

Hebrews 2:5-9

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[0 : 00] It's one word that sums up Christmas. One thing we all dream of. One idea that drives into the heart of who we are and what we were made for.

! We want to be together. Christmas every year is an attempt at something that we want to be true, to be capable of. Real friendship.

Real togetherness. Gathering around the tree to know laughter with ones that we love. To sit around a table to exchange loving gifts.

The hope of Christmas is to see a world even. A world at peace. A world together. What was God doing when he decided to send his son into the world?

When God became a man. He was triggering the climax of the story of creation. The story of the human race.

[1 : 08] That God made us for fellowship. With him and with each other. What was he planning? What was he doing? How silently, how silently this wondrous gift was given.

In a quiet, understated, and yet colossal mission, God was involved in a conspiracy of love. To forge a perfect partnership between God and man forever.

Where God and man would join. Inseparably, mysteriously, and eternally bound. Where in Christ, God and man are together.

This is where we've been heading in the first couple of chapters of Hebrews on Sunday mornings. And this is where the greatness of this salvation that we've been hearing about, revealed in the sun, that first Christmas shines.

That the story of being together, God's world story, is finding its goal in Jesus. We're going to focus in on verse 5 to 9 of chapter 2 this morning.

[2 : 24] And then, if you're here next Sunday, we'll look at verse 10 to 18. And in these verses, the pastor of the Hebrews gives the why of the incarnation. He gives us an insight into the heart of God.

He uses a quote from Psalm 8. He shows us the focus of God's mission to renew a partnership. Where creation is the stage.

Where God says to man, let's do this together. Let's rule this creation together. You will rule human beings by my side.

Let's enjoy togetherness. In Psalm 8 here, this quote he gives, he gives a flashback, first of all, to the beginnings of a beautiful friendship.

The beginnings of a beautiful relationship. Where God made man in his own image. To share. To be together with him in his rule over the earth.

[3 : 31] Occasionally, in our confession of faith on a Sunday morning, we'll say the Nicene Creed. And that creed explains to us what happens in the incarnation and why it happens.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven. Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For us and for our salvation. The creed isn't embarrassed there, is it? Telling us that God did something for human beings.

For us. It was for his glory, of course. But it was genuinely for us. For our benefit. But why do it?

When we look at ourselves. Why should God bother? Why bother God with tiny little people like us?

[4 : 32] Try standing in front of the mirror. Naked, if you like. Tonight. And asking that question. Why do it? Why was I worth it?

In all of my weakness. And in my smallness. Why should God, who can make a universe with a word. Who hold galaxies in a teacup.

Bother doing anything for tiny little man and woman. And that's the question that Psalm 8 asks that he quotes there, isn't it? What is man that you are mindful of him?

Why do it? God. Because right from the beginning. The plan has always been. God and man. Together. United. And in creation we see the beginnings of that beautiful partnership. Human beings are the only ones.

[5 : 30] The only creatures God has ever said. Let us make man and woman in our image. Male and female. You can hear him in Genesis chapter 1 at the beginning of the Bible.

Forging this partnership in creation. Let us make man in our image. After our likeness. And let them have dominion.

Over the fish of the sea. Over the birds of the heavens. Over the livestock. Let them have dominion over all of the earth. In creation.

He makes man. To partner in what God is doing. In what God is. His rule. His authority. His very image.

Genesis 1. It repeats. So God created man. In his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. Man was made by God.

[6 : 30] To reflect God. In partnership with God. And so he crowns man with glory and honour. God as creator.

And Adam the first man as king. Man as lord of God's world. With him. Together. Together. The world laughs at the creation account.

Doesn't it? In Genesis chapter 1. It pours scorn on what God did then. So much so though. That it fails to hear God speaking there.

The things that actually we long for. That creation was made. And at its pinnacle. Is a relationship. In creation.

God says to little people. Like you and me. Let's do this whole thing together. Let's be together. Let's share.

[7 : 32] Let's rule my creation together. God walks with Adam in the garden. God talks with him there. God gives him Eve.

Saying enjoy togetherness. Loving God. Loving their neighbour. A beautiful friendship. Together you will be on top of the world.

He says to them. And by my side. You will rule my world. Now it's not that they're the same. Is it? God and man.

They're not the same. Of course not. Isaiah speaks of God's uniqueness. As the one who creates the world. He created the heavens.

He formed the earth. And made it. But he goes on in chapter 45 of Isaiah. To say. He established it. But he did not create it empty. He formed it to be inhabited.

[8 : 32] Even when God would have been perfectly happy. On his own. By himself. In the communion of the Trinity. He fills the world. He fills the world with people.

For friendship. With him. A world for walking and talking. A world for eating and laughing. A world for a passionate.

Ruling partnership. Over his creation. So the pastor tells us. Doesn't he. In verse 5. This is why. God sent his son.

Because God has a vested interest. In man and woman. Why is God mindful of man? Why save man? Remember the Hebrews obsession with angels.

