

Keynotes from Tim Gamston's am Sermon on 17/4/2022

“Our great high priest lives”

Text: Hebrews 1 verses 1-3

Scripture references from the ESV

Hebrews 1: 1-3 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. **After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.**

When we are confronted with great things, such as the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls, or great people such as the Queen, other lesser things come to seem trivial in that moment. We would not be shopping on Amazon or catching up with Facebook at these times. When we are captivated by something that is bigger, more beautiful or more awe inspiring than those things that usually hold our attention, we are drawn away from the lesser to the greater. God created us with the capacity to see greatness and to be in awe of that greatness and find joy in it. However, we have failed to see the greatest greatness in the universe.

We have failed to see God.

Sin has blinded the eyes of our hearts so that, instead of seeing the majesty and beauty of God, we find greater delight in lesser things like silly videos, games and TV shows or in natural wonders like the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls.

- We were wired to see God, and be in awe of him, but sin has rewired us to miss God and instead we are in awe of everything that isn't God.

As a result, we turn small things into big things. We get hurt over matters that are minor and divide over matters that are trivial. We live in constant fear of losing those small things that we have made into big things, but which are inconsequential in comparison to God.

We need to see something bigger than the trivial things that have captivated us.

As the Christian church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus on this Easter Sunday, let us pray that the eyes of our hearts will be lifted away from everything the world calls great, but which pales into insignificance as we

gaze upon Jesus and come to delight in Christ.

To point us to Jesus, consider this verse: **he (Jesus) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (v3 above).**

Jesus took his rightful place on the throne of God AFTER he had made purification for sins, by dying on the cross.

- He died to satisfy the just wrath of God that stood against us because of our sin.
- Through his shed blood, his death on the cross, he made purification for all our sin, past and present

Then AFTER dying, he climbed the steps to the throne of God and sat down, showing that

He lives after he died

Earthly rulers die and are buried and we hear no more of them. Jesus' body hung lifeless on the cross and was laid in a sealed tomb for three days. Then the resurrection happened and

He was raised to life

Those who saw Jesus alive after he had died tell of a real body with flesh and bones, a body that could be touched and ate fish with them. Now Jesus' body could never grow old, wear out or die ever again.

The body of Jesus raised to life and now eternal!

The resurrection gives us the assurance that:

- Jesus' death was sufficient to make purification for our sins. If he had not done enough to satisfy the wrath of God for our sin, then Jesus would have remained dead, but the resurrection is evidence that the Father accepted his sacrifice as sufficient. There really is forgiveness for all the wrong we have done.
- Our bodies will be raised to life also, though we die and are buried. One day Jesus will return and reunite our souls with our bodies. Because our Saviour, who redeemed us and rescued us from sin, was raised to life, so we can know that we also shall be raised to life.

Jesus is alive

In his resurrected body, Jesus **sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** (v3 above). As we look at the aweinspiring truths about Christ that this shows us, we need to ask God to enlarge the capacity of our heart to see and to be in awe of Christ.

1. **See the completion of Christ's work.** Jesus **sat down** on the throne of God, an action signifying completion. Under the Old Covenant, before Jesus came, every year the priest would go into the most holy place in the temple. The ark of the covenant, with the lid that was the mercy seat, was in that place and it was there that God made his presence known. The priest would kill a lamb and collect the blood. He sprinkled it over himself and the people as a picture of the purification for sins that Jesus would secure through his death. Then he took the blood into the presence of God, and sprinkled it over the mercy seat.

There was nowhere for the priest to sit down, because his work was never completed. Each and every year, on the Day of Atonement, he had to perform the same ritual and we are told why, later in the book of Hebrews: **It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (10:4)**. Though this ritual pointed forward to what Jesus would do, it could never purify the people from their sin.

In contrast, when Jesus enters the true holy place, in heaven, **he sits down**.

Through his own death, Jesus secured eternal redemption for us, paying the price for our sin in full (**Hebrews 9:11-12** see p4).

Every sin we have committed, past, present and future, has been purified by Christ 2000 years ago, even before we were born. Thus, when we sin, we can come to Christ and have assurance that he will forgive us. Be awe-struck by this! **The work was done**

2. **See the honour of Christ's position.** Jesus sat down **at the right hand** of the Majesty on high (v3 above).

