

Prayer of the Day:

Lord God, you know that we are surrounded by many dangers and that we often stumble and fall. Strengthen us in body and mind, and bring us safely through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. The Spirit of the Lord is on me; he has anointed me to preach good news. Alleluia. (Luke 4:18a cf. NIV)

Sermon Text:

Have you ever been fixated on something? It's that phenomenon which occurs when we become so consumed with one thing that everything else just seems to lose its importance or disappear. The new couple, so madly and deeply in love, can easily become fixated on one another. The high school athlete may become so fixated upon their success on the field or the court that they forget about success in the classroom. Even on the job, we can become fixated on a task, a project, or the vacation which may be coming at its completion. We can fixate on just about anything. Today, God taps into this tendency of our humanity and urges us to become fixated on Jesus and for good reason. So, **FIX YOUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS. HE IS ONE GREATER MOSES THAT WE MIGHT BECOMES GOD'S HOUSE.**

Unfortunately for Moses, he has a tough job today. The writer of the book of Hebrews stacks him up against Jesus in a comparison test. Now Moses is no slouch. He is the first leader of the people of Israel as he moves the fledgling kingdom from the nation of Egypt to the promised land. God has him performing miracles, handing down the commandments, and establishing the tabernacle and worship among the Israelites. God even gives this leader of men some high praise. Verse five tells us, *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.* In other words, Moses does a pretty good job.

However, that's really all the farther we can go. Moses is not Jesus and his faithfulness only goes so far. We cannot say Moses is perfect. In fact, at Meribah, Moses faithfulness wavers as it becomes more about him than the holiness of God and for it Moses will die before crossing the Jordan into the land he had led God's people too. Yes, even for Moses, the Words of John ring true, *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us* (1 John 1:8).

Thankfully, Jesus surpasses Moses. The writer explains, *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.* You see, Jesus built Moses. As such, Jesus will surpass Moses and for a very simply reason, He is God.

In fact, this theme of Jesus is better, has often been suggested as the theme of the entire book of Hebrews. While Moses was as faithful as we could ever expect one of us to be. Jesus surpasses him. In chapter 4, the author will tell us why. *We do not have a high priest who is*

Text: Hebrews 3:1-6

3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. 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, testifying to what would be said in the future. ⁶ But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. – NIV84

unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). As the builder of all things, as God incarnate (in the flesh), Jesus surpasses the faithfulness of Moses. You see Jesus isn't pretty good. He is perfect! Truth be told, God can't be anything less or He ceases to be God.

This is the truth which even the demons shrieked in their distress and of which the people marveled in our Gospel lesson this morning. But it's not simply a nice piece of trivia to wow your friends and neighbors with as you speak with them. The author tells us it carries real significance for us as God's people.

Again, we heard, *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.* Do you hear it in there? We are the house of God. No, not the brick and mortar, studs and drywall of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, but the flesh and blood, the bodies and the souls who have been gifted by God with this unfathomable privilege. It's as we begin to marvel at that truth that we understand the depth of the importance of Jesus superiority or as we also said, His perfection.

As we said when we were discussing Moses, we cannot claim to be without sin. This of course poses a massive problem for people who would be the house of God through faith. God's requirements when it comes to this building are exact, so exact that perfection is most certainly a requirement in every aspect of our lives. Jesus tells us as much in the book of Matthew, *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect* (Matthew 5:48).

Only God can fix this problem and it happens as faith fixates on Jesus. That's the encouragement again to *hold to the courage and hope of which we boast.* Let's go back to that first verse that becomes our theme this morning. *Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.* Fix Your thoughts on Jesus who is what? The perfect follower of God and the high priest whom we confess.

Up until right now, we haven't really discussed that second aspect of our Savior, the high priestly role of Jesus. Old Testament high priests, were skilled butchers. They had to be as countless sacrifices would make their way through the temple for a whole host of sacrifices which the people offered to God in order to allow them to be that people, the house of God.

Now fast forward to chapter 10 in the book of Hebrews, ¹¹ *Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.* ¹² *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.* ¹³ *Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool,* ¹⁴ *because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy* (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, once for all, that you might be everything that God demands. In Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, everything God requires becomes true of you. Your sinfulness paid in full. The perfection that is required of God's people, supplied in the perfection of our Savior. That we might become the house of God, holding to the truths, in courage and hope, which would call us heirs of heaven.

Fixation can be a bad thing. Especially if it closes our minds to the faithfulness required of us in all the various aspects of the lives we live. It can however, also be of exceptional value as it focuses us on all our God has done for us as we faithfully carry out our callings to be His temples. So the author focuses us again on our Savior, our hope, our courage in a crazy world as he urges us to **FIX YOUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS.** Amen.