

Pentecost 21
October 18, 2015

“Fix Your Thoughts on Jesus”

HEBREWS 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. ² He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵ Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. ⁶ But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

A pastor once told his large congregation and his much larger television audience, “We are here to proclaim the message of the gospel with Jesus’ words ‘It is finished!’ in 10,000 different ways.” When Satan hears such a bold proclamation of the gospel, he immediately begins planning 10,000 different ways to destroy that message and keep it from the hearts of people.

What do I want more than anything else in my life? I want to hold on tight to the message that Christ has done everything necessary to save me and rescue me. That is why these words before us are so compelling. Listen again to these simple yet profound words, “Fix your thoughts on Jesus.” Early in this letter to the Hebrews it says, “We must pay more carefully attention therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”

Is it possible to drift away from the message of the gospel? Sure it is. Is it possible to have our thoughts fixed on other things instead of Jesus and what he has done for us? Sure it is. Are you so weighed down with problems and troubles your eyes are taken off of Jesus? Are you so taken up with the blessings of this life that your eyes are taken off of Jesus? Is Satan suggesting to you that the life you try to live for Christ is more important than Jesus’ life, his death and his resurrection? Let’s listen to this timely message that calls on us to **“Fix Our Thoughts on Jesus.”**

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” You are holy brothers and holy sisters in Christ. We have this amazing bond because we are connected to Christ Jesus who said, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” Notice it says we are holy brothers and holy sisters. Holy? We are holy? Really? We are obviously not holy in how we have lived our lives. The man who wrote the hymn “Rock of Ages” estimated that by the time a young man reaches his teen years he would have committed over 600 million sins. If you know your heart you will admit that this estimate is probably low. Yet, it says we are holy brother and sister in Christ. In Christ we have our sins washed away. We are pure and sinless, perfect in the eyes of God.

Think of the damage that termites can do when they get into the wooden structure of your home and let that help you understand the damage that sin can do in your life. These hungry termites keep eating and eating away. On Monday this church building will be tented and fumigated for termites. The termites will be dead. Only Jesus can destroy the sin that has burrowed into your life and made you unacceptable to your God. Only he can make you holy and acceptable and loved by your Father in heaven. That is why it is so important to fix our thoughts on Jesus and not go

back to thinking we can do something to get rid of the results of sin in our lives.

Keep your thoughts fixed on Jesus because he is the "apostle and high priest" whom we confess. This is the only place Jesus is called the apostle. The word apostle means "sent." Jesus was sent by his heavenly Father to be our high priest. Later in this great book of Hebrews it says of Jesus our high priest, "He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." The prophet Isaiah predicted Jesus would be "pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities." Jesus, only Jesus, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." That's where our thoughts are fixed.

Jesus was always faithful in what he did for us. **"He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all of God's house."** It was very difficult for a Jew to think of anyone greater than Moses. Yet Jesus was greater than Moses and even more faithful than Moses in what he did. Moses certainly impresses us as he leads the people out of the land Egypt to the Promised Land. But Moses had his moments when he was not faithful. Remember when he struck the rock in anger to bring fresh water to God's complaining and ungrateful people. That unfaithfulness cost him the opportunity to go into the Promised Land. Jesus was never unfaithful to his work and his plan of saving us. United States Marines encourage each other with the words, "Semper Fi" which is short for Semper Fideles ("Always Faithful). The faithful Marine will not abandon his buddy on the field of battle. Your faithful Savior did not balk at taking every sin you ever committed and dying for it. Jesus was and is and will always be faithful.

The Jewish Christians who were reading these words were in danger of going back to the laws of the Jewish faith to supposedly add to what Christ had done for them. Perhaps you need to supplement your Medicare with other insurance plans. But you do not have to supplement what Christ has done for you by going back to the laws of Moses or any other rules and regulations. Jesus is superior to Moses, just as the builder of a house is superior to the house itself.

"Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of the house has greater honor than the house itself." Behind every house that has been built there is always someone who designed that house. Moses was part of the house or church of the Old Testament people. Jesus was the builder of the church. I am holding in my hand a stone taken from a river bed. Each stone is unique and different. In 1 Peter 2 we are told that we are living stones built on Jesus the Living Stone. Moses was one of the living stones in the church, but Jesus is the Living Stone upon whom we build our salvation. Why would the Jewish Christians want to go back to putting their trust in Moses who was a stone in Christ's church and give up building their lives on Christ the Living Stone? Why would I ever want to put my hope and trust in myself as stone in Christ's church when my life is built on Christ the living Stone.

When our God designs and builds something he sure does a good job, wouldn't you agree? **"For every house is built by someone but God is the builder of everything."** When I drive by the new house going up down the street I wonder, "Who is building that house?" Every house has a builder. But God is the builder of everything. Did you know that you have 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body? Every day your heart pumps blood throughout those blood vessels taking food and oxygen to the cells and then removing the waste through the kidneys. Who designed this amazing system? It was our God. When Job was questioning God's love for him, the Lord asked Job, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?"

Way back in eternity our God carefully designed how he would take people who are destined for eternal death and make them part of his house and his family that lasts forever. How did Jesus respond to this important task of building up his Father's house with people like you and me? In John 17 Jesus says, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to

do." Jesus did not hesitate to go to the cross and give his life for us because there was no other way for us to be built into God's house in this life and for all eternity. Jesus was faithful. He did the job well. That is why you can be sure of being part of something that will last forever.

Jesus was so far superior to Moses because he was not a servant in God's house, he was the Son. **"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. And we are God's house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast."**

Moses sure did a good job of testifying to what was coming in the future. It was in the first book of Moses, Genesis chapter three that we hear about a Savior who was going to crush the devil's head. In Genesis twelve we hear of a descendant of Abraham who would bless the whole world. In the book of Deuteronomy we hear of a great Prophet coming in the future. Carried along by the Holy Spirit, Moses faithfully bore witness to Jesus. In John 5:46 Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "If you believed Moses, you believed in me, for he wrote about me." Why would anyone want to go back to Moses and the laws of the Old Testament when Moses faithfully pointed to Jesus as the One in whom we place our hope and trust?

Moses was the faithful servant in God's house but Jesus is so much more. Jesus is the faithful son over God's house. Moses the faithful servant gave laws that pointed to the Christ, God's Son who was to come. These laws were never given to provide people with a way to get into God's house. They pointed to Jesus God's Son who is over God's house. Here is Jesus, taking you, a spiritual dead person and building you on him and making you a living stone in his church. I can't let my worries and concerns, or my blessings and joys in life, or any false teacher ever take my thoughts off Jesus.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We share something very special with each other. We are God's house. We are built on Christ Jesus our Savior. That makes us very special to our God and very special to each other. So we listen to this urgent plea, "And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." How will we ever hold on? How will we ever be faithful and stay in God's house? Our hope is in Jesus who is faithful in God's house.

This past week in my personal devotions I was reading from 1 Thessalonians chapter five. There it reminds us that Jesus will always be faithful. "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it." What do I want more than anything else in life? I want to keep my thoughts fixed on Jesus. I know that Jesus who is faithful will keep my thoughts on him. Amen.