

**Sermon – 10-7-2018**  
**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Hebrews 2**  
**By**  
**Pastor Christopher Miller**

**Being human is great. We are able to do so many more things than any other part of creation. We have language that can be written down. We have thoughts that can be written down. We can think in the abstract, and not just about what's right in front of our face. We can cook. We can create art. And we can worship. I am thankful that I am human. And there's one other thing that's great about being human: we have authority over all animals. They are our food. They often move out of the way when we come barreling through, although some of them still like to wander through our yards. We are over them. This suggests a certain order to creation, where we humans are at the top.**

**Well, sort of. In today's reading from Hebrews, it cites Psalm 8, declaring "you have made them (humans) a little lower than the angels." So, the angels are above us. And of course, the creator has to be over everything in every way. So, if we're going to have a full order of creation, it looks like *this*. God is the one on top, then the angels, then man, then the animals. We're actually third here. But hold on a second. The Scriptures say that humanity is made "a little lower" than the angels. So, it might look like *this*. And we can see how that might be the order. We probably like that order. But there's one more piece to add to the chart.**

**How much difference do you think there is between you and an angel? Well, they've got six wings, sing praises to God all the time, and are often invisible to the human eye. That is actually a big difference. So, let's be honest: our chart should actually look like *this*. Even though we are just a little lower than the angels, there is a huge chasm there. And that chasm is revealed through the rest of the chapter. 5 times in the rest of the chapter, Hebrews mentions death. It gets mentioned in many forms, but it is there. When we read this passage, death has to be on our minds. And the angels do not die, but we do.**

**In fact, we fear death so much that we avoid thinking about it at all costs. And when we do, if it is separated from our faith, it is the most terrifying thought ever. I clearly remember when I first realized that I would die one day. I was probably about 9 or 10, and we were driving home from my grandparents' house one winter night. I was in the back seat, my head next to the window, looking up at the brilliant stars, probably a very similar view to the one that caused the Psalmist to declare "what is mankind that you are mindful of them?" And the thought came rushing into my head that I would die one day. A great wave of fear came over me, and my mom had to talk me down when we got home, so that I could go to sleep. But that wasn't the only time. I remember obsessing about death again when I was 14, and again after my father passed away. It is the greatest fear known to man, even greater than public speaking, no matter what anyone says about that.**

**And God knows this. God knows that we fear that mortal end, that we worry about it, that it comes out in trying to make ourselves as young as possible for as long as possible. So, he sends our Savior, Jesus Christ. But look at that gap! He can't just send Jesus down a level and have any impact. He can't just randomly appear to some people, and give them some special knowledge that death really isn't so bad after all. He is going to show the power that he has over death. He needs to show the power he has over death. And in order to do that, he has to go through death. He has to *jump the gap*. He is made lower than the angels for a little while. He becomes mortal. He tastes death for everyone, even and especially for you.**

**His death serves many purposes. He uses this death to bring us glory. He brings us forgiveness of sins and eternal life through this death. He makes us his brothers and sisters, making us family through his flesh and his death. He becomes flesh in order that his death might be just like ours, connecting to ours, and that he might fulfill his role as God's faithful and merciful high priest. And because of his suffering, he is with us in our suffering. Our God is not a God who stays on his side of the chasm. He has come to us. He abides with us. He sits with us in ways that no other of our gods ever would. He gets dirty and dead for our sake. But he doesn't stay on this side of the chasm. But because he is now joined to us, through his life, death, and resurrection, we go *with him*. We are brought through and past death, because Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead. And in that, we no longer have to fear death, or our sin, or anything in**

**this world or the next, because our Lord and Savior has gone before us. And through his death, we have life. AMEN.**