

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 30 May 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Christ Our Brother

Hebrews 2:10-13

In my lifetime, I have lived in North America and Europe. However, there is something that I've noticed about the African folks whom I have met in both places. No matter where I've been in America or Europe, I've notice that African folks address each other as "brother" and sister." It doesn't matter whether they are actually close relations; they speak *as though* they were close relations. When they address someone from their culture as "brother" or "sister," they are saying, "We are family."

So it should be among believers in Jesus Christ. As Christians, we call each other "brother" and "sister." However, this isn't merely a nice formality. We who know the Lord have a spiritual bond with each other, which is far stronger than that of flesh and blood. When we call each other "brother" or "sister," we are saying, "We are from the same spiritual family. God is our Father; and we are one in the Spirit."

However, there is a Biblical truth about God's family which we should think more about--namely, the fact that **Christ is our Brother**. We don't have any trouble thinking of ourselves as brothers and sisters to *each other*, because we understand that *God is our Father*. We also don't have much trouble thinking of ourselves as "one" in the Holy Spirit, because we know that He indwells us all. However, how often do we think of Christ as our *Brother*? That is sometimes hard to comprehend—especially since *Christ is not only Man, but God!* Because of Jesus' deity, it is hard for us to think of Him as being on "our level." Does Christ really call us His "brothers"? Yes, He does. Should *we* call *Him* our "Brother"—as though He were one of us? Yes, we should. Why? Because this is what the Bible teaches!

The fact that Christ is our Brother has profound implications. How profound? Well, let's put it this way: if Christ were *not* our Brother, we would have no hope of salvation! This morning, in **Hebrews 2**, we will learn this important truth about our Saviour. The title of this message is ***Christ Our Brother***.

Read Hebrews 2:10-13.

There are two main truths about Christ in this passage. First, we see that...

I. Christ is the Captain of our salvation (v. 10).

In **verse 10**, Paul says, "***For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.***" Now, before we go any further, we need to know whom Paul is talking about. Who is this one "***for whom are all things, and by whom are all things***"? It is God the Father. The Father is the One who created all things for His glory. With this in mind, look at what Paul tells us *about* the Father. He says that "***it became Him...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.***" That expression "***it became him***" means that it was "appropriate," or "fitting." Paul is saying that it was "fitting" for the Father to allow His Son (the "***captain of our salvation***") to suffer on the cross for us.

Now, think about that statement. Paul says that it was “fitting,” or *in keeping with God’s character*, to allow His Son to suffer and die! This idea flies in the face of human reasoning. For example, in the Muslim religion, people are taught that Jesus (whom they call “Isa”) was a sinless *prophet*. However, they deny that Jesus is the Son of God; and they even more vehemently deny that Jesus died on a cross. Some Muslims say that Jesus substituted *Judas* on the cross instead of Himself; but they deny that Jesus Himself went to the cross. Their reasoning is this: “How would it be *fitting* for God to allow His sinless prophet to die on a cross?” They reason that “Even if Jesus *were* the Son of God, why would God allow His Son to die in disgrace, for sinful people?” In their thinking, such a thing would be inconceivable, blasphemous, and absurd. Yet, what the world calls “foolishness” God calls “wisdom.”

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

Man calls the preaching of the cross “foolishness”: but God calls it “wisdom.” Furthermore, God says that the preaching of the cross is *in keeping with His character*. The Father says that it “*became*” Him to allow His Son to be made “*perfect*” through suffering!

Now, the unsaved world does not get this; and the reason they don’t get it is that they have the wrong view of *themselves!* They fail to understand that a holy God *cannot accept us in our sin!* Sinners do not understand that a righteous God cannot simply “drop the charge” against them! They don’t want to believe that a bloody sacrifice had to be made on our behalf-- because if such a thing be true, it means that our sin is so gross as to demand the death of the Son of God. We, as sinners, do not wish to see God’s holiness for what it is, because it reflects badly on *our own* sinful character.

