

# Hebrews 2:5-18

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hebrews 2, page 1001. If you can get that open. That's where we're going to be together this evening. Let me pray one more time as we come to God's word.

Our Father, we ask that you would speak and that we would listen And that your spirit would work in each of our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Michelangelo only ever signed one of his sculptures, the Pieta. It's a statue of Mary holding her crucified son.

And this statue stood in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome from 1500. And it was there for four and a bit centuries until somebody in 1972 got past security and took into it with a hammer.

Mary's arm was in smithereens. Her nose was very badly damaged as well. That makes throwing paint over Van Gogh's sunflowers or soup, wasn't it, over Van Gogh's sunflowers.

[ 1 : 13 ] Seemed a bit like child's play. But what had happened was this treasure of Renaissance art, Michelangelo's beautiful creation, became a marred masterpiece.

And it took experts an age to restore it. That sense of a marred masterpiece is a great description of you and me.

Men and women, boys and girls, we are a marred masterpiece. That we are a masterpiece, the crown of God's work, comes from the creation story.

God made everything, and we're told when we read those first verses of the Bible, that those things were good. Trees, good. Mangoes, good.

The silverback gorilla, good. And then he made mankind and looked at his handiwork and he said, Very good. Unique.

[ 2 : 14 ] Distinct from everything else. Wonderful. All by God's design. And that's actually where our author starts this evening. Verse 5 of Hebrews chapter 2, including Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 begins as a meditation on that creation story. The psalmist looks at humanity in wonder. He looks at us as we are now. He does that in wonder that God would bother with us.

God is so vastly glorious, so supremely wonderful, and we are so insignificant by comparison. And the psalmist says, What is man that you are mindful of him?

But as he goes on, that declaration from Genesis chapter 1 is at the front of his mind. Look at verse 7. 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. He's saying, You gave mankind this place of honor and dignity, and you gave them this world to rule.

[ 3 : 24 ] That was our original design. We were created to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But we know that we blew it. We blew it. We chose to reject God's ways in his world.

We squandered our potential, and we damaged what God had made, and we are inescapably marred. We're broken. But unlike the Pieta, the vandalism doesn't come from outside of us.

It is an inside job. Many years ago, I heard a preacher referring to sin like the employee of the bank who goes down and opens the door for the robbers.

And he said, Every sin you see is an inside job. And it's a good way to put it, isn't it? Because our sinful hearts cause the problem. Our sinful hearts open the way for sin to come in.

But here's the thing. Just as the Pieta was restored by master artists, it took them a long time to be sure, but just as it was restored by master artists, Hebrews 2 tells us that this is what God has done for us.

[ 4 : 32 ] Through His Son. So the divine Son of chapter 1 of Hebrews, the supreme one, supreme over all things, including, we heard last time, angels, that supreme Son is now shown to move in our direction.

He's coming to put right, verse 5, the world to come. The world to come. Do you notice he says there, it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. So it's the era that he is talking about now, chapter 1, verse 2, in these last days. He's talking about the world that followed the old order of the Jewish way of things.

Old covenant Israel. This is the era of the new covenant. It's not simply some time far off, another world in the new creation. It is this world. God has come to put right this world, and in particular, chapter 2, verse 10, can you see, He's done that to bring many sons to glory.

God is coming to restore us to the presence of God that we have forfeited through sin. That's what Hebrews 2 is about. You could say that's what salvation history is about.

[ 5 : 45 ] And it is a remarkable story. The way Hebrews 2 unpacks it for us, it is a remarkable story. It first of all describes how this supreme son of chapter 1, here's our first point, takes our humanity.

How he takes our humanity. As I've said, in Psalm 8, David is speaking about mankind. As he begins, he's talking about mankind and the high calling that we were given in the beginning. But the author of Hebrews then makes the connection with Christ.

Look at verse 9. 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. He is a marred masterpiece.

He doesn't rule as he should. Verse 9, But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus. The psalmist knows that because of sin, we don't have dominion over the earth, but there is a particular man who has come to put this right.

The Lord Jesus. So, when the Son of God took on flesh that first Christmas, the eternal Son was made a little lower than the angels. Now, if you were here last week, you'll remember that I mentioned...

