

The Condescending Christ

By Paris Reidhead*

To the 2nd Chapter of Hebrews, if you will. Last week we saw the Incomparable Christ, as He was set forth as high above angels and all beings. Today, The Condescending Christ. This wonderful Lord, who made all things, sustained all things, the heir of all things, that this same wonderful Lord should become flesh and dwell among us...The Condescending Christ.

Will you notice the first word of the second chapter, "Therefore." Therefore, and we carry it right back to the first Chapter and the 2nd verse. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son..." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the Word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression to the word of angels received its just recompense of reward; How shall we escape" (The Book of Hebrews is addressed to Christians) (Heb. 2:1-3a). It is directed to Christians. This is not to the unsaved. All we know, that if the unsaved neglect to repent and believe they surely will perish. This is unquestionable. Certainly there is no...But there is no need for that. That is self-evident, and it would be redundant for him to say if men neglect repentance and faith — Oh "he that hath the Son hath Life. He that hath not the Son shall not see Life" (I Joh. 5:12). No, he is talking to Christians. He is talking to people that name His Name. He is talking to the kind of people that are pictured by those that came over the Red Sea, and were in the Wilderness, and came to Kadesh-Barnea and refused to go in, turned and went back, and their bones bleached the trail through the wilderness. He is saying to you. You say you love Jesus Christ. You say that you believe on Jesus Christ. You say that you have been born of the Spirit of God. You say that you are a new creation in Christ. All right. The evidence of it is this, that you are going to treasure everything Jesus Christ died to make you, and died to bring you, and died to share with you. And you are not going to count that anything that He counted important enough to make it possible to be yours is a light useless thing. You may not see all that it means now, but if it was important to Him, it is important to you.)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3). How can we possibly vindicate the fact that we are Christians. How can we have the Word have any meaning, if we are unconcerned and indifferent to what was of such moment to the Lord that He died to make it ours. Now if you are His, then you are going to have proof of the fact that you are His by your deep desire to be everything that He purchased, and to have everything that He purchased. You are going to give evidence for it. The idea of a Christian without a hunger for God is an anachronism. It is just so anomalous you cannot imagine it. It just does not exist. It is like white black, or something else. Alive dead. One of those contradictions that has no meaning. And if you are a child of God, you have a hunger for the things of God. And this is what he is saying.

But it is in the form of a warning. It is in the form of a warning. It is not automatic. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Now we go down to...begin the second portion of this Chapter, verse 9. He has spoken to us now about angels, then this wonderful prophecy, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." But now we see not yet all things put under him. This One who was the Creator, and the Sustainer, and the Heir of all things, was made as a man, a little lower than the angels, in the form that He took, in order that He might have all things in subjection under His feet.

But we see Jesus. We see Jesus. You recall in John, the 12th Chapter, and the 21st verse when the Greeks came seeking the Lord. And they came to Nathaniel, and they said, Sir, we would see Jesus. And our Lord did not reveal Himself to them. He did not go out to meet them. He did not go out to talk to them. They represented the Gentiles. They represented that great pagan world. But you see, He came unto His own. He is still dealing with His own in John 12. "Sir, we would see Jesus." But He is not yet prepared to present Himself to them. A little later, after He had gone to the Cross and the Tomb, and been raised, then the presentation is made, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." But now, we see Jesus. We see Him now because of the completion of His work. I suppose that in this congregation this morning there are several that are of Jewish nationality, I suppose would be the proper word to describe it, that are literal descendants of Abraham. But for the

most part, as I view you, I would surmise that you would represent those Nations which were called Gentile dogs, the pagans. Such certainly was I.

Now, in Isaiah the 43rd Chapter, He said, "I will do a new thing. I will make paths in the Wilderness; I will take the beasts of the field and change them; I will take the owls and the dragons, the lizards and the owls, these unclean beasts not to be eaten, and I will let them drink of the waters that will spring up in the wilderness from the river that I will bring, and out of this I will get to Myself something, a people, that will show forth My praise" (Isa. 43:19-21). That people are we. The Lord Jesus has been shown to us. He did not go see the Greeks. But now we have our Missionaries on twenty two fields around the world. Some today undoubtedly in the Balin Valley are going into Tribes and Villages that have never before seen a Missionary, or heard the Name of Jesus. And out through the ends of the earth, where the eight hundred missionaries of this Society and the other thousands of other societies that are faithful to the Word of God, are witnessing. People are hearing for the first time. And our great purpose is to show forth the Lord Jesus. And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me.

