HEBREWS 2:1-9
SINCE THE KING IS IN CONTROL...
SEPTEMBER 22, 2024
PASTOR RICK DUNCAN

JESUS IS BETTER

A Study in Hebrews

SERMON NOTES

Why should we never ever drift?
Jesus is King and in control. (vv. 5-9)

Already, but not yet.
When Jesus died and rose again, Colossians 2 tells is that He put to open shame the rulers and authorities and principalities and powers. The ultimate victory of Jesus is sure and certain! But right now we are waiting for the perfect fulfillment of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Christ Himself is "waiting... until all His enemies be made a footstool for His feet" (Hebrews 10:13). So, Jesus is in control already, but not yet fully. That's coming as His second coming. And on that day, He will restore all who believe in Him to our full humanity. He will reverse the curse. And we will rule and reign with Him forever. He's got it. And He's got you. And that means everything is going to be OK.

In The Glory of Christ, the Puritan John Owen wrote, "All power in heaven and earth is given to Christ... He reigns over all, visible and invisible." Even though we do not yet see everything subjected to Him in our day-to-day lives, we can trust Him. Another Puritan, Thomas Watson, wrote, "Christ is not only Lord paramount, but He is also Lord protector" (A Body of Divinity). Jesus is not only ruling but is also shielding us from ultimate harm.

How do we know that Jesus is King and in control? (vv. 3-4)
The 3 witnesses.

- The testimony of Jesus Himself. (v. 3b)
  - In Mark 4, when Jesus calmed the storm by rebuking the wind and waves, His disciples were amazed, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" He controls nature. All creation is subject to Him.
  - In Matthew 11:27 Jesus said, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father." He knew that He had been entrusted with universal authority by His Father in heaven.
  - In Matthew 28:18 after His resurrection, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." He has supreme control over everything, both spiritual and earthly realms.

- The testimony of His first followers. (v. 3c)
  - Those first followers – Peter, James, John, Matthew – that all heard Jesus with their own ears. And they passed on what He said and did.

- The testimony of miracles and gifts of the Spirit. (v. 4)
  - God Himself testified that Jesus is King and in control through signs, wonders, and miracles. The blind could see. Lame people walked. The deaf could hear. Jesus has authority. And the ultimate sign, the ultimate wonder, and the ultimate miracle was the resurrection. He dies on the cross and three days later, there was an empty tomb. Jesus has authority over sin, death, hell, and the grave!

Therefore... (vv. 1-3)

- Pay much closer attention. (v. 1a)
  - If Jesus is King and in control, we must pay much closer attention, not less! The Greek word for "pay closer attention" (prosechō) means giving careful consideration. It's focusing your mind. It's avoiding distraction.

- Don't deny the dangers of drift. (v. 1b)
  - *"There are few people who deliberately and in a moment turn their backs on God; there are many who day-by-day drift farther and farther away from Him. There are not many who, in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who, bit by bit, and almost imperceptibly, involve themselves in some situation, and suddenly awake to find that they have ruined life for themselves and broken someone else's heart." -William Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews, pp. 13-14*
  - *"People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated." -D. A. Carson*

- Don't neglect your salvation. (vv. 2-3a)
  - Notice this doesn't say, "How shall we escape if we reject such a great salvation?" It's neglect! The Greek word is ameléō. It means to be careless of or to be unconcerned about. It's not paying attention to something important.

A Prayer for those who have been Drifting

Father, I confess that I have drifted away from You, the King who's in control. I've allowed my circumstances to distance me from the joy I once had. I don't want to drift anymore. Please draw me back with cords of kindness. Anchor my soul in Your truth. Help me pay much closer attention and never neglect Your great salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

SEPTEMBER MEMORY VERSE

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 1:3

Christ is King and in Control: A Pastoral Prayer

Lord Jesus,

We praise You that You are King and in control. You are truly ruling and reigning (Revelation 19:16; Psalm 103:19). Nothing surprises You (Isaiah 46:9-10). You aren't wondering what's going to happen next (Daniel 2:21). We praise You for Your providential care and Your sovereign plan (Romans 8:28).

Forgive us for our fear and worry, for looking at the wind and the waves – at the seemingly catastrophic cultural currents – more than we look to You (Matthew 14:30). You alone are worthy of our trust (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank You that we are first and foremost citizens of Your heavenly Kingdom (Philippians 3:20). But keep reminding us that we still have the responsibility to strive to advance the values and virtues of Your Kingdom where we live and learn, work and play (Matthew 6:33).

You told us to pray that Your Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). And You have assigned us a responsibility, as Your people on this earth, to work and serve so Your Kingdom would be advanced here in the USA just as Your Kingdom is manifested in heaven (I Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 5:13-16).

This is the reason we care during this political season. We know we are not trying to elect a king. We already have a King! But help us to do what we can to elect political leaders who will enact positions and policies that will enable all people to be governed by the principles and practices of the Kingdom of Christ (Proverbs 29:2; I Timothy 2:1-2).

Help us to look intently at Your Word so we can understand the virtues and values of Your Kingdom (Psalm 119:105).

So, guide us, Lord! Motivate those of us who are not registered to vote, to get registered (James 4:17). May we, when deciding who to vote for, not just think about the top of the ticket. Help us to understand the character and the convictions – the positions and policies – of all candidates: for the Senate, for Congress, for judges, mayors, city council members, and school board members (Exodus 18:21). Help us to elect those who align most closely with Your values (Proverbs 14:34). Lead us to vote for and pray for leaders who are God-dependent, Christ-honoring, and Spirit-led (Psalm 2:10-11).

And no matter what happens, help us live with faith, hope, and love, knowing that You are King and in control (I Corinthians 13:13; I Peter 5:7). May we live by faith and not by sight, realizing that even during these dark and difficult days in human history You are accomplishing Your good and wise purposes (II Corinthians 5:7). Thank You that we can live in this political season with a non-anxious presence (Philippians 4:6-7).

Your Kingdom is surely coming (Revelation 11:15).

Praise Your holy name, Amen!

Scripture references:

Revelation 19:16 - "On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

Psalm 103:19 - "The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all."

Isaiah 46:9-10 - "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'"

Daniel 2:21 - "He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."

Romans 8:28 - "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Matthew 14:30 - "But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, 'Lord, save me.'"

Proverbs 3:5-6 - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Philippians 3:20 - "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:10 - "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

I Corinthians 15:58 - "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Matthew 5:13-16 - "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Proverbs 29:2 - "When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan."

I Timothy 2:1-2 - "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

Psalm 119:105 - "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

James 4:17 - "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

Exodus 18:21 - "Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens."

Proverbs 14:34 - "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Psalm 2:10-11 - "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

I Corinthians 13:13 - "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

I Peter 5:7 - "Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

II Corinthians 5:7 - "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Revelation 11:15 - "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.