

The Power of Our Salvation

Hebrews 2:14-16

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, May 22, 2022

I was listening to the music there, I was reminded of the time, the Puritan preacher, Samuel Rutherford was preaching the gospel to his congregation. And he told them about the law. And he told them about hell. And he told them about what they had done to disobey God by not doing what He wanted, which really discouraged them, as you can imagine, until he started talking to them about Christ. And he told them what He had done to save at which point an old man stood up and started running down the aisle, saying stay there, preacher, stay there. We can't do without that. We need to stay there as a church, we need to keep our eyes fixed on Christ. It's okay to talk about your sin. And it's okay to talk about where you fail God, and it's okay to talk about how you broke His law, that's important, you can't be saved without understanding that. But at the same time, you've got to remember that's only part of the story. That's only one side of the coin. The other side is that Christ has come to take care of your sin. In the words of Samuel Rutherford, your sin was great, but your Saviour is greater still, and your sins were big, but that's okay, because you have a bigger God to cover it. And so we want to keep that in mind. And I just want to say thank you to our worship team for helping us do that this morning. They did a wonderful job drawing our minds to Christ today. And that leads us to the sermon time.

So if you would, open your Bibles with me to the book of Hebrews, because that's the book that we're talking about today. So if you would, please turn to the book of Hebrews. And as you're doing that, if you're joining us for the first time today, we're in the middle of a series on the book of Hebrews called the "No Greater Saviour" series because that's what this book is about. It tells us there is no greater Saviour than Christ, because He did something that no one else could do, and that is to pay for your sins. He made it possible for a sinful person like you and me to get to heaven. Because your sin came at a price. It came at a cost and it wasn't gold or silver or money that would pay for it. It wasn't riches or jewels or treasure, it was blood. God would have to kill someone in order to take care of it. And that's what He did. And if you would, read the second part of chapter two with me, that's where we are in the book. Starting in Hebrews two, verse 10, it says,

For it was fitting for Him for who, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise." And again, "I will put my trust in Him. And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me."

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subjected to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

We'll stop the reading there. When you read that section, you can tell that the main subject is Christ, because he's a theme that comes up over and over again, because verse 10 says, "For it was fitting for God to perfect the author of our salvation," and that's a reference to Jesus. That's the one that he's talking about there. And it says He did that so He could bring many sons to glory in verse 10, sanctify us in verse 11, and then render powerless him who had the power over death, or the devil in verse 14, because that's what the cross eventually led to. It allowed Jesus to defeat the devil once and for all.

And just to say a few words about that, when you think of all the doctrines in the Bible, you'd probably have to say that the doctrine of Satan or demonology may be one of the least popular ones today. You rarely hear about it. Because most people don't believe in the devil anymore. They don't think he exists because life is too comfortable for them. Canada's a very nice place. So what do we need a devil for? And also another reason he's not very popular anymore or talked about very often is because we have gotten really good at redefining sin. We call it something other than what it actually is. Because we take a sin like homosexuality, and we call it gender dysphoria. We take a sin like drunkenness, and we call it alcoholism, we take a sin like a murder, and we call it abortion. So the word Satan has dropped out of our vocabulary because we can explain all that through biological causes nowadays, but the reality is that you shouldn't do that, you don't need to ignore the devil because the Bible says He is real. Satan is a living, breathing creature who exists to do one thing and one thing only, and that is to tempt you to sin. He wants to steal, kill and destroy you. So you need to pay close attention to him. First Peter Five, Verse eight, says, "Be of sober spirit and be on the alert for your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." And that means that he's doing that now; the devil is prowling around today looking for someone to swallow, because he hasn't stopped since Bible days, and you need to be alert to it. The moment you fall asleep, your soul is in jeopardy.

First, John three, Verse eight says, "The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." And the interesting thing about that passage is that it means the devil is really good at it. He's been sinning since time began. And so he's very skilled at the endeavor because the idea is that God's over here, you're over here, and there's a devil in between. God is facing this way you're facing this way trying to get to the Lord and Satan is blocking your path. So this verse tells us that Christ has come in order to stop him.

Just to give you some perspective on this that the scriptures tell us is Satan has gone through several names throughout the years. But his first name was Lucifer, which means Morningstar or the bright Morningstar, dutiful angel. He was one of the most glorious creatures in heaven until he sinned by trying to take God's throne away from him, at which point he was thrown out of heaven, along with 1/3 of the angels. And he's been trying to drag us down ever since. He started with Eve in the Garden of Eden, and then moved on to Adam in the same place. And from that point, his influence has spread to all of humanity, which is why the Lord had to give you a Saviour to resist Him.

