

The Cross of Christ and Message of Deliverance

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[0 : 0 0] Let's start together to the letter to Hebrews and chapter 2, and we can read at verse number 14. Hebrews chapter 2 at verse 14.

Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things,¹ 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 life long.

Slavery, and so on. Now, once this evening to continue the study that we're doing and looking at the benefits of the cross of Jesus Christ, and we are doing so because unless we understand what the cross means, then we're not going to appreciate the importance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we read this letter itself, it reminds us of the way in which people were losing their way, some were close to losing their faith, some were close to abandoning their faith because of what they were suffering, and when the writer reads to them to address these difficulties, he focuses primarily in the first half of the letter on the passion and work of the Lord Jesus.

So, in focusing on the passion and work of the Lord Jesus as the answer to our problems, it's following the pattern that we see from time to time in the Word of God.

[1 : 3 2] And as we look at this chapter itself, it reminds us that there is a context and that there is a goal, and we see from verse 5 of this chapter that the writer is talking about the world to come, and it's important for us to grasp that at the very outset.

We are in this world, but there is a world to come, and the significance of Jesus is to be found in understanding this world and understanding the world to come, and the only connection that we have between the two or the only way from this world into the world to come that's described here is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read on further in the letter, and we understand something else about this people. They were immature, and as we read at the end of chapter 5 and into chapter 6, we understand that the writer could not speak to them of the depths and the riches of the Lord Jesus because they were immature in their faith.

They were struggling with their faith because of the world around them, and they were struggling also in their faith because they hadn't reached a mature understanding of the Lord Jesus.

And that again is instructive for us as we look this evening at this passage and continue to think of the benefits of the cross of the Lord Jesus. And we have seen the benefit of reconciliation.

[3 : 1 2] We have seen the benefit of redemption. We have seen the benefit of propitiation. And tonight we want to look at the cross of Christ and the message of deliverance.

First of all, I want us to see that there is a reality we must learn to fear. And in verse 14 we have that reality that through death, it's a solemn thing to speak about death.

We have it throughout the Word of God. Death is the end of our lives in this world. It's when our hearts start, stops beating.

It's when our organs fail. It's when there appears to be nothing. And the writer in Ecclesiastes speaks of the way in which the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Death is the end of our visible lives here in this world. And at the beginning of our service this evening, I wanted to think for some time on the solemn issue of our death.

[4 : 43] And if we're going to think about death in a biblical way, we want to see there are three elements to death as the Bible brings it before us.

And the first of these is that death is physical. There is that separation of body and soul. It is physical in the sense that there is a tearing apart of the creation of God in the sense in which body and soul are separated.

And such is the awfulness of death, physical, that it is tearing apart the very thing that God has created in all of its beauty.

Death is physical. We know that. We see that. And we need to remember the reality of death as physical.

Death is also penal. The wages of sin is death.

[6 : 03] Why is there death in the world? Because of Adam's sin, described by Paul in Romans 5. Sin came into the world, and death entered because of sin, and death came upon all because all have sinned.

Death is penal. It's a penalty of our covenant breaking. And thirdly, death is eternal.

It's described in the book of Revelation as the second death. death. It's described as the second death in the lake of fire.

We saw in the chapter we read this morning the way in which Jesus himself speaks about eternal death. The fiery furnace where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It's eternal. It's permanent. And when the Bible speaks about death, the focus on death is on the eternal aspect of it.

[7 : 19] That it's a death that goes on forever beyond the scene of time. It's a reality. And we know it's there.

And it's so easy for us to live our lives as if this awful reality of death did not exist. It comes close to us in our homes.

And we become more aware of its destructive power as it affects us emotionally. But it's too easy for us to forget and to go on living.

How should we respond? How should we react? To this reality of death. Here the writer makes that clear. That those who fear death were subject to lifelong slavery.

There is a fear and a phobia that there is a sense in which all our emotions and the whole of our beings are in a sense to be terror stricken with an awful thought of what death means.

