

# Consider Jesus

Hebrews: Jesus is Better • PART 5 • Hebrews 3:1-6

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It is good to be back in Madison this morning! If you are visiting with us today (either here in person or online), we are glad to have you with us, and we would invite you to fill out an online visitor card by using the QR code on the front of the bulletin or by going to our website at [fourlakeschurch.org/visitor](http://fourlakeschurch.org/visitor). I am thankful to Life and to John for preaching over the past two weeks, and I am very thankful for the chance to have been away for a bit – the first week at the Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectures and the second week taking the scenic route home, camping through Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. I’ve put a copy of the program for the lectures in your cubbyholes this morning. If you are not yet a member, there are extras in the upper left cubbyhole, just so you know something of what I’ve been up to over the past few weeks.

I have had the privilege of worshiping at several congregations over the past two weeks, and I’d like to share something that made me especially thankful for our situation here at Four Lakes, and it’s something we might not appreciate, but perhaps we need to be very thankful. We may not always appreciate this building. It’s small and we may be cramped in here from time to time, but I got to see what it’s like to NOT be crowded, and I prefer what we have here right now. This first picture is of the Wednesday evening 5:15 class at the Crieve Hall congregation down in Nashville about a week and a half ago. I met my dad’s sister Marsha and two of her kids for class that night. And their building is absolutely huge. If I remember correctly, their Sunday morning attendance was over a thousand at one point. This is where Tom Holland preached for many years. Years ago, they helped us financially here in Madison. I’ve met with their elders. Twenty years ago, their missions budget was getting close to a million dollars. They have missionaries all around the world, and at one point, their elders asked me whether they could send a copy of one of my monthly activity reports to all of their missionaries, telling them to use mine as a template. They loved that it was on one page, that we had pictures, and that we gave the news truthfully, whether it was good or bad. And so, they sent one of our monthly reports to all 100 of their missionaries, saying, “Do it like this.” But their building is just massive, almost cavernous. And as I was sitting on the back row, almost needing binoculars to see the teacher, I think I counted 54 people in that class. 54 almost sounds like our attendance on a Sunday morning. But I’m just saying that 54 people in here feels a whole lot better than 54 in a building that seats a thousand! I’d much rather be a little crowded than to be in a building like this, as nice as it might be.

This next picture is from the church in Detroit where I worshiped two weeks ago. I have a friend who preaches here. He and his family help us out at camp every year. But in terms of their building, they have a similar situation. He said their building seats around 700, and as I looked around, they also seemed to have about 50

or so spread all over this absolutely huge auditorium. And in fact, I'm including this picture for a reason. I don't know whether you realize this based on the picture, but I am sitting on the eighth pew from the front (maybe a quarter of the way back in the auditorium), and I want you to notice that there is nobody between me and the preacher! So, to put this in perspective, the eighth pew back here at Four Lakes is basically our back row! Imagine being so spread out in this building that there's nobody between me and \_\_\_\_\_. Wouldn't that be discouraging? It would definitely affect the atmosphere. I would much rather be a little bit crowded than to be as spread out as I've experienced it over the past few weeks.

And there's something else I'm thankful for: I am thankful for the young men who do so much work keeping our technology up and running. In Detroit and also in Janesville last week, neither preacher used PowerPoint, because their projectors were broken. And it reminded me that we have never really had a complete technology meltdown. Now that I've said this, it may happen at any moment (and that's okay), but I am confident that our team of young men will deal with it. In fact, many things are dealt with before they happen. But we are thankful for our team of Silases, along with Josh, and Elijah, who allow themselves to be distracted during worship so that the rest of us can worship without distraction, and so that others outside this building can worship with us as well. We are thankful for their skill and for their willingness to serve.

