

Read

Hebrews 2:5–18

Consider

Are you an only child? Or do you have one or more siblings? If so, where do you come in the birth order? I am a first-born and I am also a typical first-born; I am not the exception that proves the rule, just the opposite. First-borns aim to please their parents. One study I saw a number of years ago verified that on a percentage basis there were far more first-borns who were clergy than one would expect from random choice. And that applied to both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

If you don't know it from personal experience, ask around: many second and third borns etc. will tell you their older brother was just a pain to have around. Never caused any trouble, or at least their parents never knew about it. Many will also tell you they were always being compared to that older brother and usually the comparisons were not favourable, as in "I don't know why you can't be more like your older brother. He never did anything like..."

Our text from Hebrews 2 tells us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters. Depending on your family experience you might ask, "Do I want a brother like Jesus?" Jesus is perfect, without sin. What does that mean? Will Jesus spend all his time pointing out my faults and failings? Is that the sort of brother he is?

Jesus is both a brother and a high priest according to the author/preacher of Hebrews. *Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested* (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

In the providence of God the Father, God the Son became a human being in the person of Jesus, born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth. The author/preacher of Hebrews is going to speak more fully in later chapters about the sort of high priest Jesus is. Here he wants us to know that Jesus is fully human, so that he can understand and sympathize with our faults and frailties, but while fully human, Jesus is without sin and therefore able to offer himself, according to the plan of God, as a sacrifice of atonement for our sin. Jesus is the reason we are saved!

This Sunday, March 13 the sermon will look at three of the images for Jesus used in Hebrews 2—brother, captain, king. I look forward to seeing some of you in-person at 9:30 a.m. and some watching the live-stream.

The Rev. Dr. Bill Norman

Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you that Jesus became fully human and would become our brother. Thank you that because Jesus tasted death that we can be certain that death has been defeated. Please help us to grow in our understanding of this reality, that we might rejoice in you and be transformed through your grace to be effective servants of your Kingdom. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Diving Deeper

What memories do you have of a brother or sister when you were a child? If you were an only child, did friends have siblings and stories about those brothers and sisters?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to *taste death for everyone*? Why having died is Jesus now *crowned with glory and honour*?

In the sermon Bill refers to Jesus as being for us brother, captain and king. Explain what those concepts mean. Does one of them hold more meaning for you than the other two? Why?

Suffering is part of everyone's life. Hebrews 2:18 says that because Jesus suffered *he is able to help those who are being tested*. Have you found that to be true? How did Jesus help you in your time of testing or suffering?

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?