

“Domine, volumus Jesum videre,” John 12:21.  
“Credo, Domine; adjuva incredulitatem meam,” Mark 9:24.

## Hebrews 2

<sup>9</sup>But we look to Jesus (the one who was made lower than the angels for a little while, so that by God’s grace he might taste death for everyone), now crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered death.

<sup>10</sup>Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings. <sup>11</sup>For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers. <sup>12</sup>He says: I will declare your name to my brothers. Within the congregation I will sing your praise. <sup>13</sup>And again: I will trust in him. And again: Here I am and the children God has given me.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil) <sup>15</sup>and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup>For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham’s offspring. <sup>17</sup>For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.



Prayer: “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever” (Psalm 73:26). Amen.

Does this place feel like home to you? Some of you would, no doubt, answer, “Yes! This is where I am comfortable. This place feels like a warm hug.” Others of you might answer, “Home? This is supposed to feel like home? It has never felt that way to me. I feel like a stranger. Sometimes I even feel like I’m not wanted. No, this place doesn’t feel anything like home to me.”

When we gather for worship, God tells us that we are spiritual family. On this day, we pray that the Holy Spirit would renew and restore our congregation to be the family that His Word says we are. In order to do that, as always, let’s not get stuck looking at who we are. Let’s learn first from Jesus and be reminded who He is, and let us learn ...

## WHERE YOUR BROTHER PROMISES TO BE

### I. LEADING SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO GLORY

The eternal God of the universe is our brother. Let’s not underestimate that enormous point of fact. The writer to the Hebrews spends a great deal of ink to underscore that Jesus Christ is true God, and as true God superior to all others.

Jesus is *the heir of all things* (1:2); the *radiance of God’s glory*, the *exact representation of God’s Being*. He is the *Sustainer of all things by His powerful Word* (1:3); *worshiped by angels* (1:6); has an *everlasting, forever-throne* (1:8); and about Him the Father says, “*in the beginning ... laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands*” (1:10).

And He calls Himself our Brother. Is your mind blown yet?

They say you can pick your friends, but you cannot pick your family. But Jesus is true God. And Jesus chooses us as His family? Amazing!

Verse 9 of chapter 2 reminds us of just what this Brother of ours was willing to do for us. He humbled Himself to the point of being “*made lower than the angels for a little while.*” The Son of God left His perfect Triune family in a pristine, sinless heaven. He was born in the dumpster-fire known as earth to search through the filth and rubbish of this fallen world – for me. He’s the Lord who chose to live with us. He didn’t spend an extended weekend. He spent 33 years of what must have been an absolutely mind-numbing existence.

This He did in order to “*lead many sons to glory.*” Jesus took our sin upon Himself and did what we could not do. Yet we get the forgiveness and power for holy living that we needed so much.

When I played football, I was an offensive lineman. These are the five guys up front who protect the quarterback and lead the way for the running back. We rarely got the glory. We only got the blame if we goofed up. But I loved it, because every play there was somebody to clock. Our biggest accomplishment in college was getting our running back 1,000 yards. But it was Joel, our running back, who got the glory. God is our offensive lineman. He blocked every defender and plowed away every obstacle just to get us to the goal line. He includes angels to battle the demons and He incorporates Christian friends to call us back, but they all draw on the power of God Himself. It was His lowliness and humiliation that took on our sin; it was His mighty power that took away our sin.

Now, our Brother, Jesus, didn’t only live for the people of this world; He died for them. Our text says, “*So that by God’s grace He might taste death for everyone.*”

Think of when you were young, and your brother refused to drink his milk at dinner. Mom insisted that he drink it before he was allowed to go outside and play. By now, the milk was warm and not at all pleasant to drink. Who of us would volunteer to drink that big glass of warm milk for our brother to free him from the dinner table? Probably very few of us would be willing. (Growing up, I was the brother who wouldn’t finish a meal or drink the milk.) But our Brother, Jesus, was willing to drink *death* to the dregs for us. What a Brother! Who wouldn’t want this Brother?

But that is the kind of Brother that we have. Without suffering, Jesus would not have been a complete Savior. But the Father’s goal was to *lead many sons to glory*. Since the will of the Father and the Son are in perfect alignment, the Son willingly went along with the suffering.

*<sup>11</sup>For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers.*

Many people are ashamed of their families. Maybe your dad is the town drunk. Maybe your mother is a mess. Maybe your sister is known to too many men. Maybe your brother has been in trouble with the law too many times to count. So you are ashamed, ashamed to admit your relationship. What would others think of you if they know you are related to someone like that?

But if ever a Brother had the **right** to be ashamed of His siblings, it is Jesus. He ought to have disowned us long ago. He ought to hang His head in shame at even knowing us. If we were Jesus, this is surely what we would do. But He is the One who has worked for our perfection. He is the One who has merited our status of sonship and inheritance. He is the reason we are declared righteous in the Father’s eyes. He is beaming to call you brothers and sisters as if we had won an Olympic gold medal or were elected to high office.

Jesus points at you and says, “That is my sister! That is my brother!”

No wonder we love to come to this place! Why are there so many families in church on Mothers’ Day? It is because we love Mom so much and we know she would love it if we joined her at church. Why not more Sundays? Why are there so many at Christmas and Easter? It’s a special time and the whole family wants to go. How about more Sundays?

Of course, He is here to do more than to be worshiped. He is here to give to us. He gives us His forgiveness so we never need to fear His anger; He gives us His promise of eternal life so we never

need to fear death; He gives us His strength so we never need to fear temptation. In verse 18 we are told, “*because He suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.*”

## **II. GATHERING WITH YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

Not everyone was raised in a warm, loving environment. The thought of a childhood home brings feelings of sadness or loneliness or loveless-ness.

In the same way, Christians have had wonderful experiences in God’s house. They have found caring and supportive brothers and sisters in Christ. They have found warmth and welcome. But others have not. They have experienced unloving attitudes and actions. Their congregation has never felt like home.

This is why “Welcome Home Sunday” affords us the opportunity to repent of our sins against our brothers and sisters in Christ. We beg forgiveness from Christ, and from one another, for every unkind thought, every hurtful word, every self-serving action. Were we upset about something silly? Were we too selfish to consider how our words or actions impacted others? Were we too busy serving ourselves to think of how we might serve others around us? For all the ways we have failed to be brothers and sisters as God has called us to be, we repent.

Your loving Lord assures you of His forgiveness.

I repeat, your loving Lord assures you of His forgiveness.

With that forgiveness, we look for ways to show His kind of love to the fellow members of our church family. Who is hurting? Who needs help? How can I serve? What can I do?

An attitude of love and service to one another creates the kind of home we all long for. It is a place where we can find encouragement as we face an increasingly hostile world; hope when we feel hopeless; and help when we feel helpless.

Today’s first lesson in Ecclesiastes put it this way: *Two are better than one ... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up ... A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.* We are not wired to exist as isolated individuals. We need one another. God has designed us to be this way, and God’s design is for us to be family in Christ.

People often ask if someone can be a Christian without going to church. Technically, of course, you can. There are those who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to be active in a Christian congregation. However, when we consider who is here when we gather this morning—our Brother Jesus and our Christian brothers and sisters—we might answer this question by saying, “Who would want to?” It would be a little like me asking if I can be a member of my family without ever visiting your parents’ home. Technically, the answer is “yes,” but I cannot for the life of me imagine why I would want to.

How often do you think about the brothers and sisters who do not have the strength to be here? Whether because of illness or the infirmity of old age, they cannot make it to join their family on a regular Sunday morning. At the same time, because of illness or the infirmity of old age, they may be more reminded of the empty promises of this world than all of us. They may be more aware that they are not like God than all of us. They may have more time to think about what comes next than all of us. And if they know they need reminders about their Brother, how much more the rest of us who are caught up in this busy world? Don’t lose courage. Don’t lose hope. Don’t forget.

Here are your friends. Here is your Brother. Here is your home.

... in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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