

(Through the Bible) Hebrews - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on Hebrews emphasizes the humanity of Christ and its practical implications for believers' lives.

Duration: 56:51

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-3, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 3:12-14, Hebrews 4:9-11, Hebrews 4:14-16

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Faith And Rest"

Description

This sermon from the book of Hebrews emphasizes the importance of considering Jesus as our example, focusing on his humanity and the practical implications for our lives. It highlights the need to believe in Jesus' complete identification with us, his victory over sin, and the promise of entering into God's rest through faith. The message urges believers to hold fast to their confidence, to encourage one another daily, and to diligently seek to enter into a life of rest and victory over sin.

Transcript

Let's turn now to the letter to the Hebrews. Now, if you use a King James version, you probably see at the top of it, the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. Now, this is one of those unusual books in the New Testament, where there is no record within the letter or book as to who wrote it and to whom it was written.

Paul, whenever he wrote a letter, he always put his name at the beginning and wrote to whom he was writing. So, if that was his habit, then probably Paul did not write this, and probably it's not Paul's letter. The second thing is, we don't know to whom it was written.

And the reason why they gave the title to this book as Hebrews, is not because of anything inside the book. I mean, no evidence that it was to the Hebrews. It's because there are so many references to the Old Testament, and to the priesthood of Aaron, and Moses, and many things like that, and Melchizedek, that it's assumed that it's written to someone who was very familiar with the Old Testament, and therefore, possibly Hebrew Christians, Jewish Christians.

But as far as we're concerned, that doesn't really interest us too much. That's for those who want to get doctorates in theology, who study all that type of stuff. We're more interested in seeing what God is trying to speak to us.

It doesn't matter who wrote it. The Holy Spirit wrote it. That's enough for me.

And it doesn't matter if we don't know to whom it was written. It was written for me. So it's the Holy Spirit's book to me, as far as I'm concerned.

And it's not very important that we don't know that first century to whom it was written. But it's a very profound book. And I don't know how many believers read it carefully.

And I think believers are more into other books like Romans and Philipians, and not so much in Hebrews. But that could be a work of the devil, preventing believers from reading this wonderful book. This book reveals the humanity of Jesus Christ, our Lord, more than perhaps any other book in the entire New Testament.

And what the humanity of Christ means for us, the practical implications of that for us. See, every truth in Scripture has a practical implication. Because Jesus Christ is God, we worship Him.

We pray to Him. And because He is man, what? We need to ask ourselves, does it have any practical implication for us? We can say, because He was a man, He died for our sins. But in what way does that have some practical implication for your life today? If you say that there's no practical implication, then the humanity of Christ is a dead doctrine for you.

And a dead doctrine is like a dead muscle. It may be there, but you don't use it. You know what happens to a muscle in your body if you don't use it for a long time? It dies.

That's why people who are in bed in a hospital for a long time, when they get up, they almost have to learn how to walk again. Because their muscles have become so weak. So, any doctrine in Scripture, even if you say that you believe it, if it has no practical application in your daily life, it's almost like a muscle you're not using.

And after some time, you lose it altogether. And because most Christians have not sought for some practical application of the truth of Jesus becoming a man in our daily life, they have lost it. I really believe it, that today when somebody gets up and proclaims that Jesus was a man and the practical application of it, people call him a heretic.

Why do they call him a heretic? Because they've lost the use of that muscle. They've lost the use of that doctrine. When Martin Luther proclaimed justification by faith, people called him a heretic.

Because they had lost that doctrine for centuries. And whenever a doctrine is lost and somebody brings it out, he's always called a heretic. The next generation will call him a prophet, but the current generation will call him a heretic.

This has always been true in church history. When people began to proclaim the baptism in the Holy Spirit, over a hundred years ago, everybody called them heretics. Now, of course, they recognize that it was a real move of the Holy Spirit.

So it's the same thing here with the humanity of Christ. Very rarely do you find in churches any preaching on the humanity of Christ. Have you found people telling you about what it means for you today that Jesus was a man? We know what it means that he was God.

We worship him and pray to him. Because he's a man, we can follow him. If he were not a man like us, we cannot follow him.

That is so important, and that is what the book of Hebrews is presenting. Jesus as a man. And we could say that one of the phrases or thoughts that come through this book of Hebrews is, Consider Jesus.

It comes in chapter 3, verse 1. Somewhat similar words in chapter 8, verse 1. Somewhat similar in chapter 12, verse 2 and 3. Looking unto Jesus. Consider Jesus. In a sense, that is the theme of this letter.

