



But We See...Jesus

Series: Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul

Hebrews 2:5-9

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We have seen some amazing theology so far in this sermon series from the book of Hebrews. Just the other day, I was talking with Bob Smith and saying that one of the reasons I love this series so much, preaching through this book so much, is because it's all about Jesus. It is a book that is explicitly and intensely all about Jesus – Jesus is better, Jesus is greater, Jesus is glorious, Jesus is supreme, Jesus is sufficient – more than sufficient; Jesus alone can satisfy!

But this is more than great theology. It is theology with a context. Theology has to touch our lives; it has to engage us in our experience for it to be powerful and life-changing. True theology – the truth about Christ – is life changing and soul-saving, because it is what Francis Schaeffer called “true truth.” It is truth that corresponds to reality. It fits and explains our reality. That is why it is so important for us to keep the context of this sermon to the Hebrews in mind. This is not a discourse on spiritual truths and facts that do not have very real implications for the way that we live our lives. On the contrary, without the truth that we have revealed to us in the context of this sermon, it is absolutely impossible for us to live meaningful, satisfying, stable and God-honoring and Christ-exalting lives. We need this truth for living. It is true of us just as it was true of our Hebrew brothers and sisters who received this sermon so many years ago.

When they received this sermon, they were in the midst of a crucible of persecution and hardship, experiencing a crisis of faith, tempted to abandon the Christian faith and Jesus Christ, Himself. Believing in and following Jesus had proven to be very costly. It cost many of them their families, their friendships, their jobs, their homes and possessions, their rights, their place in society, and with the great persecution by Nero just on the horizon, it was going to cost many of them their very lives. They needed to hear truth, true truth that would meet them where they were. They needed a fresh vision of the supremacy of Jesus

Christ, the marvel of His person and character as God's Son, our Savior, and the unrivaled King of the universe, which engaged them exactly where they were. Not spiritual niceties and clichés, but real truth. They needed a towering picture of Jesus the Son – as the final word from God, as the One who alone is the radiance of God's glory; as the One who is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the Universe; as the One who alone saves sinners, as the One who sits enthroned in Heaven, greater than all the angels, awaiting the day when all His enemies will be under His feet and His Kingdom, through invisible now will be seen by all, and **“every knee (shall) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...”** (Philippians 2:10–11, ESV)

And that is what they received in this sermon. They got what they needed and then, as we saw last week, they received a warning, not to neglect this great salvation. Not to drift from the truth of Christ, but to anchor themselves to Jesus, to dig deep and hold fast to Christ – the true Lord and King.

But the writer of Hebrews is not done. He understands that there is more to be said because he understands the human heart and the questions that such hardships as the Hebrew Christians were enduring would raise, questions in their own hearts and questions from those who mocked their faith in Christ. The question he is going to answer this morning is a natural one. It is one that we have probably asked, one that we have probably had unbelievers ask, and certainly a question that the Hebrew Christians faced.

And that question is simply: “If Christ is God and Lord, and He reigns over all of creation, then why do His people endure such suffering and hardship? Why such persecution? Why such trials?” If the author of Hebrews is correct and Jesus is the Supreme Being in the universe, who sits at the right hand of God, and is reigning with all authority and power, then why are bad things still happening? We have all heard or asked that question, right? Today the writer of Hebrews is going to give us an answer. He is going to give us “true truth.” And he is going to begin by stating

An Absolute Fact of Reality (5) Reaching back to what he said in verse 13 of chapter 1, **“And to which of the angels has he ever said, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’?”** (Hebrews 1:13, ESV) – he writes, **“For it was not to angels that God**

subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.” (Hebrews 2:5, ESV) This kingdom that you can see with your eyes, that you can touch, in which you are now passing your days – this isn’t the eternal and lasting kingdom. It’s not. It’s passing away. It has an expiration date. But Jesus reigns over the eternal kingdom of God, the world to come, the spiritual kingdom that has begun but is yet to be fully revealed, the kingdom of a new heavens and a new earth, a kingdom without sin, a kingdom without rebellion, a kingdom of peace and joy, of full fellowship with God, a kingdom filled with glory and the people of God.

