

HEBREWS VERSE BY VERSE - The New and Living Way - Part seven

Sunday, February 26th, 2017 - 10 a.m. - Teaching #1949

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THE POWER OF HOPE AND THE TEMPTATION TO SHAME AS WE FOLLOW CHRIST IN THIS PRESENT WORLD

Hebrews 2:10-11 - "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. [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...."

The "**For**" at the beginning of **verse 10** takes our minds back to the death of Christ mentioned in **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."

Then **verse 10** opens with the rather bold words that Christ's death was a "**fitting**" death - an **appropriate** death - a **suitable** death. In a way we can't fully appreciate this description of Christ's death being "**fitting**" was absolutely essential in our writer's mind. The notion of a **crucified** Lord was deeply scandalous to the first-century world. The Jewish believers to whom our letter was first directed had been raised with the Old Testament teaching that death by crucifixion meant the one crucified was **under the curse of God**.

This idea came from God Himself. And this curse was taken very seriously - **Deuteronomy 21:22-23** - "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, [23] his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."

These important words did not escape the notice of the Apostle Paul as he considered the staggering implications of the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christ - **Galatians 3:13** - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'...."

Make no mistake about it. This is why those soldiers would come around and break the legs of those hanging on the cross. Death had to come quickly because the Jews were devoutly serious about not "**defiling the land**" by breaking God's law and having that cursed victim hanging on the cross overnight. This was a **religious** act to the Jews. It was their obedience to God's command.

So you can see how the death of God the Son - the Messiah - on the cross of the curse would be seen as anything **but** "**fitting**." For these Jews - and for many today - the idea of a saving Messiah and a ruling Savior dying such a pathetic death on a cross makes no sense. Surely this can't be "**fitting**." This ending can't be the promised victory. This curse can't produce life. This can't be the One we worship. This Jesus can't be a legitimate object of the church's hope. John the Baptist wasn't the first nor the last to think maybe we should be placing our hopes for God's kingdom elsewhere.

All of this is on the writer's mind as he unpacks the meaning of the "**fitness**" - the **appropriateness** - yes, the **necessity** - of the death of God's Messiah. There are hard issues that must be addressed:

1) THE DEATH OF THE CHRIST IS NEITHER A MISTAKE OR ACCIDENT. IT IS ROOTED IN THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF GOD

Hebrews 2:10 - "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."

For now just set your attention on those words, "....for whom and by whom all things exists...." These are the words of **doxology** and **praise**. These kinds of words became the phrase used to lift up the greatness of God in the early church's worship:

Romans 11:36 - "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

1 Corinthians 8:6 - "....yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

So when our writer of Hebrews says the death of the Christ came about through the One "....for whom and by whom all things exist," he means to declare the death of the Christ wasn't an event **outside** Father God's

sovereign plan. It wasn't a surprise and it wasn't a disappointment. It was the unpacking of God's plan for the sweep of world history.

And our writer wants us to remember we will get nothing else right about the meaning of Jesus, the Christ, and His death and our own lives unless we **begin** with the recognition that this was the plan of the One **"...for whom and by whom all things exist."**

All of this raises the next obvious question. **"If all of this was in the sovereign plan, what was Father God's purpose in the death of the Son?"**

2) THE PURPOSE OF THE SON'S DEATH IS THE RESTORING OF LOST GLORY IN FALLEN MANKIND

Hebrews 2:10 - "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."

Again, we're just focusing on one phrase at this point - **"...in bringing many sons to glory...."** And the reason we should look carefully at this phrase is it is the first time our writer uses the plural term, **"sons."** Previously only the singular word, **"son,"** has been used (1:2,5,8). These are all referenced to Jesus, the Christ, God the **Son**.

But in **verse 10** the emphasis is entirely different. Here we're seeing the **fruit** of the Son's redemptive work. The **"firstborn" son** (1:6) has **offspring**. And we should have expected it. Our writer hinted earlier of the **inheritance** the Son of God would receive from His atoning work:

Hebrews 1:2 & 14 - "...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world....[14] Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"

So the writer of Hebrews is turning our attention to the **collected sons and daughters** who make up the inheritance of God the Son. But it's the way he **describes** their destiny that's striking - **Hebrews 2:10** - **"...bringing many sons to glory...."**

That word **"glory"** is important. It's the **goal** of the Son's work. It's the **destination**. This is not just some form of religious poetic imagery. To see what the writer is driving at we need to go back in our text to something we've just studied together. We need to go back to the way our writer set the work of Christ in the context of **Psalm 8**.

He quotes that Psalm in **Hebrews 2:6-8** - "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? [7] You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with **glory** and honor, [8] 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.**"

"We do not yet see everything in subjection to him"(2:8b). Things are not presently the way God created them. Mankind's story is one of dominion lost. It's a story of sin's bondage and soiled dignity. It's a story of broken laws and lost righteousness. It's a story with the sad ending of graves swallowing up the dead in darkness. But more than anything it's a story of **glory** lost. So, no, **"we do not see everything in subjection to him."**

Now we're ready to go back to today's text - **Hebrews 2:10** - "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory...." Taken with our writer's exposition of **lost glory** in **Psalm 8**, these words are precious indeed. **Glory** is still the goal. God's original plan for mankind's created glory remains firm. While not fully visible yet, the **target** of creation glory has not been discarded. The goal of Christ's **redemptive** work is in line with Father God's **creative** work.