We are here today to worship God, and part of that is preaching the good news that Jesus loves us and gave himself up for us on the cross. We respond in awe, believing the message, turning away from sin, publicly confessing that Jesus is our King, the Son of God, and by submitting to his command to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins. And we do have several examples today, starting with an update from the Lord's church in Prattville, Alabama, where LaVerne Becker, one of our former members worships. Their preacher's name is Brent Misseldine, and they posted a week or so ago and say,

There was rejoicing around the throne of God as Lorna Rivera gave her life to the Lord in baptism this evening! Lorna is the sister of our own Debbie Cammack, and Debbie has been encouraging her for many years to make this step. Lorna lives in south Florida and joined my online live Bible study two and a half years ago as we studied about Jesus and salvation. She has also been watching our services online since then. She surprised Debbie with a visit and her decision to give her life to Christ. She will be with us in worship tomorrow, so be prepared to encourage your new sister in Christ!

And then they say under this other picture that Lorna's family was thrilled to join in this moment with her. Great news from Alabama this week!

And then we have a post from Jason Hilburn, who preaches down in Baker, Florida. He says that "We have two new sisters in Christ! Two of our online students in Pakistan obeyed the Gospel. All glory to God, and thanks to Shahid Khokhar for translating and doing follow-up studies with these precious souls. Please rejoice with us and welcome Anmon and Anita to the family of God!" Years ago, I remember hearing from a preacher in Pakistan who mentioned needing to hire two guards armed with AK-47's to stand outside their church facility to help protect them from threats as they worshiped. But I don't think we've had a baptism update from Pakistan over the past three years, so this one is rather unique. But we share these pictures by way of encouragement, and we would ask: Have you done this? Have you obeyed the gospel? Have you been immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, and if you would like to know more, we would encourage you to get in touch. Pull me aside after worship or call or text any of our shepherds using the contact information on the front of the bulletin each week. We would love to study together.

This morning, we return to our series of lessons on Hebrews. The book itself is described as *“a word of exhortation”* and is written by an unknown author to some Christians who seem to have been having a hard time listening to Jesus. And the theme of the book is: JESUS IS BETTER. He is a BETTER MESSENGER, he is ENTHRONED ON HIGH, and for these reasons, we must PAY MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION so that we do not drift away from it. Several weeks ago, we learned that Jesus is ONE OF US, giving us several more reasons to be amazed by Jesus and who he really is.

Well, this morning, we move into the first six verses of Hebrews 3 as the author encourages us to CONSIDER JESUS. So, I'd like to invite you to turn with me to Hebrews 3. We will have it on the wall up here (or on the screen for those of you joining us online), but there is a special value to looking at the text in your own copy of the Bible. And even before we jump into the text, I hope we notice that we start with the word *“therefore.”* I know it's been a few weeks, but as the saying goes: When you see the word *“therefore,”* you need to look around and ask what it's there for! And in the verses right before this paragraph break, you might remember we just had Jesus introduced as our trailblazer (the guy with the machete clearing the way before us), he is our older brother, he is our deliverer, and he is also our faithful and merciful high priest. So, with this in mind, we move into Hebrews 3, where the author says,

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; <sup>2</sup> He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. <sup>3</sup> For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. <sup>4</sup> For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. <sup>5</sup> Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; <sup>6</sup> but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*

As we think about what we've just read, I'd like for us to use the rest of our time together this morning to CONSIDER JESUS. And isn't it great we can take some time today to think about Jesus? For at least a few hours every Lord's Day morning, I don't have to think about politics. Thank you, Lord, for that! For a few hours every Lord's Day morning, I don't have to think about the world, I don't have to think about whatever it is that might be stressing me out right now, I don't need to think about my weight, or my schedule, or the fact that I need an oil change, but for several hours every Lord's Day morning, we have the awesome privilege of thinking about Jesus and his rule here on this earth, because Jesus is better!

I. **And I'd like to start where the author of Hebrews starts in this passage, with a reminder about WHO WE ARE.**

And it's important, or else it wouldn't be here, but in the opening verse of Hebrews 3, he starts out by addressing his first hearers or readers as *“holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling.”* So, as we consider Jesus, we think for just a moment about who it is doing the considering. We are *“holy brothers,”* we are a family, holy (or set apart), called out by God to be separate from the world. We are different. And, of course, these people are struggling. These are people who are having a hard time listening to Jesus, and so they need some reassurance. And this is who we are as well. We are a family, and we also have been called out from the world. We may struggle from time to time, but we also need to remember who we are. We are related to each other as brothers and sisters, and in this family, we are different from the world around us. My grandfather apparently had a saying that he would use to encourage his children to hang in there. He would often say (to my dad and his sister) that “Exums are made of tougher stuff.” And sometimes my dad would repeat this to

