

Jesus is Greater **Hebrews 3**

1. Consider Jesus

2. Hold Our Confidence

3. Hold Our Conviction

4. Choose Today

West Valley Church
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Hebrews: Jesus is Greater Chapter Three

Intro:

Good morning everyone, we have some of our 6th grade grads in church with us today, they are no longer 6th graders, but 7th graders. We took eight of them to Seattle to celebrate them leaving as children and entering the youth department.

We went to Wild Waves, Gameworks, and downtown Seattle. I had five boys stuck in my car in Seattle traffic so I got to preach to them a little. They only got parts of it, so here is the full version. Let's jump into chapter 3 of Hebrews as we continue our summer series: Chapter 3 is broken into 2 sections- the first is connected to the end of

chapter 2 (you know it's connected because verse one begins by saying, "therefore"), and you heard Pastor Jason say last week and you've heard Pastor Mike say in the past that anytime we see a "therefore" in Scripture, you have to look in front of the "therefore" to see what it is "there for". And we will get to that in a bit. Chapter 2 and 3 mirror each other. Chapter 2 warns the audience and then talks about Jesus, chapter 3 talks about Jesus and then warns the audience. There is so much we can learn from chapter 3, but I don't want to make anyone else's brain hurt the way mine did from all that can be found in chapter 3 alone. So today, let's just look at four things from chapter 3 that will help us today and this week:

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Why does chapter 3 start out saying "therefore". It is finishing the thought about Jesus in chapter 2. The last half of chapter 2 is talking about Jesus being fully human and why it's important for us. But if you look specifically at chapter 2:17, "He (Jesus) had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."



Because Jesus was fully God but also lived and was fully human, we can therefore look to Him to help us now as our apostle and high priest. Because he was tempted like we are, he knows what it's like to face temptation. He knows what it's like to be in pain or sad or angry because he was fully human. Therefore fix your thoughts on Jesus. The word here that is best translated from the original language, is actually "consider". Jesus uses same word in Luke 12:24.

Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

Jesus uses this word consider and he is not just saying to look at them, or think about them, but look and think about them in order to understand and learn God's lesson to you, from considering them. In that way, let's...

1. "Consider" Jesus

...as our apostle and high priest.

Only in Hebrews is Jesus referred to as an apostle. Apostle means, "One who is sent out" and was given to the disciples, Paul, Barnabas- many of those commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel. Apostles were sent by Jesus, and Jesus was sent by our Heavenly Father. The Hebrews writer mentions many great messengers sent by God earlier in Hebrews like angels, prophets, apostles but Jesus is greater, Jesus is "the" Apostle. He was sent out, and He sends us out.

As our High priest, Jesus is the bridge we have spanning the gap between our heavenly Father and us. The Latin word for priest is *pontifex* which actually means, "bridge builder" To be a good priest, they must bridge the gap between people and God. To do it really well, a priest must know both people and God really well. The role of the priest in the Old Testament was also to make atonement for sins (1:3, 2:17) and make the people holy (2:11) or clean. So you can see why Jesus is our High priest because He alone can make atonement for our sins, and only by His blood on the cross can we be made clean. So in light of this, consider Jesus.

Verse 5-6 from Hebrews chapter 3 says:

"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Consider Jesus, in order to help us:

2. Hold our confidence

I don't know if any of us would argue that Moses is better than Jesus, but for the ones getting the letter they needed to hear that Jesus was greater than Moses. And not to take anything away from Moses, he was the man, especially for those getting this letter. Prophets heard from God in visions, but Moses spoke face to face with God. Moses was a

faithful servant in God's house but Jesus is the Son of the house. And there is a big difference between being the son in a house and being the servant (even if it's an honorable one).

In John 8:35, Jesus says:

Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but the son belongs to it forever.

When we are convicted of our sin, repent of it and turn to Jesus, we are given the gift of being adopted into God's family. But being part of God's family and His house is conditional. If, we hold firm to our confidence and hope in which God gives us. The tough thing, is sometimes we all lack confidence. We are easily afraid of what others will say or do if we stand up for what we believe in. Everyone is offended by everything else, and at the same time nobody wants to offend anyone, except if it's anonymous or on social media. Holding on to our confidence means we should be confident, but not because of who we are, but because of who God is. Our confidence comes from being a child of God. A God who loves us and gives us power to overcome evil in this world, the same evil Jesus has already overcome.

When we live in fear, it's like we are telling God, we don't trust Him. We don't deserve to be part of God's household. But when we follow Jesus, when we surrender our desires for God's, we are adopted into God's family. As children of God, we need to act like it. I have some friends who always told their kids as they left the house, "don't embarrass the family name". I also told our 6th graders heading into a restaurant, "don't embarrass the family name." We should want to honor and obey our parents, and not do anything that would bring dishonor to our family. We should want them to be proud of who we are. More so, shouldn't we want to bring honor to our Heavenly Father? Imagine God saying each morning before we leave the house, "Don't embarrass the family name." As a follower of Jesus, we can hold our confidence in God, as a member of His family.

