

Hebrews 2:14-18
Week of February 19, 2012

Text:

Notes:

¹⁴Since therefore the children **share** in flesh and blood, he himself likewise **partook** of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels that he **helps**, but he **helps** the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Share...partook – The Greek word for “share” is *koinonia* which means fellowship, communion or partnership. But the Greek word for “partook” means to take hold of something that is not related to one’s own kind. Thus, Christ took upon himself something that was not his, but that we fellow humans share – mortality.

Helps...helps – The Greek word for “help” means literally “to take hold of, to seize, to take possession of.” This word has been translated “help” by the ESV only in this instance. The use of this particular word connotes taking hold of someone in order to push or pull them to safety.

Propitiation – The Greek word for “propitiation” means “to conciliate, to appease or to satisfy.” Propitiation is the means by which we gain or regain the favor or goodwill of another individual. Christ’s death appeased the justice and righteousness of God who abhorred our sins.

God allowed men to kill animals in place of themselves. These sacrifices “atoned for” (covered or made satisfaction for) sin, “expiated” (removed) man’s guilt and “propitiated” (satisfied, appeased) God’s justice. Those Old Testament sacrifices were not sufficient payment for sin in themselves; they were sufficient only in that they represented what Christ was going to do. But putting faith in the sacrifices commanded from cleansing, the Israelites were putting faith in God’s way of cleansing that is fully revealed in Christ.

Discussion:

Spend a couple minutes on your own reading through the passage and the text notes.

1. Have you ever encountered someone who you felt genuinely understood you or was able to empathize with you? What was it about that person that helped you connect? What was it about them that comforted you during your difficulty?

2. What is the “fear of death” that the author Hebrews refers to? What were we afraid of before Christ came into our lives?

In what ways did this fear enslave us. How did this cause us to live a life of bondage and burden rather than of freedom?

3. The passage tells us that Christ had to become just like us in order to serve as our substitute and thus make propitiation for our sins. How does Christ’s work on the cross free us from the enslavement of the fear of death?

What does it “look” like to live a life that is no longer afraid of death but is free in Christ? How would our lives change?

4. William Lane – *The central fact that the author brings before his friends is that the exalted Son of God is a person who actually shared our situation. He was fully human. His humanity was exposed to the full range of testing, just as ours is. He was made to be like us.*

Let’s look more closely at v.18. In order to be our true substitute, Jesus had to not only take on flesh and blood but experience human suffering. Christ did not just free us from the fear of our future death, but he also comforts us during those moments of heartache when we feel like dying. How is Christ a greater empathizer during these moments? How should this strengthen us during times of difficulty?

Split up into smaller groups or pairs and share about some difficulties you are experiencing right now and how this passage might comfort and strengthen you.