

Jesus: Our Unashamed Brother

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[0 : 00] Well, please have a seat. Please grab your Bibles or turn them on and scroll to Hebrews chapter 2. Just before we dig in, why don't I pray for us and then we'll get to work.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you that so much of our service has been on the truth that you came. And Father, our prayer now is that you would come and meet us in your word.

Father, you would come and speak to us. Father, that we would leave here loving your son more, cherishing him deeper. And Father, being more conformed to his likeness as we've already been praying.

So Father, help us concentrate. Fathers, help us discern your voice in the midst of the great cacophony of noises that crowded on our lives. Father, do your work to your glory, we pray.

In the name of your son. Amen. Well, this is the second installment in our series in Hebrews, Out of the Shadows. This morning we're in Hebrews 2, looking at Jesus, our unashamed brother.

[1 : 07] And the book of Hebrews is written to Jewish Christians. And the writer writes the book because these believers are tempted to turn away from Jesus and to crawl back to the safety and security and familiarity of Judaism.

And the book is a letter-ish, but it's more of a sermon. And in the sermon he is telling them, stick in with Jesus.

He's saying, stick in with Jesus and don't turn back to the shadowlands of the now defunct Old Testament Jewish faith. And in chapter 1 last week, Graham was telling us that Jesus was fully God.

He is 100% God. He is the one as superior to the angels as the name that he's been given is superior to theirs. He's written explicitly that Jesus the Son is God's full and final word to humanity. He's written that Jesus is God's final fulfilled and finished work for us. That Jesus is God's glory revealed and his character disclosed.

[2 : 23] He is God's agent of creation and the sustainer of creation. He is the one infinitely superior to angels and given the name superior to every name.

In chapter 1 he is laying out unequivocally his case that Jesus is 100% God. In the rest of chapter 1 he gives us seven Old Testament quotes to highlight all that God has said to, through, in and about his Son.

Which brings us to Hebrews chapter 2. If Hebrews chapter 1 is all about Jesus being 100% God, then Hebrews chapter 2 is all about Jesus being 100% man.

100% man. I don't know about you, but as I get older, I'm amazed how small things are becoming other than myself. I seem to be swelling as time goes by.

But if you think of the first mobile phone and how enormous that was, and now you get a phone that's just one and a half inches big. Or you think of the computer.

[3 : 34] I don't know how many of you were at school when computers came in, but they took up almost whole wings of the school. There was a room. Computers, tough.

Huge things. And now you can get this little thing that plugs into your HD television and turns it into a fully functioning PC. Way more, infinitely more powerful than the one that used to take up a room. Or the television. Used to be huge. There used to be three of you to carry it, and you still wanted more. And now you get something that's so wafer thin and small that's curved and in 4K.

If Santa was good to you. Or the car. That now is shrunk down to that kind of size. Or the library that now fits on that.

It's amazing how you can shrink massive things to become tiny things. And that's true. The miraculous miniaturization that took place 2,000 years ago is unbelievable.

[4 : 42] That when a young peasant girl a long way from home amidst the squalor and stench of a stable, grasping the hand of her betrothed gives birth to God. That is miraculous miniaturization.

The big message of Hebrews concerns this mind-bending doctrine that God would shrink himself and take on human flesh.

That is the video at the beginning said that the God of all would come as a baby. Just look at our passage.

Look at verse 9 in Hebrews chapter 2. But we do see Jesus who was made lower than the angels for a little while. Lower than the angels he became man.

Look at verse 11. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family.

[5 : 43] That is, they are human. That Jesus became human. Look at verse 14. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too, that is, Jesus, shared in their humanity.

Verse 17. For this reason, he, Jesus, had to be made like them, fully human in every way.

The unfathomable truth that Hebrews 2 is looking at is the incarnation, where the infinite becomes finite, creator becomes creature, the sustainer of all things is sustained by others.

The all-powerful becomes weak. The sovereign God becomes dependent on others. The one without being is born. Spirit becomes matter. Boundlessness takes on flesh.

The indescribable becomes 65% oxygen, 19% carbon, 9% nitrogen, 9% hydrogen, 3% nitrogen, 2% calcium, 1% phosphorus, with a sprinkling of potassium, 2% sodium, 2% sodium, 2% sodium, 2% magnesium, thrown in for seasoning.

[6 : 55] Hebrews 2, the big thing, Jesus becomes man. Jesus becomes man. It's a potentially embarrassing truth, isn't it? That when you take your friends to the nativity service and you say, well, that inanimate object, that doll in the manger, that's God.

That's what I believed to be God when God came. To focus on Jesus and his teaching and his humanitarian work, rather than the fact that he's God is a little bit more comfortable.

