

Jesus: Our Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:5-18)

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[0 : 00] Over the last few weeks, we've been looking at the book of Hebrews. And if you remember from week one, when we were talking about Hebrews, we mentioned the fact that William Barclay said there was many difficulties that we can experience when looking at the book of Hebrews.

There's many things that that are difficult for us to understand, possibly from our cultural standpoint of not having a Jewish background in different things. And there's so many things that it could be difficult to understand at times.

And if I'm honest, this week was one of those weeks for me as I was studying and diving into this passage. I was just wrestling with the kind of the outline of of what I wanted to use for this this week.

And so just wrestling through those things, it was challenging at times. However, after finally arriving at an outline that I was excited about and comfortable with, it was like God just just opened the open the gate.

And it was just so easy to see what it is that that he was wanting to speak to me this week. And so I hope and I pray that that is something that comes across to you today.

[1 : 13] But also say that as an encouragement to you. I think all of us at times have had those moments where we read God's word and we struggle with understanding it, where one day it seems like the words just jump off the page at us.

And other times it feels like we have to dig a little deeper. And so I just want to encourage you when those times happen to dig deeper. Many times I can say from personal experience, some of the most meaningful times alone with God and spending that time with him are digging in and diving into his word in a deeper way.

And so I want to encourage you with that. Today we're going to be looking at the book of Hebrews chapter 2. We're going to spend our time focusing on verses 5 through 18.

And so if you have a copy of God's word with you, I invite you to open with me to Hebrews chapter 2. And we're going to start reading in verse number 5.

This is what the word of the Lord says. It says, For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, What is man that you are mindful of him?

[2 : 28] Or the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him, but we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, is bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers.

In the midst of the congregation, I sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me.

[3 : 45] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. In this passage this morning, there's three takeaways that I want us to be able to see clearly.

And it's my hope and prayer that by the end of this morning, we will see each of these clearly. Those three things that I want us to be able to see today are, first of all, I want us to be able to see God's plan from this passage.

Also, I want us to clearly see how God accomplishes his plan, and finally, what this means for us today. And so to begin with, I want us to take a look at God's plan.

[5 : 08] What does this passage tell us about God's plan for us? And we see part of this in verses 5 through 8, where it says, For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

It has been testified somewhere. What is man that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower.

You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet. Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control.

At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. We spent some time a couple of weeks ago talking about the significance of angels and the significance of the author declaring that Jesus is superior to the angels when we were looking at chapter 1.

In fact, much of chapter 1, when you take a look at it, is spent, there's a lot of real estate that is given to the fact that Jesus is superior, he's greater, he's better than the angels.

[6 : 21] And this was significant for the audience that he was writing to. They were often seen as, and rightly so, as co-ministers under God's direction.

In fact, Kent Hughes talking about the angels, he says, this is what Jacob's vision of the ladder was all about. Because as he looked at the ladder, he saw angels going up to heaven and coming down.

The message was clear. There is an angelic commerce between heaven and earth on behalf of God's people. And now the author is going to shake things up a little bit for them.

He's going to kind of rattle them a little bit, but when he says, it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come of which we are speaking.

Angels are not going to rule the world to come. If God does not use angels to rule the world to come, then who will he use? The answer may come to a, as a surprise to many of us today.

[7 : 24] And I can promise you that the answer would have greatly surprised this first audience of believers that he was writing to. And the fact is, he's going to use us, his children to rule.

God's ultimate intention is to have his kingdom ruled by redeemed men and women. Hughes again notes the significance of this realization when he says, those insignificant people in that Harried House church, a minuscule dot in the Roman Empire, were going to rule everything.

No doubt that this would have floored the early church in hearing this news because surely they felt insignificant. Surely they felt like there wasn't much to them.

They were just a small body of believers outnumbered by everybody else around them. And so I want to use this as an encouragement to us today.

Those moments when you feel insignificant, those moments when you feel like your circumstances or the happenings in your life are weighing in and pressing down where you don't feel significant in the sense of who God is and who you are.

[8 : 39] Let me encourage you to do something. I want to encourage you maybe to possibly go outside at night. Take a look up at the stars. Encourage you to maybe drive somewhere where there's not as much light pollution.

Just to take a look up at the stars where you can see as many stars as you possibly can with a naked eye. Or maybe go on a drive just to take a look at God's creation.

Just take a look at all that He has created, all that He's spoken to existence. The mountains, the beach, lakes, valleys, ponds, trees, whatever the case may be. Take a look at all of those things. Stand in awe of God's creation and then remind yourself of the truth that we find in Scripture. That when Jesus left the glory of heaven, lived a humble yet perfect life and then willingly went to the

cross, He didn't do that for those stars in the sky.

