

**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – October 7, 2018**

Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

**Hebrews 2:9-11 (NIV)**

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.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Christ Jesus;

There is a relatively new “industry” that has sprung up in Japan called the Rent a Family industry. Various agencies rent out actors or actresses to serve as replacement relatives. For example, an elderly woman might rent a teenager or young woman to be her “grand-daughter” for a day of shopping. A lonely man in his sixties rented a wife and daughter after his wife recently died and his twenty-two year old daughter left home and never returned after an argument. A recent article in the New Yorker took a more detailed look at this flourishing industry and commented: “People who are short on relatives can hire a husband, a mother, a grandson. The resulting relationships can be more real than you’d expect.”

It seems that there is a human need for the closeness that only family can provide. The reason for that is because that is the way our creator designed us. As we heard in our first reading for today, the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.” A short time later, both Adam and his God-created helper listened to the Devil and rebelled against their heavenly father and their creator. Their sin separated them from God and placed them outside of the family of God.

God, in his grace, sought them out and promised to send his Son to restore them to their place in his family by sending his Son to be born of a woman and to take their place under his wrath. God fulfilled that promise when he sent his Son in the fullness of time to redeem those under that Law that we might receive adoption to sonship (cf. Galatians 4:4-5).

By God’s grace we can rejoice in the fact that Jesus that we are brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus. May the Holy Spirit bless us as we contemplate the amazing truth that

**Theme:** Jesus Calls Us His Brothers & Sisters

1. He came as one of us
2. In order to die for us
3. So that we could live eternally with him

Let’s begin by reminding ourselves of who Jesus is. We are told in Hebrews chapter 1 that Jesus is God’s Son through whom all things were made. He is the one who laid the foundations of the earth. The heavens are the works of his hands. (cf. Hebrews 1:2, 10) **The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.** (Hebrews 1:3 NIV)

We can be thankful that when we see Jesus in the Scriptures we don’t just see him as the one by whom all things were made and who sustains all things. We also see him as one **“who was made a little lower than the angels ... so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”**

Sin destroyed our relationship with God. God could not ignore this. He could not let our sins go unpunished. He had to deal with sin according to his plan and his grace.

Our gracious Lord had a plan – a plan to rescue humanity from sin and to restore his relationship with him. That plan included the suffering of Christ who died for all that those who live will no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again. (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15)

Jesus lowered himself to become one of us. **He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross!** (Philippians 2: 7-8 NIV)

Jesus, our creator and God became true man – with human flesh and bones as well as human emotions. He ate and drank like we do. He was filled with joy and sorrow like us. He was tempted like us. He suffered like we suffer. He even died like we will die. He is our brother – our perfect sinless brother – who offered his perfect life as a payment for our sins.

We have often heard of family members speak about the “black sheep” in the family. That brother or sister, son or daughter or maybe a husband or wife who has fallen out of favor with the rest of the family for some shameful thing they have done. Often they exclude themselves but many times no matter how hard they try to set things right they are still not treated as one of the family because the rest of the family is ashamed of them.

That’s how it should have been for us. We were the black sheep of God’s family because of our sins. But instead of treating us like outsiders or being ashamed of us Jesus became our brother.

### **Jesus Calls Us His Brothers & Sisters**

1. He came as one of us
2. In order to die for us

Jesus entered our world and was born as one of us. He allowed himself to be treated as an outsider by God when he suffered our punishment on the cross.

Jesus is the author (or source) of our salvation – his perfection, not ours, satisfies God’s command, **“Be holy because I the Lord your God am holy.”** His death, not ours, satisfies God’s decree that the wages of sin is death. His suffering, death and resurrection are the only way for us to enjoy glory as Jesus himself told his disciples: (John 14:6 NIV) **Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

Jesus had a single goal and purpose in mind when he emptied himself of the use of his divine nature by becoming one of us. That goal was to provide salvation for sinners as he himself decreed. (Luke 19:10 NIV) **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.**

The only way for him to accomplish that goal was through the cross where he willingly suffered our punishment and shame. His goal was accomplished only through his suffering. That is what our text has in mind when it says **that the pioneer (or author) of our salvation was made perfect through suffering.** His suffering and death was the only way to bring us to glory.

In order to bring us to glory Jesus had to become one of us. He took our place under God's wrath. He was punished for our sins. He suffered the eternal death that we deserved because of sins. Our text reminds us: **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.**

Jesus willingly and lovingly carried out his Father's plan to rescue us from sin and to restore us to a place in his family. He became one of us in order to die for us **therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.** (Philippians 2:9-11 NIV)

It is because Jesus tasted death for all – taking our sins on himself and paying our penalty – that Jesus is now exalted in glory as an assurance of the glory that he has obtained for us. When we look at Jesus – see our brother and we give thanks for the fact that he did not reject us or abandon us to eternal condemnation. The one who willingly laid down his life for us is the one who is now exalted. Our brother rose from the dead and lives exalted -- on high.

Think of God's great love for us. While we were dead in transgressions and sins, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ...God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms. (cf. Ephesians 2:1-6)

Sometimes when a family member hits it big they are ashamed of the humble roots of their families and do whatever they can to keep their roots secret, again because they are ashamed of them. But not Jesus! Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. He's not ashamed to admit his love for us. He calls us his own and he invites us to live with him in his kingdom and to rule together with him for all eternity.

Let us all with gladsome voice  
Praise the God of heaven,  
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,  
His own Son has given.

We are rich, for he was poor;  
Is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore  
Here on earth and yonder.

To this vale of tears he comes,  
Here to serve in sadness,  
That with him in heav'n's fair homes  
We may reign in gladness.

(CW 64: 1-3)

Amen.