

Hebrews 2

Hello ladies, many of you know me, I'm Jen Kramer. For those who don't, I've been at this church a number of years, am married, and have a son and daughter, age 9 and 6, respectively. I have the privilege of teaching you today on Hebrews 2—and you get to be my guinea pigs, because I've never actually taught a lesson like this before. Feedback is appreciated, but booing and hissing is discouraged.

Let's open our Bibles to Hebrews chapter 2. As you saw in your study, chapter 1 focuses on how Jesus is better than the angels as the Son of God. Chapter 2 goes into how Jesus is better than the angels as the son of man. Before the author goes into this argument, he gives the first of five warnings in the book of Hebrews. You'll find them in the introduction to your study. *This* warning is about drifting from the Word.

Drifting

What does he mean by drifting in verse 1? In your word study, it identifies drifting as a nautical term meaning “to flow by, drift away, slip away.” What does it imply if a boat's drifting?: **“Who's at the helm and why aren't they paying attention?”** right? Sailors constantly take measurements to determine where they are in order to course-correct—because there's no question they'll need to course-correct.

When a boat drifts, it doesn't just sit still, it's carried away. If we direct the ship straight toward its destination, the winds and currents veer it off course. Even without the winds and currents, if it's heading is off just a half degree, what happens over time? It gets farther and farther away from its original heading. Someone's got to be at the helm, and that someone better be paying attention.

In Hebrews, what is it we're supposed to pay attention to? To what Jesus has told us about salvation. To God's Word. And no person spoke God's Word with more authority than Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews is pointing out that every other way God has delivered His word to us—even the angels—pales in comparison to God delivering His word to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself has more authority than any other messenger of God. He isn't just the messenger. The firstborn son has the authority of the father, if you remember from Lesson 1. It is as though the Father Himself is speaking... because Jesus shares the same divine essence as the Father.

So we'd better pay attention, sisters. Much closer attention, as it says in verse 1. If those who came before were destroyed for not listening to a message delivered with less authority, isn't it all the more important to listen to God's message delivered through Jesus Himself?

Son of Man

After explaining how Jesus is better than the angels as the Son of God, it surprised me that he would then go into why Jesus was better than the angels as the *son of man* in chapter 2. Wait, men are better than angels? When did that happen?

Take a look at Hebrews 2:6: “What is man, that You [God] remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him?” If you grew up in the church like me, you always assumed “son of man” in the Bible automatically referred to Jesus. But if you look at the text—and I hope in your lesson you were able to go look at Psalm 8 where the author quoted from—you start to see it's talking about men in general. Jesus is definitely there, but He's there as a *man*.

This theme continues in verses 7-8: “You have made him [who’s him? We’re still talking about man] for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him [man] with glory and honor, and have appointed him [man] over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his [man’s] feet.”

Maybe you’re not fully tracking with me in that this refers to man—don’t worry, I didn’t track with it at first, either. Let me take you through some Scripture. Hebrews 2:6-8 are quoting Psalm 8:4-6, but I’ll read through verse 8 in the psalm. “What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him [man] to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his [man’s] 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 through the paths of the seas.”

Does that last part sound familiar? Let’s go back to Genesis 1 when God first created man and read verse 26: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

Is the author talking about man in Psalm 8? Yes. Yet we also have Hebrews 2:9a, which says, “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, *Jesus*.” So is he talking about Jesus? Yes—as a *man*. As THE man: the perfect epitome of what man should have been—and what man will be again due to Christ’s sacrifice.

So it *is* about Jesus, but what does this all mean for us? God originally created us to rule over the earth. Is that a sobering thought? You may think, “Sure, but that was before the Fall when we were perfect.” You’re right. When man fell, it was part of God’s curse to make us “for a little while lower than the angels,” (reference Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:7). Since the Fall, we no longer rule the earth, we have to fight to subdue it (Genesis 3:17-19). In the latter part of Hebrews 2:8, the writer acknowledges this: “But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him”—him being man. Not yet. But sisters, we will.

Revelation 22:5d (the very last chapter of the Bible) says, “**and they will reign forever and ever.**” They isn’t just Jesus, sisters. It’s His brothers, too—God’s children. The fact that man’s dominion is mentioned in the very first and last chapter of the Bible, cover-to-cover and reaffirmed in the middle—Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2—is pretty significant. God created man to rule.

