

October 4, 2015

Hebrews 2:5-18: ***“Things As They Are Now”***

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It says in Hebrews 2:8b, "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him."

In this passage, we are to understand and believe that the Father has made everything subject to Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary. Jesus, who is the Son of God, and therefore equal with the Father, took the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on the cross. That humility is now over, and in this moment, he forever sits at the right hand of the power of God in exaltation. But, we are not to stop here. It is even more astounding than this. His exaltation even now touches his manhood. In very simple terms, one of us is in charge. He who became flesh, who lived a perfect life for us, who suffered our punishment, who rose from the dead and still retains his body, who understands and shares our feelings, who was tempted like us in every way but was without sin, has the power to help us.

Our theme for this morning is this: **Things As They Are Now**. It is based on Hebrews 2:8b. Please allow me to read it again: "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him." On the one hand, one of us in charge and he has the power to help us. Nothing is left outside of his control. That's one side of the way things are now. But, now the rest of the verse. On the other hand, it says that we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. In other words, we may understand and believe Jesus, son of Mary, Son of God is in control, but we do not see it with our own two eyes. And this is why it so difficult for us.

I mean, what do our two eyes really see? We look at our lives, we look at others, we look at our nation, we look around this world and does it really seem that the good Lord Jesus Christ is in charge? It hardly looks that way at all. And we especially feel this when we discover just how helpless and out of control we are even in the simple things of life. And the sinful flesh capitalizes on this and raises a wicked storm in our souls when we beg and beg and beg our good Lord Jesus Christ to do what we think is good and all we think we hear is silence - a silence that can feel be deafening.

If we only look with our two eyes at ourselves and everyone and everything around us, then we might end up in despair; especially, in those moments when everything is going wrong and we can't seem to catch a break. That is why we pray that the Holy Spirit would help us to see through the eyes of faith. As it says in Hebrew 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Did you catch that? The "conviction [the certainty] of things not seen." Indeed, at present we do not see things in subjection to him. And, that is because we live in the midst of sinful place that is passing away. Jesus did not come to save this passing away place that we may live here in sin and death. Rather, he came to put an end to this passing away place and give us a future in a kingdom that will last forever. It is a kingdom with him as king. But, like our king, we must pass through suffering before we get to glory.

What are **Things As They Are Now**? He is in control, but it doesn't look like it. That is because the Lord is gathering and saving his little flock in the midst of a messed up world. Furthermore, we need

to understand that it is not to our advantage that he would grant every request we make to him in prayer. We are convinced that most of the requests we make in our prayers are right on spot, the best for us, in keeping with everything that is good, and should be granted exactly as we have requested. What we fail to realize is that our goals in this passing away place are often quite different than the goal that Jesus has for us. Sometimes we think that we are asking for a good thing, but he who is in control knows that it is a snake that will sink its fangs into us that we may be filled with poison and lose the kingdom. Paul was convinced that it was the good thing for the Lord to take away his thorn in the flesh. However, the Lord knew better and said "no" to that. He reminded Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)." Indeed, the undeserved love and where it take us is sufficient.

The power of God is the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, the issue for the Lord is really about us getting to the goal, and the goal is the salvation of our souls. He uses his power to give us a kingdom that lasts forever. And Jesus knows exactly how to give good gifts to us. In his grace, which is sufficient, he knows what is necessary and not necessary, what will keep us on the narrow path and what will divert us, and he preserves and governs all things that are in subjection to him in such a way that we might run our course in this passing away place and make it to our heavenly home. It Jesus says in Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

What we then see through the eyes of faith is quite different than what we see with our own two eyes don't you think? If we were to make an evaluation on the basis of what we see with our own two eyes we might accuse Jesus of not caring for us at all. We might forget these words, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." But, when we realize that Jesus humbled himself, even made requests on earth to his Father in heaven who said "no," and experienced hell itself on the cross, and then note that all of this agony gave way to his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, everlasting glory, and an eternal joy for and with us, then that changes our perspective.

Just as nothing was allowed to prevent our Savior from reaching his goal, so nothing will be able to prevent us from reaching our goal of salvation. Why? Because Jesus is in control - everything has been made subject to him. Paul writes in Romans 8:29-30, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

Indeed, through the eyes of faith, even in this passing away place we are glorified! And we, who are his people and have the glory now through faith know and believe that one day we will see it with our own two eyes! We will reach the glory that is ours in Jesus Christ. Sometimes, as we live in this passing away place and beg and beg and beg God to do this and that and he doesn't, we convince ourselves that he doesn't love us and will not hear us. It is in this moment that we need to recall that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. He does love us! It is in this moment that we need to remember that it isn't that he doesn't hear us, for if we are sincere when we pray "thy will be done," he answers us with a "yes." Which do you want? His will or ours? What is his will? His will is that we would be with him forever.

The apostle Paul writes some powerful words in Romans 8. Sometimes I think we really don't absorb all that is being said there. We would do well to pay attention closely and remember the words in that day when things are falling apart and it feels as if everything is spinning out of control. The apostle Paul says: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things (Romans 8:31-32)?" If God gave his one and only Son to us, should anyone of us think that he would withhold anything good from us. May he forgive us for all the times we have had such thoughts. And he does forgive us.

But, let us get one thing straight in our heads. There are two sides to **Things As They Are Now**. There is the side that doesn't look so good. And there is the side that is always good in him who died for us. Therefore in this passing away place we can sing the Psalm:

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.

(Psalm 46:1-5)

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott