



## **It Was Fitting...to Bring Many Sons to Glory**

*Series: Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul*

Hebrews 2:10

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Happy Resurrection Day, beloved! This is without a doubt my favorite day in the church calendar, bar none. This is the day, with every other faithful church in this sin-cursed world, we celebrate the heart and soul of our one true faith – the sacrificial death on the cross, where Jesus took our place and suffered the punishment that we deserve for our sins, and then His sin-defeating, death-destroying, and Satan-conquering resurrection from the dead as our Savior, Lord, and King. All of history, every human destiny, is defined by what took place in three days in Jerusalem, over 2000 year ago.

What we celebrate this Sunday and every Sunday is that Jesus Christ bore the penalty of sin on the tree for us; He died for us, but then He came forth from the grave alive three days later, the victor over sin and hell and death, crushing Satan under His feet and has been exalted to God's right hand in heaven until the day that He will return and establish His Kingdom forever. That's why we unashamedly worship Christ crucified and risen from the dead. That's why we joyfully serve, we adore, we praise, we glorify, we humble ourselves before, and we thank a crucified, risen, exalted and soon coming Savior – because He willingly endured the shame of the cross and died in our place and then rose from the dead, in glorious triumph, so that through faith in what He did for us, on our behalf, as our substitute, we could have forgiveness and eternal life.

This is what we believe. On this truth, we have staked our soul's hope for peace with God. If we are truly Christians, then we gladly confess that our only hope in life and in death, our only hope before the throne of judgment, our only hope for the joy and the glory of heaven is our crucified and risen Savior. This we believe.

But, what to us is the source of our greatest hope is too many people -- utter foolishness, stupidity, an ancient myth, just some invented fairytale, a spiritual delusion. Paul experienced

the backlash, the rejection of this gospel message quite often when he preached it. Speaking from his experience, he says: “We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:23–24, ESV) And his experience was very much like that of the Hebrew Christians in Rome to whom the author of Hebrews was writing this letter. We have talked a great deal about the persecution, the hardships, and the trials that these Jewish Christians were facing for their faith in Christ. It was hard. 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.

But all of this persecution proceeded fundamentally from a rejection of God, a rejection of Christ, a rejection of the gospel, a rejection of a suffering and crucified Savior. The Christ-rejecting Jews believed that Jesus was a fraud, that He was not God’s Messiah, God’s King. They could not see how God’s Messiah, the true King of the Jews, the Christ, could suffer and be crucified on the cross. Why would he do that? That was a sign of being under the curse of God. They did not understand Him or His mission. They didn’t see their need for forgiveness or for a Savior. They simply rejected Jesus, called Him a blasphemer who actually deserved the suffering and cruel death of the cross, and they refused to believe, despite all the evidence, that Jesus rose from the dead.

The Greeks, who prided themselves upon their wisdom, thought that a suffering Savior, a suffering God, was utter foolishness. For the Greeks, that one man (even the Son of God) could die on a piece of wood on a nondescript hill in a nondescript part of the world and thereby determine the destiny of every person who has ever lived seems stupid, foolishness, literally moronic. It allows no place for man’s merit, man’s attainment, man’s understanding, or man’s pride.

The Romans, who worshipped power, thought the cross to be pitiful. They were blind to the power that Christ displayed there. Real gods wouldn’t be crucified.

No God worth His glory would give himself to suffer and die at the hands of men in order to save men and women from spiritual destruction. A crucified God did not make any sense to them.

But is this really that surprising? No, not really. Fallen people, it seems, have always delighted to declare how God “ought to do things.” People have always enjoyed inventing a personal “god” who suits them and acts according to what seems right in their eyes. Utilizing their self-generated ideas, critics of Christianity have always had their opinion of what a proper “god” should be like. That desire and habit to redefine or create a god are woven deep into the human psyche. I’ve heard the objections – maybe you have too – “Why, if God is really God, does He have to save people in this way? It seems so barbaric...cruel...extreme...foolish. Is all this really necessary?” The Hebrew Christians got this kind of question regularly and no doubt it weighed upon them. How do you answer those kinds of objections? Here in this one verse – that the writer of Hebrews will expound upon in the several verses following – he gives to His Jewish Christian brothers and us, a definitive answer -- All that Christ endured, for the salvation of men and women, was absolutely fitting and right.

Look at these words again with me, in fact go back to verse 9 and let’s read them again together and then we will dig in. “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. For 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.” (Hebrews 2:9–10, ESV) The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that the suffering of Christ and His resurrection from the dead was absolutely fitting, absolutely proper, absolutely necessary if sinners like you and me, people who have rebelled against God and against His Lordship and who deserve only judgment, are to be forgiven and raised from eternal death to everlasting glory with Him. How was the suffering for the salvation of His people fitting?

