

HEBREWS 2:5-18

Our Empathetic Brother pt 2

(Welcome, whether you are a convinced believer, skeptic, or in between. We are glad to have you with us and are honored that you would share part of your day with us and entrust us to help you in some way in your faith journey.)

How many of us as parents have told our kids about the need to resist the temptations that they face, and we make the point that the Lord Jesus was tempted in the same way that we are, and he didn't sin? OR MAYBE YOU'VE said it to yourself or an adult friend.
DID YOU EVER GET THIS RESPONSE...?

"Yeah, but Jesus is God!"

Well, that is what we all tend to think. Christ may have been a man in principle, but he was not a man like us.

OR WAS HE? Yes and No. This topic has been one of the trickiest over the course of church history.

This sermon letter to the Hebrews helps us see that Jesus was like us in that he was fully man, although fully God. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin. He didn't live in an ivory tower, but he came and lived among us, and he suffered as we suffer.

The author of Hebrews is reminding the people of the necessity and superiority of Christ.

Our doctrine is what theologians call the "consequent absolute necessity" of the atonement through Christ. God did not have to save us, he could have left us all to our sins, but, once deciding to save us, there was no other way to secure our salvation but the way that was used: the incarnation of God the Son, his obedience and suffering in our place, his death and resurrection, and the application of Christ's redemption to our lives by the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to our salvation, God WAS ALL IN.

Jesus wrestled with this as he prayed in the garden, the night he was betrayed. "Father, if there be any other way... but not my will but Thy will be done."

Jesus understood that his suffering was NECESSARY - LUKE 24:25- 27

25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

This passage in Hebrews unpacks the reality of the necessity of Christ being made like us so that he could die for us, so that we might be conformed to His image.

9 but we do see Jesus—who for a while was a little lower than the angels—crowned now by God with glory and honor because he suffered death for us. Yes, because of God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting that God, who made everything for his own glory, should allow Jesus to suffer, for in doing this he was bringing vast multitudes of God's people to heaven; for his suffering made Jesus a perfect Leader, one fit to bring them into their salvation..

11 We who have been made holy by Jesus, now have the same Father he has. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers 12 saying,

"I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,
IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." Ps 22
13 And again,

"I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM."

Isaiah 8:17-18

And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."

¹⁴ Since we, God's children, are human beings—made of flesh and blood—he became flesh and blood too by being born in human form; for only as a human being could he die and in dying break the power of the devil who had the power of death. ¹⁵ Only in that way could he deliver those who through fear of death have been living all their lives as slaves to constant dread.

¹⁶ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 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.

Why Did He Become Our Empathetic Brother?

3 answers from the text

1- So salvation could be accomplished in harmony with the character of God. V. 9ff

"It was fitting."

It was in harmony with the character of God that the creator and sustainer of all things in bringing many sons to glory would perfect the author of salvation through suffering.

Behind the sacrifice of Christ is the very character of God Himself

"fitting" = becoming, suitable and proper; right and appropriate

Sometimes in a novel, movie or real life we ask, "Why would he/she do that? What was the point. I don't understand. It doesn't make sense. It seems out of character, etc."

So too we might ask of God, "Why would He do this...send His Son to suffer?"

To the Jews and the Romans, it doesn't make sense. We still struggle with it 2000 after Christ.

But Hebrews says, "it was fitting with the character of God."

How and Why?

It shows us the deep compassion that God has for lost sinners, for those who are in rebellion against Him. NO OTHER God IS LIKE THAT.

This is one of the best arguments for the truth of Christianity – it is unique.

People say, "all religions are basically the same". With all due respect – that statement is nonsense and the one who says it is at best ignorant, at worst trying to deceive.

They are NOT all the same. Only Christianity has a God who will die for you. Only Christianity has a God who entered our mess and suffers with us.

The author of Hebrews is reminding his readers that Jesus became a man to identify with us by suffering with us and for us. IT WAS FITTING TO SHOWCASE THE GRACIOUS NATURE OF God.

What was the action to bring sons to glory? It was "fitting" that the author of salvation would be made perfect through suffering.

"perfect" = be complete, fulfilled, finish

For Jesus to complete the work of savior and to fulfill all the requirements of the Law, his ministry in the flesh must include death. It was not enough to actively obey, but He had to passively obey. He had to die to bear the curse of sin.

Thus, he is the author (champion, pioneer) of salvation.

This means that nothing of the character of God was surrendered to bring about salvation – his love did not compromise his holiness and vice versa.

It was fitting or becoming to the character of God in several ways: A.W. Pink

It was fitting to display God's wisdom. His wisdom is evidenced in all His works, but nowhere so conspicuously as at Calvary. At the cross God exhibited the solution to a problem which no finite intelligence could ever have solved, namely, how justice and mercy might be perfectly harmonized. How was it possible for righteousness to uphold the claims of the law and yet for grace to be extended to its transgressors?

IT was fitting to show the holiness and righteousness of God. Again and again during Old Testament times God manifested His displeasure against sin, but never did the light of God's holiness shine forth so vividly as at Calvary, where we see Him smiting His own Beloved because the sins of His people had been transferred to Him. – Sin is paid for. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is salvation through Christ Jesus.

It was fitting to show God's power – Rom 1 The gospel is the power of God unto salvation

It was fitting to show God's LOVE - "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). The mercy of God is over all His works, but never so fully and so gloriously was it manifested as when Christ became Man and was made a curse for His people, that theirs might be the blessing.

WHY Jesus BECAME OUR EMPATHETIC BROTHER...

