

Hebrews 2:10-13

Pursuing the Path to Glory

For it became him... in bringing many sons to glory – v. 10

We count ourselves to be bountifully blessed when we understand God's purpose in His dealings with us. A sense of purpose can go a long way in helping a man persevere when circumstances become tough. On the other hand the loss of this sense of purpose can leave a man in despair. There's nothing quite so dreadful as losing all sense of purpose and meaning. Suicides are, in all likelihood, the result of a loss of purpose. When a sense of purpose is gone then life isn't viewed as worth living.

One of the most perplexing things to be found among young people is a lack of purpose in their lives. There are many that have no initiative because they have no sense of purpose. They don't know what they want to do and so they leave themselves open to whatever pleasure gratifies the flesh at any given moment. They become vulnerable to sin and vulnerable to destruction because of a lack of a sense of purpose. Solomon certainly knew the truth of this and expressed it in Pr 29:18 *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

There are times in the Christian's life when the trials he bears cause him to lose his vision or his sense of purpose. I believe that was largely the case with the Hebrews that are addressed in this epistle. We're given a glimpse of the severity of their trials in Acts 8:1 which tells us that *at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

They were scattered abroad – which means, doesn't it, that they lost their homes and they lost their jobs and they were forced to flee from everything that had been familiar to them. And why? – because of their identification with Christ. It's not hard to understand how they would feel. It's not hard to perceive that in such severe circumstances they could have lost their sense of purpose and questioned whether or not following Christ was the right thing to do.

Now I raise the matter of this sense of purpose because we find a phrase in v. 10 that might be easy just to pass over without really appreciating its importance. Notice the purpose statement that is found in v. 10 where we read *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Do you see the purpose statement? It's found in the words *in bringing many sons unto glory*. This is what was being lost sight of. The Hebrews were on their way to glory. God's purpose in subjecting His Son to suffering served the purpose of bringing many sons to glory. But all they could see and feel was that which was immediately upon them. They could feel their losses and they could feel the pressure of their peers and they could feel the

difficulties and challenges of life but what they were unable to perceive was where they were suppose to be headed.

We'll see when we get to that great "faith chapter" – chp. 11 that the thing that drove those men of faith in ancient times was their awareness that they were on their way to glory. So we read of Abraham that *he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (11:10). And later in the chapter Paul makes a general statement about all those who had died in faith that they saw the promises afar off and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ...But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God* (11:14,16).

So God's purpose is to bring many sons to glory. And the text further indicates that in order for this purpose to be realized – Christ, the captain of our salvation, had to be made perfect through sufferings. This verse does not suggest that Christ was lacking in perfection. He was morally perfect. He was holy, harmless and undefiled. What the text indicates is that with reference to being a Savior Christ had to be made perfect through sufferings. He could not be a perfect Savior, you see, apart from the sufferings He bore. Because He could not be a Savior without bearing the penalty of our sins. He could not be a Savior without expiating our sins.

But what I want to draw your attention to today is this pathway to glory for you and for me. Christ's purpose in redemption is to bring us to glory and so we must ask ourselves – how does this come about?

How do we pursue this path to glory in keeping with Christ's purpose?

I. We Must Recognize the Nature of the Path

And the nature of the path is not terribly difficult to discern. It's the same path that Christ Himself has trod. Note again the words of the text *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Christ is called in this verse *the captain of our salvation*. A captain is a military officer who leads. We find this designation given to Jehovah in a preincarnate appearance of Christ in the beginning of Joshua. {cf. **Josh. 5:13-15**}. So while Joshua was the one who led the Israelites into Canaan – in a higher sense we recognize that it was Christ, the captain of the host, or the captain of salvation who led Joshua and the Israelites and gave them the victory. He led the way and the Israelites followed.

So as the captain of our salvation Christ leads which means, of course, that we follow. We follow Him on the path that He has trod and the text makes it very plain to us what the nature of that path is. The captain of our salvation tread the path of sufferings. And take note that the word *sufferings* is in the plural indicating many sufferings.

This is why we're told by Peter in 1Pe 4:12 that we're to *think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you*. We're following in our Savior's steps when the path takes us through fiery trials. A part of being conformed to the image of Christ is our conformity to His death. So Paul writes in Phil. 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*.

We love to think of our conformity to Christ in terms of our mountain top experiences with Christ. We travel up the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James, and John and we behold Christ in His glory as He's transfigured before us and we think to ourselves that we too will shine with radiant splendor when at last we land safely in glory. And we groan within ourselves because of an anxiousness for such glory to come.

But we must remember that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings – the captain of our salvation had to tread the path of the cross on His way to glory. And so Christ Himself has instructed us that we're to take up our cross and follow Him. He would have us, you see, be overcomers the same way He overcame. So we find Him addressing the church at Laodicea in Re 3:21 and saying to them: *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne*. He led the way and overcame and now we're to follow in His steps and do the same thing.

And in a prophetic statement that could be applied to the church throughout the ages we read in Re 12:11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*. Christ conquered the devil and the devil was cast out of heaven to the earth so that the followers of Christ could conquer him as well. And this they do by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimonies and by loving not their lives even unto death.

We know, of course, that the path of sufferings that leads to glory is not an easy path. The Hebrews certainly knew that. But by the same token we should always keep in mind that the path Christ has trod was not an easy path for Christ either. He came into this world knowing where the path of His life would eventually lead. The cross of Christ, you see, was no surprise to Christ.

He knew what He must bear while He walked in this world. He knew that while the devil assaulted Him, and men assailed Him and His own followers would sorely try His patience, He must nevertheless pursue the path that would in the end bring many sons to glory.

And I think it's worth noting here that we can learn a very important lesson from the example of Christ when it comes to the matter of treading the path of suffering. Later in Hebrews in 12:2 we're exhorted to *Look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*.

Do you see what this verse teaches us about Christ's example? He kept His focus on the joy that was set before Him. He knew what the end would be. He knew that by enduring the cross God would be glorified and many sons would be brought unto glory. And so the joy of the prospects of what would come enabled Him to endure the cross and despise the shame by counting it to be a thing of naught in comparison to what would follow.

The Apostle Paul knew how to follow Christ's example in this way. You are aware, I'm sure of the many sufferings that Paul endured – how he was whipped and beaten and in perils of various kinds often. He certainly resembled Christ in all that he endured. And yet he had a tremendous ability to keep it in perspective with what would follow and by keeping his sufferings in perspective he could write to the Corinthians in 2Co 4:17 of *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory*. Do you see how he viewed his affliction as light and as brief? He could view them this way by keeping His eye of faith on what was to come.

So we see the nature of the path that we're to tread. It's the path that Christ, the captain of our salvation has trod and we are to follow Him. Would you consider with me next that not only must we know the nature of the path to glory but:

II. We Must Depend on the One Who has Trod that Path

Would you notice from our text who it is that brings many sons to glory. *For it became him, for whom [are] all things, and by whom [are] all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*. Notice that it is God who brings many sons to glory.

How thankful we should be not to have to read that we bring ourselves to glory. We would have reason to despair were that the case for we don't have the wisdom or the strength or the moral qualifications to bring ourselves to glory. Thankfully this is a task that God Himself takes to Himself. It's a task we could argue that God the Father and God the Son bear together. In this verse it is God the Father in view. He's the One in this verse that is in view in the first part of the verse. It is becoming to Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things. It is in keeping with His honor that he makes the captain of salvation perfect through the sufferings that are assigned to Him. And the sufferings assigned to Christ by His Father serves the Father's purpose of bringing many sons unto glory.

In Heb. 7:22 we see that it is Christ Himself that bears the responsibility. So we read in that verse *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament*. A surety is one who becomes a guarantor. He takes on the responsibility of seeing a matter through. In the book of Genesis when Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt, his brothers who had betrayed him came to him, not knowing who he was and received food from him. His treacherous brothers were told that if they returned they had better bring their youngest brother, Benjamin with them.

When the time came that they needed more food Jacob was reluctant to let his sons take Benjamin with them. He was the youngest and was the only other child that Jacob's wife, Rachel, had borne to him. Jacob's sons had lied to him and told him that Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast so Jacob viewed Benjamin as the last surviving son of his wife Rachel. In the course of trying to persuade their Father to let them take Benjamin with them Judah stepped forward and said in Gen. 43:9 *I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.*

These words of Judah to his Father Jacob describe in essence the obligation that Christ took to Himself when He was made a surety of a better testament. We may picture Christ, in the covenant of redemption saying to His Father *I will be surety for those whom thou hast given me. Of my hand shalt thou require them. If I bring them not unto thee and set them before thee then let me bear the blame for ever.*

What comfort these words afford us when we feel that we've reached the end of ourselves. God the Father brings many sons to glory and God the Son is our surety. This being the case, there's a definite sense in which we cannot fail. Our own strength can and will fail us. The trials we endure may convince us for a time that we've been knocked off the path to glory to be lost forever but we learn from our text that our path to glory serves God's purpose and God will not fail.

The same omnipotent power that brought us out of our bondage to the guilt and power of sin is the power that will see us all the way through. It's God's responsibility and God has never and will never fail. What does this mean on our part when it comes to the path to glory?

It certainly means that we must be very careful, to use Paul's words in 2Co 3:5, Not to think *that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves*; It is a sense of self-sufficiency perhaps more than anything in the world that the devil will use to knock us off the path. We must, therefore, guard ourselves from the pride that leads to such thinking and realize and reckon on the rest of the verse that tells us that *our sufficiency [is] of God.*

This teaching was emphasized by Christ Himself when He said in Jn. 15:5 that *apart from me ye can do nothing.* It seems that this is a truth that Christians know but still have to learn. What Christian would ever be so foolish as to say he is sufficient of himself to carry himself along the pathway to glory? What Christian would ever be so dimwitted as to suggest that he's not dependent upon Christ?

We know that we are dependent upon Christ. But alas – there remains in us a carnal nature that hates to admit dependence upon anyone. Carnal pride loves to assert itself and make us believe that we are sufficient to think highly of ourselves. And so the Lord finds it necessary to bring us low. The Lord finds it necessary to teach us in our experience what we readily affirm in our creed – that we are wholly dependent upon Christ.

Our part in pursuing the path to glory, then, must be to keep the flesh down and keep our sense of dependence up. This is accomplished by abiding in Christ. Jn. 15:5 *I am the vine,*

ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. By abiding in Christ we can affirm what Paul affirms in Php 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Apart from Christ we can do nothing – with Christ there is nothing that we can't do. We must, therefore, take special heed to abide in Him, to wait on Him, to spend time in His presence that we may draw strength from Him. We must avail ourselves of every opportunity to utilize the means of grace and draw near to Him.

So we tread the pathway to glory by keeping in mind the nature of that path – it is the pathway of sufferings. This comes as no surprise to us since we're treading the same path that Christ has trod and the captain of our salvation in bringing many sons to glory was made perfect through sufferings. We tread the pathway to glory by being mindful of our dependence upon God. We draw great peace and assurance that God is the One who brings us to glory and that Christ is our surety and we abide in Him as we tread this path. It remains for us to consider that we pursue the path to glory:

III. By Being Convinced that Christ is For Us

Or if I could put this heading in the words of v. 11 – we pursue the path to glory by being convinced that Christ is not ashamed of us. I find it interesting that from vv. 11-13 Paul is laboring to prove that Christ is not ashamed of His followers. {cf. vv. 11-13}.

He proves that Christ is not ashamed of His followers by referring to their union to Him. *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.* We know, of course, that Christ is the One who sanctifies and that we are the ones that are sanctified. He sanctifies us by giving us His Spirit who empowers us to fight and overcome sin. Our shorter catechism defines sanctification as *the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.*

Just as Christ is the author of our salvation so is He the One who sanctifies us. And by virtue of His humanity and the fact that He is our Sanctifier there is a oneness between us and our Savior. And on account of this oneness or this union it can be said that He is not ashamed to call us His brethren.

There is, however, a different interpretation of this verse that I think might better serve to explain the Apostle's design. Remember that it is by virtue of this union that the Apostle can say that Christ is not ashamed of us. Some commentators interpret the word *sanctifieth* as a reference to Christ's atonement. There are those that hold that the word sanctify here is used in the sense of, to make expiation or atonement, and that the meaning is, "he who maketh expiation, and they for whom expiation is made.

We certainly know that Christ sanctified Himself with an aim toward His atoning work. So we read in Jn.17:19 *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* What does Christ's sanctification amount to here but His consecration to the task that was before Him and going forth to suffer and die.

The reason I like this interpretation of Heb. 2:11 is because it strengthens the case for Christ not being ashamed of us. He's not ashamed of us because He's identified with us but beyond His identification with us He has borne our sin and made payment to the justice of His Father.

I believe the Apostle is laying strong emphasis on this truth that Christ is not ashamed of us. So after referring to our union with Christ and the fact that He's the Sanctifier and we're the ones who are sanctified he continues in vv. 12 and 13 to strengthen his argument with the use of the Old Testament Scriptures. He quotes Psalm 22:22 *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.* And then he quotes the Septuagint version of Isaiah 8:17 speaking of Christ as a man who says with regard to His Father *I will put my trust in him.* And not content to leave the matter there he strengthens his case with the use of yet one more reference *Behold I and the children which God hath given me..*

Paul is certainly laboring hard to drive home the point that we are considered Christ's brethren and he is not ashamed of us. This is certainly a point that needs to be stressed to every follower of Christ for we don't find it too hard to find reasons why we would believe that Christ would be ashamed of us. After all we still come short of His glory. We are still plagued with an old nature that wars against our souls and endeavors to bring us back to bondage. How often do we fail in our spiritual endeavors? How often do we grow cold in heart and lose our spiritual sensitivity to the things of Christ and bear the appearance of being carnal worldlings?

We know too well – or at least we should know well that in and of ourselves Christ would have great cause to be ashamed of us and yet He is not ashamed of us – He is not ashamed to call us brethren. And the reason He's not ashamed is because He sanctified Himself and in that sanctification He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It's because our sins were imputed to Him and His righteousness has been imputed to us that He is not ashamed to call us His brethren.

What incentive this provides for us to pursue the path to glory. This is what makes our present afflictions light and but for a moment – God accepts me in His Son. Christ regards me as a brother. Christ views me and you as being a part of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

How you should be moved, then, upon the consideration of Christ to run the race that is set before you with patience. You know the pathway won't be easy – it's the pathway Christ trod and so it's the pathway of suffering. This comes as no surprise. But it's a pathway you can pursue not because you're sufficient of yourself to think anything as of yourself but because Christ is faithful to see you through. And because you are of one with Him. I hope, then, that you are pursuing the path to glory. I hope and trust that the vision of glory is before you and that you'll not merely tread this path but that you'll be enabled to leap over a wall and run through a troop as you go forward in your journey to the Celestial city where Christ and all the saints await you.