

**Jesus is... Human**  
**Heb 2:5-18, John 1:14**

Well brothers and sisters, last Sunday we started this series on Jesus is... by saying that as disciples and followers of Jesus we are at our best when we have a high view of Jesus and then we looked at what it meant to confess that Jesus is God.

This morning I want to state additionally that we are at our best as followers and disciples of Jesus when we also have a high view of human beings.

I mean human beings really are amazing, aren't they? Where does one start? Perhaps in the past as we see the monuments of great achievement, the Pyramids, Machu Pichu, the Roman Colosseum, built without any of the modern technology that we have today.

Maybe it's the arts, great composers of music – Mozart, Bach Beethoven... Taylor Swift and Nickleback 😊, great painters like Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Van Gogh. Great sculptors like

Rodin, playwrights like Shakespeare, movie makers like Steven Spielberg, actors like Sir Christopher Lee...

Maybe it's great minds of the philosophers and the scholars, Aristotle, Plato, Confucius, Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Hawking.

Or great kings and queens, emperors and world leaders like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Constantine, Justinian the Great, Queen Victoria, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King Jr, JFK, Queen Elizabeth.

We see amazing accomplishments of famous athletes, Wayne Gretzky, Tom Brady, Pele, Maradona, Hussain Bolt, Muhammed Ali, sorry if your favorite sports hero didn't make the example list...

And we see wonderful displays of compassion and sympathy and charity, like the outpouring of support for the Bills Damar Hamlin's toy drive after his cardiac arrest during a football game.

Or perhaps it's the quiet determination and grit, the commitment and perseverance, the underlying morality, of someone whom you know and admire who has lived a good life as a husband or wife, or a parent, or an employer or a friend.

Human beings are truly amazing creatures and we are at our best as disciples of Jesus Christ if we have a high view of them. However...

The amazing aspects of humanity are not all that we see in this view. Let's work it backwards shall we. For every person that we know and admire there are a dozen who have let us down, betrayed us, attacked us, and are untrustworthy and immoral.

And the cynic in us can look at all the public support for Daman Hamlin and say that's wonderful but why don't people willing give to help out their local homeless shelter or foodbank in the same way?

And many amazing athletes have turned out to be using steroids and performance enhancers – lying about it for years until finally coming clean – Lance Armstrong.

And the great kings and queens and leaders of this world all have their dark sides, having to establish and maintain their rule through conquest and war and brute force, and then you get those leaders who embody that and so much more like Hilter, Stalin, Idi Amin and our own current Fed gov't who seems hell bent on legalizing death and immorality and has made it a criminal violation to try and persuade people otherwise.

And much of the current political agenda is a direct result of post-modern philosophy and academics like Jacques Derrida who say there is no absolute truth, its all relative. This has been combined with neo-Marxism to produce the incredible divisive and socially undermining concept of critical race theory, which isn't to say that the prior worldviews of modernity and merit-based classical liberalism didn't have their own problems.

And the arts... where else can one push the boundaries of what is considered to be decent moral behavior and get away with it as “art” - in any and all forms, all I need to say is “Hollywood” and or “Cardi B” and you know exactly what I’m talking about.

And the great monuments in history – how did so many people become motivated to participate in these enormous building projects? Forced labor with no regard for the lives of the workers.

And so, brothers and sisters, it is challenging to have a high view of humanity because when we look at ourselves... we see both truly amazing things and really terrible things – And this self-contradiction undermines our ability to know who we really are because we have this conflicting evidence and experience. Are we amazing creature or are we terrible creatures?

And if we are honest, we can see this same contradiction as we look at our own reflection in the mirror, and perhaps you

even noticed it being referenced in the scripture passage we read from Hebrews this morning.

The amazing aspects of humanity are referred to in this passage as the writer implies in vs 5 that the world to come, the new heavens and the new earth, will be subjected by God... to human beings – we will rule over it. Amazing!

He then quotes Psalm 8:4-6 to show this was always God intention for us, creating us only slightly lower than the angels for now until the new creation, crowning us with glory and honor meaning we were created in God’s image, and thus everything was put under our feet. We were created with a purpose, a calling to rule as God’s representatives over the entire creation. Amazing stuff! Maybe you caught this?

And there’s some other “amazing” references as well that you probably didn’t catch – because we’re not O.T. Jews - but there are additional O.T. quotes that would have stood out to you if you were.

In vs. 12 he quotes Ps 22:22 which talks about proclaiming God's name and praising Him in worship, and then in vs. 13 he quotes Isaiah 8:17-18 where Isaiah professes his conviction that he is called to be God's prophet.

This reveals that human beings are capable of a special kind of relationship with God where we speak to God and God speaks to us. Amazing!

And out of all the human beings on earth God chose the humans of Israel and gave them the responsibility to be His representatives to all other humans. He would bless all nations through them and let them know about His salvation. So the references to Ps 22 and Isa 8 are the amazing capacity that humans have to be priests and prophets.

