

Hebrews 2:10-18 - Williams

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[0:00] Well, it was three and a half years ago on May 22nd, 2022, that we had our first official! that we had our first official service as Holy Covenant Church right here in Bethany Chapel.

You might remember that was a warm and sunny early summer morning, a little different than this morning, a little different. But it was my privilege to preach that morning and it's my privilege to preach this morning here at our last service here. If you remember our passage three and a half years ago was Luke chapter 1, 67 to 79, the song of Zachariah.

And if you remember in that scene, Zachariah gets his voice back. He had been mute. The Lord restores his voice. He bursts into song. And in his song, he praises God in part because God has remembered his Holy Covenant. And that's the passage of scripture where we get the name of this church, Holy Covenant Church. God has remembered his Holy Covenant. We love that when we were thinking about what we should name this new church that connected with us.

But that song of Zachariah is a song in which he praises and adores God and exalts Jesus Christ. And we want that to be baked into the name of our church. And in that first sermon, I challenged us as a church to remember that and to maintain that in our preaching. And so our passage this morning does that in a beautiful way. And so it's a wonderful reminder for us to extol Jesus Christ, to seek to understand him so that we can worship and adore him.

So may God bless us as we read and study his word and allow us to worship him rightly. Here's what I'd like to do in this sermon. Three things. I actually want to start with some theology, teaching theology. Some big words. Get ready. Big words, some terms. But theology, I think, that can help us understand this passage. And then I want to look at the passage and do a fairly short exposition of the passage. And then at the end, I want to tell us a story. Maybe a little bit of a longer story. So three things. Some theology, an exposition of the passage, and then a story. Okay.

[2:50] For some theology, in the really centuries after Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the early Christians struggled to understand what it meant, what Jesus meant. What is the meaning of Jesus? And how does it work? And there was a real process of trial and error. And we call the error heresy.

But those heresies were sort of discovered as the early Christians sought to understand Jesus and the scriptures and the teaching of the apostles who'd been with Jesus. And there were a number of errors and heresies that were identified and named. And it can help us, I think, to know some of these and understand why the early Christians thought it was so important. What became so clear and important to the early Christians was that they maintain the teaching that Jesus has two natures. That Jesus is fully God and fully man. And fully man. And a simple little illustration. Fully God and fully man together in one person, Jesus. And this does not diminish either nature. He's not like little God. Nor is he Superman.

He's not like little God and fully God and fully man. Fully God and fully man. One person, not diminished, also not mixed, not mixed, not mixed, but unified in the one person.

this wasn't immediately obvious to everyone here are some heresies arianism an early teaching that denied jesus's divinity that said jesus was actually created by god he was not eternal he was not eternal god he was a creation of god we call that arianism the council of nicaea was really organized to refute arianism and so when we say the nicaean creed here in this church that jesus is god from god true god begotten not made the nicaean creed is directly refuting this idea wrong idea of arianism so these errors these heresies really fell into these two camps where they would deny or undermine the divinity of jesus the full divinity or they would deny or undermine the humanity of jesus the full true humanity here are some errors that deny jesus's humanity okay docetism an early

teaching that held that jesus only appeared to be human he only appeared he had the appearance of humanity but not real humanity docetism a version of docetism a variant apollinarianism holds that jesus had a real human body and human emotions but he he maintained the divine mind or the eternal logos okay so he didn't really have a human mind he had the mind of god and so what that teaching is doing you understand is it's mixing at that point human yeah but god mixed together and the early christian councils said no that's incorrect i want to actually read you the what's called the definition of chalcedon um fairly short statement i mean it's a it's a good long paragraph i'm going to read the whole thing you believe that i'm going to read the whole definition of chalcedon um which came from the council of chalcedon in the year 451 a very very important statement on jesus's nature essential statement really of what's called christology the true study of jesus okay here is the definition of chalcedon therefore following the holy fathers we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same son our lord jesus christ at once complete in godhead and complete in manhood truly god truly god and truly man consisting also of a reasonable soul and body of one substance with the father as regards his godhead and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood like us in all respects apart from sin as regards his godhead begotten of the father before the ages but yet as regards his manhood begotten for us men and for our salvation of mary the virgin the god bearer one and the same christ son lord only begotten recognized in two natures

