The Man, The Myth, The Legend
Week 1: Jesus Our Brother

I. Our vision as a church this year is:
Every Way But One!

A. Within the Church, our call to unity has been challenged by the cultural moment because we easily find ourselves deriving our identity from our politics, ethnicity, education, or socioeconomic levels. At Tab, we've set out on a different course. It's hard and messy, but beautiful and worth it. It's also aspirational. It's in process! We've said that in a world that often chooses corners, we would like to be a community that is diverse in every way! Every way but One!

1. What is the One? Our common pursuit of:
Jesus!
What does that mean? We're not talking about a Christian label. This would be equating our relationship with Jesus like a football jersey. We put the jersey on when it's convenient and we take it off when it isn't. Or maybe some feel comfortable in defining our faith through prohibitions? I find it so interesting and disheartening that Christians often have an easier time defining what we're not than what we are. Like my grandfather said, "I don't drink, cuss, smoke, or chew; nor go with girls who do!" But these are inadequate in how Scripture truly portrays a life of following Jesus.

2. Listen to these words in Hebrews 12:1-2:

Hebrews 12:1-2 - 1 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus, who became, and still is, fully human and yet fully God. He took on the fullness of humanity, never setting aside His divinity. Jesus, although human and tempted in every way, did not sin. Jesus lived a life perfectly obedient to God the Father because no other human being could. He took His completely obedient life and laid it on the altar of the cross paying a penalty that He had not incurred, but willingly on our behalf. He alone is the Source of our faith, our very salvation, and He is the perfector of our salvation! We hold both to be true and in the process we:
Follow!

3. We lay aside the weight of sin not for the sake of patting our backs or for the sake of achieving moral excellence. If we define our Christian lives by what we don't do, we have missed the mark! We don't lay aside sin to declare ourselves "good people." We certainly don't lay aside the weight of sin so we can compare and judge! We lay aside the weight of sin so that we can be free to run the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfector of our faith.

4. Too often, and I'm guilty, we think about salvation in terms of a finish line or trusting Jesus in terms of a decision I once made, but the past isn't the emphasis of our Christian life. It's our relentless pursuit of Jesus; the One who has already and will forever relentlessly pursue us! We must know this Jesus and follow!

II. We're going to be in a 6-week series of an in-depth look at Jesus, but we will be weaving this theme throughout the entire year! I beg God that this would be a ministry year in which many would discover the life of following Jesus. I also pray that many would rediscover the joy of following Jesus. Simply Jesus.

A. Today we're going to begin by looking at another passage in Hebrews, Hebrews 2:5-18. We could spend hours diving into this text and please do! In our brief time together, I want us to see:
Jesus, Our Brother!

1. Let's take a look at Hebrews 2 starting in verse 5:

Hebrews 2:5-9 - 5 For he has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are talking about. 6 But someone somewhere has testified: What is man that you remember him, or the son of man that you care for him? 7 You made him lower than the angels for a short time; you crowned him with glory and honor 8 and subjected everything under his feet. For in subjecting everything to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see everything subjected to him. 9 But we do see Jesus- made lower than the angels for a short

time so that by God's grace he might taste death for everyone- crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death.

To appreciate that Jesus is our brother we must not get too far removed from the reality that Jesus is: King!

2. **We'll discuss that next week, but to summarize: Jesus our brother is the very One to which all of creation is now subjected. We don't see the fullness of this reality and we won't until the consummation of His kingdom at His return, but just because we don't see it in full doesn't negate the reality that it is true!**
3. **So how do we know it's not just a pipe dream? Because for a time, God the Son, Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels. He was incarnate and walked among us. He tasted death and yet death could not hold Him! By His obedience to death on a cross, He is now crowned with glory and honor. Our brother has been given full authority as king because He obtained the right of our salvation through His death purchase.**
4. **Our brother, Jesus, has purchased the home and He didn't even need to take out a mortgage. The property lines cover all of creation. Not everyone will recognize Him as Savior but one day everyone will recognize Jesus as Lord! For those of us in Christ, who have embraced His authority, we get the privilege of calling Jesus our brother!**

Hebrews 2:10-13 - 10 For in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God- for whom and through whom all things exist- should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, 12 saying: I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; I will sing hymns to you in the congregation. 13 Again, I will trust in him. And again, Here I am with the children God gave me.

