

The Captain of Our Salvation

Rob Rogers September 12, 2021

Introduction

Hebrews 2:5-12

For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, “*What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet.*”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, He left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 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. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. 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.*”

Last week I shared a story about the first sermon I ever preached as an ordained minister — and when I set my notes down on the old wooden podium, there was engraving on it from John 12:21 that said, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” This has informed and influenced the purpose of my life — not only as a pastor, but also my life goal as a Christian — to point people to Jesus.

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

This letter to the Hebrews was written to a group of urban, first-century Christians who were living in a pluralistic society, facing tremendous persecution for their faith, struggling with tremendous fear and discouragement.

- The writer of Hebrews says over and over and over again...
 - Are you suffering? Fix your eyes on Jesus.
 - Are you struggling? Fix your eyes on Jesus.
 - Look at Jesus. Obsess over this person
 - Stare into His glory and meditate on His goodness
 - He will bring you life! Rest! Hope!
 - He will completely transform your life
 - He'll give you strength, power, victory, freedom

OUR default thinking as it relates to God is — that if ***we do the right things, if we behave in the right ways***, THEN we'll have God's pleasure and power in our lives.

BUT the writer of Hebrews tells us that it's **not** about ***what you do, or what you've done***, but what **Christ has done FOR YOU**. And **IF** you'll just fix your eyes on Him... dwell on Him, meditate on Him... He'll grow you, transform you, change your heart — He'll give you the ability to persevere, to overcome.

In verses 5-8, the author quotes **Psalm 8**, looking back at creation asking God, “***What did you make us to be? What did you make us for?***”

Psalm 8:4-6

“What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

- When God created our world, He gave it to us to care for, to cultivate, to work, to make better, to nurture — which means prosperity, peace, unity, and justice *is our responsibility*. We've been crowned with glory and honor; everything is subject to us. **It's our responsibility.**

But in verse 8 in **Hebrews 2**, we're told...

Hebrews 2:8

...At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him.

- In other words, God made the world to be subject to us, under us, *but it's not happening*.
- That's not our current reality. We look out in the world — and we don't see prosperity, or peace, or unity, or justice...

The first few verses are saying...

- “God created this world for you, for us, to enjoy, to see it flourish together in harmony with one another and with Him.
- But the great irony of Genesis 3 is that when we decided not to serve God but to serve ourselves and become our own masters — not only is God no longer our master — but we can't even master ourselves.
- We can't master our own emotions — let alone the world.

Power and Fear of Death

There are natural disasters, war, poverty, abuse, and violence — the world is not as it should be. According to verses 14 and 15, our biggest problem as we face the condition of the world, and the condition we're in — ***is the power and fear of death — and the control that it has over us and over the world.***

When we get discouraged, or blindsided by painful circumstances, or we're stricken with grief, sadness — that's one of the big questions we begin to ask...

“What's the point of it all? Why try? Why should I keep going?”

Leo Tolstoy had similar thoughts when he was around 50 years old. He wrote this in his book *Confession*.

“Why then go on with the effort? What is it all for? What does it all lead to? What difference will it make whether I do this thing rather than that thing or nothing at all? So I could give no rational meaning to any single action or even to my whole life. What was so surprising was how we can fail to see this. For a time it is possible to live intoxicated with life, but as soon as one is sober, it is impossible not to see life in the face of death is a fraud and a stupid fraud. How often I have been told, ‘You cannot understand the meaning of life, so don't think about it. Just live!’ But I no longer can do that.”¹

~ Leo Tolstoy

This thought will drive us down one of two roads...

1. The lack of an adequate answer will drive us to a variety of temporary sources for meaning. Money? Accomplishment? Reputation? Achievement? The pace of life increases resulting in psychological conditions we need medication for. We put all our meaning on the shoulders of another person — no human being can bear that weight.
 - a. *We're desperately trying to convince ourselves that **we matter**. That the things we do make a difference. **But if death is the end... nothing we do matters.***

¹ Tolstoy, Leo. *A Confession* (Courier Corporation, Mar 12, 2012)

- b. *So, we do our best not to think about it.* Not to face it. Not to acknowledge the futility and emptiness of our efforts. We do our best to avoid the thought altogether
2. The other road is that we can't avoid the thought — the meaninglessness of it all — and we still have no adequate answer. So we think, *"I might as well get some pleasure out of life while I'm here."* We medicate the dread we have with drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography — even achievement, or belonging to a group or cause that brings us some semblance of meaning and value.
 - a. **We want to matter** — we're terrified that we don't, and we run to anyone or anything that will have us.

Verse 14 tells us the devil has the power of death... it looms over us.

How can you believe in the devil? If there is a personal, supernatural good, it's not that far of a stretch to believe in a personal, supernatural evil, is it? All you really need to do to believe that there is this evil at work in the world is to watch the news. There is so much evidence of a being that is absolutely committed to the misery of the world and everyone in it — and the looming nature of power of death is his number one weapon — that's the situation we're in.