First, it was fitting because it was in keeping with the purpose and the person of God. The writer of Hebrews wastes no time in “telling it like it is.” Let me show you what I mean. He says that it was fitting for the God the Father to accomplish the salvation of sinners in this way because He is the one, for whom and by whom all things exist. In other words, as the one who has created the entire universe and who rules and reigns over it all, it is He who determines the way of salvation, and no one else. God is the one who determines what is appropriate for the situation and for the need involved, we don’t get to do that. The suffering of Jesus did not take place by chance. It was in keeping with the God’s great eternal purpose to bring many sons to glory. The salvation of sinners, the salvation of rebels against God, began in the heart and the mind of God. He is the one who took the initiative to save us from hell. If fallen humanity is to be brought ultimately into the presence of God as forgiven and redeemed, and changed people,

it can only be because God has chosen to accomplish this miracle by His saving intervention in human history. If God decreed that we could only be saved is through faith in the substitutionary and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ in our place, who are we to say it should be otherwise? Some can say, "God could or should have done it some other way..." but that is not for any fallen human being to say. Paul writes on Romans 11, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33–34, ESV) Salvation is God's business and fallen man has no place to quibble over the way God provides such grace.

The point that the writer of Hebrews is making is this -- the suffering of Jesus Christ in order to redeem sinners, is the only way of salvation and very other way is not only completely unfitting, it is completely ineffective. All ways do not lead to God. As Peter said in Acts 4: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12, ESV)

Second, Christ's suffering was fitting so that God would make Jesus the perfect founder of salvation. The writer of Hebrews says, "For it was fitting that he...should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." Now let's look at this because it is key. Jesus is the founder of salvation. That word for "founder" is word that means the captain, the hero, the trail-blazer or the pioneer of salvation. It is a word that is used of someone that opens the way into something that was previously unknown or never explored. I just finished a book on the Lewis and Clark expeditions that opened the American West in the early, early 1800's. They charted and explored territory that was previously unknown to the United States, crossing the mighty Rockies with few supplies, but with great courage and determination.

Likewise, but in a far, far greater way, Jesus is the pioneer or trail-blazer of eternal salvation and the glories of heaven. He has gone where we could not go, and done what we could not do, with the resources of His righteousness and perfect obedience, and His death-conquering death and resurrection to open the way to heaven and peace with God for us.

But in order to do that, He had to be the perfect Savior. And He is. When the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was made the perfect founder of salvation, he does not mean that

Jesus was, at some time, imperfect. He has always been morally perfect and perfect in His divine attributes. But to be the perfect founder of our salvation, to be perfectly qualified to be our Savior – that’s the idea, perfectly qualified, perfectly established, perfectly suitable -- He had to become one of us and He had to endure suffering on our behalf.

He had to suffer and take to Himself human nature, and enter into our sin-ravaged world. He had to be born the same as you and me. He had to go through all of the stages of human life and experience all of the suffering that human beings endure as a result of the Fall. He had to experience the hardship of temptation and defeat it by the Word of God and faith in the Father. He had to become just like us in every respect but without sin. To be our perfect substitute, He had to be without sin Himself, but He must be tempted to the full. He had to suffer the humiliation and hatred of other men and women as a result of His perfection. To be our trail-blazer, he had to suffer being tired and hungry, being rejected and betrayed, mocked, spat upon, scourged and crucified. He had to be unjustly accused, unjustly tried, unjustly condemned, and endure it all without vindicating Himself. He had to be nailed to a cross and suffer, experience the forsakenness of the Father, and cry out in agony as He paid for the sins of His people, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The Messiah, Jesus our Lord, had to be fully God and fully man. He had to be. If Jesus were not fully man, He could not stand in the place of sinful man and be a substitute for the punishment man deserves. But if He were not fully God, His sacrifice would be insufficient. Our Savior must be both God and man in one glorious Person! Man had to answer for breaking God’s law, but only God could offer the payment necessary to satisfy sin. Man had sinned and man must die; but his death could never satisfy the justice of God for us were he not himself the infinite God. Jesus had to become a man; He had to suffer for sin and pay sin’s price if we could ever be saved. He had to suffer if He was to be the perfect founder of our salvation.

Third, Christ’s suffering, particularly on the cross, was fitting because it revealed the character of God. It is in the cross that we see the holy otherness of God displayed. Who else but God would offer up His Son, the perfection of God incarnate, as the sinners’ substitute so that God could forgive sinners through the sacrifice of His Son? Who else but God the Son would offer Himself, “for the joy that was set before him (of redeeming sinners like us) enduring the cross, despising the shame?” (cf. Hebrews 12:2, ESV) Where else do we see more clearly the burning righteousness of God against sin than when He crushes His Son as the sinners’ substitute? God’s infinite and relentless righteousness unleashing all His rightful and just wrath upon the

Substitute for all that is evil, wicked and filthy? In the cross we see God's righteousness supremely demonstrated and vindicated.

Where else do we see the love of God more manifest in that "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8, ESV) Where do we see the love of Christ more clearly illuminated than in His willingness to suffer in our place, in that "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:2, ESV) It is the suffering of Christ on the cross that tells us that God is, at once, both just and merciful. When someone says, "Why can't God just forgive sins without the cross? Why does the blood of a Savior have to be shed in order for Him to forgive?" they show that they don't understand the depth of our sin against God, the treason and wickedness of it, or the justice and righteousness of God. Justice demands that the penalty for sin must be paid. God cannot just ignore our sin and remain just. We all instinctively know that justice is right. If someone broke into a loved one's home and killed them so they could steal a few dollars for drug money, for instance, we would be outraged if a judge said, "I'm going to let this slide. Everyone makes mistakes. We'll just pretend this didn't happen." That's not justice! The amazing thing is that God saw it fitting to be satisfied by Christ's suffering and death to pay the penalty of our sin. Justice is served upon Christ, in our place, and we are given mercy and grace.

