

Text: Heb. 2:11-18

Title: "What the brotherhood of Christ is like"

Time: 7/6/2014 pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Do you know what it is like to have a brother? I have always enjoyed my brother's love and friendship, and so I pity people who do not know what it is like to have a brother. Our passage tells us that in Jesus Christ the believer has a brother, and it is the purpose of this passage to tell us what that brotherhood is like (vv. 11, 12, 17). This is that company of creatures who is going to rule the world to come as eternal objects of God's majestic grace (vv. 5-6). Tonight's passage is all about what the brotherhood of Christ is like, and I will note five things about this.

I. The brotherhood of Christ is sanctified by the Sanctifier (v. 11).

Illustration: Man-made "brotherhoods" normally have a central theme, an *esprit de corp*. For example, the TLC Brotherhood is dedicated to honoring military service personnel who served in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia before, during, and after the Vietnam War. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is a union dedicated to the cause of better working conditions for electrical workers. I imagine Brian Smith would qualify for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen given his love for trains. Brotherhoods normally have a central purpose.

Application: Well, the brotherhood of Jesus Christ has a central purpose or theme, given in that first phrase of verse 11. This brotherhood is all about holiness. Christ died to make it so (Heb. 10:10, "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once

for all"). It is a brotherhood made up of a Chief Sanctifier and the ones being sanctified. The language indicates that this sanctifying in our lives is an ongoing continual process. *To sanctify means to make holy*, to be a *Chief Sanctifier* is to be one in charge of making others holy, and to be *the ones being sanctified* is to be the ones becoming holy. So we know that we are the brothers of Christ this evening through salvation, but do you and I see becoming holy as the central purpose of God in our lives as the brothers of Christ? Many professing believers are under the impression that they have eternal life without ever having received any newness of life. This is an impossibility, because eternal life is also new life, so sanctification or being made holy, always goes together with living forever (Rom. 6:4, 22-23).

Do you want to be part of a brotherhood, this evening that is focused centrally on becoming more holy? If you and I do not want to become more holy, we greatly misunderstand what it means to be the brother of Jesus Christ. And if we misunderstand what it all means, how do we know we are even a part of the brotherhood?

II. The brotherhood of Christ is done with shame (v. 11).

Illustration: Brothers can be embarrassing. Politicians often have that problem. President Jimmy Carter's brother Billy made headlines in 1978 and 1979 when he visited Libya's Khadafy to discuss an oil deal. Part of the plan included a \$220,000 loan the President's brother received from the Libyans. Jimmy Carter was ashamed of his brother Billy.

Appl: Christ has far more reasons to be ashamed of us as His brothers, but our passage tells us that He is not ashamed to be called our brother. That should cause us

great amazement and wonder, that God's Son, our Creator, is not ashamed to be called our brother.

But that leaves a question unanswered, which is simply this: "Given that Jesus is not ashamed to be called our brother, are we ashamed to call Him our brother?" Most of the passages of the New Testament that contain this word *ashamed* are exhortations to us to not be ashamed of Christ: Mark 8:38, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Rom. 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (See also 2 Tim. 1:8, 12, 16).

Illustration: Jospheh Griggs was an 18th century Presbyterian minister of humble beginnings who wrote the text of a song that used to get me choked up quite a bit in choir in our church in South Carolina. We have the hymn in our hymn books, and it is a work that challenges us to face honestly the horror of the question, "Am I ashamed of Jesus?" Let's read it together (#492).

III. The brotherhood of Christ is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy (vv. 12-13).

Our author uses two prophecies from the Old Testament to tell us that the brotherhood of Christ in a New Testament local church is a gracious part of the plan of God.

1. 2:12 is a quotation of Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 is, of course, a Messianic Psalm that describes the sufferings of Christ on the cross of Calvary in vv. 1-18. It goes on to tell of the victory of the resurrection of Christ in vv. 19-21. And then in

verse 22, it tells us that the Messiah would proclaim God's name to His brothers in the midst of the assembly.

The word for *assembly* is the word for *church*. Just as vv. 1-18 prophesied the importance of Christ's death, and vv. 19-21 the importance of Christ's resurrection, so v. 22 proclaims the importance of the assembly and the presence of the Messiah in the church when it comes to the life of the brotherhood of Christ. It even says there that the Messiah not only proclaims the name of the Father in the midst of that assembly, it also says that He sings hymns there. When we assemble as a local church singing hymns, Jesus sings the hymns too. If you knew Jesus Christ would be here Wednesday night to join in our singing and fellowship and praise, would you want to be there? What makes you think He won't be? He will be, and that I best be too.

2. 2:13 is a quotation of Isa. 8:17-18. Here the brothers of Christ are called His *children*. Remember that Isa. 9:6 calls the Messiah the *Everlasting Father*. He is the covenantal patriarch who dies to save His seed and eternally seal their redemption. Isa. 53:10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." 8:14-15 speaks of how the houses of national Israel, the north and the south, stumbled over the stone of stumbling and rock of offense. They crucified their Messiah. Then after that, God's plan for the brotherhood takes over. Jesus put his trust in his heavenly Father, and the Father has given to Him offspring who are His brotherhood.