me and my sister. If we were having a hard time with something growing up, dad would sometimes encourage us by reminding us of what his dad taught him, that “Exums are made of tougher stuff.” And we would sometimes joke about this through the years, with a wink and a nudge, “Well, you know, Exums are made of tougher stuff.” When my dad moved into a new place just over a year ago, we printed this out and laminated it and put it on the bulletin board in his room. Yes, what dad has been through over the past few years has been difficult, but “Exums are made of tougher stuff,” and we can do this together, as a family. Maybe we put that there more for us than for him, I don’t know. But it’s a constant reminder.

And I think that’s what the author of Hebrews is doing here: He’s reminding those who heard this for the first time (and ultimately us today) that we as God’s people are **“holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling.”** We are pulling together, headed in the same direction, listening to God’s call, intent on making it to heaven together as a Christian family. The author of Hebrews uses the word **“heavenly”** more than any other New Testament writer – a **“heavenly gift”** (in Hebrews 6:4), a reference to the **“heavenly things”** of the tabernacle (in Hebrews 8:5), a **“heavenly country”** (in Hebrews 11:16), the **“heavenly Jerusalem”** (in Hebrews 12:22), and so on. As brothers and sisters, we participate in this **“heavenly calling.”** This is who we are.

## II. Secondly, though, the author of Hebrews continues by telling us to CONSIDER JESUS.

We are to **“consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”** To **“consider”** something is to think about, to examine something carefully, to contemplate. We think of Jesus telling us to **“consider the ravens,”** to **“consider the lilies of the field.”** He wasn’t just saying, “Hey, look at that raven,” but he was telling his people to think carefully about the lesson he was teaching. Let this sink in. Contemplate this. Take some time on it. As I was preparing today’s lesson, I ran across a reference to an 80-year old park ranger who had spent his entire life exploring and giving tours out in Yosemite National Park. One day, a visitor comes up to this old man and says, “If you had only one hour to see Yosemite, what would you do?” And this elderly park ranger slowly repeated her words, “Only one hour to see Yosemite.” He paused, and then he said, “Ma’am, if I only had one hour to see Yosemite, I would go over to that log, I would sit down, and I would cry.” To consider something is to spend some serious time looking at it. And so the author of Hebrews is telling us to **“consider Jesus.”** For us, this means we read. We open the gospel accounts and we read, we get to know Jesus as revealed to us in scripture.

He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. An apostle is someone who has been sent on a special mission, a messenger, and this is the only time this word is used to refer to Jesus. But we know that Jesus was sent by his Father. He came to this earth as a messenger. This is God reaching down to us. But Jesus is also described as the **“High Priest of our confession.”** A priest is a go-between, and so a priest, then, is someone to approach God on our behalf. Jesus is the great High Priest. He came down to us as an Apostle (with a message from God), and he ascends and approaches God for us as a High Priest. An apostle represents God before mankind. A high priest represents the people before God. Jesus does both. And so, if I’m having a hard time listening to Jesus, I need this reminder to **“consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”** Our confession is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And sometimes, we need the reminder. Sometimes we need to stop and think about this.

## III. And this is where we get to A COMPARISON BETWEEN JESUS AND MOSES.

And everybody knows Moses! Miraculously saved by God as a baby, raised in Pharaoh’s house, spoken to by God through the burning bush, **“Let my people go,”** performer of miracles, leader of God’s people through the wilderness, receiver of God’s law on Mount Sinai, author of the first five books of the Bible, and when he died,

buried by God himself. Moses was the greatest! One commentary suggested that the equivalent of Moses to the average American today would be something like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Captain America all rolled into one. And as we look at this passage, let's notice that the author of Hebrews never cuts on Moses. In fact, he says (in verse 2) that Moses was *"faithful."* So, it's not like Jesus is faithful and Moses was un-faithful (not at all), but it's a matter of Moses being faithful and Jesus being even better. Jesus is better! Both Jesus and Moses were sent by God; both were appointed by God; both were faithful.

