

Hebrews chapter 2. Our sermon text this morning is Hebrews 2 verses 11 through 16. Now perhaps there is no other portion of God's Word that sets forth the deity of the Son of God as fully and clearly as Hebrews chapter 1. And perhaps there is no single chapter in the Bible that sets forth the humanity of Christ, the son of God, and his incarnation as fully and clearly as Hebrews chapter two. In chapter one, you see that he is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, the creator of all things, the one whom the angels themselves worship.

Chapter 2, you see that he is made for a little while lower than the angels, that he is not ashamed to call you his brother, that he is tempted in every way as we are, that he tastes death and he suffers. You put these two chapters together, Hebrews 1 and Hebrews 2, and you get what we call the incarnation. The God-man, the second person of the Trinity, became man without ceasing to be God. That's what you get when you take these two chapters and you put the truths found in them together.

And the truth is that if Christ is not the God-man, then there is no salvation. With that in mind, let us pray and ask God to help us as we read and hear his word proclaimed. Almighty God, help us now. that we hear your word preached as we sit underneath the preaching of your word. Speak not only to our ears, but to our hearts by the power of your spirit in the name of Christ, amen. Hebrews chapter two, beginning in verse 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, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers. in the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me. 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, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the proclamation of it to our lives. Why should you care here this morning that the son of God became a true man. Why should you care that Christ became a true man? Because if Christ did not become a true man, you would have no salvation. Your salvation this morning rests as much on the deity of Christ as it does on the humanity of Christ. Why must Christ be a true man to save you?

Well, he must be a true man because it is man who sinned, and therefore it is man who must pay the penalty for sin. However, what is the penalty of sin? The penalty of sin is an infinite debt, an infinite penalty. So man must pay the penalty, but how can finite man, who must pay the penalty, pay an infinite penalty, an infinite debt. Only God can pay the infinite debt because only God is infinite. But you see the dilemma. Man must pay it, but only God can pay it. Therefore, God became man that he might pay the infinite debt on man's behalf as God and yet pay the infinite debt on man's behalf as a man, a true man.

There is no salvation apart from Christ becoming man in the place of men. He had to be a true man in every sense. He had to have a true body and a reasonable soul. He wasn't almost a man. He wasn't 99.9% of a man. He was entirely and fully and truly a man.

As Gregory of Nazianzus put it, that which is not assumed cannot be healed. That which is not assumed is not healed. It is not saved. If he only had a human body, but he did not have a human soul, then you're dead and your

trespasses and sins. There is no salvation because you are a body and you are a soul. Everything that is essential to being a man, Christ became. In the incarnation, he had a true body, a reasonable soul, and if he was lacking in any part, no matter how small, in his soul as a man or in his body as a man, man would not be saved.

So our text today focuses on the humanity of Christ. And we see that Christ identifies with us. Christ identifies with us. And we see that Christ identifies with us in two ways. By becoming a true man. and by fulfilling the covenant promises. By becoming a true man and by fulfilling the covenant promises. So first, Christ identifies with us by becoming a true man.

This is stressed in verses 11 through 13. The fact that Christ identifies with us by becoming a true man is stressed throughout verses 11 through 13. It mentions that he is not ashamed to call us brothers, and then it quotes from Psalm 22 to that effect that he calls us brothers. It's stressing this reality of his true solidarity with man, his identification with man as a true man.

It's interesting to consider, just as a brief aside, that here as he's making his case for the true humanity of Christ, where does he appeal? the Old Testament. And we saw what was fascinating is, in chapter one, where did he appeal to make a case for the true deity of Christ? He quoted seven Old Testament texts in chapter one. It's amazing to see how these authors of the New Testament, writing by divine inspiration, could go back to the Old Testament to make a case for the true humanity and the true deity of Christ.

As another brief aside, I didn't read that in any of the commentaries, but it's clearly there in the text, so surely other commentators have seen it, but I thought it was interesting to contemplate this reality that these authors could go back to the Old Testament and see the full beauty and the full humanity of the promised Messiah who was to come. Well, verse 11 begins with this somewhat, frankly, strange sounding language.

