which he summarizes as follows:

In this narrative, our problem is that we stand under the wrath of God because of our sin. But Christ Jesus took our place and suffered God's wrath on our behalf when He

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<sup>41</sup> AC V, BC 40.1–3.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in David Maxwell, "The Resurrection of Christ: Its Importance in the History of the Church," *Concordia Journal* 34, no. 1–2 (2008): 23.



died on the cross. This vicarious atonement won for us the forgiveness of sins, which restores us to a right relationship with God.<sup>43</sup>

Not only does this function of the cross, this atonement narrative, dominate Missouri's dogmatics and teaching, it also dominates our preaching. Out of twenty-one Good Friday sermons published in Concordia Pulpit Resources since 1991, for example, sixteen of them present the gospel in terms of the vicarious atonement.<sup>44</sup> We may say that the vicarious atonement is typically the assumed reading of the Gospel narratives in the Missouri Synod and the primary way we preach, teach, and present the gospel.

The vicarious atonement is a trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform account of the gospel. What is more, it can, in its best form, lead to the proclamation of the gospel that brings Christ to us for our salvation. When presented properly, it also allows us to emphasize the theocentric nature of the gospel, that is, the movement from God to the world, the work of Christ on our behalf, and the passivity of our salvation by the Spirit's work through the external Word – in other words, the certainty and objectivity of our *justification*. It is certainly cruciform, as well. Therefore, my intention in this thesis is not to argue against the vicarious atonement, but to challenge our tendency to limit all preaching of the cross to the vicarious atonement. For us, it is not a matter of preaching Christ; it is a matter of preaching Christ fully.

### **1.2.2. Atonement Theory**

In his work "*Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*," Gustaf Aulén outlined three basic narratives of the cross within the Christian

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>44</sup> I examined the following sermons in Concordia Pulpit Resources: 1.2 Duchow, 2.2 Selle, 3.2 Anderson, 4.2 Mulder, 12.2 Weedon, 13.2 Mitchell, 14.2 Colageo, 15.2 Korby, 16.2.1 J.P. Meyer, 16.2.2 J. Saleska, 17.2.1, 18.2.2 Neidigk, 18.2.6 Utech, 17.2.4 Nehrenz, 19.2 Albers, 20.2.2 Femmel, 20.2.3 Cripe, 21.2.1 Rattelmuller, 21.2.2 Brockman, 22.2 Quardokus, and 23.2. Schmitt. While these sermons may have various aims, they assume, speak about, and at times proclaim the gospel in terms of vicarious atonement.

tradition: the Latin type, the classic type, and the subjective type.<sup>45</sup> Aulén claims his main objective is to differentiate the three types in terms of their characteristics and their development within the tradition.<sup>46</sup> He does this, however, in order to make the case that the classic type is the most biblical, traditional, and beneficial type of the three.

While Aulén does not account for every function of the cross, his analysis does provide a way to move forward in our discussion. Aulén categorized the vicarious atonement as the Latin type following upon the fact that Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) did much to substantiate this theory. In answering the question, “*Cur Deus Homo?*,” Anselm points to the way the cross functions in the context of the incarnation and the relationship between Jesus and the Father. As true God, Jesus is without sin, and thus *able* to pay God an infinite satisfaction for humanity’s sin and offense against him. As true man, Jesus is the necessary sacrifice that ought to be given to God on behalf of sinful humanity, though Jesus does so freely. Therefore, with God’s justice as starting point and *telos*, Anselm shows the way God’s wrath is assuaged as a result of the perfect payment of the God-man on behalf of all mankind. This is vicarious atonement.

Aulén also shows that the cross may function in another way, by means of a second atonement type or category that he calls the subjective type. Represented by Peter Abelard (1079–1142), this perspective sees the cross not as the God-man’s payment to a righteous God, but an event that functions in the context of our relationships with one another. Abelard understood the cross primarily as the definitive expression of divine love and emphasized the way in which it functioned as an example of love for humanity. Here, sin is not dealt with in the same way as in the objective type. In fact, this type does not address sin at all.

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<sup>45</sup> Aulén, *Christus Victor*.

<sup>46</sup> “My aim is, therefore, simply to analyze the actual types of Atonement-doctrine, so that their characteristics may emerge with the greatest possible clearness, and to fix the actual development of these types in the course of Christian thought.” *Ibid.*, 12.

Aulén categorizes these two types, the objective and subjective, in order to distinguish them from a third type, which has roots in the early church fathers, namely, the classic type which presents Christ as Victor. Aulén seeks to demonstrate that this type is the most comprehensive understanding of the view of the cross and the most fundamental to the Gospel narratives. He attempts to show the way Luther promoted this view and then argues for its continued use today.

Throughout his book, Aulén is concerned with keeping the cross a “continuous Divine work,” that is, something that comes from God and is carried through by God:

The most marked difference between the ‘dramatic’ type and the so-called ‘objective’ type lies in the fact that it represents the work of Atonement or reconciliation as from first to last a work of God Himself, a continuous Divine work; while according to the other view, the act of Atonement has indeed its origin in God’s will, but is, in its carrying-out, an offering made to God by Christ as man and on man’s behalf, and may therefore be called a discontinuous Divine work. On the other hand, it scarcely needs to be said that this ‘dramatic’ type stands in sharp contrast with the ‘subjective’ type of view. It does not set forth only or chiefly a change taking place in men; it describes a complete change in the situation, a change in the relation between God and the world, and a change also in God’s own attitude. The idea is, indeed, thoroughly ‘objective’; and its objectivity is further emphasized by the fact that the Atonement is not regarded as affecting men primarily as individuals, but is set forth as a drama of a world’s salvation.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, Aulén’s primary concern in comparing types of atonement is the theocentricity of salvation, that is, preserving the movement from God to man.<sup>48</sup> Along these lines, he concludes with the following comments that promote the classic type:

The classic type showed us the Atonement as a movement of God to man, and God as closely and personally engaged in the work of man’s deliverance. In the Latin type God seems to stand more at a distance; for the satisfaction is paid by man, in the person of Christ, to God. In the third type God stands still more at a distance; as far as

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>48</sup> Sánchez has argued that, while we must “give proper due to Aulén’s interest in preserving God’s initiative and agency in the work of atonement,” we must not do so “at the expense of Christ’s true human sacrifice for sins.” Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 98.

He is concerned, no atonement is needed, and all the emphasis is on man's movement to God, on that which is accomplished in the world of men.<sup>49</sup>

The irony of Aulén's analysis is that he addresses a narrow view of the atonement, a view that holds only to the objective type, by adhering just as tenaciously, if not more so, to another view, namely, the classic type. In his insistence on one type to the exclusion of others, Aulén is a victim of his own critique in that he confines himself to the same narrative narrowing that he attempts to counter by continuing to operate within a system of atonement theories that demands adherence to one function of the cross over against all others.

Aulén's analysis is helpful, however, in that he shows how the cross can and does function in more than one way within the Gospel narratives and that these various narrative trajectories might address various concerns. The important point for our purposes is not the mere variety of the narrative trajectories, but the fact that all of these theories of atonement are faithful ways of reading the Gospel narratives. In addition, each theory of atonement addresses a particular concern of Christian faith and life. So, Aulén helps us see that the cross may function in three different ways within three different relational categories: the relationship between God and man (objective), the conflict between God and his enemies (classic), and the relationship between one person and another (subjective). Put another way, the first view addresses a change in God, the second addresses a change in the cosmic battle between God and his enemies, and the final view addresses a change in humanity.<sup>50</sup> The point to take from Aulén is not that one narrative should be used to the exclusion of others, but that each narrative trajectory addresses a particular and legitimate concern for Christian faith and life by means of the cross.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>50</sup> Sánchez sums up the strengths of the three approaches as follows: "These strengths are respectively and comparatively the central place of Christ's *human* obedience unto death in atonement (Anselm), the affirmation that reconciliation is always and exclusively the eschatological work *of God* against his enemies (Aulén on the classic approach), and the non-exclusive stress on the church's objective appropriation of atonement in self-sacrificial Christ-like works of love (Abelard)." Sánchez, "Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit," 90.

### 1.2.3. The Eclipse of the Cross

David Maxwell established his point about the narrowing of the biblical narrative mentioned earlier in order to address the significance of Christ's resurrection. He notes that the "central importance of Christ's resurrection is not always evident in our preaching and in our theological reflection," observing that our sermons often "declare that the glorious comfort of the resurrection is that it proves that God the Father accepted the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."<sup>51</sup> The problem will not be solved with "a little less cross and a little more resurrection,"<sup>52</sup> nor will it be solved by arguing against the vicarious atonement as Aulén did. Instead, Maxwell frames the problem this way:

Instead of focusing on atonement "theories," I would suggest we need to look at the overarching narratives used to explain the significance of both the cross and the resurrection. There are in fact any number of narratives, all of them Scriptural, into which the cross and the resurrection fit. A second question we need to ponder is whether we are allowed to have only one overarching narrative.<sup>53</sup>

Maxwell then outlines three overarching narratives. The first is the Day of Atonement narrative, grounded by Leviticus 16 and Romans 3:21–25a. He writes,

When we boil down the Day of Atonement narrative it goes like this: God is angry with sin. The blood of the sacrifice is presented to God, and this blood makes atonement for sin. This, I suggest, is the dominant narrative that Lutherans use to describe the way in which Christ's crucifixion saves.<sup>54</sup>

The second overarching narrative Maxwell identifies is the Passover narrative. He summarizes it this way: "The blood of the lamb saves because it causes the Angel of Death to pass over the house. Applied to Christ, this means that the cross conquers death."<sup>55</sup> In other words, "the blood of Christ, like the blood of the Passover lamb in Exodus, saves because it protects the people

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<sup>51</sup> Maxwell, "Resurrection," 22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 28.

from death.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, Maxwell identifies a third narrative he calls the “stomping narrative” (Gen. 3:15). He writes, “According to this pattern, the cross is not primarily described as a victory. In fact, it is a defeat, penultimate to be sure, but it is the point at which Satan seems to win.”<sup>57</sup> He comments further: “The genius of the stomping narrative, it seems to me, is that it has a place for the experience of defeat.”<sup>58</sup> All of this certainly has implications for preaching.

In concluding his analysis of these three narratives, Maxwell makes an important point: “These narratives cause difficulty only when one is committed to one narrative at the exclusion of the others. Luther, as we have seen, says that every event in Christ’s life saves us because He does it for us and bestows it on us.”<sup>59</sup> Maxwell then observes:

I think the way forward is to admit to ourselves that we can have—and in fact do have—multiple narratives which describe the role of the cross and resurrection in various ways. What we need to abandon is not the Day of Atonement narrative but the zero-sum mindset that assumes that if the cross saves us, then nothing else that Christ does can.<sup>60</sup>

While Maxwell is primarily concerned with the function of the resurrection in these narratives, his analysis helpfully demonstrates some of the narrative trajectories regarding the function of the cross and the unique benefits to Christian faith and life these different functions may have.

The question, therefore, is not whether the cross may function as vicarious atonement in preaching, but whether the cross can function in any other way besides the vicarious atonement in preaching. The problem is not the vicarious atonement, but the assumption, and particularly the *unconscious* assumption, that it is the only narrative of Christ’s person and work allowed by Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. If the vicarious atonement is used to the exclusion of all

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 35–36.

other biblical narratives, and thus other functions of the cross, it can become detrimental not only to our reading of the narratives, but also to a fuller approach to the task and aims of preaching. Such an eclipse of the cross and its manifold functions in our teaching and preaching simply leaves some aspects and concerns of Christian faith and life unaccounted for and unaddressed.

### 1.3. Preaching Christ Crucified

“The cross of Christ is the only instruction in the Word of God there is, the purest theology.”<sup>61</sup> So, we preach Christ crucified. The goal of preaching Christ crucified is to bring Christ to sinners and sinners to Christ. In other words, preaching draws people into the divine economy of salvation accomplished by the Father through the Son and in the Spirit with all of its implications for faith and life. In this section, we will analyze the limitations of preaching Christ crucified for faith and life when this is done only on the basis of or in the framework of the vicarious atonement. These limitations, particularly with respect to preaching sanctification, demonstrate the need for us to return to the Gospel narratives for another way of understanding the significance and function of the cross.

#### 1.3.1. The Challenge of Trinitarian, Theocentric, and Cruciform Preaching

Through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the Father justifies and sanctifies (1 Cor. 1:30). In his *Christian Dogmatics*, Francis Pieper defined the relationship between Christian faith and life, justification and sanctification. He wrote:

The teaching of Scripture and of Scriptural theology on the relation between justification or faith and sanctification and good works may be epitomized in these two statements: 1. There is an inseparable connection (*nexus indivulsus*) between justification and sanctification; where there is justification, there is in every case also sanctification. 2. But in this *nexus indivulsus* the cart must not be placed before the horse, that is, sanctification must not be placed before justification, but must be left in its proper place as the consequence and effect of justification.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> WA 5.217, 2–3.

<sup>62</sup> CD III, 7.

Here, Pieper helpfully distinguishes and orders justification and sanctification. In terms of doing and preaching this distinction and order, we may say that a problem with life is really a problem with faith, even as a problem with sanctification is fundamentally a justification problem. While there is an order, the order does not dissolve the inseparability of these two aspects of salvation which both flow from the work of Christ on the cross. In that sense, as a result of the activity of the Spirit through the Word of God, which crucifies and raises the sinner with Christ, both justification and sanctification are trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform and may be said to flow also from an account of the person and work of Christ.

Preaching grounded solely in the vicarious atonement tends to relativize all three of these aspects of an account of the person and work of Christ. In the first place, the vicarious atonement narrative is not fully trinitarian, particularly in that it minimizes the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church by simply accounting for his work in calling individuals to faith in Jesus. This will be discussed in more detail in the introduction to the second chapter. At this point, it is important to note how the vicarious atonement does not address a trinitarian reductionism that separates the *nexus indivulsus* between Christian faith and life. Justification and sanctification are separated from one another when the gospel conveys a Christ who comes to redeem from sin and a Spirit who creates faith in the Redeemer to the exclusion of the Christoform life that flows from the cross and faith. Therefore, the vicarious atonement account of Christ's person and work alone does not directly account for or address sanctification.

Second, when it comes to preaching that is theocentric, the vicarious atonement can maintain the movement from God to the world in that the atonement is the work of the *God-man*, but it does so at the expense of the function of the cross to create faith in Christ. Therefore, preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone tends to emphasize ideas about Christ



rather than Christ himself as the object of saving faith. Certainly, faith about Christ (*fides quae*) cannot be disconnected from faith in Christ (*fides qua*), but faith trusts the promise of the gospel and the crucified and risen Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Faith does not merely appropriate facts, although that is involved. Now, to be sure, the vicarious atonement is a true and important way to understand the work of Christ. But, if the word of Christ is heard for the sake of saving faith, what kind of faith does this narrative actually produce? It would seem that preaching Christ this way has the danger of presenting Christ as a mere idea. The gospel becomes a formula for personal salvation. In other words, if the preacher preaches correctly and points away from human works and to the righteousness of Christ, and if the hearer hears, rightly understands, and accepts this message as presented, then salvation is received. Preaching the gospel as a formula promotes faith that is reduced to the cognitive appropriation of a formula. A limited view of the gospel leads to a limited view of faith and it is from this limited view of faith that the *nexus indivulsus* between justification and sanctification is dissolved. So, by reducing faith to the cognitive assent of an explanation about Christ, the gospel is stripped of its power to engender a life of trust in Christ that in turn shapes how we live. So, while the Gospel accounts of the person and work of Christ are not simplistic or formulaic, our preaching often is.

Third, preaching grounded in the vicarious atonement alone minimizes the cruciform nature of the gospel. When the cross is preached only as Christ's sacrifice to the Father, there is little or no place to speak about the cross of the Christian, at least not provided by the narrative itself. So, we preach the gospel, convicting the hearts of people with respect to their sin, directing them away from their own works and to the person and work of Christ. He has done all for us. But, if the cross is Christ's work, *extra nos*, on our behalf, through which He acts as our substitute (*Christus Vicar*), it becomes difficult to then speak of the cross from that same

narrative as something that the Christian is commanded to pick up and carry (Luke 9:23). Thus, the vicarious atonement narrative leads to a cruciform deficiency when it comes to sanctification, illustrating the need for a broader understanding of the function of the cross in preaching Christ.

The eclipse of the cross just described limits our account of the Christian life and thus presents a problem for preachers in addressing the many and varied challenges and experiences of the Christian life, such as obedience, prayer, temptation, suffering, and service. Still, Lutherans have learned to say a few things about sanctification, though such reflections typically do not follow directly from the vicarious atonement narrative. For example, Lutherans have learned to address good works, motivation, and vocation as aspects of the sanctified life.

Typical sanctification preaching in Missouri Synod circles presents God's work (justification) and then addresses our work (sanctification). But these are antithetical within the vicarious atonement narrative. So, addressing both is a very awkward move to make since the preacher has already absolved the Christian of all work in an effort to make the gospel and salvation absolutely and objectively certain. Here we see the way the Lutheran concern for the theocentricity of the gospel dominates and even determines the narrative. The certainty of the gospel is certainly not wrong; in fact the concern for the troubled conscience ought to be a major priority for the preacher.<sup>63</sup> But it is precisely at this point that preachers may not want to preach sanctification out of fear of putting people back under the Law and its obligations. This seems to me, at least, to be the classic tension in Lutheranism and the reason so much has been written about the relationship between justification and sanctification.<sup>64</sup> It is within this tension that the controversy over the necessity of good works arose.<sup>65</sup> Good works, however, are not addressed

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<sup>63</sup> BC 120–121.1–2. See also FC V, BC 581.1.

<sup>64</sup> FC III, BC 567.29; FC III, BC 567.32.

<sup>65</sup> FC IV, BC 574.1–3.

or accounted for in that preaching which operates only within the vicarious atonement narrative, even though they are accounted for in the Lutheran Confessions as a whole.<sup>66</sup>

The way we typically account for the connection between the cross and good works is by moving, perhaps unknowingly, into another narrative, namely, Abelard's subjective atonement narrative, which presents the cross as the example of love. Within that framework, the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification is easily reduced to the thin string of motivation; all thrust and no vector. No actual shape or description of the sanctified life necessarily follows from such a framework. In order to fully address the sanctified life with all of its varied concerns and experiences, the preacher must use another narrative that does not directly flow from the vicarious atonement alone. The danger here, of course, is dissolving the *nexus indivulsus*.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, when we speak about good works motivated by love, we typically point to the reality that Christians do these good works within the various vocations to which God calls them. While a theology of vocation does address the location and nature of good works, vocation alone does not fully describe the shape of the sanctified life beyond the location and nature of good works. What is more, a theology of vocation does not come from any narrative of the cross and can easily become a separate, or at least secondary, teaching that needs constant reinforcement.

To summarize, when it comes to preaching sanctification, the vicarious atonement narrative does not provide the preacher with a framework broad enough to account for or address the sanctified life fully. While sanctification may at times be presented in a trinitarian and theocentric framework, the use of the vicarious atonement in preaching often does not promote

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<sup>66</sup> Ap XII, BC 191.28; FC VI, BC 587–591.

<sup>67</sup> Alberto L. García, *Cristología: Cristo Jesús, centro y praxis del pueblo de Dios* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 11–13; 38–41. García argues that the Latin version of AC III and its language of “reconciliation,” lends itself more readily than the German text to conceiving Christ's death not only in terms of our individual salvation but also in terms of the shape of personal salvation for our communities as Christ's death opens the way and allows for our reconciliation with one another. This is one example of a confessional Lutheran theologian who attempts to see the social implications of Christ's death, which are not explicitly available in the theory of vicarious atonement.

the function of the cross toward shaping the Christian life. Therefore, an exclusive use of or dependence upon the vicarious atonement narrative does not promote preaching that retains the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification.

### **1.3.2. The Challenge of Preaching Justification: On the Cross as a Present Event**

In his article, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought,” David Lotz writes:

The doctrine of justification exists only to serve the event of justification, by insuring that Christ is properly preached as God’s gift of forgiveness to the trusting heart. Were the gospel to be identified with the church’s doctrine of justification, it would no longer be gospel but law, namely, the demand for “right belief”; and it would no longer be the offering of Christ as gift, but the exhortation to hold fast to a treasured possession, namely the “right (= biblical-Reformation) teaching” about Christ as Savior. (Lutheranism, it must be noted, has been singularly prone to this doctrinalist distortion of the gospel).<sup>68</sup>

I content that the problem Lotz describes follows, at least in part, from an overdependence upon the vicarious atonement narrative as the means to explain justification rather than to proclaim Christ and him crucified.

Gerhard Forde did much to address this problem of preachers usurping the proclamation of the gospel with explanations about the gospel in their preaching.<sup>69</sup> For Forde, preaching that merely explains the truth that Christ died for the sins of the world has often led to moralistic appeals to accept Christ as Savior and believe on him as the only way to the Father and the only way of salvation. On the other hand, among some Lutherans, there is also the danger of explaining justification in a way that does away with the Law in the Christian’s life. Forde writes:

I have spent most of my career insisting on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, particularly that Christ is the end of the law to everyone who has faith. But today it

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<sup>68</sup> Lotz, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought,” 352.

<sup>69</sup> “Gerhard Forde called for a much needed rethinking of the function of systematic theology in relation to the task of church proclamation. He argued that theology must move beyond its usual contentment with explaining God’s past deeds and move instead to the direct speaking of God’s promises to people today.” Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., “God Against Us and For Us: Preaching Jesus in the Spirit,” *Word and World* 23, no. 2 (2003): 135.

seems as though there is a kind of gospel *Schwärmerei* among us. It is not the *proclamation* of Christ alone as the end of the law that drives us, but rather an *explanation* of the gospel that ends up putting the law out of commission. When explanation is substituted for proclamation of Christ, the result is antinomianism. The end of the law and source of our freedom is no longer Christ, but *theology*. This is a terrible and fatal mistake.<sup>70</sup>

The good news of Jesus is addressed *to* and *for* people, but not as explanation about God (whether nomistic or antinomian). Either danger robs the gospel of its power as God's Word: "We have to stop explaining God. Word and opinions *about* God do not help anyone. Only the Word of God, a word *from* God, can help if we 'let God be God.'"<sup>71</sup> In this light, Forde defines proclamation according to a distinction between two kinds of discourse:

To delineate precisely what is meant by proclamation it is necessary and helpful, at the outset, to distinguish between two different types of discourse employed in the church. We have already been doing that roughly by articulating the difference between explaining and proclaiming. This difference can be maintained as a difference between secondary and primary discourse. Explaining, talking, and writing about God and things theological is secondary discourse. It is the language of theology in general, the language of teaching, and particularly, for our purposes here, of scholarship or systematic theology. Secondary discourse is generally third-person, past-tense discourse. Proclamation, on the other hand, belongs to the primary discourse of the church. Proclamation in its paradigmatic or ideal form is first- to second-person, present-tense, unconditional address. The most obvious example (paradigmatic form) of such address is in the absolution: I declare unto you the gracious forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the triune God. (When it comes right down to it, that is about all we have to say in a nutshell). It is first- to second-person: I declare it to you. It is present-tense: here and now I do it. Not tomorrow, not next week, not on judgment day, but here and now in the living present. The deed is done. I give it to you. It is unconditional: I do not say, "God will forgive you if certain conditions are fulfilled, if you properly repent." Nor do I say that we will pray and hope that God will forgive you. I do not say, "May the Lord have mercy on you." No, I say it flat out: "I declare unto you the forgiveness of all your sins." It is proclamation. As such, it belongs to the primary discourse of the church, the chief way the church and the Christian address the world.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *The Preached God: Proclamation in Word and Sacrament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 34.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–46.

