



keeping us safe at His side and so gently sustaining.

Have you not seen all you have needed has been met by His gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord who shall prosper our world and defend us.

Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend us.

[5:49] Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, who with His love will befriend us.

Praise to the Lord who when darkness and sin are abounding, who when the godless are rampant, all goodness confounding, breaks forth as light, scatters the terrors of night, saints with His mercy surrounding.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him.

All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him.

Let the Amen sound from His people again. Gladly we praise and adore Him.

[7:26] Having sung, let's now pray together. Lord our God, we bow before you in your greatness and ascribe to you all glory and grandeur and majesty and holiness and wisdom and power.

We come humbly acknowledging before you our sin, our lack of faith, our unbelief, our attempts to solve our problems in our own way and not yours.

We acknowledge the sin that dwells within us by which we still rebel and neglect and go wrong in our thoughts and words and deeds, right down to our inner motivations.

Hear our confession and grant us forgiveness and repentance through Jesus Christ. We thank you for your care of us each day.

We commit our lives to you afresh. Please take every part. Let there be no part of any of us that is unresponsive to your spirit and your ways.

[8:40] We pray for our world, that you will show mercy and bring many people to realise that you are the true and living God. May they turn to you.

But Lord, in the meanwhile, please, in your mercy, alleviate suffering. Have compassion on the work of your hands. Please send and equip your church to be the means of your salvation across the world.

We ask you to have mercy on our city of Brighton and Hove. Strengthen all your people. Strengthen and bless your gospel churches, large and small. In particular, we ask you to strengthen and bless our friends at Park Hill Evangelical Church, Ebenezer Reformed Baptist Church.

New Life Moolskin. The Grace Baptist Initiative and David's Skull. And our own request of you as a church, that you'll provide future leadership in our church.

We ask you to send labourers into the harvest. We pause as we pray to bring our own particular needs to you. Our heartaches.

[9:55] And burdens. And cares. And hopes. And longings. And fears.

And thanksgiving. Hear our prayers. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. I'm now going to read a psalm.

It's Psalm 22. Psalm 22. And while you find that in your Bible, I always encourage you to find that in your Bible, so that you can follow along. Psalm 22 is another unusual psalm.

It comes from King David. It's associated with him. And it describes an innocent sufferer. The sufferings of this person are very great and very graphically described.

This person is forsaken by God as he says, Why have you forsaken me? This person is mocked and rejected. Even his clothes are seized from him.

[11:03] And yet God lifts him out of this pit and rescues him. He is revived. And he's now able to tell this story.

The story of the name of his redeeming God. He's able to tell this story to his brothers. To the great congregation. To the great gathering. Now I should also say that Jesus himself, strikingly, identifies himself with this psalm.

His dying words, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Are taken from this psalm. So, as we read it, I think we'll all be struck by the way it seems to visualize Jesus in considerable detail.

And it does this many centuries before his birth. Many centuries before his death. And many centuries before his resurrection. So let me read Psalm 22.



Let God deliver him, they say, His God would save him, was his claim.

They only wait to see me die, they share my clothing in her game.

[18:30] My hands and feet they bind to wound, My bones they number at each breath, Until with burning thirst I taste the bitter agony of death.

My God I trust you, trust you still, Be near, be near, to hear my prayer.

I know that all who hope in you are safe in death from death's despair.

Then I and all who live for you this day until the end of days will tell of ever answered prayer and pray this world's most thankful praise.

Well, as I said at the beginning, the Bible passage we're looking at is in Hebrews, and Arsema has kindly recorded a reading of that chapter. So thank you, Arsema, reading Hebrews chapter 2, beginning at verse 1.

[20:19] Hebrews chapter 2, verses 1 to 18. We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.

It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified.

What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honour, and put everything under his feet.

[21:32] In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present, we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who is made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour, because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

But the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

He says, I will declare your name to my brothers. In the presence of the congregation, I will sing your praises.

And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Here am I, and the children God has given me.

[22:45] Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity, so that by his death, he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people, because he himself suffered when he was tempted.

