

Scott A. Wood 9-1-2024
HEBREWS STUDY: PERSEVERE-HOLD ON-BELIEVE TILL THE END.
PART 3C: PROTECT YOUR HEART FROM HARDENING

Good Morning CVCHURCH family. It's great to see all of you here this morning on site and it is marvelous to join with all of you online. Kathe and I deeply appreciate all of you who are teaming with us behind the scenes to make these broadcasts possible for all who tune in.

I appreciate teaming with Pastor Scottie as we're team teaching our ways through this most marvelous book of the New Testament named HEBREWS. The title for this series is **PERSEVERE—HOLD ON—BELIEVE TILL THE END**. Today's teaching is entitled **PROTECT YOUR HEART FROM HARDENING**. Would you join me as I pray for our time together in God's Word this morning (this afternoon):

"Father we are so grateful for Your love, mercy, forgiveness for, and Your patience with, each one of us. We thank You for Your Word and for sending the living Word, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. Through You we can experience complete love, forgiveness, and acceptance. Jesus, we're so grateful that You are the captain of our salvation, our Pioneer, Author, and Leader. You have earned that title because of Your willingness to suffer death on our behalf and because of Your sacrifice you have freed us who were held in slavery by our fear of death, We thank you this morning (afternoon) because You suffered when You were tempted, we can come boldly before Your throne and enter into Your presence and you are able to help us, encourage us and strengthen us so can PERSEVERE—HOLD ON—AND BELIEVE STAY IN FAITH TILL THE END. It is in Your Name that we pray, faithful Jesus, Amen."

1. GOD'S HOUSE RULED BY CHRIST 3:1-6

JESUS IS THE GREATEST OF THE GREATEST

Please follow along as I read Hebrews 3:1-19. **"¹AND SO, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO BELONG TO GOD AND ARE PARTNERS WITH THOSE CALLED TO HEAVEN, THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THIS JESUS WHOM WE DECLARE TO BE GOD'S MESSENGER AND HIGH PRIEST. ²FOR HE WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, WHO APPOINTED HIM, JUST AS MOSES SERVED FAITHFULLY WHEN HE WAS ENTRUSTED WITH GOD'S ENTIRE HOUSE. ³BUT JESUS DESERVES FAR MORE GLORY THAN MOSES, JUST AS A PERSON WHO BUILDS A HOUSE DESERVES MORE PRAISE THAN THE HOUSE ITSELF. ⁴FOR EVERY HOUSE HAS A BUILDER, BUT THE ONE WHO BUILT EVERYTHING IS GOD. ⁵MOSES WAS CERTAINLY FAITHFUL IN GOD'S HOUSE AS A SERVANT. HIS WORK WAS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRUTHS GOD WOULD REVEAL LATER. ⁶BUT CHRIST, AS THE SON, IS IN CHARGE OF GOD'S ENTIRE HOUSE. AND WE ARE GOD'S HOUSE, IF WE KEEP OUR COURAGE AND REMAIN CONFIDENT IN OUR HOPE IN CHRIST."**

A. Christ's faithfulness BRINGS worth and abiding VALUE to His church. Vs 1.

Once again, in this passage, we observe an expert preacher at work, and, as Thomas G. Long has observed, this preacher utilizes a technique called "repetition and surprise." First comes the repetition from 1:5-14 where the preacher focuses on the superiority of Jesus, specifically how Jesus is loftier, even, than the angels; now, in 3:1-6 he circles the runway by returning to this idea of Jesus' preeminence and superiority, this time in relation to Moses. But this is where the surprise comes in. The congregation is prepared

to hear more about the supremacy of Christ. Here, though, the spotlight suddenly PIVOTS and shines on the congregation! The FOCUS of this teaching changes from Christ to HIS CHURCH! It is a word about how the faithfulness of Jesus brings worth and abiding value to the church and its struggles to live the faithful Christian life. Pastor Scottie touched on verses 16 through 18; we're told that, because God's family is human, Jesus Christ had to become fully God AND fully Human in order to be our merciful and faithful High priest before God. In becoming our High Priest, He not only represents us before the Father but, He Himself, became our sacrificial Lamb. It is because He was tempted, suffered, and remained faithful, that, NOW, He has the ability to help and strengthen us when we're being tested.

