

Hey, how are you? Excellent. Hebrews chapter one. We are starting a series on the book of Hebrews; we will just march through it line by line, even when I'm not here. I'll be out I think three or four times in the spring, and even when I am not here Paul Mathis or Josh Paterson, who will speak in my stay, will be going through the book of Hebrews. So get to know this thing, chew on it. It is not a wildly popular book among most evangelicals because it has a lot of Old Testament Hebrew references, a lot about animal sacrifice, a lot about those kind of things and that's illegal here. So don't really kind of dig into that too much so we'll explain and so just, I mean, you want to start digging, you want to start reading, you want to start wrestling, go ahead and start tagging along through Hebrews because we are going to be in this book for quiet some time. Ok, and we'll open up there this morning. So let me pray and then we'll jump into Hebrews, alright?

Father, I thank you for this morning and I thank you for these men and women. And I thank you for just the opportunity to get together and talk about you. And I pray that you would stir our hearts and stir our minds. And I hope you'd give us eyes to see and ears to hear because the things that we're talking about this morning are as deep as eternity and as wide as the universe. And so I pray that you help us and you stir us and you let us rest in your grace, and you let us rest in your love, and you let us hear the Gospel and you let it digest in us. And I think so many of us want new revelation and we've forgotten the revelation. I pray that you would help us and stir those things in us because in a lot of ways I think the Gospel been kind of hijacked by people who want to tie it to something it's not. So help us see just how full and beautiful the cross really is this morning. And it's for your beautiful name I pray. Amen.

I've learned over the last probably 13, 14 years that communication is much more complex than you would think. And part of that was just getting older and part of that was getting married because in the earliest forms of communication you think that simply verbal communication is enough but communication goes well beyond that. I mean, it involves at least two people, sometimes even more than that and there's all these different kind of factors that play into whether or not what you're communicating gets heard or doesn't heard.

Like, I was married for about an hour and a half before I found out that it's not really what I say, but it's how I say it. That was a completely new revelation to me. I was like, "What are you talking about? This is what I said." But apparently how you say it has all this weight. And then I learned that sometimes simply verbally speaking something will fall very short of the actual message. And so there's all these other ways of communicating, everything from body language to tone, to acts of service, to the written word, there are all these ways to make sure the message you're trying to communicate really kind of takes root into who you're talking to. And really in the two places this is a priority in my life is one with my wife. Like, one of the questions that I have, that I spend time on, that I try to work through, is how can I communicate to my wife on every level that I love her, so that it is loud and clear, and so that there is never room for a seed of doubt to come into her soul and into her life about how I really feel about her.

And I learned that I can't just say I love you every night, that there are some other things I have to do on top of the verbal to add to what I'm saying so that not just her ears, but her heart and her soul know that I love her. And so some of that is as simple as helping around the house, some of that is, I mean I think some of the goofy stuff we'll do is that I'll make a blank CD for her and pirate some songs, I mean, illegally download some music off the net. And I'll give her that CD, just put it in her car, or right a note, or hang them on the mirror in the morning out of construction paper and scissors that are my daughters. Just some of that is goofy and fun, tons of text messaging, tons of..., now why? Because if the message

that I love my wife, not what my wife physically looks like, not that she makes my life work, because she does, something ever happens to Lauren I'm in trouble, I mean beyond just where are things at? I mean, really spiritually, emotionally, mentally, I'm in a lot of trouble if something were to ever happen to Lauren. How can I communicate that I love her and do it in such a way that the message is heard loud and clear.

The second place this means a bunch to me is with you and with the staff here. how can I communicate to you loud and clear in a way that you can understand the mission of Jesus, how we're tied into that, and then to my staff, how as pastors we are called to be servants and slaves to God's people, not to be entitled to special stuff. Which is why our staff has parked the furthest away this morning, not up front, because biblically they are your slaves, alright, don't be calling them about yard work, that's not what that means. "Bleeker where are you?" "I'm raking somebody's lawn, Chandler, thank you." That we are as staff your servants.

Our job is to serve you and ensure that you grow into the fullness of the head of Christ. That's our job. So how do I communicate that how do I teach that because where communication fails, where it break down, and whether where it is not heard or where it is misinterpreted, and if you're married you're following me, and if it breaks down then everything from anger to fear to frustration to loneliness to despair, takes root. Where a message is misinterpreted or not heard at all even though one is speaking and the other one just doesn't seem to be hearing, where that unravels anger, fear, hopelessness, despair, loneliness, rage, all of that can sink into the soul.

Now, in the book of Hebrews, what we have happening is a failure for these Jewish Christians to hear what God is saying. They are misunderstanding and they have ceased to listen and in so doing, somewhere along the way they have replaced an internal intimacy with Jesus for an outward religious personification. Are you tracking with me? Because where you cease to hear the message of God and where you cease to hear and be connected to God you will always replace it with some kind of religious motif and neglect the inner realities. Testimonies? Ah, you're saying yes or you're a liar. Alright. Yea, where you are not woven into who God is, you will replace that with some religious motif, some kind of "this is what we say, this is what we do, this is how we act, this is what we watch, this is what we think is funny, this..." and you will put that religious kind of coat and neglect or have empty the inner realities of following Jesus.

And that's what's happened to this group of Jewish Christians in the book of Hebrews. They have lost sight of Jesus. They have started to revel in despair and anger and frustration and loneliness, and they have missed out on and shut down the reality of God actively speaking and actively trying to woo them. And so with that as the background of who we're talking, and I think we might relate maybe on some level, with that as the back drop let's check out Hebrews chapter one starting with verse one.

"God, after He spoke..." Now, I want to stop there because I want to clarify something. God is not an idea to be thought about. Are you tracking with me? Right here it said God spoke, ok? So God is wanting to communicate. God needs to be listened to, and the best I can do with limited English language, He is a person to be known, loved, listened to, and obeyed. He is not some abstract reality to be thought on. There's a difference there. He is not some far off, hiding behind Mars going, "Just dwell on me."

He is actively speaking, wooing, saying "hey listen, hey let's go this way, hey let's watch that, hey let's go here" so God spoke. Now, let's see when and who and how. "After He spoke long ago to the fathers..." and he's talking to Jews here, he's referencing the Old Testament. "After He spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways..." Now, what he's saying here, and I love this about Jesus because we've got kind of this divide in culture and what happens is you have people who are anal retentive, dot every "i", cross every "t", you've got kind of that orderly personification. And then you've got kind of the artist. And the artist is like, "I know it's a 'g' but deep down it's an 'i'."

And you've got this whole other kind of deal over here. And what ends up happening is these two end up being, they kind of become enemies of one another and they kind of divide up and you end up hanging out with kind of the athletic, dot every "i", cross every "t" kind of crowd or you end up over here with the artists and the poets. And it kind of divides out and they both kind of think that they love Jesus more than this group. Yea, very high school, I know. Yea, so they divide out and they kind of tread their own ways for all their days.

But here's the thing, when the scriptures here reference the Old Testament and say that God chose to speak in many portions, in many ways, all you have to do is look at the styles of writing to see how creative and beautiful God is. Like, the creation story is extremely simple. Like, I, all I would have to do is sit my 3- year old down and I've got about a thirty-two second window there, but in that thirty-two second window I could read for her straight out of Genesis, New American Standard, the creation story and she'll get it, she'll get it.

It is very simple, "On the first day, God created..." alright, it is very, very simple. And it moves on from the simplicity of the creation story to this really straight-forward narrative of the patriarchs. Abraham and Jacob and Isaac and you've got this straight-story but then you'll get into the songs of Psalms and all of the sudden you've got this emotion filled, emotion, I mean packed with feeling and umph and heights and depths and joy and pain of the poetry of the Psalms. And then you've got the majesty of the prophets, you've got the dramatic sense of the law coming into being.

You've got, I mean, you've got tenderness of the Song of Solomon. "Oh, my dove in the cleft of the rock. How lovely is your form, how beautiful your voice." You've got all these different styles in the Old Testament. Now, remember, all scripture teaches that's no random accident. God says, "No, no, no. It's all me. It's all me. The guy that hasn't quit trying to compare the kingdom of God to the University of Texas winning the international title to the guy who didn't even know there was that sport and who instead has painted a picture of the kingdom of God via..." On both sides, you've got the creativity and brilliance of the creator God who would probably lean down and go, "You guys are dumb. You probably ought to get together and learn from each other." Because all through scripture you've got this straight-forward, but you've got the poetic, you've got majesty, and you've got drama, you've got the mystery of Ezekiel and Daniel. Have you read those books? I mean, that's mystery, that's mystery.

You've got all these different ways that God communicated but that's not the thrust of this passage. So I apologize. Let's keep going. "God after he spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways in these last days..." I'm going to stop right there and try to explain the last days. This little phrase right here is breaking time in half. What it's saying is there was, there are two things happening, time is being broken in half and he's saying, "This is the way I communicated before Jesus, this is what I'm going to do in the last days in the person of Jesus." And what He's doing by calling it the last days is saying that you and I, from the moment Christ was born on are the last days.

And if you're going, "That's some long last days" what He's saying there is there's not a third section coming. When He says He is going to speak through the Son in these last days, what He's saying is that what He's going to say through Jesus is so full there's never going to be a need for there to be a third form of communication. So He has spoken in these ways and now in His Son He is speaking to us. Now, the interesting part about how this is worded is the scriptures are not saying that God is going to speak through some things that Jesus is going to tell you. That's not what He said. It says that God is going to communicate to you and I in the sending of Jesus. So, the question is if this is how He communicated in the Old Testament, what is He saying to us in Jesus in the New Testament. What is He saying to you and to me by sending Jesus. Ok, well to discuss that and to answer that question we're going to have to talk about a wildly unpopular idea. But it's in the text so we've got to handle it. Start in verse three with me. "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had

made purification of..." What's the word? Ah, the "s" word. We don't talk a lot about sin any more, in fact it's a wildly unpopular idea for some strange reason, and the thing is sin is a reality. That's just bottom line.

And you will make yourself look like a fool trying to argue otherwise. You will make yourself look like a fool otherwise because you will be forced to say that things like Sept. 11th, you will be forced to say the tragedies that occur every night on the news are not wrong or evil and you'd be a fool to say that. Plus, I always..., people who say there's no such thing as sin always change their mind if you slap them and take their stuff. No, I'm kidding, I'm kidding. "Give me that." "Wait, that's not right." "Why is it not right?"

So, yea, people who say there is no sin will eventually make themselves look like fools in trying to defend it. No, sin's a reality and it plagues you and it plagues me. It plagues you and it plagues me, and one of the ways the church gets off is when you like to pretend like we're not and they are, and form this us vs. them, instead of we. Then you begin, I would just kind of use this as the illustration, you know Jesus is going to give us the cross and we're going to bow down in front of it. And what we end up doing if it's us verses them is we kind of lean against it and we go, "Come on, get right" instead of being down there ourselves. You know? Being down there ourselves and go, "Come on, there's room. There's room." Instead, we lean against the side of it and be like, "If you guys knew what I knew you'd get right." It makes you look pompous and sad and all the things that are really an enemy of what Jesus wants to do. Yea. Sin's a reality. And listen here's the thing about sin: all sin is rooted in untrust. All sin is. All sin is rooted in this idea that God is not for us, does not love us, and does not want our best.

And when you don't get into your heart and your mind that Jesus loves you and longs to take you to the best possible life, the richest possible life, the deepest possible life, it's when you believe that is a lie that you will go against what God wants and begin to kind of hack your own path through life. Because when there is not a trust for the love of God for you, you will be forced by your own sinfulness to pull out your machetti and hack your way through the jungle of life hoping to come across some fountain of youth and never really finding it. Never really finding it. All sin is birthed in you not trusting that God really loves you, that God really loves you. And so when you don't really believe that He loves you and you don't really believe that He wants the best for you. And this is why, I get asked all the time why I mock Christian stuff on stage because it might be undermining who we are as a people and all, you know I always mock the bracelets and the horrible t-shirts and stuff like that. And the reason I do that, and I'm in counseling, I'll eventually stop, but the reason I do that is because when you take the Gospel of Jesus Christ and you racket it down to not drinking beer or drinking beer you have stolen the Gospel because that's not the Gospel of Jesus. It's just not. It's just not.

Sin is untrust that leads you to disobedience and it leads you to say "my way is better than God's, my way of living is better than God's, my way of handling this is better than what God wants, my way of dealing with..., you know marriage is tough and instead of doing what God asks me to do and being more faithful and really digging in and trying to heal, instead I'm going to ixnay and go find something else and find some other outlet" instead of doing it God's way you do your own and you create this really entangled, fractured, broken way of living and your soul begins to wilt up.

And I need you to hear this this morning, because I haven't said it since I preached through the book of Ephesians, my first year here, so let me say this to you because it's so true. If you lived in the 18th century, all you would have ever heard was that God is angry at sin. I mean, I've read those. I've got a lot of the Puritan books, I mean, those guys, I'm like, "Those guys need a hug, man." I mean, everything was "God's waiting to destroy you. You better get right. You're walking a sword like..." I mean, it was scary stuff. I mean, I got saved like 42 times that year alright? I was reading and I was like, "Again, Jesus." You know? I just kept getting saved and I was just horrified and everything is "God is angry and God is angry and God is angry and God is angry" and then in the 20th century the pendulum swung all the way to the other side to the ever more popular "God is love and He is never angry". For some reason people like that better, alright.

Now, the truth lies in the middle. Your sin, your sin, my sin, breaks and enrages the heart of God. And if you don't believe me, go rent Mel Gibson's "The Passion of Jesus". Because the cross is the picture of the rage of God against sin and the indescribable mercy towards sinners. Your sin, my sin, breaks and enrages the heart of God, ok, but here's the good news because it doesn't just stop there, if you stop there then you miss the Gospel and that's one of the things I like mock all the time, "We're dirty sinners let's sing." "What?" no, there's great news here and it's found in that same line, look in verse 3 again.

"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made..." What? "When He had made purification of..." What? Now, I want you to notice something here because we've got, well, we've got some verb problems here. "When He had..." "When He had made purification of sins." Is that past, present, or future? Like, I saw like six of you, "Oh, God if he calls me, I'm..." you know?

Yea, as a testimony to the failure of our education system that's past. "When He had made purification of sins." Now, listen to this because this is a very Jewish part of it but it's really powerful. "...He sat down." And Jesus sitting down for the Jewish mind is representative of the fact that He's done. "I'm done. I've purified the sins. I'm done." So "When He had..." past tense, finished He sat down. Now this is perplexing because my sins are pretty recent. Half an hour ago recent. Right? Yea. So now, if Jesus' purification of sins occurred in the past where does that leave us in '06? For those who believe, purified. All my sins past, present, and future covered by the blood of Christ on the cross. Even the sins that are 20 years away right now waiting on me. Now, what happens when you preach that is that the congregation immediately divides into two groups. There's the group that goes, "That's dangerous, Chandler, that's dangerous, man. People are going to take advantage of that and they're going to go, 'oh, well, if all my sins are covered I'll just do whatever I want.'" And that's the first group.

The other group is actually those people that are like, "I can do whatever I want." And that's the two groups and they, you're either "oh, I don't know about that, it's dangerous, we should control people, we should try to build a moral box around them to guide them" and then there's the other group that's like, "What?" and they won't listen to anything else I say because they're already rolling up the list of debauchery for later on this afternoon now that all sin has been covered. Well, to better explain this and to better hack through, - and by the way, your right, it absolutely is dangerous.

It's such a dangerous thing that even Paul is going to say in the book of Romans, "Should we sin all the more so that grace may abound?" because this has been a historical problem. The people go, "Oh, I'm forgiven, I'll do whatever I want." For the record, Romans 6:1 says, "Shall we sin all the more so that grace may abound? May it never be." The language in the Greek is actually a lot stronger than that and it's going to say that if you can believe and behave that way, you're not saved. I just want to be honest with you. If you can say, "I'll do whatever I want because I can get forgiven." the Holy Spirit of Christ does not dwell in you according to scripture, according to scripture. So just chew on that. Try to digest it. It's heavy but it's the truth.

Now, let me try to bring some clarity to this thing. Go over to Hebrews chapter 10. Is it warm in here? Man, it's like I'm preaching on hell, it's hot. What's going on in here? It's like, "I want it hot in there this weekend." I'm sorry. 14, Hebrews 10:14. "For by one offering..." what's he talking about there? "...one offering..." The cross, Jesus, Jesus on the cross. "For by one offering he has perfected", he has perfected, he has perfected, he has perfected "for all time..." - in Greek that means "all of the times", past, present, and future. So by one offering, by the death of Jesus Christ he has perfected you and me. He has perfected for all time your unborn children, my children now. He has perfected. Now, who has he perfected?

Those who are being what? Sanctified. Now, sanctified is not an '06 word that gets thrown out a bunch. In fact, if you're not a believer in Jesus and have no church background, this is kind of one of those words that you never hear about and you never have to dig in to and you never have to really reference. So let me, let me try to define it for you, and here's how I would define it: sanctification is a progressive, which means it doesn't happen at once but rather over a period of time, a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more and more like Christ in our actual lives. So who are those who have been perfected once and for all, for all time by the one offering?

Not those who go, "I'll do whatever I want and live however I want because Jesus will forgive me", but rather those who are being sanctified, who are finding their souls more and more and more free from the bondage of sin and find their lives more and more and more like Christ. You and me right now, as unbelievable as this is, stand and look perfect to God. It's a tough one. And I tell you all the time, like, if I'm not careful I will be convinced that God some future version of me, you know. Like, He'll finally love me when I work this out, or He'll finally love me when I get this thing down, or He'll finally love me when I finally overcome this or He'll finally... But according to the sacred scripture of ours, to one offering, the death, the slaughter, the crucifixion of Christ He made perfect for all times those who are being sanctified. Ok, now remember the question.

The question is, God has spoken through all these creative means and now God is speaking to us through the Son, and what He is saying has to do with sin and the purification of all sin. So what's the message? I think the message is two-fold. I really think it's 3 or 4 fold, but I've only got time for 2 or 3. First, the message is love. This is why I tend to get angry and tend to openly mock people who picket and boycott and hold up hateful signs, because they've taken the God who is the purifier of sins and abounds so much in love that the scripture says that He is, it's not something He has, it's something he is, and they boil Him down to this old man in the sky with a white beard ready to pounce and destroy sinners. But it seems like He is the opposite. He is ready to pounce, mind you, but with love and forgiveness both for man and himself, love for himself. That's a big piece. I would say that God doesn't seem to be the enemy of all that we seek, but maybe the author of it. So much so, I mean come on, can you define love better than this? That you would lay down your life. Like, if my daughter's in the road, if my daughter's in the street and she loves to run out into that thing no matter how many times we talk to her, no matter how many times she gets paddled, I mean she tends to absorb it right around four or five seconds and then has forgotten, and if she ran out in the street and some car's coming, man, I am jumping and shoving out of way and I'm taking the car, man. I mean, that's what's happened.

How did God become the bad guy in our culture? How did He become the enemy of all that is good and all that is really life when He came to make purification of the great plague of mankind. I would say love is the message and then I would say hope is the message, hope that I don't have to be chained to my sins. My mom and dad actually joined the church and my sister has joined the church, and pretty much my whole family's here and we've got a really, we've got some bad blood in our generation of things, like, our great great grandfather got hung for robbing trains and it only got worse after that.

So, we've had some really dark, wicked stuff in my family, and hey, can I talk to you, just be, just be as legit as I can to you? I mean, from a very young age I could feel that in me, wooing me, calling me to be the same thing that 100 years of Chandler men have been. And the hope I have because of the sanctification of Christ is that I don't have to be chained to those things, that I don't have to be owned by that stuff, that it doesn't get to master me, and that God has not saved me and abandoned me, but rather is chiseling away, walking, healing, confronting, disciplining, caring, loving, being gracious to, and sanctifying me so that as I go, sin more and more and more loses its power as my life is more and more and more conformed to the image of His Son.