I mentioned this Wednesday and I will say it again, too many people think of divine love as something that utterly overturns justice and sets it aside—as if God's love nullified His justice—as if God's love simply overwhelms His holy hatred of sin. God's love does not cause Him to forget about His holiness and set aside His righteous anger against sin. The demands of righteousness must be fully and completely satisfied if God is going to forgive sin. God's holiness must be upheld. He cannot and will not simply overlook sin as if it didn't really matter. He will not act as if His glory is unimportant, as if righteousness is trivial. God's holy love moves Him to deal with the reality of Sin so that sinners can be saved. God's just wrath must be dealt with, and it is, in Christ.

Whatever eternal wrath comprises, the miracle is that, if you are a Christian, it was compressed into time and poured out on the Son for you and the fullness of God's wrath against every one of your sins – every harsh word, every lustful thought, every lie you ever told, your hatred, your envy and jealousy, your stealing, your pride, your arrogance, your lovelessness, your idolatry, every sinful thought -- was consumed, quenched, and satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's suffering bought your salvation.

Beloved, where else do we see the grace, the mercy, the wisdom, the compassion, the kindness – all of His character so clearly displayed – in that Christ, in His suffering on the cross, on the cross has provided for us a place for us to be washed of our sin, accepted by God, adopted as His children, a place of favor and forgiveness, so that can be changed by faith and draw near to God and find in Him our greatest treasure and delight.

Some might say, “I didn’t ask for that!” And that is the point -- you didn’t have to. FF Bruce says, “It is in the passion (the suffering and death) of our Lord that we see the very heart of God laid bare; nowhere is God more fully or more worthily revealed as God than when we see Him, in the words of 2 Cor. 5:19, ‘in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.’” You didn’t have to ask for this, and why? Because, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, ESV) And that brings us to the last point. It was fitting that Christ should suffer in order to be made the founder of salvation, because:

Fourth, it is only through the suffering of Christ that God brings many sons to glory. God the Father made Christ the perfect Savior through suffering and confirmed the perfection of Jesus for just that task by raising Him from the dead. Death could not hold Jesus. God did not allow His Son to see corruption in the grave. In the words of Peter, “God raised him up, losing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” (Acts 2:24, ESV) He is the Lord of life, the sinless Savior, it is impossible that death should hold Him. It impossible that He should not conquer the grave and rise from the dead. Through the resurrection, Jesus has proven that through His suffering sacrifice, death and sin and Satan are defeated foes. And as the resurrected One, the One who suffered for our forgiveness and then rose from the dead, He will lead many sons to glory.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, our perfect Savior, we have received the promise of glory, the promise of heaven, the promise of eternal life. He has gone before us as the perfect Savior and the trail-blazer of our salvation. He has gone before us as the perfect man, living a perfect sinless life, overcoming every temptation and suffering, dying as the perfect atonement for all our sins, resurrected to glory and has made the way for us to that same glory. That is the end game, the goal. His goal is to take sinners, rebels, rejectors, and make them, by His kindness and love, into sons and daughters and lead them to salvation and glory, into full communion and fellowship with God.

There awaits us the glory of heaven, the glory of life with God, the glory of living with God in the new heavens and new earth. It is impossible to know all that such glory entails. It means, at the very least, that we will have glorious resurrection bodies, free from sin, sickness, infirmities, and death. There will be no more suffering, no more tears, no more pain. Ours is the glory of a new and better life in a new and better body. It means that we will have a glorious purpose, to be with Christ and to praise and serve Him throughout eternity. "We shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2b, ESV)

This is how we should think of ourselves, beloved, as sons and daughters of God, bound for glory. That is what Christ has made us by His suffering as our perfect Savior.

That's why the writer of Hebrews says: "For 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." (Hebrews 2:10, ESV)

I want to close with these thoughts from John Calvin, from his book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*: This is the wonderful exchange which, out of his measureless benevolence, he has made with us; that, becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him; that, by his descent to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, by taking on our mortality, he has conferred his immortality upon us; that, accepting our weakness, he has strengthened us by his power; that, receiving our poverty unto himself, he has transferred his wealth to us; that, taking the weight of our iniquity upon himself (which oppressed us), he has clothed us with his righteousness. If you are a Christian today, rejoice that you are bound for glory because of the perfect salvation that Christ, your perfect Savior, suffered to bring you.

But I want to speak for a moment to those who need to believe in Jesus Christ this morning: Eternal life can be yours today, the hope of glory can be yours, if you will come to the cross of Christ. Let go of the filthy rags of your own righteousness. Confess to God that you are a sinner deserving His wrath. Trust in the death of Jesus as the only acceptable payment for your sins. Then the cross will not be a stumbling block or foolishness to you, but rather the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23-24).



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