

BETTER THAN

Andy Deane · 2/12/2023 · Hebrews 3-4

Series Summary: The author of Hebrews aims to convince his Jewish audience of one main truth: Jesus is better. This portion of Hebrews is written to inspire lifelong faithfulness to Jesus, well past our initial emotional decision.

Hebrews 3:2-6, 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," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future.* ⁶ *But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.*

Jesus is BETTER THAN: Your Faithfulness

- Moses showed amazing faithfulness in his ministry, but Jesus showed a perfect faithfulness.
- True commitment to Jesus is demonstrated over the long term, not just in an initial burst of emotion to start.
- If Moses' faith wasn't enough, then how can we possibly have a faith that perseveres?
- The most important thing to remember is, "*Christ is faithful*" (3:6)
- In the next few verses, the author is going to show his readers why else it's possible to continue to believe.

Hebrews 3:7-11, ⁷ *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did...in the wilderness, ⁹ where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did..."* ¹¹ *So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."*

#1 Faith perseveres: with a heart of gratitude

- "Today" (3:7) means this is still a real invitation from God to you!
- "...they saw what I did..." = Israel saw, but did not remember with gratitude, so their memories were poisoned.
- Gratitude reminds us to trust in God based on his past faithfulness in our lives.

Hebrews 3:12-13, ¹² *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.* ¹³ *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*

#2 Faith perseveres: with the help of others

- Unbelief is not inability to understand, but unwillingness to trust. It is the will, not intelligence, that is involved.
- Persevering in faith is a community project!
- If we want to have faith that lasts, we must be around other believers who will encourage & challenge unbelief!

Hebrews 4:1: 9-11, ¹ *...let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it...* ⁹ *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;* ¹⁰ *for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.* ¹¹ *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest...*

#3 Faith perseveres: with healthy fear & effort

- What do we fear? Unbelief! -- "*fallen short*" (4:1)
- This cessation from works as a basis for righteousness fulfills our "sabbath rest", but we still pursue good works!
- We rest securely on what Christ has done for us!
- The rest is there, but God does not force it upon us. We must "*make every effort to enter that rest*" (4:11).

Hebrews 4:12, ¹² *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

#4 Faith perseveres: with time spent in God's Word

- God's Word shows us His heart and His way, as well as our heart and our way!

- Our faith grows as we listen, read & discuss the Word: Romans 10:17, *faith comes from hearing the message...*

Hebrews 4:14-16, ¹⁴ ...*since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

#5 Faith perseveres: only with mercy, grace & help of God

- The only way we are able to “*hold firmly to the faith*” (4:14) is “*since we have a great high priest*” (4:14)
- *If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.* - 2 Timothy 2:13
- “*empathize with our weaknesses*” (4:15) = Jesus understands our situation. He’s been there.
- “*with confidence*” (4:16) means we can: pray constantly, about anything, trusting that God hears, without using super religious words, and without a reservation.
- There is only benefit in coming to Jesus in prayer:
 - We obtain mercy (this is not getting what we deserve).
 - We find grace (this is getting what we don’t deserve).
- Philippians 1:6, *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...*