By distinguishing between primary and secondary discourse, Forde clearly articulates what it is to preach faith and justification as the word *from God* in unqualified and unequivocally *extra nos*, theocentric terms.<sup>73</sup>

What is more, for Forde, this proclamation, the present-tense address of the Word of God, is cruciform in function, that is, it kills and makes alive. In other words, Forde seeks to recapture death and resurrection language in a theology of the Word of God in order to intensify both the theocentric movement and cruciform function of the Word of God. Forde writes:

If the Word has lost its bite how shall that be remedied? If that salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? In the old days there used to be an answer for that. It had to do with the proper preaching and distinction between law and gospel. The gospel, it was insisted, must never be preached unless the law is preached first. . . Both law and gospel were an attack on the citadel of the self. The law exposed the sin and the gospel granted divine forgiveness – neither of which was particularly welcome to the autonomous self.<sup>74</sup>

Applying the distinction of Law and Gospel, Forde follows Luther and employs the language of Paul in 2 Corinthians 3.6: “For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” He writes,

But Luther, as was his wont, simply took the passage about the letter killing and the spirit giving life literally. That has as a consequence that the letter is not simply dead, but deadly. That is to say that the history of God and his people leads finally to the cross. It spells but one thing for old being. It spells death. Only then can there be life, new life in the spirit. That is what lies behind the old method of rightly dividing and preaching law and gospel. It is not merely a matter of a guilty conscience set in the context of a fixed moral universe, it is more broadly a matter of the old self under attack by the letter, the text, the very story itself. Luther saw quite clearly what had strangely been overlooked, that the text of 2 Corinthians was actually not about interpretation as such, but about ministry – that we claim nothing for ourselves, for our sufficiency is from God who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not according to the letter but the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

When the law-gospel method of preaching is seen against the background of the letter/spirit dichotomy there is a possibility of recovering something of the bite of the Word. The Word is not intended to open up possibilities for old beings to exercise their spiritual muscles. The Word comes not to coddle but to kill old being, to put them out of the misery, to make way for the life-giving spirit.

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<sup>73</sup> “The sheer and simple ‘from-withoutness’ appears as a mighty attack on our self-esteem. The gospel turns us ‘inside out’ so to speak, addresses us from without in the proclaimed story of Jesus.” *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

A little later, Forde goes on to say:

Where it is understood that the letter kills and spirit gives life then it will be seen that, at least for the purposes of preaching, law and gospel do not designate sets of differing or even opposed propositions but *functions*.<sup>75</sup>

For this to be the case, however, Forde seeks to distinguish explanations about the cross – whether moralistic (nomistic) or set against the Law (antinomian) – from the goal of proclamation, which is to *do* the cross to the hearer. He writes,

Preachers must realize that precisely what upsets us the most is where the question of law and gospel is to be settled, rightly divided, and preached today. Preaching must not, in the first instance, seek to apologize the offense away but must rather use it to kill and make alive; it must seek to do the deed.<sup>76</sup>

In conclusion, Forde calls preachers to put their trust in God's Word: "We need simply to acknowledge that the word we preach as God's word is powerful, as law and gospel. It is a word that does what it says and says what it does. It kills and makes alive."<sup>77</sup> In this way, for Forde, the cross, the death and resurrection of Christ, functions as a present-tense death and resurrection for hearers when it is brought to bear upon them through the Word of God.<sup>78</sup>

Grounding Forde's move toward proclamation is the narrative of Christ as Prophet. Within this narrative, the cross functions as the world's rejection of God's Prophet. God vindicates Jesus and his Word on the third day and Jesus sends out apostles to speak his Word in the present. Thus, when God speaks his Word today, there are only two things you can possibly do with it. You can accept it, which means accepting your own spiritual death, or you can reject it, which means sentencing yourself to eternal death. Either way, the sinful person must die in an

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>78</sup> For Luther, we are brought into that word of the cross already in our baptism, so that in the waters "the old creature in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily contrition and repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." SC, BC 360.12.

encounter with the Living Lord through his Word. In the end, the message of the cross is that by faith in Christ crucified and risen the individual not only dies but also rises again. Overall, in his account of the Word of God, Forde emphasizes the presence and activity of the risen Lord.<sup>79</sup>

In his use of the narrative of Christ as Prophet, Forde critiques the vicarious atonement narrative. In his article, “Caught in the Act,” Forde problematizes the use of the vicarious atonement as an interpretive move or explanation that allows the hearers of God’s Word a way to avoid the cross, that is, their own death and resurrection.<sup>80</sup> Regarding the cross as the work of Christ, Forde asks, “Why the murder of the innocent one? What does that accomplish for us—or for God?”<sup>81</sup> Forde then summarizes the three atonement theories as ideas that, in some way or another, get around the “brute facts” of Christ’s death on the cross:

In sum, each of the major types of atonement theory tends to obscure the truth of the murder of Jesus in the very attempt to convey its “meaning” and “significance” to us. As a matter of fact and not just coincidentally, the theories seem to defeat their own purpose: they tend to alienate rather than to reconcile. In attempting to explain the “necessity” for the death of Jesus by taking it up in the schemes suggested, God’s “reputation” is endangered, not enhanced. Why should a God who is by nature merciful demand satisfaction? Is a God who consigns his Son to an excruciating death just to provide an example of what everyone already knew really a “loving Father”? If God is God, could not the defeat of demonic powers have been accomplished without the painful death? In other words, “was this trip really necessary?”<sup>82</sup>

Along this line of critique concerning the use of atonement theories to defend God, and in the process avoid the mere fact of his Son’s death and our death in him, Forde asks:

Why could not God just up and forgive? Let us start there. If we look at the narrative about Jesus, the actual events themselves, the “brute facts” as they have come down to us, the answer is quite simple. He did! Jesus came preaching repentance and forgiveness, declaring the bounty and mercy of his “Father.” The problem, however,

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<sup>79</sup> For a fuller description of an account of the Word that emphasizes the living Lord’s presence and activity in and through His Word, see Lotz, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought,” 344–354.

<sup>80</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, “Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ,” *Word and World* 3, no. 1 (1983): 22–31.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*



is that we could not buy that. And so we killed him. And just so we are caught in the act. Every mouth is stopped once and for all. All the pious talk about our yearning and desire for reconciliation and forgiveness, etc., all our complaint against God is simply shut up. He came to forgive and we killed him for it; we would not have it. It is as simple as that.<sup>83</sup>

Moving us away from the temptation to explain the cross to our advantage, Forde summarizes the work of Christ on the cross more personally as follows:

The universal significance of the death of Jesus has its roots first of all in the fact that he is universally rejected and killed by us, not in a theory about how his death is of infinite worth or universally “satisfying.” “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone” (Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7). Caught in the act!

For Forde, each theory of atonement, in its own way, is a defense mechanism by which we avoid our own death and resurrection. Therefore, the word of the cross, “is translated into an idea or an ideal which serves ultimately just to reinforce the way we run things.”<sup>84</sup> For Forde, the cross functions, in the first place, as the world’s rejection of Christ. That rejection implicates us. The cross functions as the means by which we are put to death and raised to life by faith in Jesus.

Forde says it this way:

Jesus came to forgive sin unconditionally for God. Our sin, our unbelief, consists precisely in the fact that we cannot and will not tolerate such forgiveness. So we move to kill him. There is nothing for him to do then but to die “for our sins,” “on our behalf,” “give his life a ransom for many.” For him to stop and ask us to “shape up” would be to deny the forgiveness he came to give, to put conditions on the unconditional. Thus he must “bear our sins in his body”—not theoretically in some fashion, but actually. He is beaten, spit upon, mocked, wasted. That is, perhaps we can say, the only way for him to “catch us in the act.” The resurrection is, therefore, the vindication of Jesus’ life and proclamation of forgiveness, God’s insistence that unconditional forgiveness be actually given “in Jesus’ name.” To accept such forgiveness is to die to the old and be made new in him. His death is, therefore, our death. As Paul put it, Christ “has died for all; therefore, all have died” (2 Cor. 5:14).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 30.

Forde's account of the work of Christ is theocentric and cruciform, but in a different way than that particular use of the vicarious atonement account that presents a comfortable explanation of the cross and avoids our complicity in the death of Jesus and our need to die with him.

Forde certainly has his critics.<sup>86</sup> The central critique of Forde is his emphasis on the cross as the experience of the Christian to the exclusion of the cross as actual satisfaction for the wrath of God and atonement for the sins of the world; an emphasis that, it is argued, would leave the sinner under the wrath of God.<sup>87</sup> In his dissertation, "The Self-Donation of God," Jack Kilcrease, a student of Forde's at Luther Seminary, demonstrates that Forde is a victim of his own analysis in that he systematizes the texts of Scripture according to his own purposes: "If Forde is interested in the 'brute facts' and the story 'as it has come down to us' then why does he not pay attention to these texts? His presupposition as to the form divine mercy must take influences his decision to not utilize these texts."<sup>88</sup> The texts Kilcrease refers to are those that speak about Christ as sacrifice. In defense of the vicarious atonement, Kilcrease writes:

Retaining the doctrine of vicarious atonement has the advantage that it makes it possible for faith to receive the gospel as a complete promise, not as an incomplete promise that needs to be augmented with our own actualization of righteousness. Faith indeed does proleptically bring about the new resurrected being free from wrath and law. But faith must have a basis in a complete and not an incomplete promise.

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<sup>86</sup> For a list secondary criticism of Forde's theology, see Jack D. Kilcrease, "Gerhard Forde's Doctrine of the Law: A Confessional Lutheran Critique," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 75, no. 1–2 (2011): 151–179. See especially Jack D. Kilcrease, "The Self-Donation of God: Gerhard Forde and the Question of Atonement in the Lutheran Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2009); Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and Living God: The Third Use of the Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002); and Burnell, F. Eckardt Jr., *Anselm and Luther on the Atonement: Was it "Necessary"?* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992).

<sup>87</sup> Kilcrease described Forde's approach in the following manner: "Because Christ's role is to become revelation of God's desire to relent from his wrath and to forgive, Christ's mission is primarily to inspire repentance and faith through his mercy. This mission works its way out in Christ's death and resurrection. Through seeing our negative reaction to Christ culminating in his death (in that he is killed by the sinful system we participate in), our old beings of unbelief are judged through the law. Through the resurrection, we are born again through God's persistent promise to forgive. It is our new being of faith then that 'satisfies' God through conforming to God's will to forgive. In this sense, since Christ does not satisfy God's law, it then falls to the believer to do so." Kilcrease, "The Self-Donation of God," 152.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

Ultimately saving faith must live outside of itself (*extra nos*) and look to Christ as the fulfillment of the law, and not to its own fulfillment of the law as the foundation of Christian freedom. Luther states this well in his sermon *Two Kinds of Righteousness*: “Through faith in Christ therefore, Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours; he himself becomes ours.”<sup>89</sup>

As a summary, Kilcrease writes:

In our analysis of Forde’s doctrine of atonement we have observed several difficulties. First, he has undermined the proclamation of the law by making it overly vague and abstract. Secondly, he has undermined the proclamation of the gospel, by making it represent an incomplete promise to the sinner. Both of these problems, as we have observed, come out of the peculiar tension in his thinking between the self-donating quality of grace and the disruptive power of grace to be found in the work of Christ. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that Forde has wrongly emphasized these two elements of the work of Christ. If the gospel is an unconditional promise, it must involve a wholesale and unilateral self-donation on the part of God in Christ. If the law is unrelenting judgment of God, then it must be completely disrupted and neutralized for salvation to be wrought. Furthermore, such neutralization must happen in the concrete history of Jesus and not in the speculative realm of *deus ipse*.<sup>90</sup>

While Forde’s account of the work of Christ promotes cruciform preaching that justifies sinners through the word of the cross as a present-tense event, Kilcrease argues that Forde’s push for the function of the cross on the hearer calls the objective certainty of the gospel into question. Otherwise stated, we may read Kilcrease’s critique of Forde’s account of the atonement as an attempt to recover an aspect of a theocentric account of the cross that he believes Forde’s cruciform orientation has partially obscured. This is not to say that Forde’s account is not theocentric, given his emphasis on the cross as the living Christ’s work to us in the here and now. Instead, one could read Kilcrease’s concern as an attempt to highlight the cross as God’s objective work *extra nos* already done in the past as the ground of Law and Gospel proclamation today. For our purposes, Forde’s account of proclamation is a helpful critique of certain uses of the vicarious atonement narrative to explain justification rather than to proclaim Christ.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 212.

### 1.3.3. The Challenge of Preaching Sanctification: On the Cross as Present Event

Simply put, the problem of preaching sanctification is justification.<sup>91</sup> While the cross is the content and function of our preaching, if the cross is used to justify, how do we preach sanctification through that same cross? Along these lines, there are two dangers: either the cross is used for justification and then set aside for sanctification so that sanctification turns into mere morality or sanctification is never preached for fear of moving beyond the cross. Otherwise stated, either the shape of the sanctified life is emphasized to the exclusion of the way the sanctified life is shaped or the means for shaping the Christian life are stressed to the exclusion of its actual shape.

Forde falls into the second error. His central narrative of the gospel, Christ as Prophet, much like the vicarious atonement narrative, does not directly include, account for, or address the sanctified life. So, while Forde's framework promotes preaching justification, and thus preaching that *shapes* the sanctified life, he does not help us move toward preaching that describes the *shape* of the sanctified life. For Forde, "Sanctification is a matter of being grasped by the unconditional grace of God and having now to live in that light. It is a matter of getting used to justification."<sup>92</sup> So, Forde does rightly order and relate justification and sanctification:

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<sup>91</sup> "When Christ's alien righteousness is not understood as the living Christ himself but as a transferable fulfillment of the law, it is a sign that one is living within the realm of the law. There justification is understood from the point of view of the law that by Christ's alien righteousness (understood as a transferred fulfillment of the law) it has become possible to satisfy the demands of the law. But such a fulfillment of the law is not understood as a victory over the law. Sanctification thereby becomes a problem. Sanctification cannot directly be based on such a nomistic view of justification. Sanctification must then be understood as a new and partly human fulfillment of the law, a "real righteousness" within the realm of the law. In this way sanctification must become a double problem. On the one hand it must, because it is considered from a nomistic point of view, be constantly viewed as a limitation of justification by faith alone. The sanctification-righteousness must be considered as a constant competitor of justification-righteousness. On the other hand it becomes an unsolvable psychological mystery, how sanctification should be thought to proceed naturally from this strictly legalistic justification. Here we are in the center of (229) the problems of later Lutheranism in which it was necessary to maintain the strictly legal character of justification and thereby the complete separation from all sanctification and simultaneously the connection of sanctification with justification as its fruit. This is an absolutely impossible task." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 228–229.

<sup>92</sup> Forde, *The Preached God*, 235.

If our righteousness depends totally on Jesus, and is appropriated only in the relationship of trust (faith), then we can begin to see that God has two problems with us. The relationship can be broken in two ways. The first would be our failure, our immorality, our vices. Since we lack faith and hope in God's cause, the relationship is threatened or broken; we go our own way. That problem is usually quite obvious. But the second problem is not so obvious. It is precisely our supposed success, even our "morality," our virtues – the relationship with God is broken to the degree that we think we do not need the unconditional justification, or perhaps even to the degree that we think we are going to use God to achieve our own ideas of sanctity. The relationship is broken precisely because we think it is *our* holiness.

It is in this light that Forde asks, "But is there not such a thing as *growth* in sanctification, progress in the Christian life?"<sup>93</sup> He answers:

That brings us back to our thesis: sanctification is the art of getting used to justification. There is a kind of growth and progress, it is to be hoped, but it is growth in grace – a growth in coming to be captivated more and more, if we can so speak, by the totality, the unconditionality, of the grace of God. It is a matter of getting used to the fact that if we are to be saved it will have to be by grace *alone*.<sup>94</sup>

Here, Forde upholds the truth that sanctification, like the Word of God that brings life, is theocentric and not anthropocentric.<sup>95</sup> In his argument for "getting used to" justification, Forde addresses two aspects of sanctification:

The first is that since we always are confronted and given grace as a totality, we find ourselves always starting fresh. As Luther put it, "To progress is always to begin again."<sup>96</sup>

The second aspect of the transition of the Christian from old to new, death to life, is that all our ordinary views of progress and growth are turned upside down. It is not that we are somehow moving toward the goal, but rather that the goal is moving closer and closer to us. . . . The progress, if one can call it that, is that we are being shaped more and more by the totality of the grace coming to us.<sup>97</sup>

What is the result of this? It should lead, I expect, to something of a reversal in our view of the Christian life. Instead of viewing ourselves on some kind of journey upward toward heaven, virtue, and morality, our sanctification would be viewed more

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> "God, who creates faith, also produces sanctification by His infinite power." CD III, 14.

<sup>96</sup> Forde, *The Preached God*, 240.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 241.

in terms of our journey back down to earth, the business of becoming human, the kind of creature God made . . . What might that look like? When I think about such sanctification, I think about several things: spontaneity, taking care, vocation, and attaining a certain elusive kind of truthfulness and lucidity about oneself.<sup>98</sup>

Forde's articulation of sanctification emphasizes its theocentricity, that is, the Christian's passivity. So, while Forde is able to say *something* about the sanctified life, he does not offer a description thick enough to account for or address the various challenges or experiences of the sanctified life. I hope to build upon Forde's foundation of proclamation that kills and makes alive by expanding it to proclamation for the sake of describing and shaping the sanctified life.

Before going further in our discussion of preaching sanctification, we need a clearer understanding of what it is. Grounding our understanding of sanctification in the Missouri Synod is Francis Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*. Pieper defines this term at the beginning of his third volume in both a wide and a narrow sense. In a wide sense, "sanctification comprises all that the Holy Ghost does in separating man from sin and making him again God's own, so that he may live for God and serve Him."<sup>99</sup> In a narrow sense, "sanctification designates the internal spiritual transformation of the believer or the holiness of life which follows upon justification."<sup>100</sup> Our present discussion pertains to this narrow sense.

In this narrow sense, sanctification follows from justification and is distinct from it. While justification takes place outside of a person (*extra nos*) by the person and work of Christ, sanctification takes place inside of a person (*in nobis*). It is the inner renewal that has to do with transformation, growth, good works, and the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22). While this happens inside of a person, it remains the work of the Holy Spirit. Pieper goes on to say that sanctification

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>99</sup> CD III, 3. In this sense, sanctification includes justification.

<sup>100</sup> Forde, *The Preached God*, 4.

“is an unceasing activity, constantly called forth and sustained by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>101</sup> So, justification and sanctification in the narrow sense belong together as a *nexus indivulsus*.

Those within the Lutheran tradition are particularly sensitive to the unhelpful ways of preaching sanctification. We are particularly attentive to the danger of presenting Christ as example apart from Christ as gift, effectively forcing the Christian back under the curse of the Law after they have been rescued from it. In that vein, there is much talk about spiritual transformation as a misguided and even evil endeavor if for no other reason than it operates as if the forgiveness of sins second-rate at best. The crime, here, is disconnecting sanctification from justification. There is, however, another error more subtle and perhaps more pervasive among Lutherans than the first, namely, antinomianism. This antinomianism does not come in the form of doctrinal statements about sanctification nor in any kind of statement at all. It is precisely in silence that this antinomianism does its work.<sup>102</sup> Rather than risk a wrong application of sanctification, we tend to avoid the subject altogether.

David Scaer notes that both of these errors demonstrate that “preaching sanctification tends to divorce the sermon from proclaiming Christ. The message becomes something other than the Gospel.”<sup>103</sup> He goes on to write:

Sanctification is preached when Christ is proclaimed so that the hearer is taken up into Christ’s life and death, and the good works performed by Christ are now done *in, with, and through* the believer – even without necessarily being conscious of them. Of course, every sermon wants to do exactly this. Since sanctification flows from that nexus where Christ and the believer are joined by faith, the Gospel must predominate.<sup>104</sup>

Whether we are talking about justification or sanctification, faith or life, preaching ought to bring

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>102</sup> Richard H. Warneck, “Notes on Preaching Sanctification,” *Concordia Journal* 25, no. 1 (1999): 59.

<sup>103</sup> David P. Scaer, “Preaching Sanctification,” *Concordia Pulpit Resources* 4, no. 4 (1994): 2.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Christ to the hearer and the hearer to Christ. As we have already noted, Luther writes that the, “preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him.”<sup>105</sup> We may say that the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification is Jesus Christ. Thus, we should address the life of the Christian, the entire topic of sanctification, just as we address the topic of justification, that is, Christologically. To do so requires an account of the cross that describes and shapes people into the sanctified life.

During the Lenten season of 1519, Martin Luther wrote a devotional piece called, “*A Meditation on Christ’s Passion*.”<sup>106</sup> Luther begins by naming three misuses of Christ’s passion, and then offers his own understanding of the proper use of Christ’s passion. His approach is twofold. First, Christians must regard the cross as *punishment*:

They contemplate Christ’s passion aright who view it with a terror-stricken heart and a despairing conscience. This terror must be felt as you witness the stern wrath and the unchanging earnestness with which God looks upon sin and sinners, so much so that he was unwilling to release sinners even for his only and dearest Son without his payment of the severest penalty for them. . . . You must get this thought through your head and not doubt that you are the one who is torturing Christ thus, for your sins have surely wrought this. . . . For every nail that pierces Christ, more than one hundred thousand should in justice pierce you, yes, they should prick you forever and ever more painfully! . . . We must give ourselves wholly to this matter, for the main benefit of Christ’s passion is that man sees into his own true self and that he be terrified and crushed by this. Unless we seek that knowledge, we do not derive much benefit from Christ’s passion. The real and true work of Christ’s passion is to make man conformable to Christ, so that man’s conscience is tormented by his sins in like measure as Christ was pitifully tormented in body and soul by our sins. . . . For it is inevitable, whether in this life or in hell, that you will have to become conformable to Christ’s image and suffering.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> LW 35.121.