Pressing on to perfection is something else we could say is a theme in this letter. The word better occurs about 13 times in this letter. Better sacrifice, better resurrection, better covenant, better promises, better mediator.

Many things like that. And other words like perfect, perfection, heavenly, eternal. Many things like this.

Entering into the holiest is another theme. We could say this book of Hebrews refers to entering into the most holy place. Into fellowship with God.

So there are many things like this in this book, which are the theme of this letter. And basically what it reveals is that if you can look at Jesus as a man, as your example, there you find the secret of an overcoming life, of spiritual strength. You need the power of the Holy Spirit and you need the word of God.

We don't deny that. We have seen that often. But you also need to see Jesus as a man.

And just in case we get into a little overemphasis on that, Hebrews chapter 1 begins with saying that Jesus Christ is God. So that, you know, sometimes when... I've written a book on the humanity of Christ called Living as Jesus Lived. And in the first chapter, I also needed to emphasize that I believe that Jesus Christ is God.

That even when he was on earth, he was God. People worshipped him. Because when you speak about the humanity of Christ alone, people can begin to doubt, does this man believe that Jesus Christ is God? And I can see that the writer of the Hebrews had exactly the same thing.

He thought, now I'm going to write about the humanity of Christ. What are people going to think? Are they going to think that I don't believe that Jesus Christ is God? So he spends a whole chapter. His first chapter is proving that Jesus Christ is God.

We don't doubt that. The question is imbalanced. Some of you folks, he writes to these people, you believe that Jesus Christ is God, but you don't believe that he's a man.

And this is the book that we need to study in our time. There are a number of quotations. You see, Hebrews 1, he's proving that Jesus Christ is God from a number of Old Testament verses.

And Hebrews 2, he's proving that Jesus Christ is man also from a number of Old Testament verses. These are basically the themes of the first two chapters. So let's just look at them.

Chapter 1, he says in the Old Testament, God spoke to the fathers, in the prophets, in many portions, in many ways. We know he spoke through visions, prophecies, dreams, prophetic words, written scripture. But now, God has in these last days spoken to us in his son.

His son is the word of God. That means God speaking. What is the message? Jesus is the message.

That means his life is the message. God, in the Old Testament, spoke through written words. Now he's spoken through a person.

And the meaning for us is, when you go out into some place, today, God wants to speak through you. Not just your words. You.

You are the message. Jesus was the message. That's why he's called the word made flesh.

And that word was made flesh in Jesus, and now the same word has to become flesh in us. And this son is appointed the heir of all things, through whom he made the world. So Genesis 1.1, in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

Jesus created the heaven and the earth. That's it. And he is, Jesus, is the radiance of God's glory.

The exact representation of his nature. That means, if you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. He's the exact representation of God's nature.

And Jesus is the one who upholds the whole universe by the word of his power. The whole universe is today upheld by the word of Jesus' power. And when this Jesus had made a purification of all our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become much better than the angels, because he has inherited a much more excellent name than them.

Now, is he just better than the angels? Is he actually God? Or just someone better than the angels? That's what he goes on to say. He says, the angels were not called, thou art my son. Today I begotten thee and I'll be a father to him and he shall be a son to me.

Well, we can say, okay, he's better than the angels. The angels are not called sons. But we are called sons.

And God is a father to us. So, is Jesus superior? Okay. He goes to the Old Testament.

And he says, when he brings this firstborn into the world, he says, verse 6, let all the angels of God worship him. And the moment you see the word worship, you know that that's not a creative being. No creative being has the right to receive worship.

Not even Michael. When John fell down before an angel in Revelation, the angel lifted him up and said, don't worship me. You can't worship Peter.

You can't worship an angel. You can't worship an archangel. You cannot worship anything created.

The only person in this universe who can receive worship is God. Anyone who receives worship other than God is committing a terrible sin. And we read that Jesus, when he was on earth, many times were people worshipped him.

I counted it once in the Gospel. Seven times it says people worshipped him. Which proves that even though he had emptied himself of the privileges of God when he was on earth, he was still in his person.

He was God. And the angels worshipped him. So he's quoting the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is God.

And then he says, of the angels, he's comparing Christ with the angels. He says the angels are only a flame of fire. But the Son, to the Son he says, God the Father, says to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

That's an Old Testament verse, which he quotes from Psalm 45 and verse 6. And he says, the Father is calling the Son, O God. So he's quoting these Old Testament verses to prove the deity of Christ without any doubt. So that's where he begins.

He's established that. And then he moves on, in chapter 2 onwards, to show us his humanity and all the practical implications of that for us. It's a wonderful book.

