

Jesus: Our Great High Priest Forever
(Week 6)
Hebrews 3:1-6
“Seeing IS Believing”

Introduction

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.” **Hebrews 3:1**

The writer of *Hebrews* begins this section of his letter with the word “*Therefore*”. When I see this word in the *New Testament*, I am always reminded of my pastor from years ago, who would always say, “When you see the word ‘*therefore*’ in the scriptures, always make sure to look to see what it’s ‘there for!’” (It’s amazing what you’ll remember from your former pastors!) The word is always used as a way to look back at the previous passage, and then go forward to a truth that we must remember. In this case, the writer has just given us a very detailed description of just who Jesus is. He is our Sacrifice, our Sibling, and our Spokesman (High Priest). These truths should have enabled us to “see” Jesus. THEREFORE, now that we have “seen” Him, we should never take our eyes off of Him. He must become our everything. Once a person has seen Christ, it is imperative that they never again allow themselves to become distracted by earthly things. This is what the writer means, when he says **“fix your thoughts on Him” (3:1)**. A child of God BECOMES a child of God, when he/she truly “sees” Christ for who He is and subsequently, repents of their sin, putting their complete faith and hope in Him. Jesus is EVERYTHING to a true believer. Therefore, He must remain as such. We must NEVER allow our focus to shift away from Him. After all, Jesus didn’t die so that He could become a “part” of our lives, but He died rather, that He would become our reason for living!

I am reminded here of one of my favorite *Bible* passages found in **Matthew 14:22-33**. It tells us of the time when the disciples saw Jesus walking upon the Sea of Galilee. Remember how that story begins? It begins with the disciples “seeing” Jesus walking upon the waves, and naturally, they were pretty much terrified at the sight, for they didn’t really know that it was Him. I mean, let’s face it. Nobody really expects to see someone that they know walking on top of a sea. Right? After their initial panic attack, Jesus calms their fears by saying to them **“It’s ME”**. Once they see Jesus, they go from fear to utter amazement. Then Simon Peter asks The Lord if he can come out on the water and join Him. Jesus simply says, **“Come”**.

As soon as he hears the word, Peter jumps right out of the boat, and before he knows it, he’s DOING IT! He is actually walking ON WATER! He’s headed straight out to Jesus, no doubt with the other eleven jealous disciples looking on from the safety of the boat. Remember, they were constantly trying to “out-do” one another when it came to Jesus’ approval (**Mark 10:37; Luke 22:24**). They all must have been so thrilled when they saw Peter begin to sink. And why did he sink? BECAUSE, he took his eyes off Jesus and began to focus on the waves around his feet, that’s why. Did you catch that? First he “saw” Jesus, and he did something wonderful. Then, he took his eyes off Jesus, and it all ended in dismal failure. Jesus rescued ol’ Pete from drowning that day. After He had saved his life, He asked Peter simply, **“Why did you doubt?”**. You see, when we fail to keep our focus upon Christ once we have truly “seen” Him, then some pretty bad things can happen. We must always remember that truly “seeing” Him, IS believing.

The writer of *Hebrews* wants us to realize that the natural result of seeing Jesus should lead us to do three things: FIXATING (upon Him), FINDING (a better way in Him), and FINISHING (what He has begun in us). Let us look together at these three characteristics of every believer who has truly “seen” Jesus!

Fixate (Upon Him - vs. 1)

First of all, notice the language the writer uses to describe his readers. He addresses them as **“holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling”**. There can be absolutely no doubt here that he is *not* speaking about Jews in general, but rather, Jewish Believers. That is why he calls them HOLY brothers, who share in the HEAVENLY calling. Only a true believer in Jesus Christ has been made holy and has any share in a “heavenly calling”. The nation of Israel, in the days of Moses, had only been given an “earthly calling”, not a heavenly one. Please allow me to explain. Israel had been given Moses, an earthly man, to lead them out of an earthly place (Egypt), to an earthly promised land (Canaan). As they journeyed through the wilderness, Moses gave them The Law, which was to serve as a kind of “babysitter” for the people (**Galatians 3:24**) until a more perfect way could be given. This “way” would be found in a person, and His name is Jesus. He came from Heaven to bring us this better way. Remember one of the key words in this book is “Heaven”! Jesus has come to offer us a heavenly calling as opposed to an earthly one. All of the *Old Testament* realities that the nation of Israel experienced were mere “types and shadows” of a “heavenly calling”, that the whole world would one day be offered through Christ Jesus.