My friends, God is a *just* God, who must judge our sin; and the minimum payment for sin is eternal death in hell. His holy character demands it. Yet, there is another aspect of God’s character: and that is **love**. As a *holy* God, He cannot accept us in our sin; yet, as a *loving* God, He does not desire for us to perish. That is why it was in keeping with God’s character to send His sinless Son to *become our Substitute*. The only way that God could satisfy His justice *and* His love was to send His Son *to die in our place*, so that we could go free! It was fitting for a holy *and* loving God to send His Son to become the **Captain of our salvation**.

Now, that word “*captain*” is interesting. It comes from the Greek word *archegos*, which means “**originator**.” It also means “**leader**” or “**captain**.” Both these definitions are true of Jesus. On the one hand, He is **Originator** of our salvation—the One who purchased it for us. He is also our **Leader** on the path to glory. We aren’t blazing our own trail of salvation through good works: rather, He has blazed the path for us, by paying for our sins on the cross. Our part is simply to believe on Him, and follow Him. Christ *is* the Way to the Father.

Yet, *how* did Christ become the Captain of our salvation? That is the question that Paul is answering for us in this verse. Paul says that in order for Christ to become the Captain of our salvation, He had to be made “*perfect through sufferings*.”

Now, what does this mean? How could *Jesus* be “*made perfect*”? Is Paul saying that Jesus was ever *less* than perfect? In order to understand what Paul is saying, you must realise that the word “perfect,” in Scripture, does not have the meaning that *we* often attach to it. We often say that “nobody’s perfect”: and by this we mean that “no one is *without sin*.” However,

the word “perfect,” in Scripture, does not mean “without sin.” Rather, it means “complete,” or “entire.” The Greek word that is used here is *teleosai*, which means “to complete, finish, accomplish, or perfect.” Paul is saying that in order for Christ to “complete” His mission of saving us, He had to suffer on the cross for us. Yes, He had to live a sinless life first; but His sinless life could not, by itself, atone for our sin. Sin demands *death* as its penalty. In order to make atonement for us, Jesus had to go to the cross, and suffer all that pain and separation from God the Father, on our behalf. That is why Jesus, just before his death, cried, “*Tetelestai*”--“***It is finished.***” Everything that was needed to open the path of salvation, so that we could get to the Father, was completed on the cross. This was God’s plan from eternity past; and, strange though this design may be in men’s eyes, it is “perfect” in God’s eyes.

Now, the fact that Christ had to suffer for us leads us to another important point. In order to go through all that suffering for us, Jesus had to become a Man. He had to take on human flesh. And if this be true, it means that...

II. Christ is our Brother (vv. 11-13).

(Read verse 11.) Paul just got done telling us that it was fitting for the Father to make the Captain of our salvation “*perfect*” through suffering. Now, in **verse 11**, he is about to tell us how this was made possible in the first place. The reason why Christ was *able* to suffer for us is that *He became a Man*.

Look again at **verse 11**. Paul says, “***For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.***” Now, let’s break this down. First, who is the One who “*sanctifieth*”? It is Jesus Christ. He is the one who sanctifies us, or “sets us apart” to God. Who are “*they who are sanctified*”? Those of us who are saved! We are the ones whom Christ has “set apart” unto God. And what does Paul say about the One who sanctifies, and those who are sanctified by Him? He says that we are “***all of one.***” We are all “***brethren.***” Christ was able to suffer for us, and to set us apart to God, *because He is our Brother*. He is *human flesh*. He is *one of us*. If He were *not* a Member of the human race, He would not have been *able* to be our Substitute for sin. No angel could have died for us: only a *Man* could die for the sins of mankind.

Jesus is 100% God; but he is also 100% Man. He is our Brother; and because He is our Brother, he is able to do several things on our behalf. We’ve already seen that He was able to suffer for our sins; however, there is much more that Christ is able to do, and to be, for us, because He is our Brother.

For one thing, **He is able to be our High Priest**. Let’s read **verse 11** again, and see what Paul says about this. (Read verse 11.) Paul says, “***Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.***” What Paul is describing is Christ’s role as our High Priest. Christ is the One who sanctifies us, at the moment of salvation; and He *continues* to sanctify us throughout our Christian lives. He is qualified to do this because **He is our High Priest**.