He didn't do that for the mountains and the oceans and the valleys and the ponds and the trees and the animals, all of those things. He didn't do that for them. He did that for you and me, for those that are created in His image.

[9 : 53] You know, oftentimes when it comes to the question of what it means to be a human, we will either often overshoot or we're undershoot what that means.

Some think of humans as little gods. Everything is measured by what we think, feel, and we think that the world revolves around us and our needs and our wants and we are the center of the universe.

Others might say that there is nothing significant or unique about us at all. We are no different than anything else. And then others will try to have one foot in each place, in each location of these categories.

On the one hand, they talk about how insignificant humanity is in the universe. And on the other hand, they act like everything revolves around them.

Michael Kruger gives a sobering reminder when he says this about this passage. He says, it tells us that humans have glory and dignity and honor because we are made in the image of God.

[10 : 57] And at the same time, we are not God. We are not the measure of all things. We have messed up the world and we need to be redeemed.

Again, in verse five, we're told it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come. In other words, humans stand out in creation. We are greater than the angels.

And one day we are going to rule the world. But why is this the case? What is his grounds for making this statement? Well, he goes on to say, he says it like this.

It has been testified somewhere. You know, it almost sounds like the author here is having a senior moment, you know, where he's like, you know, I believe that somebody somewhere possibly had said this.

But that's not the case at all. Because he actually goes on to then perfectly recite and quote Psalm 8, which says, what is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you care for him?

[11 : 58] You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet. God has made us for a special purpose, to reflect his glory.

This is part of what it means to be created in his image, to reflect his glory. God made human beings to be the guardians, protectors, and rulers of his world. He intended it that way for his glory and for our blessing.

This is why the angels are not given dominion over the world. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 6, we are told that one day we're going to be the ones who are judging the angels.

Do you know what that means? I'm not exactly sure either exactly what that means, but it does tell us that there's something distinctively different about us.

There's something distinct about human beings. Kruger says, every person, poor or wealthy, notorious sinner or respected member of the community should be shown dignity and honor.

[13 : 10] And let that be the thought that comes to mind as we seek to serve, as we seek to minister to, as we seek to interact, and maybe even disagree with those that are around us.

May we always remember that we are created in the image of God. But verse 8 also reminds us that things are not as they should be. They are not as they should be and that we need help.

We need a rescue. We need a savior. It tells us very clearly that we need Jesus. And so the next thing that I want us to take a look at is this, and that is how God accomplishes this plan.

We see his plan, but now we want us to see how God accomplishes this plan. Verses 9 through 11, it says this, But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

[14 : 29] For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. Primarily, this section is showing us the necessity of Jesus really being human.

This section is trying to show us very clearly and the necessity that Jesus Christ was a human. Now, this isn't something that we typically have to convince people of today.

This isn't something that we have to make arguments with people today. In fact, most people, whether they're Christians or not, would believe that Jesus actually existed. That it's pretty hard to argue that when you look at the evidence, both in the biblical and extrabiblical evidence that is out there, that Jesus actually existed.

No, very few people are arguing that. Very few people are arguing that Jesus actually existed and that he was a human. Today, most people were having to make the argument that he was truly divine, that he actually was God as well.

But this wasn't the case, always the case in the first century. In fact, there was a group, there were a number of groups, but most prominently the Gnostics who struggled to believe that Jesus could both be human and God at the same time.

[15 : 44] For them, since Jesus was divine, they couldn't understand how he could also be a human, how the divine could humble himself in that kind of way to be a human.

And let's be honest, this is a difficult concept for us to understand as well, this incarnation, this hypostatic union of both being fully God and fully man all at the same time.

It's a difficult thing for us to understand. But it is necessary for us to believe. It's necessary for this to be true because this is exactly what makes it possible for God to accomplish his plan.

You see, Jesus is uniquely qualified to pay for our sins because he is both God and man. This is why the incarnation is such a big deal.

This is not a doctrine we can waver on. This isn't something that we can agree to disagree with. The qualifications needed to pay for the sins of the world would require him to be God.

[16 : 50] In order to bridge the infinite chasm between us and God, it would require an infinite sacrifice. We also see that this person would have to be human, like us and familiar with our weaknesses.

If he was going to represent us then he had to be one of us. But finally we see that this person would have to be perfect. If that person had ever sinned, then all of a sudden they would need somebody to make a sacrifice on their behalf.

And so what we see as far as the qualifications are to make atonement for the world is they have to be like man, like God, and perfect. There is only one person that has ever lived that meets these requirements and his name is Jesus.

