

Hebrews 3:1-6

Set Your Mind on Jesus

3.28.2021

Introduction: I don't currently get the hiccups much. But at one point in my life, for whatever reason, I did. Who really knows why one gets the hiccups? Anyway, you of course have heard of the various pains that people put themselves through to try to rid themselves of the hiccups: drinking water upside down, having someone scare you, holding your breath. During my college years, one time I got the hiccups, and I thought, "I wonder if the thickness of something like peanut butter could affect the hiccups and make them go away?" I do not promise this will work for anyone else. But, it worked for me. And then next time I got hiccups, it worked again. Then (this is not a joke), one time I got the hiccups and went to the cupboard, took out the peanut butter, opened it, and realized, "Wait a second...I don't have the hiccups anymore." A couple times later, I was walking towards the cupboard, and they went away again. (No Joke!) And at least one time (though I think it was multiple times), I just sat where I was, thought of peanut butter, and they went away. Some of you are whispering under your breath right now...the placebo effect. When this experience happened to me, I was struck by a reality...our minds are incredibly powerful. Interestingly, biblical writers know this to be the case. Have you ever noticed how often biblical writers tell us to set our minds somewhere?

- "Set your *minds* on things above, not on the earth" (Col 3:2)
- "Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely...*think* on these things" (Phil 4:8)
- "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your *mind*..." (Rom 12)
- "Have this *mind* among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus..." (Phil 2:5)

Why this emphasis on the mind? Because where we set our minds has great affect on our affections, our emotions, and our actions. It can greatly help us or greatly hurt us in our faithfulness to God.

Pre-application: Where did your mind go when you were discouraged this past week? When you got interrupted, when your plans changed, when your schedule blew up, what did you believe in that moment to be true? Where did you set your mind? How are you dealing with trials and temptations in your life right now? What do you believe will bring you true and lasting joy? ***Our text today is going to encourage us to set our minds on the one who has given us every reason to trust him and to believe that true joy, comfort, satisfaction, and salvation is found in him.***

Text (Heb 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."

Consider Jesus: Out of all six of these verses, there is just one command given, and it is a command that guides and informs this entire paragraph and really highlights the theme of this entire sermon series (“Hold Fast to Christ”): the command comes in v.1, and is this: “consider Jesus.”

Explanation: Let’s not forget the verses that came just before this (as I often like to say, chapter breaks are not original AND chapter 3 begins with the word “Therefore”). 2:14-18 highlight Jesus humility and work of salvation on our behalf (vv.17-18):

“Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Then we read in 3:1: “Therefore, holy brothers...consider Jesus.” This word “consider” means to think about, ponder, meditate on (the NIV says, “fix your thoughts on Jesus”). The writer of Hebrews will use this word one more time in Hebrews 10 when he says, “Let us *consider* how to stir up one another to love and good works...” So, based on everything that we know to be true about Jesus (that we just read), fix your thoughts on *him*. Consider *him*. Meditate on who he is and what he has done.

Application: Not to get too far ahead of myself, but I can hardly leave this point without urging us to take this to heart. Brothers and sisters, meditate on Jesus, who he is and what he has done. The gospel truth of Jesus person and work are words that we should be speaking to ourselves daily. ***God’s grace and mercy to us in the person of Jesus should inform our anxieties and discouragements, confront our temptations, challenge our guilt and despair, and fuel our daily pursuit of God and obedience to his mission.*** The gospel of Jesus is not something to be believed and then set aside. It is something to be considered, to be rehearsed, to be spoken to ourselves (and to one another) daily, letting in inform and influence our thoughts, emotions, words, and actions. And that’s what the writer of Hebrews does in the next several verses. He helps us consider Jesus.

Transition: Specifically, the rest of these verses tell us more about *WHY* we should set our minds on Jesus, both in terms of who Jesus is and what he’s done AND in terms of the benefit we derive from fixing our minds on him. The first reason we have to set our minds on Jesus is...