Before Christ came to earth, who was the one whom God ordained to “sanctify” the nation of Israel? It was the man who held the office of high priest. Once per year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest sanctified the whole house of Israel. He did this by sprinkling the

blood of bulls and goats upon the mercy seat of the Ark. When the blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, the sins of Israel were symbolically “covered” for one more year. All this was symbolic of how Jesus Christ would one day sanctify His people with His own blood.

Of course, the high priests of the Old Testament could sanctify the people of Israel only *symbolically*. The blood of the bulls and goats could never actually take away sins. In contrast, Jesus is our *true* High Priest; and it is *His own blood* that sanctifies us unto God. Furthermore, Christ doesn’t have to sprinkle His blood for us once per year, as the Old Testament priests did, because His blood sanctifies us *one time forever*.

Read Hebrews 10:1-5, 10-13.

The high priest of the Old Testament was the real, flesh-and-blood brother of the people of Israel, whom he represented. Likewise, Jesus, our *true* High Priest, is the real, flesh-and-blood Brother of those whom *He* represents. And whom does He represent? Not only Israel, but the whole human race! (Particularly, those of the human race who believe on Him, and embrace His sacrifice.) Jesus is the “*Saviour of all men*”--but “*especially of those that believe.*” Because Jesus Christ is our true Brother, He is able to intercede before God for those who have placed their trust in Him.

Now, what else is Jesus able to do for us because He is our Brother? **He is able to join us in praising the Father. (Read verse 12 again.)** Have you ever stopped to think that Jesus *sang praises* to God when He was on this earth? That’s mind-boggling, isn’t it? If Christ Himself be part of the Godhead, then why was it necessary for *Him* to praise God? It’s simple: **because He was also a Man.** (And He still is!) Because Christ became a Member of the human race, it was necessary for Him, *as a Man*, to do all that is required of men; and part of man’s obligation to God is to praise and worship Him! God commands us to teach each other in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. Since Jesus is a Man, He is required to do this, as well.

Now, once again, Paul is prepared to back up what he is saying with Scripture. Here in **verse 12**, Paul is, in fact, quoting directly from **Psalms 22**. Let’s look at that psalm.

Read Psalm 22:1-22.

In the first 21 verses of this psalm, we find more than half a dozen prophecies of Jesus’ crucifixion. David describes how the Messiah, while on the cross, would cry out, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (The Father had to turn His back on His Son during those six hours when He hung on the cross, because our sin was laid upon Him.) He describes how the daylight hours would suddenly be turned into night time. He describes how the Messiah would be mocked and ridiculed by the people. He describes how both Jewish and Gentile enemies, like fierce animals, would surround Him. He describes how the Messiah would be lifted up for everyone to gaze upon, and how all His bones would be out of joint. He describes how the Messiah would be consumed with extreme fatigue and thirst; how His clothes would be gambled over; and how His hands and feet would be pierced.

However, in **verse 22**, the tone suddenly changes from one of despair to one of praise and victory. Suddenly, the Messiah says, “*I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst*

of the congregation will I praise thee.” Why is there this sudden change in tone? Because now the *risen* Messiah is speaking! This is Jesus speaking to His “*brethren*” (His disciples) *after* His resurrection. Remember what Jesus said to Martha when He saw her on the morning of His resurrection? He said, “*Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*”

Throughout this psalm, we see a very human portrait of Jesus. We see His pain, suffering, and death; and we see that He is our *Brother*. That is the point that Paul is making by quoting this psalm. Furthermore, Paul points us that Jesus, as our Brother, “sings” in the midst of His congregation! He says, “*In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee.*” When did Jesus sing? He would have sung throughout His life and ministry! However, there is one instance of Jesus’ singing which is actually *recorded* for us. Let’s take a look at it.

Read Matthew 26:26-30.

When Jesus sang with His disciples at the Last Passover Supper, He was singing in the midst of His church. Remember, a “church” is an *ecclesia*--a “called-out assembly” of saved and baptised believers. A “church” may even be as small as two people. Jesus said that “*where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*” The local church already existed on the night of the Last Supper; and the disciples were the church members with whom Jesus sang the psalms that night! He literally sang in their midst!

