

Prayer

Jesus, Lord of all, show us more of Yourself this day. May we find You present within every situation in which we find ourselves; not because you have come as a result of our request, but because You love to be with Your people everywhere, and all the time. Give us hearts to appreciate and value Your presence at all times Lord Jesus, Saviour of all: AMEN

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: Housing

Pray today for the way in which homes are being built in your own country. It will probably be the case that some houses are well built and some are built quickly and with little chance of surviving as fit for habitation more than a decade or two. Pray that standards may be maintained for the good of all people who need to have somewhere to live.

Meditation

If you are troubled by something that has happened:

- Something which you never thought would happen;
- Something done by someone, close to you;
- Something you want to forgive ... but it troubles you deeply.

Where do you go with your faith and your thoughts?

- Do you become angry and tell the Lord what you think?
- Do you say nothing to God; forget faith, it can't cope?
- Do you pray and pray, and search endlessly for peace?

What will you do? Can Your faith hold strong in the midst of trial?

- Will your reactions offend God, or hurt others, or yourself?
- Will your heart find God's heart or be consumed by distress?
- Will your anger be constrained by God's love, or burst out of you?

There's no point in hiding it; we each face these tests.

The furnace of life refines faith, and Christ alone sustains us.

Bible Study - Hebrews 2:10-15

¹⁰ *In order to bring many children to glory, it was right that God, for whom and by whom all things exist, should make perfect through sufferings the one who pioneered their salvation.* ¹¹ *For the one who makes people holy, and those who are being made holy, have one origin. For this reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,* ¹² *saying, 'I will declare Your name to my brothers and sisters; I will praise You in the midst of the congregation.'* ¹³ *And again, 'I will put my trust in him.'* *And again, 'I am here, with the children God has given me.'*

¹⁴ *Therefore, since the children share the same flesh and blood, He Himself also shared the same, so that through death he might destroy the one who has power of death, that is, the devil,* ¹⁵ *and free those who by the fear of death had been held in slavery their whole life long.*

Review

Hebrews has already told us that Jesus was no angel, but God Himself come to earth to do a specific task given Him by God. In this wonderful passage, we are told what that task was. Strangely, the author does not mention Jesus' name directly; possibly because he wants his readers to focus on the nature of this task, and all that He did. Here, Jesus is the one who 'pioneers' our salvation (2:10); the 'one who makes people holy' (2:11); the one who declares salvation 'in the midst of the congregation' (2:12); and the one who presents 'the children God

has given me' before the eternal throne of God (2:13). Jesus is able to do this because He shared fully in every aspect of human nature, even to death itself (2:14). However, by overcoming death itself, He has therefore overcome the devil (2:14) and his power, creating liberty for all who have been held in his bondage (2:15)!

Many of us are used to the way that Paul explains the work of Jesus Christ in his more famous letters. He speaks of Jesus reconciling people to God through His sacrifice for us on the Cross, and how we are saved 'through faith for faith' (Romans 1:17 and see also Romans 3:21-26, for example). However, here in Hebrews, the description of Jesus' work highlights His humanity as our brother (2:11,12), because both Jesus (the one who makes people holy) and ourselves (the ones being made holy) have our origins in the one same God (2:11). Also, the passage dwells on the intimate way that Jesus shared every aspect of our 'flesh and blood' (2:14) in order to save us. We, and all people subsequently, now share our humanity with the one who has triumphed and made a real path of salvation by his example, and His life and death.

But the passage does not merely present Jesus as our human companion. The writer emphasises that in order to do His work, Jesus is 'made perfect' by God 'for whom and by whom all things exist' (2:10). He, and those He brings are acceptable before the throne of grace because He has come from God (2:13); and His divine authority is what defeats the powers of evil which eventually brings salvation to all who are in bondage (2:15).

As is becoming typical of Hebrews, the message about the truth of salvation is brought through a combination of statements about the work of Jesus as the Christ, backed up by a wide range of Old Testament texts. In this passage, Psalm 22:22 is quoted in verse 12; 'I will declare Your name ...' It is the pivotal verse of Psalm 22 in which despair and death gives way to promise, and the hope of life which endures throughout the generations (see Psalm 22:29-31). The next two quotes in verse 13 are from Isaiah 8:17 and 18, which speak of Isaiah's firm and sure hope in the truth of God's prophetic Word. Both these passages are both strongly linked to Messianic themes, and confirm the promises of God for salvation through His Messiah.

There is a fresh and challenging feel to the way that Hebrews presents the truths of the Gospel. It does not tell us a different truth to that found in the letters of Paul or the Gospels, but it does help us to see things in a new light by explaining Gospel truths in a powerful and refreshing way. Generations of Christians have been inspired to hear of Jesus as the 'pioneer' of our faith (2:10) and the one who shared our human nature so that he could 'destroy the one who has power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who by the fear of death had been held in slavery their whole life long.' (2:14,15)

Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. What are the highlights of this passage for you?
2. Discuss in your group whether there is a good balance within this passage between a description of the Saviour as human, and divine.
3. Why is it that Jesus has to die in order to defeat death and 'the devil'; discuss this and try to explain this using your own words.

Discipleship

The drift of this passage tends towards a description of Jesus as the one who brings deliverance and a defeat of all evil. Within your own life, are you aware of ways in which the devil makes trouble for you and for your own work? It is important for us to recognise that this does happen, especially when we are about the Lord's work. When we recognise this, we can then call upon the Lord to help us deal with this, and defeat the devil ourselves, in His strength.

Final Prayer

Lord, I turn my eyes towards You, I look for Your help, I seek Your advice, and I long for Your presence in every moment of my life. Remove the unseen barriers, O Lord, and break into my consciousness with Your liberating power, I pray, and encourage me. Thank You, Lord: AMEN