

The Righteous Love of God

Hebrews 2:5-18

In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp.

One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster."

Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God while I am in prison."

This is the where we often miss it... we ask God to change our circumstances, we pout, get upset and angry, or complain about how things aren't going our way....

When in reality we should be asking God to help us glorify HIM in the circumstances.

*Spiritual maturity is **not** about finding a way of escape "from" but rather finding God way "in."*

People is God's method.

While the church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better people. ...

What we need is not more machinery, more organization or innovative methods...

... what the church needs is people of prayer who are sold out to God.

This is what the writer of Hebrews is getting at ...

... He wants us to show us how to live closer to God ...

... and he wants us to get our eyes off our "negative" circumstances and focus on our powerful Christ.

(Pause)

Last week we saw in chapter 1 we saw that Jesus is better than the angels as a **revealer** of God the Father.

In chapter 2 we see that Jesus is better than the angels in **representing** man.

The big picture in Hebrews chapter 2 is that Jesus is better than angels, that he became flesh and blood (lower than the angels) in order to rescue humanity from its hopeless condition.

Jesus came down to bring us UP, IN, and OUT.

(Heb. 1:14) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? ... (Heb. 2:5-9) ⁵ For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. ⁶ But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? ⁷ "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; ⁸ YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁹ But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

1. Jesus came down so that He might bring us UP

The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was made "for a little while" lower than the angels.

The point is that Jesus came down (made lower than then angels) so that when Jesus goes back up (when He is exalted) he will take us up with him ...

Paul is saying is that in time humanity (in and through Jesus Christ) will be restored to his rightful place ...

... to the place of authority over all created things ... which is where humanity was before its fall into sin in the garden of Eden.

When you look at all the trouble, sorrow, and confusion in this world ... this IS NOT what God intended for us to be.

LET ME TRY TO SAY THIS MORE CLEARLY ...

God the Father's purpose for this world is that humanity, not the angels, rule in the future (or as the writer says in verse 5 "In the world to come.")

Quoting from Psalm 8 Paul details three things about God's plan for humanity.

- Man has been made a little lower than the angels;
- he has been crowned with glory and honor
- he has been set over the works of God's hands, with all things in subjection to him.

This has always been God the Father's plan for humanity ...

In spite of humanity's weakness and lowliness, God intended for humanity to have a position of remarkable greatness.

But notice what the writer says in verse 8 ***But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.***

Paul is admitting that we have not yet achieved that greatness ...

... sin (the rebellion of Adam and Eve) has **robbed** humanity of the greatness God intended.

... but **perhaps "robbed" is too strong of a world ...**

... look at what **verse 9** says.

... But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Although what was planned for humanity has not yet been realized, that does NOT mean it won't happen ...

... You see, regardless of how things may look to you and me ...

... Our God has a plan to remedy our situation ...

Notice the phrase in verse 9.

... because of the suffering of death crowned with glory ... humanity will be brought up ... exalted.

In the Greek this verse literally says that Jesus was crowned “for death.”

In other words, ... *crowned in order that* He should taste death for everyone

... there are other passages of scripture that say that Jesus was crowned “in death” or “after death” ...

In other words, Jesus was crowned **for death**, and **after** death.

How can it be both?

... First, Peter tells us this “crowning with glory and honor” which prepared Jesus for his death and was on the mount of Transfiguration.

(2 Pet. 1:17) For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased "

But, in another place, Paul reminds us that Jesus was also crowned after his death.

(Phil. 2:8-9) ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name, which is above every name,

Finally, Hebrews adds one additional element ...

... in Hebrews 2:9 the use of the word “taste” death indicates that Jesus didn’t just merely die, he experienced what death is in the fullest sense.

Jesus went to the bottom of death ...

Jesus came down so that he might bring us up.

Jesus was humiliated so that we might be exalted.

(Heb. 2:10-13) ¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, 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 WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."

2. Jesus came down so that He might bring us IN

“For it was fitting for Him...”

... In other words what Jesus did was congruous (in agreement, in harmony with) with God’s divine will and plan.

What Jesus did, made it possible to bring “many sons to glory!”

It was right and proper for Jesus to die because in his death He vindicated the righteousness of the Father.

... Jesus is the author, the captain of our salvation ...

But what about the phrase in verse 10, where it says that suffering “perfected the author” of our salvation???

Was Jesus not perfect before? ... Did His death make an imperfect savior perfect ... ???

Let me be clear: Jesus has always been, is, and always will be the PERFECT son of God.

... But the writer of Hebrews is telling us that Jesus' suffering and dying fully equipped Jesus for His work as our Savior.

- Because of what Jesus has done we can be redeemed.
- Because of what Jesus has done the redeemer and the redeemed are one ...
- ... we have the same father.
- WE ARE FAMILY WITH CHRIST!

(Heb. 2:14-16)¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.¹⁶ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

3. Jesus came down so that He might bring us OUT

Randy Newman (who wrote the theme song for Toy Story) also wrote a song he entitled, "Beware of the Naked Man?"

Newman explains that this song is based on a true story told to him by a friend who was a public defender. Apparently, a woman walking down the street had her purse snatched by a naked man who was running down the street. When the police found a naked guy, a few blocks away with her purse, but the man insisted that he didn't take the purse, but that another naked man had run up to him and handed it to him.