It is also important to note the two titles the writer attributes to Jesus in this verse. First, he calls Jesus our “Apostle”. This is the only time this word is used to describe Christ in all of scripture. The word *apostle* (*apostolos* in the Greek) simple means “one who is sent”. Jesus was the ultimate apostle. He was sent from Heaven to bring God’s message of grace and mercy to a sinful world. It is incumbent upon us to respond appropriately to this message, or we shall be forever lost without hope.

The second word used here to describe Christ is one that we have previously discussed; Jesus, our High Priest. As you know from The Law of Moses, the work of The High Priest was to be the people’s representative to God The Father. This is why the *Old Testament* High Priests were commanded to make sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. As we look closely at the two distinct functions given here, we will have a complete picture of the ministry of Christ. He is our “Apostle” sent from heaven to bring us a message from God, and He is our High Priest, who offered Himself as a sacrifice and has returned to Heaven to speak to God on our behalf. No one but Jesus could adequately carry out both of these “Heavenly” functions, as a mediator between God and man. There is none like Jesus, our Apostle and High Priest! He is Better, He is Perfect, and He is from Heaven.

The writer goes on to tell his readers that as a result of knowing who Jesus is, we who believe in Him should **“fix our thoughts upon Him”**. The word he uses here for “fix” (*katanoeo*) means to give our full attention or to steadfastly gaze upon. You see, to the believer, Jesus is all that we need. The things of this world will simply fall away, once we have found Christ. *The Bible* tells us that we must **“Love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind” (Luke 10:27)**. That sounds like total focus to me. How about you?

Do you know why there are so many miserable people in this world today? Because they are focusing their attention on EVERYTHING but Christ, that’s why. They live for pleasure, the approval of others, wealth and prosperity, power and dominion, and a myriad of various worldly pursuits that do not satisfy the empty longing in their souls. If they were to be completely honest about it, deep down, they are the most thoroughly unsatisfied of all humanity. Many of them go to church regularly and have convinced themselves that they are alright with God, when in fact they stand wretched, pitiful, blind, and naked before Him (**Revelation 3:17**). Jesus warns us that many will stand before Him on the day of judgment and talk of all their “religious activities” only to be told **“Depart from Me, I never KNEW you” (Matthew 7:22-23)**. You see, a person who has been truly “born again” will only have eyes for Jesus. For once a person has “seen” Him, everything else pales in comparison. Are you “fixated” on Christ, or is He just something you have “added” to your busy life as a side item? If you have truly seen Him, you will never be the same. Child of God, never let your eyes wander away Christ. Fixate upon Him. Remember what happened with Simon Peter’s infamous “walk on the water”. He took his eyes away from Jesus, and he sank like a stone.

Find (A Better Way IN Him - vs. 2-5)

I wonder at this point, if the writer paused to take a deep breath before penning these next few words that would have been, to say the least, “controversial” for some of his Jewish readers. **“Jesus is BETTER than Moses!”** You must remember, that the Jewish people, then and now, still regard Moses as the greatest man that ever lived. Unlike any of the other *Old Testament* prophets, Moses spoke with God face to face as one speaks to a friend (**Exodus 33:11**). He was even allowed to see God’s glory upon the mountain (**Exodus 33:18-23**). God “passed by” Moses, so that he could see Him from behind for He warned Moses that no one could see his face and live. Moses’ own face even shone with the glory of God for a time, until it began to fade (**Exodus 34:29-35**). It was Moses who led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. He performed countless miracles and even parted the Red Sea. He gave the people the Law of God. There can be little doubt that Moses was indeed an extraordinary man, but Christ is FAR superior to Moses. Moses hand delivered God’s rules (The Ten Commandments), but Jesus brought God’s forgiveness and salvation. Jesus was faithful to His Father and has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses (**vs. 2-3**).

He goes on to say that while Moses was a faithful servant in God’s House, it was Jesus who BUILT that house! The word that he uses for “servant” is not the usual word we find for a servant in *The New Testament*. This particular word (*therapon* in the Greek) is much greater than that of an average household slave. It is a word used to describe one who is a steward of high regard and authority. Moses was indeed a great servant, but he was still, in fact, a servant. Jesus is better than Moses.

The word used here for “house” doesn’t actually mean a dwelling, but rather it means a “household”. Moses was chosen to lead the household of Israel, but Jesus was not only the architect of Israel, he is also the builder of a much greater household... The Church. It is this “house” that has received the heavenly calling. I am reminded here of King David, who desperately longed to build a house (temple) for The LORD (**2 Samuel 7**). God refused to allow David to build house for Him, but He made a covenant with David, that He would one day establish a “house” for David through one of David’s very own descendants.

