

Hebrews 2:14-18

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[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be here. Look forward to this for quite some time, and I'm not going to waste any time. I'm going to dig right into God's Word in Hebrews 2.

Again, it's on page 1002 where we're looking at Hebrews chapter 2. Hebrews is one of my favorite books. I know you're not supposed to say you like one book or one scripture or have a scripture over another.

It's all God's Word. But I find Hebrews to be particularly helpful for suffering, for difficulty, for going through just the reality of what life is.

Life is hard. And one of the most common accusations that's levital against Christianity is it's a wish fulfillment. It's pie in the sky. It's a way to deal with things to make us numb to what reality really is. Well, for one, I need help. I admit I'm weak. I can't take all of the earth on myself. I can't take life on by the horns.

[1 : 03] I'm not capable of doing that. I am a creature, and I have limitations. So I fully admit I need help. The question is where is the help going to come from?

From some place that is equally as weak or from a point that's stronger. But not only stronger, allows me to gain a perspective of what's really going on.

Of course, that is what's happening in Hebrews here. The book of Hebrews, as far as we best know, is written to a group of believers who are largely probably Jewish in their heritage and background.

These would be those who would see themselves as having believed in Jesus as Messiah. They probably still viewed themselves as Jews. And so you have a tremendous argument throughout the scripture made to the consistency of what God had promised Abraham, what God had done through the covenants and how he had made a people for himself.

And apparently they're being tempted to some degree to throw it all away and return back to Judaism. And his argument is there's no there to go back to because Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham.

[2 : 10] Jesus is the promise of what all Moses had spoken of, of what the law pointed to and the one to whom the prophets referred. So in that first chapter, he speaks of the superiority of Jesus over the prophets.

It's Christ's superiority as as creator of all things. Even the angels worship him and his superiority as redeemer. He is creator. He is sustainer.

He is redeemer. And for that reason, if they were to walk away from their faith or throw it away, as he says, they would have nothing. There is no old covenant to go back to.

So he says repeatedly throughout the book, it's a book that's both of warning and encouragement. We think of warning is always negative, but it's a serious thing to say you're going to throw away everything if you throw away Jesus.

He's not an add on to your life that you can put on a shelf and say, well, I'll go back to what I had. If you throw away Jesus, you will throw away God because Jesus is the end of the law.

[3 : 12] Paul says the fulfillment of the law. He is the one that everything speaks of. And this argument that he makes here as he starts in chapter two is an argument that speaks of Jesus in the incarnation, that he is God in the flesh, that he is shared in our bodiness yet without sin.

Jesus did not sin. We sin. Jesus was perfect in that regard. But it doesn't mean that he walked through life one foot above the ground and just glided through and was never in any way tempted.

The scriptures make it clear Jesus was tempted. Yet he didn't sin. Now, that temptation, some people say, well, it was just, you know, theater because there's no way that Jesus could have possibly sinned.

But I believe that temptation had to have some enticement to him. The devil tempted him in the Gospels and said, look, if you're really the son of God, just forestall all that difficulty that's going to come and start your kingdom now.

He said, no. But I believe even just living as God in the flesh on this earth was itself an ongoing temptation for him.

[4 : 22] He saw the world around him broken because man had been disobedient to God because he had refused to believe God, particularly the people of God, the covenant people of God, who constantly the prophets called to repent because they were spiritual adulterers.

They had joined themselves to another and it broke his heart. They think of him in the Gospels standing there and saying, you know, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who stoned the prophets, killed those I sent.

How I long to draw you under my wings. But then he says, but you would not have it. Now, anyone standing there would immediately think either he's crazy or he's making the claim to be the one who sent those prophets all those years.

Anyone in C.S. Lewis that looks at the life of Jesus could never lay the claim of idiocy or lunacy at his feet. He was completely within the control of his faculties and obviously very clearly a man who was together.

And his moral teaching, of course, being what it is. But it wasn't just because he was calm, cool and collected. It was because he was who he said he was. So the incarnation is so important.

[5 : 32] But at this point, he makes this argument that Jesus is a fitting savior because of his suffering in the world. This past summer, my 13 year old nephew killed himself.

13 years old. He was a little boy who I still see him as a little boy who just loved people. And he would actually take the burdens of people on himself.

It seems sometimes to a fault, you know, if you stubbed your toe on the bedpost. I bet that hurt, didn't it? It was just a concern to him.

And it's like the burdens of the lot of life seem to be just too much for him. And he was very sad.

And this past August, he took his own life. Speaking at his funeral service was difficult.

There were over 2000 people that showed up from his church community and from the surrounding community. And it was an outpouring of grief. And so much of the sentiment was, why?

[6 : 31] How is it that a 13 year old could be so burdened in this world that he would feel that he need to take his own life? A 13 year old in a Christian home, in a community in which people proclaim the hope of faith in Christ.

Why? Why? Recently, Derek Thomas spoke. Some of you know him at our church. And he spoke of a situation as a pastor that he dealt with with a woman who had a profoundly ill mentally and physically son.