BUT THERE'S HOPE!

The Captain of Our Salvation

The writer of Hebrews basically says, "God made us this great! This powerful! He gave us this high calling! He puts everything under our feet — not to dominate it but to cultivate it. But it just doesn't seem to be true. It doesn't ever really feel that way! We're not on top of the world, the world is on top of us — and it often feels like we're being crushed by the weight of it and there's no way out..."

Then writer of Hebrews illuminates the meaning of Psalm 8 for us...

Hebrews 2:9

But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

It doesn't say that He was crowned with glory and honor *in spite of* His suffering of death, it says that He was crowned with glory and honor *because of* His suffering of death... through death.

The writer of Hebrews, through the first reading of Psalm 8 says... "This should be true of us, but it's not. This was what we were made for... but it isn't true of us, but there's still hope, because it is true of Jesus. ***And even beyond that, through Jesus it will be true of us again one day.***

HOW?

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.

Founder, author, originator, hero, champion, captain. Are all compiled in this one Greek word *archegos*.

Here's what this alludes to...

A hero or a champion was someone that engaged in combat as a substitute. Israel is facing off with the Philistines. They have Goliath, and everyone is terrified — who's the champion? David steps in to save the nation from further humiliation and defeat.

*If you're in a battle, or you're running for your life, or on the verge of death and a champion sees you and defends you, stands between you and your enemy — He faces down death — the Bible says that **this is exactly what Jesus Christ, our captain, our champion has done for us.***

Another example of a “champion” or “hero” is the father in the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. The life the prodigal son lived when he was away from home was punishable by death. This is why the father runs out to meet him when the son was a long way off. He “fell on him” and “covered” him. What the father is doing is putting himself in between his son and all those that would seek to stone him to death for his sinful life.

That's who our Captain is. That's the kind of God we have.

- *One who, when he sees you take a step in His direction, runs out to you, and covers you.*
- *One who stands in between you and your greatest enemy, between you and the one who reminds you of your sin, of your shame.*
- *Jesus stands in as our captain, our champion, and says, “If you want them, you've got to come through me.”*
- *That's our Captain.*

And when you see the love He has for you, you no longer have to be afraid.

Because He walks through the valley of the shadow of death with me, His rod and staff, they comfort me, and He's walked the road ahead of me.

Not Ashamed to Call Them Brothers

Hebrews 2:11

For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. 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.*”

Illustration: Years ago, I came across a commentary that describes some major differences between western and eastern cultures — western culture is far more individualistic than eastern culture. Eastern cultures are much more in tune with the importance of family, community — it's not about me, it's about us. It's not about what's best for me, it's about what's best for the community.

An example is when a resume is created in America: it does not include anything about parents or any relatives. It is solely based on things that *I myself* have done.

In eastern cultures the resume might include ancestors — however only those that they are proud of — they would never include those they were embarrassed by.

In Matthew 5, we're given our Captain's genealogy — the list of people that the Holy Spirit was using to recommend Jesus to the world. Do you realize who is on that list?

1. There were women on the list, which in the First Century world, never happened because of the low social status they held.
2. But beyond that — look at the women who were listed...
 - a. Tamar, an incest survivor
 - b. Bathsheba, an adulteress
 - c. Rahab, a prostitute
 - d. Mary, an unwed mother

According to moral standards of the First Century Hebrew world — these are people anyone else would have been ashamed of — but Jesus proudly holds them up in the place of honor in His own genealogy! ***Do you know what this means?***

It means that

- no matter who you are
- no matter what you've done
- no matter what shameful act is hanging over your head
- no matter what struggle has held you down
- it does not matter if you've been a prostitute, a hit man
- it does not matter what you have ever done

through the sacrifice of Jesus, through union with Him

- Jesus Christ, our Captain is not ashamed to call you sister or brother
- He is not ashamed of you
- Even though you've been weighed down by guilt, and shame, and grief, and sorrow, and regret
- He is not ashamed of you and in Him you can be free
- He's singing over you with joy, with pleasure
 - It doesn't matter what anyone else has ever said about you
 - it doesn't matter what the world has told you
 - or even what you have told yourself
 - **Jesus Christ, your Captain, your King is not ashamed to call you family**

Are you afraid? Look to Jesus.

Are you discouraged? Look to Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-30 *(The Message)*

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Come to your Captain of our Salvation, who alone gives the gift of life.

Discussion Questions

1. Psalm 8:6 says that everything is subject to us; and Hebrews 2:8 says that it's not happening yet. How does living in this daily tension affect you?
2. Have you personally faced the biggest question, “What's the point of it all?” What conclusion did you come to?
3. Discuss: Jesus was crowned with glory and honor *because of* the suffering of death (Hebrews 2:9).
4. Had you ever thought of the Father of the Prodigal Son as a “champion” or “hero”?
5. Is there any struggle or shame that you need to let go of, so that you can be set free?

NOTES