So I think it's about love but I also think the message is about hope. That we don't have to be what we hate. And the message is freedom, freedom from those things. Now, I'm wondering in here as we wrap up this morning, one of the things I've learned from running with Christians for a long a time is that evangelicals, they want this next great revelation from God. That's why we study tons of stuff, like end times, and I'm not saying you shouldn't study those things. Those are the kind of things that become real big catches. Like, we want to know of angels. I remember when I first got saved everybody was studying angels.

Billy Graham's book of angels was like required reading. Like, you couldn't be saved until you read it, and there was, there was this kind of, "Angels. No, end times. No, it's this. No, it's this. It's this. It's this." It seems like we're so hungry for more revelation that we haven't really digested the revelation. The fact that you're loved right now, the fact that you're loved right now, now not some future version of you, now. The fact that you don't have to be slaves to the sin that whispers to you every morning when you wake up. So where do we go from here? Well, I don't know. What I'm hoping is that you'll here because the Jewish Christians that Hebrews was written to, they had stopped hearing.

And when they stopped hearing they got filled with anger and doubt and despair and loneliness and they began to lose sight of what we have been called to and what the missional call of Christ was, and who we were called to be, and they replaced it with this religious façade. And the thing I know about the religious façade is it's really, really, really, really, really lame. It's boring and it's lame and it makes us all that we at one time hated. And we miss out on all the inner realities and life with Jesus. And so I'm hoping you hear this morning because here's what I know, I know some of you are sitting in here because I know there's 800 people in here, hey listen, I know some of you are sitting in here and you have completely, you are completely exhausted trying to fix yourself up because you have bought into that He'll finally love you when you start this and stop this. I mean, when you finally do this, and you keep failing at it. And so you're convinced He doesn't love you. And because you're convinced He doesn't love you yet, you kind of run from Him rather than to Him and it becomes this horrific cycle of New Year's resolutions that never get done.

And I'm hoping that you'll hear what I say this morning, and those of you who are stuck in some darkness. Hey, listen, you've got no reason to be quiet and secretive about that. I'm the pastor of this joint and I'm standing up here telling you that I've got some dark, wicked things in me that needed to get worked out. I'm hoping maybe that you'll hear this this morning and that you'll go get some help. Maybe it's counseling, maybe it's Celebrate Recovery. Maybe you just go grab a guy that you know who loves Jesus and you go, "Help me. I am messed up." Listen, anything's better than the religious façade, man. So this is why we're here this morning. If you don't know Jesus or you're kind of on the fringe and you're just kind of looking to us, this is why we're here, because God spoke and what He said is that He loved and there's this hope that we didn't have to be the darkness that was inside of us. And that the plague of the human creature, sin, can be healed, and that we're loved by God right now. On and on and on I could go, it's just the good news, that's why it's called that. I love you. I pray these things would settle in your soul, that you'd digest them because I know some of you feel really far from God right now and you're going, "Oh if He'd just speak to me. If he'd speak to me." He has, He has. It's not will He speak, it's will you listen, will you listen? Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for these men and women and I pray that we might digest these things tonight. I pray that you would let these things settle into the real deep places of our souls. And that you'd free us from a performance based Christianity that would have us spinning our wheels but not really enjoying the inner realities of who you are. And I pray that the word that there is sin and we're full of it might really be heard by us. Because I really don't thing, well I don't know how salvation occurs if you can't admit that you need it. I thank you for the poetry of the Psalms and the tenderness of the Song of Solomon, and I thank you for the mystery in Ezekiel and Daniel and I thank you for the straight forwardness and majesty of the prophets and that you are the God of them all. And I pray that you would drill deep, deep down inside of our soul and that you'd let us rest in your love today and that we would look forward to the

process of sanctification by which you destroy our sins and make us more like you. You are good and beautiful and right and I pray I've done a good job of communicating that today. I pray that you would let some of these things haunt these men and women and that they wouldn't easily be able to forget them or let go of them but rather maybe phrases or sentences that would roll through their heads and haunt them. I pray you get them home safely. It's for your beautiful name I pray. Amen.

Would you stand with me? We'll sing the blood and then we'll be dismissed.

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