

Hebrews 3:1-6. Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. ² He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵ Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. ⁶ 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.

Gather around His Greatness!

1. There is no comparison: Jesus is the greatest.

2. Sharing in his greatness: We are his house.

In case you haven't heard, it's Super Bowl Sunday today. This certainly has become quite the television event in our day and age. It is estimated that 113 million people throughout the world will watch the Super Bowl telecast sometime today. Many people will be gathering around their televisions hoping to witness something great. Some will pay closer attention to the commercials than to the game itself, others will be interested in the halftime show, but most will be invested in this championship game.

Leading up to the Super Bowl there has been quite a bit of talk about how this should be a great game. Two really good teams will meet, on arguably the biggest stage of the entire professional sports world, to stake their claim as being the greatest team in the land. All sorts of questions of greatness surround this game. Is this defense one of the greatest of all time? Is that quarterback one of the best quarterbacks in Super Bowl history? Has this coach built this franchise up to be one of the best of all time? No matter what the outcome of the game turns out to be many of these questions will continue to swirl, all with that main emphasis: Who is the greatest?

In our lesson for today, that very question is discussed, but the answer does indeed have a definite answer and there is really no debate about it. From the beginning of this letter the writer to the Hebrews has been advancing the argument that Jesus is superior to anyone or anything. And now the argument takes a significant turn especially for his initial readers. He poses this question, "Who is greater: Jesus or Moses?" To early believers who came from Jewish descent and culture that would be a tougher question to answer than it probably would be for you and for me. Moses was the one God had chosen and used to lead the people out of the slavery of Egypt. Moses was a great leader who did so much to shape Israel as a nation. Moses was a cultural hero, a legend of sorts. He was a respected leader and a friend of God. He would speak to the LORD on behalf of the people and he would speak to the people on behalf of God. Moses was a unique character in the history of God's people. He was a faithful servant of God. He was one of the greatest men in all of Bible History, but he was just a man, a member of God's church on earth. He had brought the commands of God to God's people, but he could not fulfill those commands. No matter how

hard he tried he could not lead the people to perfection or provide them with salvation, only Jesus could do that. Jesus not only spoke God's Word and shared God's commands with the people, but he fulfilled every one of those commands and provided salvation and perfection for all of us sinners. And so as great as Moses was, Jesus was far greater.

And so the writer to the Hebrews makes this urgent request, ***fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess***. Pay close attention to Jesus. Learn about the Son of God. Spend time considering the greatness of Jesus the Christ. It seems very likely that the Hebrew Christians were at times more interested in Moses than they were in Jesus. They looked to the "laws of Moses" and his leadership, they were invested in his story, and interested in his legacy and influence, and so the author of this letter is compelled to remind them about the one who is greater, who is the greatest. Fix your thoughts on Jesus.

It's shocking how wrapped up we can get in other interest and other things. It's shocking how our thoughts can be dominated by other things that we consider great and we can forget about Jesus or overlook his importance. An estimated 113 million people will watch the Super Bowl today; that number is so staggering that it kind of makes you wonder how many will be in church worshipping Jesus today. Some people might be able to tell you all the things to look for in the matchups for today's game, every angle, every back story. It's kind of fun to read up on the big game, it's fun to witness greatness, but at times it might feel like a chore to learn more about the Savior. And so God's Word reminds us of the greatness of our Lord Jesus. It calls us to give Jesus our attention and to consider what he has done and what he continues to do for us. Right here in the book of Hebrews we are reminded more than once to fix our thoughts, fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 3:1, 12:2). After all he is greater than anyone or anything.

Even in the way the writer addresses his readers he reminds of the greatness of Jesus Christ. ***Holy brothers {and sisters}, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus***. Jesus is the only way to heaven. We can't expect to follow the laws that God gave through Moses and be saved. We fall short of God's perfection but by his grace in Jesus God has called us to that home above, he is the one who cleansed us from our sin and has given us holiness so that we might one day stand before a holy God. Jesus is the one who guides us through this life and saves us from our sin, and ourselves, and the sinful world around us. The use of Jesus personal name here reminds us that this was his mission; that the LORD had sent this one to save the people from their sins (People's Bible). Jesus would prove to be faithful to his mission.

Two other aspects of Jesus' mission are highlighted in these verses: ***Jesus is the apostle and high priest that we confess***. In his love God sent out his Son to preach and teach the good news and then make the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. What amazing power and greatness and love we see demonstrated in the person of Jesus!

Consider the greatness of Christ! This is the one who was sent by the Father from heaven to live and die to save us. This is the one God the Father sent to clearly preach and teach God's Word of repentance and compassion and to teach others to do the same. The creator of the universe came to our world and lived among us. Talk about greatness, Jesus

made no mistakes, he committed no sin. He flawlessly executed God's game plan of salvation and kept all of God's commands for us. The creator of all things humbled himself so that he could show us and teach us about the greatness of God. He came to preach and teach God's Word, to extend the kingdom of God, to build his church on earth, to build and care for God's house with unmatched compassion and power.