1. Because of the privilege we enjoy in Him (1a)

3:1 “Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus...”

Explanation: Sometimes when we read Scripture, it’s easy to skip over certain words that possibly have become too ordinary to us. The beginning of verse 1 can be that way. “Therefore, holy brothers...” But these two words in themselves give us endless reason to fix our thoughts on Jesus.

Brothers – First, we are called brothers and sisters. As the end of Hebrews 2 says, through faith in Jesus’ perfect life and sacrificial, substitutionary death on our behalf, we

become Jesus' brothers and sisters. We become God's family. Since we talked about this last week I won't say much more about it, but think of the significance of the all-powerful, sovereign, good, wise God being your Father. You are not (and will never be) forgotten or ignored. You are a brother of Jesus, a precious son or daughter of God. How could that truth help you in the trials you are facing right now?

And further, we're brothers and sisters to one another. God in his love has placed us in a new spiritual family where we care about each other like brothers and sisters. Virtually all of us are carrying some kind of burdens at any given time. You are not meant to bear them alone. (This command—"consider Jesus"—is a plural command.) God wants your brothers and sisters to bear your burdens with you. This is a gift from God to you, as a part of God's family. ***Fix your thoughts on Jesus who has placed you in His/God's family.***

Holy – But we're not just called brothers, we're called HOLY brothers. Christians are often accused of thinking that they are better than everyone else. Unfortunately, sometimes professing Christians act this way. And the word "holy" is often used to slander Christians who act as if they are "holier" than everyone else. But this kind of pride should not be the attitude of any Christian. (***Gospel presentation***) Doesn't the gospel teach us something different? The gospel tells us that we are not brought into God's family because of how holy we are or have become. We are brought into God's family by his mercy, in spite of how UNHOLY we are. If you are here and are not a Christian, please do not leave here thinking that if you try hard enough then God might end up being pleased with you. Rather, look to Jesus who lived a perfectly holy life on this earth in our place and then died and rose again to take the punishment for our unholiness. It is only by faith in Jesus that we are cleansed from our sins and counted holy. ***So fix your thoughts on Jesus who by his life/death/resurrection has made you holy.***

Finally, the writer of Hebrews addresses the believing readers as "you who share in a heavenly calling." Put simply, Jesus' work on our behalf transforms our lives from futile to purposeful, from temporary to eternal. Because of his work, we know that this life is not all there is. Paul says in Phil 3:20-21...

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

Application: Regardless of what job you work or how much money you make. Regardless of how significant you might be in the eyes of others or how talented you are in any given area. In Jesus you share a heavenly calling. It is this heavenly calling that makes our earthly days significant. We are worshipers, bringing God glory and pointing others to his glory through normal, everyday things like the integrity of our work or the serving of our neighbors. So, whether you're struggling with your job or trying to find motivation to do another load of

laundry or facing the final years of your life, ***set your mind on Jesus in whom you share in a heavenly calling.***

Transition: A few, small words, but packed with eternal significance. Take these few, small words with you this week. Meditate on them, and let them drive you to the joy of what Jesus has done for you. The next reason we are given to consider Jesus is...

2. Because of the faithfulness He has displayed (1b-2)

Explanation: Right after we read the words “consider Jesus” in v.1, we’re immediately given more reasons to fix our eyes on him.

“Therefore...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.”

Apostle – Interestingly, Jesus is first here called an apostle. Maybe that strikes you as strange. Why would Jesus be called an apostle? Most often we probably think of the word “apostle” in terms of the office: those who were called to be apostles of Jesus. But the word apostle itself simply means “sent one.” And that is who Jesus is: a sent one. Jesus was appointed by God and sent to be the visible Word of God on the earth. Jesus was sent for a particular purpose.

John 6:38 – “I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who *sent* me.”