The most impressive things really. That God has created. When you look at them. You fear. You're filled with trembling. But the world. Wasn't made for them.

[9 : 31] He says. The world to come. Verse 5. Has not been subjected to them. The world that God made. Is not the place for God.

And angels. To know this relationship. But for God. And man. Together. Now in God's mind.

Angels aren't the big deal. Even though they're so impressive. He's already said. At the end of chapter 1. If you look in verse 14. They're angels. They're just ministers. They're just.

Servants of the ones. Who will inherit salvation. My tiny little. Human beings. He desires. Not to be joined.

With the angels. But with you. And with me. For us. And for our salvation. Because we are the ones. He has made.

[10 : 24] To share in his reign. He put everything. In subjection. Under Adam's feet. He made Adam. To be his covenant partner. In ruling the world. He gives.

Tiny little man. Great big shoes. To fill. Doesn't he? Human beings. See how he is. Mindful of us.

His partners in creation. And it's true. Isn't it? Human beings. We build skyscrapers. And we plant arboretums. We invent the microchip.

And cure disease. We create family. And friendship. We rule. This earth. We were made to rule. Together.

All together. With God. United. This was always the plan. man. And this is why he is mindful of man. Because of this beautiful friendship.

[11 : 24] It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Wasn't it? But now we see something else. Don't we in the world? We see not a beautiful friendship.

But the waging of an ugly war. We see the waging of an ugly war. There's a word in verse 8 that we naturally question.

I think if we're reading carefully. It's the word everything. Isn't it? Putting everything in subjection under his feet.

Under mankind's control. He says he left nothing outside of his control. This was Adam in partnership together with God. But we question that word.

Everything? Really? As we look at the world today. We see that's just not the case. Is it? And he agrees.

[12 : 20] The pastor. He says no. At present actually. We do not see everything. In subjection to man. What we do see though. Is the degeneration of man's power.

Instead of him subduing the earth. The earth subdues him. Doesn't it? It swallows him in the dust. Literally. And while there is much human advancement.

We are not rulers of the earth. As God intended us to be. We are slaves to this earth. All around us. Our dominion.

Our everything is weak. God makes us for partnership. To rule over his world. But as much as we love doing things together. As much as we long for that.

There is something in us that defaults. Not to us. But to me. God says. Let's do this together.

[13 : 21] But our reply. No God. God. Not we. But me. He says. Together. We say.

Apart. And we try to be lone rulers of this earth. We've broken that partnership with God. We've broken our covenant with him.

And we've waged war with God. And surely this is what the incarnation reveals to us. Doesn't it? That when God comes into the world.

What is our response? He does not come into a world that welcomes him with arms open wide. He enters a world of hostility.

He doesn't enter a humanity that loves their God. He enters a humanity that raises daggers at him. Slams the door on him.

[14 : 23] Who pierces him with the cold steel of a spear. And thorns and nails. He doesn't come to visit his good old friends.

But rebels. Who spit on him. Who mock him and kill him. God is dead. We cry. Not together.

Apart. I wonder if you can sense just something of that animosity in your own heart towards God. Just the difficulty we have in praying is a sign of that, isn't it?

That there is some barrier there. Paul says to the Ephesian Christians. We have become children of wrath from God. And in all of this we have proven what became true when Adam rebelled in the garden that first time.

We have proven to ourselves that we cannot be the people of God apart from God. We cannot be the rulers of God's world apart from him.

[15 : 31] We can't wear our crown with glory and honour in ourselves apart from him. We cannot though fight God's design for the world.

For we must live and rule only together with God. Apart. Apart. We have never successfully subdued this earth.

Apart. We build skyscrapers and we knock them down and we destroy them. Apart. We build cities but then we burn them down.

Apart. We make friendships but we break friendships. Apart. Apart. There is love. But there is also much hate in the world.

And we've proven haven't we beyond doubt that we cannot keep the crown that God has placed on our own heads. When we deny the crown that is on his. Breaking covenant with God.

[16 : 34] Apart from him. Our dominion over the world is weak. Because we were supposed to be doing it together. With him.

And it all culminates for Adam doesn't it? And for us. In death. Death shows that the pastor is right. That eventually we all succumb to it.

The reign of death. A sign of covenant curse. In death God says to us doesn't he? You want to be apart from me. So be it.

Goodbye. We are not together. And death screams that we're not friends of God. And we're not friends of the earth. We are at war.

And the ground is cursed because of us. And one day it will swallow each one of us up. No he says we do not see everything in subjection to man.

[17 : 35] So what was God planning? What was he up to? We see the beginnings of a beautiful relationship.

We see though the ugly war. But he closes this section in verse 9 doesn't he? But now we see him. Namely Jesus. Because we see lastly a new union forged. A new union forged. And this is the good news of the incarnation.

In its great mystery. That in Jesus. The partnership. The togetherness. Finds an even greater reality.

