

DISCOVERING THE UNDERCOVER JESUS (Hebrews 2:5-18)

Many of you have likely seen an episode or two of this TV show, maybe more of them. It is a reality show that first aired on February 7, 2010, right after Super Bowl XLIV. It is now in its 11th season. After more than a decade, it boasts 122 episodes. The name of the show is *Undercover Boss*. Have you seen it?

The plot of the hour-long show is that the head of a large company leaves his or her corporate office for a week, and while hidden by a disguise, does some of the jobs that his or her employees are doing.

For instance, the first episode featured Larry O'Donnell, then President and Chief Operating Officer of Waste Management, Inc. At that time, Waste Management was a \$13 billion corporation, the largest waste company in North America. It employed approximately 45,000 people and served 20 million customers.

During his week in the field, O'Donnell worked at a recycling plant, picked up blowing trash at a land fill, cleaned portable toilets, and worked on a trash truck doing residential pickup. The day he picked up trash at the land field, he was fired by his "supervisor" because he wasn't working quickly enough. He later said that was the first time in his life he had ever gotten fired. He also said he got a new appreciation for the work his employees did and how his policies impacted their jobs. As a result of that week, he oversaw a number of changes in how Waste Management does business.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is our Lord. Essentially, that word means "boss." If you are a Christian, Jesus is your boss. You answer to Him. It occurs to me that Jesus was the first undercover boss. The Bible teaches that He left the comfort and glory of heaven to be born in this sin-stained, war-torn world. And when He came, He came incognito. His Godhood was concealed by His manhood. His humanity hid and cloaked His deity. Very few recognized Him for who He was and who He is.

Unlike the undercover bosses you can see on television, Jesus didn't come for a week and then go back to His real job. No. He spent 33 years walking, working, and living among us. His reason for coming was not to learn some things of which He was unaware, or to get some ideas for doing His job more effectively and efficiently, nor was it a PR campaign to make His employees feel more appreciated and understood.

Several weeks ago, we began studying the NT letter known as Hebrews. In preparation for this message, I read a sermon preached by Ray Stedman 56 years ago. The first five words of his sermon were these: "Hebrews is all about Christ." By reading and studying this book, we better understand and better know our boss—Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1 of Hebrews tell us of the deity of Jesus. Look back at 1:2. If God created the world through Jesus, that means Jesus had to be there when God created the world. Jesus, the Son, did not come into being in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. According to John 1:1 & 14, Jesus is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father. Look also at Hebrews 1:3. No mere man could do what is communicated in this verse.

While Hebrews 1 asserts the deity of Jesus, chapter 2 presents the humanity of Jesus. Look at 2:9. Jesus was once much higher than the angels, but when He came into the

world as a baby boy, He was made much lower than the angels. He grew up, and He had to suffer. Is there anyone here who has never had to suffer something? Some have to suffer through illness or injury or deprivation of some kind. I have a friend who is married to a woman who for years has held a very, responsible, high-paying job. They have done well financially and are able to put their children in the best schools. My friend, however, is no stranger to suffering. For years he has borne the curse of being an avid, Detroit Lions fan. He knows what it is to suffer, as do my friends who have been longtime OSU fans.

In His humanness, Jesus knew and experienced suffering Look at vv. 17-18.

This morning, we are going to discover and uncover this One who came to us undercover. Last week we worked our way through Hebrews 2:5-9. We are going to pick up where we left off. I will read vv. 10-18, but in this message, I may refer to last week's text.

As I was preparing this message, I discovered there is too much here to cover in one message; so, I am going to divide today's message into two. This Sunday, we will focus on the mission of Jesus—why He came. Next Sunday, we will examine the nature of Jesus—who He became.

Let's Discover the Mission of Jesus—Why He Came

At least 12 times in the gospel accounts, Jesus clearly announced why He came. Listen to what He said:

- Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17).
- For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Lk 4:18-19).
- I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32).
- Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division (Luke 12:51).
- For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).
- For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him ((John 3:17).
- For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the

will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:38-40).

- Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind” (John 9:39).
- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).
- I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness (John 12:46).
- Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice (John 18:37).

All of those quotations tell us the reasons Jesus gave us as to why He came into the world. Notice what He didn’t say. He didn’t say He came to solve all of our problems. He didn’t say He came to make us feel better about ourselves.

Now, let’s look at what the author of Hebrews says in regard to why Jesus came.

1. Jesus Came to Save and Sanctify.

Look at vv. 10-11. Saving is the focus of v. 10 while sanctifying is I view in v. 11. Verse 10 begins with the phrase, “For it was fitting.” I like the way that verse appears in the NLT: “And it was only right that God—who made everything and for who everything was made—should bring His many children into glory.” That phrase is telling us that our salvation was consistent with **God’s character**. Your salvation and my salvation were consistent with **God’s wisdom . . . consistent with God’s power . . . consistent with God’s love and grace**.

The part of the verse that says Jesus was made perfect through suffering, is problematic for some people. They think that to be made perfect implies that Jesus wasn’t perfect before, and He had to go through a process of gaining what He lacked—namely perfection. If that were the case, you would have to conclude that Jesus wasn’t perfect in heaven before the incarnation, that He wasn’t perfect in the Manger, that He wasn’t perfect when He was tempted by Satan, that he wasn’t perfect while He was teaching, healing, and doing miracles.

That is not what the author of Hebrews is attempting to communicate. Earlier, he wrote that Jesus is the exact imprint of God’s nature, and we know God the Father is perfect. He is the carbon copy of His Father. In the last chapter of Hebrews, we read in 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Jesus has always been morally perfect. There has been and will be no change in His character.

So, in what sense was Jesus made perfect? The point is that suffering equipped Jesus to be the kind of Savior you and I need. We need some who has succeeded at the very point where we have failed. All of us have experienced suffering, but sadly, we have not allowed that suffering to perfect us. Instead, when we experienced suffering, we complained; we threw a pity party; we blamed others for our problems; we got mad and

lashed out.

So, when we look to Jesus, when we see how He serenely did the Father's will despite the injustice He faced, despite the unjust pain and humiliation He experienced, that infuses us with the desire to become more like Him.

Jesus could have bypassed birth, childhood, a ministry of teaching and healing. He could have come into the world as a 33-year-old and died on a cross the very day He came into the world. And that would have been enough to pay for our sin, but we wouldn't look to Him for help in our struggles. We wouldn't look to Him as an example to follow in remaining faithful despite being unjustly persecuted. It was His suffering that fashioned Him into being the Savior we need.

In that sense, Jesus was made perfect through suffering. It was not His nature that was perfected. It was His work as Savior that was made complete.

Jesus came to save and sanctify. Look at v. 11. What does it mean that Jesus sanctifies us? The NLT put it this way: "So now Jesus and the ones He makes holy have the same Father. That's why Jesus is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters." To be sanctified is to be made holy.

It was either late in high school or maybe early in college that I went to a Bible study, and I heard someone say that the most holy thing I had in my home, in my possession, was my toothbrush because my toothbrush was set apart for one person and set apart for one purpose. The same is true for you and your toothbrush. You don't let just anybody use your toothbrush. You don't brush your dog's teeth with your toothbrush. You don't scrub the toilet with your toothbrush. It is for one person and one purpose.

Jesus sanctifies us. He makes us holy. He sets us apart to one Person—His Father. And He sets us to one purpose—to serve God alone.

I like the phrase, "He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters." Have you ever been in a public place with your family, your children, your friends, and you wanted to act like you didn't know them, that you weren't with them? They were acting up, being stupid, and you didn't want to be associated with them.

Well, Jesus so works in our lives that He willingly and gladly associates with us. He says proudly, "I'm with them."

Here's another reason Jesus came:

2. *Jesus Came to Destroy and Deliver.*

Look at v. 14. Do you ever get the nagging feeling that the devil hasn't yet been destroyed, that he is alive and well and active in our world?

In that sermon he preached back in 1965, Stedman said that there is a difference between *eliminating* and *destroying*. Jesus has not eliminated Satan. He still exists, and he is still at work. Jesus, however, has destroyed Satan. The word *destroy* means "to render impotent; to render inoperative." It is true that Satan is not impotent in the life of everyone, but believers, however, have been freed from his bondage. A true Christian is no longer held captive by Satan to do his will.

I have heard some Christians who teach that it is possible for believers to be demon possessed. I disagree. I think that is bad theology. How can Satan possess what the Holy

Spirit inhabits? A true believer can be **harassed** by Satan, **tempted** by Satan, **opposed** by Satan, and be **shot at** by Satan, but Satan cannot possess a true believer because Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, lives inside of those who are His, and He is not going to share His quarters with Satan.

I have heard it said, “When Satan knocks on your door, politely ask Jesus to answer the door.” When He does, Satan is gonna mumble, “I think I got the wrong house.” Jesus will say, “You sure did.” And to borrow from Ray Charles, Jesus just might say:

Hit the road Jack and don't you come back
No more, no more, no more, no more
Hit the road Jack and don't you come back no more.

Unfortunately, he or his demons will come back. They are hoping you will answer the door yourself, next time. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. He will come back, but resists him again and he will floss.

In addition to destroying Satan, Jesus delivers. Look at v. 15. He delivers us from the fear of death. If you are a true Christian there is absolutely no need to fear death. Forrest Gump's momma was right, “Death is just a part of life.” For the believer, death is the gateway into eternal life, the life that is truly life.

Have you ever noticed that every story has a villain, an enemy, a bad guy, a nemesis? In one of his books, author John Eldridge explained, “Every story has a villain because yours does.” He went on to write:

Something has gone wrong with the human race, and we know it. Better said, something has gone wrong within the human race. It doesn't take a theologian or a psychologist to tell you that. Read a newspaper. Spend a weekend with your relatives. Pay attention to the movements of your own heart in a single day. Most of the misery on this planet is the fruit of the human heart gone bad. This glorious treasure has been stained, marred, infected. Sin enters the story and spreads like a computer virus . . .

Any honest person knows this. We know we are not what we were meant to be.”

Eldridge spent the next two pages lamenting the desperate condition people faced in various popular stories, and then, he changed direction. He wrote:

But wait. Consider also this: Every great story has a rescue.

Jack will come to rescue Rose. William Wallace will rise up to rescue Scotland. Luke Skywalker will rescue the princess and then free the peoples of the universe. Nemo's father rescues him. Nathaniel rescues beautiful Cora—not just once but twice. Neo breaks the power of the Matrix and sets a captive world free. Aslan comes to rescue Narnia. I could name a thousand more. Why does every great story have a rescue?

Because yours does.

Jesus came to rescue us. He came to destroy our enemy and deliver us from anything and everything that might hold us in bondage. Jesus is our Rescuer, our Deliverer, our great Savior.

Next week, we will look at who Jesus became, but I want to secure in your mind today why Jesus came, the mission that was His. Jesus came to save and sanctify. Jesus came to destroy and deliver.

I want to ask you, "Has Jesus' mission been accomplished and is it being accomplished in your life?" Have you been saved? Are you being sanctified? Has the power of Satan over you been destroyed? Are you experiencing the deliverance He came to bring you over fear and anything else that might plague you?

On May 1, 2003 George Bush stood on the deck of the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, an aircraft carrier, that was returning home after being in the Persian Gulf for ten months. Less than a month and a half earlier, the United States had been authorized to use military force against the nation of Iraq. The Iraqi government quickly fell and Saddam Hussein fled. He was captured about 8 months later.

When President Bush addressed the sailors aboard the aircraft and the country by television, above him was a large banner that read: "Mission Accomplished." In his speech, Bush declared, "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."

That conflict led to the death of more than 4400 U.S. service members and to almost 32,000 additional casualties. Unfortunately, the vast majority of those deaths and injuries came after the mission was said to have been accomplished. The conflict didn't officially end until more than 8 years later on December 15, 2011. In fact, we still have 2500 service members living and working in Iraq today.

When Jesus arose from the dead, He didn't walk to the temple complex and announce, "Mission Accomplished." No, He said that while He was still hanging on a Roman cross. Just before He died, He cried out in a loud voice, "It is finished." Those words meant, "The payment for sin had been made. The work the Father gave me to do has been done. The mission had been accomplished." Everything needed to win the victory over the devil and secure your salvation was done, fully done, by Jesus.

Now, all you have to do is trust Him. Believe on Him. Receive Him as your Savior and Lord. His mission in your life has been accomplished to the degree that you trust Him and surrender to Him.