

**Sermon Transcript**  
**07.06.2025**  
**Hebrews 3:1-6**

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- Good morning. Please turn to Hebrews 3.
- As you do, raise your hand if you have any siblings? Now keep it up if you have never once quarreled or fought with your sibling?
- Two of my favorite stories involving my brother both involve him picking on me & him getting hurt as a result. Since I'm the younger brother, I love those stories. He once decided to just spontaneously kick my head as I was watching tv. He was barefoot and broke two toes. Another time he chased me into a bathroom and he tried to pick the lock and ended up cutting his eye with the knife he was using. As a kid I wasn't faster or stronger than my brother, but apparently I was blessed. Anytime he tried to hurt me, he got hurt.
- Siblings fight. Cain & Abel, Jacob & Esau, Joseph & his brothers. Hopefully your sibling didn't murder you or steal your birthright or sell you into slavery and tell your dad that you were murdered or even break his toes on your head, but the point is that the phrase sibling rivalry is common for a reason.
- And this morning I want to start by telling you a slightly lesser known story about sibling rivalry involving Moses and his siblings.
- In this story, Aaron and Miriam were mad because Aaron and Miriam were jealous. They were leaders too, but Moses got all the glory. He seemed to be God's favorite.
- And he got all the honor despite that fact that he had married a Cushite woman and he couldn't even speak good and he once killed a man.
- What made it even worse was that he was the younger child. Exodus says that Aaron was 3 years older than Moses and implies that Miriam was even older than both. And so, in a familiar pattern, like the story of Cain and Abel or Isaac and Ishmael or Jacob and Esau or Joseph and his siblings, older siblings don't generally love to defer to their younger brethren.
- So Aaron and Miriam murmured, they complained, they grumbled, and slandered their brother.
- They wanted a little bit of credit.
- But God was not pleased. In fact, Miriam was afflicted with a week of leprosy for the insult as God's anger was aroused.
- And in the midst of this passage in Numbers 12, we read YHWH's response:
  - *And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"* (Numbers 12:6-8)

- In other words, Moses is unlike other prophets. He was a prophet, but there was something different about him. God's relationship with Moses was unlike that of the other so-called prophets of Israel in various ways.
- And that difference is summed up in vs. 7 by calling Moses a servant and saying that he is faithful in all God's house.
- And that language will be picked up in our passage in Hebrews 3 today to show that, like Moses, Christ is also faithful, but, unlike Moses, his faithfulness is not as a servant, but a son.
- And if Moses is greater than all the other prophets and Christ is even greater than Moses, just how glorious is this Son?
- That's what we'll see in our text today.
- Let's pray.
- Self, others, me.

***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, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. (Hebrews 3:1-2)***

- As we transition to chapter 3, let's summarize chapters 1-2.
- The book of Hebrews was written to first-century Jewish Christians who were facing persecution and were thus tempted to withdraw from the church, renounce Christ, and go back to the synagogue and Mosaic Law.
- So the author writes this book to encourage them to hold fast and stand firm in the gospel, in light of the supremacy of Christ. Christ is a better priest who offers a better sacrifice in a better temple, He's a better mediator of a better covenant founded on better promises. In short, Christ is better. That's the overarching theme of the book.
- As we've mentioned, the structure of the book then systematically shows how Christ is superior not just to the whole, but to each individual aspect of the Mosaic Covenant and the Levitical priesthood.
- So chapter 1 showed that He was superior to the angels who mediated the former covenant. They serve the throne, He sits on the throne. He is Creator, they are created.
- Then in chapter 2, Christ's superiority to the angels was still in view, but this time the emphasis was on the humanity of Christ. He is the ultimate human who has fulfilled the anticipated promise of mankind ruling and reigning over creation. Remember that when we were created, God commissioned mankind to subdue the earth and exercise dominion as His ambassadors, apostles, representative, imago dei.
- We failed to do that through sin, but Christ identifies with humanity, He shares in our nature, in order to fulfill that expectation and be our high priest and sacrifice Himself and defeat death and the devil.
- That's what we've seen over the past couple of months. And interestingly, there are a number of verbal parallels between these 6 verses of chapter 3 and the previous 2 chapters.
- For example, 3:1 calls us holy brothers which corresponds to the language of chapter 2 which speaks of brothers who are sanctified or made holy. And our passage today again

references Christ as high priest, like we saw last week, and today's passage speaks of Christ's glory and honor which we saw back in chapter 2 and so forth.

- We've talked before about the danger of reading a text without the appropriate context so I mention all of those so you don't read chapter 3 in isolation. The author is building an argument here. He is building it brick by brick, line by line and no bricks are irrelevant or superfluous. Those parallels and similarities between chapters 1 and 2 and 3 are important to see the cohesion and flow.
- With that in mind, let's look at vss. 1-2 of chapter 3.
- Let's begin by looking at that phrase holy brothers.
- This is something I want to emphasize because I think it is so neglected in a lot of evangelical thinking and that is the idea of positional sanctification.
- When we think about sanctification, most of us probably operate through the grid of pop evangelical thinking that stresses the progressive nature of sanctification. We are becoming sanctified. And that's definitely a biblical emphasis. But it is just one part of a more robust biblical picture of sanctification.
- When we step back and look at the big picture, we see that there are past, present, and future aspects to sanctification. When we are born again and justified by grace through faith, we are sanctified, that is set apart and called holy. That becomes our identity.
- Then, as we grow in conformity to the image of Christ, we are progressively sanctified, we become what we already are in a sense.
- And then finally, in glorification, that work is completed and we are fully and finally sanctified by having all of the presence of sin removed from us. So there are past, present, and future nuances to sanctification.
- What's interesting is that even though we tend to really focus on the present and progressive aspects of sanctification, the book of Hebrews in particular, and really the NT in general tends to emphasize the once-for-all, definitive, positional aspect of sanctification. That is, that we have been sanctified, already. We are holy. Its been done. Already.
- For example, Hebrews 10:10 states:
  - *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (Hebrews 10:10)
- And then we see how that past act of sanctification has ongoing present implications as we read in 10:14
  - *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.* (Hebrews 10:14)
- There is a sense in which it has been done and a sense in which it is being done. There is an already, but not yet to our sanctification.
- So there is a sense in which we have been sanctified, a sense in which we are being sanctified, and a sense in which we will be sanctified.
- I wanted to emphasize this in order for us to understand the import of us being called holy now. Holiness isn't just some future status, it is yours now. You have been set apart, you have been consecrated, you have been justified, so live like it. Become who you already are is the biblical ethic. You are holy, so start living like it.
- That's one of the main truths that protect us from legalism and works righteousness. Anytime the Bible commands Christians to hold fast or consider Christ or do not lie or

steal or commit adultery or whatever, it is doing so with the expectation that the Spirit has already written the law on the heart and transformed that person such that the seed of holiness is present and growing. We never obey out of the flesh, but we have the Spirit and should thus live like it.

- And as those who have been declared holy, we share in a heavenly calling. What does that mean? It could either refer to us being called by or to the kingdom of heaven. Either one or even both are possible, but the point is the same, we share in the kingdom and thus have a responsibility to consider the king.
- And think about the word share for a second. We've already seen that image before back in chapter 2 where we read that since we share in flesh and blood, Christ partook of the same. So He shares in what is earthly so that we might share in what is heavenly. Notice that exchange, that substitution.
- So we have a responsibility to consider the king.
- Consider Jesus. Interestingly, this is the first imperative of the book of Hebrews. Perhaps you're aware of the difference between imperatives and indicatives. Indicatives are statements of fact, imperatives are commands that flow out of those facts. Think about the structure of Paul's letters.
- Take Ephesians for example. You have 3 chapters of indicative. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. You were raised with Christ. By grace you were saved. The dividing wall of hostility has been broken down and Jew and Gentile have been reconciled in one body. The mystery hidden for ages has been revealed. That's chapters 1-3. All about what God has done through Christ.
- And then in chapter 4 we see a shift from indicative to imperative, command. In light of what has happened, therefore, walk in a manner worthy, put off your old self, put on the new self, speak the truth, be angry, but don't sin, be kind to one another, husbands love your wives, wives submit to your husbands, and so forth.
- That's the difference between indicative and imperative. The indicative describes what God has done and the imperative describes our God-empowered response to what God has done.
- And that's again helpful to keep in mind as it relates to sanctification. The imperative of sanctification is grounded in the indicative of sanctification. In other words, you can only pursue progressive sanctification because of the fact that God has already accomplished positional sanctification.
- But back to the flow of the text, as mentioned, this is the first true imperative of the text. We saw an implied command in chapter 2 when it says that we should listen to the word, but here we have the first true imperative and that is to consider Christ.
- That word consider is formed from a word meaning to think about and a prefix that intensifies the verb.
- I mention that because there are all kinds of connotations that we have for considering something. I consider what I want to order at Mi Cocina, but not much is at stake except my weight. Or you consider which iPhone to get or which shirt to wear or which car to buy or what movie to watch, but most of the time you could probably just go through the motions without giving it much thought.
- But that isn't the way that the author is commending us to consider Christ.

- So let me give you a list of synonyms that might help to stress the gravity of the command. You might say that we should fix our attention on, observe carefully, contemplate deeply, think vigilantly, etc. Notice how I added a bunch of adverbs like carefully, deeply, vigilantly. That's because, again, an intensifying prefix was added to the verb for think. So it isn't just consider, but consider carefully, seriously, earnestly, sincerely, etc. It connotes deliberate and sustained mental effort and attention.
- So rather than waiting for application toward the end of the sermon, let me ask, are you considering Christ? What are you doing to consider Him? Are you regularly reading His word, attending services, partaking of communion, talking to others about Him, meditating on His promises, praying His word, etc.
- Are you seriously, studiously, regularly, fervently, zealously, attentively, intentionally considering Christ?
- Consider Christ. That's the command.
- And what should we be considering? Well, in context, consider the fact that He is the apostle and high priest of our confession.
- This is the only place that Christ is called an apostle in Hebrews or the rest of the NT, but the basic idea of an apostle is that he is one who is sent by another as a representative of the sender, and certainly that applies to Jesus. After all, if you read the gospel of John, there are dozens of references to the Father sending the Son and the Son perfectly representing the interests of the Father. So the title of apostle isn't seen elsewhere, but the function is.
- And next He is the high priest. Again, Christ is not called a high priest in any other letter of the NT, but we do see the functions of the office applied to Christ in multiple other books. But it is perhaps ironic that no other book comes right out and calls Him a high priest except Hebrews given the fact that it is THE central point of the book. Literally chapters 5-10 are all about exploring and expounding upon the meaning of Christ's better priesthood.
- Last week we saw that He is a merciful and faithful high priest. He is merciful to His people, but faithful to His Father and that idea comes back up in today's text.
- Look at what it says: He was faithful to Him who appointed Him. I actually don't like the word "was" there. That's actually a present tense verb in Greek and given the context of Christ's enduring faithfulness, I would prefer for it to read He is faithful, but we'll return to that idea shortly.
- So Christ was and is faithful, but notice so was Moses. At this point in the text, a contrast between the two isn't evident. First the analogy is drawn. There is similarity before there is dissimilarity. Both Christ and Moses were faithful.
- The distinction, the contrast, the dissimilarity will come up in verse 3. Let's look at that.

***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. (Hebrews 3:3)***

- Before we get into this, I think it's important to ask why we're even talking about Moses. Again, this is where we need to remember the context. In order to show how the new is better than the old, the author is showing how Christ is superior to all of the individual aspects of the old.