You may not see it right now. It may seem to be unreal, but I assure you that it more real than what you can see with your earthly eyes right now. By comparison, this kingdom of the earth, that you can see and feel and touch, is unreality. The kingdom of Christ is the overarching reality! Don’t make the mistake of judging everything by what you can see; it is what you cannot see with earthly eyes that is eternal and lasting and real.

You might say, “Ok, that’s great, but how does that help me to understand the reality of pain and suffering right now? How does that help me understand the reality of hardship and persecution and trial and sickness and violence and ungodly rulers right now? Why are things the way they are right now?” And if you say that, the writer of Hebrews has an answer. He is going to speak to the “right now” and he does it by showing us the reality of

Paradise... Lost! (6-8) Why are things as they are right now? The author of Hebrews reaches back to Psalm 8, to give us a biblical answer. **“It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? 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.” 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.” (Hebrews 2:6–8, ESV)** Now, like all the other Scriptures that the writer of Hebrews has quoted thus far, there is an original OT application of this text as well as an eternal application to Jesus. Let me show you what I mean.

Psalm 8 is, in its original context, a psalm, a song, a poem, of the original creation and purpose of man. The Psalmist is musing on the creation and he says: **“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what**

is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.” (Psalm 8:3–8, ESV) Here is the Psalmist, looking at the starry sky, the moon and the stars, everything that God had created, the great expanse of the heavens and though man is so small in comparison to the vastness of God’s creation, yet it is mankind that was the crown of creation – made in the image of God.

And that’s just what it was in the original creation. Adam and Eve were the king and queen of a glorious paradise, one full of peace, joy, and perfection. They were given dominion over the entire world, given the responsibility of ordering all of creation under the Lordship of God. Nothing was left outside of their control. There was no death, no strife, no sin, no hardship, no trials, no lack – all perfection, a true Paradise. That was the original creation, but clearly it is not that way anymore, is it? What happened? We know what happened.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, from whom all of us are descended, were placed in Paradise with one and only one restriction – not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Everything else was theirs to enjoy but this one thing. Satan entered into this Paradise, the serpent, and persuaded Adam and Eve that the reason God gave that command was keep Adam and Eve, who were made in the image of God, from being like God! Speaking to Eve, Satan said: ***“You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*** (Genesis 3:4–5, ESV) Eve first, and then Adam, ate the forbidden fruit. And they did come to know good and evil – the good they had forfeited and the evil they had gained by rebelling against God. Adam did not become like God; the image of God in them was broken. Their dominion over the earth and all that is in it, forfeited. Instead they became like the devil in his rebellion. Because of this act of cosmic treason against God, man fell the most tragic fall that has ever been recorded in human history. With sin came the curse – the curse of death, the curse of suffering, the curse of lost dominion. The curse of sin in this earth.

The reason there is confusion, turmoil, anarchy, suffering and misery today is because of man’s rebellion against God. Sickness, death, poverty and need, war, strife, malice, are all the result of sin. Every drop of blood that has been spilt, every heart broken, every ache in

your body, every cancer cell, mental illness, every Alzheimer's gene, the lack of regard for human life, the murder of the innocents – the political chaos that our nation is in, the persecution of the godly, the hatred of Christ, the attempt to remove any vestige of God from the social consciousness, the spiritual blindness, the chasing of worthless idols – all of it is traced to sin, to man's rebellion against God. The peace, joy, and perfection that marked the original creation – all lost. John MacArthur makes a great point when he says: "Our many hospitals, doctors, medicines, pesticides, insurance companies, fire and police departments, funeral homes—all bear testimony to the cursed earth."

Phil Newton writes: "The effect of the fall leaves its mark everywhere. We see it in the natural realm in the ways we have failed to be good stewards over creation. We see it in the family, as the disintegration of the home no longer mirrors the unity of the Godhead as it was intended to do. We see it in the business world where it is fair game to trample over others for selfish gain. We see it in the governmental realm where law is ignored and human dignity sacrificed in a raw thirst for power and control. And we see it in our own lives where the tendency to sin outweighs the passion for holiness." So man – created by God to be His image bearer, crowned with glory and honor and dominion – became subject to God's curse even to the point of death. This is the problem of man – Paradise lost.

