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Sermon Notes

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Jesus, Death-Destroyer and Gentle Priest

Hebrews 2:14-18

I begin this morning with this one statement:

There are some here that **OUGHT TO FEAR DEATH vastly more than you do**

And there are others here who ought **NOT TO FEAR DEATH AT ALL!!!**

Fear of death hangs over this text... both its existence and its resolution...

John Newton's hymn "Amazing Grace" is arguably the most popular hymn in the world, one immediately recognizable to even many non-churched people. Newton's biographer, Jonathan Aitken, estimates that "Amazing Grace" is sung over 10 million times every year.

In this famous hymn, Newton was writing his personal testimony of God's grace to him as a wretched sinner, a slave-trader and debauched man, wicked to the core... a man who had heard the gospel repeatedly but who refused to come to Christ and be saved. Newton had been kidnapped and pressed into service in the British Navy, eventually deserted, and ended up on a slave trading vessel, the *Greyhound*. His behavior and cursing were among the worst that ship's captain had ever heard... not only did he swear and curse as most sailors did, he stretched language to invent new curses none of them had ever heard.

In March 1748, while the *Greyhound* was in the North Atlantic, a violent storm came upon the ship that was so rough it swept overboard a crew member who had been standing where Newton was moments before. After hours of the crew emptying water from the ship and expecting to be capsized, he offered a desperate suggestion to the captain, who ordered it so. Newton turned and said, "If this will not do, then Lord have mercy upon us!" He returned to the pump where he and another mate tied themselves to it to keep from being washed over. After an hour's rest, an exhausted Newton returned to the deck to steer for the next eleven hours where he pondered what he had said, "If this will not do, then Lord have mercy upon us!"

Filled with terror at the prospect of his own death, he realized that he could only be saved from death and hell by the mercy of the Lord, the same Lord he'd mocked and blasphemed earlier that day. That event, prompted by his fear of death, led to his eventual conversion to Christ.

In the hymn, Newton wrote,

“Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.”

Given his testimony, there can be little doubt that his fear was fear of death, and of the judgment that would follow.

Hebrews 9:27 man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

Some people don't have any idea why the grace of God should teach a person's heart to fear... that makes no sense to them

BUT the fear a sinner has of death and of the judgment that follows is a KEY STEPPING STONE to salvation in Christ

Once that grace has come, however, we should forever be freed from fear of death!!! Christ's powerful death on the cross and His mighty resurrection from the dead have immeasurable power to free sinners from fear of death

Thus I make this one statement:

There are some here that **OUGHT TO FEAR DEATH vastly more than you do**

And there are others here who ought NOT TO FEAR DEATH AT ALL!!!

Those of you who are lost, who have not Christ as Savior... you ought to fear death:

Luke 12:5 Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

And do not be so confident, thinking, "I am young... I have many years ahead of me!" God is able to strike down both young and old. And do not reason with yourselves, thinking "There is no obvious way that I will die... I'm in good health, sitting comfortably in a pew in church!" Death comes whenever God chooses, and we cannot stop it. The SAFEST THING A SINNER CAN EVER DO is to fear death and flee to Christ... so FEAR DEATH and FLEE TO Christ

Christ has power to destroy fear of death

And so I say to others of you, who are Christians, who are trusting Christ as your Savior, you fear death far MORE THAN YOU SHOULD

Our text this morning says that Christ became a human being, in order that He might die on the cross and destroy him who held the power of death (the devil) AND FREE THOSE WHO ALL THEIR LIVES WERE HELD IN SLAVERY BY THEIR FEAR OF DEATH

SO you ought to walk in complete freedom from fear of death

It is to that end that I preach to you today

I. Jesus Shared in Our Humanity...

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity...

