

Our Faithful Savior

[Announce Text] Please keep your Bibles open to Hebrews 3:1-6.

[Scripture Introduction] My name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here. We're in a series on the book of Hebrews- which was written to Christians who weren't quite sure they wanted to continue to be Christians.

[Prayer for Illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] Imagine there were life-ending nuclear weapons pointed at Spokane in nearby Moses Lake- only 100 miles away. In what would become known as the Cuban Missile Crisis the Soviet Union had moved nuclear weapons and missiles for delivering them to Cuba, just 100 miles from the United States. For 13 days there was undeniable evidence that life in most of the United States was in danger. It was President John F. Kennedy's job to protect those lives. Kennedy had to think. He had to consider what to do. He considered doing nothing, after all America had already been vulnerable to Soviet missiles. He considered diplomacy- putting political pressure on the USSR to remove them. He considered a secret approach by going to Cuba's leader Fidel Castro and forcing Castro to split with the Soviets. He considered a full force invasion. He considered an air strike. He considered a naval blockade. He was advised by his military advisors that there was only one option- a full scale invasion. He had to consider not only his actions, but the actions that could come in response. **He had to do clear and constant thinking. He had to apply his mind diligently to one thing.** He had to consider whose lives should be risked. He had to consider the way actions would be perceived by the outside world. He had to consider what was morally right. Making the wrong choice could be disastrous for the American people and really, the whole world. Lives hung in the balance.

Hebrews 3:1-6 places us in a similar situation. In fact, it is more serious because the consequences are eternal. A whole people could be wiped out. The author tells us that if we don't really consider who Jesus is, if we don't think long and hard about Him, an eternal disaster awaits our souls, our church, and our world. Hebrews 3 tells us to

[Proposition] Consider this faithful Jesus.

Are you feeling someone or something tug you away from Jesus? Do you find yourself disinterested in Jesus, the Bible, or church? This text challenges you to quit doodling in your notebook, quit thinking about basketball, afternoon lunch, or work tomorrow, or how things might be going in the nursery. This text tells us to consider this faithful Jesus. And **to “consider” means to apply your mind diligently to something. It’s to study. To focus. To think through what lies before you without distraction.** What you eat for lunch does not take up much room in your head when you consider that there are nukes just off the coast. What you are doing in 35 minutes does not take up much room in your head when you apply your mind diligently to this faithful Jesus. So let’s consider Him together. Let’s look at Him and think about Him and discuss Him together. **If we’re commanded to “consider this faithful Jesus,” let’s pick apart that command by asking three questions: Who is Jesus? How is Jesus faithful? Why consider Jesus?**

[Main Point 1] Who is Jesus?

This is the most important question in the world. And there aren’t enough books in the world to write everything that could be said about Jesus- but this text gives us two answers to the question “Who is Jesus?”

[Subpoint 1] Jesus is the appointed apostle.

Look with me at vv. 1-2

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him,

This is the only place in the Bible where Jesus is called an apostle. Does that mean He’s just like Peter, and Paul, and John? He is like them in that He was appointed by God- He’s been sent as a messenger. But He’s the ultimate apostle because He’s the Son of God. So if we think back to the very beginning of the book of Hebrews in chapter 1 this is restating what’s been said there. That at *many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.* Jesus has been sent and has brought the message of salvation to us.

Who is Jesus? He is the appointed apostle. What other answer do we get when we ask Who is Jesus?

[Subpoint 2] Jesus is the appointed high priest.

Look again at vv. 1-2

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him,

Pastor Jeff did a great job speaking about this last week and this is a major theme in Hebrews- Jesus is the high priest who represents us before God. And, this passage tells us that He is appointed to this position, not by men, but by God and there will be much more in the weeks and months ahead. He is the one who offered the cleansing sacrifice for our sins- His very life on the cross. He executed his role with perfection. If you are trusting in a different way to approach God whether it's your own good works, your religious knowledge, your respectable family, your tolerance of others and their cultures, your political party, ethnicity, or education you are not properly considering who Jesus is- the One and only appointed high priest. The only acceptable way to approach a Holy God.

[Illustration] In the early and mid-1990s the grunge band, Pearl Jam, was on top of the world. Playing massive stadiums, making tons of money, but it was taking it's toll on lead singer Eddie Vedder. After their first album *Ten* went multiplatinum, the other band members bought expensive cars, but Ed still drove his old beat up pickup and spent long hours alone. He considered retiring, just a few years into a career that millions would have dreamed to have had. Long time rock star Neil Young took Vedder under his wing and told him that he couldn't retire. The gods and fans of rock and roll had appointed Vedder to be their leader during that time. He was appointed as the one who represented a movement, maybe a generation. Even as he took on the responsibility, it was still crushing him- in an article titled "I'm not your (bleeping) Messiah," he said, "what happens when a lot of these people start thinking you can change their lives or save their lives or whatever and create these impossible expectations that in the end just start tearing you apart."

