

## Themes for a Growing Church

### “Jesus Our Leader, Our Hero”

#### Hebrews 2:5-10, 14-15; Philippians 4:8-9

We're looking now for about six weeks at the foundations of a strong, godly and growing church. For the sake of the next chapters in the life of the church. Today I want to speak on Hebrews chapter two, which is a sort of a fresh perspective on the person and the work of Christ. Psalm eight was originally written. There's a creation psalm describing humanity, but Hebrews repurposes it and says, yes, it's about humanity, but really it is even more about Christ, the one who fulfills the original purposes God had for mankind. And if you were the kind of person who likes to know what's coming, I'm going to talk first of all about the human predicament that Hebrews describes. We need to know that. And then the way in which Hebrews distinctively describes the cure for all that is wrong in this world, calling Jesus, especially our hero or champion. We'll meditate on that and see how we can become little heroes like him as we're united to him by faith, which we read earlier today from Colossians three. So listen to God's Word as I read it to you.

*For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere. What is man that you are mindful of him, or the Son of Man that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet now, and putting subjection everything to him. He left nothing outside his control at present. I'm going to add the word. However, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him, but we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. It was fitting that he, Jesus, for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many and bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of these same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who, through fear of death, were subject to lifelong slavery.*

Let's pray for a moment. Heavenly father, give us ears to hear what you're saying in this marvelous and yet complex part of your word that describes who we long to be, who we are not, and Lord Jesus, who you are. We pray in Jesus name, Amen. And you may be seated.

Hebrews 2 describes the human desire for glory and how we fall short of that glory. I was looking at a group of photographs a few years ago of silver medalists from a recent Olympics, and they were, you know, runners and weightlifters and rowers and everything else. But the common thread was they had won a silver medal and there were photographs, 43 silver medal winners on the podium in their anguish at how close they came to gold. They were covering their faces. They were wiping away tears. They were looking at the person who won the gold. They were weeping. They were scowling. They were looking at the sky. They came so close. So close. Now what? What's happening here is that they longed for glory. They long not for some glory going to the Olympics. They longed for supreme glory. Gold. And while that's mistaken in some ways to desire to be better than everybody else, there is something in us.

Hebrews two and soulmate says, that desires glory. Now, Olympic glory is one thing, but ordinary people also want their life to be good. And indeed in some ways glorious. So we might say musicians such as we had up here want to play very well. They want to sing well, they want to hit all the notes. And when they do, that seems right and normal and good, not extraordinary. When a teacher, whether a teacher in the church or a teacher in grade school all the way to grad school teaches well, and the students are engaged and everybody's learning, we don't think, oh, how strange. We think that's the way it's supposed to be. We expect things to go well. There is there is a desire in human beings for the original order of the world before all the sin and disarray and disorder. There's a there's an everlasting desire for that. We wish life were better. We wish it internally and externally. And when we don't see it, we feel that things are not the way they're supposed to be.

That applies when we don't conduct ourselves the way we wish we would. It also applies when we read the news and we read about a flood yesterday. We think it shouldn't. It shouldn't happen. Or when there's a war between Israel and their neighbors, between Ukraine and Russia. Hot or cold war, media war, culture war. We think, why are we living like this?

This is not the way it's supposed to be. Now, if we feel that way and we do, and every generation does, it was certainly even more striking in Rome when the people in the church there received the letter we call Hebrews, because they had all the ordinary troubles of life, and they were also being persecuted for being Christians.

They had previously, about 12 years earlier, suffered loss of property, imprisonment, expulsion from the city, and they done so with good cheer. Hebrews 12:10,11,12 but 10 especially points out they had borne joyfully this time not so much. They're struggling, struggling greatly. This is not the way the world is supposed to be. Ever since the sin of Adam and Eve, ever since the fall of Jesus, the curse entered the world.

Ever since we first heard the words, we should fill the earth and subdue it and tend it and care for it. And that that became thorns and thistles. Ever since then we have a desire, an unfulfilled desire that Hebrews describes to put everything under our feet. That's what God did in the beginning. He put everything under the feet of Adam and Eve and their descendants, and we should rule it and we should govern it.

We should care for it. Well, in fact, Hebrews says, what is man that you're mindful of him? You mean a little lower than the angels. You put everything under his feet. And we think, really everything under my feet. I was in my backyard yesterday, walking around and noticing that spiky thing that grows in Alabama. Somebody will tell me the name of that spiky thing.