And for 17 years, as he ministered to her, he would come to her house and she would ask, Pastor, why would God allow this? And he said, I don't know. But I do know that he knows what suffering is. And that's what Hebrew 2 speaks of. It was fitting. Verse 10 says that he for whom and by whom all things should exist. There is his creator and maker of all things in 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. They all share in the same reality. They are human beings. They are made together of the same stuff.

[7 : 40] So Jesus shares in our humanity, but he also shared in our suffering. Now, we need to ask this question. What does it mean to say Jesus was made perfect? Because, of course, when we think of Jesus, we think he is perfect.

You know, if he had to be made perfect, that means he was less than perfect. Right. Well, I think it can't mean that he was morally imperfect. We know that because Jesus kept the law.

And we know that in verse 15 of chapter 4, it says he didn't sin. He did all these things without sin. It's not speaking of a moral imperfection. And it can't mean that he was less than divine or else the argument of Hebrews falls apart completely.

Because he is divine. He is the perfect creator. The clue to the answer, I think, lies in that following verse in verse 11. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family, is how I like to put it.

Not just the same source, but the same family. Jesus' experience as a human being was completed in that sense. The verb can be translated that way. It was completed. It was made perfect by his suffering ultimately unto death.

[8 : 46] So, when God enters the world in the incarnation, he has full omniscience, knowledge of all things. Because he's made all things. But there's one thing he has not yet experienced.

And that is being a human being. So that living life. And I think that from the moment he was conceived through his conception, I believe he was fully aware. Part of his humiliation of humbling himself was that he was aware through all things.

Even as an infant, imagine God, the infant, having his diaper changed. And knowing, fully aware, what was going on.

Imagine having parents who were not perfect. Mary and Joseph were not perfect parents because they were human beings. And then perhaps disciplining Jesus. Well, for one, he didn't need discipline. He was sinless.

Because, you know, we as parents often discipline our children in error. Our sin is what does that. You know what? My alarm is going off. Sorry about that.

[9 : 50] But not only that. I think as Jesus would go through the world and see other things. He experienced a level of suffering that allowed him to have an insight that he did not have as God.

Some people find that to be a little unnerving. To think that Jesus didn't know something before. But I think his humanity cemented for him a personal knowledge of suffering that allows us, when we suffer, to realize.

It isn't that Jesus looks at us as creator and says, there, there. I know what I'm doing. You need to just go on through it. What he's saying is, I know. I know.

Because I've been there. So, he goes on to say, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood. Verse 14. He himself likewise partook of the same things that through death, the ultimate end of suffering.

There is no suffering greater than death itself. He might destroy the one who has the power of death and is the devil. And deliver all those who fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

[10 : 52] It means that Jesus was tempted in his suffering to not trust God. Maybe even to question. How could God question himself?

Was this a good idea, really, for me to come into the world and go through this? In the garden itself, when Jesus prays, Father, if there is some way for this cup to pass from my hand.

That's one of the most profound things I've ever read. How could he ask that question when he knew from before the foundation of the world? In eternity past, when it was determined that he would come and give himself.

How could he now ask that it not happen? There's something about the suffering that Jesus was ultimately about to experience on the cross. Not just the physical suffering. But the fact that God was going to pour out his wrath.

In judgment. So that sin would be judged. And that we would have a way to be able to say, through Christ, that our sins are forgiven. They have been taken away.

[11 : 52] That the penalty for sin has been paid. There are only two ways that sin will be born. Either by us or by Jesus. And if we bear it, it will crush us eternally.

But because Jesus bore it, he can deliver us. But more than that, as we go through suffering, it means that Jesus' experience of suffering, even suffering temptation, helps us to know that he's a savior who has a kinship with us.

He's a man, Isaiah says, who was acquainted with grief. A man of sorrows. One of the things I shared in that funeral message that I did for my nephew, which was clearly one of the hardest things that I've ever had to do, was the fact that I think that by the time Jesus made it to the garden, he was a broken man already.

Broken by what he had seen and had experienced. Because of what suffering in the world had happened. That he himself witnessed. And he knew he was going to ultimately correct it. Spiritually, dealing with sin on the cross. But in the renewal of all things, as he is continuing to reconcile the earth, Colossians says, to himself. And in the end, in the consummation of all things, which will set everything right.

[13 : 17] Here's what I said. I am convinced from the moment of his conception in Mary's womb, our savior began to sorrow and to grieve. When the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and the divine

mystery of the incarnation became an enfleshed reality.

Our savior began owning the very curse he had levied. In pain, you shall bring forth children. Whatever those pains are, Jesus was no mere bystander in their reality because he personally submitted to them as God, the infant, God, the child.

Even as he was at the same time upholding the universe by the word of his power. As he grew, Jesus owned every suffering reality. As he walked on the soil, he had cursed.

When Luke tells us that Jesus the boy grew in wisdom and stature, I believe he was not simply saying he was becoming a strapping young man. But that he was gaining a wisdom that only he could have.