[ 6 : 56 ] You'll remember. That's presumptuous. What I said last week was that angels are a measure of status of being. You remember? To be above the angels... In the way the Bible talks, to be above the angels is to be God.

To be below the angels is to be human. And here we see that for a little while, the Son, who according to His divine nature is higher than the angels, takes to Himself the means by which He can become lower than them.

One of the early church fathers sums this up like this. He says, The Son of God deigns to become and to be called Son of Man, not changing what He was, for it is unchangeable, but assuming what He was not, for He is full of love to man.

What He's saying there is, all the grandeur and splendor and majesty of the One who is portrayed in chapter 1 humbles Himself to take our humanity.

That profound truth that we sing, our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man.

[ 8 : 10 ] God, who is higher than the angels, coming for a little while below the angels, taking up residence in Mary's womb, taking flesh.

And that humiliation marked every aspect of His ministry. Baptized by John, you remember, identifying with sinners. Embracing temptation in the desert for 40 days as the second Adam. Living in perfect obedience to the law of God. The Lord Jesus is the model of true humanity. The question is, why? Why did He make that descent from glory to earth?

It's a shocking thing to think about. Why would the God of heaven and earth contract to a span incomprehensibly made man?

It is a shocking thing. And the answer is even more shocking, actually. He did this in order to be able to suffer and die. That's what we're told. Verse 9, 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.

[ 9 : 29 ] Christ has been crowned as King. He is ruling and reigning this evening from the Father's right hand in a human body. But that exaltation only came because of His obedience to death.

Do you see the way the writer says that? That's the reason that He gives. He is crowned with glory and honor. The Lord Jesus enjoys a restored humanity because of the suffering of death.

He has been exalted because He was humbled. He reigns now because He was obedient to the Father's plan of redemption. And this was only possible because He took to Himself the ability to suffer and die.

Because He made that journey from glory to be one of us. There was no other way. Verse 10, have a look. 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.

He's saying, if God, for whom and by whom all things exist, would bring men and women back into His presence, restore the masterpiece, bring them to glory, have them rule with Him, as Psalm 8 tells us, the only fitting way for this to happen would be through the suffering and death of the one who was a qualified Savior.

[ 10 : 49 ] When it says here that Christ was made perfect through suffering, that's not suggesting that there was any deficit in Him. He wasn't imperfect before His suffering. Rather, the word is, literally it is, He is the founder, He is the pioneer who goes ahead of us, and so He is therefore a perfectly fit Savior.

And He is that, verse 11, because He is one of us. Look at verse 11, For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.

He who sanctifies, the Lord Jesus, and those who are sanctified, His church, all have one source. Because of the shared humanity, He is our perfect representative.

He can act on our behalf. When He took our humanity to Himself, He was then able to stand in our place. And this was essential.

Verse 17, Have a look, if He would deal with our sin. Therefore, do you see, 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.

[ 12 : 01 ] If our sin will be removed, if it will be dealt with, He must take our humanity. And that is what He did. The God of glory became one of us so that He could suffer and die for us.

He took what we deserve for our failure in order to bring us to God. So, the Son of God in chapter 1 becomes a son of Adam, not changing what He was, but assuming what He had not been in order to deal with our sin and bring us to glory.

Is that not staggering? The distance between us and God was infinite.

And He came down and reached across that chasm. He came from the loftiest height into the depths of our rebellion. He came from the sublime perfection of heaven to the angry hatred of our world.

We didn't care for Him one bit. We weren't saying, oh, please come and save us. Please come and restore us to the glory that we had in the beginning while we were yet sinners.

[ 13 : 27 ] We hadn't a thought for Him or a care for Him in the world and He made that journey. And He did it to taste death for everyone and bring many sons to glory.

And sons here is the language of inheritance. It refers to both men and women. If you're a woman, you want to be a son of God in this sense because it means that you're an heir of salvation.

It is a staggering thing that the Lord Jesus did this. He took our humanity. But it is on that theme of inheritance and becoming heirs that our author stays.

You see, the Son takes our humanity in order to, point number two, make us family. That's verses 11 to 18. He takes our humanity in order to make us family.

That's the language that's used. Can you see it? Verse 11, 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.