[8 : 47] A heart full of a sense of wanting to distance ourselves from the reality of death. death. And wanting if it were possible to remove the whole idea of death from the whole perspective of life and from the experience of humankind.

But the Bible tells us that a response to the reality of death is to fear it. death. And the writer in this letter itself reminds us why we should fear death.

In chapter 10 of verse 31 it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The fear of death.

death. death. death. And the more you and I in the secularized society in which we live the more we're sucked in by its way of thinking.

The more the fear of death will be lost to us. And the more we will remove it from our thinking. And the more we will promote things like assisted dying.

[10 : 07] because we fail to appreciate what death is. And we initiate we bring a proposal that's to be brought into the law of the land that is aimed at reducing the suffering of those who are dying.

And losing sight of the fact that the eternity of suffering in the fire of hell that Jesus speaks of is unthinkable.

And we need to remind ourselves and remind the society in which we live that this is the reality of death. And that without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ there is eternal suffering beyond life in this world.

And that is why we ought to fear. And the writer here goes even further than that through because of the fear of death they were subject to lifelong slavery.

Death is powerful. Death works like a master. Death comes to our door and we have no control.

[11 : 32] We cannot resist. We cannot stop its progress. Subject to lifelong slavery. All the days of our lives.

This should be our reaction, our response to what the Bible describes as death and as eternal death.

And sometimes the whole concept of death is like an overcast on our communities because of the solemnity of it and of the tragedy of it.

And we want to speak of the reality of death sensitive to all of these things. But the Bible, and God wants us from the Bible to understand that the overcast of the skies around us is nothing less than eternal death because of our sin and because of our lostness.

The reality that we must learn to fear. Secondly, there is a relationship that we must learn to appreciate.

[12 : 59] And the relationship that we must learn to appreciate is, again in verse 14, since there were children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things.

people and the picture that we have here is oppression outside of the human race, looking down on the predicament of the human race, and looking down on the predicament and seeing that humankind is lost and trapped in death and in sin because of rebellion against God.

And that external passion that is looking down on humankind in that way is no one less than God himself and is here no one less than the Lord Jesus himself.

and if we look more closely at the way in which the Lord himself is looking down on the predicament of humankind, we notice something that's really important.

And the important thing is that God is looking down on a particular people amongst the mass of humankind.

[14 : 19] And read through these verses. And time after time we are coming face to face with children. We are coming face to face with the offspring of Abraham.

We are coming face to face with quotations from the Old Testament. I will tell your name to my brothers. I will put my trust in him. Behold, I and the children God has given to me.

What does this tell us about God's relationship with humankind? These words remind us that as we read the words in verse number 13 coming from Isaiah chapter 8, we understand that there is what the Bible calls a remnant, that there is a chosen people.

And God in this image that we have here, external to the experience of humankind, God's looking down on children. He is looking down on his family.

He is looking down on the offspring of Abraham. He is looking down on those whom he has chosen, not the physical descendants of Abraham, but those whom he has chosen from before the world was, and he sees that they have flesh and blood.

[15 : 41] There is frailty. He sees failing. He sees death. He sees hopelessness. The whole environment of humankind as God looks down upon it is one of doom and darkness and one that looms forward to eternal destruction.

And that whole external assessment, if we can call it that, is where we see the wonder of the relationship into which God has come with his people, those whom he has come to save.

And because children, she and flesh and blood, he himself, who is the he himself?

Who is the writer referring to? No one less than himself. The center of the gospel, the center of our salvation, the one described at the beginning of this letter, as the one who is the radiance of the glory of God, who is the express image of his person, the exact imprint of his nature, the one whose throne is forever and ever.

He himself, the son of God looking down on your lostness and mine, and because of the predicament in which we find ourselves in our lostness and under the shadow of death, he partook of the same things.

[17 : 34] the wonder of the son of God becoming man, the wonder of the son of God taking our human frailty and our human nature, taking it to himself, the wonder of the son of God entering into the experience of this world, to walk its path with us, to walk alongside us, to share our griefs and our sorrows, and in particular to come alongside us and to be able to suffer, to go through the death that is the penalty due to us for our sin.