An accumulation along his life's path of the heavy reality of the brokenness of sinful hearts, the vileness of human cruelty and the deep sorrow of death's blow.

[14:22] We cannot know so many whys. Our minds spin. Our hearts melt. Why? Why? Why is this happening?

Why is suffering taking place? But surely because we can never know the depth to which our Savior suffered in both life and death, we can also know that he knows far better than we do what suffering is.

So we can trust him. Because he himself has suffered, verse 18, when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Understatements are something that we in the West are given to. Understatements are a way of deflecting some of the hard realities or being sarcastic about them.

They're kind of like forms of denial. To stand in front of my family and those people in that service and to say this was a hard time, that's an understatement.

[15:23] But it was. It was a hard time. And it occurred to me as I was preparing for that, that there is a passage of scripture that is really the most profound understatement ever made, but the most important statement.

He was despised by men. He was rejected. He was a man acquainted with sorrows. We have no idea how much sorrow Jesus really was acquainted with.

Far beyond anything we could ever bear. He bore it in his life. He bore it in his death. But that makes him a fitting Savior. We can't answer the whys.

But we can know that God doesn't just pat us on the back and say, well, just trust me. I'm going to make something good out of it. He says, I've been there. I have worn it.

And I have owned it. I have destroyed it. If you can trust that that is true. Even in my death, I take away the fear of death.

[16:26] And all that is death's calling card. The fear and anxiety. The unknowns. To say, I've got it.

And to know that he's got it because he has entered into it. It changes everything. So when people say, where is God? Where was God in 9-11?

Where was God in the Holocaust? Where was God when my nephew set his chin on a rifle and pulled the trigger?

He was bearing my pain and everyone else's pain on the cross.

So that we might say, even then, though we might not answer why. We can believe he is going to redeem even that.

[17:25] That's a matter of faith. That's a matter of hope. Man of sorrows. What a name. For the Son of God who came ruined sinners to reclaim.

Hallelujah. What a Savior. When he comes, our glorious king. All his ransomed home to bring. Then anew this song we'll sing. Hallelujah.

What a Savior. Hebrews 2. We see that reality. Of his kinship. In suffering. In his identification with us. And that kinship gives us the hope of glory.

That's what verse 10 speaks of here. Here. He's bringing many sons to glory. Because he's been made like the sons. We've been made like.

We're being made like him in our sanctification. So that we may enter into that glory with him. But that promise has been made by the down payment. Of his death and resurrection. His kinship with us gives us the promise of holiness.

[18:26] For he, verse 11, who sanctifies. Who sanctifies. And those who are sanctified. All have the same family. Holy. Jesus has gone before us. Hebrews says.

As a predecessor. A forerunner. He's cut the way. And he says. I'm here. I'm bringing you. And I'm going to make you like me.

We dare to believe. That I could be like Jesus. I'm a sinner. Not a saint. But I'm going to be a saint. I am called a saint now.

One who's set apart. And he is going to make me holy. He set apart for his purposes. More and more. Verse 11. His kinship with us. Assures us of his pride in us.

And I think this is something we have to remember. Some of us have siblings that we're ashamed of. Right? I have a brother who hasn't worked in 30 years. And he's just a squatter in my parents' house.

[19 : 22] They should kick him out. They won't. Because they're worried about him. But I'm embarrassed of my brother. You know. People say. Well how's Doug? I wish I could say Doug who. But I have to say.

He's still squatting in my parents' basement. But it says here. Verse 11. The last part of verse 11. He's 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 every praise. Jesus is not ashamed of those for whom he died. He's not ashamed of those who are suffering in this world for his name.

We're going through pain. And difficulty. Sometimes we're ashamed of what we do in our sin. But also ashamed because we end up suffering for the sake of the Lord. We're sorry for that.

But Jesus says. I'm not ashamed of you. I bought you. I died for you. I suffered for you. And I know you're suffering. I'm with you brother. And sister. I have pride in you.

[20 : 20] Here I am. And the children. God has given me. Look. And there's a song we sing. It says. Jesus shall have the price for which he died. An inheritance of nations.

And he is joyful to bring that inheritance. And he calls us brothers. His kinship with us delivers us from fear. As we've already said in verse 14 and 15. Because he was made like us.

He suffered in the world. And he suffered death. And he has delivered us from the fear of death.

And his kinship with us gives us help. Help. I love verses. Verse 16 through 18.

Surely there's not angels that he helps. But he helps the offspring of Abraham. That's us. 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 satisfaction. 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. Martin Luther's famous hymn on Psalm 46.

[21 : 20] If God is an ever present help in trouble. A mighty fortress is our God. A bulwark never failing. Our helper he amid the flood.

Rife is a flood. But our brother. Who is like us. And is making us now like him. Is not ashamed of us. He has been there. He has borne it. And he says. I'm with you. I will help you. I will never leave you or forsake you.

Though I cannot answer why. I know Jesus knows. Whatever I have suffered. Better than I could even know it myself.

And I can trust it. Let me pray. Let me pray.