

Hebrews 3:1-6 **Don't let go of Christ!**

Pentecost 21 October 25, 2009 (Children – favorite things, God's Word)

Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ Amen.

God's Word is written in Hebrews 3:1-6

These are Your Words heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth. Your Word is truth! Amen!

Dear Friends, in Christ,

How can we describe the way that Christ has saved us? Sometimes we see a news story of someone standing on top of a car in a flooding river. He or she is about to be swept away to certain death, when a helicopter stops overhead a rescuer at the bottom of the rope says, "Grab my hand, I'll pull you to safety." The person says, I'm not that strong, I'll drown in the water. The rescuer says, Don't be afraid, I've never dropped anyone. With that promise, the person reaches up and is pulled to safety just as the car is washed away in the raging river. We may never be caught in a flood, but we are surrounded by temptations, by discouragement, and by weaknesses in our sinful nature. We are not strong enough to save ourselves. But, Jesus calls to us through His Word and says, "I've got you. Don't worry. Trust in Me!" That is the main reason that we are here today to hear from Christ and receive encouragement as His Word says to us

Don't let go of Christ!

First, Jesus has hold of us. In our verses, the God compared the work of Jesus to the work of Moses. It states, "*Fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. [Jesus] was faithful to the One who appointed Him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.*" (v.1-2) God had sent Moses to Egypt to save His people. When the Israelites left Egypt, there were over one million people. Many of them only thought about how bad their slavery had been and wanted to escape the hard labor. But, they didn't know much about the true God and that He was offering them much more than an exit. When they were tested in the wilderness, many rebelled and complained against God and Moses. As much as God wanted to hold them as His people, many died in unbelief. Moses was sent to call the people back from their sins to be close to God. Through Moses, God gave them the 10 Commandments and the laws of worship and sacrifice. These served to remind the people to their need for forgiveness and of a coming Savior.

Moses served for 40 years as the people's guide, judge, and intercessor. He wasn't perfect. He made mistakes and received forgiveness from God. Through his faithfulness he led a remnant of the people to the Promised Land. Those who believed God's message through Moses were blessed and helped through many difficulties. Moses was such a great spiritual leader that even at Jesus' time the Jews still claimed him as their spiritual guide.

How much more they should have looked to Christ. Hebrews states that He was faithful in following everything perfectly that His heavenly Father wanted Him do. Our verses describe Him as an "apostle." We usually think of Peter or Paul. But, the word apostle means, one who is sent. God had sent His Son into this world to reveal the saving truth. He would do this not only by speaking about God, but by living among people as the God-man.

In a sense Moses served as a priest for his people. When they rebelled, He pleaded to God for their forgiveness and taught the people the truth that would save them. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus pleads to the Father in our defense. But, He pleaded by giving His life to save us. He pleads for us not because of our goodness but for the sake of His own sacrifice, when He died on the cross to erase all our sins. Jesus' resurrection shows that He did all His work perfectly so He could claim us as His own. Imagine a person who wanted to buy a certain type of car. He or she saves up the money until finally there is enough to pay for it. Once purchased, do think that the person will no longer care about the car? No, it will be driven with pride and it will be closely cared for. So, we should know that Jesus holds us closely since He has paid the price for us with his own blood.

Jesus isn't done with His faithful work. He is still gathering people into His kingdom from around the world by the means of His Word. Recently at a women's mission rally we heard that Christians only make up 2 – 3% of the population of India. That doesn't sound like much, until you think that there are 1.2 billion people in India. That's millions of Christians in just one country. Our church is just a small portion of all the believers in the world. But, no matter what the size of our church, we are important to God. That's why Jesus sent out His disciples telling them to teach everything He commanded. That's why He told them to baptize and commune people as a way of gathering and keeping His people close to Him. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* (Galatians 3:26-28) There are no limits to Jesus' love and forgiveness for people. They extend to all. If only all would believe in Him and follow His Word!

Second, hold on to Christ by faith. Moses never asked anyone to believe that he was the Savior. He always told the people to believe in God and to remember His promises. And in that sense he was a faithful servant to God's people. Our verses state, *"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house."* (v.5-6)

When Jesus preached, He didn't just talk about God. He showed Himself to be God. He said, *"Believe in God, believe also in Me."* (John 14:1) Jesus didn't just point the people to some way to find God. He said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me."* (John 14:6) Jesus once reminded the people how Moses put up a brass snake on a pole so the rebellious people could think of God's promised healing when bitten and be saved from the poison of the snakes. So Jesus said, *"As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son... must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life."* (John 3:14)

We have believed God's message about our Savior. We know that we have a share in the heavenly mansions because of Him! So, our verses urge us to continue in that saving faith and remain united with Christ. It states, *"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus..."* (v.1-2) Jesus our Savior is the reason that we have a congregation. We come from different backgrounds. Yet, every time we worship, Jesus unites us with His Word. And with that unity, we join in hymns and prayers in order that we might encourage each other to hold on to Christ by faith alone. Temptations are always telling us to give up and look for other sources of help. But only with Christ can we stand.

Our verses picture a house. A house in our climate it needs maintenance at times. The hot sun and cold winter wear away at the siding. The rain and winds damage the roof. Yet, with proper repair the house will stand. So our verses state, *"We are God's house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast."* (v.6) Jesus has blessed us with His promises as our foundation. Even though we can make a wreck of our lives at times, His promises fix our hearts forgiveness and the encouragement. We stand together by faith as we wait for goal of heaven. We're not perfect. That's why we daily need Christ. In Him and by His Word we withstand the powerful forces of sin and temptation. The Bible reminds us, *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for [God] who promised is faithful."* (Hebrews 10:23)

As we meet for worship each Sunday, picture Christ rescuing us. He is not hanging from rope on a helicopter. He is hanging on a cross to set us free. Our risen Christ still has a saving hold on us. By faith as we think of getting to our final goal of heaven, we thank God that He hasn't dropped us, despite our sinful kicking and screaming all the way. His arms and His saving Word are strong enough to carry us through. Amen.
The peace of God ...