But, you know, it's really hard to get rid of. And I'm supposed to put the entire world under my feet, or at least my realm of the world, and I can't even control the weeds in my backyard. But that's not all. I have a hard time keeping my desk in order and my emails in order, and my files in the right place on my computer.

It's a pretty small thing. Things are out of order. We know we're supposed to govern the world says a little bit too grandiose, and we also know that we don't. Hebrews addresses the gap between what we know should be and what actually is. Now, I've been saying that the book of Hebrews takes this up, and it does, but takes it up here and there in the book and really hits it only in chapter 10, 11, 12, 13.

And before that, it doesn't say, let's look at the problem. It says, look, let's look at Jesus. That's how the book begins. Begins with words about Christ the Savior, the beginning of the book says Jesus is the Son of God. He's the radiance of God's glory. He created all things and sustains them. And then he made a purification for sins.

And then he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, and now all his enemies are under his feet. That's how it starts. Not by looking at our troubles, but by looking at Jesus, the one who solves our troubles. Now, in case you're wondering about this, Hebrews also points out that God has testified to us.

These are people living rooms. They didn't actually see Jesus. But he says, God testified to us that is through the eyewitnesses who wrote the Gospels. God testified to us by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the spirit, distributed according to his will. That's chapter two, verse four. That is to say, there is there is a message about Christ.

And we have heard good attestation to it. We heard about the way he governed and conquered the world. And beyond that we heard about what he did and beyond that, beyond the word, about what he did in the cross and his resurrection. We also had this attested to us by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

That is to say, we've heard objectively about what Jesus did, and we've also had at some objectively described to us and applied to us by the Holy Spirit. That means we can say, although I didn't see Jesus on earth, I saw him through his witnesses, and I have assurance, as perhaps you feel it when you sing a moving hymn that resonates with your heart.

It's not just words about God. I'm in my spirit field. Yes, this is what I believe. The Lord is the Ancient of Days. He's caring for us. And then Hebrews says, let's look at the Old Testament. Let's look at the fact that somewhere someone testified. Now he's quoting Psalm eight. He could have said that, but he's saying as a sort of a tiny little point for us.

Anytime we read the word of God, it's a testimony. And even if it's somebody, somewhere, we don't know who it was, it's still the word of God. And this is what God said. What is man that you're mindful of him? Son of man. You care for him. You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor, put everything under his feet.

Everything. We think that's a lot. Creation's big. We can have another discourse on the grandeur and the size of creation. I'll just give you one short one. Today. Most of you know that the sun is 93 million miles from the earth. You know that, right? Yes. And you know, it takes about eight minutes, a tiny bit less, actually, for light to go from the sun to the earth.

And then there's one object we can see through a telescope, and it's called the Crab Nebula. And it takes light 11 years to cross it. That's really big. You see how big the answer is 65 to 70 trillion miles. You say, I don't know what that means. I say, I don't know it either, but it's a lot. And God has put this under government.

And he says, in this world, the government of this world is under humans. God delegated it to us even in all of our brokenness, our sins and follies, we're still crowned with glory and honor and flocks and herds and birds and beasts and fish are under us. And we think again, it's just so grand. It sounds grandiose, it doesn't sound credible.

And so he says, I'm going to double down. God left nothing that is not subject to him. Chapter two, verse eight says, everything is subject to us and we think it can't be true. And then Hebrews and verse nine alleviates this tension. We feel and says, yet we do not. We don't see it, but we do see him that Him as Jesus.

Jesus is the one who still fulfills the original mandate to mankind. We don't see humans ruling well. We see hot wars, cold wars, culture wars, media wars, political wars. We see. I read this recently seven, eight, 8 million people still dying every year of hunger or bad water. That's 20,000 a day. That's eight a minute. We've done so much of it.

So much progress is still eight people every minute. We want to rule. Well. And even when I say that, some people say, do we really? 2400 years ago, Plato created a document and a and a

person, a man, a fictitious man. He called him Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus was sophist and a skeptic. And he said in the book *The Republic*, which is about governing a good society through Simic, is said, justice is nothing but the interest of the stronger, that is, whoever holds power, whoever makes rules, whoever says this is a just government is actually doing it just to get their way.