The author, though, goes on to use two illustrations to try to emphasize that Jesus is better. You respect Moses? Well, then you should REALLY honor Jesus, and here's why: The first line of reasoning, the first illustration, is that Jesus is better than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. So, these people love Moses, and that's great, but the author makes the point that Moses and Jesus really aren't even in the same category. It's like comparing Frank Lloyd Wright to Monona Terrace. Monona Terrace is a great building, but Frank Lloyd Wright is obviously much more impressive than the building he designed. And not only that, *"but the builder of all things is God,"* and by the way, Jesus is God! That's the argument we've seen previously in this book, so I think that's why we have that reference here in verse 4. Jesus is the master builder. Moses is great, but Moses is just the house. Jesus is the builder of the house. Jesus, therefore, is worthy of greater glory than Moses. And again, to these people, Moses was practically a superhero, but Jesus is greater; Jesus is better.

The second argument, the second illustration here, is that in the house of God, Moses was faithful as a servant *"in"* the house, while Jesus was faithful as a Son *"over"* the house. And, in fact, Moses testified about Jesus, who would be coming later. We think of what Jesus said to the Jewish leaders in John 5:46, when he said, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Moses, therefore, was important, but Moses (the servant) was merely preparing the way for Jesus (the Son) to come along later. Who is more important: The servant in a house or the son of the house? The point of all of this is that Jesus is greater than Moses, so how dare anybody even think about going back! Jesus is better; Jesus is greater.

#### IV. Well, SO WHAT? What does all of this mean for us today?

I want us to notice that the author of Hebrews ends this little section with a big *"if,"* a conditional statement. This *"house"* he speaks of here is not a literal building. God's house is not HERE (God's house is not this building), but God's house is HERE (all of us). We are God's house, but this statement is conditional. We are God's house only *"if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."* And that is the main point of this paragraph. When I first started working on this morning's lesson, I titled it, "Jesus: Better Than Moses," and that is a true statement; however, that is not the main point of this passage. The main point is: Consider Jesus! That's the command in this passage, and the "So what?" in this passage is that we (as God's house) must *"hold fast our confidence and boast of our hope firm until the end."* And we do this by CONSIDERING JESUS, by thinking about Jesus, by focusing on Jesus. If we don't consider Jesus, we drift, we have a tendency to let go, we have a tendency to go soft (as opposed to holding firm until the end).

And really, I don't know of too many people who are tempted to go back to Moses these days, do you? I don't know too many people who start thinking, "You know, following Jesus is too hard; I think I should go back to offering animal sacrifices; I think I should go back to observing the Sabbath; I think I should go back to circumcision, and observing the Day of Atonement," and so on. Is that a temptation for any of you? Not for me. But you know what is a temptation? You know what is a very real danger? Getting distracted, letting go, turning away, turning back to the old way of life, not holding firm until the end. That's the real danger. It's the

danger Peter faced when walking on water and taking his eyes off Jesus: He sank! And so we have the reminder this morning: Consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession! And yes, he is greater than Moses, but the truly amazing thing in this passage is that we are God's house (or at least we can be, if we hold firm until the end). Moses, as great as he was, was a servant in the house. We are the house itself, children of God, with Jesus as our older brother, but we have to hold on.

**Conclusion:**

If I could encourage one change, if I could encourage one behavior this week, I would simply encourage all of us to spend more time with Jesus this week. Find a quiet place and simply read through one of the gospel accounts. Don't be like that tourist who only had an hour to explore Yosemite National Park. But take some time to simply read the word of God this week: Consider Jesus!

Josh has chosen a song to prepare our hearts and minds for the Lord's Supper, but before we sing, let's go to God in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

You are the great and awesome God who saved young Moses and ultimately spoke to him in the burning bush. Today, we confess that you are still the one and only great and awesome God, creator of heaven and earth. You loved us so much that you sent Jesus to save us from sin. This morning, we ask for freedom from sin, we ask for deliverance from the spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly places. We pray for courage and clarity of mind as we look to Jesus this week. We pray for strength to serve the world around us.

We come to you through Jesus, our Savior and Lord. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)