He is able to help those who are being tempted. Amen. The reading contained some of the things we were thinking about last week, the U-shaped career of Jesus down to earth, from heaven, down to the cross, lifted up in the resurrection, lifted up in the ascension, lifted up in his enthronement, and one day, all things, without exception, will fall beneath his feet.

We don't yet see that, but that will be the case one day. You came from heaven to show the way, from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky. Lord, I lift your name on high. It's number 314, and that's what we're going to sing. Lord, I lift your name on high.

[24:53] Lord, I love to sing your praises. I'm so glad you're in my life.

I'm so glad you came to save us. You came from heaven to earth, to show the way, from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky.

Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I lift your name on high.

Lord, I love to sing your praises. I'm so glad you're in my life.

I'm so glad you came to save us. You came from heaven to earth, to show the way, from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky.

[26:30] Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I lift your name on high.

So in a moment we'll have the talk, but let's pray first.

Lord, you tell us to fix our eyes on Jesus. We've got so many other things to think about and look at, but help us, we pray, in this time to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

So help the speaker and help those of us who hear. deliver us from being distracted. Give us concentration and give us the help of your Holy Spirit to see what is being described to us here with the eye of faith.

So we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Well, we've read and prayed, and now we're going to look together at this letter to the Hebrews, this part of the second chapter.

I've entitled it Jesus Made Like Us, because the chapter is absolutely full of references to the fact that Jesus is made like us. And up on my screen, I've got one of the, somebody who could well be one of the believers to whom the writer is writing.

[27:53] They seem to be a bit bowed down, don't they? There's pressures on them represented by those arrows. And are they running the race that's set before them? Are they holding on?

Are they persevering? Well, if we overhear what they're saying, I wouldn't dare say this in front of the other people in the church, but, reality.

Life is hard. There are lots of stresses. This is what I should really expect from the Christian life. Me. I'm weak. I can't be expected to keep this up by myself, am I?

My situation. Oh, you don't understand what it's like for me in my situation. what might they be saying? They might not be saying, I'm single.

That's so difficult. They might be saying, I'm married. That's so hard. They might be saying, I'm young. Oh, you don't know how difficult it is. Well, I'm old. You don't know how difficult that is.

[29:03] Well, they might be saying, I'm very busy. That's a lot of stress. they might be saying, I'm unemployed. That's a lot of stress.

Well, they might be saying, I'm ill. You just don't understand what it's like trying to live the Christian life when you're ill.

Well, they might be saying, I have a family. You've no idea the burden that plays on me. Well, they might be saying, I don't have a family. You've no idea how difficult that makes life. And they might be saying, well, my background, all the things in my background, my upbringing, experiences, the things that have been done to me, things that I've done to other people or done to myself.

You just don't understand what it's like, my situation. And the sort of disappointment which says, there have been so many battles and difficulties. Surely the Christian life isn't meant to be like this, is it?

And, click. Other people. Do you know, the Christians in our church are such a bunch of oddities.

I'm rather embarrassed by them. Their speech. The way they talk. Their habits. Their politics. Their tastes. The class of these people.

[30:20] And if you went really back into that Hebrew situation, you'd say, well, some of them have actually got arrested. Got themselves arrested. They're in prison. Do I want to get tangled up with them?

Wouldn't it be much better just to distance myself from that group? They'll drag me into trouble too.

And, you know, what about my family?

My family, to be honest, is more important than that lot. And then something about power. Do you know, it's life so difficult.

I don't think anybody, I don't think anything or anybody can help me out of the sort of hole I'm in.

Well, poor folks. Let's try and encourage them.

And the writer is definitely going to try and encourage them in various ways. He's going to give them very promises, and he's going to give them warnings. Let's see if this clicking will work. But let me just, before we get into that, let's look at some background information.

[31:21] This letter was written to people who said they were Christians, professing Christians from a Jewish background. The writer doesn't stop

to prove the Christian message.

It's something they'd already accepted. But he does remind them of the power and implication of what they've once believed and received.

They had believed in Jesus back in the early days, and they'd suffered for their faith. They'd been insulted and persecuted, and suffered all sorts of things. Chapter 10, verses 32 and 33.

But you see, now somehow they're losing their way. They're going back to whatever it was, the synagogue, the temple, the sacrifices, the priesthood.

