

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – October 11, 2015
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.

In the name of Jesus, dear friends:

Near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem some Greeks came to Jesus' disciple Philip and said, "We would like to see Jesus." Jesus used the occasion to speak about his upcoming suffering, death and resurrection as well as his return to heaven.

To see Jesus, isn't that the reason we have come today? Our epistle lesson for today rivets our attention on Jesus. What a privilege it is for us to see Jesus with the eyes of faith crowned with glory and honor, suffering for our salvation and as our brother!

Theme: We See Jesus

1. Crowned with glory and honor
2. Suffering for our salvation
3. As our brother

It is only when we see Jesus that we can see ourselves properly. The verses immediately before our text have spoken of mankind as the crown of God's creation and as co-rulers with God. That's the way it was when God made man a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor and put all things under his feet in the Garden of Eden. After the creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28 NIV) **God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."**

Because of sin, mankind no longer appears to be in charge as God intended. As Hebrews 2: 8 says: **Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.** When we look at mankind today we see that those who were created to have dominion over the earth are often dominated. Human beings are ruled by sin and subjected to its curse. If we look at ourselves we see nothing worthy of salvation – nothing worthy of honor and glory. Yet we are loved by God and our eternal future is bright. We are still the crown of God's creation.

There is no doubt about that for the Christian who sees Jesus crowned with glory and honor – a glory and honor that far surpasses the glory and honor with which God crowned mankind. His is the name that is above every name, a name at which every knee should bow ... and every tongue confess as Lord. (cf. Philippians 2:9-11)

Indeed the exalted Lord Jesus now rules over all things for the benefit of his church. But there was time when he was not exalted in this way, when not every one confessed him as Lord to the glory of God the Father. In fact Jesus (Philippians 2:6-8 NIV) **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God**

something to be used to his own advantage...made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

What a sight this must have been for the angels as their Lord stepped down from his eternal glory to appear here in human flesh as one of us AND for us as we confess in the Nicene Creed: **For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and was incarnate (that is became man) by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary.**

This is not the sight we see now – now with the eyes of faith, we see an ascended and glorified Jesus – the author of our salvation. We see a Jesus who pleads for us with his heavenly Father – who assures us that he is with those who gather in his name. We see a Jesus who is able to shepherd us through the valley of death to a table that has been prepared for us. Because of this we confess with the Psalmist: **Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and we will live in the house of the Lord forever.**

That would not be our hope if Jesus had not left his glory. If Jesus would have stayed in heaven – he could not have authored our salvation. 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. We also see him suffering – tasting death for everyone so that by the grace of God we might enjoy salvation as our text assures us: **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.**

We have already briefly mentioned the fact that the fall into sin ruined God's creation. Sin not only destroyed humankind's relationship with creation. It also destroyed their 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)

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.

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 was the only way to bring us to glory.

In order to bring us to glory Jesus had to become one of us and today we see Jesus as our brother. Our text reminds us: **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.**

In just a couple of months, we will once again celebrate the fact that Jesus became our brother when he was born of the Virgin Mary. The Scriptures call him Immanuel which means God with us. Just a couple of verses after our text the writer to the Hebrews reminds us: (Hebrews 2:14-16 NIV) **Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of 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. 16) For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.**

Just thinking of this has to fill us with joy and amazement to see Jesus as our brother. 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. He allowed himself to be treated as an outsider by God when he suffered our punishment on the cross.

He has made us holy by giving us his righteousness and removing our sins. Now we are holy and righteous in God’s sight – restored once again to our place in God’s family – the place lost through sin.

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 lives exalted -- on high. 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. Jesus is our brother – true man and true God! Lord of lords, Prince of Peace, King of Kings – that’s our brother!

How wonderful it is to see Jesus who suffered as our brother crowned with glory and honor! May we never be ashamed of him.

Jesus! and shall it ever be
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend
On whom my hopes of heav'n depend?
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.

Ashamed of Jesus? Yes, I may
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fear to quell, no soul to save.

Till then -- nor is my boasting vain
Till then I boast a Savior slain;
And oh, may this my glory be:
That Christ is not ashamed of me. Amen.