[Application] Jesus is the appointed apostle who speaks God's word to us perfectly. Jesus is the appointed high priest who represents us perfectly to God the Father. He wasn't appointed by people, He was appointed by God and he exceeded all expectations. He didn't run from the responsibility, He embraced it, even though He knew it would tear Him apart on the Cross. He is your Messiah. Think about Him. There is a way to access God Himself. There is an open door to God's presence- it's Jesus who has been appointed to the task. We deserve no entrance at all. If you have a fortune waiting in the next room are you going to whine and moan that there's only one appointed access point to that fortune- crying into your hands because you can't get there through a different wall? No, you change your thinking, you walk around the corner and you receive your fortune by entering at the appointed spot. Jesus is the appointed apostle delivering the only message of salvation.

Have you ever noticed that you don't tell your grandparents or your crush or your co-workers everything about your life because you don't want to be rejected by them? Would you really want to relate to a perfect and pure and powerful God who knows everything about you? Frightening. Our rejection seems obvious. But what if God appointed someone who guaranteed that you be accepted and welcomed and loved? Would you complain and insist that God is intolerant? **Consider this Jesus.** Think hard about Him. Think about how you complain about insignificant things but then consider that Jesus went to the cross for that sin and never complained. Think about your lusts and how they make you feel dirty but then think hard about how Jesus kept His heart, mind, and body pure for you- always caring for people as precious image-bearers rather than trying to use them for His own pleasure. Think about how your sins deserve the wrath of God, and then think hard about the cross where Jesus absorbed an eternity's worth of your deserved wrath in Himself freely. He is the only one appointed to serve as your apostle and high priest. And He makes it so that you can be fully known and fully loved.

Consider this faithful Jesus. Think hard about Him. Consider carefully who Jesus is as the appointed apostle and appointed high priest. But if we are to consider this faithful Jesus and we've look at who Jesus is the next question is:

[Main Point 2] How is Jesus faithful?

Next week, we'll be warned as we look at disastrous examples of unfaithfulness, but this week we are being called to persevere by looking to great examples of faithfulness. Is there some way to understand how Jesus is faithful? Is there someone we could compare Him to?

[Subpoint 1] Jesus is faithful like Moses.

Look with me at v. 2 which talks about Jesus-

...who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in God's house.

The Hebrews seem to be tempted to go back to Judaism where Moses is really the greatest of all heroes. He's the only one who related to God face-to-face as a man speaks with his friend. The author affirms this high view of Moses the audience has. He doesn't argue about Moses' shortcomings- he seems to confirm his great faithfulness as a servant in God's house. Listen to Numbers 12:7 where God is rebuking challenges to Moses' authority.

Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.

Moses is called faithful by God. And Jesus is faithful like Moses. But is that the end? Is there anything more that can be said about how Jesus is faithful?

[Subpoint 2] Jesus is more faithful than Moses.

We're going to camp out here for a bit because this is important and takes up a big chunk of our text. Look with me at vv. 3 through the beginning of v. 6

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses- as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son,

Moses was great! He was faithful. But Jesus was even more faithful- if not in quantity than at least in quality. Because Moses was faithful as part of the household of God- a way of saying that he was a member of God's people, and he was loyal and faithful as a trusted servant. But Jesus was faithful over the household of God the way a Son oversees the whole household- including the

servants. You see, if the people of God were a building, Moses would be part of the construction- maybe even an important support beam. But Jesus is the architect and builder, there wouldn't have even been a place for Moses if Jesus, the Creator, didn't build the house. In fact, Jesus must have a different level of faithfulness than Moses because Moses testified about things to be spoken later and that testimony was about Jesus. Listen to vv. 46-47 of one of my favorite chapters in the Bible, John 5- where Jesus says:

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

If Moses was faithful and he was most concerned about writing of Jesus- then Jesus must be even greater. He must deserve more glory. He must be even better, even more faithful.

[Illustration] "If you had to be an animal, what animal would you choose to be?" My answer: A raven. Hebrews is telling us to consider Jesus and Jesus, when He is speaking about anxiety in Luke 12 says this, "Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them..." Jesus says, consider the ravens, think hard about them. When I think hard about ravens here's why I like ravens- they have fun. Many times when I've been deer hunting I've been on the top of a freezing cold mountain huddled next to a rock or a tree trying to take shelter from the furious winds that blow over the ridgetops burning my face. It's cold, it's sometimes deafening, and then I see them. One or two or 10 or 20 ravens calling to each other as they fly toward the peak. And as they get close to the peak where the winds are high, they start to dance, it seems, in the sky. They spin and dip and spiral and elevate and float and fall. They aren't worried about saving energy or getting to their destination, they just live like they were meant to be free and meant to fly. Jesus says consider the ravens. They are scavengers. They don't kill their own food. So last winter when I was driving on a sales call to Kettle Falls, I was looking out at the snow- everything buried. No fruit on the trees, no garbage in the ditch, you'd think the ravens would be panicked. If I were a raven I would be flying around looking at the white blanket beneath me and I'd be wondering if I was going to survive. And then, there they were. Several of them, on top of a road-killed deer on the side of the road. God fed them. He fed them by putting in the mind of men in other centuries, on other continents,

the idea of an automobile. Then putting in the mind of men highways where great speeds could be implemented. Then putting in the mind of some deer the need to cross the road in front of a car. Then, without sowing nor reaping, without storing food in a freezer or pantry or barn, God fed the ravens. And it all probably happened while they were just going about dancing in the cold mountain winds enjoying themselves and their brothers and sisters around them.