However, I believe that this prophecy applies to us today, as well. Though Christ is not with us in the flesh, He, *as God*, is in our midst whenever we assemble; and when we sing together, He joins us in singing praise to the Father! If *that* isn’t enough to make you take our congregational singing seriously, I don’t know what is! Imagine if Christ were standing next to you, with a hymn book in his hand. Would He be sad as He glances over at you, and perceives that you are singing only half-heartedly, with little thought about the God whom you are supposed to be praising? I hope not! Brethren, sing with all your heart unto the Lord!

Because Jesus is our Brother, He is able to be our High Priest. He is also able to join us in singing praises to God. Is there anything else? Yes, there is. **Because Jesus is our Brother, He is able to place His trust in God. (Read Hebrew 2:13a.)** Once again, Paul is quoting from the Old Testament. This time, he is quoting from the book of **Isaiah**. This statement, “*I will put my trust in Him,*” comes from **Isaiah 8:17**. Yet, how does this statement relate to the fact that Jesus is our Brother? Well, let’s look up that Scripture, and examine its context.

Read Isaiah 8:13-17.

If you take the time to read all of **Isaiah 8**, you’ll see that Isaiah is prophesying to the nation of Israel--especially to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In Isaiah’s day, most of the Northern Kingdom was in apostasy and rebellion against God. There were few righteous people left in the land. Thus, Isaiah is warning them that very soon, God was going to send the Assyrians to destroy their nation, and to take them away into captivity. (By the way, this event took place less than 20 years after Isaiah made this prophecy, in the year 722 B.C.)

With this in mind, look again at what Isaiah says in **verse 16. (Read verse 16.)** In this verse, Isaiah is instructing his disciples to bind up the testimony (in other words, the prophecies that

God had given him up to that point), and to seal it, so that in days to come, it could be proven that God's Word had come to pass. Then, look at what Isaiah says next. He says, "***And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.***" When Paul quoted this verse in **Hebrews 2**, he wrote, "***I will trust in him.***" "Waiting upon" the LORD and "trusting" in Him are the same thing.

So, let's back up and look at the context of **Isaiah 8** again. Because of the apostasy of the nation of Israel, the LORD was hiding His face from them; yet, in the midst of this apostasy, Isaiah, and his family, and the faithful remnant of believers in his day, were continuing to trust confidently in the LORD, even though they knew that God's awful judgment was coming on the nation. They knew that they, too, would suffer in that judgment; nonetheless, they waited upon their God, and trusted in Him.

So, how does this relate to Jesus? Well, once again, there is a hidden prophecy about Jesus in this Old Testament Scripture; and it affirms that He is, indeed, our Brother. In order to get the picture, let's fast-forward about 700 years from Isaiah's day to Jesus' day. In fact, let's fast-forward right up to the hours when Jesus is hanging on the cross, and pause right at the point where Jesus cried out, "***My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?***" Now, let me pose a question. Was the house of Israel in rebellion and apostasy at this point? You bet they were! In fact, this time, they had *really* done it! It wasn't enough that they had slain God's prophets down through the centuries; **now they were crucifying the Son of God!**

With this in mind, allow me to pose another question: "Was God hiding His face from the nation when Jesus was on the cross?" He certainly was! In fact, at no other time was this *more* true than when Jesus was hanging on the cross! Jesus Christ, the High Priest of Israel, was bearing the sins of the house of Jacob, and of the whole world, upon His shoulders; *and the Father could not look upon His Son (or the nation)*. That is why Jesus, in agony, cried out, "***My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?***" Yet, in this hour of anguish, Jesus knew that his Father would not forsake Him. He knew that three days later He would arise from the dead, and that He would, shortly thereafter, ascend back to His Father. Jesus, as a Man, had to put His trust in God; and the fact that He had to put His trust in God shows that He was truly a Man. Jesus is our Brother; and as our Brother, He must trust in God.

