

Hebrews 2:9-18 - Radical Transformation - Lesson Summary

I admit it. I am a Fixer Upper fan. I could blame my fandom on my wife's obsession with Joanna or my background in construction, but doing so would miss the real truth. Honestly, I love seeing broken things restored. I love watching Chip and Joanna see the potential in a particular house and then doing the restorative work to make it a reality. On a much grander level, Jesus does the same for us. He sees our potential despite our brokenness. He enters into the mess so that we can be radically transformed.

In the final verses of Ch. 2, the author of Hebrews emphasizes 3 main contrasting realities which answer the question; why did Christ have to suffer? Having spent the early part of his letter declaring the superiority of Christ, he quickly transitions into a defense of Christ's need to suffer on the cross and the transformation we experience as a result of His life, death, and resurrection. The cross was necessary in order for humanity to be exalted, adopted, and set free.

The first transformation addressed in Heb. 2:9 comes at the hand of Christ's humbling Himself as He takes on human flesh. Christ's humiliation allows for our eventual exaltation. Italian fashion designer, Gianni Versace, challenged this reality when he said, *"I'm not stupid. I can't believe that God, with all the power that he has, had to have himself born in a stable. It wouldn't have been comfortable!"* The idea that a perfect holy God would step into His broken creation does seem extreme. But perhaps, this is because our sin is extreme. God's justice had to be satisfied. We all deserve death. We deserve separation as a result of the sins of our flesh. In order for that to be dealt with, a sacrifice had to be made. So, in His abundant grace and love, Christ stepped off the throne to take our place. He took on our sin and flesh so we could take on His identity. As a result of His humiliation, we are exalted through Him.

The second transformation we experience is our adoption as sons and daughters. This passage uses familial language. Our sinful desire to be exalted led to our alienation as we surrendered our relationship with God in order to be like Him. Our sin required us to be tossed out of the garden and put a barrier between our Heavenly Father and His children. Christ took on flesh in order that we might be restored to our Father. Those who were once unworthy to be called sons or daughters are now called the children of God. Jesus reinforced this truth in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. After demanding his inheritance and squandering it, the son comes to his senses and declares, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Lk. 15:21) But, the loving Father presents a contrasting truth when he declares, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!" (Lk. 15:24) Like the father in His parable, Jesus restores us to our Heavenly Father.

The final transformation that the author addresses is our freedom. Once slaves to the fear of death, through Christ's suffering death, we are set free. We are no longer slaves to the lies of Satan but rather free in the truths of God. Upon His death and resurrection, those who believe in Him will be given His Spirit which becomes our new authority in life. Instead of fear, guilt, and shame, we find hope and glory. We no longer serve the Devil, but instead, our perfect High Priest, who sits at the right hand of the Father declaring us free.

The significance of these transformations should bring us to our knees. Christ humbled Himself that we might be exalted. He alienated Himself from His Father so that we might be adopted. And he allowed Himself, for a time, to be a slave to death that we would be set free. What or who else could provide such radical transformation? Transformation comes through Christ; we must place Him upon the throne of our life.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some radical transformations that you have seen? Have you seen people transformed? What characters in Scripture would you say experienced radical transformation?
- 2) The author of Hebrews uses family language throughout this passage. In quoting Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8, he reminds us of God's desire for us to be a part of His family. Have you ever considered yourself a part of God's family? What does that mean to you?
- 3) Christ came to set us free from the fear of death and the devil. In what ways have you been set free? How are you living that might suggest you are still in slavery?