

“Jesus: The Help We Need from God”

Heb. 2:5-18

‘God helps those who help themselves!’

Where did that phrase ever come from? Because its not in the Bible. Actually it was written over 2500 years ago by Aesop, Aesop was a Greek story teller who lived in the 6th century BC and collected stories usually involving animals which had a moral lesson to them. Listen to Hercules and the Wagoner.

A wagoner was carelessly driving his wagon along a country lane when one wheel sank into a deep rut. The driver did nothing but utter loud cries to Hercules to come and help him. Hercules appeared and told the Wagoner to put his shoulder to the wheel, reminding him that heaven aided only those who first tried to help themselves.

Now I’m sure there are times God is waiting for us to do what we need to do but God is proactively making Himself available to us to listen to our prayers and meet our needs. How do we know this? Because He sent Jesus to this earth for us and since we’ve placed our faith in Him He now dwells with us. Emmanuel, God With Us.

We looked last week at John 1:1-18 how Jesus creates everyone and thus gives us value. But we are unable to recognize our value until we place our faith in Him and then we see everyone through Christ’s eyes as valued and in need of salvation. As well, when we accept Christ we now see how wonderful and amazing He and His Father are, full of grace and truth. Now it our responsibility to model Jesus to each other and a lost world by being full of grace and truth also.

As we come to Hebrews 1-2 this morning we see how much God values Jesus which results in how valued we are. And how Jesus is able to meet our needs now, as we await His return. The letter of the Hebrews is a letter exalting the greatness of Jesus interspersed with warnings to a predominantly Jewish church, some of whom due to persecution from Nero (mid to late 60’s AD) were tempted to revert to traditional Jewish temple worship and the Law to avoid suffering. In other words not identifying with Jesus.

So the author urges them not to give up nor go back to Judaism and he does that by showing the majesty and superiority of Jesus. So the stronger our Christology (understanding of Jesus) produces greater holiness (obedience) in us. Where does he begin?

He starts his letter reminding them that Jesus is divine, the exact image of God, now sitting at God’s right hand because He accomplished God’s work. He then shows how Jesus is greater than the angels – which to us seems a rather odd angle to pursue – except that the Jewish people highly revered angels because they believed angels gave the Law to Moses.

Then the author shows from Old Testament verses in 1:5-14 that Jesus is the Son of God while angels are His servants. God did not tell angels they would sit at God’s right hand until God makes His enemies a footstool for Jesus’ feet. Ch. 2:1-4 gives us the first warning of the book urging a church audience (which can have a mix of believers and unbelievers in it)

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Jesus is far superior to angels. And then the author changes direction and says this:

⁵ For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, [Ps. 8]

“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.”*

See the author’s goal is to encourage people to know Jesus and walk with Jesus and do what he says. As special as angels are God didn’t make the world for them; He made it for us, who were made lower than the angels. So if we’re doubting God’s power or timing or presence in our life, we are reassured ...

God Always Cares for Us **(2:5-9)**

The author is talking about a future time when God will put everything under the son of man’s feet when His followers will help Him govern. There’s nothing to rule or govern in the New earth because that is perfection and glory and all our enemies have been removed. But when Jesus returns to the earth after defeating the antichrist and his supporters, who in a 7 year period try to wipe out all God’s people, Jesus will come to establish His rule for 1000 years on this earth with our help. Thus fulfilling God’s intended initial purpose for us. So here we are reassured God always care for us,

He has not forgotten His promise for us to have dominion over the world (vv.5-7)

Quoting Ps. 8 he tells us how wonderful humans are that God is very mindful of us, even though we’re made lower than angels, His own Son became one of us and through Jesus God will subject the world under His feet and we will co-reign with Jesus. When God made humans He said,

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Yet, Adam and Eve sinned and so failed to and were incapable of being God’s representatives to govern the world. A fallen angel, Lucifer, usurped our dominion by enticing us to sin and taking control over this world. Because of sin we all die and are incapable of overthrowing the enemy so we can have the dominion that God said we would have.

Because Jesus became one of us, being made human [a little lower than the angels] (even though He's above the angels, divine) to live a sinless life here for 33 years and die for our sins and then prove His divinity by rising from the dead.

Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. ⁹ But 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 he might taste death for everyone.

How do we know God cares enough about us that His promise for us to have dominion over this world will happen?

Jesus' resurrection assures us (v.8)

Currently Jesus sits at the right hand of God interceding on our behalf. Why? Because God cares about us. He's waiting for God to say 'now is the time' to return and establish his kingdom on earth where we His followers will help him govern this world for a 1000 years. He earned that right because He tasted death for us all, He satisfied God's requirement that a perfect human sacrifice could undo what Satan started which separated us from God. Now

Jesus' sacrifice restores our relationship with God (v.9)

And assures us of God's all promises coming true for us. Sin results in death and death means separation. Our sin separates us from God and Jesus alone can make it possible for us through faith in His accomplished work on the cross to be reunited with God. So He cares for us even when we weren't saved by sending Jesus to die for us, knowing many would not choose Jesus. That's wonderful and we're looking forward to that day of reigning with Jesus but what about now? How is God helping us now?