And Jesus was completely faithful in everything he was given to do. Sometime just take a few minutes and meditate on the perfect faithfulness of Jesus on this earth. Sin is so much a part of our lives that it’s almost hard to even imagine what it would be like to always be perfectly kind in every interaction, to never (even in his thoughts) slander another person, to never (even as a child) grumble and complain. And it’s not as if Jesus was never tempted. The truth is, Jesus experienced temptation to a degree that we never will because he never gave into temptation. He fought every single temptation to the end...and now helps us when we are tempted (Heb 2:18). ***So, fix your eyes on the one who is (Heb 1:3) “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.” If you want to know God, look to Jesus.***

High Priest – But amazingly (and this is such a beautiful thought), Jesus isn’t just the exact representation of God to us, he is also “the high priest of our confession” (v.1b). In other words, Jesus is OUR advocate before God the Father. Jesus is our high priest. Later chapters of Hebrews will unpack this further, but right now, I think we need to see the beauty of these two words set next to each other: apostle and high priest. Jesus is the apostle, the one sent from God to perfectly show us who God is, and he is our high priest, the one who perfectly represents us before God. The perfect mediator between God and man.

“I need no other argument, I need no other plea; it is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me.”

“When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see him there who made an end to all my sin.”

“Hallelujah! All I have is Christ!”

Application: Jesus is the high priest of our confession. Brothers and sisters, don't set your hope on anything or anyone else. Don't respond to your sin by trying to make up for it yourself by trying to hide it. Don't ride on the rollercoaster of despair in trying to earn God's favor on your own. Abandon your own righteousness. Confess your sin and run to the high priest of your confession. ***Set your mind on Jesus, God's perfect communication of himself to you and your perfect advocate before God.***

Transition: If there's a simple truth for us about God's Word here at the beginning of this chapter, it's not to rush past familiar words. Stop, consider, meditate. And then rejoice and worship. And if all this wasn't enough, the writer of Hebrews is now going to compare Jesus to one of the most faithful leaders of God's people to ever live...and come away saying there's no comparison. So, third, we should set our minds on Jesus...

3. Because of the high position He holds (3-6a)

“3 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. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.”

Explanation: It's possible that after reading verses like this, we might think, “Well, duh, of course Jesus is better than Moses. He's our Savior.” But we need to remember that this was being written to Jewish Christians who would have known the Old Testament very well and held Moses in very high regard. Let me just help give a brief biography of Moses to maybe help raise the significance of Moses in our mind:

- Moses' life begins with a miraculous rescue by God after Pharaoh commanded that “every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live” (Exod 1:22). In a bit of sovereign irony, Moses is placed in a basket in the Nile and rescued by the daughter of Pharaoh, who then tells her servant to get a woman from the Jews to nurse the child. This woman just *happens* to be Moses' mother, who raises him until he grows up. So right from the start Moses' life is surrounded by the sovereign and miraculous hand of God.
- Many years later, we find out the purpose of God's sovereign protection of Moses: God appears to Moses in a burning bush and calls him to go and lead his people out of slavery in Egypt.
- Through Moses, God does amazing signs and wonders in Egypt (10 plagues), demonstrating (through Moses) his power over the Egyptian gods and culminating in the Passover, delivering his people from their bondage to the Egyptians.
- God's law then comes to his people through Moses, and more signs and wonders are done through Moses in the midst of God's people throughout his time leading them.

- You might remember that God interacts with Moses in a special and unique way: “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exod 33:11). Moses was often appealing to God on behalf of the nation of Israel, at times begging God to have mercy on them.
- Numbers 12:6-8: “If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. [This is quoted in our text.] With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD.”
- At the end of his life, his significance is confirmed with these final words of Deut (34:10-12) – “And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.”

Moses was a faithful servant in God’s house, among God’s people. But we are told here (v.3) that “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.”

