

God Made Us His Family

Text: Hebrews 2:10-18 for 12/30/2018 by Pastor Bolwerk

¹⁰ *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.* 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.* ¹² *He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."* ¹³ *And again, "I will put my trust in him."* *And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."* ¹⁴ *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy 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.* ¹⁷ *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.* ¹⁸ *Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

God is completely independent. God does not rely on anyone or anything for his existence. God needs no one. Yet God wants everyone. God wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (see 1 Timothy 2:3-4). But what would God possibly want with the people of this world? We break his laws. We don't always follow his commands. Too often don't show love to our fellow human beings, and sadly, even more often we do not love and respect God as he deserves.

Yet, for some reason this completely independent God wants a relationship with you and me. He wants to be connected to us in a very special way. This is what the writer to the Hebrews is telling us. This author is making something known that goes so far beyond anything our simple minds can grasp. Through this author, our Lord is telling us that ...

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1. By coming down to our level
2. To bring us up to His level

God came down to our level the first time when he gave life to his greatest creation: humans. Moses wrote, **The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being** (Genesis 2:7). Everything else God created he created by speaking. But God did not speak when he created Adam and Eve. Instead, God directly formed them out of the dust of the ground. God himself breathed life into these first two people, making them in his own image: holy, perfect, without sin.

But with a single lie Satan destroyed that perfection. Satan got Adam and Eve to rebel and separate themselves from God. When they did, they found out that separation from God means death. When Adam and Eve sinned, they died spiritually; they lost the perfection God had created them with. Once they had sin, then all they could do was sin. On their own they could do nothing to please God. And along with that spiritual death they would eventually go on to die physically. If something was not done to change their spiritual death before their physical death, they would end up dying eternally in hell.

We inherited that same spiritual death. The Apostle Paul tells us, **"You were dead in your transgressions and sins"** (Ephesians 2:1). In fact, we were spiritually dead before we were even born. God's speaks of this dead condition through King David, who writes, **"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"** (Psalm 51:5). Something dead has no power to do anything. Born in sin, we had no power to lift ourselves up to God's level of perfection. Our sinful nature denied God and shunned any relationship with him. We still see that sinful denial today. We see it when we put that one special person in our lives on a higher pedestal than God; putting their words and will ahead of God's. We see that sin within us when we deny our relationship with God so that our family or friends won't think we are "weird." We may even push our relationship with God into the background, getting it out of the way so we can do something we feel is "more important." The spiritual death of sin that is in each of us does not allow us to reach up to God's level of holiness.

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It keeps us separated from God, and that separation equals death.

That is why God came down again. God came back down to our level to bring his greatest creation back to life. The writer to the Hebrews says, **“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels”** (v. 9a). The One with supreme power and authority over the angels put himself on a lower level than the angels who serve him. He did that so he could serve you and me. Christ came into the world he created, so he could reunite the family he had created. To do that he followed the plan that was laid out by his Father. Jesus said, **“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me”** (John 6:38). What was the will of the Father for his Son? The writer to the Hebrews tells us, **“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death”** (vs. 14, 15). Jesus took on human flesh and blood, so he could die to free us from the power of death. The death Jesus faced was separation from his heavenly Father. As Christ hung on cross covered with our sins God the Father left him, leaving Jesus to taste the bitter anguish of hell itself. Jesus took on himself our death for all the times we have denied our relationship with God or pushed him away. Our Lord suffered in our place so our sins would no longer separate us from our heavenly family. God loves us so much that he worked to make even you and me a part of His family. He did that by coming down to our level.

Would you do that? Would you give up everything and lower yourself down to a level of absolute poverty so that you could adopt a child who hates you and refuses to listen to you? Isn't that what Jesus did? He gave up the glorious riches of heaven to come and live in poverty here on this earth. He gave up everything to adopt you into his family. But just coming into this world was only part of Jesus' work. More had to be done than just Jesus coming down to our level. For us to be God's children we need to meet God's standard of holiness and perfection. So, Jesus came down to our level to bring us up to His level.

God brought us up to his level, and into his family, by making us holy. Our text says, **“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family”** (v. 11a). God made us holy in a couple of steps. First, God purified us in Jesus. As the Apostle John wrote, **“The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Through faith in Christ we are again pure and holy in God's sight because we are covered with Jesus' righteousness. After purifying us, God lifted us up to his level. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, **“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms”** (Ephesians 2:6). As long as we remain connected to Christ through faith, we are lifted up so that we meet God's standard of perfection. Finally, since in Christ we are perfect, God makes us a part of his family by adopting us as sons and daughters. God says in these words before 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. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; [...] And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me”** (vs. 11-13). This is what God wants. He wants us as his family. Since God has made us holy and adopted us, Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters.

Are we ever ashamed to call Jesus our brother? Do we feel uncomfortable when people ask us about our religion or what we believe? Do we remain silent when people use our brother Jesus' name in an offensive way? Or are we like Peter, and openly deny we even know Jesus when people try to connect us to him and his teaching? This is the kind of shame that destroys our heavenly family. Jesus said: **“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory”** (Luke 9:26).

Feeling ashamed of Jesus is just another lie of Satan. We do not need to feel shame for someone saving our souls. If we ever feel ashamed of Jesus, then we need to turn away from that sinful feeling and turn again to the Author of our salvation. Jesus paid for all our sinful feelings. He gave up everything to connect you to his Father and bring you into his family. You can trust him. Trusting in

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Jesus there is no shame, as the Scripture tells us, “**Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame**” (Romans 10:11). Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sister. The faith he has placed in our hearts makes us holy, it makes us alive, and it makes us a part of a very special family.

Be proud of the heavenly family you are a part of. Speak with pride and respect about your Brother Jesus who made you holy by his suffering and death. Speak with honor about the Father who adopted you as his own precious child, and lifting you up out of that pit of sin and hell. Speak to others about the God who brought you into his family so that you can enjoy a loving relationship with him for all eternity. It is God who made us his family. He did that by bringing us up to his level of holiness, so that one day we will be brought up forever into the glories of heaven.

So often, throughout our lives, we long to be independent. We can't wait for the day when we can drive or own our own car. We can't wait until we are adults and can live in our own place. We can't wait until we have that job we have always wanted, and once we do, we cannot wait for retirement. As humans we want our independence. Yet, I pray that we never want to be independent of God. May we always have the desire to be close to God and the family he has brought us into. God, who is independent of us, could have left us for dead. He could have left us to rot for all eternity in hell. He does not need us. Yet out of his overflowing love, God gave of himself, not only to save us, but to make us a part of his very own family. Enjoy the blessings you have been given as a child of God. And one day, the one who lowered himself to your level will lift you up to be with him forever. Amen.