

The Wednesday Word, May 14, 2014: He Became Like Us

Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

The Eternal Word became one of us in order to redeem us. Indeed, our verse says, “He was made like unto his brethren.” He took our nature and paid for us with His blood. If ever we were to have been saved, there was an absolute necessity for Christ to have become one of us. Consider our predicament: we were on earth and God was in heaven. We were polluted, but God was pure. We were unrighteous, but God was just. How then could He look upon us and grant us grace?

We were without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:12). We needed someone to span the immense divide between God and us and rescue us. But to do this, this rescuer would have to become low enough to reach the bottom of our pit (Genesis 18:27). He would also have to be high enough to reach the exalted glory of Yahweh (1 Timothy 6:16). But, where could we find someone low enough and high enough all at the same time? The answer was and is in Christ alone, our Great High Priest. He was and is the exclusive hope of sinners for He alone established the bridge between man and God.

He is now our great high priest and is according to our text both merciful and faithful! Mercy is an interesting word which is inseparably linked to the concept of misery. The objects of mercy are those who were in misery. Indeed, it is only the miserable who sue for mercy! In his misery, for example, Blind Bartimaeus cried out, “Jesus son of David have mercy on me” (Mark 10:47). In His mercy, our priest, the Lord Jesus destroyed the eternal misery of death and the grave for us! In mercy, He destroyed the misery of Satan’s authority over us. In mercy, He took away our sin and misery and reckoned us with His righteousness. He is our champion. Because of mercy, no believer need ever be destroyed by the misery of sin.

But not only is our high priest merciful, He is also faithful. In His faithfulness He finished His work (John 17:4). In His faithfulness, He is our present help in time of trouble! In His faithfulness, He brings all needed gifts and blessings of God to us. In His faithfulness, He understands and sympathizes with us. In His faithfulness, He helps and strengthens us. Because He is faithful, He can be trusted (1 Peter 2:6).

Don’t be mistaken, there is no access to God without a priest and there is no priest qualified to act on behalf of sinners but Jesus Christ. Unlike human priests, Jesus is perfectly holy. Unlike other priests, He understands all our temptations and struggles. Unlike other priests, He Himself is that one, perfect non-repeatable and finished offering for sin. Unlike other priests, in Him we encounter God. Unlike other priests, He will never die, for unlike other priests, He ever lives to make intercession for us. Unlike other priests, mercy and faithfulness meet together in Him. On this point, William Gouge says, “His mercifulness was the ground of His faithfulness and His faithfulness was the evidence of His mercy.

A Man there is, a real man,
With wounds still gaping wide,
(From which rich streams of blood once ran),
In hands and feet and side.
(Tis no wild fancy of our brains,
No metaphor we speak;

The same dear Man in heaven now reigns,
That suffered for our sake).
This wondrous Man of whom we tell
Is true Almighty God;
He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, His own heart's blood.

Joseph Hart

Jesus by His suffering and death has become our merciful and faithful high priest. He has ascended and has presented us to the Father and declared us unblameable and perfect. We are saved by His sacrifice for us, not by our sacrifice for Him. We are saved by His faithfulness to us, not by our strivings to be faithful to Him. We are saved by His merciful and faithful commitment to us, not by our failed efforts of total commitment to Him.

And that's the Gospel Truth!