

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 1ST–2ND, 2025 // HEBREWS

BETTER THAN MOSES (HEBREWS 3:1–6) “THEREFORE...” (V. 1)

These Believers are called holy brothers and sisters who share in a heavenly calling. Even in difficulty and trial, in Christ, this is who we are!

- Because Jesus is our merciful, faithful high priest who can help us in our temptation and weakness, we are to “consider” Him.
- To “consider” is to think about, understand, mediate on, or look at closely as an example.

“...CONSIDER JESUS, THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST...”

Jesus, in some ways, is God's ultimate Apostle—an ambassador who represents the One from whom they were sent.

- We are to consider Jesus as God's ambassador and messenger.
- Jesus is our High Priest: we are to consider that God has provided a mediator who stands in our place to make atonement for our sin.

“...OF OUR CONFESSION...”

To “confess” in our day and age often means to own up to doing something wrong.

- Biblically, to “confess” simply means to own up publicly to believing in the Christian message and belonging to the Christian community.
- Christianity is a confession that is made both with our mouths and with our lives (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9). Both matter greatly.

Just as Moses was faithful in being God's sent representative and standing as a mediator between God and Israel, so Jesus was also faithful (v. 2).

- Moses was considered by 1st-century rabbis to be the greatest man who ever lived (Deuteronomy 34:10) because of his faithfulness and the glory that Moses received from God (Exodus 34:29–35; Numbers 12:6–8; 16).

Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses (v. 3).

- Moses was a faithful servant of God's household (v. 5), but Jesus was the one who built the house (v. 4)!
- In other words, Moses served the family and the people of God faithfully, but Jesus, as the Son of God, was the creator of the household and He completed His work perfectly.

God the Father bestowed upon Jesus the Son far more glory than He did Moses (“A cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!’” Mark 9:7).

- Christ was faithful as a Son over the household of God (v. 6), and we who have confessed Him as Lord are that household.

“...IF WE HOLD ON...” (V. 6)

We will see several times throughout Hebrews a very important spiritual reality:

- Only those who hold on and persevere in faith will be saved, and all who have genuine faith will persevere.
- Our works don't save us. Only Christ saves us. We must hold on to our confidence and hope in Christ throughout our lives.

This does not mean we enter God's household by faith but then stay in it by works.

- We enter God's Kingdom by a faith in Jesus that will persevere and never fail, but we must continue in that faith.
- Our “boast,” “confidence,” and “hope” are not in ourselves, but in Christ, the One we must continually hold on to throughout the duration of our lives.

DON'T HARDEN YOUR HEARTS (HEBREWS 3:7–11)

Psalms 95:7–11 speaks of ancient Israel's rebellion against God in the wilderness, despite all the amazing signs, wonders, and mighty works God had performed on their behalf.

- Think about all Israel had witnessed from God: the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Seas, God's supernatural provision and protection.
- Yet, despite all the good they'd received from God, they rebelled and hardened their hearts.

Vs. 7–11 quote Psalm 95 as a way of comparing Israel to this group of Believers.

- Just like ancient Israel had witnessed God's glory, faithfulness, provision, and work, so too these Believers had witnessed it through Jesus.
- And just like ancient Israel, the Hebrews were turning away from God's voice and commands to return to their “slavery” (to the law, traditions, and sacrificial system of Judaism).

“...THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS: TODAY, IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE...”

Notice, the Holy Spirit speaks through the quoted Scripture in present tense, not past tense?

- According to God, the time of decision to get right with God is not yesterday or tomorrow, it is TODAY.
- Why? Because yesterday is gone, and you are not promised tomorrow.
- Are you right with God today?

“...DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION.”

God gave Israel Moses, and He expected Israel to obey, trust, and follow Moses as their appointed leader (but Israel rebelled against Moses).

- God has given us Jesus, and He expects us to obey, trust, and follow Jesus as God's Messiah.
- In the Bible, a “hardened heart” is a heart that is unresponsive, unfeeling, and unmoved, especially in regard to God and His truth.

A hardened heart is unresponsive to God's Word, God's work, and is unfeeling towards God's presence and towards God's people.

- How is a heart hardened? It is through rejection of God's Lordship (Exodus 7:13–22).
- Ultimately, pride and a refusal to surrender (let God be in charge and lead) cause our hearts to be hardened.
- What is at stake when we harden our hearts?

THE WRATH OF GOD (V. 11A)

Even though Israel had seen God's mighty works for forty years, they tested and tried God because of their unbelieving, hardened hearts.

- Because of their unbelief in rebelling and rejecting Moses as God's appointed leader, the people of Israel received judgment from God.
- If we reject Jesus as God's appointed leader (Messiah), we will face God's wrath.

A FAILURE TO ENTER THE “REST” OF GOD (V. 11B)

The promised land of Canaan is often used as a prototype for an ultimate land of promise for the people of God—a new creation where we will live together with God in restful, peaceful, perfection forever.