And it might help to say a little bit about that, because when you study the Scripture, you find there are several times when Jesus encountered the devil himself, and He triumphed over him. There are several moments when the two of them met face to face. One of them is found in the Gospel of Matthew, if you want to just keep your finger in the book of Hebrews in turn there with me. One of these encounters between Jesus and the devil happened in Matthew chapter four. Which is interesting if you think about it, because this means this was a moment in time, when the most sinful creature in the universe met the most sinless one, the worst one met the best. Usually, when

Satan tempts someone to sin, it's far less complicated than that, because he's tempting a sinner. This is a moment when he didn't. And here's what it says in Matthew four about the encounter. It says,

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command the stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and, 'On their hands they will bear You up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give to You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Now, we don't have time to go into all the details of that, but you can tell there are three temptations in here and they are all centered around the phrase, "If you are the Son of God." It is repeated once in verse three, and again in verse six. To say that if you are really the Christ, prove it, because I don't believe it, so none of this was done out of pure motives. Just to walk through them, the first temptation was about doubting God's love for him because the devil said, if you are the Son of God, then why doesn't he love you by giving you bread? Why are you hungry all the time? The second one was about doubting his goodness, because the devil said, "If you are the Christ, why doesn't he kill you now, unless you jump off the temple, instead of dragging it out of the cross." The third one was about doubting God's plan for his life or his sovereignty, because he said, "If you are the Son of God, why doesn't he give you the kingdom now, instead of putting it off until later." But in all of these, the point is that Jesus never gave in to the temptation. He never allowed the devil to triumph over Him. In fact, He quoted Scripture over and over again to say that if you want to see that I am God's Son, here it is; here's the proof in the Bible. But this is how it started. The devil was attacking him from the beginning.

And then if you want to see another time the devil came after him, you can see it in Luke 22 if you want to turn over there. Another time the devil attacked the Son of God, and this time it was with Judas Iscariot. And it's interesting because it comes at the end of His ministry. The other one came at the beginning. This one is at the end because Satan never stopped coming after him. But Luke 22 tells us this:

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. The chief priests and scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money.

The interesting thing about this passage is that this is one of the only times I'm aware of when Satan actually entered into someone. There's a lot of passages where he tempts someone or argues with them or talks to them. But this is one of the only times where he possesses them personally. And he doesn't do it to anybody, he does it to Judas, one of Jesus' friends. This passage actually calls him one of the 12 which is noteworthy because every time you see Judas' name mentioned in the Bible, it calls him one of the 12. It reminds you that Jesus was not betrayed by an outsider, but an insider, a close ally. Because Satan knew if he couldn't get to Jesus through the opponents, he could get to Him through to His friends. Which means that every time Jesus looked at Judas, he was staring at Satan. Every time He talked to him, He was locking eyes with the devil himself. Verse six even says Judas began searching for an opportunity to betray Him, and the way that's worded means he kept searching and kept searching and kept searching. He wouldn't quit, he wouldn't stop. And yet Jesus even triumphed over that. Even with Satan himself standing among his 12 disciples, Jesus still beat him. Because every time the Lord came up against the devil, this is what you saw in the Bible, you saw a victory. And every time the two of them butted heads and locked horns, Jesus won.

Some people have a wrong understanding of this because they believe when Jesus meets Satan in the Bible, it's a standoff. And they believe that when the two of them do butt heads, it's some great cataclysmic battle where the earth shakes and the ground quakes and the heavens rattle. And the two of them start sparring, and boxing and trading blows with each other. But it's not like that. It's not like that at all. Every time Jesus shows up, the battle is one sided. Every time Christ is in the picture, it's a total washout. And that's what our passage is about today.

If you want to look back at Hebrews chapter two, verse 14, this is what it refers to when it says this. It says,

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Now, I'll say a little bit more about this in a moment, but a key word here is the word *powerless*. It's the Greek word *katargeo*. It's a compound word from *kata*, or down, and *argeo*, or inactive. It means to take something down from the place where it was, and render it useless. The idea is that like a machine with the engine stripped out of it, or a car with the battery turned off, because the author of the book of Hebrews says that this is what Christ has done with the devil. He took him from the high place where he sat and the lofty place where he held a position and he turned his battery off. He took all the power out from beneath him, because the devil was on a pedestal and he was sitting high on the throne and he was right running rampant over the world until Jesus showed up. He's the one who got rid of his hold over us in this passage. This passage says that He did that through death, because the cross killed our sins, then it totally obliterated them. So the devil can't tempt you to do them anymore. That's what the Cross did mean.

Satan can't tempt you to do something that's dead, can he? And he can't get you to partake of something that's already been butchered and killed and buried at the cross. So that's what Jesus came to do. He came to bury your sin. So they would no longer be a problem for you.

Then verse 15 also says that he did this by freeing you from slavery. And that means slavery to the devil, because he came to free you from the mindset that says "the devil made me do this and the devil made me do that." You guys know anybody that talks like that? Satan made me act this way. And Satan made me act this way. This passage here says no, he didn't. If you're in Christ, the devil can't make you do anything you don't want to do

because your chains are gone. The bars had been loose and the prisoners have been set free, so you can escape the devil. That is good news!

One commentator says it is easy to defeat your opponent if you have a bigger weapon than him. And it's easy to crush him if you have a stronger hammer. And that's what Christ gave you at the cross, He gave you a stronger hammer than the devil. So all you have to do is reach out and grab it in order to crush him. You don't need to let it sit on the shelf, collecting dust. I tell you this, because this passage really shows you how much hope you have as a Christian. Because listen, if you can defeat Satan, you can defeat anything unanswered. If you can beat the devil, then any problem you're facing today should be easy. I don't know about you. But I can't think of anything worse than the devil. I can't think of anyone more dangerous than that. If Christ can take care of him, he can take care of anything. You can trust Him.

I also tell you this because this passage shows you how much of assurance you can have as a believer, and how much confidence you can enjoy. Because this means you really do have power in the Christian life. You don't have to be a wimpy Christian anymore. You might know some wimpy Christians today who go around saying, "Oh no, the world is bad. Sin is bad." Yes, it's bad. But Christ is better. Because it says Jesus has rendered him powerless, useless, null and void. Like a machine with the engine taken out. Friends, you need to understand the devil is real. I mean, despite what you hear today, he's not a figment of your imagination. He can't be explained away by biological causes. But at the same time, you have nothing to fear if you're a Christian. He's your enemy, but he's a defeated enemy. And that's what we're going to talk about today by looking at four things Jesus triumphed over in this passage.

In Hebrews two, starting in verse 14, we're going to look at four things Jesus triumphed over. And the first one is the devil. The first thing Jesus triumphed over is the devil, which means He came to give you victory over the worst person of all, and that was Satan himself. We've already talked about this a little bit, but the passage begins here in verse 14, it says, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also protecting the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." If you notice, as you read that passage, it says a lot of wonderful things. But it begins with the word "therefore," which ties you back to the previous passage, where it says up in verse 10, that it was fitting for him for whom are all things and through whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. I told you last time that the term perfect here, it doesn't mean to make something better because you can't do that with Jesus. And it doesn't mean to improve something because you can't improve the Son of God. But it means that when He came to Earth, this is how God prepared Christ to be our Saviour: He perfected Him by letting Him suffer. He got Jesus ready for the task by letting him experience hunger and thirst and weariness just like you and me. Jesus couldn't be our Saviour if He didn't do that. He couldn't be our Redeemer if He stayed up in heaven and lived an easy life. So the Lord didn't let that happen. He had Him come down and live a hard one.

And now the author says a similar thing when he says in verse 14, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself also partook the same." That means that since God's people were in skin and go around with flesh, God let Jesus do that, too, so He could live like you and I do. This idea is so important that it is repeated three times in this passage, because if you look in verse 10, it says, "The Lord perfected the author of salvation through sufferings." Then in verse 14, it says, "We share His flesh and blood." Then later on in verse 17, it says, "He had to be made like His brethren, in all things." And the idea here in the passage is that Jesus became

a man, a man, a man, he became a human, a human, a human, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, the One who was all those amazing things in Hebrews chapter one has now been a person like the rest of us. Talk about being humbled. Talk about condescending. But that's what saved us. And to explain this a little more, the phrase flesh and blood can refer to a lot of things but it basically refers to the frailty of man or his weakness. Because this is what happened when Jesus entered our world, for the first time ever, the Son of God became weak. And for the first moment in history, the second person of the Trinity became frail, never happened before. And when he was in heaven, Jesus was omnipotent or all powerful, and he was omnipresent, or everywhere present, and he was omniscient, are all knowing, immutable and never changing. But now as a man, He experienced all the total opposite of that. In Heaven, He could do whatever He wanted. On earth, He couldn't. In heaven, He could go wherever He wanted. On earth, He was confined to a mortal body. That's all tied up in this phrase.

This phrase, flesh and blood, also refers to the cardinality of man, or his sinfulness. Because this is what happened to Jesus as well, He experienced sin for the first time, not by sinning because He never did that, but just by being around it. You can imagine the greatest culture shock in human history is when God came down to earth, and looked around and saw what we do on a regular basis. You think sin drives you crazy? Can you imagine what it did to Him? Verse 14 says that not only did He share our flesh and blood, but He actually partook of this with us. And the word *partook* in Greek is the word *metecho*, which means to share in something or hold in common. Depending on how it's used, It can be translate as fellowship. Because not only did Jesus take on our nature, He fellowshipped in it. And not only did He become a man, but He lived that way for a long time. I think if I was Jesus, I'd come down here for a day or two and say, "Okay, I'm done. That's enough." This verb is in the continuous tense, which means He did this continually. He lived as a man for years and years and years on in.

If you want to write this verse in your Bibles, or in your notes, Hebrews five verse two, gives us some insight into this when it says that He can deal gently with the ignorant, since He Himself was beset with weakness. That's what this is talking about. Jesus can assist you in your weakness because He Himself was weak. And He can deal gently with the ignorant because He knows what that felt like. Isaiah 53, verse three also says He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and therefore He knows how to deal with those who are rejected; He knows what to do with you when you're grieving because He grieved. And the author brings it up here to say that no matter how you look at it, Jesus' incarnation was real. He was fully God and fully man. 100% both, not 50-50 or half and half. He had both natures united in one so that when He died on a cross it was a real man dying. And when He rose from the grave, it was a real man rising. And when He ascended into heaven, it was a real man ascending because it wasn't a phantom or a ghost or something like that. It was an actual person.

This verse says, He Himself likewise partook of the same. That means Jesus Himself did this, the one who is sitting at the right hand of God was made a little lower than the angels, perfected through sufferings, took on flesh and blood. All in order to do this, verse 14 says that his all happened so that through death, "He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil." The word powerless again, it's a word that means to make something null and void. So it can't hurt you anymore. The author says Jesus became a man in order to do that, because ever since time began, Satan has been tempting humans. And ever since the world first started, he has been getting us into trouble, because we're made in the image of God; we were formed in His likeness, so Satan doesn't go after the goats or the sheep or the rams, he goes after you. So Jesus came in order to stop it. This passage says He did that through His death.

This verse says, “Through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil.” The word death is repeated twice there to highlight the fact that Jesus didn't stop the devil with his actions only or with his works. He did it through the cross. He stopped him at Calvary. Because the devil can attack you with a sin that's already been crucified. And he can't lure you in with a temptation that's already been tried and punished and judged by God at the cross. So that's what Jesus came in order to do.

I believe it was Martin Luther who said that when the devil accuses you of sin, you can say to him, I know I sin. But what of it? I know that I've messed up. But what business is that of yours because I have a Saviour for sin, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he tells me that my sin has been put on the cross. Amen. So that's, so that's good enough for me, I just want to leave it there. You see, so many Christians today, won't do that; they won't leave their sins at the cross. They love to climb up there and bring them down again. They love to reach up to the cross and yank them off so they can study them, and relish them and mourn over them over and over and over again. I know they do that because I counsel them. And I tell them to stop because Jesus already did all that. He was already punished for your sins at Calvary, so you don't need to punish yourselves for them anymore. There's no reason for that. You also see Christians going the other direction with this because they look at the cross. And they say, you know, that's not enough for me. They look at their sins hanging there. And they think, “I need to do more. My sins are so bad. I have to do more works and give more money and more efforts for God to forgive me.” This passage says you don't. Jesus came in order to deal with it all. And you have to believe in that.

Now, you need to understand what God is offering you in Christ. He's offering you a full salvation. And you need to see what He has given you at the cross. He's given you complete forgiveness, not a partial one. Jesus didn't die partially. He died all the way. And He wasn't crucified a little bit. He was crucified alive for every sin. Which means the battle has been fought, the war has been won, it's all been nailed to the tree. You need to live in light of that. I know it may not seem like the sin has been nailed to the cross, because this world can look pretty devilish at times and evil. But studying for this sermon, I came across a pastor who said that this passage should really cure you from the sovereignty of Satan syndrome. I don't know if you've ever I'd never heard of that before. So I went on to listen and he said, you know, some people are so wrapped up in the devil nowadays, they believe that everything bad that happens to them happens because of him. And so when they get a cold, they say the devil did it. And when they get laid off from work, they say the devil did it. And when they get into a fight with their wife, they say the devil did it. And when the St. Louis Cardinals lose in the World Series, they say the devil did it. It's just devil devil devil all the time to the point that he's sovereign, because he's the one calling the shots. The Bible said he's not. Scripture tells us the devil is not calling the shots, because God is and so you need to keep your eyes fixed on Him.