So the writer uses words like drift and lazy, sluggish. The letter contains promises and warnings, and we're reminded that both of those are necessary.

[32:23] The mark of the elect is that they believe the promises and heed the warnings. And so far we saw in chapter 1, verses 1 to 4, he blasts off by showing that Jesus the Son is at the epicentre of all things divine.

Creation, final destiny, revelation, providence, redemption. The Son is intimately involved in all of that.

And he spent time looking at the matter of angels. They are different from the Son, the firstborn, the only begotten. They're different from the Son. The angels are created.

They are worshippers. They are messengers. They are servants. They don't do family, unlike Jesus, who brings many sons to glory, as we shall see, and who calls God Abba, Father.

And the relevance of angels most likely was that they would be pretty convinced that the law of Moses was brought by angels. And what could be better than that?

[33:26] Well, the writer says the message brought by the Son is better than that. And then last time we looked at Psalm 8, which is a psalm of anthropology, meaning to say about humanity.

And the writer turns it into Christology, something about Jesus Christ. And there's that little picture. I'll keep that up. You might amuse you to be reminded of the one who was made for a little while lower than the angels and is crowned with glory and honour.

We don't yet see all things put under his feet, but one day all things will be put under his feet in a very visible and open way. We looked at the U-shaped career of Jesus, who was made lower, who is now crowned, but not yet.

Totally everything, totally under his feet. And you remember that having said these sorts of things, he would say, you must pay careful attention to this. You mustn't slip from it.

You mustn't drift from it. You mustn't lose it. And at the end of the section that our seminar read to us, we could have gone on and said, I noticed that he says, therefore, holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

[34:49] So we'll think about that. We'll try and make that our theme this morning, to fix our thoughts on Jesus. And I'm going to try and do it in two questions.

We're thinking here about Jesus made like us. So question one, how much was he made like us? I'll explain the question as we go through. And number two, how is that impressive?

I ask that question because the writer is so full of this. He clearly thinks it's very impressive. And I'm going to try and pick out the thoughts that I hope will leave us with that sense that this is really impressive, something to be really impressed by, grateful for, and make us want to live the Christian life in a very, very positive way.

So I'll take the answers in the order that they come up in the text, although there's a lot of overlap. But hopefully this will make sense as we go through.

So the first question was, how much like us is Jesus? Now, when I say that question, I'm thinking you could ask, how much is the Queen like us? Yes, we've been watching The Crown and it raises that question about how the royal family like ordinary people.

[36:11] Well, to put it crudely, the Queen has to go to the toilet the same as us, but she probably doesn't have to go and put out the recycling when it's raining.

Or I could ask this in terms of my family. I've got relatives. My family originally came from the north of England and I've got a daughter of my cousin lives in Morpeth.

I don't even know whether I spelt that right. I've no idea where Morpeth is. I've heard of it in songs, but is my relative like me? She lives in a different part of the UK.

The family live in a different part of the UK. She knows Kate Rusby. Now, some of you will be really impressed by that. Her little boy goes to the same parties as Kate Rusby's little boy.

Now then, how amazing is that? And those of you who don't know who Kate Rusby is, you can look her up on Google when we've finished. Well, they eat different food up there.

[37:16] They talk with a different accent and they have different challenges in their lives. So are they like us? Well, I have to say, sometimes it's difficult to try and explain life here when I meet them.

But, yeah, they're like us. And that's not quite the same. So, how much like us is Jesus? So I've got some answers to this. So the first answer is, he became enough like us to share our worst experience, which is suffering death.

Verse 9 says, So he was made enough like us to suffer death.

That's the most extreme experience that a human being is ever bound to. I mean to say death in the total sense of death under the wrath of God.

It says he suffered death. It says he tasted death. Meaning to say, as I understand it, that he had the full gastronomic experience of death.

[38:31] It wasn't a single bit of death he didn't get the flavour of. In verse 10 it says that he was made perfect through suffering. And that suffering is, of course, the suffering on the cross.

That would be the extreme point of that suffering. And when it says made perfect, it means perfect in the sense of completely fitted for the goal and purpose of being a saviour.

It doesn't mean that Jesus was sinful it just means that he became all that a saviour needed to be through the suffering of death.

