

“God Gets You” (Jesus)

Unshakable Hope Chapter 7

Pastor Heather

October 18, 2020

God’s Promise: Our high priest is able to understand our weaknesses. Hebrews 4: 15

My Promise: I will draw near to God with confidence that He hears me and understands me.

The story of Jesus’ birth begins with Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem for a census count. - Registration of their family group meant returning to the home place of the family group. So Joseph was going home to Bethlehem, the ancestral home of the line of King David and thus was bringing Mary, his fiancée, who he also had to register. They traveled from Nazareth, a village in Galilee, 15 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee, where Mary and Joseph had been living.

Verse 7 reports specifically on the birth of Jesus. These transients found no room at the local inn, since the town was thronged with visitors for the required registration. They apparently found shelter in a bedding place for farm animals. This well could have been a cave, for such are still used today for animal shelters. I saw some like that when I visited Israel - nomadic families in the Middle East sometimes live together with their animals. The Holy Family found some privacy, for Mary’s labor and some comfort from the grasses or straw left over from feeding. There was also protection from storms or sun there. The wrapping of a baby in bands of cloth, completely encircling the body, was a cultural custom . . . some Bible versions refer to it as “swaddling cloths” - this snugly wrapping of a baby has made a resurgence with young parents today . . . different from when I had my children - allowing them to freely kick.

Max Lucado’s main idea and God’s Promise in this chapter is that:

JESUS GETS YOU. He gets you because He has both a heavenly Father and a human mother Mary.

INCARNATION is the theological term for the coming of God’s son into the world as a human being. The term itself is not used in the Bible, but it is based on a clear reference in the New Testament to Jesus as a person in “the flesh”. Max Lucado says “The One who hears your prayers understands your pain. He never shrugs or scoffs or dismisses physical struggle. He has a human body.

Are you troubled in Spirit? He was too.

Are you so anxious you could die? He was too.

Are you overwhelmed with grief? He was too.

Have you ever prayed with loud cries and tears? He did too.

“HE GETS YOU”

When I read that portion of chapter 7 in “Unshakable Hope” - I had to stop to walk away for a little while and just absorb what that meant. For me, it was mind boggling. It is hard for our human minds to understand how Jesus can be both fully God and fully man. The Bible, however does give us a clear indication of how this works out in practice.

Jesus participated fully in all that it means to live a human life. But if Jesus were merely a man, no matter how great, there would be no significance in drawing attention to His bodily existence. The marvelous thing is that in Jesus God Himself began to live a fully human life. As the Apostle Paul declared:

“In Him dwells all the faithfulness of the God - head bodily” (Col 2: 9). The capacity of Jesus to reveal God to us and to bring salvation depends upon His being fully God and fully man at the same time.

Jesus lived out His human life by experiencing all the pressures, temptations and limitations that we experience. This is why Jesus’ life really is the human success story. Jesus was a pioneer, showing in practical terms the full meaning and possibilities of human life, lived in obedience to God.

Jesus would have performed a great work if He had done no more than set a perfect example. But His full humanity is also the basis on which it is possible for Him to represent us - indeed take our place in dying for us. The Bible makes this clear when it speaks of “There is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the human Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a payment to set all people free” (I Timothy 2: 5-6)

Let’s hear God’s promise this week to us once again from Hebrews 4: 15-16 (NCV).

“For our high priest (Jesus) is able to understand our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way that we are, but He did not sin. Let us, then feel very sure that we can come before God’s throne where there is grace. There we can receive mercy and grace to help us when we need it.

Max says that “some have pointed to the sinlessness of Jesus as evidence he cannot fully understand us. If He never sinned, they reason, how could He understand the full force of sin? Simple. He felt it more than we do. We give in! He never did. We surrender. He never did. He stood before the tsunami of temptation and never wavered. In that manner He understands it more than anyone who ever lived.”

Remember - Because Jesus is human, He understands you.

- Because He is divine, He can help you.

We serve a God who is able to understand us. There is a reason for this. God became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ. He was miraculously conceived, yet naturally delivered. He was born, yet born of a virgin. Had Jesus simply descended to earth in the form of a mighty being, we would respect Him but never draw near to Him, After all, we would wonder how God could

understand what it means to be human. On the other hand, had Jesus been biologically conceived with two earthly parents, we would draw near to Him but not want to worship Him. After all, we would wonder if He was any different than you and me. But because Jesus is both - at once God and human - we have the best of both worlds. He is fully human, so we draw near to Him. He is fully divine, so we worship Him. Our God gets us. As a result, we are not left to languish on our own but find mercy and grace when we need it.

Let us pray,

“Father some of my areas of weakness have been there for so long. Help me embrace the humanity of your son, so I can understand how you can relate to my struggles.” Amen.