- Since the argument is for the supremacy of the new covenant in Christ to the Mosaic covenant and Mosaic Law, it makes sense to show that Christ is superior to Moses himself.
- In chapter 1, the author talked about the angels because, as we talked about then, they were associated with the giving of the law and the covenant, but the obviously most important creature connected with the Mosaic covenant was Moses himself.
- And this is particularly interesting when considering that in some circles of Jewish tradition, Moses was thought to be exalted even above the angels. So Christ isn't merely greater than the angels, He is greater than the one that many Jews believed was greater than the angels.
- That's Moses.
- In vss. 1-2, we saw how they were similar. Both were faithful.
- That part is really important. It is kinda like we said of the angels. If you look at chapter 1 and conclude that the Son is better than the angels because the angels are super weak and boring, you've undercut the entire argument. It's the fact that the angels are glorious that makes Christ's superior glory shine more brightly.
- Likewise with Moses. Hebrews is not trying to knock Moses down, but rather raise Christ up. As mentioned in the intro, Moses was the greatest prophet, but a prophet nonetheless. Christ isn't merely a greater prophet, His glory and honor and superiority is categorically different.
- We see that in vs. 3 where the author states that Christ is better than Moses by using the phrase counted worthy of more glory.
- And the term glory and the person of Moses have an interesting connection.
- If you remember your Old Testament, Moses once asked God to show me your glory. And there is a story in the OT about how Moses would meet with God and afterwards his face would shine with glory so he'd have to wear a veil in order for the Israelites to look upon him.
- And yet, the glory pales in comparison to that of Christ Jesus who is, according to 1:3
  - *...the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...* (Hebrews 1:3)
- Moses reflected God's glory, Christ radiates it. You could compare this to the difference between the sun and the moon. The moon reflects the light of the sun, but has no inherent light of its own. That's like Moses. But the sun inherently radiates light. That's like the S-O-N, Jesus.
- Moses reflected glory that wasn't inherently his, Christ intrinsically radiates the glory of God.
- And to stress this point, the author uses an analogy.
- He says that the builder of a house has more glory than the house itself.
- My father-in-law, being a custom homebuilder loves this analogy. Any time he shows me one of the mansions he's built in Highland Park or something, he says, you think that's impressive, look at me. I'm kidding.
- In our cookie cutter suburban world, this analogy might not resonate. How many architects or builders can you name? I know a lot of incredible houses that I have no idea who built, Buckingham Palace, Versailles, Graceland, The White House, Waffle House.

- But the image itself makes sense. If the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or the Mona Lisa or the Colosseum or Pantheon are incredible, how much more astonishing is the mind who conceived them and the hands that made them?
- Or, if you are impressed at the Grand Canyon or the Matterhorn or aurora borealis, how much more impressed should you be with its Creator? We'll see that's a good analogy when verse 4 will compare Christ's building of the house with God's building of creation.
- So Moses and Jesus may be similar in a sense, both were faithful, but they are also dissimilar and the incongruity is what is emphasized here. Although not highlighted, there is actually even dissimilarity in their faithfulness. Moses was generally faithful, but he did have one blot, one blemish, one very public indiscretion...a fault that kept him out of the promised land. But, as we talked about last time, Christ was faithful to the very end. Without spot or stain or blemish.
- But that isn't the author's point because that would demonstrate that Christ is quantitatively different, He is more faithful. But the author isn't interested in Christ's quantitative superiority, He is interested in showing a qualitative difference. Christ is categorically different.
- He is not merely a prophet like Moses, He is not merely a trustworthy messenger, He is the pioneer, founder, originator of the people, the builder, Creator. In any and all ways fundamentally better and thus worthy of more glory.
- By the way, notice that reference to both glory & honor. Now look back to Heb 2:9 which says:
  - *But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.* (Hebrews 2:9)
- So Christ exceeds the angels in glory and honor and exceeds Moses in glory and honor.
- Unlike Islam, which views Jesus as simply another prophet, a great one, but a mere prophet nonetheless, slightly better perhaps than Adam or Abraham or Moses or David, the biblical depiction of Jesus is that He is in a category all to Himself. He isn't merely quantitatively better than Abraham, Moses, and David, He is altogether intrinsically superior.
- Let's keep going. Vs. 4.

***(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) (Hebrews 3:4)***

- Picking up the house building imagery earlier, the author inserts this parenthetical remark. At first glance, it might seem out of place, but when you think about what is being argued here, when you really grasp the significance of the analogy, its astounding.
- Bear in mind what we read at the end of vs. 3, Christ is more glorious than Moses as the builder is more glorious than the house.
- Now the author says, by the way, the builder of all things is God.
- Notice the implication. Think about it for a second. Consider Christ, remember, that's the command.

- And when you do, it should begin to dawn on you that we have a not so subtle argument for the deity of Christ. Think about it. Christ's glory over Moses is the same as God's glory over creation so the implication is that Christ is worthy of God's glory and honor. In other words, Christ is God.
- That's a bold claim and yet its merely restating what we saw in chapter 1 where we read in 1:2 that the universe was made through the Son and in vs. 8 where the Son is called God and in vs. 10 where the Son was said to have laid the foundations of the earth and created the heavens.
- So the universe was built by God and it was built by the Son. To be sure, they have different roles and responsibilities in creation. Creation is generally pictured as being from the Father and through the Son and by the Spirit. Each member of the godhead has a different function in creation, but each is involved in creation. Creation is the product of the trinity because the creator is triune and all of His works are triune.
- And so the honor that is due to God is due to the Son. Again, you can see why theologians find some of the most compelling evidences for the deity of Christ in the book of Hebrews and not just a handful of proof texts.
- So when we consider Christ, we consider Him as creator and we do so by giving Him the honor that is worthy of His person and work.
- Let's keep going. Vss. 5-6.

***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. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. (Hebrews 3:5-6)***

- Earlier we saw the analogy of a builder vs. the house. Now, we have another image, that of servant vs. son.
- We've already seen the faithfulness of Moses, but now we have the addition of the servant image & that's important because it clues us in to an allusion to the OT, namely Num 12:7 where it says:
- *Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. (Numbers 12:7)*
- We read that earlier. The Greek of Hebrews isn't an exact quotation of Numbers, but there is such overlap in terms such as faithful, servant, and house, that its clearly an allusion.
- And when we think of a servant, we might think of that as being a term of derision. We might think of some lowly office.
- But that's not the way the Bible speaks of Moses as a servant. In fact, the word used here isn't the more common words for a servant. This isn't a common servant, it would be like the right hand man, the chief of staff.
- The title of servant is not demeaning, it actually shows Moses' exalted position as we see from the context of Numbers 12, where his role as a servant is used to qualify why he has greater responsibility and authority than Aaron and Miriam.
- So, as we mentioned before, the point of this passage isn't to diminish the role of Moses, as the purpose of chapter 1 wasn't to diminish the role of angels. The purpose was to instead highlight the role of the Son as exceeding even the elevated roles of both.



- So there is a contrast between Moses as the servant and Christ as the son. But there is another linguistic clue to the contrast that you might notice. Look at the prepositions. Notice that Moses was faithful...what's the following preposition? In God's house.
- What about Christ. Christ is faithful...what's the next preposition? Over God's house.
- In vs. over. Moses is a member; Christ is the Lord. Moses didn't establish the household. He didn't establish the people. He was a member of the household, but Christ is over the household.
- And so Moses, as a servant, in the household, didn't speak for himself. He spoke for another. And he spoke proleptically, with a future orientation. He was never the point. He was a means, not an end. He wasn't the final boss. Notice that he testified to the things that were to be spoken later.
- And Christ is the ultimate anticipated fulfillment of that. He is the final decisive speaker because He Himself is the ultimate decisive speech, the very word of God.
- Remember how the book of Hebrews started. What were the first two verses of chapter 1?
  - *Long ago, 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, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.* (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- As we talked about then, but in these last days present a stark contrast. Christ and the new covenant is something new and different and better. Jesus is God's mic drop.
- And that word, who is the Son, creates the house. Remember, that's the analogy that the author used before. Christ is the builder of the house.
- So what is the house? Well, Hebrews says that we are the house. The house isn't a building, but a people...a people who listen to the Son, who embrace the supremacy of the Son, who worship the Father through the Son. In short, the house is the church.
- A couple of years ago, when we preached through the pastoral epistles, we saw this same metaphor in 1 Timothy 3, where Paul writes:
  - *if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.* (1 Timothy 3:15)
- So we are the house...that is if we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in hope.
- This is what logicians call a conditional statement. We're familiar with these all the time:
  - If you land the client you'll get a promotion; clean your room you'll get an allowance.
- And we'll read something similar next week in vs. 14 which says:
  - *For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.* (Hebrews 3:14)
- Again, notice the conditionality.
- So what do we do with this conditionality? You are his house if you hold fast. You share in Christ if you hold fast. You are not his house if you do not.
- And this isn't unique to Hebrews. Consider where we see this language elsewhere:
  - *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples..."* (John 8:31)
    - How do you know who is a disciple? By whether or not they abide.

- *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:1–2)*
  - Notice the condition of holding fast
- *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:21–23)*
  - Again, there is a condition.
- And look at Matthew 7:21-23
  - *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Matthew 7:21–23)*
- Here is where some people start to get upset. Are you saying we can lose our salvation? Are you saying that God's covenant is conditional? That sounds pretty scary. And surely we shouldn't want people to be scared, right? Wrong.
- In just a couple of weeks we'll read Hebrews 4:1 which says:
  - *Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. (Hebrews 4:1)*
  - So we should be a little afraid. As Philippians 2 told us, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Fear and trembling aren't something to avoid, they're gifts to be received. Can some go overboard with fire and brimstone and terror? Sure. But do we therefore swing the pendulum to no fear, no trembling, no concern? Of course not.
- But the idea of there being some sort of condition on salvation sounds Pharisaical or legalistic or worksy to some. They think this smacks of works righteousness.
- But, as we've seen, this conditional nature of the covenant, is the language of the Bible.
- The biblical picture isn't that the new covenant relationship between God and His people is unconditional, but rather that God Himself fulfills the conditions of the covenant.
- Let me repeat that because it is a fundamental reason that the new is better than the old.
- It isn't that the new covenant relationship between God and His people is unconditional, but rather that God Himself fulfills the conditions of the covenant in and for His people.
- So as it relates to the idea of holding fast, the elect persevere because God preserves them.
- We see this throughout Scripture: look at John 6
  - *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. (John 6:37–39)*

- *but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. (John 10:26–30)*
- *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:28–30)*
- *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*
- In other words, we have to hold fast in order to be saved, but it's God's grace that enables and empowers us to hold fast so He gets all the glory and credit.
- And if we do fall away, it's because we were never actually members of the household in the first place.
- We see that in texts like 1 John 2:19
  - *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)*
  - The same way that Jesus says, you don't believe because you aren't my sheep, so John is saying here, they left because they never really were of us. They might have come to services and read the Bible and offered some prayers, but their apostasy reveals their true nature all along.
  - That's what the author of Hebrews is dealing with. Remember the context and the danger, the threat of falling away, drifting away from Christ and His church, drifting back into the synagogue and the traditions of empty religion.
  - The author isn't saying that you are God's house only if you never sin, he's saying that you are God's house only if you never fully give up, give in, let go.
- We have to remember that the author of Hebrews is writing this letter to a large group of people that is probably composed mostly of actual Christians. But he isn't sure that there aren't any false professors. He doesn't know if any goats have slipped in among the sheep so he writes that perseverance is a sign of belonging.
- Notice that he doesn't write, if you don't persevere, you will lose your salvation. Or if you hold fast, you'll become a Christian. He writes that your holding fast is a sign that you're already held.
- One of the challenges of preaching this verse is the fact that in any congregation there is a lot of diversity, and I don't just mean racial or ethnic diversity. I mean members and visitors, attendees who've been attending for months and others who are here for the first time, people who have been walking with the Lord for decades and others for whom it's been measured in weeks, some bearing bushels of spiritual fruit, some just starting to put out some buds, some I know really well, others I've just met.

- And given those differences, what you might need from this text could be different from what the person next to you needs. The text doesn't change, but the emphasis might. Consider what Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:14:
  - *And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.* (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- Now take that and apply the same idea to Hebrews 3:6. Some of you may be idle, lazy, apathetic. You may be flirting with apostasy. Slowly drifting further and further away from the church and from the Word and from confidence and hope and faith. Perhaps you're toying with spiritual doubt or indulging in unconfessed unrepentant sin or giving in to despair and apathy.
- If that's you, you need to be admonished, rebuked. You need to be reminded of the need to hold fast. You need a little fear.
- But others are fainthearted. You're being faithful, but imperfectly and you need something different. You need encouragement. You need to be reminded that your true hope isn't in your holding on to Christ, but His holding on to you.
- Both of those are true. Both of those are necessary. Good preaching has two goals: to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.
- So which do you need to hear this morning? Do you need to be comforted or afflicted? Are you walking in faithfulness or allowing yourself to drift?
- And are you considering Jesus? Are you considering His apostleship and high priestly role? Are you considering His faithfulness? His superiority and supremacy? Are you considering His work in building and sustaining His household?
- Before we do anything, our response is simply to see, to listen, to consider. So are you considering Christ?
- And in light of that will you hold fast to your confidence and hope and let go of the doubts, fears, sins, and stresses that weigh you down?
- May we consider Christ and hold fast and all that that implies. God help us!
- Let's pray.

### **Communion**

- Fence table
- As we prepare to partake, I want to encourage you to consider Christ.
- Think about His death. Think about the sacrificial nature of His death and the implication that your sins are forgiven. Think about His resurrection and the defeat of death. Think about His return and the reality of a new creation when all that is sad will be untrue.
- In a spirit of examination and exultation, let's partake...
- The body of Christ...