It says there in verse 11, he who sanctifies, that is Christ, and those who are sanctified, that is those for whom Christ died, all have one source. What does it mean when it says that those who are sanctified all have one source? Well, there are various interpretations of this because it literally just says in the Greek, those who are sanctified are of one. Well, of one what? Of what are they one? And one author said this, his point is that the sanctifier and the sanctified share a common humanity. Or as John Owen put it, they are all of the same mass of humanity.

And this is why he can go on because they're all the same mass of humanity. He can go on to say, he is not ashamed to call us brothers because he's really a man. So he's not ashamed to call those with a human nature his brothers. And who are the them he is not ashamed to call brothers. Well, it's not every individual who has a human nature.

It's specifically those who are sanctified. And who are those who are sanctified? Those who have been washed in the blood of Christ. Those are his brothers. Those are his family members. By faith in him, they are his brothers and he has washed them with his blood. Well, what does this mean then for you, Christian? that Christ is not ashamed to call you his brother.

Well, it means just simply this. If you're a Christian in the room this morning, Christ is not ashamed of you. Every family has that hopefully extended family member that you're a little bit embarrassed by. You're a little bit, maybe you wouldn't use the word ashamed, but you might use that word, you're a little bit ashamed of them. And Christ comes and he says, everyone who's part of this family, I am not ashamed of a single one of you.

He is not annoyed, frustrated, filled with hate towards anyone who is in his family. He loves his family. Our burdens we just sang, gladly bearing. That's a fascinating thing we just sang, gladly bearing the burdens of his brethren. Here's how John Owen put it.

He says that, he says not, this is him saying for Christ, he says not with those proud hypocrites and the prophets, stand farther off, I am holier than you. But he comes unto us and takes us by the hand in his love to deliver us from this sinful condition. You might think of it like this, Christ never says to his brethren, holier than thou. And there's, he could actually say, I'm holier than thou. He could treat us justly with that attitude, but he doesn't. He comes to us and he welcomes us into his family. Verses 12 and 13 continue to stress this identification with us as a true man.

Quote from Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It is that Psalm, that Psalm that depicts with great clarity the crucifixion of Christ that was to come. But that Psalm, which is full of a lot of detailed description of the gruesomeness of the crucifixion, has a turning point.

And it is at that point that our author is quoting here. He says this in that same psalm, the same one that is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He says this, I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation. I will sing your praise. In that Psalm, Psalm 22, there is a transition, a deliverance from the persecution that the promised Messiah was to receive. And after he transitions to this point of deliverance, he begins to sing the praises of his God, the Father, and the redeeming work that he has accomplished, where? In the presence of my brethren.

He does it in the congregation, in the midst of the church, the ecclesia. He makes known the way of his salvation. And he goes on to continue to stress this solidarity, this identification, in this quotation from Isaiah 8. He's a true man. Look at this, I will put my trust in him.

Those words could be said of Christ. Christ could say in his true humanity, I will put my trust in my heavenly father. No one ever trusted the Father as Christ did. No one ever believed as Christ did. He trusted Him wholly. He trusted Him completely. He trusted Him perfectly, really. And He went through harder things than any of us have ever gone through or will ever go through. He trusted his father perfectly when all of his own family thought he had gone mad. He trusted his father perfectly when his best friends betrayed him. He trusted his father perfectly when he was denied by Peter. He trusted his father perfectly through everything he endured, even death, death on a cross.

John Calvin writes, Jesus depended on God's aid. His lot is the same as ours. The trust which we put in God is evidence of our helplessness. At the same time, we differ from Christ in this, the weakness which necessarily and naturally belongs to us, he willingly undertook. But it ought not a little to encourage us to trust in God, that we have Christ as our leader and instructor. For who would fear to go astray while following in his steps?