Apparently that night there were two naked men running through the streets of New Orleans.

... Let me just say that his alibi didn't hold up in court and he was convicted.

People believe a lot of things, and say a whole lot more about what they believe.

However, no matter what story you believe or tell, it doesn't change the fact that we are all guilty ... we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

... and you know it true ... even if you are afraid to say it out loud.

... There is no question that humanity is self-destructive.

Humanity is in bondage ... shackled ... bound by sin, death and fear.

... and no matter what we do, we cannot free ourselves from this bondage.

The writer says that this is the reason Jesus took on flesh and blood in order to “render powerless” the devil.

Satan uses bondage, death, and fear to paralyze us ... but Christ through His death has robbed the devil of all his power.

Think about this ... Jesus, who was perfect, sinless, and spotless ...died.

... And when that happened, Jesus's death broke (forever) the connection between sin and death.

... Before that moment only sinful people died ... [there was a direct correlation between sin and death.]

But Jesus, who knew no sin, DIED!!!

I don't know if you can see this but listen ...

... It is not only that Jesus took upon Himself human flesh to be like us ...

... He took on flesh, without sin, to show us that flesh isn't our problem ... sin is.

Our problem isn't that we have flesh and blood and skin ... our problem is that we have sin.

Look at how Hebrews says it ...

(Heb. 2:17-18) ¹⁷ Therefore, He 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. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Jesus had to be made like us... be like us ... weak like us ... so that he might become our merciful and faithful high priest!

Do you see it??? ...

... There was no other way!

The plan wasn't just salvation ... the plan was an eternal relationship with God!

What is the point of redemption without relationship?

... and the only way we can have that relationship with God the Father is if there is a priest who understand US and THE FATHER ...

... relationship is only possible if we have a priest who is both **faithful to the Father** and **merciful to us**.

Let me explain what I mean... Do you see the word “propitiation”?

That's a big word ... and I quote it a lot ... but what does it really mean?

Propitiation means, that which makes it consistent for God to pardon and adopt.

God is holy/righteous/faithful/pure ... and we are not.

Someone has asked, *“If God can do anything then why doesn't He just forgive everyone and let everyone go to heaven regardless of what they've done, who they are, or how they've lived.”*

First of all, God can't do everything.

God can't lie, God can't be unholy, unrighteous, or unjust.

God can not act in any way that is inconsistent with His holy righteousness.

After Adam and Eve's sin in Gen. 3 there was no way unholy, faithless, humanity could dwell in the presence of a holy God ... impossible.

Sin incapacitated us ... it left us separated from God ...

... IN FACT, we were not only separated from God ... God was separated from us!!!

There was no path that connected unholy humanity with holy God.

... our sinfulness had to be judged.

But that is not the end of the story...

Although God's justice could not overlook sin ... in the same way His love could not be indifferent to us sinners ...

... and so, what God's righteousness demanded, God's love provided in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus's propitiation (death, burial and resurrection) **made it consistent for a holy God to pardon and adopt us** even though we were unholy and sinful.

Jesus became us (although holy and God) suffered like us, bore shame like us, died like us ...

(Pause) The one who has judged us is also the one who has justified us!

I cannot stress this enough ... Jesus saw us desperate and hopeless in our sin ... and HE CAME TO OUR AID!

There is a fascinating story that came of the 1989 earthquake which destroyed much of Armenia.

The deadly tremor killed over 30,000 people in less than four minutes.

In Armenia there was a father, who immediately after rushed to his son's school to check on him and when he arrived, he found the school building leveled.

He rushed around asking everyone if they had seen his son ... but no one had.

... the situation was hopeless. The father was devastated.

Then, remembering that his son's classroom was in the back right corner of the building, the father rushed there and began digging through the rubble with his hands.

There were other grieving parents there crying, "my son, my daughter" but when the father asked them to help him dig they said, "No, it's too late."

... the father begged and plead with them, but no one would help.

"It's too late!" "They're dead!" "You're wasting your time!" "Go home!"

Even the police officers and a fire-fighters told him he should go home.

But the father kept digging, "won't anyone help me?" but no one did.

He kept digging, stone by stone, board by board ... he was obsessed.

He dug 8 hours and then 12 and then 24 and 36.

... but then in the 38th hour when he pulled back a boulder, he heard his son's voice down in the ground.

The father screamed his son's name, "Armand!"

The answer came back "Dad?" "It's me Dad!"

When the father pulled back the rubble he didn't just find his son, he found the whole classroom had fallen into a crevice the earthquake had opened up, and everyone of the classmates were alive.

The news reported that the son said to his father, "I told the other kids not to worry. I told them that if you were alive, you would find me and save me and now you've saved me ... and them too."

God the Father sent Jesus to save me, but not just me ... you too.

If you will surrender your life to Jesus, if you will ask Jesus to forgive you ... he will not just forgive you of your sins ...

- He will bring you up and exalt you
- He will adopt you and bring you into His family
- He will bring you out of bondage into liberty.

Listen to me, if you will open your heart and accept Jesus as your Lord in Savior, He will make you his child FOREVER!