We see the old humanity don't we? Apart from God at war. But now we see Jesus. God and man are eternally.

[18 : 35] Mysteriously. Inseparably. Not simply together. Or as partners. But in union. Inexplicably.

Fused. Fused. By the power of the Holy Spirit. Forever. God and man. Combined. Notice the pastor uses.

His human name. For the first time. In the letter of the Hebrews. Jesus. God. Has a man's name.

This tiny man. Can now fill. The big shoes. Of humanity. Of humanity. He is. The union. Of God and man.

In his one person. This man. Is God's perfect image. And so he does what Adam. Failed to do. Doesn't he? Notice in verse 9. The repetition.

[19 : 37] Of Psalm 8. We see him. Who for a little while. Was made lower than the angels. He repeats. Adam's mandate. Yet again. He lives out.

This union. In all he does. This man says. Us. Not me. Together with God. Not apart.

The maker of the angels. He bows himself here. Doesn't he? He stoops. He empties himself. Lower than the angels. As a man. And it's as if humanity now.

Has a second chance. In him. Where this beautiful friendship. Can find. A new beginning. As George Whitefield. Puts it. Jesus was God.

And man. In one person. That God and man. Might be happy. Together again. This union. He brings. Not just for himself.

[20 : 38] But for his people. He comes as a new Adam. As a new head of humanity. And entering the world. He enters the hostility.

He enters and exhausts. All of the ugliness. Of the war. He experiences. The separation. That we ask for.

From God. He is swallowed. Into the ground. He feels the hostility. Of the earth. He is buried. And he returns. To the dust.

To rise again. In Europe. There was speculation. During the middle ages. About whether there was. A sea route. To India. Away to the land.

Of spices. Around the southern tip. Of Africa. No one could be sure. Many believed. There was a route. But attempts. At sailing around.

[21 : 32] That route. Had failed. It was called. The Cape of Storms. It became notorious. But one sailor. Was determined.

To try once more. One sailor. Came to. Overpower. The seas. One man. To pull anchor.

At the harbor. And one man. To succeed. In rounding. The Cape. And reaching the east. Ever since. Vasco da Gama. Sailed back to Lisbon.

In triumph. It's been impossible now. To doubt. That a way. To the east. Exists. A way. Through the dark waters. Around.

What is now. Not called. The Cape of Storms. But the Cape. Of good hope. We see. Jesus. One man.

[22 : 27] Sailing. Humanity. Through the storm. Of death. He tastes. Death. For everyone. He sails.

Into God's. Throne room. And in Jesus. God. And man. Are ruling. Together. Again. In union. In. We've proven. To ourselves. We can't be. The right rulers. Of the world. Apart from God. We can't even. Run our own lives. Properly. Can we? Apart from him.

Try as we may. We can't do that. Apart from him. But now. We see. Jesus. And we see. Man. As he should be.

We see. Man. As he. Could be. And we see. Man. As he will be. Amongst his people. John Henry Newman.

[23 : 23] Wrote in his. Carol. About the incarnation. A wisest love. That flesh. And blood. Which did. In Adam. Fail. Should strive.

Afresh. Against the foe. Should strive. And should prevail. We see. Jesus. It's why. One of Paul. The apostle Paul's.

Favorite. Descriptions. Of a Christian. Is. Somebody. Who is. In Christ. Though we are. Many. He says. We are. One body.

In Christ. And individually. Members of one another. He says. To the Galatians. There is neither. Jew nor grief. There is neither. Slave nor free. There is neither.

Male nor female. For you are all. One. In Christ. Jesus. It's always. Been. The plan. That God.

[24 : 14] And man. Would unite. In Christ. That we would unite. In Christ. This is the dream of Christmas.

Come true. Together. Again. I know. Many of you. Are going to feel. The pain of Christmas.

The pain of separation. Separated from those. That we love. And somehow. Christmas. Just brings that. Back to us. Doesn't it. Separated by death.

Remembering. Old. Unions. Broken. Because. We do not. Yet. See. Everything. In subjection. To. Man. But God.

Is mindful. Of that. God. Is mindful. Of man. And in his. Memory. In his. Mind. This is the goal.

[25 : 12] Of the world. Story. Man. Is the object. Of his. Desire. Not the angels. What was he doing? What was he planning? That humanity.

Would be united. With him. In his son. Jesus. That. As Paul says. In Ephesians 1. All things.

Would be. According to his purpose. Set forth in Christ. As a plan. For the fullness. Of time. To unite. All things. In him. Whether things. In heaven. Or things. On earth.

And that is the dream. Of Christmas. It is a world. In union. Dream on. We think. As we look at the world. Don't we.

But the. The pastor tells us. We can dream. We can dream. Of this. Because it is. It is now. A reality. In. Jesus.

[26 : 08] And we see him. With the eyes of faith. And one day. When he returns. Our hope. Will be a felt reality. In Jesus.

God. And his people. Are forever. United. Together. Let's pray. Let's pray. Thank you.