1. Jesus PLACES us into His family. Chapter 3 Verse 1a, in the NIV, says, **"1THEREFORE, HOLY BROTHERS, WHO SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY CALLING, ..."**

It is way too easy to skip over this powerful truth loved ones! Throughout the New Testament the authors refer to the church as family, brothers, and sisters. We are family not because of blood, or race, or even because we are fond of each other and share common opinions and interests. We are joined as one family because we each belong to Jesus Christ, who fully shared our humanity and in 2:11 **"... JESUS IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BROTHERS AND SISTERS."** Thomas G. Long writes profoundly on this truth: **"We often speak of the church as a 'voluntary organization,' something that people choose or not, but the Preacher calls us to a more profound theological understanding of the church. In the deepest sense, we do not choose the church; we are chosen for the church by God. The church is not a club for people who are fond of religion; ..."** It is a community of people who have been summoned to live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. We are God's family called to a lifestyle of worship, to invest our lives in a ministry of serving people, a passion to share the Gospel with the non-believer, to invest our lives in a transparent vulnerable intimacy with each other loving other with Christ's love and a commitment are committed to be fully devoted followers of Christ. Long writes, **"Clubs have membership rolls of companionable, like-minded people; churches, like families, include people who would never dream of being, working, and living together were they not 'kin.' Voluntary organizations have fans, and if the dues get too high or the demands too great, one can drop out, walk away, and find something more congenial. Churches, however, have 'brothers and sisters' bound together in common kinship to Jesus Christ, and the only way to walk away is to leave home."**

2. Jesus' church is HOLY. 1:1a Family, this is a risky truth. We all know that we're all sinners and we are all flawed and have character defects. For anyone who has spent a day relating to people in the church realizes as Long writes, **"... the trees in the church's moral forest do not grow any higher than anywhere else. If greed infects the world it poisons the church, too. If bigotry walks through society, it slithers its way along Church Street as well. The same goes for lust, pride, anger, sloth, and all the other deadly sins; the church is immune to none of them. Even so , the author of Hebrews dares to call the church holy only because he knows that holiness is not an intrinsic human virtue but a divine gift."** The preacher says the church is holy because it has been set aside, sanctified, by Jesus Himself. Hebrews 2:11, 14-15 says, **"11SO NOW JESUS AND THE ONES HE MAKES HOLY HAVE THE**

SAME FATHER. THAT IS WHY JESUS IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS. ¹⁴BECAUSE GOD'S CHILDREN ARE HUMAN BEINGS—MADE OF FLESH AND BLOOD—THE SON ALSO BECAME FLESH AND BLOOD. FOR ONLY AS A HUMAN BEING COULD HE DIE, AND ONLY BY DYING COULD HE BREAK THE POWER OF THE EVIL, WHO HAD THE POWER OF DEATH. ¹⁵ONLY IN THIS WAY COULD HE SET FREE ALL WHO HAVE LIVED THEIR LIVES AS SLAVES TO THE FEAR OF DYING.” Loved ones, Jesus through His own trials and suffering, knows every fracture that our sinful nature and weakness has, and the living Christ is at work in His church, strengthening the community of faith beyond our own capacities for a ministry of mercy, service, and worship. As Long states, **“In this sense, holiness is not so much a description of the church’s moral stature as it is a sign of how gracefully God puts the church to work in the world.”** Long writes, **“The church is holy like the bread at the Lord’s Table is holy; though quite ordinary, it is, nonetheless, set apart for holy use and becomes the instrument of the extraordinary purposes of God.”**

3. Jesus’ church is APOSTOLIC. 1:1c The preacher says in 3:1c **“... THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THIS JESUS WHOM WE DECLARE TO BE GOD’S MESSENGER AND HIGH PRIEST.”** The NIV translation says, **“... FIX YOUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS, WHOM WE ACKNOWLEDGE AS OUR APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST.”** Our passage this morning, Hebrews 3:1-6, begins the second major division of Hebrews. It extends to Chapter 5, Verse 10.

