

Jesus Christ: God's Gift of Restoration

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[0 : 00] Well now, we're going to turn to our Bibles and to our reading for this morning, which is a short reading, but just at the very beginning of the letter to the Hebrews.

Now you'll find that on the Church Visitors Bibles on page 1001, or in your own Bibles after Timothy and Titus and Philemon, you come to Hebrews.

And this is surely one of the most majestic paragraphs in any of the letters of the New Testament, indeed anywhere in the Scriptures, summarizing as it does the wonder of God's revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

[1 : 28] After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Amen. And may God bless to us these wonderful words about our Lord Jesus Christ. Good. Well, please do have Hebrews chapter 1 open there.

We'll be looking at the first few verses there. So Hebrews chapter 1. Hebrews chapter 1. Hebrews chapter 1. Hebrews chapter 1. Hebrews chapter 1.

Hebrews chapter 1. Now, this letter to the Hebrews, it opens with the earth-shattering, the seismic, astonishing news that God has spoken and that he has spoken to us through his Son, Jesus Christ. That's what we saw last week as we looked at verse 1 and the very start of verse 2. God has completely spoken his word to the world through Christ.

[2 : 44] No additions are required. Nothing more needs to be said. His word to us in Christ is sufficient. Now, as we read on in these verses, it's like a firework exploding on a clear night as the writer introduces us to the Son, the man Jesus, through whom God has spoken.

His description of who Jesus is is utterly breathtaking. The scale, the magnitude of who Jesus is, is simply astonishing.

It's hard to get our heads around. The writer sets out here the works that God has done through Jesus in the world.

And it's just staggering as we consider these verses. Christ's word and Christ's work are the subject of these short, explosive, foundational verses.

And what better way to prepare for Christmas than to spend a few moments considering the Lord Jesus Christ? And as we do, let's not miss what is at the epicenter of Christmas.

[4 : 04] It's not just the birth of Jesus Christ, but all that he came to do and accomplish. And if we don't consider who he is, if we don't listen to Jesus, then really we waste Christmas.

We miss the point. You see, Jesus is the central figure in all of human history. That's not just a matter of opinion.

That's just the way it is. He must be reckoned with. Everyone who's ever lived, who's ever walked this earth, will one day have to submit to that fact.

Jesus is not just heir to a throne like the British throne. He is heir of all things. Not just the creator of the iPhone, lovely as it is, but he is creator of the entire universe.

Not just someone who displayed godly characteristics, but the very radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of his nature.

[5 : 16] Not just someone who talked about sin, but the one who did something about it. The one who dealt with man's greatest problem. The one who restores man's relationship with God.

Not just some figure in history. But the one who rose from the dead. And is now seated at the right hand of God in heaven.

If these things that we read earlier are really true, which is the claim of the Bible, which is the claim of two millennia of the Christian church, which is the claim of this church, if these things are really true, then the implications for mankind are significant beyond imagining.

If these things are really true, then the implications for you, the implications for your colleague, for your neighbor, are seismic.

The implications are more important than anything else could possibly be this Christmas. Most of the things we invest in during the festive period are forgotten within a couple of months or a couple of days.

[6 : 34] They're gone. Why not consider something true and lasting? Let our friends consider Jesus Christ.

Maybe you've been a Christian for many years. Hebrews was a letter written to a bunch of Christians who are thinking of turning their back on Jesus Christ.

Going back to their old ways. Giving up on Christ. Walking away. If that's how you feel this morning, maybe it's been gnawing away at you the last few weeks or months or years even.

A temptation to walk away. If that's you, the message to you this morning is don't. Don't walk away from Christ. Just look at these verses. Look at the words that are used here to describe him.

Don't go back to how your life used to be. You see, the truth for those Jewish Christians who this was written to in the first place, and the truth for us, that if we do turn back, if we go back to how our life used to be, we risk losing everything.

[7 : 47] We risk losing everything. As a Christian, you have lost nothing. You have gained everything. You have gained Christ.

And just look at who he is. Do not throw that away. Do not throw that away. Do not drift from Christ. Don't loosen yourself from the sure moorings that you have in him.

Tie yourself to Jesus Christ. Tie yourself to him. That is the message of this letter. Don't move from Jesus Christ.

For in him, God has spoken. In him, God has acted. God has acted. We'll spend a few moments this morning looking at these verses, and I want to point to four reasons as to why you should listen to Jesus.

Four reasons you should submit to him. Four great truths about who Jesus is, what he has done, and is doing. Great truths that will keep you going with Christ and not to walk away.

[9 : 00] Great truths about who Jesus is in relation to the universe. Great truths about who Jesus is in relation to God. Great truths about who Jesus is in relation to man.

Pay attention to what the writer says here. When we pause and think about these words, it is truly mind-blowing these words will give you great confidence to stand firm in Christ.

Four reasons. Firstly, why should we listen to Jesus? Why submit to him? Firstly, because Jesus created and now sustains the universe.

Just look down again at the second half of verse 2. Jesus, whom God has appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

And then look on to halfway through verse 3. He, that is Jesus, upholds the universe by the word of his power. Astonishing claims are made here about who Jesus is.