The relationship that we must learn to appreciate. there is the sense through these verses of the importance and of the necessity.

There is no salvation for lost humankind unless this great step takes place. and we may speak of the birth of Jesus.

We may speak of Jesus in the manger, Jesus on the breast of his mother, Jesus growing up as a 12-year-old in the temple. We may speak about the boy Jesus and the man Jesus and the preacher Jesus, but who is he?

He is himself. He is the son of God. come down into our world. The son of God described for us by Paul in Philippians chapter 2.

[19 : 30] The person who was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He emptied himself.

He took the form of a servant and being found in human form. He humbled himself and became obedient to death.

How much do you and I tonight appreciate who Jesus is? It's the greatest wonder that we have in the Bible.

It's the greatest wonder that we can hear over in this world God. The son of God who sits on the throne of the universe came to be an infant in his mother's arms in Bethlehem.

Learning to appreciate. And as we read through the Gospels we have a story and it's so easy for us to hear the story to hear about his miracles to hear about the things that he said and to lose sight of who he actually is.

[20 : 52] And tonight as we think of the reality of death which we must fear if there is hope for us we need to think of the relationship of the son of God with us and learn to appreciate the marvel of his coming into the world and walking the face of this earth with us.

There's the reality there's the relationship and thirdly there's the rescue that we must not fail to embrace and in the rescue that we have in these words there are two elements to it and the first part of the rescue is that there is a great overthrow that a kingdom is being demolished and dismantled and the writer tells us that again in verse number 14 that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil there is someone with power and we need to reckon with the power of Satan the power of the devil and the way in which he is organized in his kingdom and standing up against the kingdom of God he has a controlling influence and power in his own kingdom and determines what happens in his own kingdom he is not outside the authority and the sovereignty of God of course but he has the power of death and we might well ask how does he have that power what does that mean that the son that Satan has the power of death he has it because in the words of

Jesus he was a murderer from the beginning he tempted Adam and Eve into sin and through that temptation which they embraced sin death entered into the world and all of the controlling influence of the devil is with regard to sin and death and his influence is such that eternal death is also under his control and influence and power in that sense that he dominates and domineers all those who live in separation from God the one who has the power of death and so if we're thinking about the reality of death the death that we the reality that we must fear then here is something else that we must fear with regard to the reality of death that the devil the serpent the deceiver the accuser of the brethren the person who is the enemy of

God and the enemy of the people of God that he is the one who has the dominion of death in his hands under the oversight of God himself and it is that power and that dominion that is overthrown that he might destroy the one who has the power of death it's robbing someone of power and of influence we can think of dismantling of taking something apart systematically the son of God has taken apart the kingdom of Satan he has done that systematically he has dismantled everything that Satan builds and that Satan controls we can think of him disempowering

Satan and that's what the son of God has done he has worked in such a way as to prevent Satan from having the power and the influence that he had previously we can think of him deactivating the very power of the kingdom of Satan and that's so important for us to come to the gospel and to understand that the power that Satan has over death is deactivated it's removed or its effectiveness is now removed and ultimately he is overthrown he is removed forcibly from power by the person more powerful than himself and how has the son of God achieved this he has achieved this through the cross itself that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death the son of

[26 : 26] God the Lord Jesus as he is suspended on Calvary's cross dying for the sins of the world as he endures the penalty due to us for our sins and that penalty is exhausted and removed as he turns away the wrath of God and our sins are forgiven the pillars on which the kingdom of Satan stand and is built they are vanished and they are removed and there is nothing left but the tumbling ruin of his kingdom destroying his power doesn't mean to say destroying himself he still remains there but his power his kingdom is overthrown and that's the good news of the rescue that we have from the cross that the death which we fear in its physical aspect in its penal aspect in its eternal aspect and that we find ourselves subject to lifelong slavery because of it that fear is taken away through the cross of the

