

## **Hebrews 3:1-6 Fix Your Thoughts on Jesus! Pentecost 21 October 18-19, 2015**

By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

God's grace and peace are yours because of our faithful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

God encourages us to remain strong in our faith by looking to Christ's faithful work in Hebrews 3:1-6.

These are Your Words, heavenly Father, to make us certain of where we stand with You forever. Amen!

Dear Christian Friends,

What brings us here today? Is it just a tradition to church? Is it because we feel an obligation or that it feels good to start the week off with worshiping God? We are together here because we have something in common. We are sinners in need of a Savior to rescue us from power of sin's control that ultimately would lead us to eternal destruction. We are here because we are not as faithful to God as we should be and we need His help. We are here to receive the forgiveness that Christ won so that we have such certainty in life that we can offer His blessings to other sinners. We can't just wish them a better life. We can tell them:

### **Fix Your Thoughts on Jesus!**

**First, Jesus was faithful in His work to save us.** *"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house."* (v.1-2) The author was so confident in Christ's faithfulness that he calls his readers: "holy brothers." We, as believers in Christ, are holy, cleansed from sin and set apart by God. We are covered by the faithful life of Jesus who was perfect in all He did. In Christ, God sees us sinners as His perfect children, just as Jesus was His perfect child.

The Jewish Christians who received this letter held Moses in high regard. God through Moses affected the social, political, and religious life of the people of Israel. God met Moses at the burning bush in the wilderness and called him to go to Egypt and lead His people out of slavery to the land of promise. God performed great miracles through Moses and he led the people to freedom. Along the way, God spoke through Moses, giving him the Ten Commandments and many other laws of worship and sacrifice for the people. And it states again and again throughout the early books of the Bible that Moses was faithful to God. With only one exception when he struck a rock to get water instead of speaking to it as God commanded, for 40 years, he did whatever God commanded him to do. Yet, due to that one sin he did not enter the new land.

What about Jesus? He was called the *"apostle and high priest whom we confess."* He too, was faithful in following the role that God had for Him. When we hear the title "apostle," we usually think of Peter, James, or John. But, the word means, "one who is sent." Before Jesus sent out the 12 Apostles, God had sent Him into our world. His purpose was to reveal not the laws like Moses, but that He had come to fulfill the law to save them. He would not only speak for God; He was God. He told His disciples, *"If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father."* (John 14:5) God sent Jesus as His prophet to speak for Him.

Moses was a faithful prophet of God. But, he was not the high priest. His brother Aaron and his sons were appointed by God to make sacrifices and to plead for the people when they sinned. Jesus was both a prophet and high priest. Like Aaron, He too pleads for people, but not just with words. He holds up His nail-scarred hands as the one who accomplished what God had promised to save us. He pleads for us, pointing to His own sacrifice on the cross where He died to erase all our sins. Jesus did all this work perfectly and faithfully. We know this because God raised Jesus from death as proof that He accepted Jesus' perfect work.

**Second, Jesus deserves greater honor than Moses.** The Jews had a high regard for Moses. When Jesus accused the unbelieving Jews of His time of not following God, they would claim to be followers of Moses as if that was enough. Moses gave structure to the Jews' whole way of life and to their country as a whole. But, Moses knew that he was only setting the stage for the coming Savior. Of Jesus we read, "*Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.*" (v.3-4) If someone builds an outstanding building, people wouldn't throw a party to thank the building. They would thank the builder and honor him. So, Jesus is the builder of all things including the Old and New Testament churches. Moses, in a sense, was just part of the church that Jesus built.

We must be careful not to honor people more than Christ in our lives. The most godly people and Christian pastors and teachers are just part of the same church as all believers. I am a sinner in need of forgiveness just like anyone else. I cannot get you to heaven. I cannot by my own person give you an ounce spiritual strength. It all comes from Jesus through God's Word. Paul wrote, "*You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*" (Ephesians 2:19-20) All honors should go to Jesus for the great and gracious things He has done to establish a kingdom that includes us!

**Third, Jesus is the fulfillment of what Moses announced.** 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) Moses was called to prepare the way for Jesus by giving God's law to warn people of God's coming judgment and to call people to repent of their sins. He said, "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.*" (Deuteronomy 18:15) Moses was a servant waiting for his Lord to appear to make all things right. Moses always told the people to believe in God.

Jesus once reminded the people of His time how God is serious about sin. At Moses' time the people had rebelled and God allowed poisonous snakes to bite some of the people. Then they people repented and pleaded for help. God had Moses put up a brass snake on a pole so those bitten could look at it and be healed through faith in God's promises. Jesus said, "*As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.*" (John 3:14) Jesus didn't just point the way to the future like Moses. He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.*" (John 14:6) He said, "*You believe in God, believe also in Me.*" (John 14:1)

We have believed God's message about Christ as our Savior. We know that we have a share in the heavenly mansions because of Him! "*We are God's house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*" (v.6) We all have problems and challenges in life. But, God's Word encourages us not to give up. Christ will give us the strength to stay faithful to Him and to confess Him with boldness under all circumstances. We have the most remarkable message of hope, especially for people around us that have lost their hope by trusting in the frailties of man. We can boast of forgiveness, eternal life in heaven, and a glory that will never fade, spoil or perish kept in heaven for us! "*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for [God] who promised is faithful.*" (Hebrews 10:23)

The promise of eternal life with Christ is why we are meeting here today. Not only do we want to go to heaven, we want our family, friends, and even strangers to be with Jesus, too! We have a faithful Savior who gave His life for all people, and now He calls us as His ambassadors to share that great news. The plans of people may change. The hopes of unbelievers in life will fail. But, our Savior has faithfully won our salvation and He will be just as faithful in keeping us in the saving faith. In Christ alone we boast! Amen.