They make rules that keep them in power, that keep them in a position of privilege. Plato said this 24 years ago. The more recent form of this skepticism about anybody want to do anything well comes from evolution, which says we're just an accidental collocation of atoms, just atoms that bumped into each other. There's no grandeur, no hope. We just have a desire to live, to reproduce, to keep our species going.

There's nothing grand. People say the misery we see is unending. So says the secular person. And maybe some people here have that idea. Hebrews gives you a different idea. The idea of Hebrews is, yes, the world is a disaster. Things are not under the feet of mankind in a constructive way, but we do see someone who does rule over the world.

We see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, took flesh and blood. If mankind did not complete the mission, God gave us a man, the true man, the true Israelite, the God-Man. Jesus Christ did we do see things under Jesus? In fact, if you look at and we're going to pop the verses up here, here they are for us.

If you look at the text, you see that Hebrews actually wove a little summary of the life of Jesus into the lines in verse seven. He's a little while lower than the angels. That's his incarnation and then his exaltation. He's crowned with glory and honor. And then in verse eight, his triumph, everything is under his feet. And then the means in verse nine, by the grace of God, he tasted death for everyone.

That's how he defeated the human problem. Jesus took flesh and blood. We have flesh and blood. He partook of our flesh and blood so he could cure our flesh and blood. He tasted death. Now, you might think it's a little bit strange, but I, after living here for a, you know, year and a half or so, I started looking up the traits of Birmingham.

You would think I would have done it earlier, and I did a little, but I dug a little deeper and I found out and it resonated with my experience. My wife and I have experienced this is a foodie kind of town. When people want to get together with you, yes, they want to go to football games and basketball games, but they really what they want to do is take you to good food.

And when we eat good food, we taste it. We see that's good. We're having a taste testing contest. We taste now. That's the way we talk about taste here and now. But in the Bible, when it talks about tasting, it means more than nibbling or trying something. It means experiencing something. That is to say what it says. Jesus tasted death.

It doesn't mean he went to a restaurant and had a little side dish. It means that he fully experienced death. He died and then he rose, defeating the one who holds the power of death, which you talked about a minute. So he did this in bringing many sons the glory, as the passage says. So he experienced death on behalf of others.

That's verse nine. Verse ten says, in doing so he brings many sons and daughters to glory. Jesus didn't just die and rise. He took many people with him. And verse 14 says, he vanquished our enemy, the devil. And having the rest of the chapter says, having been tempted and resisted and proven faithful, he is now our sympathetic and powerful high priest.

Hebrews 2:10 says, this is fitting. This is fitting. Now that makes me think a little bit. What do you mean? It's fitting? That seems like an odd way to describe the work of Christ. It's fitting that Jesus do this well. It does fit, if you think about it in a lot of ways, it fits because God cares about his creation.

And when it went awry, he wanted to restore it. So it fits that the creator cares for his creation, will want to fix it as a whole, and also in us. That's one second it fits because God is gracious and good and compassionate. We read anything about Jesus in the Bible when he talks to people and heals people, he sees people are hungry.

It says he had compassion. He had pity. He had mercy. That's who Jesus is. It fits that he would do something to alleviate our suffering. It also fits God's character because God is love. As the Bible says, it fits for him. Verse ten says, it was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist, and bring many sons the glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Now that word founder is interesting. If you had ten translations, it would probably be four different ways that word founder is rendered. The word in the original is archaia. In Greek, archaia means first or leader. Sorry, it means chief, and August means first or leader. So chief leader first leader. And so it gets translated as author. That is to say, Jesus offered, he's the first one to lead us to salvation.

He's the chief who led us to salvation. So author is a good translation, but champion works too because he didn't just lead us, he also destroyed the one who had the power of death, the one who would have barred the path, barred the way from death to life. So Jesus is our champion. He defeated our enemy. Jesus is the pioneer.

He's the first one, and we get to follow him. He is author, hero, sometimes translated champion, pioneer. It's all the same idea, different words are used for it. The children took flesh and blood. He took flesh and blood. He partook of death. He destroyed the one who had the power of death. That is the devil. Now, this isn't usually where we think about Jesus.

I will admit to you, but it is what the Bible is saying here. Jesus is our champion, our hero, our trailblazer. And it should be clear that Jesus is a champion in that he defeated Satan. What does it say about Satan? There is.