How are we to see Jesus? How is He to be revealed to these that still sit in darkness? How is the world to view Him? Unfortunately most of the world that is acquainted with Christianity views the Lord Jesus Christ as a figment of religious imagination, or as just a personage in history whose — the historicity of whose life is questionable and doubtful. Most of the unsaved people in America, and ours is rapidly becoming a pagan land with nearly fifty per cent of the people unaffiliated with any Church, Denomination, or Religious Group — Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish — Most of the American public view the Lord Jesus Christ as irrelevant, inconsequential, not worth the time to consider, to look at, and of course the reason for this is that they have evaluated Him by the representation that has been made concerning Him.

You understand that when Marx said, Religion is the opiate of the people, he was speaking of the kind of religion that he saw, the kind of Christianity that he beheld. And we will have to admit in all fairness and honesty that that kind of religion that holds people in superstition and darkness, allows them to continue in their sins, their personal immorality, but because they perform certain rituals, and have certain taboos, they can think themselves to be satisfactory candidates for Heaven. I say, this kind of religion certainly is an opiate of the people.

And thus the world has had to form its opinions from a persecuting religion, a vicious, selfish, proud, arrogant, haughty religion. It has gotten most of its ideas from that which has been the easiest to see. And the consequence of it, most of the pagan people of this land and in so-called Christian lands, have become utterly, utterly disgusted with religion. I say most. I am saying that probably fifty per cent or over that have that attitude in this so-called Christian America.

Now, why? Because they have only been able to see Jesus Christ through the distorted lens of churches which have been largely economic, and superstitious in their impact on the people. And so there has been no clear view of Jesus Christ. But I want to ask a question. How have the unsaved people that live next door to you, in the same apartment building seen Jesus? If you are the lens through which they view Him, what kind of a representation? How about the folk that work with you? What do they see of Jesus, if they have to see Him through your life? If you are the only window pane through which they can view the Son of God, what kind of a revelation of Christ do they receive? What about the men that have been with you as you look back to your Service experience? You look back to your school experience, where you have been in some kind of close life, living with people? What have they seen, if they have only seen Jesus Christ through you? The world has no other eyes, no other means by which they can see Christ than through the lives of those that name the Name of Christ. How does the world view Him, if the only view they have had of His is that which they have obtained from this Church, from your life, or from Christianity in New York City, or America? We would see Jesus as He is, not as He is distorted and characterized by that which is so grossly inadequate to set Him forth.

Now how does the smitten sinner see Him? How does that one that has had a revelation of his guilt see Him? Do you know what we have done to our generation? We have told people how to be saved before they have discovered why they need to be saved. And because they have never seen themselves, never seen their own sins, never been made aware of their guilt before a holy God, the preachment that Jesus Christ died to save sinners has no relevance at all to their lives. As I have said previously here, if I were to spend the hour talking to you about some Doctor that had the 100% cure of cancer many of you

would sit here and say, “Well isn’t that nice.” But since you have no suspicion or thought that you have cancer, it would be quite immaterial to you. It would be academic. But when the doctor comes out and with all seriousness and concern says, “If you are prepared, I am prepared, and I want to tell you that you have inoperable carcinoma.” You would say, “Oh, my, what was it that I heard? Where is that Doctor?” The only one to whom that Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain has any meaning is the one who has seen his sins.

To preach the Gospel is meaningful only to the person that has seen his sins. The Gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, and that He was buried, and that He was raised again the third day according to the Scripture, but people have no more appreciation for Christ’s dying than they have the sense of their sins. And therefore it is to preach the whole counsel of God, and to bring the Law of God, and the righteousness of God, and the holiness of God, until men cry out, “What must I do to be saved,” and then to bring them to the place where they see the Fountain of Cleansing. Oh to whom can the sinner go but to the Son of God, whose gaping nail wounds and spear wounds testify that God loved us and Christ died for us. We view Him as the all-sufficient sacrifice, and His Blood is the only means of cleansing. And we never lose sight of Him thus.