[10 : 16] These are not your everyday claims of even the most ambitious of advertisers. What is said of Jesus here? Well, he's heir of all things. Creator of the world.

Sustainer of the whole universe. If these are true, then they represent pretty compelling reasons to listen to someone. Creation was made for Jesus.

He's the heir of it. He will inherit everything. Creation was made by him. It's sustained by him even now. Now, this very moment, Jesus sustains the universe.

And we will often listen to somebody on the basis of far less, won't we? You'll listen to your doctor because they've been through medical school, they've passed exams, they've got the right qualifications.

You'll listen to the guy from British Gas when your boiler breaks down because he knows his way around a boiler. He can get it working again. But here is Jesus. Here are his qualifications.

[11 : 28] He is the heir of everything. He created everything. He sustains everything. Jesus cannot be put in some small box labeled religion.

He cannot be boxed because he is the creator of the cosmos. everything that we can observe and measure. Everything we've not measured yet.

Everything we've not even thought to measure. He created. Jesus is God's son and he is heir of everything.

Everything belongs to him. Everything belongs to him. Everything on earth, everything in heaven, everything we can see. and he will inherit all that is his.

Those he died for, his people, the church, he will inherit. The whole of creation, he will inherit. We're beginning, just beginning to catch a glimpse of the hugeness of who the son of God is.

[12 : 38] If Jesus, the one who we sing all the songs about at Christmas time, if he's just another man, then there isn't really a compelling reason that I can give you to listen to him.

But he is not just another man. He created every star that we see in the sky. Every human being that has walked this earth, he created.

We all find our origin in him. Compelling reasons to listen to Jesus, God's last word of revelation.

But more than that, these are compelling reasons to submit to him.

The creator of the universe doesn't just require a polite hearing. He requires that we, his subjects, whether you recognize that fact or not, whether you like that fact or not, we are to bow to him, to submit to him.

And one day, every knee will bow in recognition of him. Jesus is the creator. He is the sustainer of the entire universe.

[13 : 53] I don't know if you ever look up at the night sky, and he just feels so tiny. I get a feeling in the pit of my stomach. But God, through Jesus, created all of that.

That is astonishing. He's worth listening to. Second reason to listen to Jesus, because Jesus reveals the Father.

Verse 3 says this, he, that is Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. Jesus Christ, the man who walked around Palestine 2,000 years ago, he is not in some way like Jesus.

Jesus is God. All God's greatness and majesty shines through his Son. He is the radiance of God's glory. God's glory.

The Son truly and fully shows us the character of God. When we see the Son, we see exactly what God is like.

[15 : 08] That's what the writer is saying here when he writes that Jesus is the exact imprint of God's nature. When you see Jesus, you see God.

Think of a coin. Maybe you've just placed one in the offering basket. Perhaps you have one in your pocket right now. Just as the image and the writing on that coin match exactly the imprint on the die which created it, so the Son of God bears the exact stamp of God the Father.

They are one and the same. You cannot separate them. Jesus Christ reveals the Father perfectly.

In John chapter 14, we read this short encounter between Philip and Jesus and Philip says this to Jesus, 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 not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father. Perhaps you have a friend who wants to find out about God. They've got a desire to know something.

[16 : 30] Perhaps that might be you here this morning. You want to find out about God, who he is, what he is like. And the answer to finding out about God does not lie in some mystical experience.

It doesn't involve some strange meditation practice. It doesn't involve going off on some expensive retreat. The answer to finding God does not involve paying up to go to some conference where self-proclaimed prophets give you the secrets.

None of that's the case. If you want to find God, discover who he is. all you need to do is look at his son.

Look at Jesus Christ. Consider his words, his works. And we have that written down. The Bible is where you read all about Jesus.

The Bible is the word of God. You don't need a special person or a special conference. You need the man Jesus as revealed here. You need to listen to him because he is the exact imprint of God's

nature.

[17 : 45] Now that gives you and I confidence, doesn't it? Confidence to share the gospel. We share a man. We share Jesus Christ. We proclaim him.

And we can be sure that as we do, we reveal God in all his glory. We don't need to be fantastically articulate. We don't need to have all the answers.

We share Jesus because he perfectly reveals the Father. I'm sure that you, like me, in our culture of secularism and not-so-tolerant tolerance, you've thought it best just to keep quiet on occasion. Those moments where you think, it's best just not to say too much. I don't want to offend anyone. I've certainly felt that way, that pressure, and I've acted on those thoughts. But I need to be reminded that I share Jesus Christ. I share a man. I share him who perfectly reveals the Father.

[18 : 56] God's love. So let's take confidence to share Jesus, to share all that he said and did. Let's not be frightened into silence.

Let us be prepared to read all of John 14 verse 6. I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Let us have the confidence to say all of that. On the huge Sikh temple that is opposite the Henrywood Hall, you can read these words above the main entrance.

One God. One God. Now in a sense, that statement is correct, isn't it?

There is one God, but not the one that they're talking about. There is only one God, and he is only revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20 : 04] So let us be prepared to say that. Let us be prepared to testify to Jesus and all that he says, because it's only through him, only through Jesus, that all God's glory is perfectly reveals.