Our second and third points are similar, because if you read verses 5-6 and verses 12-14, side by side you'll see a few connections.

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

So we talked about holding our confidence in God, and now we will focus on how to hold our conviction.

3. Hold our conviction (also "initial commitment")

Verse 14 is another verse like 5-6, where it says, "We are..." something "if we hold on" to something else. And like verse 5-6, it is also conditional because we get something, "if" we do something. We share in Christ, we are partners with Christ. The NLT says, "We share in all that belongs in Christ," which should have an impact on confidence we may lack. Just as Christ has victory over death and evil, holding on to our conviction, to our commitment to Jesus, means we share in His victory.

Holding on to their conviction and confidence in Jesus was really important for the Hebrew audience because they were under intense persecution for their faith. You might not be persecuted for your faith, at least not the way the Hebrews were. But life still stinks sometimes, and when it does, holding on to our convictions and commitments to Jesus will help us. When did you feel God closest to you? When did you hear His voice? Or when was your faith the strongest it's ever been? Those are moments we hold on to. When things are tough, our faith will help us through it, if we hold on.

In verses 7-8 & 15, part of the warning is repeated at the end of chapter 3, so let's focus our last point on these three verses that repeat each other, because usually if something gets repeated in Scripture, it's probably important.

So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion. (Hebrews 3:7-8, niv)

As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." (Hebrews 3:15, niv)

4. **Choose today**

...to remember the past and learn from it.

The rebellion refers back to the Israelites wondering in the Desert. Throughout the book of Numbers we read about their complaining and whining, and doing the opposite of what God says to do sometimes. They had gotten used to eating manna, which was bread that fell from the sky like the dew on the ground. But after eating it all the time, they begin to miss fish and other fruit and vegetables that they had as slaves in Egypt. They start to ask why they can't go back to being slaves again because at least there, they had other food. They had forgotten just how bad being a slave really was. They claimed in Numbers 11:5 "we got to eat meat at no cost" news flash, their meat, and whatever else they enjoyed in Egypt as slaves had a cost. It was at the cost of freedom and being whipped each day and forced to do things you didn't want to. When I read about the Israelites wondering in the desert, I think, "come on, stop rebelling, stop messing up, don't you remember what God just did for you to get you out of Egypt." I like to think that if I was one who had walked through the Red Sea being parted; my heart wouldn't have been hardened against God.

If you sit down, you can read the entire book of Numbers in a few hours, but remember, this all happened over 40 years, and over that amount of time a lot can be forgotten. Thankfully Moses knew it was important so He wrote it down.

Paul told the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 10:11

(These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.)

We can learn from their example too, if we choose to. We don't always remember just how good or bad something was over long periods of time. We take the 6th graders to Seattle every year to celebrate and get to know our youth pastor. Every year, we stay in a youth room at another Nazarene church that has couches we can sleep on. So every year I come home sore because we ride roller coasters, stay up late, eat junk food, and sleep on those

couches, plus I'm just getting old. Well I worked on my sermon at bed time on our trip and I was trying to think of an illustration to help explain how easy it is to forget something over a long period of time. One year from now, I know I'll have forgotten how much my body hurts from sleeping on a couch. And there is my illustration; I guess you could say I had to sleep on it...

Choose Today, to remember the past and, unlike the Israelites, Choose Today, to learn from it. Because we have some things in common with the Israelites from Numbers. We live in the desert, some of us for 40 years. Like the audience of the letter to Hebrews, we can also learn from the Israelites example to not harden our hearts towards God. To not dishonor God's house, to not disobey His call on our lives. You might say you aren't hardening your heart in those ways, but hardening our heart towards God can happen in an indirect way too. What I mean is hardening our hearts towards God can happen through how we treat others. A step in the right direction toward not having a hardened heart is in verse 13: "encourage one another daily..." It is hard to harden your heart towards God when you are loving and encouraging people.

If you encourage my kids, I'll know you care about me, even if just a little. Even more so, if you encourage each other (God's children), He'll know you care about Him. If you google, "why are people so." You will get lots of answers- mean, rude, selfish, fake. One answer you won't see, is "encouraging." I wish I could say the search changes if you put in, "why are Christians so" but the top answers are- judgmental, negative, annoying. That is the sign of a hardened heart. Choose today to not let your heart harden, to not forget God's love for you, and God's desire to see you share that love with others. Choose today to encourage each other, to consider Jesus, and to hold on to our confidence and conviction. Choose today, to follow Jesus.

Pray