But how are the saints to see Him? That is what we are concerned about. Listen to what we have here in our Text: “Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, Thou didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet” (Heb. 2:7-8). This is how we are to see Him. That the meek and lowly Jesus that died on that shameful Cross, God hath highly exalted and given a Name that is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow. How ought you see Him? As in the 9th verse, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” This is how you are to view Him. As the reigning sovereign of your heart. You do not truly believe on Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, unless you have made an absolute abandonment to His sovereignty. This is what believing means — to commit yourself to. And in this case it means to commit yourself to the “One who has been crowned with glory and honour.” Oh how many there are that want to commit themselves to the One who has been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. They want to commit themselves to the nail pierced hands. They want to commit themselves to One who shed His Blood. But you cannot commit yourself to just half of Christ. God hath by His own right hand exalted this same Jesus to be a Prince, and a Savior.

He stands outside the door of the heart, and knocks, and when you bid Him come in, He comes in as He is...a Prince, and a Savior. You cannot take Him half. You cannot say, Lord, come in today as Savior. And then six years later, somewhere, some way down the line, say, “Well now I am going to surrender to Him as Lord.” If you are a saint, if you have been born of God, if you have passed from death unto life, you have seen Him as Lord and Christ. You have committed yourself to Him in all that He is. You have seen the fact of His incarnation. He was made a little lower than the angels. You have beheld Him as the very God who reigned from Eternity past, before whom the angels bowed in ceaseless worship. But now He has taken upon Himself a body like unto your body. Why? The purpose of His incarnation was the suffering of death. His body became the vehicle by which He could get into a life similar to yours. Became the vehicle by which He could get into temptation, and then when He had Himself lived 30 years without sin — yea 33 years without sin -- His body became the vehicle by which He could get under your guilt and your corruption. And thus His body became the vehicle by which He could get into death. And God could enter into death for you, because He was made a little lower than the angels and taken upon Himself a body like unto yours.

But just as the Tomb could not hold Him, death could not hold Him. And this same Jesus has been by the Right Hand of God, exalted to be a Prince and a Savior. And He is crowned with glory and honor. Why? That He might taste death for every man. Every kind of death for every kind of person.

And, as you look out today and see a world at least two billion of which have never heard savingly the Name of Christ, I want you to understand that He tasted death for them. And our responsibility is to go to all men, everywhere, and preach the Gospel, to declare to them that God loved the world and gave His Son. The Son loved the world and tasted death for every man. We do not know who they are who will believe, or how many will believe. But we know that wherever this Word is preached, there are those who will believe.

Now this is how we see Him. Then we see Him in His identification with us. Notice that 10th verse: "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." What is the testimony here? The Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself with you. When He arose from prayer there in the Garden of Gethsemane He stood before the Father as you. Out of love for you, He identified Himself with you to the place where He said to the Father, Consider that I am what she is. Consider that I have done what he has done. Deal with Me as Thou must deal with her. See Me as you see her. He identified Himself with you, so that He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One. And in the eyes of the Father, what happened to Jesus Christ happened to you. This is how you must see Him. Not only as One who there at the Cross did something for you, but you must recognize that when He was doing this for you, you were doing it with Him. That when Christ died, you died. When Christ was buried, you were buried. When Christ was quickened, you were quickened. When He was raised, you were raised. When He was seated, you were seated. You were in Him, and you were with Him. For He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of One. He identified Himself with you. So that when it happened to Him, it was in the eyes of God happening to you. This is the grounds of your victory. This is what you see when you come to the Cross, that you are crucified with Christ. This is why Paul could say to the Roman Church, knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him. Not because Paul invented it, but because the Son made a Covenant with the Father and said to the Son, If you will do it for them, I will count it that they did it. Everything You do for them will be as though they have done it. So when He died, in the eyes of the Father you died. And for this reason, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He was doing it in your place and your stead.

Thus, you are to view Christ not as the world sees Him, not even as a sinner sees Him, but you are to view Him through that eye of illumination and revelation by the Word, wherein as you look at the Cross you see yourself crucified with Christ. Has this happened to you? Have the eyes of your understanding been opened? Do you realize that since One died for all, then were all dead. Because One died for all, that all for whom He died died with Him. Do you realize this has happened? You know, I am afraid, some of you are trying to feel dead. You are trying to come to an emotional state where you will say, "Well, I won't be tempted any longer. I am dead." That is not what the Scripture teaches. You will never come to a time when you are immune to temptation. You will never come to a time when you are in such a state. The Word does not teach that. The Word teaches that when Christ died you died. Whether you feel it dead or not, whether you have any emotional response or not, this is the historical fact. And on this fact you rest. And in the hour of your test, as you reckon yourself to be crucified with Christ, God the Father releases the victory and triumph of Christ into your life. It is not just one event. It is not a crisis with which there is any emotion. But it is a constant attitude toward yourself.