Lord Jesus as the late principal Don McLeod said in his book Christ crucified the paradox here is that Christ destroyed the devil with his own weapon that in the death of Christ where Satan thought he was having the victory that where he thought he had victory turned out to be his defeat and his overthrow who rejoice in the cross of Jesus Christ because he has overthrown Satan he has crushed his head he has defeated him and he has emerged victorious the rescue and the overthrow of Satan and there is the rescue and our deliverance and deliver verse 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery a change that comes about because of what

Jesus has done on the cross taking us from one place transferring us into another place it's breaking our existing relationships with sin and with death and it's giving us a new relationship with the God against whom we have rebelled it's taking us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God it's removing that fear of death it's setting us free!

love love love holy holy perfect through suffering.

That's the deliverance. Taking those who may have chosen from lost humankind and bringing them into the paradise of God.

[31 : 24] Taking many sons, many children, many, taking God's family into the glory. The world to come in verse 5.

The glory in verse 10. And the new heavens and the new earth. That Revelation 21 speaks of.

And that paradise. Where we read that people will come out of great tribulation in Revelation 7. And they will enter into the new heavens and the new earth.

God himself will be present with them as their God. They shall be his people. God will wipe away all tears. And death shall be no more.

What a place. What a paradise. What a promise. God will and as we close this evening what do you think yourself?

[32 : 30] What do you think of the rescue of humankind by Jesus on the cross? What do you think of the relationship of the Son of God with humankind with yourself?

What do you think of the reality of death? And can you go home tonight and say that you don't need to embrace the Lord Jesus?

Say that you don't need the salvation that he offers. That you don't need the rescue that he offers to you in the gospel. Can you possibly go home and say that?

And I close with reading the verses at the beginning of this chapter. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

There is no other salvation. There is no escape. hope and the necessity tonight is for you and for me to embrace this founder of salvation this deliverer of sinners this victorious conqueror on the cross and to embrace him and to look at death itself and see it as our gateway to the paradise of God and to the full enjoyment of the blessing of God throughout the endless ages of eternity to come.

[34 : 08] May God bless his word to us. We'll bow our heads in prayer. Most gracious God we seek to humble ourselves before your word the solemn nature of the truths that you bring before us in it the solemn way in which these truths are impressed upon our minds help us to receive them as they are help us not to cloud over their solemnity help us so we will not forget the truths that have been brought before us from your word this evening but give to us a sense of our need a sense of the necessity of embracing the salvation that is ours through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us bless your word to our hearts we do pray and watch over us as we close this service and as we go into the remainder of this your day bless your word and keep us and may it be the means of informing your paths each step that we take in the week that is to come as we commit ourselves to your care hear our prayer and accept us we pray these things for Jesus sake

Amen the closing psalm is psalm number 68 the Scottish Psalter is on page 303 and at verse number 18 verses that describe to us in a fitting way something of what we have been considering together from the letter to Hebrews psalm number 68 at verse 18 and we're singing down to the verse mark 20 the tune is Lingham thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended up on high and in triumph victorious led captive captivity we stand to sing these words to God's praise to verse number 20 thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended up on high ascended upon high and the holy

And the shriek of victorious land, captive, captivity, captive, captivity, captive, captivity, captive, captivity.

Thou hast received gifts for men, for such as did rebel, for such as did rebel.

Ye, for them that caught the Lord, in midst of them I dwell, in midst of them I dwell, in midst of them I dwell, in midst of them I dwell.

[37 : 24] Blessed be the Lord who is to us, of our salvation God, of our salvation God, who daily with his benefits, as plenteously doth Lord, as plenteously doth Lord, as plenteously doth Lord, as plenteously doth Lord.

Ye of salvation is the God, who is our God most strong, who is our God most strong.

And unto God, the Lord from death, the issues do belong, the issues do belong, the issues do belong.

If you'll let me to go to the main door after the benediction. Thank you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen. Amen.