This is the whole point of redemption. It is more than just **forgiveness**. There will be a **new creation** and there will be a **restored glory**.

And here's how we know this. That glorious new creation is presently accomplished and revealed in Christ's glorified ascended position in **Hebrews 2:9a** - "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...." And the writer has already told us we are included in that glory-restored inheritance in Christ.

So we **don't** see mankind's glory as created. But here's what we **do** see - **"But we see him...."** We see Jesus. And we see Him **"...crowned with glory and honor..."(2:9a)**. This is the brief description of the present new creation rule of Christ. There are other New Testament descriptions even more detailed:

Ephesians 1:16-21 - "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, [17] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, [18] having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, **that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might [20] that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21] far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.**"

Here's another description - **Ephesians 2:4-7** - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— [6] **and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**"

All of this is what our writer has in mind when he says the divine intention of the cross is **"bringing many sons to glory"(2:10)**.

3) **ONLY ONE KIND OF DELIVERANCE WILL DO US ANY GOOD AND ONLY ONE DELIVERER IS ABLE TO PROVIDE IT**

Hebrews 2:10-11 - "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.** [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...."**

Back in **verse 9** we were given a crisp picture of the magnitude of deliverance provided through the Son - **"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."**

What shall we do with the problem of death? What solution have our best minds discovered? Who among us avoids the grave? This, our writer says, is a deliverance only God can provide. Our writer will give a deeper explanation of this monumental deliverance later in this very chapter:

Hebrews 2:14-15 - "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, [15] **and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.**"

So **verse 9** and **verses 14-15** are on our writer's mind in **verse 10** - "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.**"

How was the Christ made **"perfect through suffering?"** Wasn't He sinless before His crucifixion? How can a sinless person be **made perfect?**

The key is remembering the perfection described isn't **moral** perfection but **made perfectly ready for an assignment**. And the perfection required for our deliverance from sin and death was the capacity of the divine Son to **suffer** and to **die**. This the pre-existent Son could not do. He had to become one of **us** to become the **"founder"(2:10)** of our salvation. Only the **second** member of the Trinity has **"tasted"** death.

4) **THE SUFFERING OF JESUS AND THE POWER TO FOLLOW HIM WITH JOY**

Hebrews 2:10-13 - "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*. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why *he is not ashamed* to call them *brothers*, [12] saying, 'I will tell of your name to *my brothers*; in the *midst of the congregation* I will sing your praise.' [13] And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Behold, *I and the children God has given me.*'"

We do we need to be told about our Lord's *suffering*? I know we need to understand His *death*. There is no pardon for sin and no conquering of death for us without our Lord's death and resurrection. But His *suffering* references more than His *death*. His suffering includes being *misunderstood* by His own family. It includes agonizing over the nature of the *"cup"* of His impending future torture. It includes being *"despised and rejected of men."* It includes His *closest followers betraying and denying Him* - while the rest seemed to *never "get" what He was talking about*.

Why all this *suffering*? Because you and I are called to the same path in following our Lord *now, in this world*. The worst suffering is the betraying inward feeling of *shame* for standing out visibly aligned with Jesus in this world - in that university class - at work - in front of friends who find your deepest Christian convictions as *counter-cultural as the declarations of Jesus that lead to His execution*.

Jesus knows the weight of *social un-acceptance*. He knows the sting of *persecution*. He knows the loneliness of *being lied about and misrepresented*. He went through everything that makes devotion to Him challenging in this world. And He has been made *"perfect"* in His compassion toward us as we face the same cost for allegiance to Him in this world.

Our writer tells these struggling Hebrew Christians they are *one with this Christ - Hebrews 2:11* - "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...."

Christlikeness is more than just not going to dirty movies. And it's even more than just giving food to orphans. Jesus was *persistent in His commitment to us*. Jesus *stayed with* you and me. He never shrank back from our deliverance. He was never tempted to abandon us. He was faithful to His sinful *"brothers and sisters"* to the very end and through all eternity. Jesus stays with us.

"Remember this!" - our writer would say - "You can't follow this Christ without experiencing the same reproach from the surrounding culture He experienced from His."

Are you telling your kids about this? Do they think their devotion to Jesus *won't* feel hard or embarrassing at times? Do they understand they will be considered intolerant?

I understand there are levels of Christian discipleship. What you tell a fifteen year-old will certainly be different from what you tell a six year-old. But my concern is different. My concern is we don't tell them what to expect *at all*. My concern is they know all about some of the promises and pleasantries of the Christian life until, one day, they feel the shock of discovering not only do other people think *differently* from them, but other people *reject them* for their exclusive loyalty to Jesus Christ.

And at that time they'll only be supported by understanding how the *"founder of their salvation"*(2:10) walked the same path. They need to *trust the persistent love of Jesus* and find joy in *walking the same path*. They will need to know how proud Jesus is of His faithful *"brothers and sisters"*(2:11).