This should be an incredibly comforting thought for every Christian. When you are going through a trial, and it is hard to wait on God, and you wonder if God can really understand what you are going through, just remember that Jesus, your Brother, had to trust in God, too—and in a much more intensely painful situation that you could ever imagine!

As I have said many times before, there may soon come a day when our trust in God will be severely tested; and we need to be ready. When it comes time to suffer real persecution for Christ's sake, what will keep you standing for Christ? Faith! Consider the testimony of Geoffrey Bull, a Christian who suffered years of mental and physical torture in detention camps in China after WWII. The communists used every kind of cruel torture to try to brainwash him into denying his faith. However, this is what he said:

"My mind had been so battered, and was now so fatigued, that I hardly knew how to think. Yet, as in that dark cell my vision cleared, I could not explain it, nor did I need to do so. I knew that I

believed my Saviour [was] risen from the dead. I knew He was the Son of God. I knew He had shed His blood for me.

I had been shaken, torn, and wounded, but I was conscious still that around about me were His everlasting arms. I knew, within my heart, the witness of His Spirit, triumphant still, standing yet inviolable to all the foe's assault. I knew that underneath my feet, impregnable, unshaken, and strong as ever, was the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ my Lord.

And there, as I sat, from the very well springs of my soul surged up the words that God is pleased to honour above all human utterance: **"I believe."**

Because Christ is our Brother, He is able to be our High Priest. He is able to join us in singing praises to God. He is able to set the example of trusting in God. And, because Christ is our Brother, **we are able to be a witness for Him.** Let us read from **Hebrews 2** one more time; and then, we will look at the Scripture that Paul is quoting. **(Read Hebrews 2:13b.)**

Read Isaiah 8:18.

What does Isaiah mean when he says, ***"Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel"***? This simply means that Isaiah and his sons were "witnesses" for their God. The very name of Isaiah's son, **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**, means "haste, haste to the spoil." This name was meant to be warning to the people of Israel that God was soon going to allow Assyria to destroy them, and spoil them. However, the name of Isaiah's other son, **Shear-jashub**, means "a remnant shall return." This name was meant to assure Israel that God would *save* a remnant of them from the captivity, and bring them back to the land. The very presence of Isaiah and his sons was a "sign" to the apostate people of Israel. Isaiah and his sons were living witnesses that God is true. That is why Isaiah says, ***"Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me are for signs."***

However, once again, there is a hidden prophecy in his words, which goes far deeper than the immediate situation in Isaiah's day. *Christ Himself* is speaking here in **Isaiah 8:18**. *Christ* is proclaiming to an unbelieving world, ***"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."*** Now, perhaps you wonder, "Why would Christ say, 'Behold the children that God hath given me'?" I believe we can find the answer to that question in Jesus' Bread of Life sermon.

Read John 6:37.

At the moment when a person believes on Jesus, God the Father **"gives"** that person to His Son. Through the New Birth, the Father has brought many sons unto glory; and every one of them is **"given"** to Christ for safekeeping. Brethren, let that truth sink in! We who are saved are members of *Christ's* spiritual family; and He is our elder Brother, and our Keeper. This means that our very presence in this sinful world is a continuing **"sign"** to lost people. Jesus went back to Heaven 2,000 years ago; but we, His royal brethren, have been left here on earth to testify that our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, once walked among us, *and that He is coming back!* We are living witnesses for Him. Christian, do not take that privilege lightly!

Conclusion: What kind of witness are *you* being for Him, Christian? Does the world look at you and say, "If that person be one of Christ's brethren, then I don't think I care to be a Christian. That Christian doesn't appear to be much different from me!" Does it mean little to you that Christ would call you

“brother”? Has your heart grown cold to the fact that He shed His precious blood for you? Do you consider yourself to be doing God a big favour by throwing Him a few scraps of service now and then? He has done *everything* for you! Isn't it the least you can do to serve Him with all your heart?

Perhaps you aren't truly saved. Maybe you call yourself a Christian, and you go through forms and routines of Christianity; but you've never truly had your sins forgiven. If so, today is the day to put *your* trust in Him, so that Christ can say of you, ***“Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.”***