Now interestingly, I think it’s worth noting here that in this comparison with Moses, the writer of Hebrews doesn’t say Jesus is better by pointing out the failures of Moses. He doesn’t point to his slowness to obey God’s words when God first calls him (Exod 3-4) or about his striking of the rock when God said to speak to it (Num 20) which resulted in his not being able to take the children of Israel into the promised land. Rather, he says that Moses is worthy of honor. He says that Moses was a faithful servant. The way he highlights that Jesus is better than Moses is by speaking of the glories of Jesus. And he does this first through a simple illustration.

Illustration: Here in v.3 the writer gives us a practical, simple illustration to help us understand the significance of Jesus in comparison to Moses. His illustration is that the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. This makes sense, right? (Maybe everywhere except the Biltmore. ☺) A house is inanimate. It can’t do anything for itself, and it didn’t build itself. So, to praise a house for how lovely a house looks is illogical. A beautiful house points to the builder of the house. A beautiful house is to the praise of the builder.

Moses vs. Jesus: And here’s the reality. Moses was faithful, but Moses was a *part* of God’s house. Jesus, on the other hand, is the *builder* of God’s house. Moses faithfully led God’s people as a servant (v.5 says, quoting Num 12 that we read earlier). But Jesus *creates* a people of God. We read this in Jude 5 which says that “Jesus led a people out of the land of Egypt.” And in Eph 2:10 says that “we are his workmanship, created *in Christ Jesus*.” Jesus is the builder of God’s house. Moses (v.5 says) testifies to the things that were to be spoken later. But Jesus is the *fulfillment* of those things of which Moses spoke (Luke 24:27 – “Beginning with Moses...he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself”). If we connect v.4 (“For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God”) with the verses that come before and after it, we are left with this: Jesus is better than Moses

because Jesus is God! He is the builder of God's house, the apostle sent by God to be the propitiation for sin, the high priest of our confession, faithful in all things. ***If you take away nothing else from this text, take away this: the power, magnificence, sovereignty, and perfect faithfulness of Jesus.*** He is building God's house, as he has been for thousands of years.

Application: Brothers and sisters, let this encourage you in your evangelism. Jesus is building God's house. He's going to do it, as he already has been doing it! So, share the gospel freely, and watch him do his work. For some here, this truth should continue God's work that he started in you (or renewed in you) during our mission's emphasis week, to take gospel risk in going to places where Jesus' name is not yet named, knowing that he will continue to build God's house. You see, Moses was faithful as a leader of God's people, but when you read Exodus and Numbers, you realize that he was powerless to effect change in God's people. Jesus, on the other hand, is not powerless. In fact, let me quote him: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..." (Matt 28:18). "I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!" (Matt 16:18).

[Read excerpt from *A Vision for Missions* by Tom Wells, our book of the month...

In it he quotes A.W. Tozer ***[slow down]***: "We commonly represent [God] as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world..."

Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his hearers, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of young persons enter Christian service from no higher motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and his limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of. Add to this a certain degree of commendable idealism and a fair amount of compassion for the underprivileged and you have the true drive behind much Christian activity today."

Here's Tozer's point: God is not wringing his hands wondering how to build his house. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He's going to keep building his house. So, join in and take good, calculated, local-church-affirmed gospel risk, whether overseas or in a gospel-dry place in the states like Utah or across the street. Jesus is building and will continue to build God's house.

For those who are praying for an unbelieving family member, let this motivate your continued prayers. For those burdened for unbelieving friends or classmates or neighbors or students, let this fuel your pursuit of serving and investing and sharing the gospel. ***This week, set your mind on Jesus, and on his power to build God's house.***

Transition: This last verse (6) includes one of the many warnings of Hebrews, but if we read it in the context of considering Jesus, as we have the rest of these verses, we actually have a positive motivation to set our mind on Jesus...