Imagine the Hebrew Christians who are reading this epistle. And they're tempted to turn back. They're suffering for following Jesus Christ. And they're wondering, is it all worth it? I'm being persecuted. My things are being stolen. People are mistreating me. Is following Jesus really worth it? And then they can look to Jesus, who trusted in far worse circumstances than they can imagine, and yet he continued entrusting himself to his Heavenly Father. And he was rewarded. It was worth it. He suffered, yes, but he eventually received the glory for which he came, the salvation of He suffered, but it was worth it. He trusted and endured. And so he's saying to them, you can trust him.

You can go through suffering, Hebrew Christians. You this morning can go through suffering, following after Christ's example. If Christ went through suffering and continued to trust, you too will do good to follow him in trusting your heavenly father, even while you are suffering. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. Psalm 119 we just read together. And so one takeaway from these first couple of verses is not just that we should follow his example, which is true, but Christ came to do all of this for us. to save us, to redeem us.

Notice the stress in verses 12 and 13 on the first person, personal pronoun, I. Christ taking these words upon himself says, I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation. I will sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me. The emphasis on these personal pronouns I throughout are stressing that Christ was and is faithful. He did it. He accomplished redemption for his people so that he might have you as his brother, as his sister. He did it all.

And so again, the application to those first century Christians and the application to you here today is where will you go that is better than this I? Where will you go where there is greater security than with Jesus, the one who accomplished it, the one who did it, the one who achieved redemption for his people? I will do these things. I will do these things, he is saying. And so where will you go that's better than him? Where will you go that is more secure? Where will you go that is more lasting? To what will you turn that is more satisfying to your soul?

And the answer which is implied by the text, is nothing. Nothing will be as good as Christ. Continue to press on, he is saying to these persecuted Christians then, and as his ambassador, I am saying to you, continue to press on. Turn nowhere else. Stay with Christ. Cling on to Christ. He is the savior of sinners.

But secondly this morning, Christ identifies with us by fulfilling the covenant promises. By fulfilling the covenant promises. You see that he fulfills the covenant promise to crush the head of the serpent, and he fulfills the covenant promise to help Abraham's offspring. You see he fulfills the covenant promise to crush the head of the serpent in verses 14 and 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, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

You cannot understand verses 14 and 15 rightly apart from Genesis 3.15. There's all this imagery in verses 14 about destroying the devil and death.

And all of that comes out of the covenant promise of Genesis 3.15, where God said to the serpent, I will put enmity between you, the serpent, who is the devil, and the woman. And between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

What is Genesis 3.15 declaring?

Genesis 3.15 is declaring that through the offspring of Eve, God will bring about A true man. If it's going to be Eve's offspring, this person has to be a true man. And this offspring is going to destroy the serpent, the devil, Satan. In the process, he is going to have his heel bruised. But in the process, he will also crush the head of the serpent. This is what Hebrews 2, 14 and 15 is declaring has happened in Christ. Christ is the serpent crusher, the devil destroyer, the death destroyer. Christ has done all of this.

He has fulfilled Genesis 3.15. Yes, his heel was bruised, but he crushed the head of the serpent. His heel was bruised in his death, but he crushed the head of the serpent in his resurrection.

He had to be a man that he might die, but he had to be God that he might overcome death. Here's how Turretin put it. The mediator had to be the God-man. Man to suffer, God to overcome. Man to receive the punishment we deserve, God to endure and drink it to the dregs. Man to acquire salvation for us by dying, God to apply it to us by overcoming. This neither a mere man nor God alone could do. For neither could God alone be subject to death, Nor could man alone conquer it. Verse 15 declares that in his death he delivers us from the power of death. Look at verse 15. Well, 14 and 15 again.

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, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

What does it mean to say that there are people today, certainly were then, who are living in perpetual fear of death? And what does it mean to talk about the devil having this power? Well, it is the guilt of sin that makes man fear death. The devil comes and he says, are you ready to die? You know you're not ready to die. You're a sinner. You can't be ready to die. Once you die, you're going to face the judgment and you know that you're a sinner. You'll be condemned. But what if there was a way that you could be declared not guilty? Then you could say to death, oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, grave, where is your sting? How can that happen?