- If we harden our hearts and turn away from God's Messiah, Jesus, in rebellion and unbelief, we will not enter this place of rest.

HOLD FIRMLY TO THE END (HEBREWS 3:12–19)

In recent years, a trending term on Twitter/TikTok has been “deconstruction.”

- Deconstruction is a phenomenon where people unpack, rethink, and examine their belief systems.
- Sometimes this results in a much stronger faith, as people disentangle and decipher the difference between what they were taught about God and what is the truth of God's Word.

But sometimes, this leads to people abandoning and dropping their faith in Jesus altogether.

- While “deconstruction” might lead someone to adopt a very liberal, secular, and unbiblical version of Christianity, “deconversion” is, for many people, the last stop on the ride.
- The process usually isn't a quick one. It is a slow, steady questioning of God's truth that leads someone to unbelief and rebellion.

“WATCH OUT...[FOR] AN EVIL, UNBELIEVING HEART...” (V. 12A)

Proverbs tells us to guard our hearts (Pr. 4:23) because our hearts drive our actions and influence our thinking and behavior.

- Our hearts can either lead us down a path of righteousness or a path of destruction.
- Our hearts are susceptible to sinful thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. We must be mindful of what is going on in our hearts and what we allow in.

“...THAT TURNS AWAY FROM THE LIVING GOD.” (V. 12B)

Wrestling through doubts and struggling in our obedience to God are not the same as hardening our hearts to a place of evil and unbelief.

- When pride and a refusal to listen and obey God harden our hearts, the ultimate end to that hardening if we don't repent is a turning “away from the living God.” We're to keep close watch on our hearts and spiritual lives every day!

HOW DO WE PREVENT OUR HEARTS FROM BEING HARDENED, EVIL, AND UNBELIEVING? (V. 13)

Daily encouragement from Christian community: we need other Believers in our lives who love us, pray for us, and speak truth to us as we live out our faith (church attendance and discipleship in Life Groups).

- Confession, repentance, and accountability; sin is deceitful, and it hardens, so root it out quickly.

Many use the doctrine “once saved, always saved” to assure them of salvation even as they're rebelling against God in unbelief and sin.

- Romans 11:22 and vs. 12–14 make clear to us that “once truly saved, forever following” is a clearer description of what the Bible says about eternal security. The evidence of saving faith is not the intensity of emotion at the beginning, but the endurance of that faith over time!

Beginning the Christian life is a glorious experience: but simply beginning it is not sufficient to assure its completion.

- We must “hold firmly until the end” and continue in our commitment to Christ to become participants in Him and in the great reward He has for us (v. 14).
- “The end of a matter is better than its beginning...” (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

Sometimes, we can think that our familiarity with and closeness to religion and Christian spirituality make us exempt from hardening our hearts and falling away into unbelief.

- Other times, we think we are the exception to the rule, and we are not the ones who are ever in danger of spiritual peril.
- But the writer of Hebrews asks, “who heard and rebelled” in the Exodus story? (v. 16).

The ones who rebelled against God and hardened their hearts in unbelief were the ones who saw God's wonders and heard God's message but didn't want to obey and chose sin and rebellion instead (vs. 17–18).

- This rebellion was total—almost everyone from this generation completely rebelled and was judged by God.
- You and I are not exceptions to the rule.

It was the unbelief of the people that prohibited them from entering the promised land (v. 19).

- Their unbelief was displayed by their disobedience and rebellion. Hebrews is less concerned with us just having an intellectual grasp of God and His truth than what we do with it.
- In other words, what we believe about God and His Word will lead us to moral change.
- Disobedience is a visible display of unbelief!

“TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH. EXAMINE YOURSELVES...” (2 COR. 13:5)

If we truly love the Lord, fear God, and know the magnitude of eternity, we should never grow beyond the need for serious and regular self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28; Galatians 6:4).

- Watching out and keeping an eye on our hearts does not mean we can't have an assurance of salvation, but it must be a true assurance.

THE TESTS OF AUTHENTICITY.

1. A true belief about the person, work, and identity of Jesus (1 John 2:22–23).
2. The absence of habitual, willful, and unrepentant sin (1 John 3:4–10).
3. The absence of hatred towards others and a genuine love for God's people (1 John 3:15).
4. The willingness to love in deed and in truth, not just talk (1 John 3:17–18).

I DIDN'T PASS...NOW WHAT?

- Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart and rebel. Humble yourself and repent of your sin. Trust in, believe, and follow Jesus!
- Consider Jesus. Look how much He has done for you and how much He loves you!
- He is worthy of your obedience, your allegiance, and your total and complete commitment.

I'M PASSING NOW, BUT DON'T WANT TO FLUNK LATER—HELP!

- Hold on to, hope in, be confident in, and boast in Jesus. He was faithful in saving you, and He will be faithful in keeping you (John 10:27–29).
- Just keep trusting, believing, following, and leaning into His strength to persevere (John 15:5).
- Stay in Christian community, keep your heart soft, and stay humble/repentant.