4. Because of the reward of holding fast to Him (6b)

“And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”

Explanation: There was a time when being a Christian in our American culture held many advantages. It was even respected. This has been rapidly changing and is certainly no longer the case, at least if you believe what the Bible says about any given area of life. There are many worldly reasons for you to let go of Christ and make your life easier. Or at least the Evil One will tell you that. The Evil One would tell you that life will be much simpler, you’d have far fewer awkward conversations, you could be well liked by others, you could gain respect quickly by voicing the opinions of the day on social media, if you would just let go of Jesus. The Deceiver would tell you that life would be much nicer if you just relaxed, stopped fighting, just did what you want to do. You could do that, and you would lose your life.

Or, you can hold onto Christ by faith (“hold fast to your confidence”), assured (as we’ll learn in the coming weeks—if you want to read ahead), that there is a day of rest that is coming for all of God’s house. This is why we need this passage. So that we are not deceived. This is why we need to consider Jesus, to fix our thoughts on Jesus. So that we do not give up and quit. So, meditate on God’s Word and his promises and his character. Every day. Moment by moment. Speak truth to yourself and to each other. Paul gives this confession in Phil 3:8-11...

“I count everything as loss because of the *surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—*that I may know him* and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection of the dead.”

Brothers and sisters, don’t let go of Jesus. There is a great reward coming. There is a day of rest coming. Rather, go from here this morning, rejoicing and praising Jesus (“boasting in your hope”) for all that he is and all that he has done, with confidence in his continued work.

Conclusion: However God has worked in you through His Word this morning, whether there is sin you need to confess, or whether you are motivated towards some particular action or whether you are just full of joy and ready to worship with your song/life, let me give you a moment to talk to God about it quietly before we respond in song. Worship him now by your response to His Word.

Let me also encourage you to share with someone today or this week how God has worked in you through His Word. We pray regularly on Sunday evenings for the regular preaching of God’s Word and that we would encourage one another with God’s Word. So, let me encourage you to do that. Let’s go to prayer now silently and then I’ll lead us.

Prayer: Gracious Savior, thank you for your work in our lives. Thank you for your amazing promises. Let all my brothers and sisters here hold tightly to Jesus and never let go. Let us go from here

rehearsing and rejoicing in who you are and what you have done...all throughout this week. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions for LifeGroups (or Families):

1. Read Heb 3:1-6. What is the main point of this passage? (Hint: look for the one command in the passage) (Hint hint: it's in v.1)
2. What does it mean to consider Jesus? Talk about that together.
3. Name some of the reasons that we are given to "consider Jesus" in this passage. (Don't worry about the "points" from the sermon, just look at the biblical passage itself and point out some things in it.)
4. One of the reasons we need to consider Jesus is because of the fact that we are daily bombarded by all kinds of untrue thoughts. What are some untrue thoughts that have entered your mind when...
 - Your plans or schedules change? And how does "considering Jesus" help in this situation?
 - You are experiencing some kind of physical trial? And how does "considering Jesus help in this situation?
 - You have an unexpected financial burden, like the loss of a job or a large medical bill? And how does "considering Jesus" help in this situation?
 - You are mistreated by someone else or feel like you've been treated unfairly? And how does "considering Jesus" help in this situation?
 - You are exhausted in one of your roles (parent, employee, etc.)? And how does "considering Jesus" help in this situation?
 - You could think of lots more examples here. The point of this is to get us thinking of the lies that the Devil tries to use to draw us away from the truth in any given situation that we face in life. These thoughts often just "spring" into our minds. And these are the moments that are so important to "consider Jesus," meditating on his character, his grace, and his promises. That's the goal of this question, to get us thinking through how to combat the lies of the Evil One.
5. Name several ways that Jesus is greater than Moses.
6. Jesus is building God's house, and he's going to keep doing it just as he has been for thousands of years. Some people think that affirming something like this (that Jesus is sovereign in this way) will discourage people from evangelizing. Why should this truth actually motivate our evangelism (and missions)?
7. Divide into groups of 2-3 to pray together.