

---

---

# Sermon Notes

October 11, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

---

## The Way Forward: When You Come to the End of the Road

Hebrews 2:14-18

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

<sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

<sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

<sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

### Endings

- ❖ We often like endings that are “new beginnings”
- ❖ Other endings leave us with a sense of loss
- ❖ The “end of the road”
  - death is a topic we tend to shy away from contemplating and discussing among ourselves
  - death is not what God intended for us
  - Billy Graham: “When you were born, you were born to live forever, and you will—either in heaven or in hell.”

### An Enemy to Face... but NOT to Fear

- ❖ Christ, and Christ alone, shows us the way forward when we come to the end of the road
- ❖ Though death is ugly, believers long for “what is mortal” to be “swallowed up by life” (2 Cor 5:4)
- ❖ John Piper: “If there were no God, then death would be sad for most people, but it wouldn’t be terrifying... But, if there is a God... and if we are going to give an account to this infinite, holy God and be sentenced to heaven or to hell, then death is terrifying if things are not right with God.”
  - for those who are not ready to meet God, the fear of death operates like a silent slave master
  - death need not be terrifying, we need not live in the fear of death

### The Way Forward

- ❖ Because we are human, Christ became human (*i.e.* He took on flesh and blood)
  - why does Jesus do this?
  - Jesus does this so He can die!
    - in His divine nature, Jesus cannot die
    - in His human nature, Jesus can die

- ❖ Jesus' death is the climax of the gospel and one of the great distinguishing features that sets Christianity apart from all other world religions
  - in His dying, Jesus defeats the devil, the one who has *the power of death*
  - when we face death, the way forward is to keep our eyes, hearts, and minds focused on Jesus, *the author and finisher of our faith* (Hebrews 12:2)
- ❖ In the triumph of the cross, Jesus takes God's righteous wrath against our sin on Himself
  - *propitiation* = Jesus takes away God's anger at us for our sin
  - there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- ❖ In the triumph of His resurrection, Jesus shows His power over sin as He strips Satan of his weapon to destroy us in death
  - this doesn't mean that Satan cannot kill us (Rev 2:10)
  - what it does mean is that in death, Satan **CANNOT DESTROY** us
    - if your sin is forgiven, the wrath of God is turned away from you
    - if your sin is forgiven, the devil is disarmed
    - if your sin is forgiven, you stand righteous before God

- ❖ Though we do not fear death, we may still have anxiety about the pain, loss, and suffering that **DYING** brings
  - Jesus took on our weak, vulnerable human nature so He could fully identify with any and all the temptations we face as we approach suffering and dying
  - when trial comes to us in our dying, we know Christ has passed through that trial in advance of us
  - in whatever way the dying process may tempt us to plunge into despair, doubt, self-pity, anger, resentment or even unbelief, Christ will come to our aid

### Personal Application

1. What is your attitude toward death? Does it hold fear for you, or do you look forward to it as a "graduation day" on which you will move beyond what we call "living" into what the Bible calls "life indeed"?
2. Review the text from Hebrews 2:12-14. What confidence do these verses bring you that Christ has made death an enemy to face but not to fear?
3. What are you more afraid of: sin or death? Why? Do these verses require you to make any sort of "attitude adjustment" about that?
4. What fears do you have about dying? How can you entrust those fears to God and live with the confidence that death is in your past and NOT in your future? (*cf.* Galatians 2:20)