

HEBREWS 2:5-12
WE SEE JESUS

What makes a good friend? Someone who loves and cares for us; someone who knows us and who knows things about us; someone who understands us and understands what makes us tick and who is always ready to support us no matter what! We rejoice when we find a friend like that! There are not many like them, but everybody needs one! I once visited a man who had been in hospital and was now home. He had two grandsons and one of them had been happy to visit his grandpa in hospital, but the other one wouldn't go! I discovered that the one who would visit his grandpa had himself been in hospital; he knew what it was like and so he wanted to visit his grandpa to support him; the other one hadn't and so didn't know what it was like and stayed away. Good friends understand us, walk in our shoes as it were and help us.

Christians affirm, rightly so, that Jesus is the Son of God. The whole New Testament tells us that Jesus is the Son of God and is worthy of worship and honour. Hebrews is probably a sermon preached to a group of Christians to encourage them in their faith; they were in danger of drifting away from the faith or giving it up altogether because life was too hard, faith was too costly. So Hebrews is written to encourage them: "*We must...*" (*Hebrews 2:1*) This great salvation that we have is something that God has done for us in Jesus; Jesus is someone to trust for really good reasons!

"Who is Jesus?" is the big question. We affirm that He is the Son of God. Especially today, the writer to Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is one of us at the same time as being the Son of God. "*Both the...*" (*2:11*) Here is the heart of this passage: Jesus shares our humanity with us; He is part of the same human family! The Son of God shared our flesh and blood. This is such an important other side of coin when ask the big question "who is Jesus?" Yes, He is the Son of God; but He is also a complete human being. He shares our human nature completely; He is made like us in every way, so that He can help us. Everything about us, every part of our human nature, every human emotion, every difficult circumstance, every question in our hearts about faith – Jesus understands all of these things because He understands us; He knows us as we are.

Not only does He know and understand our human nature, He also shared in the most profound parts of our lives. "*He suffered...*" (*2:9b*) "*it was...*" (*2:10*) Suffering and death – this is the complete Saviour. Some people tell us that Jesus' suffering was a tragic accident and such a waste of human life. Sun Myung Moon died recently and when his teaching first hit the streets in late 1970's lots of people were persuaded by some of the things he said. He saw himself as the messiah, come to complete the work that Jesus started; Jesus got it wrong, he claimed; His death was a mistake and He should have been married and started a family and so Moon had come to set that right. The whole New Testament tells a very different story: suffering and death were exactly why Jesus came; death was Jesus' obedience to the will of God; suffering completed His service. This is not some bizarre wish to suffer for the sake of it, but suffering and death was the way to complete our salvation; Jesus did this for us. He shared in human suffering and death in order to bring us to God. His resurrection was the proof that it worked.

"Pay attention!" The Communion service is brilliant for drawing us back to things at the centre of Christian faith, brilliant at reminding us what matters. The bread and wine show us in picture form what the Bible tells us in words: Jesus, died and raised, is the Saviour for ever. Let nothing take His place! It is so easy for other things, even church things, to

become the driving force of our lives: getting our own way in decision-making, being seen at the front, having our name in lights. Work, money, possessions, success, ambition - all kinds of things can become the driving force, the thing above all else that defines and determines our life. Communion reminds us that Jesus and the cross should shape our lives; the cross should be the one thing that defines and shapes us as people. "Pay attention" so that we declare – we believe in Jesus and Him crucified; "pay attention" so that we re-affirm what we have believed for many years; "pay attention" so that our attitudes, the way we think, speak and behave is shaped by the cross and by love and service to others.

Finally, Jesus became like us so that we might become like Him. "We see..." (2:9f) Jesus, once crucified, is now crowned with glory and honour, the King of Kings, Lord of Lord; glorious in the majesty of heaven. Our Christian hope is that one day we shall be with Him and be like Him, and share His glory. His mission is to transform people: that mission is begun here and now as we are changed little by little to become more like Jesus in the kind of people that we are; the Spirit is at work to begin that work of transformation in us here and now. It will be complete in heaven: we shall see Jesus face to face and be complete human beings, and share His glory. This is the promise of God; that is our hope.

"Pay attention!" – so that faith is stronger, so that love for Jesus is deeper, so that the desire to persevere in faith is stronger, so that we become more and more like Jesus. Communion shows us Jesus in bread and wine; pay attention to what we hear in Hebrews chapter 2; pay attention to what we see and taste in bread and wine; and rejoice in such a great salvation! This is gift of God to us!