**Bethel Christian Fellowship**

**Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Hebrews (6): The Book Of Better Things**

**“Jesus, The Pioneer Made Perfect Through Suffering”**

**Hebrews 2:10-13**

**February 11, 2024**

According to the book of Hebrews, the salvation which we have in Christ is “*so great a salvation*” (2:3). It’s not merely a rescue operation that delivers us from the condemnation of sin. For as we have seen, God’s ultimate purpose is to give us authority and dominion over all the earth.

As our author has explained in his exposition of Psalm 8, God’s plan was to put all of creation in subjection to mankind (2:5-8b). But he hastens to add, “*Yet at present we do not see* (in creation) *everything subject to him* (mankind)” (2:8c). If anything, creation appears to rule over us! That’s because the fall of Adam brought sin and death to all humanity, which has postponed our glorious destiny.

But even though we *do not* see creation in subjection to mankind, we *do* “*see Jesus . . .*” We see Him conquering death by His own death; and we see Him crowned with glory and honor and exalted to rule over all things (2:9). And we know that because we are united *to* Him by faith, we will be raised *with* Him and reign *with* Him “*forever and ever*” (Rev. 22:5). The destiny of the Redeemer is the destiny of the redeemed!

However, none of this would have happened had not God the Son become the man Christ Jesus. When He became “*a little lower than the angels*,” He entered this world as a human being, and because He “*suffered death*” for sinners like you and me, we can now see Him “*crowned with glory and honor*” (2:9). Thus, He is the forerunner of humanity’s *restored* dominion over the earth. In contrast to the first Adam’s failure, God’s gracious purpose is to bring many sons (and daughters) to glory through the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45).

This is where we pick up our author’s story about Jesus. The little word “for” at the beginning of verse 10 indicates that he is explaining more fully what he has just said concerning the purpose of the incarnation of the Son of God, namely, that by the grace of God He “*tasted death*” for wretched sinners like you and me: “*For it was fitting for Him* (God the Father)  *. . . to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings*” (NASB). Verses 11-13 then focus on the deeply personal solidarity that exists between the Son and the many sons whom He brings to saving glory. Here we read that Jesus “*is not ashamed to call* *them* *brothers*.”

**A. Jesus, the Trailblazing Savior (v. 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*” (NASB). This is one of the most important statements in the entire letter, so it’s important that we stop – look – and listen – to what our author says about the way in which God secured our salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

*First*, we know that to the unsaved mind, the notion of a Savior dying on a cross to forgive anyone’s sins is totally unnecessary. It was Paul who wrote that a crucified Christ “*was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles*” (1 Cor. 1:23). But here we read how “fitting” this method of salvation is (and by application, how “unfitting” any other notion of salvation must be). The point is that we can *trust God’s judgment*. Wouldn’t a God *for whom* all things exist know what’s best? Wouldn’t a God *by whom* all things exist know what’s best? And wouldn’t we?

*Second*, the image of “bringing” many sons to glory is reminiscent of the Exodus, when God “brought” His people out from under the yoke of the Egyptians (Ex. 3:8, 17; 6:6-7; 7:4-5). So, the language that describes what God did for Israel is used here to describe what God does in bringing the elect (“many sons”) out of bondage to sin. According to Hebrews, what He has accomplished in the redemptive work of Christ is a “new exodus!”

*Third*, God’s purpose in saving us is to bring us into the very “glory” with which Jesus Himself has been crowned (v. 9). That glory belonged to God the Son in eternity past; and it was the glory into which He entered when He was raised from the dead and exalted to God’s right hand. That glory is *our* destiny, when we reign with Him over all creation in the world to come.

*Fourth*, what was preeminently “*fitting*” for God to do was to perfect the “author” (NASB), or the “founder” (ESV) of our salvation. That word is best translated “pioneer” (as reflected in the RSV and the later translations of the NIV; 2015 and 2020). It’s a word used only four times in the New Testament, and only of Christ in His role of Savior (here; Heb. 12:2; Acts 3:15; 5:31). No other human being, and certainly no angel, has *blazed a trail to saving glory through His death and resurrection*. The reason we will eventually get to that “glory” is because Jesus has already gone there before us.