God wasn’t surprised by the Fall. It was part of His plan all along. God knew we needed a Savior, that Jesus would eventually have to come down and suffer as we do. I love the picture Rich Mullins painted in one of his Christmas songs; he says of Jesus “wrap our injured flesh around You.” What must it have been like for a righteous, holy God to come down to earth and take the body of a *fallen* man? **That was part of His plan from the beginning.** It wasn’t a contingency plan, it was THE plan.

Now, considering all we’ve done—use Israel as a vivid example—why on earth would God even *want* to restore us to that place of authority? Why would He have given us such authority in the first place?

We actually read God’s explanation in Genesis 1:26: “Let Us make man in Our image.” Have you ever really thought what it means that we bear God’s image? We were *made* to show *His* glory. Man is the pinnacle of creation—remember, even the angels were made to serve men as stated in Hebrews 1—**because we bear God’s image.**

Do we bear it well as fallen man? Did Jesus bear it well in human flesh? Jesus—not just as a son of man, but as *the* son of man—the fulfillment of what should have been, is better than the angels who served as God’s messengers of His word. We need to pay attention to Jesus. To not just be hearers of His Word who delude ourselves, but doers of the Word, as it says in James 1:22.

Perfect through Sufferings

Here’s part of the beautiful message of Hebrews 2.

It isn’t about us, it’s about Him. God made us in *His* image—to reflect *His* glory. If it doesn’t glorify the Trinity that God would be willing to send His firstborn Son—His heir and most precious relationship—to *humble* Himself and die for us *while we were yet sinners* (Romans 5:8), I don’t know what is.

But Hebrews 2 uses a progression to explain something that would truly connect us to our perfect Savior, Christ—and ultimately, to God Himself through Christ as our high priest.

In verse 9, it talks about Christ tasting death for everyone. Who is everyone? Everyone who has genuine faith in Him—in other words, God’s sons, or children. Encouragement toward genuine faith that endures is one of the reasons the author warns against drifting in verse 1.

In verse 10 it says, “For it was fitting for Him [God]... in bringing many sons to glory [that’s Christ bringing us to salvation], to perfect Christ through sufferings.”

If you’re like me, you saw “to perfect Christ,” and thought, “Isn’t Christ already perfect?” When I think of the word “perfect,” I think of moral perfection. Obviously, Christ is morally perfect, without sin. So what does the author mean? In your word study “perfect” is defined as, “To bring to an end, finish, accomplish, fulfill.” And, “To bring to maturity or completeness, to complete, perfect.”

So why would it be fitting that, in saving us, Christ be perfected—or completed, fulfilled—through *sufferings*? Because Jesus hadn’t yet suffered as we have, and if Jesus was to pay the price for our sin, He had to fully become one of us. He had to suffer what we suffer. God completed what was lacking in Jesus’ experience through sufferings, and as a result, Jesus can now sympathize with us as our high priest. It was “fitting,” as it says in verse 10, for God to perfect Christ through sufferings.

Is there another place the Bible talks about suffering and perfection? James 1:2-4 says, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**” Did you catch that? God perfects *us* through sufferings, too. I don’t mean we are morally perfect like Christ, but that suffering is under God’s control, too, and, while we usually think of suffering as a bad thing, God uses it to help us learn.

Sisters, if God was willing to inflict suffering on His own Son, then why do we sometimes think we should be exempt? God “brings us to completion” through our sufferings.

Do you know what Jesus’ reaction to suffering was? Another really great passage on how to deal with sufferings is in 1 Peter 2:23. Referring to Christ it says, “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to

Him who judges righteously..." Who is the One who judges righteously? God. Jesus' reaction to suffering was to entrust Himself to God. God has a plan—and it's for your good and His glory, according to Romans 8:28-29.

