

Christ Community Covenant Church

God has spoken: Jesus is better, so why are you so discouraged?

Pastor Dave Scherrer - September 22, 2013

We have established with the author of Hebrews that Jesus is more excellent than anything that can be imagined. In Chapter 1 we see Jesus as God - *The radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of His Being*. Jesus is the *Heir of all things* and the One *through whom all things are created*. He holds the universe together by the word of his power. **1:5-14** goes on with a *Catena*, a beautifully crafted string of 7 OT quotations elaborating the unique position and exalted status of the Son. As the Son, Jesus is *superior to* and *worshiped by* the angels. Jewish theology assigned angels a prominent role as those who were present at the moment of **creation**, who were present when the **Law** was delivered to Moses, and who assist God in **governing** of the universe. Even though the angels are a higher order of creation, the Son has been declared superior to the angels. And we need to keep the preeminence of Christ in mind more often than we do. We will discover as we move forward that there is a very real temptation for us as readers to view Jesus as pretty good but if you add this "idea" or "doctrine" to him it is even better or at least more comfortable for us.

Then in Chapter 2 we see a new amazing thing – Jesus as a human, the Incarnate Word! The all-knowing Son rubs shoulders with people he made and owns. The everywhere-present Son puts on the binding confines of a body, bloodied knees and bowel movements, the all-powerful Son says to his earthly parents, "*Okay, Mom. Okay, Dad, whatever you say.*" That had to be something!

We remember that chapter 2 begins with a warning:, be careful, pay attention. Warning! In our lives we have had times of crisis when we had to pay special attention 1963 was one of those times:

(Video clip of nuclear attack preparations from the 50s)

"How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" The author is saying, "Who would be so foolish as to turn your back on so great a gift?" Jesus the Triune God leaves His throne and becomes as one of us so that he can save us from ourselves! Jesus is the God who gets *involved with us!*

Jesus as the GOD who gets involved with us

Said another way:

The Word becomes flesh and moves into the neighborhood

John 1: 1-4, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

We live in a culture that puts the highest value on individual freedom. As soon as you get involved you lose that freedom. We don't want to get involved. Examples: why would you go to a church and never join it? - Because you would get vulnerable. Why would you live together and not get married? One aspect of love is to get vulnerable; living together allows you to not be fully involved.

'Bystander Effect' means the presence of others influences how an individual will intervene in an emergency situation. The phrase became part of our psychological vocabulary after the brutal stabbing death of [slide] Kitty Genovese in 1964.



There were at least six people who looked down and witnessed the attack but didn't get involved, didn't even call the police. She was robbed of \$49. Why didn't they help? Involvement means vulnerability. There might be retaliation and loss of safety. According to Hebrews, Jesus has heard our screams. **He doesn't just look down; He comes down – not at the risk of his life, but at the cost of his life.** Christmas means God came down to be killable. But there is more to this Jesus says the writer of Hebrews.

Jesus as the **HERO** who faced death for us

Hebrews 2:5-8 is Psalm 8 (read). When God created the world he put a perfect world under our feet. He delegated the world to us to care for, cultivate, and nurture. It is our responsibility to seek peace, justice, unity, and universal prosperity. Nature cooperated in every way. **No death or disease or disasters.**

So *what happened?* Nothing is the way it's supposed to be.

Sadly, it was supposed to be different

You see when we decided to be our own lords and masters – *not to serve God but to serve ourselves*- we found out we cannot even master ourselves! All is breaking down. It's not under our control. *Long lay the world in sin and error pining.*

According to 2:14-15, our biggest problem is DEATH and the fear of death. Fear of death manifests itself in our spending, obsessions and patterns of relationship.

"The irony of man's condition is that the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive...Modern man is drinking and drugging himself out of awareness, or he spends his time shopping, which is the same thing. As awareness calls for types of heroic dedication that his culture no longer provides for him, society contrives to help him **forget.**" – Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 284.

Leo Tolstoy's "My Confessions" was written when the author was turning 50: he has a good life, good wife, and good health. But a question has paralyzed him. *[slide]*

Is there any meaning in my life that the inevitable death awaiting me does not destroy? *Leo Tolstoy, My Confessions*

We were made for to be on top of the world, but the world (dirt) ends up on top of us! **What is God doing about it?** I have the answer; Hebrews 2:10: **"For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering."** Jesus is the "**Archagos**" of our salvation.

"Archagos"

I think I've found my favorite Greek word. It's a special word that we don't really have an English equivalent for, which is a shame because it's only used four times in the New Testament and it's only used to describe Jesus (Acts 3:15, 5:13, Hebrews 2:10, 12:12).

Writer introduces the name "Jesus" for the first time here with unusual word order for attention. Author now reads Psalm 8 through the gospel lenses of Jesus. He was made lower than angels. He suffered death on our behalf, which redeems the world. Thus He is exalted above the angels! Psalm 8 is true of Jesus and through Jesus it is true of us. **How? 2:10 – Jesus is the "Archagos" of our salvation.

Archagos means "*arch leader*." Translated as "Pioneer, Leader, Author." "**Champion**." It was used in ancient Greek to reference Hercules. He is the first one on the field who engages in combat. He is in control of his part of the battle, but he sees you running for your life from someone way bigger and stronger and faster. The Champion puts his life between you and the enemy. He faces death for you. His resurrection blows a hole through the wall of death. **The empty tomb is the hole through which we walk into eternity! Everything sad has come untrue.**

Hebrews 12:1-2. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author (archagos) and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. Why did Jesus face death? For the **JOY**. What joy? Doing God's will? Had that. The only thing he didn't have was *you and me*? What gave Jesus courage? **You and me**. It's not adrenaline or self-talk. **Courage is blinding humility that moves us on to the field because of someone else. To the degree that you see Jesus dying for you and rest in that is the degree that you will be a person of courage.** Is your life is hard? **FIX** your eyes on Jesus: the God who *becomes involved*, the Hero who *faces death for us*.

Jesus as the BROTHER who is proud of us

Jesus came to save us from sin, to make us "holy." If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, God is not angry with you. Your sin is forgiven, pardon has been made. You are declared "righteous!" You don't have to feel guilty anymore. God saves you from sin AND shame!

Hebrews 2:11b-12

That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying,
"I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."

Other cultures understand this better. We live in a society that values *individualism* which is why when we promote ourselves we use a **resume**. Other cultures put **family** there. In the ancient days when you wanted to put yourself forward you brought your **family tree as references**. You left off people who embarrassed your family! **Not Jesus!** How stunning in Matt. 1 to have **women** (low status), **Tamar** (incest survivor), **Bathsheeba** (adulterous), **Rahab** (prostitute), **Mary** (unwed mother). By moral standards these are people to be ashamed of, but Jesus gives them a place of honor in the genealogy of the King of the universe. ****Listen**: it does not matter who you are or what you've done. It doesn't matter what your parents said about you, what your teachers say about you, what your enemies said about you – **Jesus is not ashamed to call you sister, call you brother**. He sings over you! We have a **Brother who is proud of us**.

So why are we so downhearted?

Psalm 42:5

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Why are you discouraged? One of the main points of the Bible and distinguishing feature of Christianity is that Jesus, Son of God, suffered on the cross. Therefore, ***God is with us, not beyond us, in suffering.*** Our Brother has been through everything we've been through. He was rejected, experienced betrayal, suffering, loss. He knows what you've been through. He knows how bad it looks. Jesus went to the cross bearing every sorrow, every sin, and every wound. All is forgiven. All is resurrection! The promises are Yes! ***This, this is Christ the King.*** Look to Jesus and say, "I will follow You – my Brother, my Hero and my God."