There is a spiritual battle going on. There is a warfare taking place, and it is fierce, because the devil is alive and well. But in the midst of that God has given you victory. It's not a minor victory. By the way, it's a major victory, total victory. First, John four, verse four says, “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” John is making a comparison there between two things are two powers, the power of God and the power of Satan; He that is in you versus he that is in the world. And he says that He that is in you is greater, doesn't compare. Colossians two verse 13 also says when you were dead in transgressions, God cancelled out the certificate of death. And He disarmed the devil by making a public display of him, having triumphed over him through the cross.

And that brings us to another thing Jesus triumphs over in this passage, and that is fear. So the first one is the devil, which is important because he is the most terrible enemy you'll face as a Christian, I can't emphasize that enough. He's the worst opponent you can encounter. But the author brings him up here to say that God has defeated him through Christ. In fact, if you compile a list of his names, you can see how bad he is. Because the Bible calls Satan the adversary, the accuser and the deceiver. It calls him the dragon, the serpent and the tempter. It describes him as the father of lies and the ruler of this world and the prince of the powers of darkness, because he doesn't just live in darkness, but he's the prince of darkness. He doesn't just dabble in evil, but he's evil through and through. But God has overcome him.

And that brings us to the next thing Jesus triumphs over here and that is fear. This is a practical application of what we just talked about. But this means Jesus' death gives us power over a spirit that says I can't do anything to please God now, because I'm too simple. I can't get over my weaknesses because I'm just too bad. Jesus has come to take care of that. If you look in verse 14, it says this. It says "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might free those who through fear of death, were subjected to slavery all their lives." As the author goes on in the passage here, you can tell he's making an application of what he said earlier about Jesus taking on flesh and blood. Because he mentioned things like the devil in fear and slavery, to highlight the fact that that's what you experience. When you have flesh and blood, that's what you encounter as a human. You encounter the devil or your spiritual enemy and fear or your emotional enemy, and slavery. So he reminds us that Jesus became a man to deal with that. And the next one in the list here is fear. That's one of the things we wrestle with the most as Christians, we battle with a feeling of helplessness. And that's what this is talking about. Because the word fear is the Greek word *phobos* from which we get the word phobia and it refers to something that strikes terror into your heart, because it takes away your will to fight and makes you feel powerless. When you're in the presence of it. It's a word that really could relate to anything, it doesn't matter what it is, because the experts say you can have a phobia about any object, big or small. Some people are scared of little things like mice and bugs and spiders. Some people are scared of big things like lions and tigers and bears. But it all has to do with your mind; fears a battle for your soul. And that's what the author is referring to. Because this term death does not refer to physical death because Satan doesn't have the power over that. Nowhere in Scripture, does it tell us that the devil can kill a believer on his own. This is a reference to spiritual death; he has the power to lower someone into sin.

You could translate this passage like this, Jesus became a man so that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of sin, that is the devil and might free those who through fear of sin, were subjected to slavery. That phrase *him who had the power of sin* really shows you what this is about. Because this is what the devil had over you, he had the ability to make you sin and feel like you can't stop. He had the power to make you fail and think there's nothing you could do to ever get over it because you're just a rotten stinking sinner. You're so useless.

This verse also says he created a spirit of slavery in us as he did that, and we'll say some words about that in a moment. But putting these two things together, the idea is that Satan created a spirit of bondage in us so that we sin and sin and sin. Because it overwhelmed us, and we failed and failed and failed, because he blew us away. Remember, Satan is a liar. And he loves to lie to you and tell us that you're hopeless in the battle with your flesh. And he's a deceiver. And he loves to deceive you into thinking you sinned once, so you might as well do it again. And you've lost it once, so you might as well keep at it and keep watching pornography and stay up all night in

front of the computer and ruin your marriage and wreck your life and destroy everything. So verse 15 says Jesus came in order to deal with that.

The way he says this is creative because if you notice, verse 14 says, "Through death, Jesus rendered powerless him who had the power over death, that is the devil." And then in verse 15, it says, "So that he might free those who through fear of death were subjected to slavery." And the connection between this is that since the devil has the power over death, this is what Jesus did, he died. And since Satan has the ability to kill us, and hurt us, and beat us up spiritually, by making a sin and feel like we can't stop, this is what God did. He beat Jesus, and He hurt Jesus, and he killed Jesus at the cross. So that we don't have to be afraid of that anymore. So that we don't have to live in fear, because there's no reason to because our sin has already been punished. And our guilt has been taken away. And we already have victory. So when we are tempted, all you have to do now is go to Jesus, and he can help you. And when you struggle, all you have to do is run to the cross, and he'll take care of it. You know, I don't know about you. But I find this passage so interesting because it doesn't apply to everybody. I read this and I don't think this is a problem for some people, because I don't see unbelievers going around being scared about their sin. And I don't see worldly people going to the bars and clubs and taverns and being freaked out about disobeying God. But I see Christians doing that. The problem with unbelievers is they sin and they don't care. They sin and they just do it willy nilly. The Christian, we sin and we lose our mind. We mess up and we go crazy, because we think we're going to hell. Or we do and we say, Oh, no. Am I a Christian now? Oh, dear, Does God still love me?