To say that Jesus is a good man, a great teacher, a revolutionary leader, a proper prophet, is all very fine in our world, but to say he's God, that God entered human history, that's potentially embarrassing.

And it seemed to be potentially embarrassing for the first readers of Hebrews. They've given up all the pomp and circumstance of the temple and now they worship God who became man, who died on a blood-splattered cross.

It's potentially embarrassing, isn't it, to say that God came, that all of God was contained in this person, Jesus Christ.

[8 : 13] So easy to think this is a pipe dream, a fairy tale you want to file alongside the tooth fairy, the Easter bunny and the Scottish qualification for a major football championships.

Yet the writer to the Hebrews lovingly, pastorally and compellingly shows the readers and us that the incarnation is beautiful, that it is necessary, it is miraculous, and it is unescapably central to everything we believe.

Far from ridiculous, it is glorious. The writer to the Hebrews, as we read Hebrews 2, it sounds complicated, but I want to give you four simple things, hopefully, that it means.

You can tell me at the door afterwards if I've managed. Why did Jesus become man? Here's the first thing. Jesus became man to announce salvation. Read with me, one to four. We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away.

For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received is just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

[9 : 26] This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Did you read it? First announced by the Lord. This message of salvation first announced by the Lord. After 400 years of salvation, Jesus says salvation has come.

The King has come. The kingdom is here. And the message that Jesus announces, the message of salvation, is being contrasted with the message communicated by angels, which is almost certainly to say the Old Covenant, the Old Testament law.

The message that came through angels to Moses, Old Testament covenants, is being compared with all that now comes in and through, spoken and delivered by Jesus.

So in Deuteronomy 33 verse 2, the Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seah upon us. He shone forth from Mount Parah. He came from the 10,000s of holy ones, angels with flaming fire at his right hand.

[10:44] Or in Acts 7, This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. This is the one who was, this is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai.

And with our fathers, he received living oracles to give us. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, whom you have now betrayed and murdered.

You who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it. Paul writes something very similar in Galatians 3. Do you see that he's saying, you got this message from angels, this Old Testament law.

This Old Testament delivered to you, announced to you by God through angels. And he's saying, if you didn't obey that message, you were in real trouble. There was punishment for every violation and disobedience.

If you disobeyed that, how will you escape if you turn away from this message? This message that Jesus comes as a fulfillment of all of that message.

[11:57] This message announced by Jesus, confirmed by eyewitnesses, testified by God through signs and wonders, affirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit. Why would you go back to that message, which was just the national anthem before the kickoff that's now been announced by Jesus?

If you leave this message, you leave everything. Because that was simply pointing forward to Jesus Christ. If you were punished for ignoring the old message, then it's not going to go well if you ignore this new message given by Jesus.

And so there's this explicit warning. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? And the answer is we won't. We absolutely won't.

And so what does he say to them in verse 1? Don't drift away. We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away.

So we don't get lost. If we start ignoring this, if we start minimizing what Jesus has said to us, we drift away into nothingness and lostness.

[13:13] The writer is worried that his readers are not tied up tightly to Jesus Christ and they're going to drift away. They're going to drift back to Judaism and they're going to lose everything.

He's saying don't drift away. Tie up tightly to the message of salvation. Pay the most careful attention to what God has told you in his son, Jesus Christ, or you'll suffer eternal loss.

The most careful attention. Unless you keep the main thing, the main thing, you'll just drift away into nonsense and nothingness. The writer to the Hebrews is worried that some of his readers are in the haven of the church but they're not more to Jesus Christ.

So when the storm comes and it's coming, they'll just float away. Maybe that's true of some people here this morning. We love church. We've got some friends here.

The coffee's reasonable. The tray bakes are awesome. We quite enjoy the singing. But the Jesus stuff, we could take or leave. And the writer to the Hebrews says, if you leave the message of Jesus, you leave it all.

[14:22] That is the very center of everything that this place is here for. Saying this message is of eternal worth. And paying close attention to that is the only way not to drift away into lostness and nothingness.

Jesus became a man to announce salvation and it's implicit that we listen to him. It's the most important thing that we hear and respond to and keep responding to unless we drift away.

No, Jesus. Only punishment, he's saying. Second thing he says, and the rest of the chapter is really just fleshing out that truth that Jesus became man to bring us to glory.

Verse 5. It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you came for him.

You made them a little lower than the angels. You crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet. In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them.

[15 : 30] Yet at present, we do not see everything subject to them, but we do see Jesus. He was made lower than the angels for a little while, who now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.