It's through him, it's through Jesus, through his words, through his works. So let us listen to Jesus. He is the perfect representation of God.

He perfectly shows us the Father. Thirdly, let us listen to Jesus, because Jesus restores sinful man. Jesus restores sinful man. Look halfway down verse three there. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Jesus has made purification for sins. That is the great and joyful truth that moves Christians everywhere to sing this Christmas time. joy to the earth, the Savior reigns.

[21 : 20] Joyful news. He has made purification for sins. But what does that mean? Why is that important? We've seen something of Jesus on the cosmic scale, creator of the universe, but now we zoom in.

We focus on Christ's work for you and me. You see, our great problem is not a political one. Our great problem is not an environmental one.

It's not economic. Our great problem is relational on the biggest scale we can possibly imagine. The reality is that man has rejected his maker.

Man has not acknowledged God as creator and lord over everything, including our own lives. In fact, our natural disposition is outright rebellion, isn't it? We rebel.

And I guess none of us would put it that way. That's not really how we like to think, but that's the truth. That's how the Bible says it is. We have rebelled against our maker. And our sin problem is impossible for us to do anything about.

[22 : 30] We cannot be in relationship with God. We cannot fix it. We need somebody else to do it for us. We need somebody else to step in. And that someone else is Jesus Christ.

It is God's son. He wonderfully provides purification for sin. He does what all the previous generations of Israelite priests could not do.

He is our great high priest. His once for all sacrifice has dealt fully and finally with our sin problem. It brings it to an end. It brings all those repeated sacrifices carried out in the Old Testament to an end. That is why Christmas is a time of great joy. Restoration is on offer. Jesus Christ died on the cross and won forgiveness for us by making us clean from our sins.

We can be restored to a right relationship with our Father because Jesus has dealt with our sin problem. that great fracture between God and man that great fracture that happened back in Genesis chapter 3 that has been undone.

[23 : 50] You can know real restoration. Now perhaps for many of us that is in a sense old news. We know this.

Perhaps you have known it many years but the embers of your heart have dampened down to a low glow. You actually feel like walking away.

But let these truths fan into flame our affection for the great thing that God has done for us in Christ. For you, for me.

Jesus restores sinful man. Jesus and only Jesus is able to do that. Jesus has accomplished something that is unable to be accomplished by anybody else.

It would be foolishness to walk away from him. He is our great high priest. He restores man to God. [24 : 55] God will be to God. He will be to be a God. He will be to be a God.

He made everything. We just realize how incapable we are to bridge that gap. But Jesus has. He makes purification for sins.

He brings restoration. salvation. And that is a great reason to listen to him. He has spoken the words of salvation.

He restores man to God. Let's look on to the final reason why we should listen to Jesus. We should listen to him because he reigns above everything.

After making purification for sin, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

[26 : 00] These very brief short few verses give us a pretty comprehensive picture of who Jesus is and what he has done.

It is breathtaking in its scale. Creator, sustainer of the universe, the one who has stepped down into human history and revealed God because he is God, the one who has made it possible for sinful man to know the perfect and holy God.

And where is Jesus now? Well, he sits at the right hand of God in the heavenly throne room. That is where he is.

He reigns. He is our great king over all the universe, the lamb upon his throne. That is the reality.

He reigns now. And we need to live in light of that reality. He is a king. He reigns. He must be obeyed.

[27 : 04] And so we are to obey all that he has commanded. He is our great king. And one day he will be seen to have defeated all his enemies.

All those who we shudder at the thought of now. All those who push for an atheistic worldview.

All those who push secularism. Every enemy will be defeated. And all will see it one day. He is our king. And the world will know it one day.

So take confidence. He is our great king. He has washed away our sins. He is our great high priest. He has spoken God's word to us.

He has made God known. He is our prophet. Jesus Christ is our prophet, our priest, our king.

[28 : 07] Jesus Christ speaks. He redeems. He reigns. All of that is hard to get our heads around.

But the writer here to the Hebrews, he blows apart our darkened glasses through which we see the world in our day to day. He shows us reality. He shows us who Jesus really is.

And he presents us with a clear vision of what is really going on in history. And how at the center of everything, at the center of all our experience, all of history, is one man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

He speaks the word of God. He has dealt with our sin fully and finally. He reigns on high.

He is our great prophet, our priest, our king. That is the message of truth and joy that Christmas brings. Here is who Jesus is.

[29 : 17] He demands to be listened to, to be obeyed. Will you take that opportunity this Christmas to listen? Will you give the opportunity to listen to a friend?

Will you listen? And will you respond by obeying him? Because he is creator. He is revealer of God. The one who has dealt with our greatest problem and now reigns over everything. will you be nothing short of folly to ignore Jesus Christ, wouldn't it?

In light of who he is, what he's done. And it will be nothing short of culpable foolishness to walk away from him.

Do not neglect such a great salvation. Do not neglect Christ. Take great confidence. confidence. If you are his, if you are in Christ this morning, take great confidence because here is who he is.

[30 : 29] All of history finds its conclusion in Jesus. Do not move from him. Do not stray from Christ. Let me pray.

