

Where Is Your Confidence?

Hebrews 3:1-6

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Randy Lovelace

If you have your Bibles, you can turn there. If not, we have it provided for you on the screens before you that we have the passage, Hebrews 3:1-6. This is the “therefore” section of what he’s just said. He has spent the first two chapters comparing Jesus to the prophets and to angels. He now turns to do another comparison. Now he turns to give a comparison to those who would be horizontal—the horizontal relationships of Moses and other human beings, but particularly Moses. And it is his desire as he’s preaching to these converted Jews that he addresses the question of, “What about Moses?” But his ultimate question is, “What is your confidence?” as you will see at the end of verse 6, though not formed as a question. It is nonetheless a question.

Who is or what is your confidence? And then as the rest of the chapter unfolds, he will continue to unpack the comparison, but warn them against the deceitfulness of sin. It is a reality that we will deal with when those verses come, but it is nonetheless the reality that what we understand to be our confidence will lead us either to greater trust in who Christ is or it will lead us away. And this is the kind of situation and context that his hearers were experiencing. They were experiencing stress and persecution. And so their confidence in who Christ is and the promises of God was waning. And so ultimately the question becomes, “Well, who else are you going to turn to?” And so here he addresses Moses. Hear now God’s Word, Hebrews 3:1-6.

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.
[ESV]

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please, pray with me again.

Now we ask you, O Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit through this, your Word, open our eyes that we might see the beauty of Christ, who is worthy of our confidence. But will you also help uncover where we have placed our confidence in things and in people who lead us not to greater confidence in Christ but to greater confidence in ourselves or in someone else or in something else? Lord, help us to see with wisdom that those things will lead to nothing, but that only a proper confidence, a confidence in Christ, will lead to a life that we were designed to live—a life that is full of joy. Maybe not happiness, but joy. Purpose, but maybe not success. Mission, but maybe not self-realization. Lord, help us to seek a confidence in Christ as the builder of the house, that we will find a house that is worthy to live in. Help us, we pray. And help the teacher. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

You will see in your outline the three points: take me to your leader; the primacy of Moses; the superiority of Christ. Take me to your leader. Those of you who are science-fiction buffs may know that this is a catchphrase that has been around for several decades. It originated as a science-fiction cartoon. It was said by an extraterrestrial alien who landed on earth. In fact, it was originally appeared, they believe, in the 1953 cartoon by Alex Graham in the *New Yorker* magazine. The cartoon depicted two aliens coming off a spaceship telling a horse, “Kindly take us to your president.” And from there that turned into

“Take me to your leader” and has become sort of a cultural phrase through several editions of books and movies. Those of you who are Luke Skywalker fans—Luke Skywalker in *The Shadows of Mindor*, 2008, says, “If it’s not too much of a cliché, take me to your leader. If it is too much of a cliché, take me anyway.” Or even Jodie Foster in the movie *Contact*. She says, “If you want to do something for me,” she said, and unexpectedly laughed, “I want,” as she put her hand over her mouth and said with a straight face, “I want you to take me to your leader.”

We love leaders. We are addicted to leadership. It’s one of the fastest growing segments of the one bookstore we have left. Business schools continue to produce PhDs and MBAs who are focusing on leadership. One of the things that has become clear is that leadership is more than just who the leader is and their character, whatever he or she may do in whatever field they may conduct their leadership—it’s not always just about the leader. It’s also about the follower. Because oftentimes, it’s not so much what kind of leader a man or woman may be. It’s what kind of leader the follower makes them.

Psychologists for years have studied the reality that followers often do some form of transference onto their leader. So in the case of stress, if followers are experiencing stress and anxiety, that is often transferred to the leader that they have. Because they believe that the stress and anxiety that they are experiencing in their circumstances is somehow the result of a failure of the leadership that they are conducting. But the opposite is true—that when things are going really well, we often want to transfer how we’re feeling about how we’re doing so well. And we transfer it to whatever leader we happen to be engaging with.