Hebrews 1:1C is the only verse in the entire New Testament that calls Jesus ‘the Apostle.’ Not one of the apostles, but ‘The Apostle!’ The fact that the preacher calls Jesus both The Apostle and our High Priest proves He is superior to Moses. Moses is never called an apostle. He could be considered an ‘Old Testament apostle’ in the basic sense of the term. ‘Apostolos’ means “sent one.” It was often used for an official ambassador. In this definition Moses was God’s apostle, His ‘sent-one’ to lead Israel out of Egypt and to bring God’s people the law and the covenant. Though Moses’ ministry could be seen as apostolic, he was never a priest and, for sure, not a high priest!

The notion of Jesus’ ministry as apostolic is a signal that the church patterns herself after His ministry. Just as Jesus was sent by God, which, again **DEFINES** the term “apostle,” the church is sent to the world as well. John 17:28 Jesus says as He is praying to the Father, “Just as You sent Me into the world, I am sending them into the world.” As Thomas Long writes, **“Just as Jesus is the ‘high priest,’ a title the preacher will later develop at length in 4:14-10:18, the one who ascends to the holy place on behalf of humanity, so the church has a ‘priestly ministry’ of loving service and compassion. Just as Jesus is the source and focus of ‘our confession,’ the church worships, teaches, and serves: ‘Let us hold firmly to what we believe about Jesus as our supreme Lord, Savior and soon and coming King.’”**

B. Christ is SUPREME over MOSES. 3:2-6

1. MOSES was faithful to God as His SERVANT. In vs. 3:5 the preacher states, **“⁵MOSES WAS CERTAINLY FAITHFUL IN GOD’S HOUSE AS A SERVANT. HIS WORK WAS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRUTHS GOD WOULD REVEAL LATER.”** Moses was a type of Jesus who was to come. Moses points to Jesus Christ. The Old

Testament points to Jesus as the fulfillment of all that God promised through Moses and the rest of the prophets. Moses was called servant of God. Numbers 12:6-8 is important here. **“6AND THE LORD SAID TO THEM, ‘NOW LISTEN TO WHAT I SAY: “IF THERE WERE PROPHETS AMONG YOU, I, THE LORD, WOULD REVEAL MYSELF IN VISIONS. I WOULD SPEAK TO THEM IN DREAMS. 7BUT NOT WITH MY SERVANT MOSES. OF ALL MY HOUSE, HE IS THE ONE I TRUST. 8I SPEAK TO HIM FACE TO FACE, CLEARLY, AND NOT IN RIDDLE! HE SEES THE LORD AS HE IS. SO WHY WERE YOU NOT AFRAID TO CRITICIZE MY SERVANT MOSES?””** In Numbers Chapter 12, while the Israelites were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because he had married a Cushite woman. Unfortunately, Miriam later falls into a spirit of complaining. Both Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses for marrying a Cushite or Ethiopian woman, but Miriam is listed first (Numbers 12:1) so it is likely she instigated the complaint. While the complaint was ostensibly against Moses’ wife, the discontent ran deeper: **“Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?’** they asked. **‘Hasn’t he also spoken through us?’**” (Numbers 12:2). In her criticism, Miriam was questioning the Lord’s wisdom in choosing Moses as the leader. In Numbers 12:3 the Bible says, **“(NOW MOSES WAS VERY HUMBLE-MORE HUMBLE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON ON EARTH.)”** Moses, says the preacher, was found faithful over God’s house which is God’s people the Israelites. The Jews held Moses in the highest esteem. The preacher in Hebrews was systematically proving that Jesus has total and complete supremacy over all of the angels, Moses, and the priests. Why?

2. CHRIST was faithful to God as His SON. 3:5-6. “5MOSES WAS CERTAINLY FAITHFUL IN GOD’S HOUSE AS A SERVANT. HIS WORK WAS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRUTHS GOD WOULD REVEAL LATER. 6BUT CHRIST, AS THE SON, IS IN CHARGE OF GOD’S ENTIRE HOUSE. AND WE ARE GOD’S HOUSE, IF WE KEEP OUR COURAGE AND REMAIN CONFIDENT IN OUR HOPE IN CHRIST.” I want to close with two passages from Hebrews that underscore this truth that Jesus is God’s Son, the builder of God’s house the church and for us to see the lengths that Jesus went to secure our salvation. Hebrews 4:14-16. Pastor Scottie will be dealing with this verse in the near future. **“14SO THEN, SINCE WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO HAS ENTERED HEAVEN, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, LET US HOLD FIRMLY TO WHAT WE BELIEVE. 15THIS HIGH PRIEST OF OURS UNDERSTANDS OUR WEAKNESSES, FOR HE FACED ALL OF THE SAME TESTINGS WE DO, YET HE DID NOT SIN. 16SO LET US COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF OUR GRACIOUS GOD. THERE WE WILL RECEIVE HIS MERCY, AND WE WILL FIND GRACE TO HELP US WHEN WE NEED IT MOST.”**

As we come to the communion table this morning (afternoon) it will help you to prepare your heart and mind to share in the symbols of Christ’s body and blood. Jesus, as our High Priest, He is our representative before God in Heaven. We can come boldly to our gracious God because of Jesus, we are assured we will find His grace, mercy, forgiveness, strength, power, and encouragement for all of our struggles, needs and where we need healing. Our second passage is Hebrews 5:7-9 **“7WHILE JESUS WAS HERE ON EARTH, HE OFFERED PRAYERS AND PLEADINGS, WITH A LOUD CRY AND TEARS, TO THE ONE WHO COULD RESCUE HIM FROM DEATH. AND GOD HEARD HIS PRAYERS BECAUSE OF HIS DEEP REVERENCE FOR GOD. 8EVEN**

THOUGH JESUS WAS GOD'S SON, HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE FROM THE THINGS HE SUFFERED. 9IN THIS WAY, GOD QUALIFIED HIM AS A PERFECT HIGH PRIEST, AND HE BECAME THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION FOR ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM." The preacher explains that **Jesus learned obedience to God through what He suffered, even though He was God's son.** That Jesus learned obedience should not cause us to think that Jesus needed to be taught obedience because He was disobedient at any one point. No, Hebrews is clear that Jesus never disobeyed. Instead, this verse highlights His humanity. As Jesus experienced the trials associated with human existence, He learned how to obey His Father in them. Suffering taught Jesus how to submit His Will to His Father's Will. We see the height of the lesson at its sharpest point in Gethsemane and on Calvary. The cross meant a terrible agony of heart and body for Christ, but He remained resolute in His willingness to be obedient, even obedient to the point of death. Church, by faithfully enduring the suffering according to the Father's plan to redeem sinners through His own blood, Jesus learned obedience. Verse 9 tells us that Jesus **"was perfected"** through suffering. That **"He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him."** What does it mean that Jesus was made perfect? We have already seen how suffering played a part in Jesus' perfection in Hebrews 2:10 which says, **"God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that He should make Jesus, through His suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation."** Jesus was not made perfect in the sense that His nature was once impoverished or defected and needed to be improved. Rather, He was made perfect in the sense that learning obedience through suffering was a prerequisite for becoming a qualified and sufficient high priest. In being made perfect through suffering and death, Jesus became "the source of eternal salvation." This simply means that Jesus' suffering stands as the basis for our salvation. Christ as God's Son, is the source of our salvation and is synonymous with Christ as the founder and pioneer of our salvation. This is so fitting as we come to the communion table because in our passage for today, 3:6 the preacher says, **"6BUT CHRIST, AS THE SON, IS IN CHARGE OF GOD'S ENTIRE HOUSE. AND WE ARE GOD'S HOUSE, IF WE KEEP OUR COURAGE AND REMAIN CONFIDENT IN OUR HOPE IN CHRIST."**

Communion: **Luke 22:14-20** "When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, 'I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before My suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.' Then He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then He said, 'Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.' He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'This is My body, which is given for you. Do this to remember Me.' After supper He took another cup of wine and said, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with My blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.'"