It's a very logical book. Then, there's a verse here about Jesus. How he lived on this earth as a man.

Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Verse 9. Therefore, God, thy God, the Father, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions. When he lived on earth, he lived with all the limitations of a man.

He needed to be anointed. God doesn't need to be anointed. Jesus did not need to be anointed in heaven.

But when he lived on earth, to be an example for us, he had to be anointed. And here, in this verse, it tells us why he was anointed with the oil of gladness or joy more than his companions. Who are his companions? His companions are you and me.

We are his companions. And Jesus was anointed more than all his companions because of one reason. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.

He loved purity and he hated sin. Now, there's a difference between doing righteousness and loving righteousness. It's not just that he did righteousness.

He loved righteousness. You can make a child obey you because you say, if you don't obey, I'll give you a stick. Okay? He obeys.

He does the right thing but he may not love to do it. Loving to do it is more than doing it. In the same way, hating sin.

You may avoid sin because, you see, for example, there's a deadly disease called AIDS nowadays. And so people don't want to go and commit adultery in some cases because they may get AIDS. It's not because they hate it.

It's because they don't want to get the sickness. People may not steal because they're afraid they may get caught. Not because they hate stealing.

So you also may avoid sin. You may not hate it. You may do righteousness.

You may not love it. But if you want to be anointed with the oil of gladness, you must love righteousness and hate sin. And it says here, Therefore, God anointed you with the oil of gladness.

And why did God anoint you with the oil of gladness more than others? Because you loved righteousness more than others. There's no partiality with God. You know, a father should never treat his elder son with greater favor than his younger children.

If a father is a good father, there'll be no partiality with him. Whatever he does for his eldest son, he will do for his second son, third son, fourth son, daughter, everybody. He'll do the same.

That's a godly father. God Almighty is like that. Today, the Bible says, Jesus is the firstborn of many brothers.

We are his brothers. So he's the eldest son. Is God partial or not? He's not partial.

That means he will not do something for Jesus, which he won't do for me. Even I, as a father, don't treat my elder son with partiality. Where will God be partial? That proves one thing to me.

That whatever God did for Jesus, he will do for me. Have you got that faith? This comes through understanding the humanity of Christ and the fact that he's our elder brother. That he was anointed with the oil of gladness, not because he was the son of God.

Supposing it read like this, Thou art the son of God, therefore God thy God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness. Well, where do I come in then? That doesn't give me any encouragement. But when it says, God anointed you because you loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, that gives me hope.

And I say, Lord, please work in my heart through the Holy Spirit that I will not only do righteousness, but I will love it. That I will not only avoid sin, but I will hate it. And the more I do love righteousness, and the more I hate sin, the more my life will be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

And the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit, will come into my heart. So this is a good prayer for all of us to pray. Lord, I want to love righteousness and hate sin.

I don't want to just do it, do righteousness and avoid sin. I want to love righteousness and hate sin. That is where we follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Verse 10, Thou, Lord, didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. These are words concerning Jesus. Establishing his deity in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

Here is the one who created the heaven and the earth, Jesus Christ. And one day, as a mantle, you'll just roll them up, and as a garment, you'll change them. But you never change.

You are the same. Jesus Christ, the same. He repeats that in chapter 13, in the last chapter.

The same yesterday, today, and forever. He mentions it in chapter 1, Thou art the same. He mentions it in chapter 13, verse 8. And he says to the angels, and he's never told the angels to sit to the right hand.

Jesus is exalted above all of them. And, therefore, he says in verse chapter 2, he's now talking about, because the one who has spoken this word is so important, we have to pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift from it. See, some of us are not in danger of rejecting the word of God.

Some of the things that you've heard in these days, I don't believe you reject it. I think most of you are happy to accept it. And I think most of you are excited to hear these wonderful truths from a book, which some of you thought was pretty boring.

And you've discovered it's not boring. I believe you're sincere, and you're excited to hear these things. Your danger is not rejecting what you've heard.

Your danger is drifting. I used to work on a ship, and I know what drifting is. You know, if you don't drop an anchor from a ship, you will drift.

Because there's a slow current under the surface of the sea that slowly pushes the ship. Slowly, slowly. It's not fast.

Very slowly. It may take one hour to move from here to there. 100 feet.

One hour. Very slow. Almost, you can't even see it moving.

But when you wake up next morning, if you leave it like that night, you're far away from where you were. This is called drifting. And the danger, he says, is not of our rejecting God's word, but through neglect, we can gradually drift.

