

## **Faithfulness**

### **Introduction**

My beloved, we have explored the first two chapters and they taught us that Jesus is superior to those who arbitrated the Law, namely; the prophets and the angels. The writer continues to remove more territory away from the Jewish Christian who is trying to keep a foothold in the Old Covenant. Jesus is not only better than those who mediated the Law of Moses, He is better than Moses; the one who gave the Law to the people. To make the bold statement that Jesus is far superior to Moses was a serious statement for the Jews. The writer's assertion is Jesus is superior to everything, including Moses. Jesus deserves glory, as the Son of God, He is the builder of God's house, while Moses was a great man of faith and a servant of the house of God. So, the bottom line is Jesus, as the Son of God deserves worship and glory, while Moses deserves respect. The writer's challenge to his readers, at the time this letter was written and the challenge has continued down through the centuries to this very day, is people need to respect Moses, but they need to live in such a way to bring glory to Jesus through their worship.

The primary application of this section of Scripture for us, for you and me, is to take to heart this day - this simple truth; Jesus is superior to Moses as a builder is superior to the building or as the Creator is superior to His creation. The writer clearly by his comparison of Moses and Jesus claims the superiority and deity of Christ.

## **The Believer's Call** (v. 3:1)

Anyone who claims Christ as their Savior is called to believe and worship Him as God. Believers must believe in their minds, hearts and souls that Jesus is superior to everything in the universe, including great heroes of faith, like Moses. Reading verse 1, “Therefore, **holy brothers**, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.” This is the first time the writer uses the term “**holy brothers**”. This is similar to Paul’s opening in his letter to the Colossians, “To the saints and **faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.**” (Colossians 1:2) This opening in verse 1 tells us the writer is definitely writing to the church and he is declaring the election of believers and that they have been made “**holy**” or set apart for God; they are consecrated ones, they have been called from the world to live for God’s glory. This not only describes the Hebrew converts of this early church but it is who you and I are to be. Like these early church Hebrews, they and we, are being made into the image of Christ by being set apart by God from the world. God calls believers to live holy, to be holy. If one believes in Jesus as the Christ then the living out of the Scriptures, the whole of the Bible, becomes a life style.

It is important to note here that these Hebrews nor we are being set apart in a vacuum; we are set apart in community and we are set apart for service. This phrase set apart is used three times in the New Testament and each time it means set apart for a particular task. Set apart for service. “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, **set apart for the gospel of God.**” (Romans 1:1) Paul is telling the church in Rome, he has a purpose and so do they. Paul instructed his spiritual son, Timothy and he instructs us, “Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, **set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.**” (2 Timothy 2:21) My beloved,

you and I have also been called and set apart for service to God and His kingdom. The question before each of us is what service have you been called to. All believers are called by God to be in ministry. To serve God is not only good for those you serve but it is good for you also. Maturing in faith only truly happens when we are coupling our learning with service. As the Apostle James taught, <sup>14</sup>“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’—and he was called a friend of God. *What James is saying about Abraham’s also applies to Moses and we can see the relationship to what the writer of Hebrews is teaching.* <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ... <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.” (James 2:14-26)

Listen carefully – never, never fall into the trap of believing that learning things about God, studying God’s Word is all there is. To grow, to live for God’s glory you need to be engaged in prayer and study and also be active in ministry or works based on one’s faith. If you do not know what your ministry is – pray and

pray, but also look for opportunities that God will place before you. My beloved – engage in ministry and know the great blessings God wants for you. Know God wants you to share His glory with others.

I would also like to point out that the work we are to be engaged in should be coupled with evangelism and discipleship. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His followers direct orders, <sup>19</sup> “Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** <sup>20</sup> **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:19-20) We are called to Bible reading, prayer and other spiritual disciplines. However, these are the means by which we build our faith so we are able to accomplish good works for the kingdom of God; understand studying the Bible and spiritual disciplines are not the work itself. I pray that each of you prepares to do evangelism and then steps out in faith and does it. Read the Bible to strengthen yourself for the work God has called you to, but then get to work, the work of ministry for God’s glory. Let me ask a couple of serious questions, “How are you doing with your calling? What ministry are you engaged in?” To believe means to live out your faith – the proof is in the putting – are you living out your faith?

Especially, with a smaller church, like Canyon Bible, we must **all** have a ministry, we are **all** called to serve. I believe the Bible teaches **all** and I said **all**; how much is **all**? My beloved, if you do not have a ministry to serve in, then after the service, we will discuss opportunities with the Food Pantry. So again, I ask, what is it God may be calling you to do. Do **not** think that you have to reach some level of learning or maturity of knowledge of the Bible before you can be used in ministry. We as a community are a body. As Paul wrote, <sup>12</sup> “**For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are**

one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14) As a body we help each one to fulfill their calling. As your pastor I will work hard to not let you fail. Together, we will take small steps and seek the Lord’s direction together.

Verse 1 continues and tells us that we, who have the heavenly calling, should “consider Jesus”. What the writer has in mind again has to do with the work of the ministry. We are to “consider Jesus” and His life, teachings and work in such a way as to capture the purpose of our worship and encourage our working in the ministry we have been called to. Modeling our lives after the principals lived and taught by Jesus is a worthy goal.

As the verse moves on, we as believers in Jesus, as the Christ, are also to understand that He is “the apostle and high priest of our confession”. What does this mean?

The writer is using “apostle” in the sense of its literal meaning. Jesus, is God’s Messenger. Jesus is the One who came to earth and gave us the Gospel of Good News, the Gospel of Hope, the Gospel of Salvation. He was the Father’s Ambassador and Messenger to the lost world. Not only did He deliver the message but He also performed the duty of the “high priest”, which was to make atonement. Jesus, as the “apostle” delivered the Gospel and He is the Gospel and as the “high priest” He is the final atonement to bring people back into relationship with God the Father. So, as we consider the work of Christ, what Christ accomplished and did and continues to do - it should compel us to good works that spring from our faith in Jesus. As Christ brought glory to the Father, we

are to bring glory to Christ and this will give glory to the Father. As we consider the greatness of Jesus and the importance of His faithfulness to the assigned task He had and perfectly completed, this should encourage us to faithfulness to the assigned calling we have been given.

### **Christ's Perfection** (v. 2-4)

Christ is counted worthy of great honor because of His faithfulness. Reading verses 2 through 4, “[who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.](#) <sup>3</sup> [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.](#) <sup>4</sup> [\(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.\)](#)” Jesus was sent by God the Father to secure salvation for the elect. He did so perfectly. He lived a perfect life free from sin and in obedience to everything God had asked Him to do. Moses was faithful as well. Moses' faithfulness is not made light of in this text. However, Jesus is found to be in a class all by Himself; for He is perfect. He is in a totally different category; Jesus was not only perfect but He is fully human and fully God who lives eternally.

The flow of this text shows us that the writer wants these Hebrews, who are now Christian, to understand his point - it goes like this; Jesus is worthy of honor and glory because He is the Son of God, more honor than Moses because Jesus is the Creator and Moses is the creation. Just like the Creator or Builder of a house is more worthy than the house that was built. The writer is explaining to his readers, which includes us, that Jesus is the Creator of God's house or the people God has chosen. The people of God are referred to in the Old Testament as the chosen people meeting in the house of God or the temple with priests making the sacrifice and offerings. In the New Testament believers in Jesus are God's house, just as our

community is referred to as a church, we are also the house of God, we are “**God’s house**”. As Paul made clear to the church in Colossae, Jesus <sup>15</sup>“**is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**” <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>**And he is the head of the body, the church.**” (Colossians 1:15-18) The writer’s whole argument found in this passage hinges on this point; *Jesus is the Creator God and Moses is the creation. We are not to worship the creation but the Creator. When we worship Jesus, we become those belonging to “God’s house”.*

### **Faithfulness Lived Out** (v. 5-6)

In these last 2 verses we observe the metaphor of God’s house continues. Reading verses 5 and 6, “**Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later,**” <sup>6</sup>**but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**” In the Old Testament, “house of God” refers to the temple. In the New Testament “God’s house” refers to the children of God. In the Old Testament, God’s people are referred to as His chosen people and authority was found at the temple and the people had to seek God through the priests. In the New Testament Jesus is the High Priest and brings us into the presence of God and therefore, the people saved by faith in Jesus are the household of God that need no temple for worship, they worship God directly and personally. The writer of Hebrews tells us Moses was faithful as a servant. He did what God asked him to do. Moses was unique among God’s servants. When Miriam and Aaron rise up against Moses in Numbers chapter 12, God explains just how special Moses is. To Moses God spoke clearly, audibly and mouth to mouth. With the

other prophets, God spoke in dreams, riddles and visions. As great as Moses was, he was simply a caretaker or a servant in the house. He did what God said to do. He led the people as God said to lead them. However, Jesus brings believers into the presence of God.