Which added to God's intention to have us rule over the earth means that human beings are supposed to be prophets, priests and kings... Amazing!

But there's also the contrasting and conflicting references to the terrible things that we humans do. The first reference is in vs. 8 *"yet at present... we do not see everything subjected to them"*

Now this says more by implication than it does through explanation.

But this statement is recognizing that the reason why human beings are not yet functioning, or existing in the full capacity of God's purpose to rule over the new heavens and the new earth, nor even ruling over the heavens and the earth in its current state to our full capacity is because of those terrible things we that do. It doesn't go into any detail about them it just explains the real consequence of it.

Which is interesting right? We typically think that the consequences of the terrible things we do are just the suffering and the pain and the destruction we see and experience – but the actual consequence is that we are prevented from entering into the full potential and plan that God has for humans to rule over the entire cosmos in our full

glory. We often miss this and we only focus on the results of suffering and pain and death, but its far more significant that just that.

Which isn't to say that this passage doesn't acknowledge those results – it does. Death gets mentioned in vs. 9, vs. 14 and 15 and suffering is mentioned in vs. 9 and vs. 10 and 18. So, the writer is fully aware that death and suffering exist as a result of the terrible things that we humans do, and they are terrible things in their own right as well.

But instead of seeing the terrible things as self-contradictory polar-opposites with regards to the amazing things we can do, as we typically tend to experience and see them - the writer of Hebrews gives us an insight which reveals they are actually connected. So, in vs. 17 and 18 we have references to sin and temptation - which is how the good and the bad are connected.

Brothers and sisters the amazing things we can do, and the terrible things that lead to suffering and death, are connected through our sin.

We are not a composite creation, a dualism of both good and bad potential and desires trapped together in our persons struggling and warring for dominance. like the classic cartoon illustration with the angel on one shoulder and the devil on the other. Though at face value it certainly looks and feels like it.

So I understand why some people might try to figure out who we are as humans by evaluating us through weighing out all the pros and cons. Is there enough evidence or is the evidence enough that we tip the scales towards amazing, can it compensate for all the terrible things?

If so, then whatever else we are, humanity is at least generally good. Or is it the opposite? and thus the verdict is that humanity is what is actually what is wrong with the world. We are the devil.

Others see it as a matter of progress and evolution. Since humans are just products of random chance evolution who continue to evolve and progress - all the amazing things that

we do are evidence of that evolutionary progress, and all the terrible things we do indicate where we still need to evolve beyond whatever baser instincts or ignorance from the past still is still hanging around in us – but we can get past that if we just go along with the progress and evolve past it.

Which certainly sounds noble, and there is certainly room for us to grow as we learn more about how God created this world to operate - but when you actually look at what people have been suggesting that we need to evolve past, you'll see they are suggesting we need to move beyond the limits and laws by which God structures creation and designed reality so that it would be a blessing to us.

Yes, there is more potential in us than what we are currently demonstrating and experiencing – we read as much in this chapter of Hebrews. We are not fully functioning as prophets priest and kings, but it is not God's limits and laws for creation which prevent us from "*having everything subject to us*" at this time – it is Sin.

As human beings we have only one holy purpose, we consist of only one thing, our whole being is created and designed to be in God's Image and to have all things put under our feet. This is what we do... this is who we are...

But sin, which is far more than individual terrible things we do, twists and warps and makes us rebel in this one thing – we are born into this state of being, in every aspect of what our humanity consists of – biological, emotional, mental, and spiritual is affected by sin, and suffering and we are heading towards death, and under the power of the devil.

And here's where the amazing thing and terrible things are connected through sin... because whether we do amazing things, or whether we do terrible things it is all affected by sin. The terrible things we do bring in suffering and pain and death and despair... and the amazing things we do give us a false hope that maybe there's nothing wrong with us, that maybe we can tip the scales to outweigh the bad, that there's hope maybe we'll evolve past those things... and then there is all

the pride and self-righteousness that appears when we look like we're making progress.

So amazing things or terrible things aren't polar opposites from the viewpoint of the scripture, they are both evidence that we are made in God's Image but warped and twisted by sin.

Now the radical honesty of how sin affects every aspect of our humanity in this way, total depravity as the Reformed fathers called it, is often accused of being a very low view of humanity, a "*we are worms*" view, but in fact it is the highest view of humanity that you can have. What other view of human beings do you know of that can be summarized with our purpose to be prophets priests and kings?

So, brothers and sisters when you see the terrible things we do, when you see humanity at its worst, it only illustrates how far we've fallen from our created purpose, and when we see humanity doing amazing things it only hints at what could be

possible for us and this creation were it not for the sin that affects us. It's a high view of humanity brothers and sisters.