The right hand was the place of highest honour and was usually reserved for the one who would inherit the throne. Jesus is taking the highest place on the highest throne in the universe. There is nowhere higher. God the Father has bestowed the highest honour on God the Son and it is an honour he alone deserves. (v1-3 above).

As we see the honour of Christ's position, let us ask God to help us to worship him more fully

3. **See the majesty of Christ's glory.** Jesus sat down at the right hand of the **Majesty** on high (v3 above). The word majesty speaks about the quality of a person that inspires awe and reverence. Our Queen has a majesty about her, and people are in awe of her when they are in her presence. To get the image we are meant to have of Christ, we need to multiply that awe and reverence by infinity, because

Christ sits in the place of highest honour.

The throne of God is a throne of majesty. We miss this because we do not spend enough time in scripture. David's prayer in **1 Chronicles 29:11** says this: **Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.** Two more of the many, many references to the majesty of Christ are **Isaiah 6:1-4**, and **John 18:4-6** (see p4).

When you turn away from the distractions of the world and take time to meditate on passages like these, asking God to open your eyes to see the glory of Christ, you will find your capacity for worship and joy enlarged and you will see **The majesty of Christ's glory**

4. **See the activities of Christ's reign.** Christ sat down because he had completed his sacrificial work of redemption, but now he is actively reigning.
 - a) **He is subduing his enemies.** (**Hebrews 1:13** see p4). Those who don't see the completion of Christ's work, the honour of his position and the majesty of his glory remain his enemies. However nice and even apparently religious they may be, they do not trust and honour Jesus or submit to him.

Everyone will come under his feet.

When the day comes (**Phil 2:9-11** see p4) that every knee must bow at the name of Jesus, it will be a day of great joy for those of us who see Christ by faith now. Then we will see Christ in a way that fills our hearts with far greater joy. Christ has subdued our rebellion by his great love and we look forward with great anticipation to the day when we see him with our physical eyes and worship him with unparalleled joy. On that day,

Jesus will triumph over everyone who ignores his offer of purification, refuses to worship him and fails to see his majesty. His enemies will be subdued.

- b) **He is interceding for his people.** (Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:34 see p4). Christ has made purification for our sins, but we do still sin. When we sin, we can have confidence that we can come to God, confessing our sin and find forgiveness because the Son has sat down at the right hand of the Father.

When we come to God with our sin, Jesus tells his Father that we are his, cleansed by his blood, and are to be welcomed. We do not ever need to feel unworthy to come before God in prayer. Our worthiness is seated on the throne of God and pleads with the Father on our behalf. Because the Father delights in the Son, he delights in us also.

- c) **He is empowering the church.** (Acts 2:33-34 see p4). When Jesus ascended into heaven, he left the church with the mission to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. He promised that he would not leave us on our own but would send the Holy Spirit to empower us. The Spirit came when the Son took his seat on the throne of God.

- That is why we are able to witness to Christ, to live in obedience and to honour and delight in Christ. We live at a time when triviality abounds, numbing us to reality, greatness and glory. Let us be a people who forsake triviality and instead turn the eyes of our heart to **see the reality, greatness and glory of Christ**. If you do **not** see this,
ask God to open your eyes.

- Trust God, who said **"Let light shine out of darkness"** to do the miracle you need and to make his light **'shine in your heart to give you the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ'** (2 Cor 4:6).

Come to him with this prayer (see p4):

I—Incline "Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain." (Psalm 119:36)

O—Open "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." (Psalm 119:18)

U—Unite "Unite my heart to fear your name." (Psalm 86:11)

S—Satisfy "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." (Psalm 90:14)

- Open your Bible and read it for no reason other than to

See the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 9:11-12 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here,^[a] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining^[b] eternal redemption.

Isaiah 6:1-4 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

John 18:4-6 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” ⁵ “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Hebrews 1:13 To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”^[a]?

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely^[c] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Romans 8:34 ^{Who} then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also

interceding for us **Acts 2:33-34** For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

³⁵ until I make your
enemies a
footstool for your
feet.””^[1]

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”^[2] made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

IOUS prayer – John Piper