People in the world know something is wrong, but they don't understand the profound nature of it. You can see it in the solutions that they offer. Man, some think, is just ignorant. He isn't enlightened and what he needs in order to create a perfect society is the right philosophy, the right culture. Education is the savior. Or some think the issue is just that people have grown up wrong, in intolerant situations and dysfunctional environments. The savior is really social reengineering. Others say they that lack of opportunity or poverty is the real issue, so we need the twin saviors of affirmative action and wealth redistribution. Others say it's "white privilege" or "male dominance." The list goes on and on. It's all so much silliness.

The real issue is spiritual. Since Adam's fall we are sinners by nature, condemned by God, and unable to walk in righteousness and peace. The very earth we live on is cursed. A spiritual problem requires a spiritual solution, far beyond the power and reach of man. What is needed is for Paradise to be regained, not a paradise on this cursed earth or of this cursed creation, but a paradise, a kingdom of a new heavens and new earth to come where Christ reigns, where His dominion and rule is fully manifested and uncontested and where His

people will reign with Him over the new creation. And it is to this, that Psalm 8 is ultimately pointing. This Psalm is fulfilled in Christ. We need:

Paradise... Regained! (9) How can that be achieved? The author of Hebrews tells us: **“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.” (Hebrews 2:9, ESV)** Notice what the writer of Hebrews does here. This is beautiful. At the present time we do not see all things in subjection to man or for that matter does it seem that all things are in subjection to Christ. We do not see these things, but we see something else. We do not see... but we do see! We see Jesus!

He makes the Hebrews and us to turn our faces away from what we see around us and to turn them to Jesus, to focus our attention upon Christ, who is crowned with glory and honor, to Jesus came to undo what we have done. He is the great, the last, the only hope of a dying and cursed race. From the perspective of the Bible, history is about man’s fall from grace, his fall from blessing and dominion, and about Jesus Christ as the answer from God, the Redeemer of those lost in sin and the forerunner and ruler of the new creation in which the prophecy of Psalm 8 will be brought to glorious fulfillment. What Adam lost, Jesus regained. How did he do it? The preacher of Hebrews tells us.

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus -- To do this, He was made a little lower than the angels. Now, for man to be made “a little lower than the angels” is a great honor, but for Jesus, the second member of the Trinity, truly God in every way, it is incredible condescension, incredible humility. In a mystery that is beyond our ability to fully grasp, Jesus became man without in any way ceasing to be God. His existence before the incarnation was one of perfect glory, yet He put on human flesh for the sake of saving us, humbling Himself beneath the angels in form by becoming a man.

And why, **so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.** Here is the only hope of salvation for every member of the human race. This is it. Sin brings death and the only way to conquer sin, and put an end to sin’s power is to pay the penalty of sin. We could never do it. The wages of sin is death – not just physical death, but eternal death, eternal, righteous judgment under the burning wrath of God. By our rebellion, we deserve to be

condemned to eternal death and there is nothing that we can do to extricate ourselves from this horrific mess. The only payment for sin is the eternal death of God's judgment. You and I just do not have the power or the means to pay it.

The only hope that any of us has is that someone else would pay our penalty; someone who can offer a payment on our behalf that is sufficient and equal to the eternal debt that we owe. We have offended the holy God, His majesty and His glory. Only someone with equal majesty and glory could make that payment. And for that reason, Jesus became a man, so that He could die.

The eternal God, the second member of the Trinity, God's own eternal and holy Son, the righteous One, who was not and could not be guilty of sin, who could not even think of sin, suffered and died as our substitute. He "tasted death" for us. And that word "taste" is not like our idea of sampling or nibbling something. The idea is that He "partook fully of death," for us. All of our sin was placed upon Him. The holy and blameless Son was regarded by God the Father as the very embodiment of all of our sin and suffered His Father's rejection, anger, wrath, and justice. He experienced the full fury and forsakenness of sin, tasting the torment of being separated from the Father, for you and for me, so that He could lift us from the eternal death of our own making, and restore us to righteousness, to what we once were in Adam before the fall; He restored in us the image of God, and made us, and though we may not see it fully now, to the place that we once had in God's creation – all by His death. But this is not where the gospel ends – not with death, but with glory and honor for Jesus!

The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus was ***crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death***. God the Father raised Him from the dead, honoring His humility and condescension, honoring His perfect obedience, accepting His sacrifice, and established His reign over the new humanity, saved souls like you and me, over a and renewed Kingdom over which He is both Lord and the forerunner and representative of the new humanity that is to be revealed when Jesus comes from heaven to put all things and all people under subjection to Him.