He now quotes Psalm 8 and in Psalm 8, God looks at the magnificence of creation. He's humbled by it and he says, well, why do you care about human beings?

If you've done all this stuff, why am I significant? Why am I important? Why would God be so gracious and promise humanity glory and honor when he's obviously so powerful and so magnificent?

And so in Psalm 8, there's this promise that mankind will be crowned with glory and honor and everything will be under mankind's authority.

[16 : 38] That's a great promise, but it seems that something has gone severely wrong. That it doesn't feel like we have authority over really anything in our world.

We have natural disasters, we have wars, we have terrorism, corruption, domestic abuse, child poverty. Despite all the efforts, it doesn't seem we can find a total cure to cancer across the board. That this glory and honor and this authority that we're promised doesn't seem to play out in real life. So what's happened? Well, we've happened. Our sinfulness has spoiled the plan.

That we are all created for God's glory, to enjoy God's glory. That is the trajectory we're on. But we turned away and we prefer to worship ourselves.

We wanted glory for ourselves. We turned inward on ourselves. We forsook God's glory and sinned against him.

[17 : 46] So now we don't see everything subject to mankind. We see a world that's in real trouble and seemingly spiraling out of control. But the beautiful thing it says here, yet at present we do not see everything subject to them, but we do see Jesus.

Jesus came to bring us to glory. We now can't get there ourselves, so Jesus comes to bring us and restore us to the glory for which we were created for.

we lost paradise, but Jesus regained it for us. That he was made a little lower than the angels for a little while.

That he maintained the trajectory towards God's glory. And therefore hope is restored. Hope is restored. He suffered our death for forsaking God's glory.

glory. So we can have the life that he won for us. Hope is restored. Glory once again can be ours in Jesus. He brings us to glory, verse 10.

[18 : 55] In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, people who will trust him, that he's accomplished what we have failed to do. It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything existed, should make the pioneer of their salvation, the one who wins for us perfect through what he suffered.

He becomes perfectly qualified to be our saviour because he suffered for us. He took what we deserved.

One who has absolute authority over everything, even now. And in the future it will be utterly revealed, as so to everyone. And so the writer to the Hebrews is saying, give up on Jesus, you give up on any hope of glory.

Jesus is the one who brings you to glory, and if you turn your back from him, no, you won't be bought because you can't get there yourselves. Jesus became man to bring you, to bring me to glory through faith in him.

The one who got there when we couldn't. So hope is restored. Jesus became man to bring us to glory. Number three, verses 11 to 16.

[20 : 09] both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters.

In the assembly I will sing your praises. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, he says, here am I and the children God has given me.

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shed in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives was held in slavery by their fear of death.

For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. Point three, Jesus became man to free us from the power of the devil and our fear of death.

Death is the great taboo in our world. We'll talk about anything but no one wants to talk about death. 80% of all American health insurance is paid out to people in the last year of their lives.

[21 : 16] That it seems that when death comes we'll pull out all the stops and throw all the money we can at it because we don't want to die. As Woody Allen famously said, I'm not afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens.

That's true for all of us, I dare say. Death is the great taboo of our world. Death is one each and yet the fear of death, the fear of our day coming terrifies us.

The world is terrified of death. And then these verses give us the perfect antidote to the power of death and the fear of death.

Jesus, who's not ashamed to call us his brothers because he loves us. Then quotes Psalm 22 in Isaiah 8 to make the point that he became like us.

Before verse 14 applying the significance, he became human so that by his death he might destroy death and the power of the devil who holds the power of death.

[22 : 28] He breaks us out. He frees us. Jesus died our death for us, meaning that we through faith in him need not fear death and need not eternally die.

No one else has got an antidote to death except Jesus. Jesus shared our flesh and blood so that by his death, death might forever be defeated and death's puppet master the devil might be ultimately disarmed.

death. He declares by his death that death is dead and the power of the devil is destroyed. Picture it like this.

You're in the school playground and every day of your life two bullies make your life an absolute nightmare. One's called the devil and the other's called death. Every day you go and they ruin your life and they leave you cowering in fear.

You go home in tears every day but the bullying never stops. And one day the terror campaign ends and how does the terror campaign end?

[23 : 39] Because our big brother Jesus comes into the playground for us and gives death and the devil such a beating that they cannot touch us anymore because now our death has been died for us and the one who holds the power of the fear of death has been destroyed forever.

We sold ourselves we subjected ourselves to this bullying through our sin and yet Jesus comes and he destroys the power of death the fear of death and the devil who stands orchestrating it all.

Jesus became man to die so that by his death death might be destroyed. No one else has got that. death. So the writer to the Hebrews is saying you forsake Jesus you subject yourselves again to death and you return to the fear that you need and have through Jesus.

