

2025 Hebrews 2

We had so much fun with a true and false game last Sunday – why not do it again this Sunday?

Some of you have heard this one before but bear with me:

True or false – to be like Jesus is good.

True or false – Jesus Suffered.

Therefore – True or false – to suffer is good.

See, isn't this fun? Easy for me to say when I'm not in chronic pain, right? But this is the reason the apostles rejoiced after they had been thrown in prison for Jesus. This is why they encourage us to bear up under suffering as we share in the sufferings of Christ.

To be like Jesus is Good.

But the author of Hebrews flips this around.

True or False – For Jesus to be like you is good.

I think our first reaction is “Great Scott No! Not me with my sin and doubt and frailty!”

And in that respect, you're right. But in another respect the answer to this is very much True! It pleases God for Jesus to be like you. And it is good. Because “you” is who he came to save.

Listen to our text: “Since therefore the children SHARE in the flesh and blood, he himself LIKEWISE partook of the SAME things... 17 Therefore he had to BE MADE LIKE his brothers in EVERY RESPECT so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

See how he is like you. See how it is good? This is why Jesus had to be true man. He had to be true God because none of us can keep the Father's will perfectly and overcome the grave. He had to be man because man had transgressed the law and needed to offer payment in their blood to appease (that's that propitiation word) the Justice of God. Man's blood must pay and it must be holy.

Jesus.

And the connections go deeper. It's blood not offered unwillingly – as child abuse – it's offered freely out of love for, the author writes, his brothers.

I don't know if we think of Jesus as a brother much. But this is biblical. He is the Son of God, and we are made children of God through faith. I know our reading today says he helps the “offspring of Abraham” – and so we might think this isn't for us gentiles a half a world away. But a short trip over to Galatians 3 tells us “just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’?7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.” So yes, this still applies to you. Son of God: Jesus, Children of Abraham, children of God: you all. You see the relationship right? The family tree? He's your brother.

Which is beautiful because as promised, the children receive the inheritance. He the first and only begotten is the firstfruit from the dead, who sits at the right hand, you the adopted children, will follow after the firstfruit and be born from the dead to live and reign with him as well.

It's like a family of children who all share a common genetic trait, they're tall, or in my kid's case, they're short. But pick whatever sibling characteristic you want – because your sibling characteristic, shared with your brother Jesus – is victory over death. How's that for a family trait! And we might say, well, we are adopted, how do we share in this trait? I might borrow

Paul's image of a vine, into which we have been grafted in. Or simply go back to our image of an inheritance, how can we not share in it? He has promised it, written in the law will and testament – the New Testament in his blood.

And if you still doubt this resurrection is our because maybe we think, "OK Jesus is true man, so he's like me in that way, but I fail so often, I sin so much, I doubt and don't pray as much as I should – this can't be for me." Ah, but does Jesus not know what those temptations are like? He does! He knows how hard it is, which is why he can be merciful to us and speak out above the devil's accusations in the throne room of God. He is the priest, the intercessor, the go-between, between you and the Father, "they are my brother, my sister, and I shed my blood for them."

And then we think well, "ok he knows what it's like to be tempted, but he doesn't know what it's like to fail that temptation and how worthless that feels." But that's not true. Or have you been forsaken by the Father as he has? Have you been made the curse, have you been made sin, even though he knew no sin? Have you carried the guilt and shame of the sins of the world? He knows, far more than you, what failure feels like.

And yet still he stands and lives triumphant over it all. This is his power and majesty! And you think he incapable of speaking on your behalf, or advocating for you and your sins? Not hardly! As the book of Hebrews will go on to explain this, Jesus, your brother, who knows what you go through, he offers in your stead the best sacrifice, with the purest blood, his blood, in the actual throne room of the Father. It is finished.

You are forgiven, you are free, you are God's child, and you will live forever. This is why the devil's greatest weapon, the fear of death, need not terrorize us any more. And again, easy for me to say when I'm not on my deathbed, but it doesn't change the truth of the matter. We can Depart

in Peace. Simeon sees the Savior and rejoices, he isn't afraid to die anymore, he held the Savior in his arms. We need not be afraid either. We have beheld the Savior too. In Word. Or as Paul says 1 Cor 10: Is the bread and wine not a participation in the body and the blood (the purest blood)? It is! So we can sing the Nunc Dimmittus, the Song of Simeon after communion, because we too can depart, not to the pew or home, but we can depart this life in peace. Eternal life is ours!

May the Holy Spirit, in time of need or death, bring such things to mind. May these truths be our refrain and constant guide as we walk as sinners in a broken world. We are a part of the family, short of us formally disinheriting the family... we can rest secure. Our brother, Jesus, true God, true man, he suffered and died, he rose again, the family trait, and speaks on our behalf. His Work, His means, His intercession, what great reason for confidence. May we rejoice and find courage in these truths each of our days.