A. Astonishing Mystery

1. Because of our sins, we merely “See through a glass darkly”
2. We cannot comprehend sometimes even the simplest doctrinal truths
3. But this is NOT the simplest of doctrinal truths... but perhaps the most astonishing of them all

A.W. Pink: Another thing which makes it so difficult for us to grasp the wonder of the Divine incarnation is that there is nothing else which we can for a moment compare with it; there is no analogy which in any wise resembles it. It stands unique, alone, in all its solitary grandeur. We are thrilled when we think of the angels sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation: that those wondrous creatures, which so far excel us in wisdom and strength, should have been appointed to be our attendants; that those holy creatures should be commissioned to encamp round about poor sinners; that the courtiers of Heaven should wait upon worms of the earth! Truly, that *is* a great wonder. But oh my brethren, that wonder pales into utter insignificance and, in comparison, fades away into nothingness, before this far greater wonder – that the Creator of angels should leave His throne on High and descend to this sin-cursed earth; that the very One before whom all the angels bow should, for a season, be made lower than they; that the Lord of glory, who had dwelt in "light unapproachable," should Himself become partaker of "flesh and blood"! *This* is the wonder of wonders. [Commentary on Hebrews, p. 131]

4. Paul said it was a great mystery

1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body

B. Here Described: the Fact of the Incarnation, and Its Reasons

1. It says

“since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity”

2. The children are those Christ desires to save
3. “Flesh and blood” = physical existence... not like the ANGELS

- a. Greek word: “children have a FELLOWSHIP in flesh and blood”
- b. It unites the human race... all of us descended from Adam, share a common physical nature
- c. We are frail, physical beings... able to DIE

4. Jesus had to take on a human body to save us

C. Jesus: A Partaker of Flesh and Blood

- 1. Last week: the “family” nature of our great salvation

Hebrews 2:11 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.

Hebrews 2:12 He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

Hebrews 2:13 And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity...

Hebrews 2:16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

Hebrews 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way

- 2. God has in view a FAMILY... the family of God
- 3. So Jesus says this in another place

Matthew 12:48-50 "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

D. His Children: Partakers of the Divine Nature

- 1. Jesus' ultimate goal was to make us participants in His own DIVINE nature

2 Peter 1:4 says God has given us...

his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature

Paul also speaks of our new nature...

Ephesians 4:24 put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

2. We were created to be like God, and now redeemed in Christ, we are made new to be like God
3. In order to make US like Him, He had to become like us
4. This family likeness was predestined, central to God's plan before the foundation of the world

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Hebrews 2 REVERSES this amazingly: it says that Christ HAD TO BE MADE LIKE US in every way, so we could be made like Him in every way

II. So Jesus Can Die;

A. Reason Clearly Stated: "So That By His Death..."

Hebrews 2:14-15 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.

1. Christ took on flesh and blood so He could DIE
2. He entered the world to lay down His life for us and save us from our sins
3. Many verses teach this

Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

1 Timothy 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me

4. Marvel at the COURAGE and LOVE of Christ to enter the world specifically for the purpose of dying
5. "Flesh and blood" HUMAN in its limitation and frailty
 - a. Flesh and blood did not reveal that Jesus was the Christ to Peter (Mt. 16:17)
 - b. Flesh and blood did not reveal the gospel to Paul (Gal. 1:16)
 - c. Flesh and blood cannot fight the spirit world (Ephesians 6:12)

- d. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50)
- e. Flesh and blood means EARTHBOUND HUMAN... and especially MORTAL

6. Hebrew word for “flesh” used for both man and beast... both were created from the dust of the earth

Genesis 2:7 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 2:19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air.

Flesh is MUSCLE... sinew, organs, intestines, tendons... and we share it with the beasts of the field

It also means in our sin we are MORTAL

Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

B. Focus on the Blood

1. The usual order is “flesh and blood”
2. Original text actually reverses the order: BLOOD and FLESH
3. Probably to emphasize the blood connection... and the bloody death Jesus would have to die to save His blood brothers
 - a. Blood = family... lineage, genealogy,

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

^{KJV} Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth

We commonly speak of “blood-relatives”... or related “by blood”

- b. Blood = death
 - i) More deeply, though, the theme of blood is strongly related in the book of Hebrews to animal sacrifice and the atonement for sin
 - ii) Leviticus

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

iii) Hebrews

Hebrews 9:22 ...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

So Jesus was given BLOOD so He could shed His blood as an atonement for our sins:

Romans 3:25 [It was Christ] whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

C. Focus Also on the Suffering

1. Jesus shared in our humanity so He could suffer as we do
2. The issue of suffering is clear here
3. So also the shared experience of PAIN
 - a. The pain of weariness

John 4:6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.

- b. The pain of thirst

John 4:7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

- c. The pain of hunger

Matthew 4:2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

- d. The pain of temptation

Hebrews 2:18 he himself suffered when he was tempted

- e. The pain of injury

Matthew 27:26 Pilate had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

- f. The pain of death... crucifixion

D. Atonement Cannot Be Worked Without Death

1. Christ came into the world to save "the children" from death

2. The death= the penalty the people deserved because of sin

Genesis 2:17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Romans 5:12 ... sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned

Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death..."

Ezekiel 18:4 ...the soul who sins shall die.

3. For Christ to save us from the death penalty, He had to die... and the only way He could die was to partake in our flesh and blood... become ONE OF US

E. Propitiation by Death (vs. 17)

ESV Hebrews 2:17 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.

1. Very strong word used in verse 17... "propitiation"

2. Classical example:

An effort began in 19th century German liberal theology, and has gained momentum in the last one hundred years or so in America, to remove the idea of propitiation as the appeasing of God's wrath, and to see it simply as the removal of sin. Part of their case for this is that they see the appeasing of the wrath of a god as more of a pagan idea than a Christian idea. For example, in the Trojan War legend, Prince Paris had carried off Princess Helen to Troy. The Greeks sent their army, led by their general, Agamemnon, to retrieve the princess. They set off by ship to travel to Troy, but were held up by contrary winds for many days. Agamemnon responded by sending for his daughter, who was then slaughtered as a sacrifice to appease the gods who were sending the contrary winds. It worked, and the fleet reached Troy without further delay. J.I. Packer summarizes this pagan notion of propitiation as follows:

There are various gods, none enjoying absolute dominion, but each with some power to make life easier or harder for you. Their temper is uniformly uncertain; they take offense at the smallest things – or they get jealous because they feel you are paying too much attention to other gods and other people and not enough to themselves, and then they take it out on you by manipulating circumstances to your heart.

The only course at that point is to humor and mollify them by an offering. The rule with offerings is the bigger the better, for the gods are inclined to hold out for something sizeable. In this they are cruel and heartless, but they have the advantage, so what can you do? The wise person bows to the inevitable and makes sure to offer something impressive enough to produce the desired result. Human sacrifice, in particular, is expensive but effective. Thus pagan religion appears as a callous commercialism, a

matter of managing and manipulating your gods by cunning bribery. And within paganism propitiation, the appeasing of celestial bad tempers, takes its place as a regular part of life, one of the many irksome necessities that one cannot get on without. (*In My Place Condemned He Stood*, pp.29-30)

3. J.I. Packer in *Knowing God*

“Were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be adoption through propitiation” (p. 216)

- a. Adoption = being made sons of the living God... thus we have this powerful family language
 - b. Propitiation = the removal of God’s righteous wrath against us for our sins by the offering up of a sacrifice acceptable to Him
4. The word means the removal of the wrath of God by the death of a sacrifice
 5. The BIGGEST problem in an unbeliever’s life: the righteous wrath of God against them for their sins

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

6. They may not see that as the biggest problem... but it is
 - a. Example: suppose there was a wealthy married couple in one of the expensive luxury berths on the Titanic that fateful night April 14, 1912... they are having a violent argument about some incredibly important issue... each of them is determined to have their way
 - b. Suddenly there is a terrible screech and a jolt... though they pause their argument briefly, they hear no further noises and resume their argument
 - c. They may feel their conflict is a big problem... and so it is; but a far bigger problem is the gash in the side of the Titanic, and the tons of seawater pouring in the doomed hull
 - d. So it is with the wrath of God... God is our BIGGEST PROBLEM if we are not yet atoned for
7. In Christ, the wrath of God is PROPITIATED... removed... because of the shedding of His blood
8. Christ could only propitiate God’s wrath by taking on a human body

III. So Jesus Can Destroy the Devil and Death;

Hebrews 2:14 so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil

A. Christ vs. the Devil

1. Here we have a head to head confrontation between Christ and an angel
2. Hebrews 1 says Christ is greater than any angel
3. Satan was, it seems, one of the greatest of the angels, and he arrogantly tried to usurp God's place in heaven
4. Satan led a group of angels in revolt against God
5. The Archangel Michael and his holy angels fought against the devil and his wicked angels and won the victory in heaven...
6. The devil and his angels was thrown down to the earth
7. God created man in his image and entrusted the whole earth to him; Adam and Eve were the King and Queen of the whole earth
8. The devil then approached Eve and deceived her and through her was able to entice Adam to sin as well
9. In this way, the devil became the King of the Earth... he drew Adam into rebellion against God, and Adam came under the death penalty

B. How the Devil Holds the Power of Death

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

1. The wages of sin is death... the inevitable link between sin and death is the key to the devil's power

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

2. The devil uses temptation to lure humanity into sin
3. Then the devil accuses sinners of their sin in the face of Almighty God and seeks to use the justice of God to kill us in hell forever

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

4. So, the devil “holds the power of death”

C. How Christ’s Death Destroys that Power

1. David’s mighty man, Benaiah

2 Samuel 23:20-21 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. ²¹ And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.

2. Jesus snatched death from the devil and killed him with his own spear

Habakkuk 3:13-14 You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. Selah ¹⁴ With his own spear you pierced his head

3. Christ by dying has killed death ultimately... for those He came to save, His death and resurrection will one day put us in a place where death itself will be obsolete

D. “Destroys”: A Gradual But Certain Process

Hebrews 2:14 so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil

1. The word used by the author of Hebrews means to render something powerless, void, inert... sometimes with a sense of an increasing powerlessness
2. The devil was not annihilated... but His power over the elect was removed forever... he cannot send the elect to hell; rather, the devil’s influence over the elect is rendered null and void; the devil is allowed some freedom to roam and harass, but his ability to deceive the elect was destroyed at the cross

E. How Christ’s Death Destroys the Devil Himself

1. The devil himself was destroyed at the cross in that his effort to hold power over the earth was snatched back by Christ
2. The work of the devil was destroyed... the work of setting up a rebel kingdom to oppose God

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

3. Christ utters the sentence over the devil...

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

4. and someday, His power will bring it about

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur

5. so meanwhile the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour... but he is filled with rage because he knows his time is short

F. Jesus Snatched the Keys of Death and Hades

1. Jesus now controls the keys of death and Hades

Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

2. This means that by His death He is in charge of the power of death... He kills and He brings to life, and no one can stay His hand!

IV. So Jesus Can Free Us From Fear of Death;

Hebrews 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

A. The Greatest Bondage: Sin

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Romans 6:20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

B. The Resultant Terror: Death

1. The author says that people all their lives are held in slavery by their fear of death

2. Some people are so afraid of death, they can scarcely move out of their homes

Billionaire aviator Howard Hughes lived in constant terror of death, especially by infection. He spent most of his life trying to avoid germs. Toward the end of his life, he lay naked in bed in darkened hotel rooms in what he considered a germ-free zone. He wore tissue boxes on his feet to protect them. And he burned his clothing if someone near him became ill. Hughes wrote a staff manual on how to open a can of peaches—including directions for removing the label, scrubbing the can down until it was bare metal, washing it again and pouring the contents into a bowl without touching the can to the bowl.

Though extreme, this is an example of what the text says... people who spend their whole lives in slavery because of their fear of death

3. The root fear is a fear of judgment by God... that after death will come judgment for sin, and eternal condemnation in hell

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death...

Ezekiel 18:4 The soul who sins will die

Hebrews 9:27 It is appointed unto man to die once, and after that, to face the judgment

C. How Jesus Frees Us Forever from Fear of Death

1. Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection forms the only sure basis for removal of fear of death
2. As I said at the beginning of the sermon... "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved
3. By faith in Christ, we can face death UNAFRAID!!!

D. Testimonies

Acts 7:55-59 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Many saints have testified by their faith-filled joy that death is not a crushing burden...

Spurgeon: "Every day Christ is overcoming death, for He gives His Spirit to His saints, and having that Spirit within them they confront death with songs... they face death with a calm countenance, and they fall asleep in peace. 'I will not fear thee death—why should I? You

look like a dragon, but your sting is gone.” “For these saints, to die has been so different a thing from what they expected it to be, so lightsome, so joyous; they have been so unloaded of all care, have felt so relieved instead of burdened, that they have wondered whether this could be the monster they had been afraid of all their days. They find it a pin’s prick, when they feared it would be a sword thrust; it is the shutting of the eye on earth, and the opening of it in heaven...”