So young Jesus prayed it. He prayed it. Satan has some kind of a little bit of a hold over us, and the hold over us is that he says, you're guilty, you're sinful. You do not have the right to stand in the presence of a holy God. It's true. The accuser of the brethren accuses them. Day and night, however, has been silenced by Christ.

The accusation rings out. Jesus says, good point. It's true. But revelation 12:10 the accuser who accuses day and night has been hurled down. The saints have overcome him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. So the blood of the lamb took on that death that we deserve. Satan says, you don't deserve. You deserve to die.

You don't deserve to be with God. Jesus says, good point. I will take the death I deserve. You don't deserve to be in God's presence because you are unholy. Jesus says, I will give them my holiness. And so the accuser is silenced. And then the word of testimony is, I belong to Jesus. I belong to him, and therefore I claim the benefits he offers for me.

This is how Satan is silenced. This is what a champion does. Now you may say, well, this is healing to me. I don't think of Jesus this way. This isn't the way we think. Let me tell you. Actually, the idea of champions is woven into our world. For example, living here in the fair city of Birmingham, in the fair state of Alabama, I have learned that people care about college sports.

They care about Alabama and Auburn. Above all, know you know, I'm not trying to destroy or anything, but these are the schools that we care about. And if Alabama's football or basketball team or Auburn's football or basketball team defeats a team from Georgia or Tennessee, we say things like, we won, you didn't win. You're not on the team.

You didn't play. You're 67 years old. You most certainly did not win. But you say we won because believe it or not, you were regarding those tall, strong, muscular young men as your champions. They're fighting, if you will, for the whole state of Alabama.

Politics. People run for office. The Democrats, especially presidential campaigns, put forth their champion, the one who so they hope best embodies the principles and of that party. And then if they win the election, what do people say? Republicans say we want Democrats say we won as if you won. I mean, your champion won. That's what you're trying to say.

That applies. It's even in the Bible. You know, when David fought Goliath, we viewed as, you know, courageous young lad fighting a giant, which it is. But it tells us in the Bible that this occurred in a town called Soka, which is 17 miles from Jerusalem. It's more than half way from

the coast where the Philistines dwell to the center of Israel, and the two armies are arrayed against each other.

Nobody wants to fight each other and do a literal uphill battle. And so the proposition goes out, let's get a champion. And if your champion Goliath wins will be subject to you. And if your champion Israel David wins, the Philistines will be subject to Israel. Now all this prefigures the work of Christ who fought the champion of darkness.

Goliath is a type of form, a prefiguring of Satan, and David is a prefiguring of the way in which Jesus destroyed the one who would attack and destroy God's people. So, in fact, champions are not only part of our experience, they're part of the Bible. Now, in our experience, there's a little bit of a problem with champions.

The problem is that our champions are often one dimensional, and if you're a great musician, you may have a musician who's a champion, but their life is a disaster. In fact, they died of a drug overdose at the age of 60. And so they're your champion, but they're not. While we're talking about Alabama and sports, there's a man named Charles Barkley who played for Auburn years ago, who was a stupendously gifted basketball player and a pretty intelligent man, a commentator on sports.

But his life is a little bit erratic, maybe a lot erratic. And one time, after he threw a man through a sheet of glass in a bar brawl, somebody said, Charles, your life. He said, listen, I am not a role model. He's a champion of basketball, is a good basketball analyst. But don't look at his life. He was smart enough to say it.

Don't look at your heroes too closely. Then, of course, there's a counter to that. We create superheroes, heroes, you know, like Thor and Captain America and so forth. But they're not very good champions either, because you notice how very often they're isolated, they're orphans, they're childless, they're unmarried. Who wants to be that kind of a champion? We want a good champion.

We want one who's truly noble, who defeats evil and lives an exemplary life. You know where I'm going. That's what we have. Friends. That's what we have in Jesus. He is the champion, the founder, the protector of our life, the true hero. He's an answer to all the cynicism. Don't look. Don't meet your heroes. We say you'll be disappointed.

Jesus will not disappoint you. Silence the cynicism. But we also read before, the sermon. We read two passages. Philippians chapter four say, young wisely said, notice what Paul says, and he doesn't just say, think about what's beautiful, excellent, and godly and so forth. He said, consider how I modeled this for you. And you can say that because we read Colossians three, you've died with Christ, you've risen with Christ.