without confusion without change without division without separation the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved in coming together to form one person in subsistence not as parted or separated into two persons but one and the same son and only begotten god the word lord jesus christ even as the prophets from the earliest times spoke of him and our lord jesus christ himself taught us and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us yes that's a rare it's a rare sermon where you're going to hear the entire maybe for good reason it's you know it's long it's very important did you hear that did you hear the insistence in that definition jesus two natures truly god truly man not mixed not confused that's the orthodox teaching of christianity that's what we understand about jesus and our passage this morning is a very important passage to help us understand that because what is so clearly in focus in our passage is the true humanity of jesus okay so let's turn now to hebrews 2 and i hope you can see this right in verse 10 and then also in verse 17 and 18 so the top and the bottom of our passage is making this point this is the main point verse 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 go down to verse 17 therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of god to make propitiation for the sins of his people of the people for because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted okay let's define some of these words and understand this in verse 10 for it was fitting that he referring to god god the father for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory that's the author of hebrews way of talking about what jesus accomplishes the salvation jesus achieves he brings many sons to glory but god in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation the founder of the salvation for the many sons is jesus jesus is the founder of our salvation in verse 10 says that god made him perfect through suffering now this sometimes trips people up they hear that and they say well wait a minute i thought jesus was perfect i thought he's always perfect and so how can he be made perfect and here i think we have to keep in mind that what is in focus in this passage is the true full humanity of christ and christ in his humanity

[12:54] grew luke tells us in wisdom and in stature and in favor with man and with god so jesus grew in wisdom because he was truly man he was truly a boy let me some ways that we might make some errors here okay if you have ever thought man i if i went to school with jesus and we were going to play baseball i would pick him to be on my team because he could throw a thousand miles an hour if you ever thought that what you're doing is you're making a docetic error okay tell all your friends yeah your friends will love that no but that's what that is what you're doing is you're confusing the two natures of jesus um that you're thinking that jesus the boy had the omnipotent power of god such that he would throw a thousand miles an hour baseball but the scripture doesn't tell us anything like that in fact jesus was so normal as a boy that when he

began his public ministry his family members and the members of the town where he grew up thought he was crazy because he said you're just normal you're the normal son of the normal carpenter like what are you doing because his natures were not mixed so he grew as a true boy into a man not as superman as ordinary man that's what this passage is saying verse 17 therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of god later in hebrews the the author will add a couple of important qualifications will hebrews 4 15 says for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin that's hebrews 4 15 but the author doesn't bring that in here in chapter 2 because the main point he's trying to make as he introduces this concept to us is that jesus is truly man in every respect like us true man makes your head hurt really we started our service come behold the wondrous mystery our first song that's right this is a mystery this is the greatest mystery how can in one person be fully god and fully man but this is the teaching of christianity and the teaching of the bible and this is what our passage is pushing us to understand that jesus became the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for us for all who believe because he was fully man

only a man a true man can pay the penalty for the sin of men but any man who is only a man is imperfect and is inadequate to pay the penalty for the sins of all men so the perfect savior the heidelberg catechism is very helpful for us here says I think it's in question 16 says why must the mediator be fully god and fully man yes correct the mediator must be fully god and fully man in order to be the perfect sacrifice to propitiate means to turn away the wrath of god to turn away the wrath of god from sinners a perfect god man is required is necessary necessary and this is what god makes jesus makes the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering very important in this passage jesus suffers and he suffers all the way to the point of death even death on the cross and he really dies his human body dies for because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted okay that's point number one jesus is true man i have three points in our little exposition of the text i've been told i sometimes forget to say the three points or i mix up the numbers and so we'll see if i can three points jesus is true man number one number two jesus the true man makes us part of his one family and this is really what in our passage verses 11 to 16 are demonstrating verse 11 for he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source he who sanctifies is jesus those who are sanctified are those who believe in jesus they all have one source the puritan commentator writer great writer john owen on this said they all have one source can rightly be understood as they are all of one family that fits very well with the following five verses because you will see there is a lot of family language in these following verses verse 11 that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers and then the author of hebrews gives us three quotations from the old testament in each quotation features this language of family the first in verse 12 comes from psalm 22 i will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation i will sing your praise and then two quotes from isaiah verse 13 and again i will put my trust in him and behold i and the children god has given me from isaiah 8:18 if you go to the isaiah 8:18 passage you have a scene where the prophet isaiah is talking and he says i and the children god have given me are a sign and a portent for you the prophet isaiah had at least two sons maybe more but at least two and he gave his two sons very unusual names odd strange names that had very important meaning and he understands his two sons to be a sort of visual aid of his ministry of his prophetic ministry isaiah this is the prophet isaiah so in chapter 8 it's as if he is standing in front of people isaiah and saying i and my children are a sign and a portent to you and here the author of hebrews pulls that quotation in and says this is what jesus does now to those whom he has saved he calls us his children or his brothers his family members verse 14 since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of the same things so jesus is truly human he partook of flesh and blood he became a real true human and because of that we can become family members with jesus it's incredible jesus the true man makes us part of his one family and now there's a great benefit that the author in this fairly short passage wants to draw out the great benefit that this provides for us is in verses 14 to 16 that through death he jesus

