

Hebrews 2 (12) – When Jesus Preaches

In our last message, we learned that Hebrews 8:2 says Jesus is our worship leader. It speaks of Jesus as a minister. The Greek word for minister is where we get our English word “liturgy”. Our liturgy is the pattern of our worship. And we see that in heaven, Jesus is the liturgist, the worship leader in heaven. And Christians are part of the eternal choir led by Christ.

We also saw in our last message that Jesus is among us as the worship leader in our local congregations. And Hebrews 2:10-18 shows us some of the ways in which Jesus stands among us as our worship leader. Jesus brings us together as his family, and he represents us before God, as he ushers us into the presence of God, and he leads us in singing to God. And Jesus not only leads our singing, he also leads our preaching, in heaven and on earth.

We saw Jesus leading the singing in Hebrews 2:12. This is also where we find that Jesus is preaching. Jesus is quoting Psalm 22:22 – *I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise*. People usually know Psalm 22 from verse 1, which Jesus quotes on the cross, and you read in Matthew 27:46 – *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* But by doing that, Jesus was referring to the entire Psalm, which takes us on the journey from the cross, through the resurrection, and to his ascension into heaven. And it’s from that part of the Psalm that the words of Hebrews 2:12 come from. Jesus is leading the singing in heaven and on earth. And Jesus is leading the preaching in heaven and on earth. Every sermon that honors God and his word is preached in the power of God’s Spirit. And the person who really does the preaching is God’s son, Jesus.

The Bible declares this as the truth. And I know by experience that this is the truth. In over 20 years of preaching, I have had times where I thought I was going to be too hard, or too soft, too deep, or too shallow. Or after I have preached, I have felt that I didn’t make myself as clear as I wanted to. Or that people misunderstood that I was saying, and took offense. But often in those same times, I also knew that I tried with all my might to be faithful to the

text. And I have seen, and others have experienced, where God uses my words, despite my weakness, and he takes what I've said and ministers to me and to others in ways I couldn't have even imagined. It is one of the greatest proofs of God and of God working in my life that I've known.

Sometimes, people tell me that what I said ministered to them just like I thought it would. Other times, people tell me that what I said ministered to them in a way that I hadn't even thought of. It doesn't mean that I did something wrong. It means that God can apply his word to many hearts in many different ways with the same message. Only God can truly meet the needs of his people this way. He can and will use the preacher, but that preacher must be humbled to realize that it is Jesus himself that is the real preacher to his people. I just get the honor of representing him. And I dare not approach the "sacred desk" with a sense of carelessness or entitlement.

Knowing that Jesus is the preacher is no excuse for me or any preacher to be careless or lazy in their preparation. Depending on the Spirit is not an exercise in "stream of consciousness" proclamation. Yes, Jesus is still present to preach in those situations where you have an impromptu message, or when you speak extemporaneously. And yes, there is an unction in preaching that only the Holy Spirit can give. But depending on the Spirit in your preaching is more akin to how Paul talks about our sanctification in Philippians 2:12-13 – *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you*. Now, applying this to preaching and teaching – you should be aware of the gravity of your task, and work hard at the text, in your study, in your prayers, in your preparation, because God is working in you for the delivery and application to his people.

Jesus is the preacher, and you must be dependent on the Spirit. But this doesn't mean that you shouldn't sharpen your skills, or develop in your calling. It means the opposite. It means that God can use anyone and everyone he wants to deliver a message. But men who are called to preach are not called to just get up and talk. We are called to *devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word* (Acts 6:4). God's men are called to work at the

text and their task *with fear and trembling*, knowing that God is at work in them *to will and to work for his good pleasure*.

There have been countless times where someone will tell me that the message was just for them. And they tell me why. And I understand it, it makes sense. But then another person will talk to me about the same message, and say it was just for them. And they will explain a totally different reason why. But I understand that too. Because Jesus preached, and the Spirit takes up the word that's preached, and the person hears the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to them. Jesus the preacher not only speaks to us to bring conviction and correction. Jesus the preacher also speaks to us to bring compassion and comfort. He gives faith to the frustrated, hope to the hopeless, love to the lonely, strength to the weary, and clarity to the confused. Jesus can use anywhere in the Bible to speak to all of us.