You're not he with Christ as you as you belong to him, you can become more and more like him. That's actually our destiny as Christians to be more and more like Christ. And so Jesus is the son, the true hero and champion, and we're like moons to reflect this light to the world. And we can look for each other to do this.

We can hope God does it in us. We can watch it in other people. So 28 times the New Testament says, imitate somebody. And about half the time it tells us to imitate God, and about half the time it tells us to imitate a human. Now, if we didn't have the commands, we would think, this is crazy. Who would dare to say, you know, hey, what's your goal in life, friend?

My goal is to imitate God and become more and more like God. We'd think you're a lunatic. You're grandiose. We say, well, but the Bible says that. The Bible says things like welcome one another as Christ welcomed you. So it says, be like Christ. And then we would say it's lunacy to imitate another human because we're also flawed.

But the Bible tells us to do that, to. Paul says, for example, in one place, you know, you all stopped working because you thought the Lord was going to come again soon. You need to keep working the way I did, the way I kept working with my hands to take care of myself and the people around me follow my example.

And so I urge you to look around for examples. Now, in a church of size like this, there's an enormous tendency to look to maybe your discipleship leader and maybe the senior pastor and various other are there folks. And I believe pastor Red is a wonderful man and we will learn from his example, surely. But look, for many, let me tell you about a person who was my example for a while.

His name is Willard McMillan, not a person who's famous in the ways of the world. When I was 32 years old, I became a new college professor and I was a member of the Bible department, and he was the head of the department. He was 62 years old. He had survived cancer twice by this time. It left him weakened.

His hair had been blasted and came back with little random hairs on top of his head. It also another cancer weakened his voice, which was thin and raspy, and he kind of was stooped over. He was never a big man. He was five foot nine, maybe weighed 130 pounds, something like that. But he was absolutely my hero. He was my hero because I watched the way he conducted himself in our classes, which we taught together.

300 students. In the fall Old Testament survey in the Spring New Testament survey, as you can imagine, in a class of 300 people, freshman classes, a number of people were getting grades they didn't like, and so they would come and visit us. But the way it fell out, he was the department chairman. His office was here at the beginning of the corridor and mine was at the end.

So they went to his office first because they were angry and they wanted to talk to the first person available. And it was Doctor McMillan. And I noticed that people went into his office angry, and they came out happy, smiling and laughing, even. And I thought, you know what? I'm going to leave my door open the next time a student comes galumphing down the hall and see how he does it.

So here's how he did it. He would let the student talk themselves out and hear the student say, you hate me because I'm on the football team. No, no. But he wouldn't even interrupt it. Just you say what you want to say, and then he would say, okay, fine. Why don't we take a look at your grades and see why you have a C minus right now?

Okay. So your first quiz, your score was a 32. and your second quiz, you came all the way up to a 51. That is a wonderful improvement. But 51 still out of 100. And then the midterm you got a 63. Another nice improvement. And by the end of the semester you had an 81 on one quiz. And on the final exam you got a 75, which is clearly better than your midterm.

And so what do you think your grade should be? And the student would look at the average, which was 59, and say I think I'm failing. He said. But you see you have a C minus because I'm taking into account your progress and they go out happy.

And I thought, this is a good example of how to handle difficult people. And then at meetings, meetings, we had faculty meetings with about 75 people. And everybody would talk, talk, talk, talk. And then Doctor Hamilton would wait and never say anything till the end. And then he would he would notice what no one had said that was important and would weave it in with the good points everybody else had made.

And I thought, that's why I want to do it. That's the way to live. He was my hero because these acts of his are Christ like, and we can look for people around us who have some of the light of Christ. No one is perfectly like Christ. Of course, don't imitate anybody completely and don't imitate the silly things.

Decide things like they wear a pocket square or they growl when they make a really important point. Don't imitate incidentals. Imitate people when what they're doing is reflecting the light of Christ in their life. That is how we imitate each other. Why do I say this? I say it because the Bible says again, welcome one another as Christ welcomed you.

Hebrews 13 A little bit later, remember your leaders. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. That's Hebrews 13 seven, Philippians chapter four, which you read a moment ago. Whatever you've learned or received or heard or seen in me, Paul dares to say, practice these things so we can have Jesus as our main hero, and yet have subordinate heroes who show some elements of the life of Christ.

And I tell you, this is a really helpful matter as we try to live the Christian life. Now, what I mean by that is this a lot of people think the Christian life is essentially a matter of believing in Jesus, having your sins forgiven, and then following the rules. And the rules are largely negative. Don't do this, don't do that.