Any time God tests us, it isn't to prove anything to Him—He already knows all things. When God tests us, it's to grow us. It's for our good. Honestly, I think many of His tests and trials are so we can know. It can show us where we're lacking, or even encourage us in what we're doing well. **Tests help us examine our heading.**

Now, does that mean everything in the Christian life is suffering and hardship? I don't know about you, but sometimes I get so bogged down by the weight of my sin that I lose sight of how God could love me. Yet where is my focus when I go there? It's on myself—and I'm missing the point. I am absolutely responsible for my sin, but God uses it not for me to get depressed or anxious over, but to **point me toward how much I need Christ**. Everything points back to Christ, and if we aren't intentional about shifting our focus toward Him, we drift. Whether it's depression, or anxiety, or anger, or discontentment, or bitterness, or fill in the blank. **These are all signs of drifting.**

Now I'm really good at making things about duty—about doing something because I feel like I have to. Do you go there? If you really think about it, it's a works-based mentality. It's me trying to *do*—to live up to the required standard—in order to earn my worth. That's not what God calls us to. Trying to do to earn worth is trying to add to what Christ has done. Think about that for a second. Can we really add *anything* to Christ's work?

In light of this fact, see what it says in verse 11, "For both He who sanctifies [that's Christ] and those who are sanctified [God's children] are all from one Father; for which reason He [Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren..."

Did that strike a chord in you like it did for me? Christ is not *ashamed* to call you His sister. To call you a *fellow heir*—He shares His inheritance with us. He couldn't restore us to that place of dominion without sharing His inheritance with us. He doesn't call the angels brothers and heirs. How can He call fallen man brothers? We can't do anything for Him! **Because it's not about us, it's about what He did.** It says right there in verse 11 He's not ashamed because we're all from one Father—it's about God.

So let's rest in what God has done. Jesus is our fitting Savior. Through His suffering, He became our brother, and we are now children of God—fellow heirs who Jesus has saved and brought along with Him into His own inheritance. How do we rest in that work? By looking at Jesus, the perfect man, as our high priest.

High Priest

So let's take a look at this whole high priest thing.

God created man to bear His image and man blew it. Each time we sin, we incur a punishment, a price to be paid—a ransom. What is that price? "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

The Old Testament sacrifices were a picture of that price—of the blood required to pay for our sins. Yet were the Old Testament sacrifices enough? Romans 3:25c says, "because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed." The blood of animals could only cover the sins of men. God's love is shown in the Old Testament through His

forbearance—His longsuffering—of a wayward people. God chose to honor those sacrifices and *pass over* our sin, but the price of sin is the blood of the offender—human blood.

I hope you got a chance to look at Leviticus 16 in your homework. It goes through what was required of the sacrifice to atone for—to cover—the sins of the people. Could just anyone approach God in the Old Testament? No, our sin in God's presence would result in our death. God's presence dwelled behind a really thick curtain, separating Him in the holy of holies from the rest of the tabernacle and temple. No person could enter God's presence unless they had the covering of God's proscribed sacrifice, or that person faced death.

There were a lot of things that had to happen in order to make the sacrifice to atone for the people, because it wasn't just about an offering. It was the high priest's job to "offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 7:27b). Everything involved in that sacrifice had to be unblemished, spotless, or covered by the blood of a sacrifice—whether literally or figuratively. The sacrifice itself; the place on which the sacrifice was made; the person sacrificing, etc. If something was tainted or not covered as God proscribed, the sacrifice couldn't be accepted.

As part of sacrificing for the sins of Israel, Leviticus also mentions a scapegoat. There were two goats (among other animals) involved in the sacrifice on behalf of the people. One goat was killed for the blood sacrifice. The high priest took the *other* goat and confessed all the sins of Israel over it. It represented the goat taking on the sins of the people, and it was then led out to the wilderness and released. It reminds me of Psalm 103:12—"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Except that goat was still out there somewhere, wasn't it? Do we do that? Do we think, "Yeah, but my sin is only covered. It's still there." That may have been true in the Old Testament. Sisters, it isn't true today. We know that because of an important word used in verse 17 called propitiation. Propitiation is total satisfaction of God's wrath.

Propitiation

Hebrews 10:11-14 says: "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He [Jesus], **having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God**, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**" That's His children—that's us, if we have genuine faith.

Jesus was our scapegoat; He took on our sins. But He didn't just lead them into the wilderness somewhere. He took our sins on Himself and then paid our ransom: **perfect human blood**—as only He could. His perfect sacrifice didn't just cover our sins like the Old Testament sacrifices—it paid for them. It wasn't a covering, it was propitiation: **total satisfaction of God's wrath.**

Jesus took on all our sins—past, present, *and* future. He drank the full cup of God's wrath, and there is nothing left. We struggle—or, at least, I know I do—with the fact that we still sin. Over and over and over again. But all our sins for all time in Hebrews 10:12 really means every single one. God's wrath has been poured out on Jesus, and **there's nothing left. Jesus was the propitiation.**

Do you see how history is purposefully set up to point to Christ? The real summation of the author's point of Hebrews 2 is in verses 17-18: "Therefore, He [Christ] had to be made like His

brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

Sisters, is that love? Don't fall into works and let the idea of God's glory and perfection make you lose the precious and coexistent reality of His love.