[ 14 : 41 ] 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 to angels that he, it's not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. The Son of God became a son of Adam in order to make us sons of Abraham.

He did it in order to make us children of the promise, to bring us under God's covenant care. He is bringing us to glory, but we are going there as his children. Now, one thing that that means is that you have Christ as your older brother, and he's not ashamed of you.

Did you hear that? He is not ashamed of you. Think about that for a minute. Lots of us have siblings. Boys and girls, look up for a moment. Lots of you, I assume, have siblings that sometime or other have embarrassed you.

Annoying younger brothers obsessed with toilet humor. You don't want your friends to meet them. Maybe it's sisters who talk a bit funny or dress a bit funny. You don't want your mates to know that

she's your sister, and we're a bit ashamed to associate with them.

[16:19] It could be like that in the church, can't it, if we're honest with ourselves. We have brothers and sisters in Christ that say and do things that annoy us or make us cringe or they're socially awkward or they're a bit intense with bad personal hygiene.

Maybe they have extreme views, we think. If only they were just a bit, you know, less out there with what they thought about things.

Pick your poison on that. There are lots of things we get irritated about with our brothers and sisters, whatever it is. We think, oh, they embarrass us. We'd rather not be associated with them. There is none of that with Christ.

even though we all behave in foolish ways and all kinds of different ways a lot of the time, even though we slip up often, Jesus is not ashamed of you.

Maybe you need to hear that this evening. Be reminded of the fact because there's a voice in your head that, well, you're ashamed of yourself, actually, because you did it again.

[17:27] You slipped up again. You did that thing that you try so hard not to do. You committed that sin again. Jesus is not ashamed of you. Before the heavenly host, before the watching cosmic powers, in the face of accusation from the devil, when the devil comes and says, is he one of yours?

Jesus says, that's my brother. She's my sister. And he's not ashamed to do that. Because for each one of us, our salvation reveals the purpose and the power of God.

Your story of salvation, whether you had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, and you can testify to the fact that there was never a day when you didn't know and love the Lord Jesus, that brings glory to God.

If you have had a different story, and it was a total mess, and he saved you in a really radical way, that brings glory to God. Wherever you've come from, your salvation reveals the power and the purpose of God, and he gets glory for that.

Satan says, well, they're terribly bad, you know. Do you think God doesn't know that? Yes, they are, but that is how far my forgiveness extends. Have you seen how dark their heart is?

[18:52] Do you think I don't know that? That's how wide my mercy flows, and it would flow even wider if you could find someone that you think is even worse. You see, Christ doesn't bring us to glory, as one author put it, holding his nose.

He doesn't... When he saved us, he was pleased to do so. In fact, he was so pleased, verse 12, that he praises God for it.

It's a quote from Psalm 22, 22. I will tell of your name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise. We are aware of the joy that our salvation should bring to us. We should rejoice in the fact that we have had our sins forgiven, our conscience cleansed, and that we are made new, and that we are on our way to glory. We know that. But here we see the joy that our salvation brings to him.

Christ is celebrating because he saved you. And he stands up in the midst of the congregation, and he says, God be glorified that he has redeemed my brother, your name, my sister, your name.

[20:02] We can far too easily forget that our God is everlastingly full of joy. We worship and serve a God who delights to save people. You know that, don't you? He takes great joy in you.

I think lots of us, lots of Christians, believe that God has saved them because he has to kind of keep his word. He saved us, but he's not really that pleased about it.

We're so sinful, we're so inconsistent, we're so weak, and we imagine God is just a bit perpetually disappointed with us, just kind of rolls his eyes. One author says this, God is glad, and God is joyful. Now, most Christians can deal with that assuming it's an attribute of God thing, that is, he is those things in himself. Note this, however, he rejoices over his people with gladness.

He looks at the church assembled as we are now, and he breaks into song. Do you ever think that? Stop and wonder about that, that God in Christ wanted to save you, and he rejoices in having done so.

[21:13] He doesn't regret it. In fact, he's so happy about it that he sings about it. And here's the thing, if he's not ashamed of you, don't you be ashamed of him.