<sup>106</sup> LW 42.3–14.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.



This leads the Christian to a striking awareness of their sin. Luther goes on to demonstrate, however, that regarding the cross as punishment of sin leads to the freedom of the terrified conscience from sin:

After man has thus become aware of his sin and is terrified in his heart, he must watch that sin does not remain in his conscience, for this would lead to sheer despair. Just as our knowledge of sin flowed from Christ and was acknowledged by us, so we must pour this sin back on him and free our conscience of it. . . . You cast your sins from yourself and onto Christ when you firmly believe that his wounds and sufferings are your sins, to be borne and paid for by him. . .<sup>108</sup>

In other words, Luther shows how regarding the cross as punishment of sin leads to forgiveness of sin by faith in Christ. Good Friday leads to Easter Day, as it were. This movement from confession to absolution follows from Luther's view of the cross as the punishment of sin that in turn frees the conscience from sin. This is the first Christian use of the cross.

Luther then moves to a second use. Not only is the cross to be meditated upon as *past punishment*, it is also to be regarded as *present pattern*:

After your heart has thus become firm in Christ, and love, not fear of pain, has made you a foe of sin, then *Christ's passion must from that day on become a pattern for your entire life* (italics mine). Henceforth you will have to see his passion differently. Until now we regarded it as a sacrament which is active in us while we are passive, but now we find that we too must be active . . . Those who thus make Christ's life and name a part of their own lives are true Christians. St. Paul says, "Those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with all its desires" [Gal. 5:24]. Christ's passion must be met not with words or forms, but with life and truth. Thus St. Paul exhorts us, "Consider him who endured such hostility from evil people against himself, so that you may be strengthened and not be weary at heart" [Heb. 12:3]. And St. Peter, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, strengthen and arm yourselves by meditating on this" [I Pet. 4:1].<sup>109</sup>

For Luther, when Christians look at the crucified Lord, remember his passion, and mediate on the cross, they must first see the cross as Christ's cross, punishment for their sin, and the means

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

by which those sins are forgiven. Second, they must see that cross as their own cross and as a pattern for their entire lives.<sup>110</sup>

After outlining a proper meditation of Christ's passion, Luther concludes with this statement:

However, such meditation has become rare, although the letters of St. Paul and St. Peter abound with it. We have transformed the essence into semblance and painted our meditations on Christ's passion on walls and made them into letters.

This chapter has identified a way that preaching can transform the "essence into semblance" by painting our preaching on Christ's passion on a wall and turning it into a letter. For Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9.23). It's not that we don't talk about the Christian life; it's that our narrative of the cross does not always move in that direction naturally. Such an eclipse of the cross has very little to do with our formal knowledge of dogmatics, and more to do with how we preach the gospel and tell the story of Jesus. A minimalist use of the vicarious atonement narrative does not account for a description or shape of the sanctified life. As a result, we end up addressing that concern with another narrative of some kind, typically moving in the direction of good works within vocation that flow out of the cross as an example of love. Still, there are a number of experiences, challenges, questions, and issues regarding the Christian life that thereby go unaddressed. Therefore, we need a theocentric, cruciform, and fully trinitarian narrative of the cross that can promote the type of preaching that describes the sanctified life and shapes hearers of God's Word into the sanctified life.

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<sup>110</sup> "We learn from Scripture, on the one hand, that Christians by their faith in Christ enjoy the full favor of God – God is not against them but for them (Rom. 8:31), they are God's children and heirs of eternal life (John 1:12–13, Gal. 3:26, Rom. 8:17), the angels serve them (Heb. 1:14), etc. –; on the other hand, that God has ordained that the high dignity of Christians should not become manifest in this life, but rather that the same lowliness which characterized the earthly life of Christ should characterize their earthly life (1 Pet. 4:1). And this lowly form of the life of Christians, by which they are conformed to the image of Christ is called the cross of Christians." CD III, 68.

## Conclusion

We preach Christ crucified. He is what we preach for salvation; for justification and for sanctification. Christ crucified is the object of our faith and the substance of our salvation.

Overall, my fear is not that the cross is not preached. My fear is that we do not preach the cross fully; the irony being our conviction that we do. My fear is that we do not preach the cross in the fullness of its power or mystery, in the godly fear and trembling of Paul (1 Cor. 2:3–4), but in cool explanations that become formulaic. In addition, we preach the cross only as something accomplished *for us* rather than something that God is also accomplishing *in us*. These are issues that arise, at least in part, from our overdependence on the vicarious atonement narrative which does not account for the sanctified life or provide us with a ground from which to address it.

We have arrived at an eclipse of the cross. We need another narrative framework from the Gospels to function as a ground from which to preach Christ and him crucified that does account for the sanctified life. The issue, here, is not simply variety for variety's sake. The issue is the function of the cross in the proclamation of the gospel and the need for a broader framework that will promote preaching justification as well as sanctification. Such an account will be trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform. It will put the word of the cross in a trajectory that describes and shapes hearers into the sanctified life.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SPIRIT CHRISTOLOGY

The gospel, the good news about Jesus, is trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform. In the previous chapter, I argued that while the vicarious atonement is not contrary to these characterizations, it does have its limitations, particularly when it comes to promoting preaching that describes and shapes the sanctified life. In this chapter, I argue for a complementary trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework for reading the Gospels that does promote preaching that describes and shapes the sanctified life, namely, Spirit Christology.

#### 2.1. Pneumatological Reductionism and Christological Methodology

##### 2.1.1. Pneumatological Reductionism

Kilian McDonnell has observed that Western Christianity operates without appropriate attention to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He describes the situation this way:

In the West, we think essentially in Christological categories, with the Holy Spirit as an extra, an addendum, a “false” window to give symmetry and balance to theological design. We build up our large theological constructs in constitutive Christological categories, and then, in a second, non-constitutive moment, we decorate the already constructed system with pneumatological baubles, a little Spirit tinsel.<sup>111</sup>

While McDonnell gives expression to a commonly observed Pneumatological reductionism within the Western Christian tradition and establishes the need for a more fully formed Pneumatology within a broader trinitarian framework, there is, perhaps, something missing in his analysis. McDonnell connects a Western depreciation of the Holy Spirit to a theological system too narrowly constructed upon Christological categories, but it may be more accurate to say,

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<sup>111</sup> Kilian McDonnell, “The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” *Theology Today* 39, no. 2 (1982): 142.

particularly within the Lutheran tradition in North America, that there is a more fundamental depreciation of all three persons of the Trinity in light of an overemphasis on the salvation of the individual human person; an individualistic soteriology that, for instance, reduces the Holy Spirit's work to the creation of faith in Christ. In other words, just as the work of Jesus Christ is often limited to his death on the cross within our tradition – something the vicarious atonement not only fails to prevent but may actually promote – the Holy Spirit's activity is generally limited to his ability to bring the individual to saving faith in Jesus.<sup>112</sup> This theocentric move is typically grounded in the language of the Small Catechism:

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith.<sup>113</sup>

Such language is echoed in the Large Catechism where Luther writes:

Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe in him and receive him as Lord, unless these were offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed; Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden so that no one knew of it, it would have been all in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure, this redemption. Therefore being made holy is nothing else than bringing us to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, to which we could not have come by ourselves.<sup>114</sup>

These words can be used to emphasize the fact that the Holy Spirit brings hearers of God's Word to saving faith in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross. This is typically labeled "subjective

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<sup>112</sup> I believe I am echoing, here, the observation of Jürgen Moltmann who states: "In both Protestant and Catholic theology and devotion, there is a tendency to view the Holy Spirit solely as the Spirit of redemption." Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 8.

<sup>113</sup> SC II.3, BC 355.6.

<sup>114</sup> LC II.3, BC 436.38–39.

atonement” which may follow from “objective atonement.”<sup>115</sup> This distinction is helpful insofar as it addresses the concern for how it is that a person comes to saving faith in Christ. However, the use of the distinction between objective and subjective atonement with an emphasis on the work of the Spirit to create faith does not yet address or account for the ongoing work of the Spirit in the life of the church or the individual Christian as Luther’s catechisms do. A reductionistic account of the Holy Spirit emphasizes one side of the relationship between Christ and the church, again, with a concern for the theocentric certainty of salvation. I argue that a more fully formed Pneumatology would not only address this concern for theocentric certainty, but also promote preaching that accounts for and addresses other concerns, as well.

McDonnell’s response to the Pneumatological reductionism he identifies in the West does not seek a fuller Pneumatology for its own sake or independently from Christology, but sets it within a more fully formed trinitarian theology. As he puts it: “We need to get back to a more biblical and liturgical view of the Trinity as revealed in history.”<sup>116</sup> A weak Pneumatology does not stem simply from an overemphasis on Christology, as if these are against one another, but it reveals a weak trinitarian theology stemming from a particular accent in Western soteriology. Assuming McDonnell’s thesis is correct, a fuller Pneumatology has the ability to broaden the preaching task not at the expense of redemption but to the benefit of the subsequent life of the redeemed. A narrowly focused soteriological concern causes the church to miss the fuller divine economy that encompasses all of creation, all of history, and all of life, and sets our individual salvation within the ongoing life of the church and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. In that light, a fuller Pneumatology would offer a way to speak directly concerning the ongoing work of the Spirit, particularly as it relates to the shape and the shaping of the sanctified life in Christ.

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<sup>115</sup> CD II, 347–351.

<sup>116</sup> McDonnell, “The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 143.

It has already been said that the Gospel narratives simply tell the story of the life and ministry of Jesus. While reading these narratives with an eye toward the vicarious atonement may be an acceptable reading that promotes faithful preaching of the theocentric certainty of salvation, it may also obscure a number of other aspects of Jesus' life and ministry that directly account for and address parallel aspects of the church's life and ministry. I will show that reading the Gospel narratives through the lens of Spirit Christology, that is, an account of Christ as the bearer, receiver, and giver of the Holy Spirit, as will be explored more fully in this chapter, allows aspects of the story to emerge with new significance for the life of the church and the individual Christian within a broader trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework.<sup>117</sup>

It must also be said that a fuller Pneumatology provides a proper framework for preaching itself. First, an emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit in preaching provides a way to frame the nature of preaching that moves away from Christ as an idea to be understood or an ideal to be imitated and promotes the move to the proclamation of Christ as a present reality and a living person who kills and makes alive those who hear His Word. Emphasis on the activity of the Spirit who makes Christ present through the preaching of the gospel provides a ground from which to address both the concern for justification and sanctification. We will return to the language of Christ as idea, ideal, and living and present person later in the chapter.<sup>118</sup>

Second, following from the first point, Pneumatology accounts for the reality that the preacher is not in control of the Word, but is a steward of a mystery and one who participates in

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<sup>117</sup> This definition of Spirit Christology comes from Sánchez, "Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit," 100.

<sup>118</sup> "In the orthodox conception the real presence of Christ and justification, which in Luther's thinking were a complete unity, became two opposing tendencies which it became a problem to reconcile, that is, the religious interest of the doctrine of justification and the ethical interest of the doctrine of sanctification." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 62.

the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit by means of that Word (1 Cor. 4:1).<sup>119</sup> This does something to our understanding of Law and Gospel as a dynamic activity of the Spirit of God rather than a scientific categorization or even manipulation of the Word on the part of the preacher. Further, it begins to address the concern not so much for the content of preaching, but its function, and, in this case, provides a ground from which to address the way preaching might not only describe the shape of the sanctified life but might actually shape the sanctified life.

Third, along the lines of preventing attempts to manipulate God's Word, Pneumatology provides a way to correctively address preaching that tends toward a preoccupation with the salvation of the individual, while also offering a way to account for and address the larger picture, including sanctification. For the aforementioned reasons, I am interested in appropriating a fuller understanding of two aspects of Pneumatology that must be brought together to link the proclamation of Christ to the life of Christians: first, the relationship between Christ and the Spirit, and second, the relationship between the Spirit and the church. By grounding the church's life in the Spirit in Christ's own life in the Spirit, Spirit Christology provides a point of continuity and a ground in Christ's Pneumatological identity from which to account for and address both faith in Christ and the Christian life.

Yet, we do not preach the Spirit; we preach Christ and him crucified. As Luther writes in the Large Catechism, "For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, apart from which no one can come to the Lord Christ."<sup>120</sup>

For this reason, the framework for preaching proposed in this chapter is not simply Pneumatology as an independent enterprise but Pneumatological or Spirit *Christology*. I argue

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<sup>119</sup> Much has been written in this regard relating the Word of God and the Spirit of God, notably Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986); Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960); and William Willimon, "Overcoming Pentecost in Our Preaching," *Journal for Preachers* 24, no. 4 (2001): 31–34.

<sup>120</sup> LC II.3, BC 436.45.



that Spirit Christology provides a helpful framework for preaching both justification and sanctification, and for holding these aspects of God’s economy of salvation together.

### 2.1.2. Christological Methodology

Spirit Christology is an account of the person and work of Jesus as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Father’s Spirit.<sup>121</sup> Methodologically, Spirit Christology is a Christology “from below,” that is, it does not begin with presuppositions about Christ’s ontological nature prior to history but with the story of Christ in history, the unfolding of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in the company of the Spirit. In this way, a Spirit Christology facilitates the move toward accounting for and addressing various concerns of the Christian life (or life in the Spirit) in a way that a Christology “from above” is not well suited to do, given its primary interest in the ontological ground of salvation. Spirit Christology does not abandon the ontological truths established by a Christology “from above,” particularly the confession of Jesus Christ as both true God and true man and the unity of His person. Instead, there is complementarity between these two approaches. Leopoldo Sánchez expresses the benefit of this complementarity:

Theological approaches “from below” that move within the realm of the human and the historical are not uncommon today. A Christology “from below,” for example, takes as its starting point the man Jesus of Nazareth, his historicity and social location, his life in the Spirit, and/or his words and deeds in salvation history. Such an approach might follow Christological and ecclesiological trajectories. On the side of Christology proper, the move “from below” might work within the *ordo cognoscendi* (order of knowledge), in which Jesus is fully acknowledged as Savior, Lord, and God on the basis of his works for us – especially in light of his resurrection. . . . the move “from below” highlights, on the ecclesiological side, what we have in common with Christ, namely, a human life and history. Jesus is our brother, like us in every way “yet without sin” (Heb 2:16–17, 4:15). He is the *primogenitus*, the firstborn among many brethren, the one from the race of Adam who goes before us unto death, the firstfruits of our resurrection who restores us to the image of God lost by Adam (Rom 8:29–30, Heb 3:10–18, 1 Cor. 15:20–23, 45–49). In a pneumatological Christology one could say, for example, that the Son and the sons share in common their anointing with the Spirit and their being raised from the dead by the Father according

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<sup>121</sup> Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 100.

to the Spirit. To use Western Christological categories, the incarnate Word shares what is uniquely his – *gratia personalis* (or in more personal terms, his Spirit) – with his members as head of the church (*gratia capitis*). The receiver and bearer of the Spirit becomes the giver of the Spirit to others. A theology of the Christian life might argue that the same Spirit in whom Christ struggled against the anti-kingdom, proclaimed the Word of God, and prayed to his Father shapes the church’s life and mission after Christ’s own. We can then speak of the Christiform character of the church’s mission and the Christian life.<sup>122</sup>

It is precisely this “Christiform character” of the Christian life grounded in the continuity between Christ and the church who share the same Spirit that emerges in an approach “from below.” A Christological method that reads the Gospels through the lens of Spirit Christology can prove beneficial for preaching sanctification, which deals precisely with the Christiform character of the church’s life in the Spirit.

David Scaer finds Christological approaches “from above” and “from below” latent within the name of the Son of God: “The name ‘Jesus Christ’ indicates the two ways one is able to approach Christology, one way from history or ‘from below’ and the other way through revelation or ‘from above.’”<sup>123</sup> Scaer goes on to comment on Christology “from above”:

The Christology of the early church and its councils is clearly a Christology “from above.” It presupposed the preexistence of the divine nature. It is a Christology drawn from the Holy Scripture, the special revelation given to the prophets and apostles. This Christology “from above” prevailed in the church until the eighteenth century, at which time the Scriptures began to be understood merely as a collection of historical documents rather than as the divinely inspired Word of God. Since the eighteenth century the Scriptures have not been viewed as a unified whole, but rather as a collection of documents containing conflicting and competing Christologies.<sup>124</sup>

Scaer then defines a Christology “from below” as that which is against the Christology “from above” just outlined: “The contemporary Christology ‘from below’ simply does not take the

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<sup>122</sup> Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., “Individualism, Indulgence, and the Mind of Christ: Making Room for the Neighbor and the Father,” in *The American Mind Meets the Mind of Christ*, ed. Robert Kolb (Concordia Seminary Press, 2010), 55.

<sup>123</sup> David P. Scaer, *Christology*, vol. 6 of *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics*, ed. Robert D. Preus (Ft. Wayne, Ind.: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1989), 11.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

preexistent divine nature into account.”<sup>125</sup> In other words, when it comes to the question of Jesus’ divinity, a Christology “from above” assumes it and a Christology “from below” may or may not attempt to work toward it based on the unfolding narrative of the Gospels and the particular concern at hand. For Scaer, “The current state of Christology ‘from below’ is as dangerous as any error encountered by the early church fathers.”<sup>126</sup> Yet Scaer here identifies Christological methodology with Christological confession. While Christologies “from below” do not necessarily assume the theological confession of Jesus’ divinity as true *a priori*, a methodology which begins “from below” rather than “from above” does not necessarily contradict Jesus’ divinity. When articulated in the context of a biblical and Nicene trinitarian commitment, a Christology “from below” may actually complement rather than compete with a Christology “from above.” As Sánchez writes:

What a Logos-christology affirms *a priori* by proceeding “from above” (i.e., that the preexistent and divine Logos is Jesus the Christ), a Spirit-christology affirms *a posteriori* by proceeding “from below” (i.e., that Jesus the Christ is the preexistent and divine Logos).<sup>127</sup>

Therefore, the concern that a “from below” methodology threatens the truth of the gospel is not necessarily legitimate, as long as it remains a methodology and does not become an exclusive Christological confession.

While the scope of this thesis does not allow for a detailed account of why this methodology “from above” has dominated Western Christianity historically, the fact that Christological methodology “from above” has been emphasized to the exclusion of insights

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>127</sup> Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 71.

drawn “from below” must at least be noted.<sup>128</sup> What emerges from this historical observation, however, is the effect that this overemphasis on one methodology to the exclusion of the other has on the Pneumatological dimension of Christian theology:

Inheriting their Christology from the Patristics, the theologians of the Byzantine, Roman Catholic, Reformation, and Protestant churches generally upheld the now long-standing Logos Christology that stresses the incarnation over inspiration, ontology over function, and a methodology from above as opposed to one from below. The literature of this time highlights the fact that Christological discussion is dominated by reflection on the hypostatic union of the Logos and the human reality of Jesus. While these emphases are constitutive to Christology it is what is not examined that is of concern. What is neglected is the constitutive role of the Holy Spirit, especially when it comes to the relation between the Spirit and the Christ.<sup>129</sup>

Following from the neglect of the role of the Spirit in the life of Christ are various unexplored concerns that a stronger connection between the Spirit and Christ could potentially address, particularly in regard to the sanctified life. Therefore, I follow Sánchez in arguing for a complementarity between the methodologies “from above” and “from below” in order to utilize particular insights that emerge “from below” to directly address the concern for preaching sanctification. In other words, part of the problem with Lutheran sanctification preaching is our Christological methodology. As Sánchez writes, “from above” approaches can be restrictive:

As an approach “from above,” classical Christology proceeds from the Logos’ eternal preexistence to his assumption of a human nature at a point in time (hypostatic or personal union). What matters most in this methodology is explaining the how of Jesus Christ’s individual inner-constitution as the God-man. In Cantalamessa’s words, “the problem of the foundation of salvation (that is, how the Savior is *made*) becomes more important than the problem of the unfolding of salvation (that is, what the Savior *does*).”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> “In short, as the christological and trinitarian debate became more technical, with ever more subtle refinement, it moved further and further from questions of exegesis as such and more toward a proof-texting for arguments and positions determined by the different terms and logical constraints of later debates. And so it has continued in greater or less degree since, at least to the extent that the terms of the debates have been determined by the great credal confessions hammered out in the early centuries.” Dunn, *Christology*, 49.

<sup>129</sup> Myk Habets, *The Anointed Son: A Trinitarian Spirit Christology*, Princeton Theology Monograph Series 129 (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 80.

<sup>130</sup> Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 221.

It is precisely this concern for the unfolding of salvation in the life and ministry of Jesus in the Spirit, obscured “from above” but uncovered “from below,” that I hope to use as a ground from which to address preaching sanctification.

In summary, it is my assessment that we are suffering from Christological reductionism in our preaching that results in a reduction of the Christian life in our preaching. Methodologically, the vicarious atonement narrative hinges on a specific ontological or “from above” Christology, namely the hypostatic union as the logical presupposition for the atonement in that Christ *as God* is able to atone for sin and *as man* ought to do so (though freely) for us. One of the dangers with this approach for grounding preaching is that the gospel becomes theological explanation. To state the matter in Pneumatological terms, for someone to receive the atonement of Christ, the Spirit must enlighten that person and allow them to accept the mystery of Christ, the hypostatic union, the two natures in one person, which would be absolutely critical to making the atonement work for the person. A related danger in preaching in the context of such a Christology “from above” is that the Spirit takes on the role of Revealer only. In preaching a Christology “from below,” emphasizing the functional rather than ontological side of Christology, the Spirit’s role significantly grows and changes, as does our view of Christ. Not only does this Son of God save us by his cross as the God-man, but seeing him as the receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit also bridges the gap between his life and ours, connecting the church to Christ as the wellspring of life in the Spirit. Thus, using the Spirit-oriented, functional side of Christology as a ground for preaching the gospel opens up the possibility of accounting for and addressing the Spirit-oriented, functional side of the Christian life. The crux of the methodological question is whether or not we are able to hold to the truths of a Christology “from above” while pursuing a Christology “from below.” Indeed, the driving questions or concerns determine the methodology.

So, the methodological question goes hand in hand with the larger question regarding the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification, and how that nexus might be retained in preaching Christ crucified. In other words, how might preaching account for and address concerns for the joys, challenges, and various experiences of the sanctified life in Christ without doing damage to the concern for the certainty of salvation in Christ? We will now explore the usefulness of a Spirit Christology as a potential framework to accomplish exactly that.