This is the one who preached in the synagogues with unmatched authority and insight! He revealed God's Word of truth in masterful ways. He spoke in stories and parables that cut to the heart and stuck with those who listened. Thousands of people crowded around him to hear his teachings. And as he taught it was clear that he was more than just a skilled teacher (as some people today claim), but rather his divine power was put on public display as he performed miraculous signs and wonders. This great teacher was also the mighty Son of God. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He even cast out demons!

With just a few words from his mouth Jesus demonstrated his power over the devil and his demons. ***"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" (Mark 1:25).*** And just like that a man who had been terrorized and taken captive by a demon was set free. A body that was polluted by darkness and death as the home of an unclean spirit was purified and made new so that God could dwell in it, that the Spirit could make a home in that space, that salvation could evict condemnation and freely reside in peace and joy. In his power and love he makes his home in our heart. He casts out the evil and unbelief that resides within us and he makes his home in our hearts. He is our Lord and Savior. Remarkable! The power! The greatness! The glory of Jesus Christ! And so today we are blessed as we once again get to gather around his greatness.

It often happens that those gathered around greatness are able to share in the greatness of others. Perhaps it is a team that is led by a great coach and they work together and become great. Or it can be that an individual player lifts his teammates to a higher level until they reach greatness together. In football a quarterback is not only judged by his statistical prowess, but he is judged by how he is able to bring his team to brink of greatness and push them over the top. When everything falls into place a great quarterback can gather his team around himself and propel that entire team to greatness and victory.

The debate may go on and on for years about who was the greatest team, greatest coach, greatest quarterback in Super Bowl history, but there is no debate about the greatness of Christ Jesus. He is the greatest. He is superior to everything and everyone. He is the only one who can grant us eternal victory. When everything was stacked against him, when the devil himself attacked and threatened him, Jesus came through for me and you.

Take time to consider the greatness of Jesus. So often we grab onto the things of this life that others tell us are great, but really aren't. We fill up on that which is not beneficial and the results aren't great. Useless gossip, unclean thoughts, impure actions, brew up in us and out of us and such things are fueled by the empty evil that swirls around us. When we live among that filth, when spend time in that atmosphere, when we make our homes among such sinful influence, when we sit in it, and breathe it in, our thoughts are soon

cluttered with the temptations of this life and Christ Jesus is pushed into some cobwebbed corner in the dark recess of our minds. Satan may even use this lack of focus on Jesus and this mess of uncleanness and impurity in our lives to lead us into loneliness and despair. The devil would love to convince us that God would be ashamed, why we he ever want to live in you or near you. That master of lies wants nothing more for us to distance ourselves from God and his Word and his love.

Dear friends, God's wish for us that we would be set free from this darkness and despair and slavery to sin and guilt and instead he wants us to come near to him and gather around the greatness of his Son. For when fix our thoughts on Jesus it becomes clear that he came so that we may share in his greatness. He came to bring us out of the darkness into his wonderful light. He came to bring us out of sin, despair, and darkness into the welcoming warmth of God's household so that he watch over us with great care. With his great love and compassion he raises up those who were dead in sin and filled with wickedness and he makes us holy. He joins us to himself and to the Holy Church of God and he gives us victory. We who were nothing without him are made into something great because of him. We are the house of God. God dwells within us and among us because of the greatness of Christ. And we can rejoice in this wonderful happening not just one day out of the year, but every single day and into eternity.

Christ paid the price for us as he laid down his life for you and for me. And in his unmatched care and concern he daily takes away each sin. They pile up like dirty dishes in the sink and like dirty laundry scattered through our lives, but he takes all those sins away. He washes us clean, he blots out each stain. Through the power of his Word he even reaches into those hard to reach places in our lives and drives out evil and sweeps away guilt and he makes his home with us. He drives out the darkness of sin and death and devil and he makes us his house that shines with the brilliance of his righteousness and holiness. Gathered around greatness we get to share in his brilliance and his glory as our lives our changed by his goodness, by his greatness. As we study his word and we consider his greatness and love, evil impulses are swept away and more and more are replaced by his goodness. That change is the difference be like night and day. As Paul encouraged the Thessalonians, the Lord encourages us. ***5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. (1 Thessalonians 5:5).*** Our lives will shine with the greatness of Christ as will realize that we are not only a part of God's house, his church, but our bodies themselves are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). He dwells within us, and his goodness, his greatness, will be reflected in everything that we say and do.

Gather around His greatness, for the creator of all things, who is greatness personified, became one of us so that you could share in his glory. There is really no debate about it, Jesus is the greatest. His love is amazing! His faithfulness is remarkable! And one day we who remain in him will share in his eternal glory. That is something truly worth our attention each day and our unending praise forever in heaven. Until then let us continue to gather around his greatness. Amen.