So what does it mean for us when we sin again? God's wrath is not against you. He isn't angry with you. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. Christ tore the curtain to the holy of holies in two and gave us direct access to the Father so we could “boldly approach the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

Do you know the significance of Christ sitting down at the right hand of the Father as it mentions in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 1? What did a priest do all day? Offer sacrifices. He didn't sit down until the work was done. Sisters, Jesus' work is done.

Hear this, sisters, if we accept Christ as our high priest, God is not angry with us any longer! No matter what you've done, no matter how many times you've done it, God is not ashamed of you. **He sent His firstborn Son, your brother, to be the perfect high priest, the perfect scapegoat, and the perfect sacrifice to pay for each and every one of your sins and sat down at the right hand of the Father and it. Is. Finished!** Christ proclaimed that on the cross in John 19:30. *That's* propitiation.

Our Help and Hope

Sisters, if God is not ashamed of us, why do we continue to be ashamed of ourselves? Jesus didn't just take our sins, He **credited us with His righteousness**. That's how we can reign with Him as brothers and sisters. God looks at you and sees His Son. I tend to think about how His righteousness doesn't really belong to me. In one sense, it doesn't, because I don't deserve Christ's sacrifice. But that's the point. God gets the glory, not us. God gave us grace—favor that we *couldn't* earn—and His righteousness does belong in our account because Christ put it there. We belittle His gift and make it about us when we dwell on our sins and don't look to Christ for our help and hope.

So what is your course in life? What's your destination and your heading? Is it Jesus?

Or did we get a little sidetracked by the wind pushing into our sails. Disobedient children wanting to go *their* own way? Maybe we're trying to battle the current of doing everything we're supposed to do, and we really just end up pleasing man. Or we feel like it's all we can do to bail out the ship, staying just enough on top of chores to keep the boat afloat. I mean, that brochure of the Bahamas is looking really good right about now!

Are all of those things pushing on your boat things that need to be done and worked through? Absolutely! But have we lost sight of our destination? Are we paying attention to our heading, or did we leave the helm to go deal with something else—because we need to take care of it.

Sisters, Jesus isn't just where we're heading, **He's right here with us in the boat**—and He knows exactly what you're going through. He knows the temptations you struggle with, He knows what you can and can't do—and He knows what He can do. Don't look at your circumstances—at the winds and the waves. “Oh [we] of little faith, why do [we] doubt?” (Matthew 14:31). Look into the eyes of Jesus. Consider the finished work of Christ for you: the

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Jen Kramer

work He *did*, the work Christ is *currently doing*, and the work He *will do* in you. **Christ is better than anything and everything on this earth.**

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.

It’s a relationship—and we need to be intentional about it. Jesus gets it! He knows what you’ve been through; He’s been there! And He’s here to help. So ask, sisters. Ask for God’s help to repent and follow Him again. **Remember, the purpose of our failures isn’t to feel bad about ourselves; they’re to point us back to Christ.** They remind us we can’t do it on our own, and that our reliance *must* rest on Christ.

Don’t just wait until you’ve messed up again, either. Ask Him to help you before you try *anything*. **That’s part of what it means to rely on Him: you don’t *plan* apart from Him; you consult Him first.**

How do we consult Him? **We pay close attention to what He has said in His word**—to His warnings, encouragements, and instructions—and then examine our walk. His words help us take stock of where we are, and figure out how to course-correct. Don’t forget to check your heading—be intentional about watching God’s work in your life. Enjoy His presence. Count the many gifts He gives us each day. Talk to Him often. Remind yourself that He’s doing your life right beside you.

Please join me in prayer. God, I pray you would help us see You, to fix our eyes on You each and every moment. Give us the humility to listen to Your Word and take it to heart. I pray for the discussions at these ladies’ tables, that You would give the ladies understanding and renewed hope in You. Help them to see Your joy. In Jesus’ name, amen.