Stairway to Heaven: Jesus the Mediator

intro: The wisdom of God can be seen in so many ways. One of them, we are going to use extensively today: the cross. The scripture tells us that Jesus came to bring us to God and to heal the relationships between humans. The cross' shape reminds us of that vertical and horizontal work of Christ.

I. The Bridge Across the Gorge

A. Have you ever seen the Indiana Jones movies or old Tarzan movies where the hardy adventurers have to cross a terrible gorge, miles above a raging river and the only way across is a tiny swinging rope bridge.

B. Too many of us think of that kind of divide between God and man. We stress our sins and His holiness, His perfection and our deep flaws. And we are right to stress that. But that is not the end of the story.

C. Let's go to an old, old story. Jacob had left home. He had always been a rogue and a con man, but his mother's love had protected him. That protection was now gone and he was on the road to his uncle's house to see if he could live there. To speed him along the way was the knowledge that Esau was behind him and had promised to kill him.

1. Jacob goes to sleep (Genesis 28:10-16) and has a dream. He sees a large stairway that bridged earth and heaven. Angels were busy going back and forth on the stairway, making sure that the commands of God were carried out and that His promises were kept.

2. Flash forward to Jesus' conversation with a man named Nathaniel (John 1:51). Nathaniel says he believes in Jesus and Jesus tells him *"you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

3. Yes, there is a gap between rogues like Jacob – and us – and God, but Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. If you want to go to God, you have to go via Jesus.

D. to be of any use, a bridge across a chasm must be anchored on both sides. Christ has closed the gap between deity and humanity. He has crossed the chasm that separated man and God, the true Grand Canyon.

E. With one foot planted in eternity, he planted the other in time. He who was the eternal Son of God became the Son of Man. Across this bridge, the man Jesus Christ, we can come into the very presence of God, knowing that we are accepted because we have a mediator.

II. The Daysman Redeemer

A. I Tim. 2:5 – this word only appears one time in the Greek version of the OT. That is in Job, another interesting story. Job is suffering about every reversal and pain a human can experience and a group of men have arrived to help figure out why. Their theory is that Job must be a terrible sinner and that is why he is suffering.

1. Job calls out for a mediator, a daysman. He needed someone who would arbitrate between God and himself. He needed someone to put his hand on him and his other hand on God. (which makes the shape of a cross)
2. The daysman would interject himself upon request of one of the parties and try to make peace with the other party. He would place his hands on them and speak to them until they came to agreement.

B. Job was not looking for forgiveness of sins. Job was looking for someone who could argue his innocence before God. Here we see another illustration of what Jesus does for us. Because of his sacrifice, we are judged clean and whole by God. Jesus is able, then, to present us to God as innocent.

C. Job looks for a redeemer in 19:25-27. The redeemer did not always go for revenge. A redeemer's job was to buy back the inheritance, the reputation, of the relative. Job asked for the earth not to cover his blood, but let it cry out for a redeemer (the blood of Abel). Job asks for the

redeemer to speak “at the end”, a juridicial term meaning the last one to speak at a trial.

1. Eliphaz was convinced that there was no such redeemer. He thought that an angel might be found (one in a thousand) who could speak to a man, but the message would only be to tell him what he must do to be pleasing to God.
2. Jesus came to show us that Eliphaz was wrong. God Himself, through Jesus, will speak to us and for us.

D. That message comes again through the book of Hebrews.

1. 8:6 He is a mediator of a better covenant; one that includes us and which forever removes sins.
2. 9:15 He mediates the new covenant so that the called might receive the inheritance. Jesus pays the price so that our reputations can be saved, as well as our souls. Only the good lasts.
3. 12:24 the blood of Abel called out for justice. The blood of Job called out for reconciliation and understanding. Now the blood of Christ is there – and it gives justice, reconciliation and understanding. Jesus’ blood built a highway, a stairway.

when we engage in bringing people to God, or bringing people to people, we are doing His work. We are to be a people who are easy to be entreated, agreeable, loving each other uncritically. Remember the cross and let your behavior be shaped by it. Take up your cross and follow Him.