

Focus on Jesus!

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.”

Has this happened to you? You go to the grocery store to buy a gallon of milk. That’s it. But when you check out, you also bought a box of pop tarts, a bag of chips, a Gatorade, a Snickers bar and a DVD movie that was on sale. As you walked the aisles to get the milk, you saw all these other things and you picked them up, too. And there were times I forgot the milk. Has this happened to you? You sit down to your computer to do some work. But then you check your email, do a google search on where tapioca comes from, and checked the scores from last night’s games. Before you know it, it has been an hour and no work got done.

Has this happened to you? When you pray, you ask for this and that, but forgot to ask God to forgive your sins. Has this happened to you? On Monday, you can’t remember what Sunday’s sermon was about. Has this happened to you? Someone asks about your church. You boast about our school, Sunday school, and potlucks, but you never mentioned that every Sunday we hear how Jesus saves us from our sins.

If any of this happened to you, then this text in Hebrews 3 is written for you. And what does it say? ***“Fix your thoughts on Jesus.”*** We need to hear this because we are so easily distracted from Jesus. And if we lose focus on him, what will happen? Well, if an electrician stops concentrating while wiring a house, he may get zapped. If we lose focus on Jesus, we may follow the world, and you know where that will lead. So, let’s fix our eyes on Jesus. The distractions are many, but he is better than anything the world has to offer, and because of him we have a heavenly calling.

I. We are easily distracted.

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” Friends, we are not the only ones who can become easily distracted. The book of Hebrews is a Pastor’s letter to his congregation. They were Christians. They heard about Jesus and believed in him; they loudly confessed him as their Savior.

But they got distracted. The Roman government by this time started to make Christianity illegal and persecute this church. No one died, yet, but these members stopped coming to church because they were afraid some Roman undercover police officer would be in the parking lot jotting down license plate numbers. So, they started to look for another church, and the most likely choice was the Old Testament law or Judaism. This made sense for two reasons. First, most in this church used to be Jews who became Christians; that is why the book is called, “Hebrews.” So, the transition back to Judaism would be easy and familiar. Second, Judaism was still legal. I suppose you could make a third argument. Moses was pretty cool. I mean, think of the Ten Plagues, the parting of the Red Sea. Picture Moses striking the rock and enough water to satisfy 2 million came out. You can’t help but be impressed with Moses. To study him would be awesome.

Friends, what distractions face you? You are being persecuted. I don’t think Federal agents are outside right now taking down license plate numbers. But you are afraid to openly confess your faith. What if you have a son or daughter or brother or our cousin who is falling away from God. You are afraid to talk to him or her, aren’t you? You are afraid because you fear it will end up in an argument or division in the family. Friends, that is persecution on you and your faith.

But there are other distractions. I think of the Pharisees who were so busy counting how many steps you can make on the Sabbath or how much money they give to the church. Then when Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world stood before them, they didn’t recognize him; in fact they wanted him dead. Friends, what is more important in a wedding service, or a funeral service, or in our regular worship service? Do we get so wrapped up in details like the bride’s dress or the food or impressing people that we forget that it is all about Jesus?

I think of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes. Read it today. Solomon tried to find happiness in everything. He tried architecture. He tried comedy. He tried money. He tried drinking. He tried women. He tried lazying around. And what did he conclude? All of this, though fun and productive in their own way, was meaningless. And the elderly Solomon advises us in the end that the only thing that has meaning is if we would simply concentrate on God. What is pulling you away from Jesus? Is it drink, architecture, comedy, sex? Are your minds busy with juggling the kids and their online classes, taxes, politics? Are you struggling to find a way to buy a new car or what to do with grandma who can’t live at home anymore? If I could x-ray your brain, I might find about 106 different things you are thinking about.

Many of things need our attention. I mean, one thing I like to do while driving is think, to think about the sermon, what forms I need to complete my taxes, weighing at what point I should keep repairing an old car and when I should buy something newer. That’s good, to think. But I have to remember that my main reason in the car is drive and get some place. If

I get so distracted by other things, I might miss my turn, or if I grab my phone to start searching the internet for something, I might crash the car.

You and I have many things that want to distract us from the main thing, Jesus and his salvation. This is where the devil comes in. He wants us to be distracted. Yes, we can do multiple things, file our taxes and still think about Jesus. But the devil wants us to focus only on the other things so we forget or ignore Jesus or where we are going, heaven.

II. Focus on Jesus who is more important than anything else.

Thank God for his Word, the Bible. Thank God for his love and patience. Thank God for his tap on our shoulders like in our text when he tells us, ***“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.”*** Let’s avoid distractions as we focus again and again on Jesus. He is the most important person in our lives.

“He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house.”

Members of this church were thinking of going back to the Old Testament only, no New, no Jesus. That means going back to Moses and not Jesus. I can’t blame anyone for being interested in Moses. At age 80, he stood before Pharaoh demanding the release of his people. Think of the awesome things God did through him. But who is more important, Moses or Jesus? If Moses stood before us today, he would say, as he prophesied in Deuteronomy from earlier, “Don’t focus on me; focus on the one greater than I, Jesus.” That is what the writer points out in our text. Moses and Jesus were both great. Both were faithful to God, but Jesus is greater because he is God and Savior. Moses was only a servant in the house of God. Jesus is the Son and heir in the house. Moses is human. Jesus is also human but too, but at the same time he is God. Moses saved the people from slavery in Egypt. Jesus saves the world from slavery to sin, death and the devil.

I ask you, what is more important, how much you can save for retirement, or how much can you save for eternity? What is more important, winning the game, or wearing the crown of righteousness? Don’t get me wrong. I hope you succeed. Wouldn’t it be great if a member or two struck it big in corporate America or became a professional athlete? God wants us to concentrate on and do well at things. But, as Solomon showed us, all these things last a while. Their happiness is short lived. What God gives us in Jesus far surpasses them.

III. Because he gave us a heavenly calling.

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.”

In Paul’s day the inheritance, land, everything passed down from the father to his sons. By calling these Christians “brothers,” he assured them they are part of God’s family and heirs of his eternal home. And more than that; we are holy. The Bible calls the living, breathing, Christian who still lapses into sins of weakness and temptation, holy, a saint. That means, in man’s eyes, we see filthy rags and sinners. But God sees holiness as white as snow or bleached cloth, in other words, no sin. It sounds odd, but that is the truth and it is because of Jesus. We can’t clean away our sins. We can’t scrub them out of our lives, so Jesus gives us a whole new outfit to wear. It is his perfect holiness, the holiness we saw when Jesus obeyed God perfectly, who resisted temptation and committed no sin. And the sins we committed have been washed away by the blood of the Lamb. They are forgiven. God practices what he preaches in 1 Corinthians 13. He keeps no record of wrongs. As far as God is concerned, and it is his opinion that only matters, we are holy and perfect for heaven. Because of him we have, a “heavenly calling,” as it is stated here. A calling is something that we are destined for. In Christ we are all called to heaven. That is our home, not here. That is where we are all going because of Jesus.

So, doesn’t it make sense, then, to focus on Jesus? Instead of letting other things like the job and pleasure and worry and happiness distract us from Jesus, let Jesus distract us away from these things. Amen.