I've talked to people who tell me that this is so bad in their lives, they have a crisis of faith every couple of weeks. They have a meltdown about every other day over this. And friends, I'm here to tell you that if that's the case with you, you don't need to do that. There's no sense in having a meltdown every couple of days. Because if you believed in Him, Jesus died for you. And nothing can ever change that now. He went to the cross and was crucified there. And no amount of failure on your part can ever turn that around. So you don't have to live in a spirit of fear anymore. You don't have to be afraid. I don't know if you've ever talked to someone in this predicament. But it's miserable in it. It's a terrible thing to go around saying Am I a Christian or not? Am I saved or not? Am I going to heaven or not? And God doesn't want you to do that. And he sent Jesus to get you off a terrible cycle.

And I'd like to say more about that, but I want to move on to another thing Jesus triumphed over in this passage and that is slavery. I want to put this one under a different heading here, because while it's connected to the previous point, it's important to consider this separately, because the third thing Jesus triumphed over in this passage is slavery, which means Jesus' death not only gives us freedom over fear, but it gives us freedom over our bondage to it or our bondage to sin. And this is hard to put in English but verses 10 through 18 are actually one long paragraph in Greek. And the reason that's important is because Greek letters are not set up the way ours are. For them, the thought was not contained in a sentence is contained in the paragraph. So in order to get the point, you've got to just read a bunch of verses at once. And when you do that here, you see that the point is a Jesus became a man for us, and here's what happened as a result of that, He became the author of our salvation, shared our flesh and blood, all in order to free us from slavery in verse 15. All these things kind of build on each other in the passage, because this is the next stage in the progression of thought.

This is a sobering way to end the verse here, because not only were you impacted by sin, but you were slaves to it at one time. And not only were you tormented by it or tormented by the devil, but you were held captive. Verse 15 says, Through the fear of death, or through the fear of sin, you are subject to slavery. And the idea here is that

before you became a believer, you sinned but you didn't know it, and you disobeyed but you had no idea, because it was also natural to you. This passage says you did it all your lives, which means that it happened before salvation, this type of behavior was a pre-Christian thing that carried over into your Christian days, because you didn't sin a little bit, but you sinned a lot. You didn't disobey every once in a while, but you did it all the time. Like a slave, or a servant, or an addict, we might call it today. This verse even says, You are subject to it, which gives the idea of force or coercion, because you sinned against your will. Even when you tried to stop, you couldn't, even when you wanted to quit, it wasn't possible.

Theologians often talk about our total depravity. The term doesn't mean that man is as evil as he could be, because he's not, it means that man is touched by evil in every part of his soul. There's not a corner of you that's not been impacted by the results of sin. I heard one man describe it like it's like having a condemned criminal hanging on your neck. I mean, the criminal is condemned, and he is dead, but you still smell them all day long, don't you? You go around with his taste in your mouth. And so verse 15 says Jesus came to free you from that. Which is another way of saying he came to deliver you, or rescue you, or liberate you from this way. Satan took your old nature and beat you up with it. And the way he took your depravity and abused you by saying, "Look at what you did, look how pathetic you are. Just see how you keep sinning." One of Satan's names is "accuser," he likes to accuse you of those things. But through the cross, Jesus gives you victory over that. Which means through His death, he gave you a way to beat every lust and desire and passion, he gave you an outlet to defeat every temptation or deceit or lie the enemy throws at you. Because when that happens, all you have to do is trust in Jesus, and He will overcome it. And let me tell you what this means practically speaking, I mean, this means, as a Christian, I've said this several times, I want to say it again, you have no reason to give up in the battle with sin. You have no reason to quit, and throw in the towel. Because God is fighting on your side. And you can't have a greater friend than that. You may not be able to beat your sin, but Christ can. And you may not be able to defeat it, but the Lord can. So you can hope in Him. You don't have to deal with these things all on your own.