B. **Why did Jesus become our brother? Because there was no other way! The Glorious, Creator God, through whom all things exist, created humanity as an outflow of His love (not need). As those born with a sin nature, we've all rejected that love. There was no other way for us to be brought to God's glory, except for God's rescue mission to us!**
   1. **These words are so vital! God is bringing many sons and daughters to glory. Tomorrow is 9-11 and for those that were alive to experience that, you might remember images of first responders carrying people from disaster to safety. This is the image here. God has orchestrated a divine rescue plan and it is no other than the incarnate God- Jesus Christ- who is bringing many sons and daughters to glory.**

C. **How should we think about Jesus, our brother, as the source and perfector of salvation? We will get an in-depth explanation in the remaining verses, but we need a bird's eye view. Jesus did not cease to be anything He was in eternity past:**
   Fully God!
   1. **In the incarnation, God stepped into the human existence and willingly took on the fullness of human nature. Jesus wasn't half God and half human. He was the fullness of both! God came all the way to us and pioneered our salvation. He blazed a trail that only the God-Man could do. A perfect human life was the only substitute for humanity's sin and Jesus perfected our salvation through His:**
      Sufferings
   2. **The One whom through all things exist took on the fullness of a human being and as a human being knew suffering from birth to death. There is so much I can't explain, but I do know that suffering reveals character. The full character of God was made evident in Jesus, our brother! We have seen the abundance of God on full display as He spared nothing for our salvation. Jesus has perfected our salvation by paying our debt in full! His obedience has become our obedience. His death has become our death. His life has become our life!**
   3. **Jesus as the source and perfector of salvation has not sanctified us so that we can stop getting drunk and watching porn. I pray both of those are true, but morality isn't the point of following Christ. Look closely at verses 11-13. Who is the One who sanctifies? It isn't us! We are the ones sanctified! But the One who sanctifies and the one who is sanctified both have the same:**
      Father!
   4. **We are the family of God! Jesus has become our brother so that God can become our Father! This is what separates our faith from religion; at its core following Christ is all about relationship! We leave behind the**

weight of sin that has previously separated us from the Father, so that we can run the race before us focusing on Jesus who has blazed the trail to the Father's glory. Jesus wasn't ashamed to become like us in the incarnation, He's with us bringing us to glory, and He won't be ashamed to call us brother or sister when we're with Him in His exaltation. Jesus who has been granted the Name above all names, the King of kings and the Lord of lords will claim you and I as brothers or sisters! Wow!!

Hebrews 2:14-18 - 14 Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death- that is, the devil- 15 and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. 16 For it is clear that he does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham's offspring. 17Therefore, he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in matters pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

D. We looked at the bird's eye view of the incarnation a moment ago, but here we have the nitty gritty. Jesus, our brother, took on flesh and blood. He stepped into the frailty of human existence. Jesus could catch a cold, He could get frustrated, He could cry. All of that is vital to remember, but most vital of all is that:
Jesus could die!

1. He suffered on our behalf to the point of death on a cross. Jesus didn't save us apart from death; He saved us through death! As our pioneering brother, we no longer have the penalty of death laying claim to us. Satan's ultimate power over our life, which is death, has been annulled through the flesh and blood of our brother. As the source and pioneer of our salvation, He has reconciled us to the Father. As the perfector of our salvation, Jesus reaches out or takes hold of us to ensure we arrive at our destination. He doesn't lead us from a distance! We are His covenant people and God has taken hold of His people all the way back to the days of Abraham!

2. Because Jesus is our brother having taken up flesh and blood, having passed through death, and is now at the Father's right hand, He serves us as:
Our merciful and faithful High Priest!

a. Sometimes I catch myself restricting my view of Jesus to that of advocacy. While that is true, my brother Jesus who is also my High Priest has a greater role than simply advocating on my behalf. We must be cautious of oversimplifying complex things, and I would certainly put the atonement in that category.

b. We often think of atonement in terms of substitution or propitiation (appeasing the wrath of God). The phrase in Hebrews 2:17:
To make atonement,
is the present tense infinitive of the Greek word, hilaskomai. This is a way to describe a specific event with an emphasis on the ongoing effect of that event! Hebrews is deeply embedded with Old Testament phrases and concepts and for good reason! Our brother as High Priest removes our impurities and makes us pure before and gives us access to a Holy God. The high priest in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple would offer sacrifice on behalf of God's people to remove their impurity before God. No sacrifice was sufficient for the permanent removal of sin until the God-Man Jesus Christ. His atoning sacrifice paid the penalty of our sin and has removed (washed clean) our impurity, and He does so ongoingly, so that we can be reconciled to God the Father. We have been given the right to be called children of God because of our brother Jesus Christ!

E. Jesus is bringing many sons and daughters to glory but notice it doesn't say all. You don't get a universalist perspective of God from the Scripture. That's because God doesn't force His love. He doesn't need us; He wants us. But there is only One source of salvation, the Pioneer and Perfector of salvation, our brother Jesus Christ. If Jesus isn't your brother today, He wants to be. There is no prework necessary because salvation is a gift from God from beginning to end. We've focused today on the salvific work of Jesus, our brother, in reconciling us to a Holy God, but we can't neglect the work of the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the grave. The Holy Spirit raises us to new life too!

1. The gift of God (Father, Son, and Spirit) is salvation. To be brought out of death to life, washed clean of our sin, so that we can come alive to God our Father through our brother Jesus Christ!