Now we have to understand how the Lord Jesus saw us. Notice verses 11 to 13: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Isn't it marvelous that even while we were yet sinners Christ was willing to call us brethren. Think of what you were. Think of your attitudes. Think of your actions. Think of the accumulated guilt of your life. Think of what you were. And remember that from eternity past He looked across the ages and saw you and said, My brother. My brother.

But who is the brother? Who is this one? When we repent and believe the Lord Jesus Christ acknowledges us as His brethren. In Mark the 3rd Chapter and the 35th verse, you remember that one came to Him and said, "Lord your mother and your brethren await for you outside." And our Lord once and for all established it. "He that doeth the will of God, the same is My brother." And who is he that is included in this "My brethren"? It is the one who has repented of his sin, and purposed to please God. The one who has trusted in the shed Blood. The one that has opened his heart to receive the forgiveness that He died to bring. The one that has no other claim but His poured out life. The one that has no other righteousness but His given righteousness. And the one that has no other purpose but to glorify God. This is the brother. Are you a brother? Are you brother? Can you say, He is my elder brother? Oh I trust that you have the witness of the Spirit this morning that you are His.

Who are these that are called the children of God. Behold I and the children God hath given Me. In John 17 you recall He said, "All Thou hast given Me. All Thou hast given Me. Them Thou hast given Me." Who are these that have been given to the Son?

Those that would repent of their sin and believe on Jesus Christ, and commit themselves wholly to Him. Has He given you to the Son? If He has, you know the whole purpose of your life is to glorify the Son.

I want to ask you today. Are you a Christian? Not do you say you are. Are you a Christian? Not do your parents and people think you are, are you a Christian? A Christian is one who lives to glorify God. Are you a Christian? Are you one of Christ's? Have you been given by the Father to the Son? Not, no I did not say have you signed a decision card? I didn't say, "Have you been baptized?" I didn't say, "Are you a church member?" I said, "Are you a Christian?" The ones whom the Father has given to the Son live for the glory of the Son. Their lives are consumed with the desire to glorify the Son. These are those that He has given to Him.

Oh, how many there are going to be in that day. How many there will be that have thought that the Father gave the Son for them instead of what the Scripture teaches the Father gave them to the Son. You see we talk about accepting Jesus. This is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that we are accepted in Christ. Not that we accept Him, but that He accepts us. And He can only accept those that are given to Him by the Father, and the only ones that are given to Him by the Father are those who have seen the futility of living to please themselves, and whose hearts are absolutely committed to the end of glorifying Jesus Christ.

How is this going to be manifest? Does it mean that you are going to have to become a Foreign Missionary to glorify Him? No. Are you going to have to become a preacher? No. Stay in the home as a housewife. Stay in the factory as a mechanic. Stay in the office. In the Shop as a merchant. It is not a question of changing your geography. It is not a question of changing your trade. It is a question of living wherever you are, in whatever you do, to the end of glorifying Jesus Christ. These are those that the Father has given to the Son.

And the Son looks out and sees as His, those whose hearts are set to please God. Are you a Christian? This is what a Christian is. This is how the Son sees us.

Now, just one word about how we are to view the work of the Son in our behalf. Verses 14 to 18. We will touch them only: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." You have three enemies: The world, the flesh and the devil. And through death and the power of death, he had control. But our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to deliver you who all your lifetime were subject to the control of Satan, and through death therefore our Lord vanquished the enemy. Love, as you recall me saying frequently, .. Love said to hate, "Do all you can." And light to darkness, "Do your worst." Life to death, "Finish it." Truth to the lie, "Capitalize on the moment. Take your opportunity. It will never come again." And when Satan was finished, and our Lord was dead and had given up the Ghost, then there is that delightful pageantry as they danced in the streets of hell, God has been vanquished. But on the third day through death, He destroys him that has the power of death. And He leads captivity captive. And the resurrected Jesus at the right hand of the throne testifies that the power of Satan has been destroyed. He is a defeated foe.

Oh, how glad I am today that I can say that Satan has been defeated. That is what the Scripture testifies. We view His work therefore as destroying him that had the power of death.

