Hebrews 2:9a But we see Jesus…

I am so torn in how I want to start this sermon. This text is so vitally rich and draws us absolutely to the heart and core of our Christian faith, something it does even with the opening words! And yet, as I looked at the text and contemplated so many things, one thing kept popping into my head: the trees and forest.

I am going to guess that many of you have heard that famous old saying. “He can’t see the forest because of the trees.” I looked it up online and it is not attributed to anyone but seems to be a fairly old saying that means you get so wrapped up in details that you can no longer see the big picture. If we take and apply that saying to our lives it has some interesting lessons.

I remember hearing a sermon that was preached at a Synod Convention a number of years ago. As an application of this idea the preacher spoke of a man who had a beautiful and faithful wife but this beautiful and faithful woman had one flaw. A mole under her arm. The man was obsessed with the mole and because of that lost sight of the beauty and faithfulness of his wife. He just never appreciated and treasured what he had on the whole in his wife and to him the mole and its ugliness was everything. It destroyed what they had.

Or I think of many a church or member of a church that forgets the whole picture of the ministry and begins to focus on the little things. Our pastor isn’t a good preacher or our pastor just isn’t friendly enough or our Pastor (and here you can insert whatever flaw you think your pastor has)! Really? Since when has the ministry, the gospel ministry of Jesus been about the Pastor? Each man has their own gifts and abilities and I can guarantee you that each man has been called and is serving at exactly the place that God wants him to because God knows he is the best man for the work at hand. Don’t focus on the pastor, focus on the Word. Focus on the treasure of Jesus and the gracious goodness of God. Because that’s the way God wants it to be. Stop staring at the one tree and take a look at the whole marvel of the vibrant and alive forest!

So I have to confess that when I looked at this text the very first question that popped into my head was the trees and the forest. Because of that first line: **“But we see Jesus...!”** I read that line, okay, translated that line and I thought, “I wonder, I wonder if that’s what most see?” The author to the book of Hebrews is obviously, with those words, pointing us to the marvel and wonder of Jesus but what happens when Jesus is not seen? What happens when Jesus is lost because of the trees? What happens when the whole beauty and joy of God’s salvation, all wrapped up in Jesus, is missing from your life or from your church? What happens if you don’t see Jesus!!

We will attempt to address that question as we take a look at the verses before us. Our theme will be: **PLEASE, SEE JESUS!**

The lesson before us is from the book of Hebrews. It is an epistle written with the purpose of leading the Jewish people of Jerusalem, both those who were believers and those who were wrestling with faith, to see that Jesus is the complete fulfillment of all promises given by God in the Old Covenant. In other words, as I have said many times, if you want to understand what the Old Testament rites and rituals was all about and how it all pointed to Jesus and his wonder, then read the book of Hebrews!

Well, our particular text is no different. Right from the get go of this epistle, Jesus is brought forward, yes, front and center, in the spiritual battle that was going on. Christians were being persecuted and doubting the worth of following Jesus. Jews were doing the persecuting believing that those who were following Jesus had a problem, that Christians had abandoned the true God and his religion! So with wonderful mastery of words and deep theological insight the author of Hebrews reminds believers of the spectacular nature of Jesus and he points out to Jews that Jesus is actually the fulfillment of what their faith was about. It is indeed a superb work on how Old and New Testament come together in Jesus.

So what do we see of Jesus in our text? First, He **“was made a little lower than the angels.”** Those words are actually a reference to the birth of Jesus and his becoming man. The point makes perfect sense if you know that in Chapter one Jesus is proclaimed greater than the angels because He is the Son of God. In chapter 2, at the beginning, we are given warning to pay attention to this Jesus and the whole point of his being like his brothers.

In a way, I think that many of us may not grasp the point. That’s because we don’t grasp the hierarchy of God’s creation. The Creator is God. God made the angels, spiritual beings who serve him but who are also to serve the inheritors of salvation. Then comes man. That’s right, God, angels, mankind! When our text speaks of Jesus made a little lower than the angels it is telling us he entered into the realm of mankind. Jesus became a man. He was and is still God, but he entered our world to become one of us. Big question. Why?