We love the idea of leaders. We want to go to gurus. We want to find some life hack that will give us the five steps to a greater you. But then we come to our present day that’s full of this tension between an addiction to leadership and leaders on the one hand. But we’re also tearing leaders down. We’ve become cynical of leadership. So much so, it shows up in a rather ridiculous, over-repeated Diet Coke commercial where this perfectly fine human being—she comes out on the sidewalk with a skinny Diet Coke can, and she tells me, “You do you. If you want a Diet Coke, have a Diet Coke.” And I think to myself, “Since when was that a problem? Who told me I can’t do a Diet Coke?” But no, it’s bound up in this idea—you do you. You’re the leader of you.

Now, I don’t want to do too much with Diet Coke. I mean, they’re selling a product. But they’re tapping into a spirit of the age. The spirit of the age is this: we love leaders, and we want to follow them, only insofar as it’s convenient with our purposes, and then we will follow and depend on ourselves. It’s like a game. We are no smarter, we are no wiser, we are no more advanced than the hearers of this sermon to these converted Jews. They were experiencing stress, persecution, and anxiety. They had transferred it to whether they could trust Jesus Christ, whom they had confessed to follow. And now they were losing confidence in that leadership, and they’re looking. Who will be our next leader? Where do we need to go? This is not a Bible issue. This is a human issue. And the Bible understands human nature. We are no wiser and no more advanced than Israel was when Moses was here. Because they believed that they could follow him until it didn’t make sense anymore. And they transferred their confidence from Moses to something and to someone else.

We want to say, “Take me to your leader,” so long as that leader helps us realize who we want to be. But God is not about trying to convince us that we’re just really great. Because it’s not about us. It is about him. And this preacher of Hebrews has been going on about this comparison between the prophets and the angels. And now he looks and he says to them, “Okay. Now you have had confidence in Moses. Let’s deal with that.” And so we have the primacy of Moses. In these verses, you will see in verses 1 through 2 what he declares about Moses. And then before I get to the superiority of Christ, I’m going to build a bridge. I’m going to take a parenthetical pause and build why all of this is important, even for us.

The primacy of Moses. You see in verse 2, it says, “just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house.” And then in verse 5, “Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the

things that were to be spoken later.” Now, this word that is translated “faithful” is *pistos* from the Hebrew word which can be translated in two ways and actually has them together—this idea of appointment to and faithfulness in. In speaking of Moses, we must make absolutely clear that the writer of Hebrews is not tearing down Moses. Rather, he’s demonstrating why Moses was primary for the people of God in the time that God raised him up. And he demonstrates this not by focusing on Moses’s weaknesses and his seasons of faithlessness—because he surely had them. But rather, he focuses on what was good about Moses. And in so doing, he talks about this idea that he was faithful.

And this comes directly, actually, from Numbers 12 when God speaks of Moses as being the one to whom the Lord says, “This is my servant.” In Numbers 12 beginning in verse 7, he says this, “Not so with my servant Moses.” This is the Lord speaking. “He is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?’ And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed.” Moses was so primary to God’s appointment and faithfulness to lead his people into the promised land that he said, “Do you not realize how special Moses is, and you do not fear to speak against him? Because if you do, I will judge you in anger.” He was primary.

What is important is to suggest that the Bible clearly says while Moses was primary, while he was faithful in, while he was appointed to—all Moses could do was reflect God’s glory. All he could do is point to God’s glory. Because, indeed, it was Moses who was sent and appointed to speak to Pharaoh. It was Moses who was called to lead the people of God across the Red Sea. It was Moses who was called to lead the people of God in the wilderness wanderings. And it was Moses, as Wayne said earlier, who was commanded by God to come up Mount Sinai, receive the law, and take it back to the people. But when he took it back to the people, all Moses had seen was the end of the robe of the presence of God, and his face radiated with glory—so much so that the people of God, the Bible tells us, had to turn their faces from him, because it was too bright. As primary as he was, all he could do was reflect the glory and point to it. He was never, ever meant to be the source of glory.

And this is the metaphor that the Hebrew writer brings up—this idea of glory. But the way he uses the glory is this idea that Moses was a servant in God’s house. Primary, yes, but a servant. He’s not the builder. Jesus is the builder of God’s house. So as a servant of God’s house, the problem wasn’t that Moses was caught up in thinking that, hey, he’s the most important thing. He had moments where he depended on himself, absolutely. But Moses was under no delusion [in] that the Lord had promised to send someone greater. In fact, we hear this in Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 15 and following. This is what Moses says:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ 17 And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’ [Deuteronomy 18:15-18]

Now, as we’ve talked about before, Biblical prophecy has two aspects to it: a short-term fulfillment and a long-term fulfillment. This is talking about two periods. The first period would be the prophets who would come—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. But they themselves would point beyond themselves. Go and read those books. They point to a greater prophet who would come. But these verses also refer to—these very verses refer not only to those prophets but also the Prophet who is Christ who would come. Now, what’s important is because those verses talk about how you discern whether a prophecy should be believed. Because if it is not fulfilled and demonstrated to be fulfilled, then the one who uttered the words ought to lose his life. So Moses knew exactly what he was doing. That isn’t to suggest that Moses would call on God

by his incarnate name “Jesus.” But he nonetheless knew that his time was finite and that he was pointing to a greater glory that was to come.

Okay, parenthesis. What is very important for us to get right at this moment in the Book of Hebrews—if we don’t get it right, we believe that what the preacher of Hebrews is doing is comparing the period of Jesus Christ as being superior over the period of the time of Moses. That is not what he’s doing. He’s comparing two people, Moses and Jesus. Why do we know this? Because if we say that he’s comparing the period of Jesus over against the period of Moses, then we have ourselves two Bibles. We have an Old Testament God, and we have a New Testament God. That is not what the preacher of Hebrews is doing. Why? We know this. Because why? He refers to a house. We live in the same house as the true church of the Israelites who had faith in the Lord. They were saved by grace through faith. We are saved by grace through faith. Though they did not fully see that it would be Jesus the Christ come incarnate, they nonetheless believed by faith that Moses was a servant in the house that God was building, and Jesus was the builder. He’s comparing two people.

Now, it’s unfortunate that our Bibles have the Old Testament and the New Testament. That is, the labels. The Bible doesn’t think of itself as Old Testament and New Testament. It thinks of itself and refers to itself as the Word of God. We’ve put those labels there that then wrongfully lead us down the path that somehow God saved by works in doing in the Old and not by grace. But in the New Testament, that’s all about grace, and so forth. But that’s not the case. It has always been by God’s mercy and grace. And so what he’s comparing is the primacy of Moses, as wonderful as it was and as great of a leader as he was and the important moments of Israel’s life as they were—he was merely a servant to point to the one who would come.

Now, we know this to be the case because of Jesus’s own words. Jesus said this in Luke chapter 24. Luke chapter 24 verse 27 says the following: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Jesus began with Moses and demonstrated how Moses pointed to him and worked his way through it. Then in John chapter 5, he says these words beginning in verse 44. This is Jesus speaking to those who are hearing. He says:

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”
[John 5:44-46]

Jesus is saying that as Moses wrote, as Moses prophesied, as Moses lived, the primacy of Moses was to point the people of God to the redemption of God realized in Jesus Christ. And so the writer of Hebrews gives the comparison. Moses was the servant. Jesus is superior.

You hear it as he says in verse 1, “Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him.” This word “consider” doesn’t mean that we just think on him. It’s not an intellectual thing, merely. The biblical idea of “consider” is a deep reflection, a deep meditation on who Jesus Christ is. And then he uses these phrases “apostle and high priest.” He uses these two offices to be synonymous with one another to point to the reality that though as Moses served as a representative between God and man, the Israelites, Jesus, too, as an apostle and high priest, is the superior mediator between God and man.

