

October 14, 2012
Pentecost 20

"Jesus Is Your Brother"

HEBREWS 2:9-11

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

"He ain't heavy, he's my brother!" When I was a child we received stamps in the mail at Christmas time from a place called "Boy's Town" in Omaha, Nebraska. The stamp had a picture of a boy carrying his younger brother with the caption, "He ain't heavy Father he's my brother." People donated money to Boy's Town and added this stamp to their Christmas mailings.

In the late 1960's the Hollies recorded a hit song "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." Neil Diamond made this song even more popular with his recording in the early '70's. Maybe you remember some of the lyrics: "The road is long With many a winding turn That leads to who knows where Who knows where But I'm strong, strong enough to carry him He ain't heavy He's my brother."

My oldest grandson is proud of his younger brother. I have heard him say proudly, "That's my brother." He is protective of his younger brother. Sometimes he just calls him brother. Maybe you grew up with an older brother who was always there for you.

Today we hear God's Word tell us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers, and off course also his sisters. He is not ashamed because he has taken away our sin so we could be children of our heavenly Father and close to him as our brother. Older brothers are far from perfect. They are there for us, but they can fail us. This morning we want to find great comfort and peace in knowing that Jesus is our brother.

Your brother tasted death for you

You can read touching stories in about brothers and sisters helping each other and caring for each other, but none compares to what Jesus has done for us. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God me might taste death for everyone."

"We see Jesus." Yes, we do see Jesus. With our eyes of faith we see Jesus coming to this earth, even made lower than the angels. We see Jesus as Lord and God from all eternity, the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, sharing God the Father's glory, sharing in the creation of the world. We also see Jesus coming into this world as a tiny baby taking our

flesh and blood and hair and skin. He even allows himself to be tempted. This book of Hebrews says he was tempted in all parts as we are, yet without sin. The night before he died Jesus prayed so hard to his heavenly Father his sweat fell to the ground as great drops of blood. Angels had to come and minister to him, just as they had done when Jesus was tempted for forty days in the wilderness. We see Jesus tired and exhausted after a hard day of teaching people. He lays his head on a pillow and sleeps. My brother is exhausting himself for me. Then he stands up and shouts to storm, "Be still" and instantly there is a great calm. That's my brother.

My brother did not hesitate to come to this earth and give his life for me. "He suffered death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone." We see Jesus our brother hanging on the cross between two common criminals. It wasn't the Roman soldiers that caused Jesus death or the Jewish people who cried out "Crucify him." It was my sin that took him to the cross. "He was delivered for our offenses." "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." "He became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." My brother Jesus suffered death. He tasted death. He became a curse for us. He suffered hell itself for us. That is why he cried from the cross to his Father, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me."

A few years ago a pastor friend of mine donated a kidney to his brother so his brother could live. You can actually live with only one kidney. Jesus gave his life for us people who don't want him. As we sing in one of our hymns, "What punishment so strange is suffered yonder, the Shepherd dies for sheep that love to wonder." Romans 5 says, "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus tasted death for us. After Jesus made a complete payment for the sin of the world that caused him terrible suffering, he placed his life into the hands of his heavenly Father. "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." Because of what your brother went through for you, you can face your last your last hours of life on this earth with him at your side. You pray the words Jesus prayed, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit."

A pastor was visiting a man who was dying. The man confessed that at times because of all the pain and fear, it was hard to pray. The pastor wisely said to him, "Just think of Jesus as your brother sitting right here in this chair, carefully hearing everything you say to him and ready to help you." The man died one night. The attending nurse was surprised to find him holding on to the chair next to his bed. Jesus tasted death for us. Who knows when our last hour will come, or where we will be, and who will be at our side. Jesus your brother who tasted death for you will be there with you, and with the people you love who call Jesus their brother.

Your brother crowns you with glory

Because Jesus is your brother, you share in the glory that your brother earned for you after his work of saving you was completed. "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." Our God is the creator of all things. He is the God

“for whom and through whom” everything exists. Nothing escapes the notice of our God. Jesus said that not even a hair falls to the ground without your heavenly Father knowing about it. There is not one sin that escapes the notice of this God who knows all things. Psalm 139 says, “He is thoroughly acquainted with all our ways.” A holy and perfect God by his very nature of being God and being perfect must punish every sin. None will escape his notice on judgment day. The good news of the gospel is that every sin was placed on Jesus. That is made clear by the words from Isaiah 53 that tell us “The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

My brother Jesus had to pay for my sin to bring me to glory. I could never do this on my own. The job had to be perfect and it was. The words here in this text are so comforting. They tell us that our heavenly Father through whom everything exists made his son perfect through suffering. When Jesus died on the cross he cried out, “It is finished.” The Father announced that the work Jesus did for us to bring us to glory was perfect by raising Jesus from the dead. That is made so clear in the amazing words of Romans 4: “Jesus was delivered over to death for us and was raised to life for our justification.” The Father raised Jesus to life to declare to the world that he was no longer under the curse of sin. It was paid for in full. The Father accepted the payment Jesus made for us and declared us not guilty by raising Jesus from the dead. “Living, loving, dying, rising, Jesus did it all for me.” The author of our salvation is perfect.

The night before he died Jesus prayed that his Father would give him the glory he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Listen to these amazing words, “And now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.” Then Jesus prays to his Father for the his disciples, “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me, because you loved me before the creation of the world.” We see our brother Jesus rising and carrying in his body the nail marks that show us his work is completed and finished. In those wounds we find our brother opens the door to glory with him and his Father in this life and for all eternity.

Your brother is not ashamed of you

My brother is not ashamed of me. “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.” Jesus is not ashamed of you because he has brought you into his family. “The one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family.” Jesus wants us to be one with him and the Father. I go back again to that prayer Jesus prayed in John 17. “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name- the name that you gave me- that they may be one as we are one.”

Your brother Jesus is always telling you here in his Word what a wonderful Father he has and how blessed you are to have the same heavenly Father as your Father. If you were to read the next verse after our text in Hebrews 2 you hear Jesus your brother saying these words quoted from Psalm 22, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregations I will sing your praises.” I think of what Jesus taught us to pray to our heavenly Father with the words of the Lord’s Prayer. In Matthew 6 Jesus tells us how our heavenly Father takes care of the birds of the air and he certainly will take care of us.

Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters. He loves to have us think of him as our brother. Some days we are so ashamed of who we are and how we live our lives. We hurt people by what we say. We think too much about ourselves. Evil thoughts enter our minds that would shame hell itself. With Paul we hang our heads in shame and say, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my sinful flesh." But then we look at Jesus and we know that he is not ashamed of us, because his blood cleanses us from all sin. He says in John 15 that we are clean through the Word he has spoken to us. Because of him we are justified, declared not guilty and because of him it looks just as if we never sinned. Jesus is your brother. He is proud of what he has made you. He will always be there for you. You and your brother leave footprints in the sand as you walk side by side. And more often there are only one set of footprints, because that is where your brother has carried you. Amen.