That is why there is no other name on which we can be saved other than calling on the name of Jesus. There is no one else with these qualifications. And I often feel like this is a doctrine that we take for granted or at least I find myself taking it for granted.

Especially the part about how significant it was for Jesus to take on flesh. This week I was spent some time reading Martin Lloyd-Jones' reflection on this as he reflected on the incarnation.

[18 : 13] He at length detailed the significance of this. Noting at different points in Jesus' life what this humbling meant. He went through the whole life of Jesus showing at different moments what it meant for him to take on flesh and how in each of these situations it was him humbling himself.

And he started by saying this. He says, we're trying to look at something that is quite inconceivable. Our minds are overwhelmed with the very thought of it.

But this is the essence of the New Testament message. That helpless baby lying in the manger is none other than the eternal Son of God.

He has deliberately come down to this level within these limits. He is making himself subject to suffering and mortality and death.

And he did it all so that you and I could be redeemed. Lloyd-Jones goes on to look at how Jesus humbled himself all throughout his life.

[19 : 19] Looking at how he was born in a humble manger and how he came in a very humble way. But other than that he also lived this life all the way through up until his death where he put himself under his parents' teaching.

Where he allowed himself to be questioned by the Pharisees. Where he was hurt by his friends who didn't believe. Who pushed him away. Even family members.

And he humbled himself over and over again. The challenges he received from the Pharisees. He humbled himself to death on the cross. Separation from the Father. Noting example after example after example of what it meant for Jesus to take on flesh.

Finally stating of all of this Lloyd-Jones said what is meant for him was this. He who was co-equal and co-eternal with God and in the bosom of the Father for all eternity.

He who had never been separated from God whose supreme delight had forever been to have fellowship with God came to a terrible moment when he could not see the face of God.
[20 : 32] He felt forsaken and cried out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me? That was the thing he was speaking about back in the garden of Gethsemane. Where he prayed in essence is this the only way?

If this is possible let this cup pass from me he asked three times but that was but that was the only way whereby man could be forgiven and he submitted himself to it. Hopefully we can clearly see the necessity of Jesus to be both fully God and fully man. But verse 10 also provides some helpful understanding about this necessity when it says this it says for it was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist is bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

When it says that Jesus was made perfect through suffering what does he mean? Well obviously he's not talking about the moral perfection of Jesus after all he was always perfect always will be perfect you can't improve on perfection but this refers to his effectiveness as our representative. Michael Kruger notes he says by suffering as a man he became a more sympathetic more appropriate more fitting high priest for us. Here is where we see how our salvation depends as much on Jesus humanity as it does on his divinity.

[22 : 17] If he was not really human then he could not really represent us and if he couldn't represent us then he couldn't save us. So as we consider how God accomplishes his plan there's a few aspects of our union with Christ that I want us to quickly bring our attention to.

First of all we are united with Christ in death. It says that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. We're also told in scripture where it says for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin.

Or in Galatians where it reinforces this by saying Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. Jesus tasted death became our sin became our curse for all those who trust in him.

But we're also told that we have been crucified with Christ. You see the penalty we deserve is death and Jesus paid that for us.

He took our death on himself and so we are united with him in that death but we're also united in him as we put to death our old self our old desires and be renewed in his likeness but we also see that we're united with Christ in glory.

[23 : 36] The passage tells us that Jesus was crowned with glory and honor and that he brings many sons to glory. We're also told that finally we see here especially in verse 11 that we are united with Christ in holiness.

It tells us that Jesus sanctifies and that we are sanctified because of Jesus when God looks at us he doesn't see our sin our shame those things that we regret the most in life but when he looks on us he sees his son's holy and perfect life that was given in our place.

We are united with him in this so that God when he looks down on us he's not disappointed he's not ashamed of who we are but he looks on us and he sees his son's life given for us.

This is wonderful news. We are united with Christ in death we are united with Christ in glory and we are united with him in holiness.

In this passage we have seen God's plan we understand how he accomplishes his plan and now finally I want us to spend the remainder of our time and think about what this means for us.

[24 : 52] What does this mean for us? Verses 11 through 18 it says this that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers saying I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise and again I will put my trust in him and again behold I and the children God has given me since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery for surely it is not the angels that he helps but he helps the offspring of Adam therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect there it is again the necessity of him to take on flesh so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiations for the sins of the people for because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted now when we look at this passage there are so many things that we could spend time looking at and reflecting on of what it is to how this benefits us what it means for us to trust in Jesus as our savior how it changes and I would encourage you to spend time reading

through this over and over again this week being reminded of the difference that Jesus makes in our life but there's a few things that I want to bring our attention to this morning and to begin with I want us to see that we are a part of God's family he uses this brothers over over again he's not ashamed to call us brothers the author is clearly wanting us to understand that part of being a follower of Christ means that we are adopted into

God's family this is significant this is a reality that should change the way that we think about everything this is significant in our daily walk and I know that I quote this book a lot but if you've read it you've probably quoted a lot too but J.I.