And it's noticeable that the writer almost instinctively quotes Psalm 22. He quoted, you'll see verse 12, the end of the psalm.

But he's certainly thinking about that psalm. The psalm which says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The psalm that Jesus took upon his lips as he died on the cross.

[39:36] My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He came down to earth and had the deepest and worst fate that human beings could experience.

Abandonment by God himself. And we're told so fully did he enter into this, so directly did he tackle this head on, that he destroyed the power of death.

It says in verse 14, He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

So he, yeah, he shared this. He took this and he tackled it head on and destroyed the power of it and destroyed, as we're told, he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil. So these believers are told, you've got nothing to fear from death, that very worst of human experiences, because Jesus has come to share that and deal with it fully.

[40:49] Okay. And I suppose you could say that he experienced the bitterness of death more than any believer ever will.

Second thing, how much like us? Well, enough to report back to us as family. Going on holiday, you send postcards home, I expect, well, you don't do that anymore, do we?

You send WhatsApp pictures or put things on Facebook, but you share that with your family. And the end of Psalm 22 is the sufferer having returned, delivered from death, who declares, verse 12, I declare your name to my brothers in the congregation, I'm sorry, in the presence of the congregation.

I will sing your praises. And Jesus reports back to us as his family. He's got us in mind to send the postcard to, or got us in mind to say, gather round, let me tell you all about this.

That family thought is there in verse 10, in bringing many sons to glory. That's a family word, isn't it? Sons. That's a family word. Verse 11, both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same something.

[42:14] Family is the word put in there. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He's not ashamed to call us brothers. And in verse 12, it says, I declare to my brothers in the presence of the congregation, actually the word normally translated there, church, I will sing your

praises.

And there's another rather interesting quote from Isaiah. You remember Isaiah had these kids with unwieldy names. Maher Shelal Hashbaz is the one that comes to mind.

And that is not in any sense an encouragement to any couple to name a child after Maher Shelal Hashbaz. Anyway, that's what Isaiah did. And he refers to his children and the little group that were around him, presumably the little family group, him and his kids.

Maybe he had some other disciples, maybe some theological students, some in the spare room, I don't know. And the quote says, Here I am and the children God has given me.

And the writer says, Well, that truly sums up the way Jesus is with his people, close enough to call us family.

[43:32] And that's how close he's come. That's the closeness, if you like, the union that we have in Jesus Christ. And that's why as Jesus prayed to the Father, we have this enormous privilege of praying to God and saying, Our Father, Our Father.

And we can sing songs like the Stuart Townend one, doesn't it? How deep the Father's love for us. How vast beyond all measure.

The great Puritan theologian, John Owen, whose books you can probably see behind me if you look carefully enough, wrote tomes and tomes. I haven't read them all.

But I do remember reading the volume which talked about the relationship of Christians with the Father. What sort of relationship do they have with the Father?

And John Owen would say, The communion with the Father is chiefly a communion in love. We are brought into a family with a loving, heavenly Father.

[44:42] Isn't that amazing? Isn't that amazing? Whatever experiences we've had on earth regarding fathers, Christians have the very best, the most dependable, the most wonderful, loving, heavenly Father because Jesus brings us into his family.

That's how much he's been made. He's like us. Next thing. He's made like us enough to take flesh and blood. Verse 14. The children have flesh and blood.

He too shared in their flesh and blood so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death. I know there's an overlap here, isn't there? But I'm just picking up on this.

He's enough like us to take flesh and blood. You know, this stuff. Flesh and blood. To take a body and blood like ours.

The word is quite strong. He shared in their flesh and blood. It's a sort of fellowship word. He became part and parcel of what it is to have flesh and blood.

[45:53] And you think about what it is to have flesh and blood. We're wonderfully made but we're frail, aren't we? It doesn't take much to squash a creature like us made of flesh and blood.

And you think of the amazement of it. Flesh. Blood. How does that all work? We eat. We eat food. It turns into flesh. We walk around.

We use our bodies to do that. We run. People play football. We have these amazing systems of flesh and blood. The circulatory system. The female menstrual cycle.