And this is important for us to understand from the Scriptures—that from the beginning—and we will unpack this in greater ways as we go along in the Book of Hebrews, but I want to state this, this very moment, for the sake of your hearts and for your worship. Jesus did not merely become mediator at his incarnation. Jesus was the same yesterday, today, and forever. What do I mean? What I mean is this. And I

take this from one of my professors, who says this regarding—talking about these verses. And he talked about who Christ is. He says the following.

It was Christ who led the people of God out of Egypt through the wilderness. It was Christ who talked to Moses in the tent of meeting. And later, it was Christ who was in the tabernacle. It was Christ's glory that shown on Moses's face when he came out. It was the glory of Jesus Christ that Isaiah saw when he was given the vision of God high and lifted up in the temple in the year King Uzziah died. I have told you before, the general impression of the New Testament is that the person of the Godhead with whom God's people had to do in ancient times was God the Son, though in his pre-incarnate form. And though his name was not yet given, Jesus. But nonetheless, it was he whom they saw and followed. It was he whose glory shown forth. It was the Son of God from beginning to end who is the mediator between God and man. This is the assumption of the preacher of Hebrews, and it ought to be our assumption.

Jesus is superior, because he's been building the house. Those servants for a while were leading the people of God. But when Christ came in his incarnate nature, taking on human flesh, the builder of the house showed up at the address. And his broad question is, as the one who is counted worthy of more glory than Moses because he is the source of glory, worthy of more glory because he's the builder of the house, because he's the one through whom God has created all things—it is Christ who comes as the faithful one over God's house and says to these the hearers of this sermon and to this sermon: where is your confidence? Is it in Christ Jesus, our Lord? Is your confidence in Christ Jesus on a Tuesday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. when you have to have a meeting with someone in your office or in your neighborhood, that Christ may shine through you and your words, your actions, your motivations, and your character? God and Christ is worthy of our trust in the minutiae of our lives as he is in the great and difficult things of our lives.

But let me be clear—why is Jesus worthy of our confidence? It is not because he promises to make our lives happy. Because they often will not be. Jesus is worthy of our confidence because he will make all things go well? They don't go well, do they, Christian? The rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous. Following Jesus will not make you more ethical or more moral. Do you hear me? Let me be clear. Being a Christian doesn't mean that you're somehow inherently more moralistic than anybody else. But what does confidence in Jesus do? It makes us new. It makes us realize this—that my sin comes into more visibility as I follow Jesus. And as it does, so does his grace that covers my sin. As I follow Jesus, my confidence is no longer in the circumstantial areas of my life to bring happiness. No, I have a deeper joy yet—a deeper joy that allows me to look with hope in the face of death and suffering and unhappiness and broken relationships that this life is full of. My body is broken. Our bodies are broken. Our relationships are broken. Our jobs are broken. Our nation is broken. Our world is broken. Confidence in Jesus doesn't change that. What it changes is that he is present, and his forgiveness and grace will sustain us. That is worthy of our confidence. C.S. Lewis wrote these words in his book *God in the Dock*. He says:

While it lasts, the religion of worshipping oneself is the best. I have an elderly acquaintance of about eighty, who has lived a life of unbroken selfishness and self-admiration from the earliest years, and is, more or less, I regret to say, one of the happiest men I know. From the moral point of view it is very difficult! I am not approaching the question from that angle. As you perhaps know, I haven't always been a Christian. I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity.

Confidence in Jesus will not make us comfortable, but we are loved. Confidence does not make us successful, but we are covered. Confidence in Jesus does not mean the lack of suffering, but yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, there you will be with me always. For our King had a cross. And his death and his blood is our confidence. May the Lord give you grace. May he give you this

confidence. May he give you mercy. May he show you his love as he invites us to this table, as we place our confidence again in the work of Christ. Let's pray.

Now, Heavenly Father, we ask that you would prepare us for this supper, that we would worship you with our hearts and our minds, that you would receive us as those who trust in Christ alone. May you feed us, encourage us, strengthen us, and give us a confidence in Christ alone. It is in his name we pray. Amen.