And all of this is very important in developing a high view of human beings in order to help us be at our best as disciples and followers of Jesus. Because are we not at our best when we are helping others worship Jesus like priests and interceding for them and their cares and concerns in prayer?

Are we not at our best when we are speaking for God, teaching people about Him and explaining and applying His word to their lives?

Are we not at our best when we are ruling as kings over our responsibilities and relationships that God has given us to take care of and ensure all is being done to please and honor him?

So, just like last week were we needed to draw on all that God had previously revealed about Himself in scripture to inform us of what we are confessing when we say Jesus is God, we need the foundational and creational truth revealed in

scripture about what it means to be human so that we understand what we confessing when we say Jesus is... human.

Too many people – even a lot of believers and followers of Jesus see His incarnation, His becoming human, as just a sympathetic gesture whereby a transcendent, distant, unknowable God becomes easier to relate to as a human.

For others Jesus' humanity is an example of the kind of person we should all aspire to be like in order to help tip the scales of whether we are good or terrible towards the good – he is one of those few significant human exemplars who can inspire us... someone who had evolved ahead of His time but was willing to work within the primitive religious beliefs and understandings of His time to teach about love and sacrifice and so on.

And that is the temptation we face brothers and sisters – to see Jesus with a low view of humanity, to talk about him as human in a way that validates and affirms our current state of

being under the power of sin and death and our efforts to try to improve ourselves, and as such we deny our purpose and calling as prophets priests and kings.

But seeing Jesus with a high view of humanity means that as vs. 9 says *“we see Jesus... who was made lower than the angels, we see Him now crowed with glory and honor”* That glory and honor Jesus has in this reference is not an indicator of His divinity brothers and sisters, it's the glory and honor that God intended for our humanity.

Seeing Jesus is human is saying that Jesus is the one who makes a way for humanity to finally achieve what God originally intended for us, that's why in vs. 10 he is called *“the pioneer”* that's why it speaks about *“bringing many sons and daughters to glory.”*

But for Jesus to redeem humanity in this way means that He had to go as far down as we have fallen in order to raise us up. In order to restore what had been lost theologically, He had to enter into being human biologically – and emotionally and



mentally and spiritually, as vs. 17 confirms *“he had to be made like them in every way.”*

He had to go down to where we are suffering and experiencing death and walk through that – not to empathize with our sin, to affirm it, to say *“its alright, I understand, you’re only human after all...”* Being human isn’t an excuse it’s a high high calling!!

Instead, Jesus had to come out on the other side of it and make a path through temptation, suffering and death that gets back to our true purpose. So vs. 14 says *“he too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death -the devil, and free those who all their lives where held in slavery by their fear of death”* and vs. 18 *“because he himself suffered when he was tempted. He is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

So Jesus’ humanity helps our humanity not through inspiration for us to do amazing things, nor through empathy or sympathy or relatability in all the suffering and pain or sinfulness we are

in... but as vs. 17 say that as a *“merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, he might make atonement for the sins of the people”* So, one way to explain this is that Jesus doesn’t make excuses for our sin, He makes atonement for it.

Now in March, we’re going to take a much closer look at everything that’s involved in Jesus’ atonement for our sin leading up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday in April so I’m just going to leave it with that saying this morning...

Jesus doesn’t make excuses for our sin, He makes atonement for it.

Because what the writer of Hebrews really wants us to understand about Jesus being human isn’t so much about Him as it is about us, who we are, what our purpose is, and how Jesus restores that to us in who He is and what He does.

And when we understand that brothers and sisters we can fully co-operate with Him and follow Him on that path.

Even though that path may lead through suffering and through death – we know on the other side of that we are raised to the glory of having all things put under our feet, as our brother, the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for us.

Compared to what is coming brothers and sisters, suffering and death in this present life are insignificant...

And because of what is coming... reigning with our brother the Lord Jesus Christ over all things, we can act in anticipation of that, act in faith, act as a sign-post towards that coming reality, by seeking first the Kingdom in all that we do now and as we live in this way, and tell people about this we are functioning as prophets – speaking God's word for what He is going to accomplish!

And we rule and reign over this world in our sinful capacity now – but the Holy Spirit is already beginning to transform us so that the amazing things we do can be offered to God through Jesus to honor and serve Him... so you are kings and queens brothers and sisters! Go act like it!

And lastly – remember we are priests. All the terrible things that we do can be forgiven, and God – in his amazing power and goodness – is able to bring some good out of them and use it for His purposes and plans. So let us be followers of Jesus who help others come to Jesus to receive His atonement for their sins.

Believe in this brothers and sisters, trust in this, whatever we are challenged with now as you seek to reign, or what you are struggling with to speak prophetically, whatever amazing things you might aspire to now in your priestly capacity of leading other people to Christ's atonement – you can do it, you will do it, because Jesus has! He is.... Human! Amen.