The reproductive system is part of our flesh. The health and healing systems we have are part of our flesh and blood. Having blood pressure. Jesus had blood pressure because he took part in flesh and blood.

We're easily broken. Easily squashed. Easily damaged. We need protective stuff like clothing. Our feet need protecting with shoes. Our hands need protecting with gloves.

[47:01] That's flesh and blood. He took flesh and blood. The almighty son took flesh and blood. And it was just the same flesh and blood as we have. He needed shoes or sandals. Didn't he?

He ate food. And it is the flesh and blood. The vulnerable flesh and blood that was broken.

His flesh was ripped into by nails and the crown of thorns. And blood dripped out of his body as it should never do.

His blood was shed on the cross. And Jesus said, so significant is this flesh and blood that he said in John 6, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

In other words, if you're eating, meaning to take that into oneself by faith, unless you can take into yourself by faith the fact that Jesus died and the cost of that, the benefit of it, the reality of it, unless that is what you are feeding on.

[48:11] You have no spiritual life in you. It's as fundamental as that. How much like us? Enough to take flesh and blood. How much like us?

Enough to reach down, to grasp us, to help us. So I'm looking at verse 16, which says, for surely it is not angels that he helps, but Abraham's descendants or Abraham's seed.

So there's a word in there for help. It sort of means to seize, or to reach down and catch. It seems to me to be a rather evocative word.

He reached down to catch. So my mind goes to the illustration of cricket. For those of you who are not quite sure what cricket is, it's a game that traditional English and English colonies, ex-colonies, I'm getting into trouble there, play with a very hard ball, and it goes whizzing past.

And if you can catch the ball, you've won a great victory. And the slip position is close to the ball, where the ball comes whizzing past, really low.

[49:29] And if you can reach down and catch that ball, you've done an amazing thing. You really have to reach down. It's a huge effort. And it's no mean feat to firmly grip that hard ball as it whizzes past one centimetre above the ground.

I thought I'd do that in non-imperial measurements. At 120 kilometres per hour, I've done that in non-imperial measurements too. And that ball can sting your hands, but to reach down and grasp that is really something.

And Jesus reached down and grasped human nature in all its prickliness and stingingness and inconvenience with all the effort required. It wasn't angels that he reached down to.

It was us. And that's a big stretch. And he took it so brilliantly, didn't he? He reached down and he did not fail. How much like us?

Enough to reach down and grasp us, to help us. Enough to understand us from the inside. So I'm thinking of verse 17 where it says, For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

[50:52] Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. So I'm picking up on the bit. He was made like us in order to become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God.

So it's that mercifulness and faithfulness. And there's a big theme coming up here, and I don't want to spoil it, but I'll just touch upon it. The faithful and merciful. This is not, in this part of the thought, is not to qualify him to suffer, but to understand.

You know, when we might be tempted to say to the Lord, You don't understand what it's like. And the Lord says, Oh yes I do. Yes I do.

I do understand what that situation, that human situation is like, because I was made like my brothers in every way, apart from sin.

So there's some thoughts on how much like us did he become. And the passage is full.

[52:00] It just says he became like us in the deepest possible way. Please don't think that he wasn't like us, because he was. And he is.

That humanness is not something that he's lost, or discarded, or put on one side. There is a man upon the throne. So how impressive is that?

How impressive is that? Let's pick up those thoughts from the very beginning, that that Hebrew Christian might have been struggling with, or maybe even we might struggle with.

Life is hard. Surely it shouldn't be like that. Well, Jesus entered our world in full knowledge that it contains suffering.

That is the nature of the world he entered, and the life that he entered, and that's the nature of life. The suffering that Jesus entered included death, and the day when death is abolished has not yet come.

[52:59] The day when all tears are wiped from every eye has not yet come. The day when there is no more sorrow or sighing, that day hasn't yet come. Life is hard, and if we haven't grasped that, we're living in a bit

of a make-believe world, and no wonder we're going to find it difficult to be Christians, if we think that the Christian life is lived in any other way than this.

Jesus endured the cross for the joy that was set before him. His motivation was to look into the distance, into the future, and that has to be the same for Christians.

It's the nature of this world that it contains suffering, and there is particular pressure on each believer in Jesus Christ, over and above just being human.