There is an interesting phrase is found in verse 5, “**Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later.**” The writer is saying, Moses’ faithful ministry points to something that would transcend his own time and his own ministry and even his own understanding. This would “**be spoken later**”. According to the author, the thing that Moses’ ministry pointed to is the eternal ministry of Jesus Christ who is unique for He is our Brother, Prophet, High Priest, Redeemer and God the Son. So, what Moses represents in this passage is Jewish history, but an incomplete history. Jesus completes the history of the Jewish people and that of the Gentiles and the world. Jesus came to the earth as the incarnate God marking the beginning of the New Covenant, the history of salvation for mankind and Jesus will bring the close of history and the beginning of eternity.

Not to discount Moses, it was his faithfulness, although not perfect, as a servant of God that pointed people of God to Jesus the Messiah and Christ would come in the future. Moses’ greatness as a servant was in how he pointed the people of God to Christ. Moses was faithful because his life and ministry was a picture of things which would come about later. As great as Moses was, he was a servant – Jesus, however, is the blessed Son of the House of God. He is God the Son and the Redeemer and He is over God’s house, the remnant churches of the world and our church.



This takes us to the thrust and meaning of verse 6, “**but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**” My beloved, not only were the people of this young church made up of Jews converted to Christ, but we, you and me are included, listen as verse 6 continues “**we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**” As Christians, we are called to persevere in the faith. Our Christian hope is in Christ. Our confidence is in the work of Christ on our behalf. Let me share a quote from a great and faithful man of God, F. F. Bruce, taken from his commentary on The Epistle of Hebrews, “**The conditional sentences of this epistle [are] worthy of special attention. Nowhere in the New Testament more than here do we find such repeated insistence on the fact that continuance in the Christian life is the test of reality. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints has as its corollary the salutary teaching that the saints are the people who persevere to the end.**” As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and the writer of Hebrews repeats in chapter 12, “**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,** <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Since the great test of the genuineness of a Christian and true faith is if they “**run with endurance**” and hold fast till the end. Faith lived out is seen by the living out the Scriptures. Like Moses we are not required to have perfect faith. Living out life in this world, there are bumps in the road and bridges to cross. Christians fail, sin, and fall on their face. The test is that when sin is committed does repentance follow? When failures occur, do we start over and seek the Lord’s face? When we

lose a battle, do we get up and enter back into the war of good vs. evil relying on the strength of God the Holy Spirit and are we living for the glory of God? My beloved, when the world knocks us down, do we keep getting back up and seek after God?

The world is fallen and opposes God, in an effort to deny God it seeks its own glory. How, then, do we hold fast to Christ? That question takes us full circle with our text today. Let me take us back to verse 1, “**Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.**” We have learned over the years, that when a writer of the scriptures uses the word “**Therefore**” they are telling us that what follows is important so pay special attention. To begin with “**holy brothers**” means as Christians we are set apart from the world. As Christians we hold fast to Christ, meaning we are to live trusting Him as Lord, Savior and Redeemer of our salvation. We are to live believing in His message, the Gospel of Christ found in the New Testament that Jesus brought from heaven to earth and we are to believe the Gospel so strongly that living as Jesus teaches and in faith becomes the essences of who we are.

## **Closing**

So, my beloved here are some questions of essence, “Do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God? Do you believe all people are sinners? Do you believe that people are dead in their sin and that their only hope is Jesus? Are you willing to live sacrificially for the glory of Christ?”

Think about this fact, not only are we to rely on Christ for justification but as our High Priest, we also rely on the fact that our sins are being atoned for through His current priestly office. He is currently saving us – you can have faith because Jesus is who He was promised to be, He is the living God. If you do not believe

these things, believe in the whole of who Jesus is, then you are without hope. To those who believe intellectually, I say let go of yourself, embrace Jesus, repent and believe. To those who do not believe; seek truth, eternal truth and come to know God the Father is real, Jesus Christ is the Savior, you must believe in Him as your Savior and you will receive the gift of God the Holy Spirit to help you live out your faith.

There is no “mostly” saved. The test of salvation is endurance not a prayer prayed. So often evangelists will make a general declaration that all the people who came forward and prayed a prayer, if they are sincere, are now saved. The Bible shows us this is not right. We cannot know about someone else with 100% assurance. We can even know ourselves 100%. Why? Because the human heart is evil and desperately wicked, who can know it. This is why we must surrender our lives to the Holy Spirit, for God the Holy Spirit does know one a 100% and gives supernatural and spiritual power for one to overcome sin and fight temptation. The true test of genuine salvation is endurance. A true Christian will trust Christ now and forever. My beloved we will fail, we will sin, but Christ is perfect and He has paid the price for each believer that places their trust and faith in Him. Jesus will carry the faithful through life and to heaven. Amen!