2. Jesus comes to identify with those given to him by the father.

v. 11-14 – Christ has become one with his people

v. 14 to undo the effects of the fall, God must add humanity to his deity.

v.13 In other words, Jesus is so much a man that he too must put his trust in the Lord, he too must live by faith. Jesus ate, slept, got tired, experienced emotions and was subject to the ups and downs of life's circumstances. He grew in wisdom concerning the things around him. There was nothing about his appearance that said, "spiritual giant, devil slayer, champion of the faith." In all that came his way he trusted His father.

Alexander Whyte's great sermon on "Jesus Christ our Lord as a Believing Man." The reason it is powerful is that we don't often think that way about Jesus. Have you considered that he had to live by faith in precisely the same way you and I do? Jesus walked by faith every day. He depended on the Father for his daily bread. He lived a life of prayer, which is the primary expression of faith.

The commentator Albrecht Bengel once wrote that **"the most fragrant part of Christ's sin-atonement sacrifice was His unshaken trust in His Father's faithfulness and love."** [Cited in Whyte, Walk, Character and Conversation..., 187]

So, when we or our kids say, "yeah, but I'm not Jesus, we must remember that he was a person like us, and he also had to walk by faith moment by moment.

v.17 The substitute must be like us, except without sin. He was made like us in every way

It is fitting that we should hold fast to our hope and stand for Jesus, our champion.

Are you ashamed of him?

He who made purification and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high is not ashamed to be called your brother.

WHY Jesus BECAME OUR EMPATHETIC BROTHER...

#3. So he might accomplish glorious benefits on our behalf.

He came down with our good in mind

- A) **v. 14 To free us from fear of death.** – not annihilate the devil, but to break his power or nullify.

The devil held the power of death, so what does this mean? Deut 32:39 – God Ps 139 – God still controls our days. Satan is not God, but a finite fallen creature who owes his existence to the purposes of God.

Satan uses the reality of death to keep people in bondage, to torment and frighten them.
v. 15 – fear of death is the common condition

This fear is played upon often in the public arena in advertising. Note how many commercials are trying to sell something to extend your life or protect you from death – car safety, certain diet or food, medications, life insurance. DEATH AND SEX are two big items in advertising.

The fear of death is played upon often in the area of “politics” – “If we pursue that policy or don’t pursue this policy, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO DIE.”

<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2018/12/31/three-times-democrats-predicted-trumps-policies-would-kill-people/>

** Side road (if enacting or blocking a certain government policy holds the key to life and death, then perhaps government has replaced God in the public square).

The biblical reality is that because of sin, “people are going to die.”

“Each one of our lives is like a murder mystery which when unfolded shows that we are the victim.”

Death is fearful because of what may come after. The fear is that there may just be an accounting. The bible is clear that death is not the final crisis for the unbeliever – judgment is. Satan plays on our fears to paralyze and enslave us.

But for believers, THERE IS GOOD NEWS. Let it sink into your heart. Death is defanged. 1 Cor 15
Where is thy sting??

Jesus lay death in his grave. For the believer, death is a passage to heaven.

Heb 2:1-4 Don’t ignore so great a salvation... Rom 8:38ff Strengthen your heart in the Word
Calvin – But if any one cannot pacify his mind by disregarding death, let him know that he has made as yet but very little progress in the faith of Christ; for as extreme fear is owing to ignorance of the grace of Christ, so it is a certain evidence of unbelief. – Commentary on Hebrews 2:14-15

We are freed from the fear of death by death itself.

The NEXT BENEFIT accomplished by Christ is that

B.) His life and death served to turn away God’s wrath – God did not come to serve the fallen angels, but man. Jesus came to stoop lower than the angels to become a faithful merciful high priest. It was all about propitiation for the sins of the people with whom he has identified.

Propitiation – Jesus became one of us to represent his people as a fitting substitute.

A big word for big people. And it is God’s word.

“to turn away wrath, to abate, appease God”

Sin arouses God’s wrath. His wrath is his holiness responding to sin – his righteous anger is fitting.

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/the-hatred-of-god-in-the-psalms-of-david/>

Jesus identifies with us because representation requires identification and there is
No propitiation without representation! Jesus truly represents us in taking on our sin so that he may give us his righteousness.

Never overlook or underestimate the humility of God in sending His son to obey and die for us, who “by nature objects of wrath”.

The NEXT BENEFIT accomplished by Christ is that
C.)- **He came to be an all sufficient helper . v.18**

Not one of us here has faced the full force of temptations power- except Jesus. He takes it head on and he never yields. Only Jesus has outlasted temptation at its greatest intensity.

The best counselor is not necessarily one who can identify because he or she has sinned in the same way – that may be helpful.
But the supreme counselor is the one who has faced the full force of temptation and stood firm
AND HAS GIVEN YOU THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT.

The author is telling us, “**Given all that Jesus is and all that he has done, we should and can hold fast to Jesus who is superior to anything else** – even the approval of the world around us.

One thing about Hebrews that is different from many of the letters of the NT is that there are no prayers for the hearers (there is a final benediction). The letters of Paul are sprinkled with prayers that he offers.

I was using a VoV Prayer during the week and thought, “This resonates with Hebrews 1-2”)
THE SPIRIT’S WORK...

**O GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT,
Take the things of Christ and show them
to my soul;
Through thee may I daily learn more of his love,
grace, compassion, faithfulness, beauty;**

**Lead me to the cross and show me his wounds,
the hateful nature of evil, the power of Satan;
Help me to find in his death the reality
and immensity of his love.**

**Increase my faith in the clear knowledge of
atonement achieved, expiation completed,
satisfaction made, guilt done away,
my debt paid, my sins forgiven,
my person redeemed, my soul saved,
hell vanquished, heaven opened,
eternity made mine.**

**O Holy Spirit, deepen in me these saving lessons.
Write them upon my heart, that my walk be
sin-loathing, sin-fleeing, Christ-loving;
And suffer no devil’s device to beguile
or deceive me.**

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