Christ reigns right now, though for a time, He allows the rebellion of man to continue and curse of sin to remain in the world. In that sense, the words of verse 8 apply right now: **At**

present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. Not every knee is bowed before Him now. But make no mistake; Christ does spiritually reign over the universe right now. Even now, He is advancing against His enemies, with the powerful sword of His Word, the gospel. Even now, He is saving, and snatching from the fires of eternal judgment, a people for Himself whom He is leading out of this present evil age, and through the trials and hardships and suffering of this life, to eternal life in Him. Christ has come and accomplished the salvation of His people; He has established His Kingdom, and He is coming again to consummate His reign and to put all of His enemies under His feet – sin and death, Satan and this present evil world, and He will establish His new creation forever – the new heavens and earth – with the scepter of uprightness, righteousness, peace and joy. Suffering will be no more. And we will share in that glory, united to Him by faith.

Are there still suffering and hardship and pain and trial, death and the ravages of sin in this earth? Yes, and it must be so for now while the gospel does its work of saving sinners and refining the saints, preparing us to reign with Him, and until the work of the gospel is complete and all God's people are saved. But in this present age, we have this promise by faith in Christ, ***“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”*** (Romans 8:16–17, ESV) And we hold fast this promise from the lips of our Savior King Himself, ***“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*** (John 16:33, ESV) How should these words from the writer of Hebrews affect our souls?

The Way These Word Should Affect Our Souls

1) These words must strengthen our trust in God's character and His purpose toward us. Think about it. Why did God ordain suffering and death for His only begotten Son? So that He could taste eternal death for us so we could be made dead to sin and alive to God. His humiliation and suffering on the cross, was for our eternal joy. In His grace and love, the Father refused to leave us in our fallen state, to be destroyed by our sin, and to suffer His eternal wrath. Christ suffered and died in your place, if you are a Christian, so that you could have life.

Now, if we face suffering and trial, persecution and loss, in this life – knowing that God ordained that Jesus would suffer in order to save us, for our eternal good – we must believe that our suffering is for our eternal good, whether we can understand it right now or not. God’s heart and His purpose toward us do not change. Paul writes in Romans 8, starting in verse 18: **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”** (Romans 8:18, ESV) And then in the second letter to the Corinthians, Paul also writes: **“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”** (2 Corinthians 4:16–18, ESV)

We are not helpless victims of suffering, trouble and trial. Through faith in Jesus who truly rules over all things, knowing that His suffering led to Him being crowned with glory and honor and to our redemption, we know that it will certainly be the same with our own suffering, because we are united to Him and we will reign with Him.

2) These words ought to make us even more amazed at Jesus Christ. How we ought to be continually more and more astonished at the humility, the love, and the absolute amazingness of Jesus Christ. What a Savior who would leave the splendor and worship of heaven, humble Himself to take on human flesh and then to die on a cross for people like us, to save and lift us to life! If He not done this, He would still, by all rights, be holy, sovereign and glorious God, and we would, by all rights, be lost, with no hope at all. We can never forget this. Let that thought continue to fill you with wonder and awe. How prone we are to forget. It is one of the main reasons why Jesus established the Lord’s Supper, so that we would remember Him and what He did on the cross for us; so that our vision would be lifted from the evil of this age to the glory of the age to come. We see Jesus!

And a word to those of you who are not Christians today: Friend, I want you to know that you are on the same road every one of us in this room, who are Christians, were once on – the road of destruction and ruin, the road of eternal death, the suffering and hardships you experience as a result of sin that are just a small foretaste of eternal misery that awaits you. But you don’t have to stay there! You don’t! Praise God, you don’t! The only way out of that pit for us was by Jesus Christ reaching down and lifting us out by His grace. What you need more than anything else is Jesus Christ and He is here. He is offering you life, eternal

life, eternal forgiveness, paradise regained and all you must do is come to Him in faith, to lay aside all your excuses and objections and take Him as your Savior and surrender to Him as Lord. Come and speak to me. Come and speak to one of our elders. Do not neglect this great offer of salvation. Come and find in Jesus forgiveness and life.

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