

Proper 22 Year B

10/03/2021

Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

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One of the beauties of following the Revised Common Lectionary is that it takes you through short journeys of the Holy Scriptures.

Often it is like a flyover of a particular book of the Bible highlighting the major themes of the text.

So today we embark on a new journey in the Bible...

Our second reading is from the Book of Hebrews.

And we will be in the book of Hebrews until Christ the King Sunday which is the 21st of November.

So over the next so many weeks our focus on Sundays will be from this book of the Bible.

So, as I have encouraged you before when we concentrate on a particular book of the Bible...

Read through the book of Hebrews...

Meditate on it...

Consider its message...

Study it.

The book of Hebrews comes to us with an unknown author.

Many originally thought it was written by St. Paul, but the style and grammar are surely different than his writings.

Many scholars have suggested a number of authors...

But there remains no consensus.

So, it remains a mystery of who wrote the book...

But it does seem to be clear that the audience that the writer had in mind were Jewish Christians.

Referring to things that would be important and known by Jewish thinkers and leaders...

the writer is building a case of who the identity of the Messiah is.

And what the Messiah did and is doing...

It is a great reveal...

The revelation of Jesus Christ...

Hebrews has some of the highest Christology in all of scripture...

And it is there that we will turn...

And often return to through the pages of Hebrews over the next two months.

The writer begins the book with these words:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...

Right from the start...

Acknowledging the revelation of God in the Old Testament...

The author reveals the focus of the book.

The Son of God.

God has spoken to us through his Son.

This Son is the appointed one as the heir of all things.

Speaking here to his Jewish audience...

As the people of God...

The ones who inherited the promised land...

The ones who looked for the heir of King David...

Prophesied to have an eternal kingdom...

This Son of God...

Is the heir of all things not just land or nations...

But All Things!

This Son of God... the writer of Hebrews says...
is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being.

The writer is of course describing the Son of God.

The creator of the world...

The one who sustains all things by his powerful word.

This is the person Jesus Christ.

God Incarnate...

The very image of God.

Listen to how Jesus responded to who he was in the Gospel of John:

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

(John 14:8-10)

And it was this Jesus...

Who became like his creation...

Becoming lower than the angels that surround the throne room of God...

It was Jesus who suffered and died...

Taking our place...

So that we could become sanctified through him.

As the writer of Hebrews says:

...because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he (Jesus) might taste death for everyone.

Because of Jesus Christ we by grace can have forgiveness of sins...

Not because we deserve it.

Not because we can earn it.

Not because of our family background or because of our credentials.

Salvation only comes by grace through faith alone.

Jesus Christ came to earth to save sinners.

To save the lost.

And by his grace...

We are here today worshipping God...

Because he chose us before the foundation of the world...

Because he died and rose again...

Because he has forgiven our sins...

And because he is coming back to judge the living and the dead...

He will set the world at rights...

Ushering in the new earth and the new heaven...

And we will be with Jesus forever.

So, the question that the author of Hebrews is getting at...

Is the same question for us today.

Who do you say Jesus is?

...

Who do you say Jesus is?

Was he a great prophet?

Was he a great leader?

Or was he really who he said he was...

Who his disciples say he was...

Was Jesus Christ really God in the flesh?

And it is more than just how we answer the question.

It is also how the answer to that question shapes and forms our lives.

Confessing Jesus Christ as our Lord and as our Savior are not just words...

Like a mental exercise to see if we passed the test...

To cover some kind of entrance exam.

To confess someone as my Lord...

Shapes the way I live.

To declare that Jesus Christ is my Lord...

Changes the way I live...

The way I behave...

The way I do life.

Many people can say they believe this or that...

But we know many whose lives would say otherwise.

Simply because their actions speak louder than words.

A politician can say one thing.

But their voting record can say something completely different.

We can say one thing...

And our lives can say something different.

But this is one thing we don't want to get wrong.

We do not want a failure in communication here.

The following notice appeared sometime back in a newspaper in the northeastern part of the U. S.:

It reads -

"To those of you who bought our book, Skydiving Made Easy, please enter the following correction on page 12, paragraph 3, line 2:

The words 'State zip code' should say "Pull rip cord.'

We regret any inconvenience this mistake may have caused you."

Some misunderstandings have significant consequences.

And the writer of Hebrews is doing the best he or she can, to spell out who Jesus is.

They don't want to miscommunicate who Jesus is.

Hebrews says in just our reading today:

Jesus is the heir of all things.

Jesus is the person through whom the worlds were created.

Jesus is the reflection of God's glory.

Jesus is the exact imprint of the very being of God.

Jesus is the one who sustains all things by his powerful word.

Jesus is the one who made purification for our sins.

Jesus is the one sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And it is this Jesus who extends his grace and mercy to us so that by faith we can become co-heirs...

Brothers and sisters in the people of God.

Serving our one Father.

Don't get caught up in all the minutia of this world...

But stay focused with your eyes on Jesus.

Hebrews was written to remind us...

We serve a good, wonderful, loving, just, and holy Lord...

And his name is Jesus.

May we get *that* way down deep in our soul.

And may we praise his name forever and ever.

Amen.