## **2.2. Spirit Christology as a Framework for Reading the Gospels**

### **2.2.1. Spirit Christology and the Gospel Narratives: The Life of Jesus in the Spirit**

The Gospel narratives tell the story of Jesus. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was circumcised and baptized. He prayed. He was tempted. He preached, taught, healed, exorcized demons, and raised the dead. He called disciples to follow him. He suffered, died, was buried, rose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. He ascended to the Father and gave the Holy Spirit to the church. These are the basic facts of the Gospel narratives. While the vicarious atonement does not nullify any of these historical events in the life of Jesus, it does depict them all as *revelatory* rather than *constitutive* of Jesus as the Christ who came to be the sinless sacrifice for the sins of the world.<sup>131</sup> In other words, the story of the life of Jesus has the potential to be reduced to an ontological explanation of his identity on the basis of redemption, that is, atonement, to the exclusion of everything else.

Spirit Christology provides a way to read the story of Jesus as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit without contradicting the ontological constitution of Christ as God-man as the logical basis for the vicarious atonement. Sánchez describes this way of reading the Gospels in its historical (dynamic) and trinitarian (relational) dimensions:

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<sup>131</sup> “Logos-oriented readings see major events in the course of Jesus’ life as *revelatory*, epiphanic, confirming, declarative, or proclamatory of either his prior identity as God or his prior possession of the Spirit as man from the moment of incarnation.” Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 42.

We may say that a Spirit-oriented reading of Jesus' story strongly highlights the *dynamic* and *relational* presence of the Spirit as an agent in its own right in the Son's human existence as obedient Son, suffering Servant, and risen Lord.<sup>132</sup>

So, not only does Spirit Christology bring out the dynamic and relational presence and activity of the Spirit in the life of Jesus, but Jesus' reception of the Spirit leads him into three roles within his life in which the Spirit of God the Father is active: obedient Son, suffering Servant, and risen Lord. These roles are not fixed Christological categories, but dynamic, interrelated aspects of the Son's person and work in the Spirit in God's economy of salvation. Jesus' relationship to the Spirit involves all other relationships in his life and ministry such as his relationship to the Father, to the church and world, and his conflict with all of God's enemies. Sánchez summarizes what it means to read the Gospel narratives through the lens of a trinitarian Spirit Christology:

Reading the narrative of Jesus as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit of the Father helps us to look at the mystery of Christ as a series of defining moments that spans from his particular reception and possession of the Spirit for us to his universal giving of the same to us. In God's economy of salvation, Jesus of Nazareth openly receives the Holy Spirit of the Most High at his conception in Bethlehem, then at his baptism at the Jordan, and finally as the risen and ascended Lord seated at God's right hand. Throughout his life and work as God's faithful and obedient Son, Jesus has the Spirit in inexhaustible fullness. In loving freedom, Jesus also pours out his Spirit on us from the time of his glorification onwards, or, in more comprehensive terms, from the beginning of his paschal mystery – i.e., passion and death, resurrection, and Pentecost. At all times, in ever newer ways, and for us, the anointed Son and Servant receives, possesses, and gives to others the eschatological gift of the Spirit who proceeds from the heavenly Father.<sup>133</sup>

As obedient Son, suffering Servant, and risen Lord, Jesus receives, bears, and gives the Holy Spirit in an ongoing, dynamic (i.e., historical, eschatological, and theocentric), and relational (i.e., trinitarian and ecclesial) way. We will take a closer look at each of these three trinitarian actions as Jesus receives, bears, and gives the Spirit of God.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 43.

Spirit Christology reads the Gospels through the lens of Jesus as receiver of the Holy Spirit at three particular moments in His life: “These are his conception and birth in Bethlehem, his baptism or anointing at the Jordan, and his resurrection and session at the right hand of God.”<sup>134</sup> At the Incarnation of Jesus, Luke records the words of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God” (1:35). Seen through the lens of Spirit Christology, the conception and birth of Jesus become locations of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus’ title of Son of God is attributed to the Spirit of God.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, Sánchez writes, “The Spirit mediates the Father-Son relation in the economy of salvation, for the holy child Emmanuel is the messianic Son of God for us by means of the creative, fresh power in history of God’s eschatological Spirit.”<sup>136</sup> The implication of relating the Son to the Father by means of the Spirit already at the Incarnation is that, as quoted above, the Holy Spirit may be recognized as a divine agent in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Of course, this is not to deny Jesus’ divinity as the Son of God, but simply to emphasize the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus.<sup>137</sup>

At the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, the Spirit anoints him for mission. Without denying Jesus’ reception of the Holy Spirit as the Son of God at his Incarnation, his reception of the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River demonstrates the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in his life

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>135</sup> “Luke does not ascribe only the birth and holiness of the child to the Holy Spirit, but even his identity as Son for us.” *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>137</sup> “As long as we maintain a proper distinction between the presence of the Logos and of the Holy Spirit in Jesus . . . a Spirit-oriented christology can help us greatly to affirm that the Holy Spirit in its own right is also a personal agent of acts in and through this man Jesus who is none other than the incarnate Word.” *Ibid.*, 53.



for the sake of bringing him into his mission as the Servant for the salvation of the world.<sup>138</sup>

Sánchez writes:

In terms of the economic succession of events in the Gospels, we may say that Jesus' identity as "Christ" (= anointed one) does not become a concrete reality *for us* until the Father anoints *him* at the Jordan with his [i.e., the Father's] Spirit for mission. Indeed, the child Jesus is announced as messianic King and Savior prior to his baptism (see Lk. 1:32–33, 2:11–23, 25–26). . . . But Luke *never* speaks of Jesus' "anointing" or "chrism" as an event that takes place prior to the descent of the Spirit of the Lord upon him *at his baptism* (4:18–19, again Acts 10:38) or, more specifically, that refers metaphorically to his *incarnation*.<sup>139</sup>

The benefit of highlighting the Jordan event is not only to reiterate the person and work of the Holy Spirit as a divine agent with the Son of God, but to demonstrate that Jesus continues to receive the Spirit throughout his life and ministry in order to accomplish the divine plan of salvation for the world. Sánchez expresses this idea in these terms:

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the incarnate Son has both dynamic and relational dimensions. The former aspect allows for each descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in God's economy of salvation to *actualize* (and not simply reveal or proclaim) his identity as Son in a new way. By actualization, I mean an understanding of Christ's identity in terms of his "being-in-act" (or being active) throughout his entire human history. In other words, I am suggesting a more dynamic view of the incarnation – an *incarnating*, as it were – that complements the more static Logos-oriented view in which the term applies only to an event that takes place at a set or absolute point in time (i.e., hypostatic union). Now, the interrelated ecstatic or relational dimension of the Spirit's presence in the incarnate Son points to the intrinsic *pro nobis* character of the incarnation, to its orientation towards all events in Jesus' life and work carried out *in the Spirit*, namely, in loving obedience to the Father and for us. Pneumatology brings dynamism and relationality to the mystery.<sup>140</sup>

As we will see later on, the Spirit-oriented dynamism and relationality of the Gospel narrative provide a fertile ground from which to account for and address the proclamation of the gospel,

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<sup>138</sup> "The unique presence of the Spirit of God in Jesus from conception should not take away from Jesus' new reception of the same at the Jordan. The former event constitutes Jesus as 'holy' child and messianic 'Son' for us. The latter one points to his anointing for mission as faithful Son and suffering Servant." Ibid., 53. "My point is not to deny Jesus the full reception of the Spirit from conception and birth, but rather to acknowledge the Spirit's dynamic or actualizing presence in him throughout the course of his entire life and work." Ibid., 55.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 58–59.

both the preaching of justification and of sanctification, and specifically the life lived in the Holy Spirit by faith in the Son of God.

Finally, Jesus receives the Holy Spirit at his exaltation. Having accomplished the mission for which God sent him, Jesus receives the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father:

As the risen and ascended Christ and Lord, Jesus receives the Spirit of God the Father once again: “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received (*labōn*) from the Father the promise (*epangelian*) of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33). What Jesus receives from God the Father after his resurrection is the Spirit as eschatological “promise” (*epangelian*, Lk. 24:49, Acts 1:4), namely, as the Spirit whom the Father promises to send unto others through his exalted Son: “for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5, cf. Lk. 24:49). Admittedly, a strong link exists between Jesus’ reception of the Spirit at Jordan and his reception of the Spirit as the risen Messiah and Lord. The former event serves as the condition for the latter, and in the end both are oriented towards the communication of the eschatological Spirit to others. Jesus receives the Spirit from the Father at the Jordan for his redemptive mission on our behalf, but only upon his completion of such a mission does he, as “Lord” and for us, receive the “promise” of the Spirit from the Father.<sup>141</sup>

After his resurrection, Jesus does not receive the Spirit simply as a declaration from the Father that he is the risen Lord of all. He receives the Spirit as the One who has accomplished the divine mission for the salvation of the world and is made to be the Lord of all by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>142</sup> The implication of this reception of the promise of the Spirit is that Jesus, as risen Lord, now gives the promised Spirit as gift to the church.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 60–61.

<sup>142</sup> “In a Logos-christology . . . the exaltation of Jesus as risen and ascended Lord and Messiah has an unveiling character *for others*, but not a constitutive one *for Jesus himself*. The net effect of Jesus’ unique reception of the Spirit of God at this particular moment in the economy is transposed to the divine Word’s elevating of his assumed humanity at the time of the hypostatic union.” Ibid., 62. “Following Congar, we may say that a Spirit-christology invigorates Logos-oriented approaches to the narrative by seeing the resurrection of Jesus as a new *kairos* in which God has actually made him (not simply proclaimed or declared him as) ascended Lord and Messiah (see Acts 2:32–36 and Heb 1:13; cf. Ps 110:1). (Congar, *Holy Spirit*, vol. 3, 168–169).” Ibid., 63.

<sup>143</sup> “For now, it is enough to remember Paul’s teaching that, upon completing his earthly mission, God ‘established’ his Son precisely as ‘Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through the resurrection from the dead’ (Rom. 1:4, cf. 8:11). At this time in the economy, God may be said to have begotten his faithful Son to be the receiver of the Spirit as ‘promise’ for us. The imminent implication is that the glorified Son will also give the Spirit to the church from Pentecost onwards as eschatological ‘gift’ (Acts 2:16–21, 38–39).” Ibid., 66.

Reading the Gospels through the lens of Jesus' identity as receiver of the Holy Spirit points to Jesus as bearer and giver of the same Spirit to the church. Having established that Jesus receives the Spirit for us, we now turn to the question of what this reception of the Spirit does to Jesus. In other words, we will take up the question of what Jesus' Spirit-bearing looks like in his own life and ministry.

Spirit Christology emphasizes the dynamic presence of the Spirit in the life of Jesus as in the context of his relationship to the Father and to the world and it is these relationships that provide an economic trajectory for Jesus' Spirit-bearing activity:

The Spirit whom Jesus openly receives from his Father is the Spirit whom Jesus fully possesses as his own. In various ways, all moments in Jesus' life and ministry as obedient Son underscore this dynamic bearing or possession of the Spirit of God for mission on our behalf. As eschatological preacher, teacher, exorcist, and healer, Jesus acts in word and deed with authority and in the power of God's Spirit. Even though the Spirit's indwelling in Jesus can be traced to his birth, I have also argued that the Spirit's place in the Christ-event is dynamic, oriented towards all events in the course of Jesus' human existence (incarnating). To this affirmation, I have added that the character of the Spirit's presence in Jesus is *relational*. This is to say that, in the successive events of his eschatological ministry, Jesus bears the Spirit both in obedience to the Father and for the sake of the neighbor.<sup>144</sup>

In relation to the Father, Jesus is the faithful Son.<sup>145</sup> Jesus' bearing the Spirit as obedient Son highlights, among other things, temptation in his life where faithfulness to the Father's plan of salvation is put to the test. Luke makes this point in his narrative when he moves from Jesus' baptism (3:21–22) to his temptation in the wilderness (4:1–13) with only Jesus' genealogy between them (a move which has to do with the restoration of creation that, incidentally, implies

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> "In the biblical narrative, the Son surely works through his own Spirit who proceeds from the Father (most clearly, from his resurrection onwards), but the Spirit of God the Father also works in the Son upon whom he rests from Christ's conception onwards. Both aspects of this joint mission of the Son and the Spirit in God's economy of salvation need attention. In any case, the Father remains the final source and cause of the Son and the Holy Spirit." Ibid., 70–71.

the presence and activity not only of the Father, but also of the Holy Spirit).<sup>146</sup> While many other instances may be cited throughout the Gospel narrative, it is at the cross where Jesus, filled with the Spirit, remains the obedient Son, even to the point of death. Sánchez writes:

The Spirit of the Father who remains on the incarnate Son also accompanies him in the midst of rejection all the way to his crucifixion. If Jesus' whole life in the power of the Spirit is an act of loving obedience to his Father for our sake, then his sacrificial self-giving on the cross may be seen as the ultimate unblemished offering to the Father on our behalf made "through the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14). As in all events of the Son's life of faithfulness, the Spirit mediates the Son's highest act of love offered to the Father on the cross for the sins of the world.<sup>147</sup>

Following from Jesus' relationship to the Father as obedient Son who remains faithful in temptation, reading the Gospel narrative through Spirit Christology also points to Jesus' bearing the Spirit in relation to – or more correctly, in opposition to – Satan whom he fights on God's behalf and for the sake of the world.<sup>148</sup> Luke accounts for this oppositional relationship, as well, when he writes, "when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time" (4:13). Jesus' opposition to Satan involves more than this ongoing temptation, however, and points to many aspects of Jesus' ministry in which he opposes the forces of sin, death, and Satan through teaching, preaching, exorcism, healing, and particularly through resurrection from the dead, all of which happens in the power of the Spirit. Therefore, Jesus as bearer of the Spirit points to Jesus as risen Lord, King of all, and final, eschatological Victor. Jesus' victorious resurrection implies the cross. Therefore, both his obedience unto death as well as his resurrection unto life are aspects of Jesus' sonship.

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<sup>146</sup> "If at the Jordan the Father says to the Son, 'You are my Son, the Beloved,' it is in the desert that Jesus (in one of many struggles against Satan; see Lk. 4:13) especially reciprocates the Father's complete love for him through unconditional obedience and faithfulness to him alone." *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>148</sup> "Where God rules both through his Son and in his Spirit, the rule of sin, death, and the devil comes to an end." *Ibid.*, 68.

Jesus also bears the Spirit in relation to the world, though the world also rejects him.

Sánchez writes:

The Spirit takes Jesus on a redemptive mission to proclaim good news to the poor, set captives free, and bring sight to the blind (Lk. 4:18; cf. Isa. 61:1, Acts 10:38). His mission in the Spirit also involves teaching his disciples with authority (e.g., Acts 1:1–2). It is a tragedy that Jesus' preaching and teaching often encounters opposition and finally leads to his death on the cross where his faithfulness as obedient Son of the Father is tested to the fullest. Yet God's offer to love in his beloved Son is rejected from the start.<sup>149</sup>

Spirit Christology provides a thick description of Jesus' ministry. His Spirit-led relationship to the world in mission for its salvation reveals the Father's love for his world. His ministry involves speaking for God, forgiving sin, and bringing restoration to a broken creation. As Sánchez notes, this mission for the salvation of the world that comes from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit is rejected by the world and results in Jesus' death by crucifixion. So, Jesus' Spirit-bearing in relation to the world is cruciform.

In each area of Jesus' life and ministry, the Spirit leads him to the cross. As the obedient Son of the Father he goes to the cross. As the Victor over Satan he goes to the cross. As the suffering Servant of the world he goes to the cross. Therefore, we may describe the shape of Jesus' Spirit-bearing life in terms of the cross; a cruciform life in the Spirit.

Finally, Spirit Christology reads the Gospels through the lens of Jesus as giver of the Holy Spirit. While it may be logical to step directly to Pentecost at this point, the Gospel narratives first connect Jesus' giving of the Spirit with His suffering, death, and resurrection:

Seen as one theological/liturgical moment, Jesus' suffering and death on the cross (Lent), resurrection (Easter), and pouring out of the Spirit from God the Father upon the church (Pentecost) together constitute the paschal mystery. This series of events directs our minds to Jesus' identity as giver, sender, or dispenser of the Spirit unto us in God's economy of salvation. The Spirit whom the Son openly receives from his Father and possesses as his own in inexhaustible fullness throughout his ministry is

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 67.

the same Spirit from the Father whom Jesus pours out to others in freedom and out of love at the end of his earthly mission.<sup>150</sup>

While Jesus' Spirit-bearing leads him into the events of the paschal mystery, it is from the paschal mystery that Jesus becomes the giver of God's Spirit to the church and the world. In fact, Spirit Christology promotes a reading of the Gospels that sees this giving of the Spirit as the very *telos* of Jesus' life and ministry:

Through the anointing of his beloved Son and Servant with the Spirit at the Jordan, the Father inaugurates the irruption of God's kingdom among us. Yet the final goal of this eschatological inbreaking of the kingdom in the words and deeds of the Son is nothing less than the universal outpouring of the Spirit of the Father through Jesus to all who call upon his name (Acts 2:17–21; cf. Joel 3:1–5). Only from the moment of his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God onwards does this particular receiver and bearer of God's Spirit become the universal giver of the same Spirit unto others. What the baptism in the Jordan is for Jesus, Pentecost is for the church. So the baptized one becomes the baptizer, the anointed one becomes the anointing one: "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 1:33). Yet the conditional moment in the move from Jesus' bearing to his dispensing of the Spirit is the crucifixion – an act in which the Spirit does not cease to accompany the anointed Son and suffering Servant.<sup>151</sup>

The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the paschal mystery and it is only through the paschal mystery, and particularly the crucifixion, that Jesus becomes the universal giver of the Holy Spirit. So, Sánchez writes:

There is a sense in which the pneumatic dimensions of the Christ-event find their point of convergence on the cross. Jesus' anointing at the Jordan finds its fulfillment in the baptism of blood on Calvary, and from the cross Jesus hands over (or gives up) his Spirit to the Father in anticipation of his definitive giving of the same Spirit as risen Lord to the church.<sup>152</sup>

Jesus' handing over of the Spirit from the cross is a particular emphasis in the Gospel according to John. At Jesus' baptism, the Evangelist John records the words of John the Baptizer, "He on whom you see the spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit"

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 79.

(1:33). John connects, therefore, Jesus as receiver of the Spirit with Jesus as giver of the Spirit. A few verses later, John writes, “For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure” (3:34). In Luke’s narrative, Jesus gives the Spirit to his apostles after his resurrection. In John’s narrative, however, Jesus gives up his Spirit at his glorification on the cross.<sup>153</sup> John writes, “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (19:30).<sup>154</sup> Sánchez puts it this way: “John brings together Jesus’ death, resurrection, and breathing of the Spirit on the disciples under one theological conception, that of Jesus’ identity as giver of the Spirit.”<sup>155</sup>

It is in the paschal mystery, particularly at the cross, that Jesus’ life and ministry as receiver and bearer of the Spirit comes to its completion. Likewise, it is through that paschal mystery that Jesus becomes the giver of the Holy Spirit. In this light, we may say that Jesus received and bore the Spirit in order that He might give the Spirit. Furthermore, it is the crucifixion that draws

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<sup>153</sup> “The Son who gives the Spirit to believers first receives and bears the same Spirit from the Father. John is saying (3:34) that the Father gives to his Son the Spirit whom the Son then gives to the church upon his glorification.” *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>154</sup> “In John 19:30, I argue that one can posit such a symbolic sense of the term by extension in the light of at least four relevant passages in the Gospel, namely, 4:14, 7:37–39, 20:22, and even 19:34. In the first two passages, we have already seen ‘water’ is used as an image for the Spirit; in particular, the second one tells that the same water (=Spirit) will not be given until Jesus’ glorification. In the third passage, Jesus finally gives the Spirit to his disciples, bestowing on them the power to forgive and retain sins. Before, in the fourth one, we learn that from the pierced side of the crucified, ‘at once blood and water came out’ (19:34), thereby uniting the bloody reality of the rejected Messiah’s death with the image of water once again. Between the first two and the last two passages, we find the text under consideration, the assertion that Jesus handed over his *pneuma* at the cross (19:34). At a symbolic level, John can point to an intimate connection between the cross (blood) and the gift of the Spirit (water). This link is not surprising in the light of the Baptist’s reference to Jesus’ coming baptizing with the Spirit (1:33), the placing of Jesus’ giving of the Spirit (=water) at his glorification (7:39), and the significant datum that in the Gospel Jesus’ ‘obedience unto death’ already points to his glorification (e.g., 13:31–32, 17:1, 5). Moreover, John presents Jesus’ death on the cross as the point of entrance to his glorification, the climax of God’s love for the world (3:16, cf. 1 Jn. 4:9–10), and the fulfillment of the Son’s mission (19:30). From this angle, he seems especially eager to see the event as a constitutive one for Christ’s giving of the Spirit to the church out of self-sacrificial love. The Holy Spirit may then be seen as the paschal fruit and gift of the crucified Christ to the church. What follows from the painful cross is Jesus’ breathing of the Spirit on the disciples as their risen Lord for the purpose of giving them the authority to forgive sins in the case of the penitent and withhold forgiveness from the impenitent (Jn. 20:23). So we must also see Christ’s words, ‘It is finished,’ in light of the whole paschal mystery, which includes for John both his imminent resurrection and giving of the Spirit to the church. Without the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ death on the cross remains unfulfilled for us and we are left with no hope in the forgiveness of sin.” *Ibid.*, 81–83.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

together Jesus' reception, bearing, and giving of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we may say definitively that Jesus' life in the Spirit, in each of its dynamic (theocentric and eschatological) and relational (trinitarian and ecclesial) aspects, has a cruciform character and trajectory.

### **2.2.2. Spirit Christology and the Cross: Atonement Theory Revisited**

It has just been argued that Spirit Christology is centered on the paschal mystery, particularly the cross. Through the lens of Spirit Christology, the cross is seen as the culmination of the divine economy. Within that economy that moves from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, there are a number of implications, not the least of which is the salvation of the world.<sup>156</sup> While the vicarious atonement also centers on the cross, it does so in a way that emphasizes one aspect of the paschal mystery to the exclusion of the others, namely, the cross as Jesus' sacrifice to the Father. In the last chapter, we saw the way Gustaf Aulén placed this narrative as an atonement theory in conversation with two other atonement theories, namely the classic type and the subjective type, as a way to account for other aspects of the paschal mystery. Rather than pitting these theories against one another, Sánchez has shown that a Spirit Christology places the cross within a broader trinitarian framework that accounts for the concerns of each of these theories without pitting them against each other and without detracting from the fullness of the paschal mystery:

In providing us with a broader economic-trinitarian framework for understanding Anselmian (Latin), Abelardian, and Aúlenian or classic views of atonement, I argue that reading the story of Jesus' identity as receiver, bearer, and giver of God's Spirit can assume the strengths of each one of these approaches or theories. These strengths are respectively and comparatively the central place of Christ's *human* obedience unto death in atonement (Anselm), the affirmation that reconciliation is always and exclusively the eschatological work of God against his enemies (Aúlen on the classic

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<sup>156</sup> "By placing the identity and work of Jesus in the context of his acts and relations to the Father and for the neighbor's sake, a Spirit-oriented christology can show that atonement is a work of the persons of the Trinity for us. This is to say, more specifically, that God the Father ultimately reconciles the whole world to himself through his faithful Son and at once in the eschatological power of his Spirit." *Ibid.*, 90.



approach), and the non-exclusive stress on the church's subjective appropriation of atonement in self-sacrificial Christ-like works of love (Abelard).<sup>157</sup>

So, while Aulén pits these approaches against one another and only further complicates the question of atonement theory and the function of the cross both in salvation history and in the preaching of the church today, Sánchez argues that Spirit Christology brings these three approaches together under the paschal mystery.<sup>158</sup>

Spirit Christology sees the cross as the shape of Jesus' life in the Spirit. As an obedient Son, he goes to the cross according to his Father's will. As suffering Servant, he goes to the cross on behalf of a sinful world. As risen Lord, the cross is the way he conquers the enemy. So, by emphasizing the cross as an expression of the presence and activity of the Spirit in the life of Christ, the cross is broadened to actually account for all three types of atonement theory. Spirit Christology accounts for the cross as sacrifice and substitution, for the cross as victory over Satan and evil, and for the cross as a symbol and example of love.

Therefore, when it comes to the discussion of preaching the gospel, Spirit Christology provides a broad framework for addressing various theological articles. As Sánchez writes:

It is my conviction that Jesus' identity as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit provides an adequate biblical and theological framework for exploring the nature of salvation in Christ, as well as for understanding christology itself, trinitarian theology, and issues related to the proclamation of the story of Jesus in the church today.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> "Anselm and Abelard respectively stress so-called objective and subjective views of atonement, but they arrive at their conclusions through the same procedure. They define God by prioritizing divine attributes (i.e., justice or love), which then serve as controlling variables into which Jesus and his work are later situated." Ibid., 93. "In short, Aulén defines human nature and then proceeds to place God's work in Christ into this scheme." Ibid., 94. "In order to move from Jesus' receiving and bearing of the Spirit to his giving of the same, a Spirit-oriented christology can affirm the main emphasis of atonement theories expressed by Anselm, Aulén, and Abelard. But in distinction from a Logos-oriented christology, our approach does not need to resort to previously established definitions of 'God' or 'humanity' into which God's work in Christ is situated in a second moment of reflection. Reading the story of Jesus from a pneumatic angle brings together classic (Aulén), objective (Anselm), and subjective (Abelard) dimensions of God's work of reconciliation in his Son for sinful humanity." Ibid., 100.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 102.

To build on what Sánchez has done, it is my contention that Spirit Christology provides a helpful framework for addressing one particular issue related to the proclamation of the gospel, namely preaching sanctification. At the heart of this contention is the fact that Spirit Christology provides a way to preach the cross which does not nullify the atonement in any way, but rather deepens it and connects it directly to the sanctified life. When the cross is seen as something that comes about as a result of Jesus' reception and bearing of the Holy Spirit and as the place from which he gives the Holy Spirit, the cross becomes not only a means of atonement, but the shape of a life lived in the Spirit. As Jesus' Spirit-bearing life is cruciform, so the life of the church and the life of the individual Christian lived in the Spirit given by the Son is also cruciform. A Spirit Christology highlights the point of continuity between the life of Jesus and the life of the church, and thus gives the preacher Christological ground centered on the cross from which to describe what life in the Spirit looks like and to shape hearers into the cruciform life.

### **2.3. Spirit Christology as a Framework for the Life of the Church**

Read through the lens of Spirit Christology, the Gospels narrate the divine mission of the Father who sends his Son to be the receiver, bearer, and giver of his Spirit. This narrative trajectory culminates in the church's reception of the Spirit received and borne by Jesus, the Son of God. While there are certainly points of discontinuity between Jesus and the church as receivers and bearers of the Spirit, the Spirit is also an essential point of continuity between them and their respective lives. The Spirit who dwells in the Christian is none other than the Spirit who rests upon and is given to the Christian by Christ. From this continuity flows a description of the life of the church in the Spirit as well as the sanctified life of the Christian grounded in the life of Jesus in the Spirit.

### 2.3.1. Jesus Gives the Spirit to the Church: Dimensions of the Gift of the Spirit

The Gospels, particularly those according to Luke and John, narrative the way in which Jesus gave the Spirit to the church. What is not immediately clear is the purpose for which Jesus gave the Spirit to the church. A return to the biblical narrative will clarify this purpose.

The Gospel according to Luke concludes with Jesus' ascension to the Father. Immediately before that, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples and demonstrated to them the way he fulfilled the Scriptures. He then said to them:

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lk. 24:46–49).

It is not until the second volume of Luke's narrative that he gives the account of Jesus sending the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, to his disciples.

In the first chapter of the Book of Acts, Luke recounts the promise of the Spirit and the Ascension before his account of Pentecost demonstrating continuity between the two volumes of Luke's narrative.<sup>160</sup> For Luke, Pentecost serves as both the culmination of the mission of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world and the beginning of a new age in the story of the salvation of the world.<sup>161</sup> Dunn writes,

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<sup>160</sup> “Any study of the theology of Luke must take account of the fact that he wrote two volumes. . . there is continuity and interconnectedness between the two parts of Luke's twofold composition which should prohibit us from drawing conclusions regarding Luke's christology from only one part, or from one part independently of the other.” Dunn, *Christology*, 20.

<sup>161</sup> “In particular, the two-volume scope of Luke's theology enables us to recognize the governing claim of his christology: that Jesus Christ is both the climax of God's purpose through Israel and the center of history. Hence the counterpoint themes of continuity and discontinuity by which Jesus both links and separates the epochs which precede and succeed him.” *Ibid.*, 20. “The discontinuity between epochs is also marked christologically, in the depiction of the successive modes of relationship between Jesus and the Spirit – first, as the one whose human life is created by the Spirit (Luke 1:35), second, as the one who is uniquely anointed by the Spirit (Acts 3:22; 4:18; Acts 10:38), and third, as the exalted one who in his exaltation has received divine power to bestow the Spirit (Acts 2:33), so that, as with Paul, the Spirit can be designated ‘the Spirit of Jesus’ (Acts 16:7). The attempt to mark off the epoch of Jesus from the epoch of the Spirit by limiting the resurrection appearances to forty days so that there is a ten-day gap between ascension and Pentecost (Acts 1) is particularly noticeable.” *Ibid.*, 21–22.

Whereas for the earliest Christians Pentecost was seen as the precursor of the end, Luke strives to present Pentecost as the beginning of a whole new epoch of salvation-history. This motif is already implicit in the fact that Pentecost begins a second volume rather than rounding off the first (compare Acts 1:1–5 with Luke 1:1–4). But it becomes most explicit in the sharp distinction that Luke draws between the epoch of Jesus, ended by resurrection appearances and ascension, and Pentecost, the beginning of the epoch of the Spirit.<sup>162</sup>

Pentecost, then, Christ's giving of the Holy Spirit, begins a new epoch in salvation history. At the same time, Christ's giving of the Spirit is the link between these two epochs. Therefore, the gift of the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son to the church links the life of Jesus in the Spirit and the life of the church in the Spirit. In other words, the point of continuity of the two epochs of salvation history also serves as the point of continuity between Christ and his church. From this, we may say that the purpose of the gift of the Spirit is to relate Christ and all he is and does and did and will do to people who are lost and condemned to eternal death without him.

The Gospel according to John frames these events differently, however. Although John refers to the Ascension (6:62; 20:17), he neither records the Ascension nor the occasion of Jesus' promise of the Spirit just prior to the Ascension. However, while Luke indicates the coming gift of the Spirit on two occasions (11:13; 12:12), the promise of the gift of the Spirit is a recurring motif in John (1:33; 3:5; 3:34; 6:63; 7:39; 14:17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:5–15). In addition, while John does not record the events of Pentecost, he does record the giving of the Holy Spirit within his narrative. As has already been argued, Jesus gives his Spirit at his glorification (6:63), which in John is, first, a reference to the cross (17:1–5; 19:30). The cross, therefore, has at least *something* to do with the purpose of the gift of the Spirit. After the resurrection, John goes on to give a more explicit account of Jesus giving the Spirit. On the evening of the day of his resurrection, Jesus comes to his disciples hiding behind locked doors and he says to them:

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<sup>162</sup> Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 214.

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (20:21–23).

For John, Jesus gives the Spirit to his disciples even before He ascends into heaven.

John’s account of Jesus promising and giving the Holy Spirit points to the purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In terms of the promises of the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit has to do with entrance into the kingdom of God (3:5), the Word of God (6:63), life (6:63; 20:31), belief in Jesus (7:39), the indwelling of the Spirit (14:17), the Spirit’s activity of teaching and calling to remembrance Jesus’ words (14:26), witnessing to Jesus (15:26), conviction of the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8), guidance into the truth of the Word of God (16:13), and the glorification of Jesus (16:14). When it comes to Jesus giving the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit has to do with the cross (19:30) and the forgiveness of sin (20:21–23). In other words, the Spirit is given to draw and join people to the person and work of Jesus.

The overarching implication of the way Jesus gave the Holy Spirit and the promises he spoke regarding this gift as recorded in Luke-Acts and John is that Jesus gave the Spirit in order that the Spirit might relate Jesus and the church. In other words, the gift of the Spirit brings people to Christ and Christ to people.

The biblical narrative addresses the gift of the Spirit in other places beyond Luke and John. In his essay, “Spirit and Kingdom,” Dunn takes up the Pauline theme of the Kingdom of God and arrives at two conclusions. He states, “In the first place, the Spirit prepares a person for the kingdom: if he is to inherit the kingdom in the future he must experience the work of the Spirit in the present.”<sup>163</sup> Dunn’s second conclusion is this: “the Spirit not only prepares a person for the

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<sup>163</sup> “In Paul’s opinion no idolater, adulterer, thief, or drunkard will inherit the kingdom of God; only those who have been washed, sanctified, and justified in and by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:9–11). And that work of the Spirit first begun at conversion and initiation must continue throughout the Christian’s life. If he gives ways to the

future kingdom, the Spirit also enables the Christian to experience the future kingdom in the present.”<sup>164</sup> Thus, Dunn argues that the biblical narrative points to Jesus giving the Holy Spirit for the sake of the present experience of the Kingdom of God:

This is why Paul can describe the kingdom in terms of the Christian’s present experience of the Spirit: “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 4:17); it does not consist in talk but in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 4:20); God’s call into his kingdom is made effectual (παλαῖν) through the gospel by means of the gift of the Spirit and his sanctifying operation (1 Thess. 2:12–13; 4:7–8; 2 Thess. 2:13–14) – a present process leading to an “end” result.<sup>165</sup>

With these words, Dunn introduces the biblical aspect of time into the discussion of the gift of the Spirit and the sanctified life. The gift of the Spirit not only draws people to Christ and saving faith in him, but the Spirit draws people into the divine economy of salvation, the Kingdom of God, which has implications for all aspects of time; past, present and future. Yet in the experience of the Spirit, there is a tension between the present and the future:

The point to be noticed in all this is that not only do we have a present-future tension in Paul’s thought about the kingdom, but more important we see that this present-future tension is expressed by Paul in terms of the Spirit.<sup>166</sup>

In other words, the gift of the Spirit draws the believer into a relationship with Christ that while full and complete in some senses, has yet to become fully complete in every sense.<sup>167</sup> The point

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impulses and desires of the flesh, he will lose his inheritance (i.e., the kingdom of God). Only if he follows the impulses and desires of the Spirit and so brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in his life will he in the end enter into his inheritance (Gal. 5:16–23). The final preparatory work of the Spirit will be when he transforms the σῶμα ψυχικόν into a σῶμα πνευματικόν, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:44–50), only those whose mortal bodies also have been given life through the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:11; cf. Phil. 3:21).” Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 133.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> “In one sense *resurrection* is already past, for the Christian shares in Christ’s resurrection (Col. 2:12; 3:1); but in another sense resurrection is still future, for only in the resurrection of the body will the whole person be made alive (Rom. 6:5; 8:11). In one sense Christians already have *redemption* (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14); but in another sense they still have to await redemption, that is, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30). . . . In every case there is a present-future tension, a dual relationship between part and whole. Each word

to note from the biblical narrative, particularly the Pauline corpus, according to Dunn, is that it is the Holy Spirit that holds together the tension between the now and the not yet:

The Spirit gives life in the present (2 Cor. 3:6) and will effect the resurrection of the body in the future (Rom. 8:11), for the Spirit is life for the Christian (Rom. 8:10). The Spirit is the ἀρραβὼν of this ultimate transformation (2 Cor. 5:5) as he is the ἀπάρχη of the ultimate redemption (Rom. 8:23). The Spirit effects a right relationship with God by his coming (1 Cor. 6:11), for the promise of the Spirit and the blessing of justification are two sides of the same coin (Gal. 3:1–14); at the same time, it is through the Spirit that Christians wait for the hope of righteousness (Gal. 5:5). Christians are saved through the washing of regeneration and renewal effected by the Spirit (Tit. 3:5), the very Spirit whose coming into their lives makes them sons (Rom. 8:15). It is this present experience of the Spirit which gives them the sure hope that their salvation and sonship will be perfected in glory in the end through the same Spirit (Rom. 8:23–24; cf. Gal. 3:3 with Phil. 1:6), for it is the same Spirit who even here and now is in process of transforming them into the very image of the Lord from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18). In short, the present-future tension is a function of the Spirit; the Spirit himself is the part now enjoyed of the whole yet to be realized; the Spirit operates the process leading to perfection, the fulfilled Now which works for the consummated Yet to be.<sup>168</sup>

So, from Paul, “The Spirit we might say is the *present-ness* of the coming kingdom.”<sup>169</sup> Dunn argues that the story is the same in the Gospels.<sup>170</sup> The present-future tension of the Kingdom of God is held together by the Holy Spirit.

Spirit Christology moves from Jesus as the receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit to the church as the receiver and bearer of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1–11). Dunn identifies this

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indicates that for Paul salvation is not something attained all at once in this life or wholly reserved for the next; rather it speaks of something begun though not yet completed, something participated in but not yet fully possessed.” Ibid., 135–136.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>170</sup> “Turning now to the Gospels, the obvious question is whether the kingdom concept there shares the twin characteristics of βασιλεία in Paul. On the first I need say little since the consensus among recent writers on the subject is that the kingdom in the preaching of Jesus evinces the same present-future duality. What I wish to argue, however, is that for the Synoptic βασιλεία this present-future tension is a function of and dependent upon the Spirit just as in Paul.” Ibid., 136. “Already the nature of the relationship between Spirit and kingdom in the Synoptics is becoming clear. In terms of the present-future tension in the kingdom concept, we might put it this way: the presence of the Spirit is the ‘already’ of the kingdom; the inadequacy of humanity’s recognition of the Spirit’s presence and submission to him explains the ‘not yet’ of the kingdom.” Ibid., 138. “Thus when Jesus says, ‘The kingdom of God is among you’ (Luke 17:21), we must understand Luke to mean that the kingdom was present not simply because Jesus was present, but rather because Jesus as the unique Spirit-bearer was present.” Ibid., 140.

reception of the Spirit with the Kingdom of God that is experienced in the present in the Spirit but is yet to be fully experienced in the Spirit because of the limitations of those who have received the Spirit. We may further relate this to the cruciform nature of Jesus' life in the Spirit. Even as the cross is the shape of Jesus' life, it is the shape of the Christian life and the life of the church. At this point, we see the way the cross accounts for this aspect of time and the tension between present and future. The cross defines the present. The resurrection defines the future.

There is still more to be said about the work of the Spirit, however. We turn, again, to the Pauline corpus. In his essay "1 Corinthians 15:45--Last Adam, Life-Giving Spirit," Dunn emphasizes the work of the Spirit to conform people to Christ. He writes:

The primary focus of his thought at this point however is the believer's experience of the life-giving Spirit. How so? Because in this experience the believer finds himself being steadily transformed to become like Christ. Paul's own experience of the life of the Spirit bearing the imprint of Jesus' character and conforming him to that image is the ground on which Paul asserts the representative significance of Jesus' risen humanity. We enter here the deepest waters of Paul's Christ-mysticism. Paul's experience as a believer is not merely of new life; it is also of decay and death. Although the Spirit is life διὰ δικαιοσύνη, the body is dead διὰ ἁμαρτίαν (Rom. 8:10). The believer knows the life of the Spirit, but he has to express it through the body of death (Rom. 7:24f.; 8:13; 2 Cor. 4:11f.). Day by day he is being "inwardly renewed," but at the same time his "outward humanity is in decay" (2 Cor. 4:16). The suffering this involves is a necessary preliminary to glory – suffering to death is the way to glory (Rom. 8:17). The significant feature of this death-life experience is that for Paul *both the death and the life are Christ's* – it is the outworking of Christ's death and risen life.<sup>171</sup>

Dunn makes the case for something that has massive implications for preaching sanctification, namely, that the Spirit is given to the church not only for the sake of entrance into the Kingdom of God by faith in Christ, but also for the sake of *participation* in the life of Christ and *conformity* to Christ, specifically according to the pattern of his death and resurrection.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Dunn, *Christology*, 162.

<sup>172</sup> "Most striking of all is Phil. 3:10f., where Paul expresses his longing to know Christ more fully, that is, to experience not just the power of his resurrection, but to share his sufferings, and so be more and more conformed to his death; only in this way will he attain the resurrection of the dead. . . . It is this death-life motif which lies behind



The trajectory of Spirit Christology leads from Jesus as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit, to the church's reception of the Holy Spirit, directly into the Pauline application of the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit as the experience of the present Christ.

[T]he significant feature to emerge from our study is that although Paul thinks almost exclusively in terms of the present Jesus experienced now as Spirit, he does not thereby ignore or deny the relevance of the historical man Jesus. For it is precisely the Jesus-, that is, the historical Jesus-content and Jesus-character of the present experience of the Spirit which is the distinctive and most important feature of the experience. Christ has become Spirit, *Christ is now experienced as Spirit* – that is true. But it is only because *the Spirit is now experienced as Christ* – that the experience of the Spirit is valid and essential for Paul. The centrality given to the experience of the exalted Lord does not deny the relevance and importance of the historical Jesus for Paul; on the contrary it reinforces it, by binding the historical Jesus and the exalted Lord together in the single all-important experience of the life-giving Spirit. It is the continuity between earthly Jesus and exalted Lord, denoted by the clause ὁ εσχατος Ἄδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν, which is the key to Paul's thought here and to much of his christology and soteriology as a whole.<sup>173</sup>

Thus, the Spirit makes Christ present, joins believers to Christ, draws them into participation with him in his eschatological Kingdom, and conforms them to Christ in his death and resurrection. The Spirit, therefore, is the point of continuity between Christ and the church, between his life and the life of the church, between his life and the sanctified life. Reducing the person and work of the Holy Spirit to the One who enables believers to believe in Christ and be saved would truncate the broader eschatological and cruciform biblical narrative of the work of the Spirit of Christ in the life of the church today by means of the Word of God.

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Paul's talk of the continuing Christian experience as one of more and more being transformed into the image of Christ through the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; cf. Rom. 8:29; 12:2; 13:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:18) – the process of the full personality of Christ coming as it were to birth in the believer with all the birthpangs which that involves (Gal. 4:19), a process which only ends when 'the body belonging to our humble state' is transfigured to become like Christ's glorious resurrection body by the power of the Spirit (Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:11)." Ibid., 163.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 166.

### 2.3.2. The Shape of the Church's Life in the Spirit of Christ: Discontinuity and Continuity in Spirit Christology

Having established that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in order to make himself present for the church and draw the church into participation with him and conformity to him, we may say that the biblical narrative of the life of Jesus is the definitive description of the life of the church in the Spirit of Jesus. More specifically, we may say that the life of the church in the Spirit is cruciform, that is, in as much as the presence of the Spirit in the life of Jesus provides a concrete framework for accounting for and describing the presence of the Spirit in the life of the church and individual Christians, we may say that the cross becomes an important, if not definitive, point of continuity between the two.

At this point, however, it is necessary to distinguish between points of continuity and points of discontinuity between the life of Jesus in the Spirit and the life of the church in the same Spirit. We may think of points of discontinuity as indications of Christ's identity as *unique* bearer and giver of the Spirit. Points of continuity are indications of the *common* reception and bearing of the Spirit between Christ and the church.

Jesus is uniquely the Son of God, in a way that no other human can be, even though baptized believers are also called children of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, for example. Christian reception of the Spirit comes at baptism, while Christ has the fullness of the Spirit and holiness in the flesh from the moment of His conception and birth. So, Christ's reception of the Spirit is unique. Sánchez writes,

In anthropological terms (or hamartological) terms, the unique presence of the Spirit in Jesus from conception differs from its presence in other saints in that the latter remain sinners (although forgiven ones) in this life and thus need the continual descent of the same Spirit upon them for the forgiveness of sins. In this sense, Jesus as "holy" child has the Spirit from conception (see Lk. 1:35) in an unrepeatably way that others can neither participate in nor replicate.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Sánchez, "Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit," 74–75.

Another point of discontinuity is the way in which Jesus' bears the Spirit. When Jesus is anointed with the Spirit at the Jordan, he enters his unique office as our Servant. Jesus is the obedient Son of the Father. He remains faithful to him throughout his life and ministry, unlike other human bearers of the Spirit. Jesus speaks as the Son of God with a unique authority. Unlike other bearers of the Spirit, he goes to the cross as the Suffering Servant to save us from our sins.

Sánchez writes:

We may say that Jesus bears the Holy Spirit as uncreated gift in a permanent and inexhaustible but nevertheless dynamic and relational way. We may then also say that Jesus' particular authority as God's Messiah, Son, and Servant, which is intrinsically linked to this unique eschatological presence of God's Spirit in and upon him, is an unparalleled and unrepeatable one.<sup>175</sup>

Perhaps nowhere else is the point of discontinuity in the bearing of the Spirit made known more than in the resurrection. Sánchez writes:

Only in the light of the resurrection can Jesus' mission of proclamation, teaching, healing, and exorcisms – all events leading to Jesus' ultimate rejection and death – point to his unique, authoritative, permanent, inexhaustible, unparalleled, and unrepeatable possession of God's Spirit. Only in the light of Jesus' giving of the Spirit as exalted and glorified Messiah, Servant, Son of God in power, and Lord to the church can we affirm today that the bearer of the Spirit is more than a mere human being. Then we can also state that he has the Spirit not only by degree (like other saints) but also by nature (or kind), and therefore, that this man is God.<sup>176</sup>

Finally, Jesus receives and bears the Spirit in order that he might give the Spirit as risen Lord.

That is also an important point of discontinuity between the purpose of Jesus' Spirit-bearing and the Spirit-bearing church. These points of discontinuity between the presence of the Spirit in Christ and in Christians point to the ground of our justification before God, that is, they point to the way Jesus' *uniquely* bore the Spirit as obedient Son, suffering Servant, and risen Lord for the sake of the world and its salvation.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>176</sup> “What a Logos-christology affirms a priori by proceeding ‘from above’ (i.e., that the preexistent and divine Logos is Jesus the Christ), a Spirit-christology affirms a posteriori by proceeding ‘from below’ (i.e., that Jesus the Christ is the preexistent and divine Logos).” Ibid., 71.

Points of continuity between Jesus and his saints, on the other hand, offer grounding for describing our sanctification by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the life of Jesus in the Spirit becomes a precedent, pattern, and point of participation and conformity for the life of the church in the Spirit. In this way, Spirit Christology presents Christ himself as the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification. Where he is present and active by the Spirit in and through his Word, both of these implications of the gospel become reality.

The mere fact that Christ gives the Spirit to the church marks a point of continuity in the reception of the Spirit. As John writes, “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (20:21–22). Like the points of discontinuity, points of continuity follow from Jesus as Son, Servant, and Lord in that the Spirit makes us children of God, servants of others, and those who will one day be raised and rule with Christ. In general, however, the continuity between the life of Jesus and the life of the church is defined by the cross. Jesus himself taught this: “And he said to all, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me’” (Luke 9:23).

Having identified points of continuity and discontinuity in an ecclesial reading of Spirit Christology, we will focus now on the points of continuity as they provide a compelling Pneumatological description of the life of the church as well as the sanctified life of the individual Christian. First, the life of the church in the Spirit may be said to be dynamic. This is set against the view that the Spirit simply gives the church faith in Christ at some initial point, obscuring the ongoing dependence of the church upon the Spirit of God in all aspects of Christian faith and life. Much as Christ himself, as obedient Son, would pray on a continual basis, so the church receives the Spirit of faith and prayer on an ongoing basis. In other words,

the Spirit is not a static possession, but a divine and active person who continually comes into our lives to sanctify us and, in fact, dwells within us.

Secondly, the life of the church in the Spirit and the sanctified life of the individual Christian is relational. Even as Christ's bearing of the Holy Spirit established and determined the relationships within his life, so the Spirit establishes and determines the relationships of the Christian. The first point to make in this regard is that life in the Spirit is communal. It cannot be strictly individualistic; not even when it comes to salvation. This is a helpful corrective in our current culture. Dunn writes:

The model for spiritual renewal is often taken to be the individual – his or her eyes opened, will surrendered and heart filled and overflowing with the love of God. Corporate renewal, renewal of the Church, is then seen simply as a multiplication of renewed individuals – if only each one experienced such renewal, then would the whole Church be renewed. . . The whole philosophy is underpinned, of course, by those who see religion itself as that which the individual does in the aloneness of his soul – the flight of the alone to the alone. . . I wonder, however, if we do not need to give more attention to the corporate dimension of the work of the Spirit from the outset, to supplement (not exchange) the model of individual spirituality with a model of communal spirituality, where the corporate character of experience is fundamental from the outset.<sup>177</sup>

The heart of this communal aspect comes from the biblical language of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit that is given to the *church* by Christ. Dunn goes on to relate this to the biblical language of participation:

Looking at the same phenomenon from a different angle, we can also say that the experience of the Spirit was a social experience, an incorporating experience, the basis of community, of a Christian group's unity. This is particularly clear from the way Paul uses the phrase *he koinonia tou pneumatos*. It is usually translated "the fellowship of the Spirit," and regularly *koinonia* is taken to mean something objective created by the Spirit – the fellowship or congregation created by the Spirit. But, as my doctoral supervisor, C. F. D. Moule, often emphasized, that is a misunderstanding of the phrase. The phrase means actually "participation in the Spirit"; it refers to the shared experienced of the Spirit.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 343.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 345. "(1 Cor. 12:13) The oneness of the body drives from the oneness of the Spirit, the unity of the body from the common experience of the same Spirit. Their experience was not something merely personal, the

As the presence and activity of the Spirit in the life of Jesus was communal, so the presence and activity of the Spirit in the life of the church is communal.

Beyond the mere fact that life in the Spirit is communal, we may also say something more specifically about the various relationships established by the Spirit. By the presence and activity of the Spirit, Jesus is the obedient Son of the Father, the suffering Servant of the world, and the risen Lord of all, including all enemies of God. The Christian, likewise, is a child of God and an heir in relation to the Father, a servant in relation to the world, and a ruler with Christ over sin, death, and the devil. With respect to our relationship to the Father, Dunn writes,

Paul depicts the character of the believers' sonship and of their prayer life, whether individual or corporate, by reference to Christ. The hallmark of sonship is the Spirit inspiring believers to cry "Abba! Father!" – the very prayer and sonship which characterized Jesus' own life on earth (especially Mark 14:36); hence too the assertion that thus are we shown to be not only children of God, but heirs of God who share in the inheritance of Christ (Rom. 8:15–17). Likewise in 2 Corinthians 3 he describes the work of the Spirit as that of transforming believers from one degree of glory to another into the lines of God, that is, to become like Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4). Since Jesus was himself the peak of prophetic inspiration, it is natural that all prophetic inspiration should be measured against him. Since Jesus was the image, the model and pattern of divine sonship, it is natural that all Christian character should be measured against him and that the test of the character-forming work of the Spirit at both individual and corporate levels should be the sonship of Jesus.<sup>179</sup>

Finally, from the biblical account of the life of Jesus in the Spirit, we may say that the life of the church in the Spirit is likewise cruciform. That is, for the church and for the individual Christian, the cross of Christ is the pattern of life in the Spirit. Dunn describes what such a cruciform pattern entails:

. . . Paul insists again and again: the model for our present experience of Christ is not the glorified Christ, but the suffering, crucified Christ. The point is not simply that if

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individual in his or her aloneness. It was a society-creating experience, a body-of-Christ-creating experience, an experience of being knit into a community." *Ibid.*, 346. "In short, the experience of the Spirit as a shared experience, that shared experience as the basis and fundamental dynamic of Christian community, and the character of Christian community as one of mutual dependence on the grace of the Spirit – these are all essential features of what Paul in particular has to say on our subject." *Ibid.*, 348.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 349–350.

Jesus suffered and was rejected, his followers should expect no better. It is rather that they way of Christ in suffering and death is the only way for believers to follow Christ to glory. The way to heaven for all who believe is the way of the cross. . . . Notice that what he envisages is not a kind of spiritual escalator, where sharing in Christ's sufferings comes first, to be left behind as he moves on to the experience of Christ's resurrection. On the contrary, experience of the power of Christ's resurrection and sharing in his sufferings are for Paul two parts of the same process, a process which must continue through to the end, when and only when he will enjoy the resurrection from the dead . . .<sup>180</sup>

All too often, this death and resurrection language, the language of the cross, is limited to its implications for faith, specifically repentance. But Dunn demonstrates compellingly that this language ought to permeate all of Christian faith and life. This is true, in one sense, because the sanctified life is lived here and now under the cross in hope for the Day of Resurrection, but it is also true, in another sense, that the sanctified life is lived here and now under the cross in the daily dying to that which is contrary to the Spirit. Dunn writes:

If Christ is the only member of the old age to break through the cul-de-sac of death into the resurrection life of the Spirit beyond, then only in union with this Christ can that awful passage be successfully navigated by others. But we deceive ourselves if we think that we are confronted with that passage only at the end of our lives here on earth. We are confronted with it now. We are already navigating it now. The forces of death are grappling with the Spirit for every believer. So our life in this time between the ages must be marked as much by death as by life, by the dying, whether quickly or slowly, of what is at odds with the Spirit of life, for it is only through death that we share in Christ's life. The same rhythm of life and death, life through death, should be an inescapable feature of our corporate life too.

Therefore, the Christian life and the life of the church are cruciform, not only in terms of repentance, that is in faith, and not only in terms of mortification of the flesh and the battle against sin and Satan, but also in terms of our waiting for the Final Resurrection. In this way, Spirit Christology provides a way to more fully describe the Christian life in the Spirit as cruciform according to the life of Jesus in the Spirit.<sup>181</sup> In the power of the Spirit, Jesus is the

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 351–354.

<sup>181</sup> "Paul takes it for granted that the Spirit of God is known now only by reference to Christ – 'the Spirit of sonship' voicing Jesus' prayer, 'Abba, Father' (Rom. 8:15), the Spirit known by the confession 'Jesus is Lord'

faithful Son of the Father who is anointed to be our Servant and is raised from the dead as Lord over all. By the same Spirit of Christ, we are made sons and daughters, dying to self to serve others, while looking forward to the life of the world to come.

### **Conclusion**

Spirit Christology is a trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform framework for the narratives of the Gospel. Because Jesus is not only the receiver and bearer but also the giver of the Holy Spirit and because the church receives that Spirit, the life and work of Jesus is not only a gift for the salvation of believers, but is also a pattern in which believers participate and to which they are conformed by the presence and activity of the Spirit in their lives. The continuity between the presence and activity of the Spirit in Christ and in his church and the description of the sanctified life that flows from this Pneumatological link are the compelling contributions from Spirit Christology toward describing life in the Spirit or sanctification and lead to any number of implications for preaching sanctification.

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(1 Cor. 12:3), the Spirit who transforms us into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). The Spirit can now be defined as 'the Spirit of Christ' (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1:19), and spirituality must be measured against the pattern of Christ crucified (2 Cor. 4:7–5:5; 13:4; Phil. 3:10–11). The Spirit is thus redefined as the medium of Christ's relationship with his people (1 Cor. 6:17). Beyond that it is much less clear that we can properly speak of an identification between Christ and Spirit. The Spirit is still preeminently the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9, 11, 14; 1 Cor. 1:11, 14, etc.) and given by God (1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 1:21–22; 5:5, etc.)." Dunn, *Christology*, 17.



### CHAPTER THREE:

#### SPIRIT CHRISTOLOGY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR PREACHING SANCTIFICATION

In the first chapter, I argued that both the Gospel narratives and the preaching of the gospel are trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform in order to offer an account of the Word of God broad enough to retain the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification. In the second chapter, I laid out a framework for reading the Gospels and for preaching the gospel, namely Spirit Christology; a framework grounded in Jesus as the receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit that emphasizes the continuity between Christ and his church in the Spirit. In this final chapter, I show the ways Spirit Christology is a helpful framework for preaching Christ crucified, particularly toward sanctification; both for describing the sanctified life and for shaping Christians into the sanctified life in the Spirit of Christ.

The sanctified life is filled with all kinds of experiences, joys, and challenges; prayer, worship, temptation, suffering, service, and the hope of eternal life are just a few examples. As has already been demonstrated, preaching Christ crucified grounded in the vicarious atonement does not account for or provide a way to address these various experiences and an assortment of theological constructs is required to fill in the gaps left by this narrative; some of which address the *shape* of the sanctified life while others address the *power that shapes* the sanctified life while none of which provide a framework for the sanctified life in total. Forde's "getting used to justification" is a good example of one way to account for the shaping power without addressing the shape of the sanctified life. A theology of vocation is a good example of one way to account for the shape of the sanctified life without addressing the power that shapes it. Spirit Christology

provides a way to address the shape and the shaping of the sanctified life, as well as the various experiences and concerns in the sanctified life by means of Jesus own life in the Spirit and the continuity between the life of Jesus and the church in the Spirit. So, when it comes to preaching, while we have any number of theological distinctions and frameworks with which to address the sanctified life, they tend to be limited in that they pertain to a relationship of repentance and faith toward God, something to which we return daily, and a relationship of love toward others, motivated by the love of Christ for us. Any experience, joy, or challenge outside of these two aspects of faith and love in the sanctified life tends to go unaddressed in preaching and if they are addressed they tend to be disconnected from the cross. What I find compelling about Spirit Christology is the way it allows the cross of Christ to function not only as the means of our salvation but also the pattern for our lives as Christians. The cross offers something singular and simple by which to unite justification and sanctification as well as something broad enough to account for a wide variety of experiences, joys, and challenges within the sanctified life.

So, while the cross of Christ is the means by which God has saved the world, and that cross of Christ is received by the Christian as a gift through the various forms of God's Word, particularly through Baptism where we are joined to the cross of Christ (Rom. 6:3–11; Col. 3:1–4), the cross is also the pattern of life to which the Spirit conforms the church and draws it into participation with Christ as it awaits the Last Day. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9.23). Likewise, Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). In fact, Paul addressed the church as his "little children" and told them that he was enduring "the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" (Gal. 4:19).

By the presence and activity of the Spirit of Jesus, the church receives the cross as a gift for salvation and as a pattern for life in this world lived out in faith toward God, love toward one another, and hope in the final resurrection on the Last Day. This chapter will explore the ways preaching Christ and him crucified, grounded in Spirit Christology, might both describe that shape and shape that life in the hearers of God's Word.

There are three sections in this final chapter in which I will address preaching sanctification from the ground of Spirit Christology. The first of these engages Regin Prenter who relates Luther's Christological Pneumatology and a theology of the Word. Prenter does not, however, move toward a Pneumatological or Spirit Christology. So, in the second section of this chapter, I will work to ground the Christological Pneumatology of Prenter in the Spirit Christology presented by Sánchez. Sánchez provides a concrete description of the shape of life in the Spirit in the life of Jesus to complement Prenter's emphasis on the person and work of the Spirit through the Word, the shaping power, that together promote the task of preaching sanctification. In the end, I come to the conclusion that preaching sanctification from the ground of Spirit Christology can be described as preaching cruciform faith, hope, and love in Christ.

### **3.1. Pneumatological Christology and Christological Pneumatology**

In 1944, Danish theologian Regin Prenter (1907–1990) published *Spiritus Creator: Studier i Luthers Theologi*. In 1953, John Jenson's English translation of this work was published under the title *Spiritus Creator: Luther's Concept of the Holy Spirit*. I will review Prenter's analysis of Luther's theology for three reasons. First, Gerhard Forde grounds his concept of proclamation as the Word of the cross that kills and makes alive in Prenter's theology of the Word. What Forde implies Prenter makes explicit, namely, the presence and activity of the Spirit through the Word of God. His emphasis on the Spirit is the second reason to review Prenter. Prenter helps give a

trinitarian, theocentric, and cruciform account of the Word of God a Pneumatological trajectory, although that trajectory is limited. So, a third reason to review Prenter is to show that while he offers a Pneumatology strongly linked to Christ, a Christological Pneumatology, he does not follow this emphasis through to a Pneumatological Christology in which the life of the church in the Spirit is grounded in Christ's own life in the Spirit. So, in this section, I bring Prenter into conversation with Sánchez in order to ground Christological Pneumatology in Spirit Christology or Pneumatological Christology for the sake of describing the shape and shaping the sanctified life of the church in the Spirit through preaching.

Prenter's purpose is to summarize Luther's understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He begins by drawing a distinction between Augustine and Luther on what it means for the Spirit "to infuse into hearts the true love of God."<sup>182</sup> On the one hand, Augustine believed *caritas* to be a Spirit-given power by which man pursues *amor boni*, that is, the love of the good within himself, and the *appetites summi boni*, which is God himself, and moves progressively toward God within a process of justification (*Gerechtmachung*) in which he restlessly searches until his spirit finally finds rest in God.<sup>183</sup> On the other hand, Luther believed *caritas* to be the gift of the Spirit by which man hates himself (*odium sui*), not following Augustine in distinguishing between man's old and new spiritual nature in order to embrace some good in man and move toward God, but instead uniting the *whole* man under the work of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>182</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 3.

<sup>183</sup> "The basic supposition by which the whole scholastic synthesis of metaphysics and faith, idealism and Bible, stands or falls is that both God's Spirit and the spirit of man are spirit, that there in man's own spirit is an urge toward the spiritual, and that it is the task of grace to sublimate this urge and guide it to its high goal. Without the supposition that all of nature strives for and moves toward grace, the whole scholastic doctrine of grace collapses. It is its basic structure we find here, the relation between God and man understood with God as a fixed point and man eternally moving upward toward this point. This is expressed in the well-known words of Augustine in the introduction to his *Confessions* that the heart is restless until it finds rest in God." Ibid., 23.

to hate the self and instead love God.<sup>184</sup> Where Augustine emphasized *caritas* as the means by which man promotes his *spiritus* over against his *caro* for the sake of an anthropocentric movement from man to God, Luther emphasized the *totus homo*, uniting the *caro-spiritus* dualism under the work of the Holy Spirit who causes man to love God and to love self rightly, that is, *odium sui*, for the sake of a theocentric movement from God to man. For Luther, *infusio caritas* causes a person to see themselves “with the eyes of God.”<sup>185</sup> This distinction between Augustine and Luther regarding *caritas* and the work of the Holy Spirit is the distinction between an anthropocentric and theocentric movement of salvation. Prenter’s subsequent analysis of Luther’s concept of the person and work of the Holy Spirit unfolds from this simple yet critical starting point. The work of the Spirit is not to empower man to move toward God. The work of the Spirit is to establish “a direct presence of God, a sphere of life wherein the will of man can be and remain *odium sui*.”<sup>186</sup> This is as true in sanctification as it in justification.

Having established the work of the Spirit as theocentric rather than anthropocentric, Prenter goes on to describe the work of the Holy Spirit with the term *conformity*. He writes, “Therefore it is often possible to describe the content of this love as conformity to the will of God, which means that the will of man becomes one with the will of God, so that it wills, feels and acts as God wills, feels, and acts.”<sup>187</sup> Prenter further describes this conformity to the will of God as conformity to Christ, and particularly to his cross. While Prenter acknowledges discontinuity between the cross of Christ and the cross of the Christian, he emphasizes that the cross is also a

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<sup>184</sup> “No, this contrast is a theological one: *spiritus* is the whole of man, if it is dominated by the Spirit of God; and *caro* is the whole of man, if it lacks the Spirit of God. On this basis *odium sui* includes not only the “baser” part of man, but the *totus homo*, including his spiritual life to the extent that this is not directly one with the Spirit of God.” *Ibid.*, 5–6.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

point of continuity between the life of Christ and the life of the Christian.<sup>188</sup> So, the work of the Spirit is to conform believers to Christ with specific respect to his cross.<sup>189</sup>

Further drawing on Luther's *theologia crucis*, Prenter emphasizes inner conflict as the location of the Spirit's work. Inner conflict (*Anfechtung*) refers not to man-made or world-induced struggle, but to God's work upon man in which God appears to be an opponent who does not hear prayer and who forsakes his children. When the Spirit leads the Christian into inner conflict of that kind, the Spirit desires to drive the Christian to Christ who has himself been forsaken by God (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). This is the beginning of the work of God through which he seeks to conform a person to Christ and his cross.<sup>190</sup> Prenter concludes:

It is in the inner conflict and only there that the Spirit's work is understood. For Luther inner conflict is not a psychologically abnormal state, a disease of the mind which the pastor should try to remove if possible, but it is a means in the hand of God to reveal man's true state when he is away from God, man's state under the wrath of God.<sup>191</sup>

Luther regards conformity to Christ through inner conflict as the alien work of God that prepares a person for his proper work which still entails conformity to Christ.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> "In the lectures on the Psalms the Christocentric proof of the concept of conformity is emphasized very strongly, because Luther there carries through the exegetical principle that what the Psalms say about persecution, suffering and death must be interpreted "literally" about the cross of Christ and the humiliation, but "tropologically" about the cross of the believer and his humiliation in Christ." *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>189</sup> Conformity to the cross of Christ has a long history in mysticism. Prenter notes, however, that, for the mystics, conformity to the cross was a matter of *imitation*, that is, a work of man. For Luther however, conformity to the cross never ceases to be theocentric: "*conformitas Christi* is not the result of an *imitatio Christi*, but of an act of God in man through the Holy Spirit." *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>190</sup> "When God begins to do his will, he exposes everything in man, what he has of both inward and outward glory, makes him completely perplexed and leads him into the darkness of inner conflict, where it is impossible either to know or to love God. In this darkness he finally takes away from him even the word of comfort which in the time of inner conflict can assure him that God only for a season has forsaken him. . . . Thus it is to be made to conform to the will of God in the crucified Christ: thus it is to be under the *operatio* of God. This is a *theologia crucis* which also is a theology of inner conflict." *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>192</sup> "But through the cross of inner conflict God wants to teach us to hope only in his pure mercy. Like every other cross and all other work of wrath in the believer, the inner conflicts are God's *opus alienum*, which prepares the way for his *opus proprium*. He takes all peace away from the conscience in order to give it peace. This is the order of the salvation of God. He puts to death before He makes alive." *Ibid.*, 16.

What becomes clear through Prenter's summary of Luther's theology is the double meaning of his *theologia crucis*. On the one hand, this has to do with spiritual death and resurrection through inner conflict brought about by the Spirit of God. On the other hand, it has to do with hiddenness. Prenter writes:

When the work of God is the cross, pleasing God becomes the same as enduring the marvelous work of God in his saints. As the mystics put it faith, hope, and love to God mean walking into darkness, being driven and led by the Word of God, persistent suffering, a narrow and strait way, a steady and increasing impotence. But it is a way on which the sinner is gladly led, because it is God's way, which Christ has dedicated and hallowed by traveling it first himself. In the storm of inner conflict we must learn to know that God, who is our protector forsakes us, as our helper permits us to suffer, and as our Savior judges us.<sup>193</sup>

For Luther, it is precisely in moments of darkness and inner conflict that the Holy Spirit is at work conforming a person to Christ and forming the virtues of faith, hope and love in Christ.<sup>194</sup>

So, the work of the Holy Spirit as theocentric conformity to Christ is cruciform, both in its shape as a spiritual death and resurrection, and as a hidden reality.

From an emphasis on the cross, Prenter moves to an emphasis on Christ himself and the relationship between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. He states: "There is therefore an insoluble relationship between the real presence of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the crucified and risen Lord."<sup>195</sup> The relationship between Christ and the Spirit leads directly to the relationship between a believer and Christ. In this regard, we may say that the work of the Spirit is to draw a believer into cruciform conformity to Christ through

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> "To endure the work of God in us during the infernal darkness of inner conflict is humanly impossible. Time and again it is emphasized that it is impossible to stand in the darkness of inner conflict. God the Holy Spirit alone can help us by interceding for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. This word from Romans 8, about the work of the Holy Spirit as our comforter and intercessor, is in Luther inextricably united with the experience of the infernal darkness of inner conflict. In Luther's description of inner conflict, Romans 8:26 is the basic testimony about the work of the Holy Spirit as the source of the true love to God." Ibid., 16–17.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 28.

the presence of the crucified and risen Lord by means of the Word of God.<sup>196</sup> Prenter calls this relationship “faith.” Faith grasps God’s evaluation of man. Apart from Christ, that evaluation is the wrath of God in which God is our opponent. With Christ, there is grace:

Therefore he who is with Christ by faith possesses in him both grace, which is God’s merciful disposition toward us revealed in the self-sacrifice of Christ for us, and the gift. For the self-sacrifice of Christ means to us that war is declared against our whole old man and that faith stands beside Christ or rather: faith is in Christ and fights against our whole old man.<sup>197</sup>

In other words, the Spirit brings Christ to a person and a person to Christ and makes them one. The *totus homo* is either with Christ or without him; either under God’s grace or under God’s wrath. With Christ, grace, the favor of God in Christ, always remains outside of us (*extra nos*) and never our own, in the same way as the Spirit of God, while continually given to us and dwelling in us, always remains alien, and never proper to us.<sup>198</sup> So, the work of the Spirit is received by faith in Christ, the crucified and risen Lord.

For Prenter, Luther’s notion of Christ as a present person by the Spirit who is received by faith works against two false objectifications of Christ. First, Christ may be reduced to an idea to be understood. Second, Christ may be reduced to an ideal to be imitated. For Prenter, faith in Christ has to do with the experience of the person of Christ through the work of the Spirit. Without the Spirit, the message of Christ remains a message of Law.<sup>199</sup> Without the Spirit, Christ remains mere idea or mere ideal, both of which lead to death, rather than a person who is present

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<sup>196</sup> “That the Holy Spirit is doing his creative work by making us conform to Christ in his death and resurrection can signify only one thing: the Holy Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ such a present and redeeming reality to us that faith in Christ and conformity to Christ spring directly from this reality.” *Ibid.*, 52–53.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>198</sup> “A Christian should not call anything his own. It is not even permissible for a Christian to consider the spiritual virtues his own, making him worthy of being justified by God because of the; the Christian must always stand before God as the one who has nothing.” *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>199</sup> “The law can describe the ideal. But the ideal described remains a mere word so long as the Spirit is absent. Only where the Spirit is, do the words become alive, the symbol, the thing itself, and the law, the gospel.” *Ibid.*, 59.



as living Lord who leads through death to life.<sup>200</sup> With the Spirit, Christ is a living and present reality to whom believers are conformed by faith to his death and resurrection.

In light of Christ made present by the Spirit, Prenter provides an account of the problem articulated in the first chapter regarding the relationship between justification and sanctification:

In the orthodox conception the real presence of Christ and justification, which in Luther's thinking were a complete unity, became two opposing tendencies which became a problem to reconcile, that is, the religious interest of the doctrine of justification and the ethical interest of the doctrine of sanctification.<sup>201</sup>

Prenter concludes that, "The only way out of this very unfruitful question is found in the rediscovery of Luther's realistic understanding of the Spirit."<sup>202</sup> In other words, the work of the Spirit to make Christ present brings justification and sanctification together. So, while Prenter has emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to Christian faith and justification up until this point, he turns now to discuss the topic of sanctification through the same lens.

In order to engage the topic of sanctification and the sanctified life, Prenter gets to the heart of the Lutheran sanctification debate by seeking a definition of the phrase "empirical piety." When Prenter uses "empirical" he is referring to that righteousness that is actually calculable in the life of believers but is nonetheless covered by the alien righteousness of Christ and when he uses "piety" he refers to the unity of faith and love, the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, Prenter writes, "empirical piety is not in itself the new man (as

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<sup>200</sup> "Without the work of the Spirit, Christ is not a redeeming reality. Without the work of the Spirit, Christ remains an example and faith a historical faith. Without the work of the Spirit with our faith, with our Christ, and with our new life, we remain under law, which ultimately means under the wrath of God. And there all our faith and all our Christian piety, our whole new life, no matter how beautiful it may look, are nothing else than a desperate bondage under the law and the wrath of God." Ibid., 54.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>203</sup> "When Luther nevertheless is able to speak of an empirical righteousness as distinguished from the righteousness reckoned to us from Christ, he does not thereby mean a righteousness which in itself possesses the God-pleasing quality, but an empirical piety, which by being covered with the alien righteousness of Christ shall be able to stand before God. Furthermore, the word 'piety' is supposed to express man's relation to God (the religious,

pietism holds) nor is it our righteousness before God; it is only a fruit of the Spirit, an expression of the new man.”<sup>204</sup> Here, Prenter returns to the discussion of the old man and new man and emphasizes the difference between treating them as two parts of man rather than as two descriptions of the *whole* man.<sup>205</sup> He then addresses empirical piety in the following terms:

In Luther empirical piety is always ambiguous. It may in every moment be either an expression of the Spirit or of the flesh, according to whether the man in that particular moment is either Spirit or flesh. Therefore, it is impossible to speak of an unambiguous growth in the plan of real justification. When Luther speaks about the progress of sanctification, he thinks of something entirely different. He thinks of the fact that man on the way between baptism and resurrection constantly and anew takes leave of himself to take refuge in Christ’s alien righteousness. In this refuge of faith in Christ, man is Spirit, new man, and all his past life up to this moment is at once considered as flesh, as old man. In this manner the Spirit, who knows only Christ’s alien righteousness, is constantly struggling against the flesh, which wants to hold on to its own past life as an appropriation, its own righteousness. In the resurrection man shall be completely Spirit. Then the Spirit shall no longer struggle against the flesh.<sup>206</sup>

Prenter here expands and clarifies Forde’s statement that sanctification is simply “a matter of getting used to justification.”<sup>207</sup> Sanctification as the work of the Spirit is nothing more than him continually bringing a person back to justification, to Christ. Empirical piety in sanctification is therefore hidden and it becomes “an object of faith and hope.”<sup>208</sup> This progress, as Prenter

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‘faith’) and also the definite relation to the neighbor which is brought about by the relation to God (the ethical, ‘love’). Our language does not have a word which directly expresses the unity of faith and love (religion and morals) which is fundamental for Luther. We have selected the word ‘piety’ to convey this meaning” Ibid., 64.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>205</sup> “In the pietistic preaching of conversion, the struggle between the old and the new man is a struggle between two different strata in man, the lower strata which comes from the life before conversion and the higher strata which comes by the life created by conversion. The struggle between the old and the new man is in Luther a struggle between Christ truly present in faith and our whole real self, including both the lower and the higher strata, both the converted and the unconverted parts of man.” Ibid., 67–68.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 69–70.

<sup>207</sup> Forde, *The Preached God*, 235.

<sup>208</sup> “The progress of sanctification is not, as is the increase of empirical piety, an object of psychological observation, but an object of faith and hope. It is not evident to oneself and others, but it is hid with Christ in God.” Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 70.

considers it, remains theocentric, that is, it remains a matter of alien righteousness and the work of God through Christ in the Spirit.<sup>209</sup>

To further define sanctification and its progress, Prenter draws on three illustrations used by Luther: an ever-new beginning, convalescence, and struggle. First, as an ever-new beginning, *semper a novo incipere*, sanctification is a constant return to Christ and His righteousness. For Prenter, this constant new beginning in Christ is the progress of sanctification.<sup>210</sup> Second is an image of sanctification as convalescence:

In the next place Luther's view of the growth of sanctification is seen in his frequently used illustration of the convalescent man who is both sick and well at the same time. Where this illustration is most clearly presented the emphasis is not on the progressive process of recovery, but on the physician's promise of complete recovery, and on the faith of the patient in this promise and his consequent obedience to the rules of the physician. The emphasis is on the certainty of the promise, which in Christ corresponds to promise of eternal life.<sup>211</sup>

For Luther, progress in sanctification does not depend upon the sinner's own righteousness, but upon the promise of righteousness in Christ. When it comes to a Christian's consideration of themselves, they are always aware of their sickness or unrighteousness (*semper iniustum se scire*), but they look to the alien righteousness of Christ, his promise of righteousness, and his promise of return and resurrection.<sup>212</sup> This image calls to mind Jesus' parable of the Good

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<sup>209</sup> "But how then shall 'growth' and 'progress' be understood? We must constantly maintain that righteousness which grows and struggles and thus overcome sin is a gift – faith in Christ – in other words, the alien righteousness on which faith in Christ lays hold. It is this which grows and overcomes as it struggles, not a supposedly empirical piety. This alien righteousness on which faith in Christ lays hold is the living Christ himself. He it is who in a living and struggling presence overcomes sin. It is not something that his presence has made to grow in us." *Ibid.*, 73–74.

<sup>210</sup> "Since we are always sinners in ourselves and always have our only hope in an alien righteousness, the progress in our Christian life is a constant beginning anew, *semper a novo incipere*." *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> "The emphasis is on the fact that a sick man must recognize his illness (*semper iniustum se scire*) and trust in the promise of the physician. The healing is therefore not described as something belonging to this life but to the resurrection." *Ibid.*, 75–76.

Samaritan whose promise of return is the only thing he gives to the sick and dying man.<sup>213</sup> Third,

Prenter uses struggle to illustrate Luther's understanding of the progress of sanctification:

Sanctification consists in this that the Spirit overpowers the flesh. Flesh is the whole of man when his conscience is under dominion of the law, by which it is forced to seek its own righteousness. This is the situation we know from its culmination in inner conflict, by which man is driven to wish that God did not exist. Spirit is the whole of man, when he is driven by the Spirit of God, so that he does not seek his own, but lives by the mercy of God and thereby is in conformity to his will.<sup>214</sup>

Therefore, Prenter clarifies Luther's understanding of the struggle between flesh and Spirit; not as the struggle between man's flesh and man's spirit, but the struggle between man's flesh and the Spirit of God, the struggle in man between man and God. In terms of the progress of sanctification, then, man's spirit, his spirituality, we might say, his empirical piety, is not at war against man's flesh but is actually in league with it. It is the Spirit of God who is at war with man. In other words, the Christian does not sanctify himself. Only Christ in man by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctifies.<sup>215</sup> Prenter writes, "Our progress consists in this, that we in baptism are becoming a part of God's progress toward his own goal."<sup>216</sup> Therefore, progress in sanctification is constantly returning to Christ.

After establishing human passivity in sanctification, Prenter goes on to speak about human activity in sanctification in terms of "faith active in love."<sup>217</sup> For Luther, faith toward God and love for the neighbor are an inseparable unity. The unity, however, is not in man but in Christ

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<sup>213</sup> "Luther has in mind, not a modern physician who with well-balanced technical knowledge gradually brings the ill man forward toward the cure, but the good Samaritan who in a wonderful way found the dying man and saved him from death after which he left him with the innkeeper with the promise that he would soon be back again." Ibid., 77.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>215</sup> "It is the risen and living Christ himself who vicariously lives that life which alone deserved to be considered as our spiritual life." Ibid., 79.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> "The scholastic development of the Augustinian idea of love also recognized such a unity of faith and love, *fides caritate formata*, but in that unity it is love that gives substance to faith. In the Lutheran idea of unity – faith active in love – it is faith which carries and nourishes love which without faith is dead and saturated with selfishness." Ibid., 83.

who is made present by the Spirit.<sup>218</sup> In speaking of the presence of Christ and the unity of faith and love, Prenter introduces a complementary term for the work of the Spirit. Before, when speaking of faith, Prenter described the Spirit's work as *conformity* to Christ. Here, speaking of love, Prenter describes the Spirit's work as bringing the Christian into *participation* with Christ:

This "realistic" concept of faith and love based on the idea of Christ's real presence mediated by the Spirit is also corroborated by the way Luther speaks about the new life as a real participation in Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>219</sup>

Thus, Prenter summarizes the work of the Holy Spirit (sanctification) as passive *conformity* to Christ (faith) and active *participation* with Christ (love), both of which are *cruciform* in that they are brought about when the Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ a present reality in the believer by means of the Word of God.<sup>220</sup> From this, Prenter offers a definition of sanctification:

Sanctification for Luther does not mean that man by the aid of God becomes better and better, stronger and stronger, and more pious and more pious, until he of goodness, strength, and piety gets into heaven. But Luther holds that man in his totality comes into the sphere of the Spirit of God and therefore, in a certain sense, day by day becomes more weak, more sinful, and more helpless, so that he more and more comes to rely on Christ alone as his only righteousness and as the one who takes him and uses him as his instrument in his work for our neighbor.<sup>221</sup>

All of this comes about as a result of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit who draws believers into conformity to him in his death and resurrection as well as participation with him in his love for the world.

It is through the Word of God and specifically through the Gospel that the Holy Spirit works to bring people to Christ and Christ to people. Prenter echoes Luther's emphasis on the

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<sup>218</sup> "The two aspects of the Spirit's work cannot be separated at all. But both of the two aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit are concerned with the mediation of Christ's real presence." *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>220</sup> "By this everything is actually said. For this presence calls forth an incessant double movement of faith, the constant prayer to Christ and the constant work of love for the neighbor. This double movement includes all empirical piety. But the Holy Spirit does not directly produce this piety by some mystical causality. He produces it by making the crucified and risen Christ a present reality in the believer." *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

spoken Word as the instrument of the Holy Spirit.<sup>222</sup> The spoken Word not only refers to preaching but also to the sacraments which both bring about death and resurrection. For example, the Lord's Supper points back to Christ's death and resurrection and forward to the promise that Christ leads through death into life eternal.<sup>223</sup> At the foundation of Prenter's understanding of the means of the Spirit is the observation that "the basic sacrament is Christ himself."<sup>224</sup>

Preaching Christ and him crucified is certainly a means of the Spirit to bring Christ to people and people to Christ, but that reality is not something to be explained but rather proclaimed and promised.<sup>225</sup> In addition, the Word and Sacraments are means and it is the Spirit who carries these things, not the other way around. Thus, while Pneumatology accounts for the means of the Spirit, its emphasis is on the person and work of the Spirit which highlights the presence of God and his "all-embracing, eschatological, saving act."<sup>226</sup>

Prenter's claims that, "Luther's total understanding of Christianity is found in his thought about the Spirit, who makes Christ the all-decisive factor in our life."<sup>227</sup> Thus, "the Spirit is *spiritus creator* who creates life out of the dead."<sup>228</sup> When the gospel is not preached from this Pneumatological ground, the Spirit becomes an anthropocentric power and Christ is reduced to

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<sup>222</sup> "Therefore Luther says that the gospel is really not a written Word but an oral Word. But this living Word, which is the instrument of the Spirit in his work of reconciling Christ, is in its content identical with the written Word. For the risen Christ is himself identical with the historic Jesus. Therefore it may be said that the Spirit is hidden in the letter and that the oral sermon draws the gospel out of the Scriptures." *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>223</sup> "The Lord's Supper is a bridge, a door, a ship, which leads from this life over to the life to come. Baptism and the Lord's Supper thus belong closely together. Baptism leads us into a new life here in the world while the Lord's Supper leads us through death to life eternal." *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>225</sup> "We cannot speak rationally about the connection between the sphere of the Spirit and that which is found within his limits (the living Christ, the gospel, the sacrament, faith and love). It can only be proclaimed. It is not possible to describe the Spirit's connection with his means, it is only possible through preaching to promise it." *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

either an idea or an ideal. When the gospel is preached from this Pneumatological ground, we begin to approach all that the gospel gives and means both for both faith and life.<sup>229</sup>

Perhaps, for us, the most important contribution of Prenter's summary of Luther's Pneumatology is its ability to retain the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification: "Luther views justification and sanctification as one inseparable act of God; namely the work of the Spirit, which tears the man out of the kingdom of the devil and leads him into Christ's kingdom and preserves him there."<sup>230</sup> Prenter goes on to describe this unity in terms of faith, hope, and love: "Both the younger and the older Luther summarize the content of the Christian life in the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love as the new life wrought by the Spirit."<sup>231</sup> Finally, Prenter points to preaching as the location of this unity in the work of the Spirit:

As the preaching church, the church is inextricably attached to the Spirit. Where the Spirit is there is also the church. For the church is nothing else than the place where the Spirit through preaching makes the redemptive work of Christ into a present reality.<sup>232</sup>

In summary, Prenter's work, drawn from Luther's lectures on the Psalms and Romans, offers at least three important contributions. First, Prenter locates the work of the Spirit in the Word of God, in all its forms and functions, as the means by which the Spirit makes Christ a living reality in the present. More specifically, Prenter addresses the work of the Spirit sacramentally, with Christ himself as the principle Sacrament. Thus, Prenter's Pneumatology

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<sup>229</sup> "The connection between a trinitarian faith in God and *theologia crucis* is seen here. If the divinity of the Son and the Spirit is not preached without limitation, the *humilitas* theology becomes imitation-piety and the most refined form of self-righteousness. Imitation-piety really contains an attack on the doctrine of the Trinity inasmuch as it limits the domain of the divine work of the Son and the Spirit and thereby also robs them of their divine honor. All piety which is not *theologia crucis* is an attack on the trinitarian faith in God." Ibid., 179.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 226. Just before this claim Prenter writes: "Justification and sanctification, forgiveness of sin and expulsion of sin are an insoluble unity in the Spirit. They cannot be separated, because there is only one Spirit. They can no more be separated than the law and the gospel, or the *opus alienum* and the *opus proprium*, or the death of Christ and his resurrection. Justification and sanctification are not seen as two different processes for which it is necessary to find some rational and easily understood connection. This is a problem of a later Lutheranism."

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 242.

gives preaching foundation and direction as one way in which the Spirit brings Christ to people and people to Christ for the sake of conformity to him and participation with him in his life in the Spirit. Second, the language of conformity and participation with Christ as the work of the Spirit in shaping the sanctified life provides an important connection to Spirit Christology from the previous chapter. Finally, Prenter accomplishes the task of maintaining the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification by grounding both in the presence of Christ through the Spirit by means of God's Word. In addition, he employs the language of faith, hope, and love as descriptors of the sanctified life in order to join justification and sanctification together in an inseparable unity in Christ through the presence and activity of the Spirit.

While Prenter does offer a broad description of the Christian life, his Pneumatology emphasizes the shaping power of the Spirit to the exclusion of a thorough description. So, while Prenter does describe sanctification in terms of conformity to Christ and his cross and participation with Christ in his cross, even going so far as to offer faith, hope, and love as virtues within that sanctified life, his description remains ironically nebulous and existentialistic; it is ironic because it leaves room for the very anthropocentrism he tries so very hard to exclude. Since a Pneumatological Christology, the kind presented by Sánchez in the previous chapter, offers just such a concrete description of the sanctified life in the Spirit in Jesus, it provides a fitting complement to Prenter's Christological Pneumatology. I will make that connection now.

### **3.2. Spirit Christology as a Framework for Preaching Sanctification**

Preaching sanctification is preaching Christ crucified. It is not a movement past who Christ is, what he has, and what he does, but an invitation into deeper experience of him as crucified and risen Lord. The issue, however, as presented in the first chapter, is not *that* Christ is preached but the *way* Christ is preached. Preaching Christ might justify sinners and give peace to



troubled consciences, but preaching Christ ought to also energize and enliven peaceful consciences. Preaching Christ might absolve and forgive and justify, but preaching Christ also ought to form and shape and sanctify. If the goal of preaching justification is to bring peace to the agitated conscience and the goal of preaching sanctification is to energize the peaceful conscience, I believe Spirit Christology promotes proclamation that does both.

Spirit Christology is a beneficial framework for preaching sanctification for at least two reasons. First, it emphasizes Jesus as the definitive, historical instantiation of life in the Spirit of God. Second, it emphasizes the work of the Spirit, given by Jesus to the church, to conform the church to Christ and draw it into participation with him in his cross and resurrection, emphasizing the continuity between the life of Jesus and the life of the church in the Spirit. In other words, Spirit Christology accounts for both a description of the sanctified life as well as the power that shapes it. Thus, one of the most important implications of Spirit Christology as a ground for preaching is its ability to retain the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification in preaching the gospel. On the one hand, Christ is the unique receiver and bearer of the Spirit as the obedient Son of the Father, the suffering servant of humanity, and the risen Lord of all. In Christ's discontinuity with the world, the world has justification in Christ. On the other hand, Christ is the giver of the Spirit and describes Christians as fellow receivers and bearers of the Spirit with Christ who by that same Spirit are continually conformed to Christ and brought into participation with him in his life. In Christ's continuity with the church, the church is sanctified.

More specifically, sanctification preaching grounded in Spirit Christology can emphasize the continuity between Christ and the church in the Spirit. This continuity flows directly from the biblical narrative and moves toward all that has been said regarding the person of the Spirit at work to conform the church to Christ and draw it into participation with him in his cross and

resurrection. So, Spirit Christology gives the church a concrete pattern. Christ stands in relation to his Father as the obedient Son. Jesus gives the Spirit to the church in order that it might also be obedient to the Father in worship and prayer as well as in all other aspects of life. In addition, Christ stands in relation to the world as a suffering Servant. Jesus gives the Spirit to the church in order that it might also suffer for the sake of the world in service. Finally, Christ stands over against his enemies as victorious and risen Lord. Jesus gives his Spirit to the church in order that it might also be victorious against all the enemies of God, particularly sin, death, and the devil, both in this life and in the life to come. But what would preaching framed in this way sound like?

Toward the end of his dissertation on Spirit Christology, Sánchez notes that he has yet to explore the “ethical aspects of what it means for the church to live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ today.”<sup>233</sup> In some of his most recent work, however, Sánchez has explored these “ethical aspects” by offering three models of sanctification grounded in Spirit Christology.<sup>234</sup> Sánchez relates these three models to the sacraments and their daily use in the lives of Christians. Because the Spirit works sacramentally in salvation history, particularly in the person of Jesus, the Spirit works sacramentally in the lives of believers today. Sánchez calls this “an incarnational and sacramental pneumatology.”<sup>235</sup> Each model, therefore is “inextricably linked to some

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<sup>233</sup> “Ever since Pentecost, each time we are convicted of and liberated from our sins against God’s anointed Son and Servant through word and sacraments, we undergo a Spirit-led reenactment or actualization of Jesus’ baptism, death, and resurrection in our lives. We are read or spoken to by the living word of God that points to Jesus and in turn are shaped into theologians of the cross who are crucified and raised with him each day until our resurrection from the dead unto everlasting life. The church’s participation in Jesus’ mysteries also involves her sharing in his mission of obedience to God and service to the neighbor who is Christ in her midst. I have yet to explore the missiological and ethical aspects of what it means for the church to live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ today. For now, I shall be content if my proposal for reading the Christ-event from a pneumatic angle paves the way for theologian-preachers to make the transition from their reflections on Jesus’ story to its proclamation as a death-and-life event for others.” Sánchez, “Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit,” 230.

<sup>234</sup> Sánchez, “Life in the Spirit of Christ,” 7–14.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

appropriation or use of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper for daily life."<sup>236</sup> The

first model proposed by Sánchez is the baptismal model. He describes it like this:

In the baptismal model, the Christian life is cyclical, a daily dying to sin in order to be raised to new life through the forgiveness of sins. Sanctification becomes a daily return to one's baptism to receive the blessings of justification promised therein. The model corresponds to the life of daily repentance, of contrition and faith, where the gospel alone provides the power and motivation to fight sin and do God's holy will in accordance with his word and for the neighbor's sake.<sup>237</sup>

In terms of Spirit Christology, this model corresponds to Jesus who bears the Spirit as the faithful and obedient Son of God. The second model is the dramatic model, which corresponds to Jesus' as victorious and risen Lord, but that status does not come before spiritual attack and suffering in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross. From these aspects of Jesus' own life in the Spirit, Sánchez describes the dramatic model of the Christian life this way:

In the dramatic model, the Christian life is seen as a battle between God and the devil, between the Holy Spirit and the whole person in opposition to God (flesh). Luther speaks of life in the Spirit as a cycle in which God forms his children through the attacks of the devil (*tentatio*, *Anfechtung*), leading them to put their lives in God's hands through prayer (*oratio*) and find strength in his word (*meditatio*) in the midst of the attacks. We have another cyclical view of life in the Spirit of Christ, in which the Holy Spirit drives Christians into the desert, the place where the evil spirit attacks (*tentatio*), but also – like the garden, or the mountain and the temple, for that matter – the place of prayer (*oratio*) and the word (*meditatio*) where one receives the strength to stand firm.<sup>238</sup>

Sánchez proposes a final model he calls the Eucharistic model, corresponding to Jesus as the suffering Servant on behalf of the world. Sánchez describes the Eucharistic model like this:

The eucharistic model of sanctification focuses on faith and its fruits, including the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit in accordance with the fruit of the Spirit, the works of missions/evangelization and mercy/justice in the world, and everything that concerns our vocations in this life. Because the eucharistic model assumes the Christian's personal dying to self and being raised to new life (baptismal model), and his dealing with the devil's personal attacks in his life (dramatic model), it will tend

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 13.

to focus on the outward, centrifugal, social, or neighbor-oriented dimensions of the sanctified life.<sup>239</sup>

While Sánchez helpfully expands upon the “ethical aspects” of Spirit Christology, or the life of the church in the Spirit, relating them directly to the daily use of the sacraments, he does not explicitly relate these models to the preaching task. With Sánchez’ description of sanctification and his understanding of preaching in terms of an incarnational and sacramental Pneumatology, I will now proceed to explore the ways preaching functions to form the sanctified life in the hearers of God’s Word.

### **3.3. Shaped by the Spirit: Faith, Hope, and Love**

In reflecting on the question of how to preach Christ crucified for the sake of both justification and sanctification and relating this question to Spirit Christology and the description it offers of the sanctified life, I have continually returned to the language of faith, hope, and love. As I will demonstrate in this final section, faith, hope, and love not only summarize the description of the sanctified life grounded in Spirit Christology and account for the shaping power of this life, but these virtues also give the preacher goals for preaching. So, since the Spirit forms and shapes the sanctified life through the Word, the preacher might have as his aim not only proclamation and description, but the formation of faith, hope, and love in Christ.

Faith, hope, and love have long been used as descriptors of the Christian life. In addition to Paul’s famous use of these terms in 1 Corinthians 13:13, “So now faith, hope, and love abide,” he also calls upon them in other places, such as at the opening of his Letter to the Colossians:

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 14.

heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

In 1 Thessalonians Paul uses them again in his opening greeting:

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition, the Formula of Concord states:

After a person has been justified by faith, there then exists a true, living “faith working through love” (Gal. 5[:6]). That means that good works always follow justifying faith and are certainly found with it, when it is a true and living faith. For faith is never alone but is always accompanied by love and hope.<sup>240</sup>

Finally, as has been demonstrated, Regin Prenter employs these virtues when he writes, “Both the younger and the older Luther summarize the content of the Christian life in the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love as the new life wrought by the Spirit.”<sup>241</sup> While preaching can be regarded as that which strengthens faith toward God and love toward the neighbor with the assumption that all else pertaining to sanctification simply follows automatically, the language of faith, hope, and love, broadens the goal of preaching sanctification from “faith active in love” to “faith active in love and lived in hope.” My goal is to argue that sanctification preaching grounded in Spirit Christology best shows the way the Spirit shapes the church according to faith, hope, and love in Christ to the glory the Father.

Faith, hope, and love are dynamic, relational, and cruciform aspects of the sanctified life. They are dynamic in that they depend upon the ongoing presence and activity of the Holy Spirit who connects baptized believers to Christ by means of his Word. They are relational in that they pertain to the three relational aspects of the presence and activity of the Spirit. First, faith has to

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<sup>240</sup> FC III, BC 496.11.

<sup>241</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 233.

do with our relationship toward God as his children, which corresponds to Jesus' own relationship in the Spirit to the Father as the obedient Son. Second, love has to do with our relationships toward others in the world and corresponds to Jesus' own relationship in the Spirit with the world as the suffering Servant. Finally, hope has to do with the way the church militant relates to the church triumphant and the future of all creation (Rom. 8:18–30), but also to all the enemies of God, namely, sin, death, and the devil. Life in the Spirit of hope corresponds to Jesus as the risen and victorious Lord of all. In addition, these three virtues correspond remarkably well to the three models of sanctification proposed by Sánchez: faith corresponds to his baptismal model, hope corresponds to his dramatic model, and love corresponds to his eucharistic model. Faith, hope, and love are also cruciform in that they are hidden in the here and now and take the shape of the cross. I will now demonstrate the way these virtues of faith, hope, and love grounded in Spirit Christology might promote preaching sanctification.

Before examining each virtue more deeply, I will offer two general observations. First, I want to emphasize that faith, hope, and love pertain to aspects of time within the divine economy. When Paul speaks about these virtues famously in 1 Corinthians 13, he indicates that while these three abide right now, love abides forever. Expanding Paul's statement, we may say that faith pertains to the past, hope points to the future, and love pervades the present. When Christ returns, we will neither look back nor forward, but simply live in the eternal present and presence of God and his people in love.

Second, I believe that while preaching Christ crucified for the sake of faith toward God and love toward others may well describe the relationship between justification and sanctification, preaching Christ crucified for the sake of hope accounts for and addresses many aspects of the sanctified life that go unaccounted for and unaddressed under the categories of faith and love or

“faith active in love.” Under the virtue of hope, I find theological space to account for a wide range of experiences, joy, and challenges in the Christian life and a place from which to address them. For example, as the Christian struggles with temptation to sin, hope of what he or she is promised to be in the Resurrection and the eschatological restoration of all creation gives reason to continue struggling with sin in the present, reason to “walk worthy of the call” (Eph 4:1, 5:3–21; Col. 1:9–14; 1 Thess. 2:11–12). As the Christian suffers on account of Christ’s name, he or she is conformed to the cross in the present with the hope of Resurrection and glory (1 Peter 1:3–9). This is included in the conformity to Christ and participation with Christ not only in his cross now but also in his resurrection when he comes again. Hope gives the sanctified life direction and purpose. Perhaps this is why Francis Pieper definitively states, “In short, it is the blessed hope of heaven which shapes a Christian’s life on earth into the right form.”<sup>242</sup> I believe that a recovery of this eschatological goal in preaching will energize preaching Christ crucified for the sake of sanctification in a world where the Christian struggles with sin even as he runs the race to the goal of life with Christ in the new creation. With those general observations, let us take a closer look at each of these virtues for preaching, for describing and shaping life in the Spirit.

Preaching Christ crucified for the sake of faith has to do with both justification and sanctification. It has to do with Forde’s notion of proclamation, namely, that the Word of God kills and makes alive, that it does the cross its hearers. Cruciform faith, therefore, is a result of repentance. It justifies sinful people before God the Father. In terms of Spirit Christology, preaching Christ crucified for the sake of faith highlights Christ’s life in the Spirit as the obedient Son of God who lives, dies, and is raised in our place and for our salvation so that we might become obedient sons of God by grace. The faith that justifies cannot be separated from the life in the Spirit that follows, from sanctification. Faith brings us into a relationship with the Father

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<sup>242</sup> CD III, 85.

of Jesus as obedient children who have been called to hear his Word, worship him, pray to him, and obey his commandments. So, while justifying faith is oriented toward the past, it is lived out in relationship to the Father in the present. Perhaps the most important feature of Spirit-given faith in Christ is that it drives the Christian to a continual return to Christ. Here Prenter and Forde's understanding of sanctification fits well. Sanctification is a matter of getting used to justification by continually returning to the Father through his Son in whom we have access to a gracious God. If the living Christ, once crucified but now alive and reigning as Lord, is received by faith, the Lord who justifies us will also certainly sanctify us by his Spirit who in turn shapes us to be obedient and faithful sons or children of God.

Preaching Christ crucified for the sake of love also has to do with both justification and sanctification. God is love and out of love he sent his Son to live, die, and rise for the salvation of the world. In terms of Spirit Christology, this sacrificial love is a gift to us from the suffering Servant who bore the Spirit all the way to the cross for our salvation. Now, this Spirit who anointed Christ to be a sacrifice dwells within the baptized children of God and patterns or shapes their life as they relate with those in the church and out in the world. Love is primarily oriented toward the present. If the living Christ, once crucified but now alive and reigning as Lord, is received as a present reality, his love, received by faith, will be active in the lives of believers by the work of the Spirit. This Spirit-formed love is cruciform in that it requires one to die to self in order to live for another in the present moment. This cannot be separated from faith, however, and this seems to be the typical Lutheran problem. Forde addresses this very well in his little book on justification where he mentions that sanctification, understood as the activity of doing good works, comes to be regarded as a secondary movement separate from justification.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 9, 38, 46.



Yet, the unifying factor, here, is that both flow from an encounter with the living Lord by the activity of the Spirit through Word and Sacraments in the present tense. Faith and love in Christ by the Spirit cannot be separated from one another.

Finally, preaching Christ crucified for the sake of hope has to do with both justification and sanctification. In terms of justification, Jesus is the risen Lord who has conquered all enemies, even death, and promises resurrection from the dead and eternal life to those who believe in him and call upon his name. In Christ, we have the victory in the midst of the battle because he stood firm against Satan in the desert and defeated him on the cross for us. In terms of sanctification, Jesus is the future for believers who are by the presence and activity of the Spirit being conformed to him. That conformity is hidden now under the cross. There is a constant battle in anticipation of the last battle and indeed, the final victory, between the flesh of man and the Spirit of God. That battle is taken up and fought by Christ, won by Christ, and those who are in Christ have already obtained the victory. However, the battle with sin, death, and Satan continues in the lives and experiences of baptized Christians. This is where much of sanctification takes place and why hope is a helpful category for preaching sanctification. Preaching Christ crucified for the sake of hope draws the hearers of God's Word into the cosmic battle against sin, death, and the devil where Christ crucified is both gift and pattern. In addition, hope is cruciform in that it requires a person not only to begin this new life by looking away from the self toward God, but to continue doing so in everything. Hope pertains to waiting, suffering, depending, striving, learning, growing, and all those things that might be classified as "on the way" or "in process." This results from an encounter with Christ because Christ reveals that the church is, in so many ways, not yet what he has promised it to be. It is not yet fully a new creation in every respect, though pertaining to faith and a relationship with God the Father that new creation is a present

and concrete reality because of the Word. Living the Christian life continues to be cruciform, even as its beginning is cruciform, in that the Christian must continue to battle the flesh and all other enemies, waiting in the hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come (Rom. 8:8-11; 13; 15:1-7, 13; 16:20).

Preaching faith, hope, and love are inextricably connected to preaching Christ crucified. Faith, hope, and love as aspects of the shape of the Christian life in the Spirit of Jesus, the cruciform life, ought to have their grounding in the work of the Spirit, and that work is grounded in the life of Christ himself. Christ displays faithfulness in his relationship to the Father, his obedience to his Word and to his mission, most especially in his death on the cross. He displays hope, perhaps, in that he faces his entire ministry and especially his death with the hope of resurrection and the final fulfillment of his work in the Final Resurrection. He displays love in that his death on the cross is his service to the world as the Servant of the Lord. So, faith, hope, and love as virtues of the life in the Spirit are cruciform in character because they are hidden under the sign of the cross in the present until Christ returns at the Resurrection. They are cruciform in shape because they involve death and resurrection within the various relational dimensions of the sanctified life: toward God, toward others, and toward the flesh, the world, and Satan. In the end, the shape of the sanctified life here and now is the cross.

Gerhard Forde contributed to the recovery of death and resurrection language for the proclamation of the Word of God that kills and makes alive.<sup>244</sup> It is my goal to extend this death and resurrection language for the promotion of preaching that not only proclaims the gospel, and not only describes the sanctified life in dynamic, relational, and cruciform terms, but also shapes hearers of God's Word and the message of Christ crucified into that sanctified life. The shaping of faith, hope, and love happens through the message of Jesus as the obedient Son, the suffering

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<sup>244</sup> Forde, *Justification by Faith*.

Servant, and the risen Lord. The Spirit, at work through the Word, conforms Christians to Christ in his cross with faith, hope, and love as the result. By the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, Christians participate in the life of Jesus. So, faith, hope, and love describe both our participation in Christ and the conformity to Christ brought about by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. In essence, I am proposing an expansion of Forde's notion of proclamation (present tense address of the promises of God), first in its notion of "the present," not only of promise, but of an encounter with the Lord Jesus, and secondly in its sense of the result of that present activity, not only faith (Law and Gospel that kills and makes alive, death and resurrection), but also hope and love. All are cruciform. All flow from the work of the Spirit whose presence and work is seen in the life of Christ. All flow from an encounter with the living Lord through his Word and by the work of that same Spirit which Christ received, bore, and gives to his church and to individual Christians, not as a one-time possession, but as a gift that is given anew through the Word, through the proclamation of him, the presentation of him as present Lord. Therefore, through the proclamation of the gospel, the Good News of the crucified and risen Jesus, the Spirit shapes the sanctified life as conformity to Christ and as participation in his life, not only providing a description of the destination or the picture of the goal, but also strengthening faith, hope, and love for the journey towards that goal.

In speaking about the way faith, hope, and love pertain to aspects of time within the divine economy, it is, in a sense, this aspect of time that gives rise to the distinction between justification and sanctification in the first place. It is, after all, only a present distinction. It did not exist in the past of Eden and it will not exist in the future at the Resurrection and the eschatological fulfillment of all things. But preaching bridges this gap between the "now" and the "not yet." Preaching holds the two aspects together in the presence of the crucified and living

Lord Jesus brought about by the presence and activity of his Spirit and by means of his Word in all its forms and functions. At the end of the day, this is the work of the Spirit; to bring about the realization of God's plan of salvation. He will restore a fallen creation. He will allow our eyes of faith to see promises fulfilled. He will allow our hope in the new heavens and new earth to be realized. He will surround us with everlasting love. Therefore, knowledge of the presence and activity of this Spirit in the here and now impacts all of faith and life.<sup>245</sup>

Finally, it cannot go without saying that sanctification preaching is inextricably connected to the sacraments. The Spirit works through the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as through the Word of Absolution, as through the spoken Word, to bring Christ to people and people to Christ, conforming them to him and drawing them into ever-deeper participation with him. Here the experience of the Christian has a concrete point of reference in the promises of God. Here the Christian is formed not only by hearing but by receiving the gifts of God through other senses, as well. Through the sacramental Word of God, the Spirit forms and shapes cruciform faith, hope, and love in hearers of God's Word. Therefore, sanctification preaching is sacramental preaching.

Baptism, therefore, is a point to which the believer returns again and again. It is a death and resurrection that happens once but continues to impact every moment of every day. Baptism is a ground for faith in that it declares the fact of the cross event in the life of the believer. There the believer is conformed to Christ and participates with him in his death and resurrection. Baptism is also an object of hope. While spiritual resurrection has already occurred, the Final

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<sup>245</sup> The future and the present come together: "In other words, God's reign is not something 'up there' or 'beyond' the material realm but rather 'out ahead' as the language of 'the last days' and 'the day of the Lord' in Scripture suggests. This means that life in the Spirit does not dwell in the old but rather thrusts the Christian into the hopeful new. But that is not all, because life in the Spirit also leads the Christian to live the 'already now' in light of the 'not yet,' to live in the present world in light of the coming kingdom, to live today as the new creation." Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "The Struggle to Express Our Hope," *Logia* 19, no. 1 (2010): 27.

Resurrection will come when Christ returns. In this way, Baptism points to the future and casts each day in that light. Finally, Baptism motivates us to love. Conformed to Christ in his death and resurrection, we are empowered to love others as he has loved us.

In addition, the Lord's Supper is an ongoing celebration of the Lord's death which points forward to the marriage feast to come. It strengthens faith by giving the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of full participation with Christ in His life. The Lord's Supper also strengthens hope by pointing forward to that day of Resurrection and celebration and empowers believers to journey in the present mindful of the future. Finally, the Lord's Supper motivates us to love others as Christ has loved us and given himself up for us.

Preaching is not so much an explanation of what we believe but proclamation, as Forde has argued, nor is it merely a description of how things are or how things ought to be. Rather, it is an encounter between the hearer and the person of Christ through the gospel (Ex. 3; Ac. 9; Rev.1). That encounter forms faith, assuming that this encounter includes inner conflict, Law and Gospel, repentance, death and resurrection, and all other aspects of our relationship to God. That encounter forms hope, pertaining to the way in which the Christian considers his enemies, himself, and his future within the created order that will be recreated. Finally, that encounter forms love, pertaining to the way in which the Christian considers his relationship with the world and other people, particularly other Christian people. In this way, Christ present by Spirit and Word accounts for and addresses all of Christian life past, future, and present. Because Christ is present by the Spirit through his Word, preaching forms hearers into the sanctified life by bringing hearers to faith, filling them with hope, and sending them in love.

## CONCLUSION

Christology, and particularly the narrative function of the cross, is the center of preaching. As Paul writes, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). Spirit Christology emphasizes Jesus as the receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit as the faithful Son, suffering Servant, and victorious Lord. In his unique reception and bearing of the Spirit, he saves the world. In giving the Spirit to the church, Christ establishes continuity between his life in the Spirit and the life of the church in the Spirit. That is to say, the life of Jesus in the Spirit is determinative for the life of the church in the Spirit. So, even as Jesus received and bore the Spirit in a dynamic and relational way, the church receives and bears the Spirit in a dynamic and relational way as sons or children of the Father, servants of the world, and those engaged in battle against all the enemies of God while confident of final victory in Christ.

Spirit Christology is a useful framework for preaching in that it provides a way to retain the *nexus indivulsus* of justification and sanctification in the cross of Christ. Spirit Christology not only promotes proclamation, but when it comes to preaching sanctification, Spirit Christology provides a way to describe the life of the church in the Spirit in terms of the relational aspects of Jesus’ own life in the Spirit as well as to account for the way that life is shaped by the power of the Spirit through the Word for the sake of the church’s conformity to and participation with Christ in his life, and specifically in his cross. So, as Luther says, the cross of Christ is not only a gift to the church, but a pattern for its life. When it comes to the preaching task, I submit that the virtues of faith, hope, and love, not only offer a way for the preacher to describe the Christian life, but also offer the preacher goals for preaching that might actually shape that Christian life.

I will now offer a few preliminary conclusions. First, Christian preachers would do well to preach on the Gospels. While Christ is certainly proclaimed on the basis of the Old Testament and the Epistles, the Gospels not only offer the narrative description of our salvation, our justification, but the narrative description and source of our sanctification, namely, the life of Jesus in the Spirit.

Second, Christian preachers would do well to preach the cross of Christ not only as a gift, but also as a pattern for the Christian life, as Luther suggests. Again, preaching the cross in this way not only delivers justification, and not only describes the sanctified life, but also draws the church into conformity to Christ and participation with him in his work in this world.

A third preliminary conclusion pertains to the Lutheran debate about preaching sanctification in relation to the distinction between Law and Gospel with particular attention to the third use of the Law, that is, the role of the Law as a guide in the life of the baptized Christian. While Spirit Christology does not work against the third use of the Law or its purpose to conform believers to the eternal and immutable will of God, it does reframe the Christian life in terms of the life of Jesus as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Holy Spirit and the life of the church and the individual Christian as the recipients and bearers of his Holy Spirit. This not only emphasizes the theocentric nature of sanctification against the potential anthropocentric tendency of the third use of the Law, it also gives the sanctified life an entirely different description and shape that is defined and determined by the cross and not strictly by commandments, and thus provides a way to account for and address aspects of the sanctified life that may be obscured by a strict third use construction. If Spirit Christology can account for the concerns of Anselm, Abelard, and Aúlen, it can also account for the different “ethical” concerns of salvation, specifically the two approaches that seem to be prevalent in American Lutheranism, at least their

instantiations in our Synod: the side that sees sanctification as a matter of a Christian's discipline and determination, albeit Spirit-led, to follow the immutable will of God (the third use of the Law) and the side that sees sanctification as a natural and assumed work of God that flows from and is motivated by the Gospel. One side tends to emphasize the shape of the sanctified life to the exclusion of the Spirit working through the Gospel to shape the sanctified life. The other side tends to emphasize the power of the Gospel and the Spirit to shape the sanctified life to the exclusion of a specific description of the shape of that life. Spirit Christology addresses both concerns, as well as many others, showing that it is a useful and beneficial biblical and theological framework for preaching Christ and him crucified.

Preaching Christ crucified for sanctification grounded in Spirit Christology assumes that the life of Jesus in the Spirit is determinative for the life of the church in the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit given by Christ to the church provides a point of continuity between Christ and the church. That continuity is ongoing and involves conformity to and participation with the cross of Christ in theocentric, relational, and dynamic ways. Those ways can be described as faith, hope, and love. Preaching sanctification would do well to be aimed at describing and forming such faith, hope, and love by the preaching of Jesus Christ crucified who received, bears, and gives the Spirit to his church so that the church might live in him both now and forever.



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