

Title: “Taken for Granted”

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Hebrews 2:14-15

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Service Readings: Gen 2:18-25; Heb. 2:1-18; Mark 10:2-16

God created. Man sinned. Jesus saved. That is all head knowledge. The question I have today is this: do you feel it? Do you really “get” the depth of his action? Our God, who has everything subjected to him, our God who has the power to create and the power to destroy, humiliated himself, humbled himself, and became man. Do we take this for granted?

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Jesus had it all. He was in heaven. He was in perfect relationship with his father and the holy spirit. He was in control over all creation. All was made *through* him, and all was held together *by* him. What was left to want? Clearly, something. Something that was extremely valuable to him. His creatures, the ones that he loved deeply, had turned against him – made him an enemy. They had gone their own way in defiance, marching towards eternal destruction, and blind to the consequences of their actions. Jesus may have had it all, but he saw that his most prized possessions were being stolen from him.

And so, he descended to earth, freely. He was made lower than the angels for a little while for one reason – “so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Through suffering he was made perfect so that also through suffering he would “make propitiation for the sins of the people.” You have heard this – many times. You know what it means: God created. Man sinned. Jesus saved. That is all head knowledge. The question I have today is this: do you feel it? Do you really “get” the depth of his action? Our God, who has everything subjected to *him*, our God who has the power to create and the power to destroy, *humiliated* himself, humbled himself, and became man. The word humiliation is used not because he considers his creation to be evil but because the creator *also became* the created. The potter became both the potter *and* the clay. And the vessel that was formed – formed through suffering, attracted unto it every imperfection of mankind: every sin from every time. That perfect vessel, once spotless was now defiled and filled to the very brim with every assault against God. And it was hung on the cross and forsaken. Once spotless, now defiled. Once in perfect communion with the Father and Holy Spirit, was now completely separated. Once experiencing heaven, was now suffering hell. And all the while, through *all this physical and spiritual torment*, he was mediating forgiveness on *our* behalf: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

This is the humiliation of God – that his son would subject himself to this kind of for the sake of his creation. That he would take it upon himself the work that was necessary for our salvation. He could have just simply destroyed his creation and started anew, but he didn’t. He took the form of man and placed upon him your sins and mine. And for those who believe, he sculpts us onto him so

that he can transfer the victory of eternal life onto us. You see, not only did he have to come down and save us, he had to attach us directly to him. He had to indwell in us and allow us to indwell in him. He couldn't save us from arm's length – he had to get messy. He had to get personal. He had to become one of us so that he could destroy that which was destroying us! Our epistle states:

¹⁴Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil), ¹⁵and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death. (*NET translation*)

You see, that perfect vessel, once defiled with the sin of mankind, was crucified. And for those who have been baptized by the very blood of Christ have been attached to that vessel, sculpted onto the body of Jesus so that they could share in his death and resurrection - so that they could enjoy the salvation that Jesus earned for them. And the blood that was shed, the suffering that was experienced washed that vessel clean. It removed the stain of sin, and the pain of death but it didn't remove the baptized. They remained attached.... Forever. They are in Christ and Christ is in them. They are forever able to experience the benefits of Christ's work. Again, from our Epistle:

¹¹For indeed he who makes holy and those being made holy all have the same origin, and so he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you." (*NET translation*)

What beauty is in this passage. What abounding love is described within! We can only begin to understand the work that Jesus completed; we can only begin to appreciate the impact that it had on us. But do we meditate on this? This is the problem with you and me. In our baptism we may be made brothers and sisters of Jesus but all too often we take for granted exactly what that means. Our father made Jesus lower than the angels for a little while, but so often we grab onto his robes and try to pull him lower – beneath our own feet. Instead of looking up to Jesus, instead of turning over our lives – the lives that he suffered and died to save, we want to look down to him. Instead of being subjected to his will we desire him to be subjected to ours. Instead of trusting in his will for us, we ask him to trust in our will for him. "Dear Jesus," we pray, "please make this or that work out for me." So often we go to the cross, not to hear words of forgiveness but to hear the words "Father, forgive *them*" because we believe that these words don't apply to us. We are better than that. We don't need his forgiveness like *those* people over there do. You see? This is who we are, and this is what we do.

<pause>

The letter to Hebrews was written for this same reason. The same problems we experience today are the same problems that caused the author to pen this warning. We are a sinful bunch – repeatedly reminded of Jesus' forgiveness and repeatedly taking it for granted. And so, just as the author warned his original audience, he warns us this morning: "We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." And how do we do this? How do we protect ourselves from drifting away? By anchoring our entire lives to Christ. By moving the knowledge of him from our head to our heart. It happens when we read this passage not just as a history lesson but as a personal love letter that Jesus writes to us. It happens when we recognize that this letter

targets our hearts, not just our minds. It happens when we let Jesus in. And when we do, and when we subject our lives to his will, we discover that the message of love, described through the work that Jesus completed for us, will affect everything that we do - every breath we take, every decision we make, every person we meet. And that is how we ensure that we never take him for granted.

Please pray with me.

Lord,

Our minds cannot grasp the magnitude of your actions, our hearts cannot comprehend the depth of your love. Protect us, oh Lord, from ceasing to try. Protect us from neglecting your gift of salvation.

In your name we pray.

Amen.