When we come to a passage like this, I think we can often look at it the wrong way. I've said this before years ago, but I don't think many of you will remember this. But we often look at texts like this and books like Hebrews and we come across with the impression that, here's an unbeliever on this side of the room, way over here. And then on the other side of the room, here's a believer with a mile or a galaxy or a whole universe in between them because we're better than those people, right? We go to church, we pray, read our Bibles, we do all these good things. But that's not what this is saying. This is not saying anything like that. That's a total wrong way to look at the Christian life. What this is saying is that here's a believer, and here's an unbeliever and the only thing that separates them is the cross. The only thing standing between us and a life of damnation is Jesus. Nothing else. Not your works. Not your Bible study. Not your church attendance, not the money you give. Not your background heritage lineage. None of that. It's just the cross. And the good news behind that is that means the Christian life is so simple at the end of the day, when you fail, you go back to the cross. And when you sin, you run back to Jesus. And when you mess up, you call out to Him.

Because let me tell you, friends, if you read this passage, and you're saying, "Man, this is me, I'm fearful. I'm enslaved. The devil is after me." Let me tell you what, let me remind you of something: the cross has not moved. You have. Jesus hasn't gone anywhere. He stayed put. So you have to get back to that because the author is not telling you to keep a bunch of rules first, in order to get this. He's not telling you to follow a bunch of commandments. He's not saying to clean your life up first. He's just telling you to come to Jesus. He's just telling you to find your way back to Him. The apostle Paul said in the book of Galatians, my boast and nothing but the

cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which I've been crucified to the world, in the world to me. And that's a wonderful reminder, because, why did Paul boast in the cross? Because that's the only thing that could save. And why is a Jew and a Pharisee bragging about Jesus? Because he's the only one who had the power to defeat sin. Paul's works couldn't do it, and neither could his legalism. His good behavior couldn't do it, and neither could the ceremonies and traditions. Salvation is in Christ alone. We need to hear that.

And it brings us to one more thing Jesus triumphed over in this passage. Just to review these other ones, I mean, the first one is the devil, the second is fear, the third is that He triumphed over slavery, which is the most sobering point so far, because it really highlights how desperate we are. When Jesus saved you is not that you were just a little bit messed up, you were really messed up. We were enslaved to these things. And that brings us to one more thing Jesus triumphed over, and that's the wrath of God. A fourth thing our Lord defeats in this passage is the wrath of God. And we're going to talk about this some more next week. So I want to I don't want to say too much here. But I want to bring all this together because this means Jesus came to deliver us from the anger or animosity God has towards sin. And if you look in verse 14, it says, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook the same, that through death, He might render powerless Him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subjected to slavery all their lives, For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." As the author goes on in here, remember, he's focusing on Jesus' humanity, because he compares his work to the angels in verse 16. And when he says, "For assuredly, He does not give help to the angels," he means that assuredly Jesus didn't die for them. And the reason is, because he didn't have to; they never sinned. Jesus didn't go to the cross for those creatures in heaven, because they never did anything wrong. He went for you and me, because we did. It's a humbling thought.

And in fact, First Peter talks about how the angels looked down from heaven, to watch the grace of God unfold in your life because they can't believe God would forgive a sinner like you. Verse 17 tells us how Jesus made propitiation for the sins of the people. And we'll talk about how he's a High Priest next time, but this word propitiation is a Greek word *hilaskomai* which refers to someone who atones for sin, or pays for it. And it's a very interesting word, because it's not found that often in the Bible, only mentioned a handful of times, and it literally translates into the word mercy seat. It's a word the authors of Scripture really just made up to refer to the cover that sat on top of the Ark of the Covenant, where the high priests would go once a year on the Day of Atonement, and sprinkled blood for the sins of the people.

The significance to this is that that was the only time of the year that he did that is the only day when he paid for the sins of the whole people at once. The rest of the time when the Jews sinned, they were responsible to pay for their own sins, and when they fail, they were supposed to make sacrifice on their own behalf. But this was a time when the high priests went in behind the veil, into God's presence. And he did that as the representative. That moment was so special. The scholars tell us that when it occurred, the entire nation would often sit outside the temple and watch as he did that because he represented them. And they knew that if God didn't accept His sacrifice, he wouldn't accept theirs. And if God didn't receive his offering, He wouldn't receive them. So it was a big deal for the nation. The author uses that image here to say that this is what Jesus did for us. He went into the presence of God, and offered a sacrifice there. He went to the mercy seat and He sprinkled blood, not blood from the animals, but His own blood as a way to say the door to God is open now. Because God was angry with you,

but now he's not. And God was mad at your sins, but through Jesus, it has been satisfied, and you can go free. This passage puts the term sins in the plural to imply it wasn't just a little bit of sin that He died for, it was a lot. Not a tiny bit of wrath, but an extraordinary amount of wrath, more than we can fathom. And it says he did this for the sins of the people, because it wasn't one person or two or three or four that he went to the cross for. It was a multitude.