Being a believer puts us in a place of spiritual pressure in this rebellious world, and that's why we're to fix our thoughts on him.

He persevered through difficulty, and he looked at the reward in the future, and that is our reward too. So the fact that he came and understood this, and entered this, is impressive.

[54:14] Well, what about this thought, I'm weak, I can't be expected to keep this up? Notice that the writer to the Hebrews, although he is going to give warnings, he doesn't always do that.

It isn't all he does. He doesn't just say, you're lazy so-and-sos, pick yourself up, get on with it. But here he says, look, there is help. You're not expected to live the Christian life all on your own.

Not only do you have brothers and sisters to support you, and be part and part slob, but the Saviour is there to support you. It is not angels he helps, but the seed of Abraham.

And we're going to have more things about help. He reaches down to help. Think of a child struggling to do shoelaces up.

Think of a little child struggling to do shoelaces up. What does a mum or dad do? Reaches down to help. A parent reaches down to help.

[55:18] And surely that's the place for us, isn't it? As little children. I can't go through a day without prayer. I don't know about you. Francis Schaeffer, the great philosopher, teacher, Christian preacher, the 20th century, said, the secret of the Christian life is moment by moment dependence on Jesus.

And there's something going to be coming up here about prayer, receiving mercy, and finding grace to help us in our time of need. I don't know any other way to live the Christian life than to keep on calling out for help.

Moment by moment prayer. Lord, be with me in this. Lord, help me in this. Lord, I offer this to you. And then this whole matter of the situation.

Is there anything impressive to say to this matter? You don't understand what it's like for me in my situation. And this too is going to become a major theme.

But I'll just touch upon it here. Well, does the Queen understand what it's like to put out the recycling on a rainy evening before the recycling men come, or indeed fail to come?

[56:40] Well, she doesn't understand that. But Jesus understands us in every way. Yes, he does. He understands our temptations. He understands our struggles.

He sees our hearts. He's the great heart knower. And we can open our hearts to him and say, Lord, look, you see. Come and do in my heart what you need to do.

My heart is open to you. And you see the struggles. Come and help. Come and win battles in my heart. And surely again, this is the greatest possible encouragement to be people of prayer.

He won't push us away in impatience and annoyance that we're asking him again.

He's not like that. He does understand us. He actually understands us better than we understand ourselves. And surely, surely he is saying, come to me.

[57:43] Don't be distant. Don't try and live independently of me, but come prayerfully. Pray without ceasing.

And is there anything impressive to say about power? Ah, says this forlorn Hebrew Christian, nothing and nobody can help me in the hole I'm in.

Well, it is a temptation to say that, isn't it? But it's not a true, it's not a true appreciation of the situation. And it doesn't really honour God to think that way or speak that way to ourselves.

The saviour who became human is now in the place of omnipotence. He has a throne.

Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, it says in that Psalm 45. You remain the same. Your years will never end, is the grand statement about the enthroned son in whatever psalm that was.

[58:55] I can't remember, Psalm 100 and something? He's sitting at the right hand of God until all enemies fall between his feet. He's in the place of power. And we're going to look in due course at this matter of the priesthood of Jesus, understanding him as being a priest.

And the son as a priest is to say that he is omnipotent compassion. He doesn't just sympathise and say, oh yeah, I feel that's pretty awful, isn't it?

He understands, sympathises, and has the power to bring his remedy into every situation, his power and his grace into every situation.

We have somebody who knows and somebody who has unlimited power to resolve my problems.

Well, in his way, not necessarily in my way, and in his time, not necessarily in my time.

But there's no shortage of power. And that's really impressive, isn't it? Power to resolve my problems and enable me to be in the right place before my Lord.

[60:10] That is the place of someone who serves him. And let's remind ourselves, is anything too hard for the Lord? You might just like to contemplate the things that you're presently stuck on.

Maybe you're not stuck on anything, but maybe you're stuck on something and you're saying to the Lord, what's the answer to this? Nobody can help me out of this, can they? And the Lord says, I understand that and I can help.

My power is unlimited. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Hang on to that, brother and sister. And hang on to that because that's deeply impressive, it seems to me.