What I mean is, don't mumble your way through our songs that give him praise. Don't step back from him when you're told to in the workplace or when you're at school, boys and girls. And don't be shy when it comes to speaking about him to others.

He isn't ashamed of you, don't be ashamed of him. And, if he isn't ashamed of you, don't you be ashamed of yourself. Lots of us, I think, operate under a cloud of shame.

I did it again. I'm such a failure. Say, repent of your sins, remember the promises of the gospel that he forgives you, get back on your feet and go again.

He isn't ashamed of you. He isn't ashamed to call you his brother. Now, there's more to say. Let's keep going. Part of being in the family is that Christ calls us brothers, but using the language of the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 8, verse 18, we then see he also calls us children.

[ 22 : 24 ] Through faith in him, we are the children of Abraham. And look at what that entails. Do you see? He took our humanity all the way to death, verse 14, so 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.

The power of death that the devil holds, that's our fear of death. We fear death. All of us fear death at one level or another, not because our physical lives will end.

We fear death because we know that it tells us something about ourselves that we don't like. It tells us that we deserve to die. See, death isn't a biological thing. It's a moral thing.

It is the consequences of sin. So when the devil accuses us, we know that he has a point. Fair enough. If we came to an experience of death, an experience like death as innocent people, the situation would be totally different.

But we're not innocent. That's why we fear death. And even as Christians, for honest, we're tempted to fear death, which is why we need to grasp what we're being told here.

[ 23 : 33 ] Christ took our humanity in order to take away our fear of death. And death's sting, to use Paul's language, that is the hold that death has over us, is removed because of the cross.

Christ has defeated the devil. Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan, talks about Jesus going into the belly of death and when he's there, poisoning death to death.

It's quite an image, isn't it? He's saying it's like Jesus inflicts death with a terminal disease so that it spits Jesus out to glory.

I don't know if you saw this week the footage of the canoeist in Chile. And a humpback whale comes up and swallows him. His dad is in the canoe behind filming him. I can't imagine what his experience was like.

And then the whale spits him out and he's unharmed. Death is a little bit like that for the believer. We'll go into it, but it won't be able to stomach you and it will eventually spit you out to glory because Jesus, our pioneer, has destroyed Satan and has disarmed his schemes.

[ 24 : 45 ] The New Testament has countless ways to talk about this. In his death, Christ cast out the ruler of this world, John 12. Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities. putting them to open shame by triumphing over them in the cross, Colossians 2.

The cross is not just defeat for the devil. It's not just a points victory, as it were. He was destroyed. It was a thumping. So yes, he still prowls around.

He is the great accuser of God's people, but he is a defeated foe. His condition is terminal. So his words have no lasting power. His promises and his threats no longer need to pull us away.

Look at verse 18. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. The temptation of these first readers was to turn away from Christ, go back to their old lives.

Well, when Christ took our humanity, he shared in the same struggles that we do, but without sin. So although the whole point of his coming was to die and rise to bring many sons to glory, in his suffering, he was tempted to give up.

[ 25 : 51 ] In Gethsemane, he cried out in agony, If there is any other way, Father, let it be so. But he submitted himself fully to the Father's will. In his human nature, he faced the temptations and the sufferings that come in a human, being human.

And what that means is the writer of the Hebrews is telling us that he is able to help you in the same struggle. So you can hear this, that he took your humanity in order to save you, that he made you family.

He's not ashamed of you, but you've got to go and live in a world that is opposed to you. Well, remember this. Jesus faced the same temptations and sufferings that life in a fallen world brings. He was without sin, but he walked there ahead of you. And it means that he's able to help you in the same struggle. He understands temptation. He understands the human frame.

And he can help you whatever your trials. He can help you now and he can help you later when you face death. Our older brother has gone through it already and he has taken away the sting.

[ 26 : 58 ] When death's sting is removed, the fear disappears. Yes, you are a marred masterpiece. We are marred masterpieces, but the Son of God became a son of Adam in order to suffer and die to make you a son of Abraham and bring you to glory.

So what? Well, look at chapter 3, verse 1. Therefore, in light of all of that, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider this Jesus.

Trust him. Confess his name. Know that he delights in you. Lean on him when times are hard. And above all, keep rejoicing in him. Let's pray together.