*Fifth, and finally,* Jesus Christ, the God-man, was made “*perfect through suffering.*” This cannot mean that Jesus was morally flawed or imperfect and needed to be purified. The sinlessness of Jesus has never been a question in the author’s mind (Cf. 4:15; 7:26; 9:14). Rather, the “perfecting” in view has to do with His mission. As Jesus pressed on through suffering, in complete submission to the Father’s will, He demonstrated that He was “perfect” for the job He was called to do. *Our* inclination is to suffer as Christians for a while, and then bail out in order to avoid any more suffering. But not Jesus. Through His sufferings, God made Him “perfectly qualified to be the savior of His people” (F. F. Bruce).

All of this leads our author to affirm the deeply personal solidarity that Jesus has with His people. As with many Christians today, the recipients of this letter were subjected to shame and humiliation because of their devotion to Him. They endured the contempt of society (10:32-34; 13:13-14), and they suffered rejection from friends and family members. That’s the reason these last three verses are a source of comfort for *any* Christian living in a hostile, secular culture.

**B. The Oneness of the Son with the Saved (v. 11):** “*But the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers*” (NIV). The “*one who makes us holy*” is Jesus; He’s “*the consecrating priest*” (NEB). Through His once for all atoning sacrifice (Heb. 10:10), He “consecrates” a people for Himself, destined to enter His glory (the “*many sons*”). Both the consecrating priest and those whom He consecrates “*are all of one*” (KJV).

Given the context, this would most likely mean “*of one nature*,” that is, “the human nature.” Hence, Jesus and His people are “*of the same family*” (NIV), or “*of the same stock*” (NEB). Since we are all of one stock, He is delighted to be identified with us! No matter who may reject us, or ridicule us, or criticize us, or condemn us, we bring Him no shame! He is not ashamed to call us “brothers.”

**C. The Old Testament Confirmation (vv. 12-13).** In these last two verses our author quotes the words of David and Isaiah as if Jesus Himself were speaking them. So, let’s listen to the way Jesus sets forth His solidarity with His people, including you and me.

1. Psalm 22:22 (Hebrews 2:12): “*He says*, ‘*I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation, I will sing your praises*.’” In Psalm 22, David vows to praise the Lord once the Lord delivers him from his enemies. Therefore, just as he praises Yahweh in the presence of his fellow Israelites, the Son also praises God with His brothers (the sons of God). Since we are “*all of one stock*,” He loves nothing more than to tell us about the greatness of God in delivering Him from the enemies of sin and death. This victory was won when God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3, 13).

2. Isaiah 8:17, 18 (Hebrews 2:13): “*And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again he says, ‘Here am I, and the children you have given me.’’*” In these texts we hear Isaiah refusing to give up his trust and confidence in God, in spite of the unbelief all around him. The prophet also identifies himself with his children, who also trust in God as part of the faithful remnant. Both looked to Yahweh for salvation in the midst of great danger. Hence our author views Isaiah as typifying Christ, and his children as typifying those who are identified with Christ. He has a family of “children” whom the Lord has given Him, and because we are all members of the same family, His oneness with us is once again affirmed.

So let’s conclude today’s message by asking ourselves this one question: How much could I actually accomplish – by God’s grace – if I really believed that the Lord Jesus is *not ashamed* to call me His brother or sister? How often would I openly share my faith with non-Christian family members if I really believed He is not ashamed of me? What else would we be inclined to do in this local church if we really believed He is not ashamed of how we might look, or how we might talk, or because we might think we’ve never accomplished anything of lasting value?

Let’s never forget that He is not ashamed to call us His brethren! Let’s thank God for this, and let’s ask Him to use this wonderful truth to change *our* thinking about the way He thinks about us. And let’s *press on* in serving Him! After all, He and we are all members of the same family!