might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death we're subject to lifelong slavery so because Jesus is truly man and he makes us members of his family and he suffered to death and rose again he defeated death and he broke the power of death and the fear of death death that keeps us as humans in slavery I was reading someone this week who said the fear of death is the fundamental fear it's the fundamental fear of our human existence it's the fear that underlies all of our fears the fear of death but because Jesus has suffered

to the point of death and rose again he defeated death he frees us from the slavery of the fear of death we don't have to live in fear of death okay now I'll tell you a story okay most of you know that just about six weeks ago my father died and he died in a hospital room up near Detroit Michigan he had cancer two and a half year long battle with cancer and I was privileged to spend the last five days with him and my father died of uncontrollable and unstoppable internal bleeding he actually received 12 units of blood by transfusion over the course of three days the average human body adult body has 10 units of blood so this is a total replacement of his blood in three days and we made a very difficult decision with him and thankfully he was coherent enough to make this decision for himself to stop the transfusions and to move to a hospice room in the hospital in the hospice wing of the hospital the hospice wing of a hospital is a place where they move patients who are dying and this was a large hospital and this was a long hallway with lots of hospital rooms and the patient in every one of these rooms was dying and my father stayed in his room for three days and then he passed away at one point they moved a patient into the room next to my dad a female patient and in the middle of the night she was an older woman she began screaming and shouting and yelling get away from me

I know you're trying to kill me stop trying to kill me go away yeah and she carried on like this for six hours at one point she was thrashing so violently we could hear next in the next room this loud commotion and that they called in hospital security to try to restrain her in the bed and the nurses came into our room at one point they were very apologetic they said we're so sorry we're so sorry we're trying to medicate her we're trying to get her to calm down quiet down and I said to the nurse I said is it is it common that you see this because these nurses work in this hospice wing it's all they do is care for dying patients and this nurse said yeah it's somewhat common she said but most patients don't have the energy or the lung capacity to be as loud as this woman is but the fear of death is common terror of death overwhelms but Jesus has freed us from that praise God that my father knew and loved

[29:15] Jesus and spent his whole life meditating on the Bible actually he loved doing that and amazed I've made it this far in this story doing so well when we and he decided to stop these blood transfusions and move to hospice this is what he said he was very tired and his voice was kind of raspy and he said well you don't have to worry about me he said because I know whom I have believed in and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me my father he quoted 2nd

Timothy 1 12 said you don't have to worry about me and then he spent three days in the hospice room but it was very quiet and it was very peaceful it was so quiet and peaceful that when he died those who were in the room didn't actually know he had died I had stepped out of the room and my sister called me she said you should come back she said because I think dad has died she said I think because she wasn't even sure it was so quiet and peaceful his actual passing now my dad had meditated on scripture on the promises of Jesus and so his mind and his heart had been disciplined by the word of God renewed by Christ but I'm convinced of this and I want to end with this that it wasn't some form of mindfulness that helped my dad at the end it wasn't mental training or his practice of meditation what helped my dad at the end was the resurrected Jesus Christ who was with him Jesus who promises that like the good shepherd he will be with us even into the valley of the shadow of death Jesus who knows exactly what it's like to bleed to death was with my father guarded and kept him and that's what Jesus promises to do for each one who trusts in him who is of his family this is the beauty of the incarnation of Christ as the author of Hebrew in this passage wants us to understand let's pray Lord we thank you and praise you that Jesus Christ is truly man fully human that he suffered and faithfully endured all the temptations and the pain and all that we are faced with as humans and now Christ that you are alive and you guard

and keep and protect your own we praise you and thank you for that in your name Jesus amen