

**TITLE: INCARNATION: Our Great High Priest - Hebrews 2:14-18**

**LOCATION: St John's Wishart 9AM**

**BI:** Jesus came to be just like us in order to die for us to rescue us from death and to help us as our merciful High Priest.

**STRUCTURE:**

- Death Destroyed, Slaves Delivered - 2:14-15
- People Rescued & Helped - 2:16-18
  
- So far in our series on the incarnation:
- In John - we saw that God the Son or the Word of God is eternal. That is - there was never a time when he didn't exist.
- In Philippians last week - we saw the amazing humility of God the Son - in his willingness to step down from the glories of the heavens - in order to become one of us, not to BE served but TO serve us - even to death.
- This week in Hebrews, we'll see why Jesus came to earth!
- Because it's all well and good that Jesus turned up - but why did he come?
- Well the writer of Hebrews, or the preacher of Hebrews, writes that he came primarily to help us by his death for us.
- He became one of us to SAVE us - as a merciful and kind, high priest...
  
- **DEATH DESTROYED, SLAVES DELIVERED**
- V14a "Since therefore the Children share in flesh and blood, he himself partook of the same things..."
- The preacher is saying here: Since we have a body, God the Son took on a body.
- And I think we can just glance over this, but it's important that we slow down here.
- Since we have a body, God the Son took on a body.
  - He didn't take on an angelic beings body...or a super-human body, just an everyday body.
  
- We've already seen in this series the eternity of the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. He was there before the creation of the world - everything was made through HIM the word.
- Throughout the Old Testament, if we squint, we get hints of pre-incarnation appearances of God the Son
  - Perhaps to Abraham, or to Joshua as the commander of the Lord's Army....or to Shadrach, Meshak, and Abednigo in the fiery furnace,
  - Nothing that's completely certain or definite, but enough to form the argument that God the Son was always there.
- BUT what we can be sure of, is that there was a time when he didn't have a body.
- He was potentially like a Spirit because God is Spirit - but he didn't have flesh and blood as we do.
  
- But there was a moment in time when he did become one of us, and stepped down into the creation which was made through and for him.
- A moment in time, when he took on flesh..
- He became one of us - he became flesh and blood.
  
- *There was recently an exhibition of the human body in Brisbane.*
- *It showed off the work of a scientist and artist who preserved human bodies to be able to investigate them and show them off to people.*
- *And at this exhibition you could go and see these cadavers, these bodies, which were brought down to the muscles, tendons, and bones - and examine them.*
- *You could see a person's cardiac system and veins all laid out on a table*
- *You could see lungs, and stomachs, and livers, and kidneys - all the things that we need for human life.*

- *Now some may be grossed out by this (sorry about this very graphic image!) but I wished I went, because I find it fascinating!*
- *To see the wonder of our bodies and life on full display!*
  
- *Recently - Rach and I had a scan of our second baby who is due in early March...and in the scan, you could see all 10 fingers and toes, you could see the baby's heart pumping and blood flowing around his system.*
- *You could see the kidneys working and him swallowing..*
- *And it was amazing!*
  
- But what's even more incredible - is that Our God became exactly like this 2000 years ago!
- Became flesh and blood. He had a body with a cardiac system, with a digestive system, with nerves and bones, and joints, and tendons, and kidneys, and bowels, and a brain, and eyes, and ears and a mouth, and nose...
- If you were to go back in time and take a portable ultrasound scanner and take pictures of the baby in Mary's Womb - you wouldn't see any halo, he wasn't glowing - you wouldn't see anything remarkably different - you would see an ordinary baby.
- There came a point in time and space, where YHW almighty, the sovereign and just God, God the Son - became human.
- Became just like us with all our human bodily functions, with our human emotions, he became limited...he became tired, he experienced grief, he was tempted just as we are - but he did not sin...and he became mortal.
- He became able to die.
  - That heart that he has - was just like ours, ticking away, keeping us alive. If it stopped, he would die.
  - The lungs that he has - was just like ours, sustaining us with our breath
- And that was the primary reason why he came
  
- He didn't just show up to have a sticky beak into what it's like to be human, he didn't just show up in order to be a good moralistic teacher, he didn't show up to be a social justice warrior, he didn't show up to be a good role model - he came to **die**.
  - Of course, he did come to show us what God is like, he showed off God's power through miracles, and many other things...
  - But the primary reason of him coming in flesh was to die.
  
- V14 "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, **that through death** he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."
- His death wasn't an ordinary death, but his death actually achieved something.
- He destroyed - or rather, he took away the power of the devil.
  
- When Jesus had completed his 3 years or so of his earthly ministry, he was put to death on the cross by the Jewish leaders.
- They did this because they claimed that Jesus was spreading false teaching, and was gaining more popularity than them.
- But in reality, Jesus was innocent. Completely blameless! They had to lie and they had to come up with all sorts of excuses to get Jesus killed!
- But while Jesus was completely human, he was still completely God as well. He was still the light of the world, and the Lord with all authority.
- And so because Jesus was blameless and was the Lord of all - his death was different. Death couldn't hold him. Satan couldn't defeat him...
- But he took the punishment on himself, the darkness on himself, the power of the evil one on himself, and destroyed it in his death - he took it to the grave and it was gone.