And some are positive. Do this. And I tell you, a lot of Christians have this idea, in part because the law itself is good and it warns us about sin and it teach us how to live. So the law is good, but we don't simply live by the law. And the essence of the Christian life is not law.

Keeping, even though a lot of Christians think it is. About ten years ago, I was invited to speak to a group of young Christian leaders, 18 to 23 years old, 25 people from good churches, reformed churches, PCA churches, handpicked leaders of college. Among college students. These are our best and brightest college students and brand new college grads.

Okay, they're the ones who are making disciples. And for some reason, the middle, I decided, ad libbed and decided to ask them, how many of you think the essence of the Christian life is that you don't do things that people your age often do, smoke and drink and experiment in various ways. And it's a few things you do that most of your peers don't like.

Go to church, pray, read the Bible, and try to honor your parents. How many of you think that's the essence of the Christian life? I had asked as plain as I could, and of 25, 23.5 said, yes, that's the essence of the Christian life. I see 23.5 because one student was going like this. I couldn't decide. 23 said yes.

Do's and don'ts. That's the essence. Friends, do's and don'ts are not the essence of the Christian life. The essence of the Christian life is to know Christ. It will become more and more like him. That's the essence. And as we become more like Christ, we begin to reflect some of his beauty and excellence and wisdom in this world.

What do I mean by that? I mean that you can look around and learn from fellow Christians. Paul says it many times, brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes. This is Philippians 3:17 and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. So don't just look at me. Paul says, look at Christ, look at me.

Look at other people who live as I live.

How did Jesus live? How does that teach us? Well, I notice that Jesus would talk to anybody. You wonder how to live socially. Jesus would talk to anybody. Jews and Gentiles, men and women. He would talk to children, his disciples said, paraphrasing Jesus, what are you doing messing around with children? He said, let the children come to me because of such as the kingdom of God.

That's why I'm offering Hershey's Kisses, because all your lovely grown ups come and talk to me after church, and I never get to hang out with the kids. So I'm trying to fix that because Jesus loved children. And we should love children. If you want to love children, watch people who are good with children. I have a friend who's a child whisperer.

His name is Mark Futuro. He's a PCA pastor, an elder and teacher. And when children see him, they just kind of gravitate to him and want to sit with him. Why? Because he's a gentle voice and he moves slowly and gently, and children are just drawn to his manifest gentleness. Gentleness. And it is gentle voice and he'll say things like, hey kids, would you like me to tell you a story?

And they come. And if you're not great with kids, watch people who are. If you try to talk to kids and they don't talk to you, try this, which I learn from somebody. Get down on one knee and get on their level, and then they'll feel better. And if that doesn't work, lie on the floor and invite them to jump on you.

And that really will make friends with kids a lot.

And if you don't know how to go about life's business, maybe you get in a difficult conversation. Watch how Jesus converses with difficult people. He never shied away from a question or a controversy, and sometimes if someone was harsh, he'd be strong back to them. But other times he would answer the question people should have asked, as if he's saying, hey, you're getting at a really important issue, but I'm not going to answer quite the way you said.

I'm going to answer the question I wish you'd asked, and the question that's most helpful to you. And we can do that as well. So we grow friends, brothers, sisters when we keep our eyes on Jesus, our hero, our champion, and when we keep our eyes on the people who have kept their eyes on Jesus and are transformed bit by bit, and we see everything that's beautiful about Jesus is fearlessness, is courage, is combat against evil, his way with children, his way with outsiders.

And we think, yeah, I can ally with him. I can call him my hero. And when I fail to walk as he wants me to walk, he's my hero. And the other says he's the one who defeats the evil one. And I'm going to look around and find other believers who, by the grace of God, by the Spirit of God, have become beautiful little heroes in this world that we live in together.

Let's pray. The father, I thank you for. Sending your son to partake in human flesh. Indulge. Partake, but also to taste death. And now, Lord Jesus, you're crowned with glory and honor, and you offer us a portion of this glory by making us your sons and daughters, and sanctifying us, and calling us brothers, members of your family, and making us more and more like yourself.

And so, Lord, we thank you for this, and we ask that you would transform us by your truth applied to us, by your spirit, lived out together in the community of the faithful. And we prayed in Jesus name. Amen.