

Hebrews 3:1-6 // Fix Your Thoughts on Jesus

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[0 : 00] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Lord God, we thank you that you're a God who speaks. That you haven't left us guessing what you're like, but you've spoken through your word and revealed yourself to us through your Son, the Lord Jesus.

So as we listen tonight, please help us, Lord, by your Spirit to pay really careful attention to what you're saying to us. To see Jesus more clearly and to trust him more deeply.

[3 : 36] In his name. Amen. Well, I wonder if you've ever felt that little tug to keep your head down, to go with the flow, to avoid sticking out.

I know I have. Maybe at school or during a lecture, maybe among friends, maybe along colleagues. As a thought creeps in, if I keep talking about Jesus, if I keep on living differently because of him, I'll get the awkward look, the dismissive laugh, the cold shoulder.

I was down at the state bar with friends one evening. It's a number of years ago now. But I was sharing with them something about Jesus.

When my friend's partner cuts in, rolls her eyes and says, won't you just stop banging on about Jesus? The whole table laughs. Pretty awkward situation.

It would be easier, wouldn't it, to step back from Jesus, to fade into the background, just blend in.

Well, that's exactly the pressure that the first readers of Hebrews faced.

[4 : 48] Following Jesus made you stand out, make you look odd, suspicious even. And they had a safe fallback to return to their Jewish faith.

It was well respected, legally protected, and socially acceptable. And Moses, the one who'd received the law from God at Mount Sinai, he was the nation's towering hero.

To ditch Jesus and to get back to Moses would mean safety, belonging, and respectability. Now, my guess is that none of us here, a few of us here, are tempted to go to Judaism.

But we might well be tempted by the same kind of trade-off. Because our culture, a culture in which we live in, has its own version of comfort and respectability.

Its mantra is, you do you. Be true to yourself. Do your own thing. It sounds freeing, doesn't it? But there's always a caveat.

[5 : 51] You do you, but don't you step outside what's acceptable. Don't step outside the boundaries of what the liberal elite say is acceptable.

And following Jesus does step outside. To say Jesus is Lord, to say that he is the one and only way to the Father, that's the kind of thing that can get you cancelled.

And so the temptation comes. Wouldn't life just be easier if I just gave up on Jesus? Wouldn't it be easier for me if I just fitted in and kept quiet?

Wouldn't I have more fun if I could pick my own path, choose my own rules, do what feels good in the moment? Why keep going with Jesus? And maybe if you're here just exploring the Christian faith, looking in on what it means to follow Jesus, maybe you're wondering, why on earth would anyone want to join that club?

So here's the real life question that Hebrews 3 is tackling. When it feels like it would be simpler, safer, more respectable to walk away, why keep going with Jesus?

[7 : 08] And Hebrews answers this with a simple command in verse 1. Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, fix your thoughts on Jesus.

Fix your thoughts on Jesus. That's the heartbeat of the passage. That's really the whole message of the book of Hebrews in a nutshell. Fix your thoughts on Jesus.

Not a glance, not a casual scroll, not a sideways look, a proper lingering look. Fix your thoughts on Jesus. Fix them on him.

And in a world of fast content and short attention spans, Hebrews says, don't swipe past Jesus. You can think of it in terms of food, not fast food, but slow cooking.

It's like feasting on a rich meal of marrow, something to chew on, something to savor, something to digest. Fix your thoughts on Jesus.

[8 : 13] Why? Well, because he's faithful like Moses and he's greater than Moses. Let's see how the letter argues that.

First, his faithfulness, then his greater honor and glory. So first heading, fix your thoughts on Jesus. He is faithful like Moses.

In these verses that we had read, Jesus has been compared to Moses. And he's like Moses in one very particular way.

So look at the key word that links Jesus and Moses in verse 2. Jesus was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.

There it is. Both Moses and Jesus are faithful, both trustworthy. Verse 5 says, Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house.

[9 : 12] And verse 6 says, Christ Jesus is faithful as the son over God's house. Same word, same idea, faithful. It's this idea of being trustworthy.

How exactly are they trustworthy? What are they faithful at? Well, there's two things here, both in verse 1. Fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.

So there we are, two roles, two offices, two jobs. Apostle and priest. They're up on the screen. Two Bible words.

You might not be familiar with them. If you are familiar with them, you might not be familiar with Jesus being called an apostle. Or Moses, for that matter, either. Well, let's take each in turn.

So firstly, apostle. This is God's envoy from God to us. Now, apostle just means sent one, an authorized messenger.

[10 : 15] Think UN peace envoy or ambassador. I was thinking about Star Wars and a Jedi emissary. And the thought occurred to me, in the original Star Wars film, R2-D2 gets sent with an important message to Obi-Wan Kenobi.

I was struggling to work out whether R2-D2 is the apostle or whether the hologram of Princess Leia is the apostle. I think maybe they both are. It doesn't really matter. But an apostle just means a sent one.

When they speak, it's not just their personal opinion. They carry the full authority of the one who sent them. And we know this from Luke's gospel.

If you've been with us in the morning, we've been going through Luke's gospel. Luke chapter 6, Jesus chose 12 of his friends and calls them apostles. In Luke chapter 9, we've not got to that yet, Jesus sends them to announce his kingdom.

An apostle is a sent one. What about Moses? He's an apostle too. I don't know if you've ever thought about that, but God sends him to Pharaoh with words and warnings.

[11 : 26] Moses speaks for God. He speaks on behalf of God to Pharaoh and to God's people. And when that authority is challenged in Numbers chapter 12, that was our first reading, God himself steps in.

You know, Numbers 12 is one of those moments in the Bible where it's asking exactly the same kind of question that we ask today. We hear that question often today.

It's a question of authority. Why Moses? What makes him so special? Why should we listen to him? That's basically what Miriam and Aaron are saying.

They say, hasn't the Lord also spoken through us? They don't deny that God speaks. They just don't want to accept that he speaks in a unique way through Moses, his apostle.

And it's the classic challenge, isn't it? What gives you the right? What gives Jesus the right to claim absolute authority? Isn't it exactly the same kind of question that we might hear today?

[12 : 33] I've got a friend from the art school. Her philosophy is simple. Do your own thing. You follow your beliefs. I'll follow mine. Nobody has the right to tell anybody else what to think.

Well, if that sounds familiar, it's pretty standard worldview today, a standard viewpoint today. Why listen to Jesus instead of Buddha? Why listen to Jesus instead of the universe or just what I think?

Why listen to Jesus? What gives him the right? Why should I listen to him? That's Miriam and Aaron's question about Moses. That's our culture's question about Jesus.

Well, God's answer in Numbers 12, it's crystal clear. My servant Moses is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face.

With him I speak directly. Secondly, Moses didn't grab the microphone. God handed him it. He's not a self-appointed guru, not some popular philosopher flogging his ideas, not a power-hungry leader on an ego trip.

[13:43] He was sent, appointed, chosen. God's apostle, God's spokesman. And Hebrews is saying, if that was true of Moses, how much more so of Jesus?

Jesus isn't just one other voice among many. He's God's final and fullest word. Do you remember how Hebrews kicks off in chapter 1?

If you flick over a page. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 1. In the past, God spoke through the prophets. But now he has spoken to us by his son. And then in verse 2 of our chapter 3, he was faithful.

He was faithful to the one who appointed him. And when Jesus speaks, God speaks. He is God's faithful apostle. If you want to know about God, you look to Jesus.

[14:51] But there's more. Jesus was not only God's apostle. He's also our priest. And Hebrews will unpack this in much greater depth in chapters 5 to 10.

But very simply, a priest stands for the people before God. A priest stands between God and the people representing the people before God.

Like an advocate in a courtroom pleading your case, you might think. And Moses fulfills this role in the Old Testament.

You might think of the golden calf incident where the people rebelled. They built a golden idol to worship instead of the one true God. Judgment should have fallen. The whole story of the Bible could have ended right there.

But Moses pleads. Moses prays. Moses stands in between. He stands in the gap. And God shows mercy. Moses was a faithful priest.

[16:01] And Jesus, even more so. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 17 we had last week. Hebrews 2 verse 17 says, He became like us, fully human in every way.

So that he might deal with our big problem of sin and separation from God. Tim helpfully walked us through that last week. So here's the picture.

Moses did both faithfully.

Jesus did both perfectly. So what difference does that make to our lives? Well, Jesus is God's faithful apostle.

His words aren't optional. We can't ignore his words. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 1 says, Pay the most careful attention to what Jesus says so that we don't drift away.

[17:01] Jesus is God's faithful apostle. Jesus is God's faithful priest. You can come to God with confidence. Because Jesus stood in between you and God.

Stood in your place on the cross. Took your sin. You can come to God with confidence. Even when you feel unworthy. Even when you've completely stuffed up.

Don't hang back. Draw near. Brothers and sisters, are you starting to see what you're giving up if you turn your back on Jesus?

Now, Moses and Jesus are both faithful. But not in the same category. Moses is in the house.

But Jesus is over the house. Moses is a servant in the house. And Jesus is the son over it. Let's see why that matters in our second heading.

[18:01] Fix your thoughts on Jesus. He is greater than Moses. So far we've seen how Jesus is like Moses. Faithful as God's messenger and as our representative.

And now we're going to see how he's unlike Moses. Greater in every way. Jesus is on a different level. And verse 2 says Moses was faithful in all God's house.

Look at verse 3. Jesus had been found worthy of greater honor than Moses. Just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.

Both faithful. But Jesus isn't just another member of God's household. He's the architect. The builder. The son over it all.

And there's two parts to this. The builder deserves more honor than the house. Let's start there. The builder. Now the Sterling Prize is the biggest architectural award in the UK.

[19 : 08] Every year a range of buildings are shortlisted. And one paper compared this year's architectural shortlist to the dog show Crofts. Where the perfect chihuahua is obliged to do battle with the perfect Great Dane.

And it's 10 out of 10 ridiculous as a comparison. But the architectural chihuahuas on this year's shortlist are two small private houses. I say small. They probably cost a couple of million each. But they're up against these two architectural chihuahuas. Up against the London College of Fashion. Its new building. A glossy Hungarian Viesler of a building you might say. And the winners will be announced soon. On 16th of October. And let's say one of those houses wins. They won't. A private house has never won the Sterling Prize since the awards started in the 1990s.

But let's say one of them did. Who gets the glory? It's not the building that gets invited along to trip up the stairs of the awards ceremony. The architect gets the gong.

[20 : 11] And there's a couple of architects. That's what architects look like. Like normally dressed all in black. Often with a title neck.

Quite often with thick rimmed spectacles. Kind of Bond villain vibes. Kind of mixed between Bond villain and Steve Jobs. But the architect gets the glory.

Because however beautiful the building. The builder deserves the glory. That's Hebrews point. Moses is part of the house. But Jesus built the house.

The church. And if we move on to the next slide Rosie. I don't know if you can see that. There's supposed to be people in there. My first attempt looked like a row of carrots.

I think that's slightly better. But Jesus deserves more honor than Moses. Just as the architect deserves more honor than the building. Then just look at what verse 4 adds. Every house is built by someone.

[21 : 12] But God is the builder of everything. Every building. Every structure has a maker. But ultimately all things exist because God made them.

So what's the writer saying? What's he telling us here? He's saying that Jesus isn't just another human leader. He's the divine builder behind it all. Now there's another architect.

Domhans van der Lund. He's a Benedictine monk as well as an architect. And you can see he's taken the all in black uniform of the architect to the next level.

But he once described the process of making buildings. He put it like this. We can't conjure up things into existence out of nothing. As architects we always make something out of something. But Jesus. He does make out of nothing. He is the creator behind creation. As well as the builder of God's household.

[22 : 12] So yes he does deserve the greatest honor. Second part of it. The son deserves more honor than the servant. The son deserves more glory than the servant.

So look at verse 5. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house. But verse 6. Christ is faithful as the son over God's house.

That's the second contrast. Servant versus son. And Moses stands out as a faithful servant in the house. That's them there in pink.

But Jesus is the faithful son over the house. Moses stands out as a faithful servant in the house. Jesus is over it. And so notice the writer isn't.

He's not dissing Moses by calling him a servant. It's not an insult. It's a title of honor really. And again Numbers 12 helps us with that.

[23 : 11] When Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses. The Lord says. My servant Moses is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face.

That's high praise isn't it? Moses isn't a nobody. He's like the chief steward in a royal household. Trusted to look after the master's affairs.

And greater than any other prophet in the Old Testament. But even so. He's not the son. In any household.

The chief servant might speak for the master. But the son speaks as the heir. The servant manages the house. The son owns it.

The servant knows the master's will. But the son shares the master's heart. And I remember going to Inverary Castle. Once when I was at school.

[24 : 06] I'd written ahead asking if I could get a look around. See the archives. Learn a bit about the history of the building. For a school project. And I fully expected to meet the curator. You know

this type of person.

A clipboard and a badge. But when I got there. To my surprise. The Duke of Argyle himself came out to greet me. Tartan truths and all. He started talking me through the place.

Showing me where the family portraits hung. Telling me stories about what had happened in each of the rooms. This was a different level. See the curator might know the facts. But the Duke.

He knows the house. He knows the family intimately. It's his. And that's the difference between Moses and Jesus. Moses was the faithful servant.

He knew God's household well. He cared for it faithfully. But Jesus. He's the son. He's the heir. He's the one who built the thing. Who knows it intimately.

[25 : 03] Because it belongs to him. So of course. He deserves the greater honor. And Hebrews points out. That Moses himself grasped something of that. In verse 5.

Moses was faithful as a servant. Bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. It's part of his job description.

To prepare the way. It's like the warm-up act before the headline. Or the prelude before the main piece. Moses pointed forward to a better prophet.

A final word. A fuller revelation. In Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 15. You don't need to look up. It's on the screen. Moses says. Moses says.

The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you. You must listen to him. And that's Jesus.

[26 : 00] God's fullest and ultimate word. So here's the summary. Moses was faithful in the house. As servant.

Jesus is faithful over the house. As son. Moses pointed forward. And Jesus fulfilled. So fix your thoughts on him. The faithful son.

Who built the house. And welcomes us in. Okay. Let's bring it home. Verse 6. Verse 6 throws a bit of a curveball.

We are his house. If indeed. If indeed we hold firmly to our confidence. And the hope in which we glory.

It's a big if isn't it? If we hold firm. If we hold on. Now that would have landed like. Like a bucket of cold water.

[26 : 59] On its first readers. They weren't naive. They knew exactly what it would mean. To be part of God's people. They'd started off well.

Following Jesus. Being a significant personal cost. To many of them. But for sure. The temptation seems to have been strong. Go back to the social acceptability.

Of what you knew before. Blend in. Play it safe. Hebrews says. Nah. You can't do that.

Turn back. And. You turn away from the son. Everything he's done for you. Gone. Holding on.

Means keeping your eyes fixed. On Jesus. Fix your thoughts on him. Trust him. Follow him. Don't. Drift. I recognize some weeks that's easier.

[27 : 59] Said than done. So what might that look like. For you. This week. Now it'll look different for each of us. But here are some ideas. Maybe for some of you.

It's just a case of taking a few moments. In the morning to turn. To him. Before you turn on. Your phone. Maybe it's about opening. Your Bible.

Maybe going to a gospel. And asking in prayer. Lord. Show me more of who you are. Show me Lord. More of what you've done for me. And be honest with him in prayer.

If you're struggling. If your faith feels fragile. Rather than just doom-scrolling. Or numbing out. Be honest with God in prayer. Be resolved to catch yourself.

When your mind drifts. To that temptation to blend in. Steering it back to Jesus. Holding on isn't always glamorous. Sometimes it can feel. Less like floating on clouds.

[28 : 55] More like clinging on to a railing in storm Amy. This isn't grim determination. This isn't white-knuckle Christianity. We hold on with confidence.

And hope. Confidence. Because Jesus is faithful. Hope. Because he's gone before us. He's the apostle who brought God's word down to us. He's the high priest who brings us up before God.

He's the son who built the house. And by faith. He's made us part of it. So when life cranks up the pressure. When it feels easier to keep your head down.

To blend in. To stop banging on about Jesus. Remember whose house you belong to. You belong to the son. You're part of his family. He's not letting go. Fix your thoughts on Jesus.

The faithful son who built the house. Who will bring every one of his own people safely home. And if you need a reminder this week.

[29 : 51] Sing it in your hearts. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. And the things of this world will grow strangely dim. In the light of his glory and grace.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus. You are faithful. Our apostle.

Our high priest. The son of your house. Thank you that you built the house. And that by your grace we get to be part of it. Forgive us when we look away.

When we blend in. When we hide our faith. When we let our fear of awkwardness silence us. Help us. Keep our eyes on you.

Help us fix our thoughts on you. Help us to follow you. No sidesteps. No details. Lord give us confidence. Renew our hope.

[30 : 51] Help us hold on when life gets hard. When it feels like storms. Like pressure. Like clinging to our railing. Remind us that we belong. We belong to you.

We're part of your family. And you're not letting go. We pray it in your name. Amen. We're going to respond now to God's word by singing.

If you're able to stand please. Stand. Stand. Thank you.