[Application] For me to really consider the ravens. I have to watch them and listen to them. I have to think about them and the world they live in. You need to consider Jesus, the One who is more faithful than Moses. You need to apply your mind diligently to Him. Have you been reading your Bible and encountering Him- especially as He is revealed in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Are you thinking about the cross? Where we see Jesus faithfully going where Moses couldn't go- to pay for the sins His people. Are you reading good books about Jesus- both old and new? Books that teach biblical truth and help you think long and hard about Jesus- about His great generosity where He saves you without any works of your own. Are you spending time with other Christians who can teach you more about Jesus? People who themselves have been spending their time considering Jesus?

You cannot do this if you are distracted all the time. We live in a very distracting age. When we have a problem, we don't think about it, we distract ourselves. We can be on Facebook, or Netflix, or in romance novels, or video games, or popular music, or studying for exams, or texting our significant other. You must take time to consider, to think single-mindedly, without distraction about Jesus and his faithfulness that's greater than Moses. Hebrews tells us that Heaven and Hell are in the balance when it comes to how we are united to Christ. At times in the past, people tended to be forced to deal with that more. We were forced to consider Him longer. You need to repent of your sins and trust this faithful Jesus Christ, otherwise judgment is coming. Don't allow yourself to not truly consider Him. Don't just take out your phone and check the score or the actors on IMDB. Think about Him.

Consider this faithful Jesus. Jesus is the appointed One. Jesus is faithful like Moses but even more so. But lastly let's try to answer...

[Main Point 3] Why consider Jesus?

So what happens if you do, in the power of the Holy Spirit, deeply consider Jesus? When you think deeply, consistently, about Him and meditate on who He is and His faithfulness? First,

[Subpoint 1] If you truly consider Jesus you will be faithful to Jesus.

Look with me at the last sentence of v. 6-

And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

If you truly consider Jesus. If you really, in the Spirit, think long and hard about Jesus, you will be daily putting your faith in Christ. You will be faithfully holding fast to Him. When we consider Jesus we'll come home to Him faithfully until the end of our lives.

Why else consider Jesus?

[Subpoint 2] If you truly consider Jesus, He will be faithful to you.

When you truly consider Jesus, you will put your faith in Christ. And when you put your faith in Christ you become part of the Spiritual house that Jesus cares for and rules over faithfully as the Son. Listen again to v. 6-

And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

If our spouse is unfaithful to us, but keeps his or her word in every other area of life, we are rightfully deeply wounded. We want them to be faithful to us. This faithful Jesus is eternally faithful to those in God's house. That means not just "the church" whatever that means, or the pastors, this means you. Jesus will be faithful to you.

[Illustration] The Guinness World Record for longest marriage is for Herbert and Zelmyra Fisher and stands at 87 years until Herbert's death at age 105 in 2011. When they gave their vows 87 years earlier, I wonder, when they were pledging and promising faithfulness to one another, were they worried about the good times? When they said, "For better or for worse," do you think it was the better times that put the stress on their marriage? It's unnecessary to even have "for better" in marriage vows. But for 87 years they prayed for each other. Loved each

other. And they knew each other. They had to consider each other. They had to think long and hard about the other person, his interests, her worries, their difficulties. But this deep consideration drew them closer and closer together with time.

[Application] Jesus commits to be eternally faithful to Christians whether the circumstances of life are better or worse. This is a love that is not found in this culture. You need self-care, we're told. And that means eliminating relationships that don't always serve our immediate needs. But Jesus, who has always had eternal fellowship and love and relationship as a member of the Trinity has never needed us. Yet He faithfully loves us. When we see this faithful love, the Spirit grips our hearts, and draws us faithfully to Him. If we want to be faithful, the solution is to consider Jesus Christ.

The author of Hebrews had obviously done that. He knew Jesus. He spent so much time applying his mind diligently to Christ that when He read the Old Testament, he found Jesus everywhere. Everything pointed to Christ. His prayer and study and the work of the Spirit all snapped him to Jesus like a magnet to iron. This sort of person would never leave Christ for anything or anyone. He is expressing his concern and care for the Hebrews who are considering leaving the faith. And like JFK, if they make the wrong choice, disaster will most certainly follow. But like President Kennedy we can make a good choice. He chose to set up a naval blockade and started negotiating. Lives saved. When we make the right choice of truly considering this faithful Jesus we will find our own faithfulness to Him growing. And we will find that we will be holding fast to Christ we will find that we are part of His house, today, tomorrow, and forever.