Well, what about these other Christians? Sometimes it's possible to be stumbled by other Christians and to get a bit jaundiced about other Christians. Christians. But Jesus isn't.

He is not ashamed to call them brothers. That is in verse 11. And I think I've missed a one off there. Chapter 2, verse 11.

[61:15] He's not ashamed to call them brothers. That's a thought, isn't it? If anybody has the right to be ashamed of Christians, it would be Jesus. If anybody has the right to complain about them, not being up to the mark, it's Jesus.

But he's not ashamed. He's not ashamed. He's not ashamed of his people. And neither should we be. We shouldn't be ashamed of them either.

The talk that we had last week mentioned the service and the love shown to the least of these, my brothers, the low-status believer.

believer. And it's how we treat the low-status believers that really shows where we're at. Yeah, anybody can be kind and appreciative to cool dudes.

But Christians aren't all cool dudes, are they? And it's the... Not being ashamed of the least of these, my brothers.

[62:18] Jesus isn't ashamed of them. That's impressive. Jesus rates them highly. And there's an implication here about family, isn't there? Jesus isn't saying you should hate your flesh and blood family.

But he is saying, please realize that these are my brothers. And if you're a Christian, they're your brothers. They're your family.

They are your people. And don't back off from them. Don't be ashamed of them. Don't retreat from them. Don't stop meeting together with them. Jesus is not ashamed of his people.

Well, there we are. I've just about finished. The writer is going to lead to this point. Therefore, holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest, the sent one and the high priest whom we confess.

We say, he's our saviour. He's our Lord. We confess him. And he was made like us. Yeah. Made like us enough to share our worst experience.

[63:27] That's death. And bang it on the head and deliver us from it. Made like us enough to communicate with us as his family and to share with us.

I declare your name to my brothers. Made like us enough to take flesh and blood. Even that flesh and blood that was broken and blood that was shed.

Enough like us to reach down and help us humans. As a parent helping a child tie up their shoelaces, he reached down in compassion. Not to angels but to us.

Enough like us to understand our situation from the inside. He's been there. He knows what it's like. That is such an encouragement to us, isn't it?

And us. Well, whatever harsh realities we get knocked back by, however conscious we are of our own weakness, perhaps we might feel the uniqueness of our situation or the whatever we might feel about the Christians around us.

[64:36] Jesus has answers to all of that. And if we fix our eyes on him we will surely find fresh strength and encouragement to do exactly what the writer of the Hebrews wants us to do.

He says, don't give up. Don't slip back. Don't think it's not worthwhile. Don't get lazy. Don't start to drift. But hold fast.

Fix your eyes upon him. Run the race. If you've stopped for a sandwich, okay, now it's time to get up and start running the race.

And if you're just losing your grip on things, get a grip. Hold on tight. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Jesus made like us. Well, in previous times we were thinking of Jesus and the angels. Jesus is better than the angels.

[65:43] There's clear blue water between the greatness of angels and the sheer grandeur of Jesus. Jesus. In our closing song, we invited to listen to the angels as they speak about Jesus.

Hark, says the song. Hark, the angels sing. I'm not quite sure whether angels do sing, but Charles Wesley thinks they do in this song and countless of generations of Christians have sung this with great gusto and grandeur.

Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king. Jesus made like us in his birth as a human baby. So we're going to sing this song.

It's usually sung at another time of the year, but no reason whatsoever why we can't sing it now about the coming of Jesus. 359. Hark, the herald angels sing.

Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king.

[66:58] Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled. Joyful all you nations rise, join the triumph of the skies, with the angelic hosts proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king. Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord.

Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hailed in carnate deity, pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king. Hail the heaven-born prince of peace, hail the son of righteousness, light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings, mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king. Come, desire of nations, come, making us your humble home, rise the woman's conquering seed, bruising us the serpent's head.

[69:39] Adam's likeness now efface, stand your image in its place, second Adam from above, give us life, impart your love, harp the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king.

Let's close with a prayer. We thank you so much for the kindness of Jesus and the degree to which he has taken our condition to his heart, to himself.

Thank you that we have a merciful saviour. And now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good, for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen. Amen. That's it from me. May God bless each and every one, and bye-bye for now.