Our text provides the answer: **“now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”** Boy, there is a heart full of knowledge! That one little sentence sums up the whole point of Jesus. He is now crowned with glory and honor. He is that because he suffered death. He did that on behalf of everyone. It is a summary of the gospel message of Jesus. He entered our world, lived the perfect life we could not. At the right moment in history he then endured the Passion: his rejection, arrest, faulty trial, horrid beating, and agonizing death. The result? That crown of glory and honor became Jesus’ on that Sunday morning when he was raised from the grave and found to be alive, truly and physically alive, eternally and forever alive! Why? For us!

In his death he conquered death. In his resurrection He showed that He is the Lord of life and the giver of this gift of life to those called brothers. Listen to the words of our text: **“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”**

We have to pay attention to what is said here. Let me put the point being made here into different words that fit our minds today. It was God’s desire to give glory and honor to all the children of this world. So God, who is over everything, carried out his plan of sending His Son Jesus, the author of our salvation (yes, Jesus is the one who at the very beginning came up with the plan to save mankind from sin!). Jesus endured the cross, paying for the sins of the world. Any child who now believes in Jesus becomes more than just a child, you become God’s child, a member of God’s family, a sibling of Jesus, an heir of eternal life…yes, a brother (sister, if you need to hear that word) of Jesus!

Does the marvel of this teaching sink in? The world had a sin problem and Jesus, in accord with his Father, came to bring about the plan of salvation. Now, the sin problem meant that by nature we were enemies and haters of God. Yet all of that is changed in Jesus. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, because he suffered our eternal hell and atoned for our sins, our status is changed. We, by faith, are given glory. We are made the family of God. We are restored to God. We are once again the children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Now I need you to see clearly a few things in these words. First it was God who did the work. Notice it was God bringing glory, God making the author perfect through suffering. It is God who has made us holy and God who calls us brothers. The entire action of eternal life and salvation is based on the work, grace and mercy of God. This text proclaims to us the absolute awe and wonder of Jesus and what He has done for us!

But do we see it? Do we direct our lives in accord with the wonder and marvel of Jesus? Do we have that sense of joy and peace that comes from Jesus and that is a guiding force and controlling attitude of our lives? Is Jesus the quiet foundation of our strength? Is Jesus an underlying joy in our lives and the reason we can say with the apostle in 2 Co. 4:16-17, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”** That’s our faith!

It is at this point that I just want to plead, Please, see Jesus! Think of what this little text reveals to us about Jesus, the glory, and the family status he has brought us. But alas, we are all in a battle. To many times and in to many ways we end up not seeing Jesus or putting him on the back burner or forgetting the simple and awesome wonder of what He has done.

Maybe we are wrestling with a sin, a sin we can’t seem to shake and let go of or maybe it is just a sin we feel so low and horrid about and we think God could never forgive. Yet that is not true. This text tells you God has made you his child, God has given you of his glory because Jesus, your brother, died on the cross just for you. That feeling you have of sorrow and sadness is God’s way of drawing you to Jesus. Drawing you to the cross where you can hear with your own ears: “It is finished!” And hopefully, joyfully you will see that Jesus has died for your sin and forgiven you just because of his love! Please see Jesus!

Or maybe you are one of those who just can’t seem to see the point of going to church and you get all wrapped up in the externals of the church and you think it is just not exciting and vibrant enough for you. Then Please see Jesus. Our services are designed around Jesus, meant to focus your attention on Jesus and His Word. Don’t look at the people, rotten sinners that we all are! Focus on seeing Jesus. Catch the wonder and awe of Jesus! That’s the cross of Jesus on our front wall and a picture of Jesus our Good Shepherd on the other wall. When you see Jesus and focus on Jesus, there is excitement and life eternal to be rejoiced in.

Or maybe you are in a position where you have had to confront the fact that this world is **“the valley of the shadow of death.”** Trials, problems, knee deep waste in your garden of this world! Then Please see Jesus. He says you are his sibling, his brother, his sister before God. Your older and most perfect brother Jesus is not going to desert you. If he came here to die to pay for your sins, then don’t you think that He is going to be here for you even in the ugliness of this sinful world? What does He say to us?

**And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.** (Mtt 28:20)

**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose…No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Ro. 8:28-39)

**And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.** (1 Co. 10:13)

**How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!** (1 Jn 3:1)

Those are some of the things Jesus says and grants us. But if we are busy looking at the cracks in the walls or the cobwebs in the corners, we might miss this awesome wonder of God’s gift. So yes, Please, see Jesus! And know that in Jesus there is nothing to fear. Our brother has come and given His life for us that eternal life is ours by grace. It is what Jesus is about. Amen.