Thomas Goodwin: “Ah! Is this dying? How have I dreaded as an enemy this smiling friend!”

William Preston: “Blessed be God! Though I shall change my place, I shall not change my company!”

Charles Wesley: “I shall be satisfied with thy likeness... satisfied, satisfied!!”

Adoniram Judson: “I am not tired of my work, neither am I tired of the world; yet when Christ calls me home, I shall go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school.”

John Pawson: “I know I am dying, but my death-bed is a bed of roses. Heaven has already begun.”

William Everett: “Glory... Glory...Glory...” for the last 25 minutes of his life, until he was gone.

Every time a child of God dies like that, Christ has already won yet another victory over death.

E. But What About You?

Do you personally have this kind of assurance?? Can you face death unafraid because of your faith in Christ?

V. So Jesus Can Take Hold of Abraham’s Descendants;

Hebrews 2:16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

A. Not For Everyone

1. He doesn’t help angels... by this I think it means fallen angels, like demons
2. There is NO SALVATION for them... they will be sent to hell... indeed hell was made for them
3. Also, Jesus does not help every single human being, but the text says “Abraham’s descendants”

B. Jesus Takes Hold of Some... and Saves them

Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus doesn't save every single person from death and hell... He saves MANY but not all

C. Who? Abraham's Descendents

1. The covenant was made in and through Abraham
2. Paul makes this plain both in Romans and Galatians... Gentiles and Jews alike are considered children of Abraham only one way, by faith

D. All Sons of Abraham by Faith

Romans 4:16-17 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring-- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations."

Galatians 3:26-27 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

VI. So Jesus Can Be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest;

Hebrews 2:17 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

A. First Time Christ's Priestly Ministry Mentioned

B. Fully Developed in Hebrews

C. Two Descriptions: Merciful and Faithful

1. Merciful to us
2. Faithful to God

D. Full Atonement for Sins

VII. So Jesus Can Help Those Suffering in Temptation

Hebrews 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

A. Here's the Point: Temptation Causes Suffering

1. When you are being tempted to sin, and the Holy Spirit moves in you to resist, to say “No!!!” to ungodliness, it HURTS!!!
2. Think of the dieter who has made food an idol for years; the time comes to be disciplined on food; the stomach pains, screams for attention, for the habitual intake of food; it is physically painful to say no
3. Think of the person who is tempted to gossip or slander someone, especially when that person has hurt you in some way; how strong is that temptation to slander, to tell the story in a way that makes you look good and them look bad; it causes a kind of SUFFERING to say no to the temptation to lay that person out with your conversation
4. Think of the man who has struggled with internet pornography; there is almost a physical suffering that comes from resisting the temptation, saying NO to the flesh; it causes suffering to be holy!!!
5. Think of the Christian who wants to grow in their personal prayer life; they are used to praying 10 minutes a day, and they make a commitment to extend it to 30 minutes a day... after about 12 minutes, their mind is wandering, their body is growing weary of staying on their knees, their flesh is screaming to be done with the burden of praying for others, interceding for them, wrestling for them in prayer... temptation causes SUFFERING

B. Jesus Understands the Suffering

1. Jesus suffered when He was tempted
2. Gethsemane is a clear picture of this

Luke 22:42-44 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

3. Jesus was tempted in EVERY WAY

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.

4. The whole application of this passage is pastoral... Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer

C. Jesus Can Help Us Not Sin

1. The Hebrews were being tempted to give up their confession of Christ and reject him in order to please their persecuting neighbors and family members

and rabbis... Jesus understood their temptation and the suffering they were enduring

2. The author is pointing to Christ as the death conqueror... they need not fear persecution, neither the suffering caused by temptation
3. Christ can HELP US NOT TO SIN

What a Friend We Have in Jesus...

**Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

VIII. Application

- A. Terrified of Death? Come to Christ!
- B. Suffering in Temptation? Come to Christ!