When Christ dies for you in your place, the death you deserve, he takes upon himself. So that when you go to die, He having died for you and having lived for you, you can die knowing that you're safe in Christ. That He died for you and He rose for you so that the devil cannot say to you justly, you should fear death. As a Christian, you do not need to fear the grave because Christ took the penalty of your sins upon himself. Think, your entire record, all of your sins past, all of your sins present, all of your sins future, have been nailed to the cross. You can say with the hymn writer, my sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul. Now, even a Christian can have a natural apprehension toward death as something you have not yet passed through.

But, to quote one friend, in a certain sense you have. You've died with him. You've been raised with him. You continue to die daily. As Spurgeon said, there's just one more death to die. In a very real sense, you already are so well prepared, even for that experience of death, by daily dying with Jesus Christ. And so death ultimately is something that you can approach with confidence because Christ has paid the penalty. He's taken the guilt upon himself so that you bear it no more.

Let us continue here to look at this verse 16 and see that he fulfills the covenant promises to help Abraham's offspring. Verse 16, for surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Now why does verse 16 specifically say that he helps the offspring of Abraham? Why does it not say he helps the offspring of Adam? Well, it does not say he helps the offspring of Adam because he did not come to help every single individual in this helping way.

This is a salvific helping. This is a redeeming helping. This is a saving helping. And he did not come to save every single person with a human nature. All those who are descendants from Adam by ordinary generation. He did not come to do that. But he came specifically to help the children of Abraham, the offspring of Abraham.

You're sitting here perhaps and you think well I'm going to need to go do some genealogical research, my ancestry, find out if I'm among the lineage of Abraham so I can know if I can be one of those special people who gets helped by Jesus. Well what does it mean to be of the offspring of Abraham? To understand what this means we need to just take a moment to turn over to the book of Galatians. What does it mean to be one of Abraham's offspring?

Galatians chapter 3. Galatians 3 verse 7 says this, Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. So those of faith, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are Abraham's offspring. Galatians 3, 28 and 29 have the same effect. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. So the offspring of Abraham are all who have a faith in the same Messiah as Abraham, the same Christ to whom Abraham was looking. All who look to that Christ are Abraham's spiritual kin, his brothers and sisters in Christ by union with Jesus Christ, you are part of the family of God. And how is it that this is fulfilled in Jesus?

Well, because Galatians 3.16 says, now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, and to your offspring who is Christ.

So ultimately, according to Galatians 3.16, Christ is the fulfiller of the covenant promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 15, and particularly in Genesis 17, Christ fulfilled those covenant promises to Abraham so that those who trust in him might have his help. God had promised to be a God to Abraham and to all who trust in the God of Abraham.

So what is the author of Hebrews doing by divine inspiration here? Well, he's saying Jewish Christians, you're tempted to turn back from following Jesus. Are you going to turn to someone other than Christ who fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament? Are you going to turn to someone other than Christ who has succeeded where

Adam fell? Are you going to turn to someone other than Christ who was the one to whom Abraham was looking? And he's saying, don't turn back. Press on. Don't give up. Though you're persecuted, continue on in the faith.

So Christ identifies with us, we've seen this morning, by becoming a true man for us and by fulfilling the covenant promises for us. Let us pray. Almighty God, we do thank you and praise you for Jesus Christ, who sets us the perfect example, but also more than that, succeeds as our mediator, the savior of our souls, where our first parent, Adam, fell. And O Lord God, the one to whom Abraham looked, Christ was a fulfillment of all of it. And we praise you that you have given him to us, and we have you as our God, and we get to be your people. O God, I do pray that we would relish and cherish the privileges that are ours in Jesus, that we would not live as though we are impoverished when we are rich. For indeed, O God, whatever may come, if we are in Christ, we are rich. Forgive us of our many sins. Strengthen us, even as we prepare to go to your table. In the name of Jesus, amen.