One commentator explained it like this. He said, "When a man gets married to a bride, all her bills become his, The good, the bad, and the ugly. And he pays for any previous debt that she incurred. Because he doesn't marry part of her, he marries the whole thing. And it's the same way with salvation. When Jesus saved us, he didn't save part of us, he saved the whole thing, The Good, the Bad, and The Ugly." If you remember Isaiah 53 verse 12 says Jesus was numbered with the transgressors. And that's an interesting verse because it means he was numbered alongside the transgressors. He was counted as if he were one of their own, not because of His sin, but because He married into us in a spiritual sense. He united His nature with ours. The rest of that passage says that our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried, but he was pierced through for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, that chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His wounds were healed. But the reason He could do all of that, as this passage keeps telling us over and over again, is that He became a man. Jesus was one of us. In fact, if you want to get theological about it, you could say that this is why the Old Testament system never completely worked in Israel, because a goat cannot pay for the sins of a man. A ram could never take away the wrath of God; the two things are not the same. It's not apples to apples and oranges to oranges. If God was going to take care of the ransom completely, it would have to be with a man. This is also why the institution of legalism never worked in Israel. This is why the Pharisees got it so wrong, because you can't pay for a divine crime with human effort. And you can't fix God's anger towards sin with a bunch of your own mortal works. God Himself would have to get involved.

This is an important thing to talk about, because we don't think about the wrath of God much anymore, because it's such a controversial topic. But it really shows you what the cross was all about. Jesus died because God was mad. And He went to the cross because He wasn't just ashamed at your sin, He was furious at it. Because He took our sins personally. He saw them as an affront to His nature. And therefore the only way to forgive them would be with an act of violence. And that's what took place at Calvary. Jesus made propitiation for us. He didn't make an apology or a speech, He made a bloody sacrifice so that God doesn't have to keep rehearsing your sins over and over again, and dwelling on them over and over again, because they've been paid in full.

54:31

You know, I meet people today who sin and they tell me that they do that they keep rehearsing their sins over and over again. They keep meditating on them endlessly. And I ask them why because God doesn't do that. Why do you rehearse your sins when the Lord doesn't? You think you're better than God? Are You Smarter than Him? No. So you need to let them go. Other folks sin and they say, you know, I can't forgive my mistakes. There's no way I could ever get over the terrible things I've done, and then you have to say the same thing God did. If you've trusted in Christ, He got over it. So it should be easy for you to do. He's gone into the Holy of Holies for you; He has entered the mercy seat and He said, "It is finished." We should all have the same perspective. In fact, I want to say that if you find yourself rehearsing your sins today and dwelling on them, it may be that you're a Christian struggling with all this, but it may be that you're not a Christian at all. If you see yourself wrestling with the devil, giving into temptation, living in this fear, it may be that you're fighting a good fight and just having a hard time with it. Or it may be that you've never fought the fight at all. And you're lost. And if that's the case, a simple

solution is that you need to take care of that right away and come to the cross. The cross really is the only thing separating an unbeliever from a believer is the only thing separating the lost from the saved. So you need to pick it up and embrace it. Will you do that today? I can think of no better way to end this sermon and to prepare for the Lord's Supper than to talk about that subject.

So let's go to the Lord in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank You, Lord, for the cross. We all have a tendency to make salvation so much harder than it is. When we get our mind fixed on so many things in the Christian life, there's about 1,000,001 distractions. And yet you tell us in a passage like this one, the only thing we need to be thinking about is Jesus. And the only thing that can ever give us deliverance from sin is Him. Thank You. You've made things so simple for us. Thank You that we don't live under the old covenant where we have to bring all these animals over and over again and watch the high priests go in on the Day of Atonement and just do all these rituals. We have to do one thing, and that is embrace a crucified Saviour. We thank You for that. And Father, I do pray for our brothers and sisters here in the room today. I know that some of them are struggling with sin. And I know that some of the things we talked about today have been very real, just because this is a real issue in their lives. They feel like failures. And they feel like they just can't get a hold of the lust in their life, or the pride or the anger or the hatred, or whatever it is. Lord, I pray that this message in this passage, would not beat them up but pick them up. Thank You that we have such a Saviour. For those who are lost, we always pray for them every morning. But we want to do that again today. I don't know where everyone's at. But I do know that not everyone in the room is saved. Some of them are on the total opposite end of the spectrum. But there is just one step to Jesus, and He will forgive. Thank you for that. Father, thank You for this time to go to the Lord's table. And to have a memorial of these things. We do need to be reminded every time we can what the great thing our Saviour has done in dying at Calvary. May He be glorified in this hour. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.