- And he released us who were enslaved to sin and the fear of death!
- *In WW2 in the concentration camp of Auschwitz in May 1941 - someone managed to escape.*
- *As punishment for this, the guards selected 10 men at random to be sent to a starvation bunker to die.*
- *One of these men selected was a Polish soldier called Franciszek aged 40.*
- *And when he was selected he broke ranks, ran out of the line, and cried out "My Wife! My Children!"*
- *In the camp on this date was Catholic Priest Maximilian Kolbe.*
- *And seeing this all play out - he volunteered to take the place of Franciszek. The Guards agreed and so Maximillian went to his death, and Franciszek went on to live to the age of 93 after reuniting with his wife.*
- The priest went to the grave, and the soldier went free and was released.
- That's what Jesus has done for us! That's why Jesus became flesh - that's why he became mortal, to take the punishment of death that we deserve, to defeat the power of the one who thought he had the power (the devil), and to free us from death!
- One day we will physically die - but that's nothing to fear. Death won't be the end - but we will be raised just as Jesus was.
- All who turn to him and trust in him, will never die.
- But have been gloriously helped by him.
- **God's People Rescued and Helped.**
- *It's the summer time - which means probably another season of the show Bondi Rescue.*
- *The show follows the lifeguards of Sydney's most popular beach going about their business and also rescuing people.*
- *And when they go and help people, they go on their boards, paddle out into the churning waves, grab the struggling, tiring person by the collar and rip them out of the dangerous situation and plonks them on and paddles back to safety.*
- *There's no real time for niceties out there in the middle of a rip...they have to go in, grab the person, and get out.*
- And well - Jesus has helped us in a similar way. He takes hold of us and helps us, and takes us with him to glory!
- V16 "For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham."
- This word for *Help* in the original language, also has the connotation of someone grabbing someone else. Taking hold of someone out of a rip like a lifesaver!
- And this is something which he's doing right now - he helps us. He hasn't just helped us in the past and that was it, done and dusted....
- He presently helps us, and holds us, and shields us, and protects from the power of death itself!
- And we get to benefit from his help, by knowing of his love for us. Knowing that death can't harm us, knowing that he shields and protects us, knowing that he has rescued us
  - The language here is reminiscent of the Exodus from Egypt.
  - God heard the cry of his people in slavery, and by his mighty power, through his servant Moses - took them pretty much by the hand out of that land. He brought them through the dried up river, and brought them to safety...
- That's what he has done for us.
- V17 "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

- Jesus doesn't just rescue us at a distance or in a cold like manner. He actually gets what it is like to be like us because he is one of us!
- He is a merciful and faithful high priest.
- And this is really interesting.
- Because nowhere else in the bible is a high priest described as merciful and faithful or even sympathetic!
- That's not on the pre-requisite list for priests!
- They just had to do the function of the priests. Preparing sacrifices, interceding for the people, declaring people clean ect.. And to do this - you didn't have to be particularly merciful, you just needed to do the job.
- QTC principal Gary Millar once put it like this:
  - When you ring a plumber...you ask if they can do the job. You just need them to sort out the leak, or get the water going again. You don't ask if they are a merciful plumber...or a sympathetic plumber, or a faithful plumber...you just need a plumber!
  - And under the Old Covenant- you just needed a priest!
  - You needed someone to mediate between you and God! You need a priest to make you right with God through the sacrifices.
- But God in his mercy and kindness, doesn't just forgive us at a distance - or rescue us begrudgingly or with a cold heart - but has tenderly stepped into his creation in Jesus, he gets us, and is merciful to us. Gracious. Compassionate. Sympathetic.
  - He knows us. He's made up of our stuff and knows what it is like to be human!
- And Jesus is completely faithful. He is utterly trustworthy, even through trials and temptations, even in the garden of Gethsemane, he lived out God's will and God's plan to rescue and redeem us!
- And he did his priestly duty - not offering a sacrifice of an animal, but sacrificing himself for us!
  - He took the wrath of God on himself that we deserved - that's what it means to 'make propitiation', he has satisfied the rightful anger of God against sin.
  - He took the penalty of sin that we deserved.
  - He cleansed us from our sin.
- And now - he is able to help us as he is alive, resurrected, still embodied, and seated at God's right hand for us.
- After Jesus died for us he rose again and then ascended into heaven, where he is right now. Not as a spirit, but embodied in his perfect resurrected body.
- And helping us, by hearing our prayers, interceding for us to the Father, and giving us assurance of our eternal life in him.
- There's nothing that we go through, that he hasn't been through first.
  - Rejected by friends and family? Disowned even? He's been there.
  - Flat out exhausted that you could sleep anywhere? He's been there.
  - Has a close friend or family member died and you are in the midst of grief? He's been there.
  - Wrestling with obedience to God? He's been there.
  - In Physical or emotional gripping pain? Even on death's door? He's been there....//
- Jesus has been there and he gets it and is therefore able to comfort us when we go through all of this.
- And he's given us his spirit to be with us as we live here on earth.
- This is Jesus our Lord and saviour!
- This is what we celebrate at Christmas - that Jesus turned up to be with us and save us!
- Because without Jesus - we would still be stuck in sin. We would still be deserving of punishment because of our ungodliness and rejection. We would essentially be orphans, wandering around without hope and without purpose!
- But Jesus is our ONLY hope in life and death.
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- Maybe as you reflect on the past year, you realise that you've been treating Jesus as maybe just a role model rather than a saviour. Or been keeping him at a distance - preferring to do life in your own strength, or trying to please him by just being good...
  - Maybe your relationship with Jesus has been on the back burner for far too long.
- Well this Christmas season is a great time to turn afresh to him! Remember that he gets you. He knows what it's like to be us - and has sacrificed his own life for us!
- He's not ashamed to call us his brother or sister - but he cares for us.
  
- Maybe this news is still all brand new to you! And you want this life and hope! You want his help!
- Well - all of this can be yours today.
- His mercy and compassion is unending - all you have to do is repent, acknowledge that you have done wrong, confess your sins, turn away from living for yourself and instead turn to Jesus - and this life and hope and comfort is yours today!
- Because Jesus has come in flesh to die for us. To be our merciful and faithful high priest.