Packer in Knowing God he says something profound about this he says you sum up the whole of the New Testament teaching in a single phrase if you speak of it as a revelation of the fatherhood of the holy creator he says in the same way you sum up the whole of the New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy father if you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his father if this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all for everything that Christ taught everything that makes the New Testament new everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish is summed up in the knowledge of the fatherhood of God father is the

Christian name for God when God accomplished his plan on the cross what this means for you and me is that we are in the family we're a part of the family if you place your faith and your trust in Jesus then you have a heavenly father and there is nothing that can separate you from your father next we see we are saved from death and the devil look at me at the end of verse 14 and 15 it says this that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery Christ not only broke the curse of sin that is death but he also delivered us from the devil who leverages that fear of death to enslave us Jesus death sets us free not only from sin but also from the fear of death and this should change how we live our lives this should give us a boldness and a courage like nothing else can you can really live for

Christ if you know that death has no power over you if you know that death has no thing if you know that death has no power then you can begin to live for Christ boldly like never before but what we also see in this passage and I think is one of the most beautiful things is that we have a savior who understands us we have a savior who understands us and this is one of the things that that honestly comforted me the most this week as I was studying and thinking about this passage is remembering that Jesus understands us you see the point is not just that Jesus was a real human being it is also that he experienced the life of a real human if the point was just that Jesus was a human and then died then this could have happened much faster than spending 33 years on this life if this was that was the only point was for him to be born and then to die then this could have happened much faster or it could have happened in isolation where he was born and then he separated himself and spent only time with God and separated himself from this world not experiencing hardships not experiencing disappointment or anything like that and then to go to the cross but he didn't just become a human he lived the life of a human he didn't just become a human he lived the life of a human he experienced the ups and downs that each and every one of us experience in this life

[31 : 11] Dane Ortlund says it well when he states he says he came as a normal man to normal men he knows what it is like to be thirsty hungry despised rejected scorned shamed embarrassed abandoned misunderstood falsely accused suffocated tortured and killed he knows what it is to be lonely his friends abandoned him when he needed them the most Jesus is not just a distant savior who wants nothing to do with us he is a close friend who understands better than anyone what it is that we're going through in this life he's not just one who saves and then leaves us alone he's one who saves and draws us closer and closer to him no one is better at mourning with those who mourn than Jesus he is a savior who is always close our hardships our difficulties our sin does not push him away he is an ever present help in trouble today as we have looked at this passage we've gone over some pretty amazing truths truths that we all want to be true of our life truths that are true of every person who places their faith and their trust in Jesus but the question that I want us to all answer honestly today is this have you placed your faith and your trust in Jesus have you trusted him as your

Lord and Savior we are all sinners we are all dead in our sins without hope but God but God sent Jesus fully God fully man to live the life we couldn't to experience all the things that we experience to be able to identify with us in every way to go to the cross and pay the penalty of our sin so that we can experience new life in Christ this new life not only changes it not only changes our eternity but it changes our today it changes our life each and every day and the question becomes do you believe this have you given your life to Jesus if not then I encourage you to do that today in just a moment we're going to sing a song of invitation a song of commitment where you'll have a chance to respond and if God is speaking to you this morning if you're wanting to give your life to Christ then I encourage you to take a step forward I would love nothing more than to talk with you and point you to Jesus the only one that can save but I also believe that we could all benefit from spending time reflecting on who Jesus is so much of Hebrews is reminding us of who Christ is and I think each and every one of us no matter if we just placed our faith and trust in Jesus or if we've been a follower of Jesus our entire lives I believe we can all benefit from understanding and reflecting on who Jesus is and so let me encourage all of us let who Christ is change who you are let who Jesus is shape and mold who you are Father we thank you so much we thank you for your word we thank you for what it teaches us about you

Lord we thank you for Hebrews we thank you as difficult as it can be at times to interpret and to think about Lord we thank you that it points us to you over and over and over again reminding us that you are so much greater than anything in this world reminding us that our hope is only found in you and so Lord I pray that if there's someone here today that doesn't know you as their Lord and Savior that you would come into their life that you would show them the way to the Father that you would give them a new eternity set them on a path that spends an eternity with you and not only that but changes our life each and every day but Lord I pray also that you be with each and every one of us who may have given our life to you many years ago may we see you more clearly and may who you are change who we are and we ask all this in Jesus name Amen