God Continually Helps Us Through Jesus **(2:10-18)**

¹⁰ *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. ¹¹ Both 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 and sisters. ¹² He says,*

"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."
¹³ *And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says,*

"Here am I, and the children God has given me."

Jesus isn't just a past Saviour who sits around waiting for us to get our act together, He's with us and ministering to us and for us now. How so? The Hebrews writer quotes a number of Old Testament verses affirming

We are secure in His love (vv.10-13)

Jesus, the Holy Son of God, is committed to our ongoing and ultimate holiness. And Jesus modelled that for us. How? By His suffering for us. His suffering for us shows us His love for us. "Perfect through suffering" doesn't mean Jesus was imperfect, rather that God gave Jesus an earthly mission to complete (perfect) which involved suffering. Hint, hint.

These predominantly Jewish followers of Jesus needed to hang in there even in suffering for Jesus so God can complete His holiness work in us. And Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters. Jesus is not ashamed of you. Hang in there. Be a witness for Him. And He quotes Ps. 22:22, the psalm that describes prophetically Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and Jesus dies for us and declares I'm doing this for you. I'm going to praise God to my fellow followers of God. So Jesus was thinking of us on the cross knowing He would see the end of it. Trust God in your difficulties, praising Him during them knowing He will get you to the end of it.

Then he quotes Is. 8:17-18, when Isaiah was warning Israel of an impending invasion of the Assyrians. Even though it will be hard, Isaiah says 'Here am I and the children you have given me. We will put our trust in you.' The Hebrews author applies that to Jesus' commitment to us and our need to trust God no matter what comes our way. We are secure in His love.

Because we are secure in His love,

We do not need to fear death or the enemy (vv.14-15)

Why not? Because our Saviour conquered death and broke Satan's power over death for the believer in Christ.

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Satan figured he had defeated God and stole earth and God's creations on earth away from God. Whether unaware or blind to God and Jesus' plan to become lower than an angel – human – and sinlessly sacrifice Himself for us so that we too will have a secure future but also now power through Jesus dwelling in us by His Spirit to have victory over sin. Something we had no power over before Christ. Paul wrote in Rom. 6

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

And here's the point of all that he's been saying so far:

¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Jesus not only helped us on the cross paying for our sins but continues to help us now with ongoing sin knowing

We can be forgiven when we sin (vv.16-17)

Because we still sin. And even our future sins have been atoned for and Jesus now is our High Priest interceding on our behalf to the Father forgiving us when we confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. But that isn't the only thing He does for us now.

¹⁸ *Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

We can continually pray through Him to the Father and

We can ask for His help when tempted (v.18)

And we are tempted every day with anxiety, selfishness, pride, unrighteous anger, self-pity, vengeful thoughts and words, etc. And Jesus can relate to us because He was one of us. Max Lucado says this of Jesus' incarnation:

Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with Him. And had the synagogue leader of Nazareth known who was listening to His sermons ...

Jesus may have had pimples. He may have been tone-deaf. Perhaps a girl down the street had a crush on Him or vice-versa. It could be that His knees were bony. One thing's for sure, He was while completely divine completely human.

For 33 years He would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He was susceptible to wooing women. He got colds, burped and had body odour. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And His head ached.

To think of Jesus in such a light is – well it seems almost irreverent doesn't it? It's not something we like to do; it's uncomfortable. It is much easier to keep the humanity of the Incarnation. Clean the manure from around the manger. Wipe the sweat out of His eyes. Pretend He didn't snore or blow His nose or hit His thumb with a hammer.

Jesus is Emmanuel, God WITH us. He became one of us; lower than the angels, to steel victory over the fallen angel, so we could be lifted up and live victoriously – even though we go through difficulties and persecution. That's the point the author was making to His audience.

Jesus is with you no matter what you're going through. Jesus knows how frustrated, angry, depressed, tired, tempted or defeated we feel. This theme of Jesus interceding for us and being approachable is intertwined throughout Hebrews. In Ch. 4 he'll write,

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

So don't neglect so great a salvation if you have been. Stop drifting if you've gotten careless about your faith. Be encouraged that God is with you. He is not ashamed of you; don't be ashamed of Him. We've got an unbelievable future ahead of us.

Tell somebody this week about Jesus. Hand out gift bags next Sunday. Tell someone you're praying for them. Ask God for the help that you need for today to finish well today and do the same tomorrow when it comes. Renew your commitment to Him and say as Isaiah did, *'I will trust in Him. Here am I and the children [physical and spiritual] God has given me.*

[Pray], Oh Father, who indeed are we that you consider us? How humbling was it for Jesus to become one of us and yet He says, He is not ashamed of us. Forgive us Lord when we have been

ashamed to say your Name, to not lovingly ask that others not distort Your Son's precious Name or when we failed to speak up for You when we should have.

Again and again we come to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. And even here we ask Your forgiveness when we've exhausted our own attempts to fix our problems before coming to you.

Thank you that You are in us through Your Spirit. Give us victory over the temptations we face. Remind us in our times of impatience, frustration and anger with our children, friends and strangers because You are so patient and loving with us. Help us to show grace and truth to those around us so they may have their sins forgiven, receive grace and mercy and join us as members of Your body. May we look forward to singing your praises with them in our congregations where and when we gather. To You for whom and from whom and to whom are all things, amen.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please
contact us at olivet@rideau.net