Only hope of escaping death is trusting that Jesus died for us. No Jesus only death. Lastly Jesus became man to atone for sin and help us to be holy.

Look at verse 17. For this reason he had to be made like them fully human in every way in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

[25 : 03] Because he himself suffered when he was tempted he is able to help those who are tempted. Jesus became man to atone for sin and help us be holy.

The significance of the high priest is that he is the one who stands for the people before God. He is the intermediary. He is the go-between. There's going to be way more detail about this in this letter. But in the Old Testament it's always unsatisfactory because the place of the high priest is a human. And a human standing before God on behalf of humans will always be unsatisfactory to bring the two together because he's so biased and fallen on the side of humanity.

But then we get Jesus who is a better go-between. Why? Because he is fully God and fully human. So he is the perfect bridge in that gap.

And therefore he's able to make atonement. That word atonement is literally at onement. He is able to bring two things separated by sin back together as one.

[26 : 14] By removing sin, by paying the ultimate sacrifice for sin, by crawling onto the altar himself. Therefore, he's able to be merciful to sinners whilst also being faithful to God.

He is the perfect high priest. So in Jesus and only in Jesus, God and you can be brought back together. You can be at one where your sin has utterly formed a barrier.

He deals with our sin, but see that it's not just something that he's done for us. It's something that he continually does for us. Verse 18, because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who were being tempted.

Because Jesus became human, he knows all about temptation. He knows more about it than any of us because he was the one who never gave into it. And therefore he's able to help us, he's able to strengthen us, he's able to give grace to us, he's able to teach us how to resist when we're so readily and often tempted.

And so I don't know what your New Year's resolutions were, dare say they're in the bin already. But there are some sins, aren't there, that we just commit habitually. We're going to stop gossiping, we're going to stop using our internet badly, we're going to stop being so aggressive when we drive. [27 : 43] we're going to stop worshipping money, we're going to stop twisting and being economical with the truth. I don't know what it was. But the truth here is, Jesus is able to help us.

We're conscious of these sins year after year after year and we're never able to break them. But this says Jesus is ready and willing and able to help us. So next time you're going into a situation where you're tempted to speak badly of others in order to make yourself feel better.

When you're tempted to gossip and just relay truth from the grapevine to diminish others. What about praying? Jesus, thank you that you always use your words well.

Thank you that you only told the truth to people, about people, for people, that you only ever built people up. thank you that now you're using your words really well to pray for me before the Father. And I'm going into this situation today where I'm tempted. Where I'm going to be tempted to speak badly and just join in with everyone else in the banter. Jesus, would you give me grace and help so that when I'm tempted to do that I might be able to withstand it as you were able to withstand it?

[29 : 03] What if we actually believe that Jesus was there to help us? As one who knows what it is to be tempted, withstood it all, and now stands there ready to help us when we're tempted to turn away.

You know, it's a great truth that Jesus became man for us. No other religion, no other God has got something like this going on. A God who is so magnificent and majestic.

He made himself small, crumpled himself, into human history so that we might have hope. Jesus becomes man to give us the absolute essential and only message of salvation that we must hear and not drift away from.

Jesus became man to bring us to glory because we've fallen short and are utterly lost, and yet he brings us through faith in him. Jesus became man to free us from death and the power of the devil. No one else is promising that. Jesus became man to atone for our sins and be our constant helper in our pursuit of holiness. holiness. And so he writes, love Jesus, tie up tightly to Jesus, or else you'll suffer loss for everything.

[30 : 27] Give up Jesus, you give up every hope, every joy, and every comfort. It's a wonderful chapter, one that exalts Jesus to us, one that's been a joy to study this week and highlighting my absolute need to stick in and keep on with Jesus Christ.

Let me pray and then we're done. Father God, thank you that Jesus became man.

Thank you that he gave up the boundless glory of heaven for us. That he won where we failed. That he succeeded where we gave up. That he persevered when we tapped out.

Father, thank you that he is so gracious to us. He's so understanding of us. He is the one able to save completely those who come to him in faith.

So Lord, I pray for those that do not know Jesus. Father, may they trust him as one who knows everything about them and wants to help and to love forever. Father, I pray for those who are tempted to drift away.

[31 : 42] Father, I pray that we might tie up tightly to Jesus Christ and know his help and comfort forever. And Father, I want to pray for those that are sticking in with Jesus.

Father, may we love him more, serve him better and be conformed to his likeness. More and more we pray. Father, thank you so much for Jesus in whose name we pray.

Amen. that and we savior so as we do have