“The LORD declares to you, that the LORD Himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish His kingdom. He is the ONE, who will build a house in My Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He will be My Son.”

2 Samuel 7:11-13

That Descendant of David, who established the house for David, is none other than The LORD Jesus Christ, The Son of God, and we who believe in Him are a part of that house! Isn’t *The Word of God* awesome!!

So you see, Moses only gave the people an earthly “shadow” of the Heavenly things that were to come through Christ. Therefore, Jesus is far greater than Moses. Moses gave us as standard of rules that we could never possibly live up to. But, Jesus came to offer us a better way. Moses led his people out of the bondage of slavery, but Jesus’ death on the cross freed us from the bondage of sin. Moses could only “give” the Law to the people to tell them how to live, but Jesus has made a way so that He can live IN us. While Moses gave external rules for being holy, Jesus changes us from the inside out to MAKE us holy. Moses led the people to an “earthly” promised land, but Jesus is leading His church to an eternal one. Jesus is far greater than Moses!

Allow me to give a *Old Testament* “type and shadow” to illustrate this for us better. Moses, the lawgiver, was not able to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. He sinned against God and was not allowed to enter (**Deuteronomy 3:23-27**). His assistant, Joshua, was called upon to lead the people in his stead. You see, following The Law will never get you into the “promised land”, because none of us are able to completely follow it, not even Moses! The Hebrew name for “Joshua” is actually “Yeshua”, and it literally means “The Lord saves”. The name “Jesus” is an English translation from the Greek “Iesous” (pronounced ee-ay-sooce). This is the Greek version of the Hebrew name (you guessed it), Joshua. The Biblical reality found in all of this is actually quite simple: The Law, as good as it is, can

never lead the people into the promised land, we need a Savior, a “Joshua” to lead us, and that is exactly what Christ does for us. Only in Him do we find a “better way”, for Jesus IS our way.

Finish (What He Has Started In You - Vs.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.” Hebrew 3:6

The mark of a TRUE follower of Christ is that they will remain in Him until the end. There are many who claim to know Jesus, but then drop out of “the race” before the finish line. Did they lose their salvation? No, actually they never had it to begin with. If we are truly part of “God’s House, if we have truly “seen” Christ and been filled with His Holy Spirit, then NOTHING can ever separate us from Him. It is easy for us to misunderstand the writer of *Hebrews* and think that it is our responsibility as believers to somehow “hold on” to Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth. We do not hold on to Him, nor can we. However, if we have truly been saved by grace through faith, He holds on to US! No one ever comes to Christ unless The Father draws him (**John 6:44**), and the one who has truly been born again need not worry about their “security” in Jesus. Just listen to what Jesus prayed regarding His disciples on the night before He went to the cross:

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your Name— The Name you gave Me— So that they may be one, as We are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by the Name you gave me. None has been lost, except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.” John 17:11-12

Did you see that? You don’t have to hold on to Jesus. Jesus will hold on to you, if you are truly His! Sadly, there are many people who think that they have been saved, when in truth, they have not. Salvation isn’t about just praying some “magic prayer” or saying the right words in front of a congregation. It is about repentance of sin and a complete and final surrender of a person’s life over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Lots of people want to keep from going to hell, but sadly, very few want Christ to have complete control over their lives, let alone, turn away from their “favorite” sins. They want to “cut a deal” with God. They want to live as they see fit, and yet, somehow find themselves in heaven after they have had their fun and “sown their wild oats”, as it were. What’s even worse, many false preachers are out there preaching this as the gospel. These people may even “appear” to be on fire for God, but the flames usually die out pretty quickly, as soon as this world comes along with what they consider to be a “better offer”. Jesus warned that these aren’t really Christians at all, for the truth of the gospel was never able to “take root” in them (**Matthew 13:6**).

Here is the real truth of what the writer of *Hebrews* is telling us. If you have a genuine dose of Jesus, if you have truly “seen” Him, then you WILL believe in Him, and that belief will last until the very end, when He calls us home! Simply put, “Seeing IS Believing”, and true believing lasts forever. So what does *The Bible* say about all those people who start out so excited about Jesus and suddenly disappear from view?

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” 1 John 2:19

Put your complete faith in Christ today! Don’t play games with your eternity. See Him and believe. Fixate upon Him, letting all else fall away as rubbish. Find in Him a better way and life everlasting. Have the type of genuine faith that will keep you until the Finish. Seeing Him IS believing!

And ALL of God’s people said... TRUTH!!!