In a truly God honoring, biblically based sermon, we are communing with Jesus. And we are experiencing what Jesus says in John 10:14 – *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me*, and in John 10:27 – *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*. It's like when Jesus, after his resurrection, talked with those two on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. At first, they didn't recognize him (Luke 24:16). But after he disappeared, they *said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"* (Luke 24:32). I trust that you have had an experience like that. Where it seems like Jesus himself used his word to speak about how he is with you. Because if what you hear is what the word says, then that is indeed what is happening. And this is worship. The most powerful and profound lessons we can learn are when Jesus preaches his word to us. It is a glorious truth of the gospel of God's grace to us.

Jesus Christ is here to meet his people for all their needs. That's what the book of Hebrews is telling you. Jesus is superior to any other system, any other religion, any other way. Jesus is supreme. And Jesus is sufficient. As Hebrews 2:14-15 says, Jesus took on human flesh *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. The fear of death is the greatest fear. But Jesus delivers us from that. And he can and does deliver us from all other fears. We just need to hear him speak to us. And he does, through his word, in the power of his Spirit, by the proclamation of a faithful preacher, who represents Jesus as the true preacher. We meet with Jesus and he calms our fears. We meet with Jesus and he brings us faith.

As Hebrews 2:17-18 says, *Jesus has 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 sees us in our jars of clay, and shows us his power. We are human, broken, vulnerable, needy, and guilty, and he gives us forgiveness, help, and hope. Jesus knows me. Jesus understands me. Jesus feels me. And Jesus helps me to know him, and to feel him, and to understand him. And that is how and why I worship him.

When Jesus preaches, true worship is happening. It is a glorious truth of the gospel of God's grace to us. You aren't imagining what you experience here at this church. Jesus is standing among us. Gathering us together as God's family. Representing us before God, as he ushers us into the presence of God. And he leads us in singing to God. And he preaches to us about God. This is worship. This is the testimony of God's people.

And I want you to think about the testimony of Jesus. And how that relates to our testimonies of Jesus, with Jesus as our worship leader. The reason Jesus performed miracles was to testify to his being God. And each believer is a miracle that testifies that Jesus is God. And as believers experience life we witness even more that testifies that Jesus is God. Therefore, wherever and whenever believers assemble Jesus is represented by our individual testimonies, our salvation experiences and our life experiences. So, as we enter into worship Jesus is there in the midst of us by and through those testimonies. As we assemble for worship, Jesus truly is our worship leader. He gathers, he leads, he sings, he preaches, and he testifies. And all of heaven worships. And all who know him on earth worship. Hallelujah!

Let's bring this home to our hearts by talking about how hearing from Jesus on a consistent basis, week after week, month after month, year after year, has an effect on your maturity in life as a Christian. Then maybe you'll finally see how important coming to church each and every Sunday is. You need to hear from God, from Jesus speaking to you, through his preached word.

You can say that you hear Jesus from his word every day, to which I say amen. But you cannot tell me that God hasn't designed a specific and special way for us to hear Jesus speak to us all in a gathered assembly. In a way that he doesn't do otherwise. The very scriptures we have studied today prove that point. In the midst of the congregation, Jesus speaks to us all, and also individually. This is his pattern. This is his presence. This is the truth.

You see, it seems to me that even when people aren't afraid of dying, sometimes they are afraid of living. But when you mature in Christ, you can be in awful situations, and very trying circumstances, and yet you can still have courageous confidence, and find comfort in Jesus preaching to you. Then you can say like a precious sister and I did this morning around 4 am – I don't know why. I don't know how. But I do know God. You can really experience what the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:21 – *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, and it be more than just a note on your refrigerator.

Think about your maturity like this.

Before you come to Christ – I don't want to die.

After you come to Christ – Praise God, I'm not afraid to die.

As you mature in Christ – Lord I don't mind leaving, and sometimes I think I want to, because this place isn't my home.

When you're mature in Christ – If I stay, it's for your glory, and I'll do it, but my greatest desire is to be home! Philippians 1:21 – *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* Until you call me home, Lord Jesus, keep preaching to me!