

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 22/5/2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful that we can know God's love and enjoy him in Jesus Christ as our Father who eagerly wants us to know him.

Today we continue in Hebrews with "Jesus Superior to Moses" before moving on to church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Jesus Superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6)

What happens when it becomes hard to believe in Jesus? There are people around the world who are facing persecution for their faith.

Trusting in Jesus can lead to suffering and death at the hands of unbelievers. In our society, while we are not likely to face that kind of suffering, there can be a cost to being a Christian. For some, Christians are on the nose. Christians are considered immoral for not being in step with society's moral program and the Bible is seen as intolerant and even evil. Following Christ can then lead to being outed as a "bigot" or loss of job opportunities and social connections.

The Christians to whom the letter to the Hebrews is written are facing trials and persecution – some suffering, even killed, others having their property confiscated – all because of their faith in Christ. And so some are turning away from Christ to avoid hardship. Others are wavering. These are Christians who are from a Jewish background who are now being ostracised from their ethnic community. And so the author writes to encourage them to hold the line.

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. 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. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Hebrews 3:1-6

Hebrews encourages Christians, those who have been called to be a part of God's family, to fix our thoughts on Jesus. This is more than a cursory glimpse at Jesus, but through all the hours of the day, in each moment, to have our spiritual gaze locked on Jesus.

But what is it about Jesus that demands our fixed attention? First, he is called "our apostle and high priest." Jesus was an apostle before the apostles. "Apostle" simply means one who is sent. Jesus is the ultimate sent one – the Son sent by the Father to fulfil God's purposes and achieve our salvation. Jesus is the one sent by God. His goal is a missionary goal to bring people to God. He is also our high priest, representing us before God and mediating before his throne for us so that we have access into the presence of God.

Next, the author compares Jesus to Moses. He is faithful to God like Moses was faithful in God's house. But Jesus is worthy of greater honour. Why? Because Jesus is God in the flesh, God who is the builder of the house. Because Moses is a faithful servant in God's house, and Jesus comes as the Son. Because Moses bore witness to what God said would happen in the future, and Jesus is that wonderful, glorious future that Moses saw. Jesus is superior to Moses as the glorious Son who is promised. He is the fulfilment of all God spoke through Moses.

This gives us cause to hold firmly to Jesus and rest our confidence and hope in him, because we belong to his house as his family. No matter what happens in the world, no matter how much we might be ridiculed for our faith, no matter the extent of our suffering for Christ, we hold fast to Christ because we belong to him and he will never let us go.

As always, love and prayers,
Steve