Application: The God of heaven went through an awful lot of trouble to make you and I a part of the brotherhood of Christ. What does our membership mean to it?

IV. The brotherhood of Christ is freedom from slavery (vv. 14-18).

Illustration: It is always wonderful to hear of a brother who risks his own life to save one of his siblings. We have been praying over an example of that in Scott Henderson's willingness to be a cell donor for his sister Michelin. Well, that kind of thing is Christ-like because Christ was the one who gave his own life for his brothers. This was a difficult procedure that involved a number of strenuous steps.

A. The incarnation – Jesus had to become man to free us from slavery (v. 14a). Adolph Saphir: “‘In all things He became like unto us.’ In everything; in His body, for He was hungry and thirsty; overcome with fatigue, He slept. In His mind, for it developed. He had to be taught; He grew in wisdom concerning the things around Him; He increased, not merely in stature, but in mental and moral strength. In His affections, He loved. He loved the young man who came unto Him, and was not willing to give up his riches. He loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha – the disciple who leaned on His bosom. He was astonished; He marveled at men's unbelief, and said to the Syro-Phoenician woman, ‘O woman, great is thy faith.’ Sometimes He was glad, and ‘rejoiced in spirit’; sometimes angry and indignant, as when He saw the hypocrisy of the Jews, who accused Him of having broken the Sabbath. Zeal, like fire, burned within Him; ‘The zeal for the house of God consumed me’; and He showed a vehement fervor in protecting the sanctity of God's temple. He was grieved; He trembles with emotion; His soul was straitened in Him. Sometimes He was overcome by the waves of feelings when He beheld the future that was before Him. In all things He was made like unto us. Do not think of Him as merely appearing a man, or as being a man only in body, but as man in body, soul, and spirit. He exercised faith; He read the Scriptures for His

own guidance and encouragement; he prayed the whole night, especially when He had some great and important work to do, as before setting apart the apostles. He sighed when he saw the man who was dumb; tears fell from His eyes when at the tomb of Lazarus He saw the power of death and of Satan. He wept over Jerusalem, as He foresaw the fearful results of their grievous sin. His supplications were with strong crying and tears; His soul was exceedingly sorrowful; he was sorely pressed, and He agonized in Gethsemane."

B. The atonement - Jesus had to die to free us from slavery (vv. 14b-16). The idea of *taking hold on* or *seizing upon* in verse 16 is the same idea that we find in 8:9, where this verb is used to describe the way the Lord took hold of Israel to bring them out of Egypt. Here, Jesus is taking hold, not of angels, but of all the seed of Abraham's faith, circumcised and uncircumcised, to bring them out from under the slavery of the fear of death. Satan has the power of death in the sense that as the accuser of the sinner he calls for the sinner's destruction before the law of God and its penalty.

Christ died so that we can have deliverance from that Satanic power of death and from the fear of death that plagues the sinner his entire life. John 8:51, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." What saying? "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

"He hell in hell laid low,
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew,
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death, by dying, slew." (S.W. Gandy)

C. Intercession – Jesus had to become our great High Priest to free us from slavery (vv. 17-18). This precious truth, that Christ is our great high priest, would be unknown to us were it not for this little book of Hebrews. The author views the priestly ministry of Christ as that of the high priest, especially in view of the Day of Atonement in chapter 9. His emphasis here is certainly the atoning work and the reconciliation, but also the ongoing comfort of His intercession (v. 18). Christ's ministry to us as high priest, which frees us as His brothers from slavery to death and sin, began with His death and continues on with his ongoing ministry at the right hand of God. We can keep on going, because He is still there faithfully ministering.

Adolf Saphir captures this truth in marvelous terms: “he knows what is in man, He understands fully all our sorrows and is able to measure the strength of all our temptations. He is most lovingly and earnestly anxious that we should always obtain the victory and suffer no injury; for having gone through all the conflict Himself, without a single moment's wavering or surrender, He wishes us to be found continually in Him and to conquer continually. He is faithful in bringing down to us all the gifts of God; all the counsel, will, and blessings of the Most High; faithful in taking up to God all our need and trial; all our petitions, fears, and tears; all our sufferings and all our works. What deep and infinite sympathy is in Jesus! And how much we should dwell upon it, and strengthen ourselves in the Lord. For he wishes to succor us; to take us by the hand when we are sad, weary, and exhausted; to help and encourage us; to cheer and gladden us who are still in manifold temptations and sufferings. He is Immanuel, God with us, as the Man Christ Jesus.”

Conclusion: This is what the brotherhood of Christ is like.

To have Him as a brother is to have someone who is determined to make us holy, is not ashamed of us, fulfilling God's plan for us, and freeing us from sin's slavery. Do we want to be part of that brotherhood? Perhaps the greatest thing about this brotherhood is how one becomes a member. Verse 13 tells us: "Behold, I will put my trust in Him," the One who died and rose as the Brother of sinners. Trust Him for salvation from your sin.

"A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction – the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching