

# MOVING TOWARD MATURITY

## PREACHING THROUGH HEBREWS

### IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME

TEXT: Heb.2:9-18

INTRODUCTION: This morning I begin this third session in our study of Hebrews with a simple but profound question: What if Christ had not come?

Some might say, "Well, we would not have Christmas." But the truth is, we probably would. We might well call it something else. Maybe Winter Festival or Snow Harvest. But much of it would be the same: buying and selling, wrapping and opening, parties and food. Even at church we could still put the greenery up, focus on the story of some great national forefather.

On the outside, much would be the same; yet in reality, so very much would be different... if Christ had not come. In our text today, the writer of Hebrews describes for us who Jesus is and what He has done for us. By doing so he provides an answer to the question with which I began: What if Christ had not come?

Heb.2:9-18 <sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. <sup>10</sup> For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, <sup>12</sup> saying: "*I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.*" <sup>13</sup> And again: "*I will put My trust in Him.*"\* And again: "*Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.*" <sup>14</sup> Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. <sup>16</sup> For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

**He reminds us of four drastically important things that would be different if Christ had not come.**

## **I. WE WOULD HAVE NO SUBSTITUTE.**

**Heb. 2:9 ... that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**

**A. In what way was Christ our substitute? He substituted Himself for us in paying the death penalty in our place.**

**B. All sinners are condemned to die.**

**Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

**Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**C. The O.T. sacrifices would not suffice to keep us from having to pay the death penalty for our sin.**

1. The O. T. sacrifices at best provided a temporary covering for sin.
2. The O. T. sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the real sacrifice: Jesus' death upon the cross.

**D. Without a substitute we would all roast in hell.**

Objections

1. "I'm not that bad!" The truth is, we are worse.
2. We all deserve to be condemned in hell.
3. "God would not do that." You do not know God. He is altogether holy, righteous, truthful, and just. If there were no substitute, God can and God would.

**If Christ had not come, there would be no substitute, no salvation.**

## **II. WE WOULD BE DEFEATED BY THE DEVIL.**

**Heb. 2:14 ... through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**

**A. Satan's purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy.**

**B. He accomplishes most of that by deceit. He is the father of lies.**

**C. Jesus gives rather than takes, offers resurrection life, and restores what the evil one has destroyed.**

**D. We can be protected from the devil's attacks by the armor of God.**

**Kids, come on down, What are the pieces of the armor of God?**

Ephesians 6:13-17 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Now look at each piece of the armor of God. What pieces do we have because of Christ?

Every piece of the armor of God is related to Christ.

If Christ had not come, we would have no armor to wear!

- E. If Christ had not come, we would have no relief from the deceit and no remedy for the devil's attack.

### III. WE WOULD HAVE NO HELP FROM OUR HIGH PRIEST.

Heb. 2:17 ... that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining to God*

- A. Jesus is the faithful high priest.
- B. Jesus is the merciful high priest.
- C. Jesus was the priest made like His brothers so as to understand.
- D. Jesus is the high priest who is able to aid men.
- E. And what is the primary role of the priest?

To bring God to man

and

to bring man to God!

- F. But if Christ had not come, we would have no such high priest.

### IV. WE WOULD NEVER ENTER GLORY.

Heb. 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory...

- A. Believers look forward to heaven. But if Christ had not come here, we could not go there.
  1. Edith Burns was glad Christ came.

Edith Burns was a wonderful Christian who lived in San Antonio, Texas. She was the patient of a doctor by the name of Will Phillips. Dr. Phillips was a gentle doctor who saw patients as people. His favorite patient was Edith Burns. One morning he went to his office with a heavy heart and it was because of Edith Burns.

When he walked into that waiting room, there sat Edith with her big black Bible in her lap earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her.

Edith Burns had a habit of introducing herself in this way: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would be saved. Dr. Phillips walked into that office and there he saw the head nurse, Beverly. Beverly had first met Edith when she was taking her blood pressure. Edith began by saying, "My name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Beverly said, "Why yes I do." Edith said, "Well, what do you believe about Easter?" Beverly said, "Well, it's all about egg hunts, going to church, and dressing up." Edith kept pressing her about the real meaning of Easter, and finally led her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Phillips said, "Beverly, don't call Edith into the office quite yet. I believe there is another delivery taking place in the waiting room."

After being called back in the doctor's office, Edith sat down and when she took a look at the doctor she said, "Dr. Will, why are you so sad? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?" Dr. Phillips said gently, "Edith, I'm the doctor and you're the patient." With a heavy heart he said, "Your lab report came back and it says you have cancer, and Edith, you're not going to live very long." Edith said, "Why Will Phillips, shame on you. Why are you so sad? Do you think God makes mistakes? You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!" Dr. Phillips thought to himself, "What a magnificent woman this Edith Burns is!"

Edith continued coming to Dr. Phillips. Christmas came and the office was closed through January 3rd. On the day the office opened, Edith did not show up. Later that afternoon, Edith called Dr. Phillips and said she would have to be moving her story to the hospital and said, "Will, I'm very near home, so would you make sure that they put women in here next to me in my room who need to know about Easter."

Well, they did just that and women began to come in and share that room with Edith. Many women were saved. Everybody on that floor from staff to patients were so excited about Edith, that they started calling her Edith Easter; that is everyone except Phyllis Cross, the head nurse. Phyllis made it plain that she

wanted nothing to do with Edith because she was a "religious nut". She had been a nurse in an army hospital. She had seen it all and heard it all. She was the original G.I. Jane. She had been married three times, she was hard, cold, and did everything by the book.

One morning the two nurses who were to attend to Edith were sick. Edith had the flu and Phyllis Cross had to go in and give her a shot. When she walked in, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you and I love you, and I have been praying for you." Phyllis Cross said, "Well, you can quit praying for me, it won't work. I'm not interested." Edith said, "Well, I will pray and I have asked God not to let me go home until you come into the family." Phyllis Cross said, "Then you will never die because that will never happen," and curtly walked out of the room.

Every day Phyllis Cross would walk into the room and Edith would say, "God loves you Phyllis and I love you, and I'm praying for you." One day Phyllis Cross said she was literally drawn to Edith's room like a magnet would draw iron. She sat down on the bed and Edith said, "I'm so glad you have come, because God told me that today is your special day." Phyllis Cross said, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but you have never asked me." Edith said, "Phyllis, I wanted to many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked..."

Edith Burns took her Bible and shared with Phyllis Cross the Easter Story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Edith said, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He wants to live in your heart?" Phyllis Cross said, "Oh I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life." Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart. For the first time Phyllis Cross did not walk out of a hospital room, she was carried out on the wings of angels.

Two days later, Phyllis Cross came in and Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?" Phyllis Cross said, "Why Edith, it's Good Friday." Edith said, "Oh, no, for you every day is Easter. Happy Easter Phyllis!" Two days later, on Easter Sunday, Phyllis Cross came into work, did some of her duties and then went down to the flower shop and got some Easter lilies because she wanted to go up to see Edith and give her some Easter lilies and wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed. That big black Bible was on her lap. Her hands were in that Bible. There was a sweet smile on her face.

When Phyllis Cross went to pick up Edith's hand, she realized Edith was dead. Her left hand was on John 14: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Her right hand was on

Revelation 21:4, " And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Phyllis Cross took one look at that dead body, and then lifted her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith - Happy Easter!" Phyllis Cross left Edith's body, walked out of the room, and over to a table where two student nurses were sitting. She said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?"

SOURCE: Bible teacher Russell Kelfer of Wayside Chapel in San Antonio, TX.

2. But if Christ had not come, there would be no happy Easter for Edith, or Phyllis, or any of us.

**B. If Christ had not come, no one would go to heaven.**

CONCLUSION: **But Christ did come.**

**He is our substitute.**

**He gives us victory over the devil.**

**He is our faithful high priest.**

**He takes us to glory.**

for everyone who has believed and trusted in Him. Christ has come, but has He come to you?