And then we notice here, verse 15: "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Oh, you know there is a terrible pressure on people. Is there not? I am going to be...I have got so little time. Oh, I do not want to miss living. I do not want to miss getting. I do not want to miss having. Here I am, 30, someone might say, or 35 and I am not married. Here I am, I am 60 and I have not enough money. And here... And oh, the time is going and life is rushing, and all of this — the axioms of the world: Get while the getting is good. Look after number one. Who is going to watch out for your happiness if you do not? And the whole philosophy of the world. And the swift passage of time. And self-pity moves people so that they are constantly subject to bondage, the world. But oh how marvelous it is to realize that He delivered us from the power of the world, and through death, through our union with Him crucified, with Him, and buried with Him, we can live in the world, but it cannot get a hold of us. It cannot fasten itself on us. Its blandishments. Its enticements. Its siren voices that would call us find nothing in us. No response because we have been delivered through death. We who were, because of the

fact that we were going to die and life offered so much, and we do not want to miss it...We have been freed from that. Isn't it a glorious liberty that you have if you know that union with Christ and freedom from the world, its power and its hold.

But notice something else. We are to also view His work as delivering, us from the power of ourselves: "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful a successful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). This deals with the past. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted. So every need you could possibly have from earth to Heaven, He has provided for. Deliverance over Satan, deliverance over the world, and deliverance from the power of sin in your own heart. Oh, how glorious is the sanctifying power of the risen Christ, as He releases you from the tyranny of yourself, and brings you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. To make reconciliation deals with past sins. To succor, deals with present temptation. For this word succor means, to run to the one who cries. And in the cry of your need, the Lord Jesus runs to help you. He has been tempted. He has been tested. And when, in your temptation, you cry He is there to help. Oh, more than that. Christ is our sanctification. You know, I am so glad the longer I live and minister here, the happier I am with those words that so characterize the testimony of the Founder of this Movement. Dr. Simpson¹, when he said, "Christ our Savior."

In this day, it is so different. So many think the plan is salvation. No, it is Christ. Christ is your victory. Christ is your triumph. Christ is your life. What did He die to do? The Lord Jesus died so that He could live in you His life. This is what it is. This is what the Christian life is. Christ wanted to live in you and dwell in you. And so He became what you were, that you could become what He is. And He could come where you are, so that you could go where He is. Is it not marvelous?

Have you in your desperation just opened your heart and said, Lord Jesus, I can't live this life. You live it. Try it this week, will you? In the problem, in the difficulty. Because here is what it is. That He Himself has suffered being tempted, He might be able to run alongside and help you when you are tempted. Christ is your victory. He is your strength. He is your wisdom. He is your life. Christ wants to live in you His own Life. This how we are to view Him. Delivering us from the power of Satan, from the power of the world, yes, and from the power of sin in our own heart. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, said Paul. "Christ liveth in me."

Meditate on this, will you. Think about it. Don't just listen. Unless you meditate, I might just as well have gotten up here and recited the Table of Fives, or the Alphabet. Unless you go home and pray and think. Don't let the fowls of the air snatch it away. Is Christ living in you His own Life? He wants to. Unless you allow Him to, this next week is going to be a failure for you and for Him.

Let us bow in prayer. Have you seen the Lord Jesus as He is to be seen? God who became flesh, Who suffered, Who died, Who rose from the dead, crowned with glory and honor, your representative in whom when He died you died. How does He see you? As one that has been given to Him by the Father? One of His brethren? One of the children the Father gave Him? Is your eye single to His glory? If it is, then you want the victory that He died to bring over Satan, the world, and yourself. **[Tape Ends]**

Father of our Lord Jesus, here we are, a company of people that have heard truth, the reason why the Lord Jesus left Heaven, the heart of the Gospel, delivering truth, transforming truth. It is the Emancipation Proclamation. And I am speaking to some weary, burdened, failing person. Perhaps they have heard it, and heard it again and again. But it has not become real. Oh, God, may this be the time when they enter in, when truth becomes real because the Holy Ghost has made it real. Go Thou with us now as we part. May the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight, Oh Lord, our Strength, and our Redeemer.

Let us stand for the Benediction. Now may Grace, Mercy and Peace from God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, be and abide with each of us now and till we meet again. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, November 13, 1960 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

©PRBTMI 1960

¹ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance