

1st Sunday after Christmas
Just Like Us

It was not to angels - ethereal, heavenly beings that God came in the Incarnation. It was rather to real, suffering, flesh-and-blood folk like us.



Hebrews 2:10-18

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. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Reflections

What does it mean that Jesus came as one of us? It means that Jesus knows:

Sorrow: He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. (*Matt 26:37*)

Weariness: Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. (*John 4:6a*)

Anger: Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it a 'den of robbers.' (*Matt. 21:12-13*)

Anguish: And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his

sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (*Luke 22:44*)

Loneliness: Then everyone deserted him and fled. (*Mark 14:50*)

Despair: During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him

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from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. (*Hebrews 5:7*)

Grief: When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he

asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. (*John 11:33-35*)

Rejection: When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." (*Mark 3:21*)

Shame: They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. (*Matthew 27:28-30*)

Suffering & Death: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. (*Matt. 27:46b; 50*)

Jesus understands all our human trials. There is no one more perfect to save us.

Readings

Sunday, December 28

Hebrews 2:10-13 Who is the author of our salvation? How is our salvation made “perfect?” What is the relationship Jesus establishes with us by His humanity?

Monday, December 29

Hebrews 2:14-18 “So that...” Hebrews 2:14 contains these two little words that point us to the reason Christ came to us as a human being. Look at today’s reading and identify the reasons cited by the writer of Hebrews.

Tuesday, December 30

Psalms 8; Hebrews 2:5-9 In his humanity, Jesus temporarily gave up His rightful place of glory. What characteristics of God do you see evident in this action?

Wednesday, December 31

Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 5:2 Jesus has shared our humanity. How does this bring encouragement and hope to you?

Thursday, January 1

1 Corinthians 15:49 What is your hope for the coming year to grow in the likeness of Jesus? How will you allow the Holy Spirit to work change within your life?

Friday, January 2

Philippians 2:5-8 When have you allowed yourself to be humbled recently? In what ways was it a struggle? Where do you need to allow more humility into your life?

Saturday, January 3

Matthew 12:50 Jesus, our Savior and brother, asks us to follow him and do the will of the Father. What does this mean for you in the coming year?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.