And when we drift, we don't love righteousness like we did one year ago. We don't hate sin like we did one year ago. We don't love the Lord like we did one year ago.

It's all gone. Slowly we've drifted. And if you find that your life is stirred up every time you come to some revival meeting, or some servant of God comes and preaches powerfully, and you're all stirred up, and then the rest of the time you're drifting, and then again some servant of God comes up, again you come back to that position, and again drift, that is not God's will for you.

God's will is that you be steady and make progress, not drift backwards. And if you want to do that, it says here what you must do. You must pay much closer attention to what you've heard.

If you don't pay much closer attention to what you've heard, you're going to drift. Particularly in the book of Hebrews, pay close attention. How shall we escape if we neglect, verse 3, such a great salvation? Sometimes we quote that word to the unbeliever.

How will you escape if you neglect such a great salvation? It's a very popular verse for gospel meetings. But do you know that's written for believers? You believers. How will we escape? He's not telling somebody else, how will you escape? That's how it is preached sometimes in a meeting.

How will you escape? But here the writer says, how will we escape? If we neglect, not reject. We are not people who reject salvation. We neglect it.

People neglect the Bible. You know it's possible to study in a Bible school and neglect the Bible? Sure. It's not rejecting it, it's neglecting it.

It's possible to be a Christian and neglect the scriptures. And by neglecting, that means you don't realize what a fantastic salvation God has provided for us. We neglect it.

And that's why so many believers have never even sought to get victory over sin because they have neglected this salvation. Salvation from the power of sin. Have you ever heard that gospel? You've heard salvation from the penalty of sin, from going to hell.

What about salvation from the power of sin? Have you neglected that salvation? That's what it's speaking about. It says here, God bore witness to this salvation in the early days through signs and wonders by gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then he goes on to speak about the humanity of Christ.

He says the world that is going to come is not going to be ruled by angels, but by man. And he quotes from the Psalms. What is man? Psalm 8, verse 4. Hebrews 2, 6. What is man that you remember him? Or the son of man that you care for him? You have made him for a little while lower than the angels, and you've crowned him with glory and honor.

And you've put all things in subjection under his feet. And he says when we look around at men, where is everything in subjection under their feet? Are lions under our feet? No. We run away when we see a lion.

Are crocodiles under our feet? They were once under Adam's feet, but today we run away from them. And we look at so many things and say we're not ruling. We've become slaves in a world in which we were supposed to be rulers.

But we don't see these things subjected to him. Even the devil is running around quite freely and all his demons. But he says we see Jesus.

And in Jesus, this verse has already been fulfilled. And he is a man. That's the point.

When it says what is man that thou art mindful of him, son of man that you're concerned about him, you've made him a little while lower than the angels. He says it's Jesus who was made for a little while lower than the angels. Now he's crowned with glory and honor exactly like it says in this verse.

And all things are under his feet. And because he's our elder brother, this is the place to which God wants to bring all of us. What he did for the eldest son, he will do for all his younger children, all his younger sons and daughters.

If you become a younger brother or sister of Jesus, everything that God did for his eldest son, he'll do for us. Because there's no partiality with God. So, he says this verse is actually referring to Jesus.

He's identified himself with the human race so completely. He's the son of man. About whom? He said I'm the son of man.

And that psalmist is just talking about him. And why was he made a little lower than the angels? Because of the suffering of death. Angels don't die.

An angel never dies. Jesus had to die. The fact of death brought him lower than the angels.

Adam was not made lower than the angels. He would not have died. But because he ate of that forbidden tree, he became lower than the angels and he had to die.

So Jesus, the very fact that he died as a man, proved that he took a place lower than the angels, but not any longer. He rose up from the dead and now he's above the angels. Everything is under his feet.

And when we get related to this Jesus Christ, even though at the moment we are below the angels and we're going to die, we are going to one day be above them. If you're connected with Christ. And you're one of his younger brothers.

It's a wonderful place to be in. Okay. And it says here in verse 10, It was fitting for God.

It was fitting. Becoming of God. Before that, verse 9. Let me just mention one thing here.

That Jesus tasted death for everyone by the grace of God. You ever thought of that verse? Did Jesus need grace? To go to the cross and die? We know that we need grace. To endure to the end.

To overcome. And to live in victory. To do God's will.

Did Jesus need it? Yes. This verse says that. When he became a man, by the grace that he received.

In fact, the very first person in the Bible about whom it says the grace of God was upon him is Jesus Christ. Luke chapter 2 verse 40. Never in the Bible do you read the grace of God was upon somebody.

Until you come to Jesus Christ. And the next time you read the grace of God was upon them is in Acts chapter 4, upon the disciples of Jesus. Grace is upon somebody means we are under grace.

Romans 6.14. We are under grace. That happened only after Jesus came. So Jesus received grace.

You read that in Luke 2.40. You read that in Hebrews chapter 2 verse 9. And that teaches us that grace does not mean the unmerited favor of God. Many people think grace is the unmerited favor of God. Jesus did not get the unmerited favor of God.

He merited every bit of it. Grace is not unmerited favor of God. Grace is God's help and God's power.

Okay. That Jesus needed it as a man. He's trying to prove here.

He's already proved the deity of Christ in chapter 1. Now he's proving the humanity of Christ and how Jesus was exactly like us. He needed grace. And in order to make him the it was fitting for him in bringing us to glory verse 10, many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation, that is Jesus perfect through suffering.

How do we become perfect? Through suffering. How did he become perfect? Through suffering. Perfect means what? We need to understand this word because it comes often in the book of Hebrews.

Not perfect in the sense of imperfect and then perfect. No. Perfect in the sense of complete.

Here's a glass. It's empty. When it's filled, it's complete.

So it's not that it's full of dirty water and now we put clean water. No. There was no dirty water in Jesus.

In what way was he empty? It says he emptied himself in Philippians 2. As a human being, he had never obeyed anyone when he was in heaven. He had never obeyed a father and mother like we have to. Where did God have the experience of obeying an earthly father and mother? He never had it.

Where did God have the opportunity to perspire and work hard? He didn't have to in heaven. So how can such a man be our captain? In order to become our captain, he became exactly like us and he submitted himself to an earthly father and mother. He carried water from the well for them.

He ground things for his mother and he worked hard and he perspired and he was tired and he slept. He went through all our human experiences through suffering, little by little by little the glass of water became

full. That means he went through all the human experiences we went through and completed it all through suffering.

Our life on earth is one of suffering and he went through the same way and now the one who sanctifies us and those who are sanctified, all are from one father. Jesus sanctifies us and we are sanctified but his father has become our father now and therefore he calls us brothers. He's not ashamed to call us brothers.

I'm not a son of Jesus, I'm a son of God and I'm a brother of Jesus. Now sometimes Christians are a bit hesitant to say we are younger brothers of Jesus but you read Romans 8.29 it says very clearly that he has predestined that Jesus Christ might be the firstborn among many brothers. He has predestined that we might be conformed to his likeness.

Okay. And he quotes an Old Testament verse and says there is a verse in the Old Testament and we read in Hebrews 2 and verse 12. It's a quotation from Psalm 22.

Psalm 22 is the Psalm of the cross. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And he says there's a verse which says I proclaim your name to my brethren. Who are these brethren? These younger brothers of mine.

Brothers and sisters. Whenever the word brethren is used it includes sisters as well. And also another verse, behold I am the children whom God has given me.

From that is from Isaiah chapter 8. And so he says since the children took part, share in flesh and blood verse 14, he also took part of the same. That's the only way he could identify himself with us and that's the only way he could die. And thus through death he took away from the devil the power of death that Satan had.

Do you know that Satan had the power of death all through Old Testament times? He had the keys of death. Adam gave it to him. And Jesus came and died and took that key from Satan.

And now he says in Revelation I have the keys of death. That means today if you're an obedient child of God you cannot die till Jesus opens the door. I praise God for that.

Nobody can kill me, no accident, no cancer, no enemy, no religious fundamentalist, nobody can kill me till Jesus opens the door and says my son, come in. It gives me such tremendous confidence that the one who had the power of death, his power has been taken away from him. Because that is how Jesus had to die in order to take the keys of death.

That means he died, he was buried, and he conquered death. And when he conquered death, death's keys were taken away from the devil. Why did the devil have power of death? Because man had sinned.

Man had given himself to the devil in Eden. And now now that Jesus has taken the keys, he says he wants to deliver us who all our life, verse 15, lived in the fear of death. Do you know that all humanity lives in the fear of death? They're always afraid, is this a serious sickness? Is this a cancer? What sickness is this? I may die, let me go for a checkup.

Yeah, go for a checkup, but don't live in the fear of death. You don't have to if you're a child of God, if you're a disciple of Jesus Christ. If you've surrendered everything to Christ and you've got now at least for

the rest of your life no ambition but to do God's will on earth, I want to tell you, you need never have the fear of death for a single moment.

You think an earthquake will come at midnight when you're asleep? And bury you that Jesus has gone to sleep and the keys of somebody else has taken? No! Impossible! Impossible! He has the key of death and it cannot happen to me. You can sleep peacefully, my brothers and sisters. I should have told you this yesterday.

Anyway, you can sleep peacefully tonight. The key of death is in Jesus' hands. Okay, and it says here he did not become like the angels, verse 16.

The angels also fell. You know, Satan and the demons, they fell, but Jesus did not become an angel to save them. Have you heard that? Satan and the demons sinned and Jesus did not become an angel to save them.

But when man sinned, he became a man in order to save us. And if you want to know why, I think the reason is because Satan sinned on his own. Adam sinned through the instigation of Satan.

So there's a difference. However, he became like us, verse 17. He was made like his brothers in everything.

Please remember this. The humanity of Christ is exactly like yours. Apart from sin, of course.

He didn't sin and he didn't have a sinful nature. But otherwise his humanity is exactly the same as yours and mine. He was made like his brothers in everything.

Because only thus could he become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. Only thus could he become a propitiation. Propitiation means to satisfy God by making an atonement for our sins.

And since he himself was tempted in what he suffered, he's able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. You see, he could not help us in temptation if he himself has not been tempted. It's something like this.

Supposing an angel from heaven comes to teach me how to swim. And he takes me to the river and he flies across the river and says, follow me. And I try to fly and I go straight down.

And I say to him, listen, I can't follow you. I can admire you. You keep flying across, up and down the river and I can sit here and admire you, but I cannot follow you.

If I want to follow you, if you want me, teach me to follow you, you first of all take a body like mine, which is pulled down by gravity. Get rid of your wings and take a body like mine. Then teach me how to swim.

Then say, follow me. If Jesus came here as God and lived in perfect purity without sinning and said, follow me. I'd say, Lord, I can't follow you.

You're God. You're holy. You're not tempted.

I'm tempted. I'm pulled down by sin all the time. The law of gravity is pulling me down.

If you want to be an example for me, Lord, become like me. Be tempted like me. And feel the pull of temptation.

Feel the pull of gravity. Overcome it and be an example for me. And Jesus says, that's what I did.

I came just like you. I felt the pull of temptation. I sought for the power of the Holy Spirit.

I sought for grace to overcome that pull and I lived in purity. Follow me. I said, Lord, really? You mean to say you overcame? You didn't sort of float across this world like an angel with wings? No.

He says he overcame. Revelation 3, 21 says, I overcame. You also overcome.

I remember when my eyes were open to this truth about 25 years ago, I wept. I said, Lord, I never thought you'd come and become exactly like me. I thought you'd come.

I was too low down. You came a little above me. But now I realize you became like me in everything.

You were tempted like me to be an example. Lord, you love me so much. I want to follow you all the days of my life.

You changed the direction of my life. This glorious revelation that Jesus was made exactly like me. And you know, the more I've proclaimed it, I've found people have fought it tooth and nail.

All around me, Christians have fought against me. The devil hates this doctrine because he knows it will lead you to victory. He knows it is the secret of godliness.

Christ, God was manifest in the flesh. And he doesn't want you to be godly. He changed my life.

I'll tell you my testimony. He changed my life because the secret of godliness for me. He changed my family life.

He changed my ministry. He changed the lives of people whom I ministered to. He changed the family lives of people I ministered to.

The Bible became a new book to me. I saw wonderful things in scripture which I've never seen before. When I saw that Jesus was made like his brothers in everything, was tempted like me, and he suffered like me.

Oh Lord, what an example. In the Old Testament, they didn't have an example. They only had commandments, commandments, commandments.

Now I've got an example. Hallelujah. Therefore, holy brethren, chapter 3, verse 1, is referring to us Christians.

Because of all this, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus. That's the message of the book. Consider Jesus.

Think of him. I wish I could proclaim this among every Christian group in the world. Brethren, you've got a heavenly calling.

You want to live according to that heavenly calling? You want to be a holy brother like it says in verse 1? Holy brethren? Holy sisters? You want to live a holy life? You want to live a heavenly life? Here's the answer. Consider Jesus who became like you. The apostle and high priest of our confession, he was faithful to God who appointed him, just like Moses.

But he's greater than Moses because Moses is only like a house and Jesus is the builder of the house. And he says here further in verse 7, today if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart. He quotes from the Old Testament.

Therefore take care brethren, verse 12 of chapter 3. Lest there should be in any one of you, who are the you? You holy brethren? You partakers of a heavenly calling? I am scared lest there be in you what? An evil, unbelieving heart. You cannot believe that Jesus became like you. You have that evil, unbelieving heart? That cannot believe? You have theological complications? All types of things the devil puts into your mind because he wants you to live a defeated life.

I know God gave me this revelation at a time when I was thoroughly defeated. I was sick and tired of my defeated life and I was crying out to God day and night. I said, Lord I don't know what the answer is but I'm a preacher and I'm defeated by sin in my inner life.

I'm defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated in my thoughts and my words, in my family life. I'm defeated Lord. I'm a defeated person but I'm supposed to be a born again water baptized, spirit baptized Christian but I'm defeated, defeated, defeated.

I speak in tongues Lord but I'm defeated. Show me the secret. Then the Lord showed me and I believed it and it changed my life.

Take care my holy brethren, partakers of heavenly calling that there should, lest there be in you an evil, unbelieving heart, you can't believe what God says then you will fall away from the living God. You will go into a sinful life and you'll never get victory but instead of that you have another option. Encourage one another, exhort one another every day as long as it is called today.

See James says in James chapter 4, how do you know that you'll live tomorrow? You don't know whether you'll live tomorrow. You have to say if the Lord wills and if we live we will do this tomorrow but today it is mine. I'm alive.

Okay, let me do something today. Let me encourage somebody today. Let me exhort somebody today.

Let me encourage and challenge a person. What does it mean in the context of this chapter? Let me encourage someone to consider Jesus who became like you. That is our calling.

Every day to lift up Jesus by our life, by our words, so that our behavior, our conduct, our words are always saying look at Jesus, look what a wonderful savior he is. He not only forgave my sin, he changed my life. He changed my family life.

He's filled me with the joy of the Lord so that I can rejoice always. He's taken away the fear of death from me. Consider Jesus.

Every day your life must be a challenge and an exhortation and an encouragement to other people. People who just look at your face, even if you don't say anything, must see something of the glory of God

there. Okay, let's do it every day.

Verse 13 teaches us here that it requires only 24 hours to become a backslider. You know how long it takes to be a backslider? 24 hours. That's why we need to exhort and encourage one another every day.

We have a responsibility. Don't say I'm not my brother's keeper like Cain. We are our brother's keeper.

We are our sister's keeper. Encourage. If you see somebody slipping up, encourage him.

If you see somebody falling away, lift him up. And if you see and if you have nobody to encourage you or slip or nobody to exhort you, you've always got the Holy Spirit. Do you know the number of times the Apostle Paul has exhorted me? How? Through the Bible.

Peter has exhorted me. James has exhorted me. John has exhorted me because there were some times when some brothers were not available, so Peter came along to my room and exhorted me.

Isn't that wonderful? You got Peter, James and John in your room. Why don't you let them exhort you instead of keeping them locked up inside the cupboard? You need to read the Bible more than you read all these other books about the Bible. I'll tell you that.

I've read the Bible much more than I've read the books about the Bible. You know, I want to talk to my wife more than talk to other people who tell me things about my wife. Right? So I don't want to know what all the great scholars said about Peter and James and John.

I want to talk to them directly. Why do you want to read what the scholars said about Peter and Paul and John? Let me read them directly what they tell me. This is the work of the devil.

To get you to study what other people say about your wife instead of talking to your wife directly. Here it is. Read it.

Let them exhort you. For we have become partakers of Christ. Verse 14.

If. There's a big if there. How are you partakers of Christ? If you hold fast the beginning of your confidence.

Firm until the end. You have to endure till the end. And he says, you don't believe that? I'll give you an example.

How you need to hold on till the end. It's not just a question of starting well. A lot of people start well in the Olympic Games but they don't finish.

Have you ever seen anybody getting a prize for starting well? I've never heard of that. They always get a prize for finishing well. So he says, you got to endure till the end.

And he says, if you don't believe that, let me give you an example from the Old Testament of people who started well and didn't finish. Who are they? People who left Egypt. Three times in the Bible refers to this people who left Egypt and never entered Canaan.

They are like people who started the marathon race and never finished. They started wonderfully. Oh, you read Exodus 15.

They were banging the timbrel and having such a praise and worship meeting. But they never finished the race. And it says, God was angry with them.

They came out of Egypt led by Moses, verse 16. But God was angry with them for 40 years because they did not believe in him. He's talking about believing in him.

God says something and you won't believe it. God says, I'll take you into Canaan's land and they won't believe it. God was angry with them for 40 years.

But did God give them food in those 40 years? Yes or no? Yes. Did he give them drink? Yes. Did he do miracles for them? Yes.

When God is angry with you, will he give you food? Yes. When he's angry with you, will he give you drink? Yes. Will he do miracles for you? So if God does miracles for you, does it prove that he's happy with you? Not necessarily.

He may still be angry with you. So you get up and testify in the meeting, God did a tremendous miracle for me. That's good brother, but is he still angry with you or is he happy with you? When is he happy with you? Not when he does miracles for you, but when you enter the land of Canaan and put those giants under your feet.

That's when he's happy. Whether you have miracles or not is not the main thing. I'm not impressed by people saying brother, I got manna from heaven everyday for 40 years.

What's the use brother? God's angry with you. And brother, I was bitten by a snake and I saw this bronze serpent and I was healed immediately. Maybe that's right, but God's still angry with you.

What's the use of all these miracles? I want to know, have you put the giants in Canaan under your feet? Have you put anger, lust, bitterness, jealousy, everything under your feet? If you haven't, don't tell me about your miracles, I'm not interested. God is angry with people who don't press on in faith to possess what he has offered them. The promised land, chapter 4, verse 1, therefore it says in 3.19, they could not enter in because of unbelief, therefore, let us fear.

This applies to us, that God has given us a promise of entering into his rest. What does that mean? Sin shall not have dominion over you, Romans 6.14. There's a promise. You can enter into that land of rest.

What is the opposite of rest? Turmoil, turmoil, defeated, defeated, defeated, up and down experience. Rest is like a plateau. It's not up and down and up and down and up and down and up and down.

There is a land of rest, there is a life of rest and you should fear, lest you don't enter into it. Because we have also had the gospel, notice there, verse 2, gospel, good news. We have also had the good news preached to us, just like they heard it.

What was the good news they heard? Exodus 3, we read. There were two parts to that promise. I will take you out of Egypt, I will bring you into Canaan.

It was a double good news. And he said they heard it but they experienced only half of it and the danger is we also hear your sins can be forgiven and you can overcome sin and we experience only half of it. Let us fear, lest we don't enter into this life of victory that they were promised and they didn't, they just got occupied with miracles and voices from heaven and healing and all those things.

But they never got into the land God promised them. You also can be taken up with healings and miracles and visions and voices and all that and you're not entering into overcoming sin. That's the theme of this book.

And, but why couldn't they enter in? Because they did not get united with faith with Joshua and Caleb who heard and believed. That's why they couldn't enter in. Now we who have believed, enter into rest.

But, the Lord promised those, swore unto those people you will not enter into rest. God's will is that we must enter into rest. And then he uses the example of the Sabbath.

Verse 4 that's also a picture of rest. He says way back before the, going into Canaan. Canaan is a picture of entering into rest.

But much before that, he says you remember Adam? When Adam was created? What was he, what was his very first day? His first day was a day of rest. He was created on the sixth day but God rested on the seventh day from all his works. But to these people he said they shall not enter my rest, verse 5. And since, verse 6, it remains that some should enter it.

Those who had formerly heard the gospel did not enter. He fixes another day. Okay? He's giving us a chance now.

Today. Today. The word is always today in the gospel.

Not tomorrow, not yesterday. Today. Verse 7. If you hear his voice, don't harden your heart.

God is calling you to a much higher life than you have ever experienced so far in the book of Hebrews. Don't harden your heart. Say, Lord, I want to come to this life.

If Joshua had given them rest in the land of Canaan, why should he speak of another day after that? There is another rest. This Canaan is only a picture of this life of victory which is offered to us. There remains a Sabbath rest for God's people.

A life of rest is what God promises you. And the one who has entered into this rest has rested from his own works just like God did from his. That means God worked and worked and worked and worked and worked for six days and then rested.

He's using that as a picture. Do you know when you will enter into rest? When you also stop working. When you think by your struggling, your struggling, your struggling, you're going to come into this victory, it will not work.

It's like the disciples catching fish. They struggle here, struggle there, go to this corner, that corner, no fish. When you come to rest and say, Lord, all my lifetime of struggle, I'll never get victory.

You've got to do it for me. The struggling is law. Law is man trying to do something for God.

Grace is God doing something for man. When you seize from your own struggling, you can come to rest. That is the secret.

Therefore, let us be diligent, verse 11, to enter into this rest by faith and not fall like those people in the wilderness in disobedience. Let's trust God today and say, Lord, please bring me into this life of rest.

There's something I've not experienced in the Christian life.

I want it. Jesus says, come to me. All you who labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me and you shall find rest for your souls. First the rest of forgiveness of sins and the rest of victory over sin.

Let's pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/q6OnSkR7AHk.mp4>

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