

Pentecost 21

October 18, 2015

Hebrews 3:1-6

Christ is Faithful as the Son Over God's House

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Dearly loved by God in Christ Jesus,

We know someone built this building. It did not just pop up out of the ground overnight like a mushroom from dark moist soil. Someone built it by design and with wisdom and skill. We can say this about the houses we live in. We can say the same thing about the church, the communion of saints.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote about this, "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." We may apply those words correctly to the Creation. The writer is referring directly to God's living house, the church, which he builds from living stones, believers, through the gospel.

The church has a builder, Jesus Christ, who is "the Son over God's house." This house also had a faithful servant in the building. That servant was Moses. Both are great but Jesus is greater.

Let's look at that. **Christ is Faithful as the Son Over God's House.** Moses was a faithful servant in that house. We are his house.

The writer to the Hebrews compares Moses and Christ. Moses was "faithful as a servant in all God's house" but he was not God's Son. "Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses" because Jesus is God's Son and the builder of the house, the church.

Moses' work was the law. Through Moses, The LORD God revealed his holy will to Israel in the law with its ceremonial, civil and moral elements. This law distinguished God's people as unique among the heathen nations. The Civil Law protected them. The Ceremonial Law pointed ahead to the Messiah. The Moral Law showed them their sins, curbed their sinful natures and guided their living for God.

For centuries Moses the servant showed the Jews God. They had to go to God and have God come to them through the human priests. They had to listen to the men God called and sent out as his spokesmen, the prophets. All of this was preparatory. In Galatians, Paul compared the Old Testament believer under the law to the young heir of the entire estate, "He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father."[4:2]

Now things were different. The Son, Jesus Christ, greater than Moses, had come. Jesus is the One the Father sent out to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God as the perfect apostle. He is the perfect priest who offered the one time perfect sacrifice for sin after he fulfilled the old covenant of the law. Time for the Hebrew Christians to leave Moses and continue to turn to Christ.

Jesus Christ was not a mere servant like Moses, although Moses was a great servant. Jesus is the Son of God who builds the house of the church with the good news of forgiveness through him. It had been fine for them to honor Moses and to continue to think highly of his work. Yet no longer were the Hebrew Christians to fix their thoughts on Moses. Rather, the writer exhorts, "Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house."

The writer calls us to fix our thoughts not on Moses and the law but on Christ and the good news that Jesus has ransomed us from the damnation our daily sins deserve. Here is how we

hold to our courage and hope. If my thoughts go to trying to earn salvation by the law there will be only fear and hopelessness. With my thoughts fixed on Jesus, the high priest who is my only Mediator with God, courage and hope well up within my heart like fresh water fills a spring.

Jesus was faithful in the work to which his Father appointed him; the work of being lifted up on the cross so that you and I could stand up under our crosses. Christ was appointed to humility so you and I are exalted. Christ is the apostle and high priest through whom we have direct access to the Father and receive the revelation of God's Word. We are like the children who come of age and no longer must live under a trustee. We take over our inheritance and use it to the glory of our Father who endowed it to us.

Every building consists of building materials. Those materials did not just suddenly appear out of thin air. Someone made them. All those parts lying on the ground do not over a period of time assemble themselves.

The letter to the Hebrew Christians was intended to take the Hebrew Christians out of the old covenant under Moses and into the new covenant under Christ. This was no small change. It was the change from being a child under the firm tutelage of a servant of the household to the freedom of being a child in the family. Christ made this change possible by fulfilling the old covenant of the law and suffering its punishment for disobedience.

God the Holy Spirit has called us with them to be the building materials of the church. We are those living stones "if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory." We are God's building blocks so long as we have faith in Jesus Christ. This house is the family of saints. God's house had a faithful servant for many years. That servant was Moses. God's house has God's Son, Jesus, ruling over it.

God put us together. He recreated us by the Holy Spirit through the power of Christ into raw materials suitable for his construction. Peter calls us "living stones built into a spiritual house." [1 Peter 2:5]

Moses had a special time and task to prepare God's house for the revelation of "what would be spoken by God in the future." For that we continue to honor him and hold his work in high regard. That future came to pass in Jesus Christ. He is the Son and builder who saves us. For that reason we hold Jesus in higher regard and honor him above all things as God our Savior. Amen.

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