

## Not Ashamed to Call Them Brethren

*"For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."* –

**Heb. 2:11**

### Summary:

Christ's union with his people rests in his true participation in their human nature, yet without sin. By taking flesh and blood, he became able to speak to us without terror, sympathise with our weakness, set us an example, and offer himself as the sacrifice for sin. Although he is infinitely exalted above us, he is not ashamed to call believers his brethren—even after his resurrection and when he comes as Judge. This relationship should humble and dignify Christians, assure them of his faithful care, and move them to confess him openly and without shame.

### Outline:

#### 1. **Our oneness with Christ**

- Believers share one Father, Spirit, pursuit, destiny, and—through the incarnation—one human nature with Christ.

#### 2. **The sinless incarnation**

- Christ truly took flesh and blood, yet his humanity was holy and entirely free from sin.

#### 3. **The saving purpose of his humanity**

- His human nature enables his sympathy, example, atoning sacrifice, and our confident approach to God.

#### 4. **The wonder of being called brethren**

- Though exalted above every earthly and heavenly rank, the risen Christ still openly owns his people.

#### 5. **Dignity, comfort, and confession**

- His brotherhood humbles and honours believers, assures them of his care, and calls them to acknowledge him.

## Text

What is the cause the writer is speaking about? Consider the earlier part of the verse: "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." This indicates a spiritual union or oneness between Christ and believers. They share the same God and Father, are united by one Spirit, and have similar tastes, aims, and pursuits. They share a common destination and will appear with Him in glory: "Where I am," He says, "there shall also my servants be." The true meaning is clarified by the context: they are of one nature (Hebrews 2:14, 17; 4:15).

- "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."
- "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren."
- "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

This exception ("yet without sin") was both necessary and possible. Adam before his fall genuinely shared our nature, yet was sinless; likewise, the Saviour's participation in it was made through an immaculate process. His humanity was conceived by the Holy Ghost, making him the "holy thing" born of the Virgin Mary. He is referred to as the "holy child Jesus," and it is emphasised not only that "he did no sin" but also that "in him was no sin."

Unifying with us in nature remains an undeniable mystery—yet it is a divine mystery that leads to salvation. It speaks to us without making us afraid. Thus he is capable of sympathising with us and gaining our confidence. Thus he becomes our example and goes before us along the path of duty and suffering. He offers his life as a ransom and sacrifices himself to remove sin. While some may dismiss this doctrine as unimportant or withhold belief, Paul reminds us, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

For this cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, for he shares the same nature with them. It's understandable why—though he is truly human, he is also more than human. The Word was with God, was God, and became flesh. There is a significant difference between him and us, despite our shared nature. Such distinctions exist not only among angels but also among humans,

and Scripture affirms these differences, instructing us to give honour where it's due and fear where it's warranted.

A king shares the same nature as his lowest subjects, made of the same clay and needing food and sleep just like them. Nonetheless, he calls them brethren. It seems almost miraculous when a prince shows humility toward the lower classes. A commander-in-chief might refer to his fellow officers as brothers, but not to the common soldiers. Similarly, a judge may call a fellow counsellor brother, but not the prisoner at the bar.

Although Christ shares our nature, his exalted and glorious state makes it seem, by worldly standards, that he could disregard the closeness of our relationship. Humanity in him is pure, but in us, it remains unworthy. His is spotless; ours is stained. While God is angry with us, he finds pleasure in him. We are mortal and fragile, like moths, but he is immortal; death no longer holds sway over him. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We must think about who he was and who he is now. In a family, members may feel similarly towards each other while in obscurity. However, if one is elevated, like David was, to the highest position in the state, he might feel ashamed to acknowledge those far below him. Despite Jesus ascending to heaven, with angels, powers, and all names beneath him, he is still compassionate towards our weaknesses and is unashamed to call us brothers.

After his resurrection, he instructed his disciples to deliver this message: "Go tell my brethren that they should go into Galilee." He also said, "Go to my brethren and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" When he returns in glory, with all nations gathered before him as the Judge, he will proudly say, "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you did it unto me."

Let this idea uplift us. Our honour won't lead to pride since, through God's grace, we are what we are; and the more we possess, the greater our debt.

Let it comfort and inspire us. If he calls us his brothers, he will fulfil all that such a relationship entails. He will communicate with us, visit us, defend us, and provide for us. Just as Joseph supported his entire family, and because Christ lives, we shall live too. If he is not ashamed to call us his, should we ever be ashamed to recognise him? "He who is ashamed of me and my words in

this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the clouds of heaven with the holy angels."

Nonetheless, there is no need for fear here. Surely a sincere sense of our dependence and obligations will be enough to lead us to say:

*"Ashamed of Jesus! of that Friend  
On whom my heavenly hopes depend!  
It must not be—be this my shame,  
That I no more revere his name."*

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 11, Evening), first published in 1854.