



## Consider Jesus

*Series: Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul*

Hebrews 3:1-6

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### **Introduction: Consider Jesus – the Essence of Christianity**

There are two words in the six verses that we have read together this morning that capture the heart and soul, the marrow, the core, and the very essence of this sermon to the Hebrew Christians – “Consider Jesus.” The very lifeblood of Christianity and the Christian life are found right here in these words, “consider Jesus.” If you want life, to be reconciled to God and to know true peace, “consider Jesus.” If you want forgiveness of sins and want to know how to live a life that is free of sin’s enslavement, “consider Jesus.” If you desire to grow in grace and truth and to serve God in the strength that He supplies, “consider Jesus.” If you want to be faithful to God, to persevere in trials and testing, to experience the presence of God in meaningful ways, to live an upright and holy life, to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel, and gain the glory of Heaven, “consider Jesus.” The whole of the Christian life, of everything that is rightly called life, is found in these words, “consider Jesus.”

Beloved, what the writer of Hebrews has been showing us over and over again is that salvation and the strength and the sustaining power of our lives in Christ is not found in some formula, some set of steps, some certain religious practices, not some methodology, or some system. It is not nearly so complicated. It’s actually pretty simple. The secret of life in Christ is not a secret at all – it is “consider Jesus.” That word that the writer of Hebrews uses which is translated as “consider” is a word that means “to direct your whole mind to one thing, to think about it very carefully, to fix your mind and attention diligently upon something in such a way as to learn the full significance of it.” The writer of Hebrews is telling the Hebrew Christians in Rome and he is telling us that this life in Christ is all about meditating upon, thinking diligently about, focusing our mind upon and the pondering deeply the glory, majesty, excellence, faithfulness, power and worth of Jesus. That is the whole of it – to so love and honor Christ, to be so captivated by Him, to the point that you begin to think, speak, and act like Jesus. That is the heart of this sermon from the writer of Hebrews – not to produce some impressive and exquisitely crafted sermon so that we say,

“Wow, what a sermon...” but to present Jesus in such a way that we say, “What a Savior, what a Lord...” and to cause us to consider Jesus in such a way that He captures our hearts and our lives.

By now, nine sermons into this series, we are well aware of what the Hebrew Christians in Rome were up against, but let me remind you again of what is going on. These Hebrew Christians were facing severe obstacles to remaining faithful to Jesus Christ. Persecution by the Roman government for their faith in Christ had been bad – losing jobs, possessions, houses and lands – and it was going to get worse. Soon, they would be facing death simply for being faithful Christians. Many of them had been disowned by their Jewish families for believing in Christ and for following Him as Lord. Their friends rejected them and thought them fools for believing the gospel. And the pagan society, deeply immersed in polytheistic, pagan religions and human wisdom and philosophies, marginalized and mocked them.

As a result, some people’s faith was hanging by a thread. Others were determined to be faithful, to resolutely stand firm in their faith, but it was really difficult. The writer of Hebrews was concerned that they would be tempted to abandon Jesus, to take their eyes off Christ, to return to their old lives, and drift away from their profession of faith in Christ. He knows that for them to do that would be disastrous to their souls. He knew that most of them, if they did defect, would not turn to the religions of Rome; the real threat was that they might return to Judaism, to the religion of their fathers, the religion of Moses, just as we might be tempted by a costless, easier and more user friendly, not so “radical,” more sin-friendly and socially acceptable version of Christianity. These Hebrew Christians in Rome needed and we Christians in Salem, VA need encouragement, a proper perspective, strength-giving and soul-nourishing truth that will motivate us to endure, persevere and to thrive in our faith and that is what we have in this text today – all of it centered on this blessed exhortation to “consider Jesus.” The way in which he does this is fantastic. Look first at the way that the writer of Hebrews reminds them of who they are:

**A Reminder of Who They Are (1a)** He starts this section by saying: **“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,” (Hebrews 3:1, ESV)** Now, did you notice what he called them? He calls them “holy brothers” or brothers and sisters as some translations have it, and that is a significant statement. It’s not just simply a term of human affection, like when we say “Hey bro, what’s up?” This is eternally significant. He wants to remind them of who they are, ok? They are

children of God – holy, that means set apart to God as His own people – and they are brothers with Christ through faith in Him and as we saw earlier in this letter, **“That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,”** (Hebrews 2:11, ESV)

In other words, they may have lost family, they may have lost friends through their faith in Christ, but what they have gained is infinitely better. They have gained God as their Father, through faith in the saving death and resurrection of Christ. They have gained Christ as their brother and they have gained brothers and sisters in everyone that has trusted in Christ for eternal salvation. Once they were enemies of God, far from the family of God, but now they are together, brothers with Christ and sons and daughters of God, and they can never forget that. An incredible change has taken place in their lives that defines them more than anything else can or does. He does not want them to forget the truth of the great change in their identity, in their eternal destiny, wrought by God in them through Jesus Christ. As Paul says it in Galatians 3:26, **“In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”** (Galatians 3:26, ESV) He reminds them of who they are and sometimes we really need that...

But the writer of Hebrews doesn't stop there. He reminds them that they **share in a heavenly calling**. They share in a calling from Heaven to Heaven. They share in a call from God to turn from sin to faith in Jesus Christ, to turn from death and to life. We have heard the voice of God calling us to faith in Christ. Like Jesus said, **“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—”** (John 6:44–45, ESV) They had heard the calling of God from heaven to come to Christ – a calling that originates in heaven and that ends in heaven. It is a calling from heaven to heaven – to the glory of a great and awesome future prepared for us with Christ.

In other words, the writer of Hebrews is saying, “You are not like everyone else in this world. God is your Father; Christ is your brother; God has called you to this and you share in the Heavenly kingdom, the kingdom without end. Don't make the mistake of only going on what you see with your eyes. Instead, lift your eyes from what is going on around you and **consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.**

**Consider Jesus – Apostle and High Priest (1b)** He says, rather than being shaken in your faith, rather than being moved, remember who you are and **consider Jesus, the apostle and**

**high priest of our confession,” (Hebrews 3:1b, ESV)** He’s saying, “Look we all share in the same confession as Christians. We all confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, fully human and fully divine, and that He came into this earth and lived like one of us, and suffered temptation like one of us, all without sin. And that He represented us before God as our High Priest, offering Himself as the sacrifice that paid the penalty and guilt of our sins, so that we could be delivered from the wrath of God, be made at peace with Him through Jesus, and given the hope of eternal life. So put your heart and your mind on Him. Consider Jesus. Focus your heart and your mind on Him as the apostle and the high priest of our confession.”

Consider Jesus as the apostle of our confession. This is the only place that we see Jesus described in the NT as an apostle. We don’t usually think of Jesus in this way. We think of Him as the one who had apostles. The word “apostle” literally means “one who is sent under authority.” And that idea is repeated all throughout, for instance, the gospel of John. **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:17, ESV)** And, **“... I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true... I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”** (John 7:28–29, ESV) Or, **“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3, ESV)**

Jesus is the apostle of our confession – of what we say is the foundation of our lives, what we claim is more important and more vital than anything else – so set your mind on Him. The one who came to reveal the Father to us, who came to reveal the Father’s love, His mercy, His justice, His holiness, His purposes and more, who came to embody perfection, righteousness, holiness, goodness, faithfulness, who came to show us the way of eternal life, who came to show us how to live by faith, who came to show us how to live for the glory of God, how not to waste our lives. Think on Him.

Moreover, he says, consider Jesus as the high priest of our confession. Consider what He has done to provide atonement for you, forgiveness of sins, peace with God. Consider that He gave Himself as your sacrifice; consider that He endured the worst of temptation, yet remained faithful to God and faithful to His mission to redeem you; consider that He shed His blood on the altar of the cross for you; consider that He fully forgives you when you fail and beckons you to get up and continue following Him. Consider that He promises help to you in your need, that in the words of chapter 7 and verse 25: **“He is able to save to the**

**uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25, ESV)** Consider Jesus – the apostle sent by God to meet your deepest need to know God, and the priest who has entered God’s presence as your eternal Savior, present intercessor, and constant friend.

How will considering Jesus help them? How? When they could find little to rejoice in, little to hope in, in their circumstances – they could find joy and hope in this – that they know God and God knows them and their debt before God, which was great, was fully paid. When they faced all sorts of pressures – physical, emotional, spiritual – they knew they had a high priest who **“because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18, ESV)** When they did not know which way to turn, what they should do, they had an example, but more than that, one who had shown them exactly how they should walk and who would give them the power and faith to do the same. But they had to consider Jesus. In fact, the way that this is written, the tense that is used when the writer says to consider Jesus, indicates that you are to do this and keep on doing it with no end in sight. They had to set their hearts and minds on Him, to so love and honor Christ, to be so captivated by Him, to the point that they thought, spoke, and acted like Him. They were not following a religion, not following a set of precepts and rules – they were following Christ, the Son of the Living God. There is nothing and no one better.

Like I said earlier, the greatest temptation for these Hebrew Christians was to back away from devotion to Christ by going back to their former religion, the religion of their fathers, to the religion of Moses and so avoid persecution both from the Roman government that accepted the Jewish religion, and from their families who all exalted and prided themselves on being followers of Moses. They would hear all the time from their family that would still speak to them that Moses was greater than Jesus. So the writer of Hebrews deals with the question of

**Who’s Really Greater? Jesus or Moses (2-6a)** The author of Hebrews tells his readers, Consider Jesus, **“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…” (Hebrews 3:2–6a, ESV)**

Now in order to understand just how significant this statement is, you need to know just how great Moses really was, how highly the Jews thought of him. He was, quite honestly, one of the greatest men who ever lived and Israel honored him like that. Look, Moses was a man who was divinely chosen by God for great things. When he was born, his life was miraculously preserved from the decree of Pharaoh that every male child be killed when he was plucked out of the Nile River by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in the household of the King of Egypt, as a prince.

Later on, after he was grown, God called to Him from a burning bush on the backside of the desert at MT Horeb,, to serve Him and to be the deliverer of the Hebrews from the slavery of Egypt. As the instrument of God, he proclaimed a series of judgments on Egypt – the Nile turning to blood, plagues of frogs, gnats, flies, hail, boils – a number of things – culminating in the death of the firstborn of all in Egypt on the Passover. After Israel was released and then Pharaoh decided to chase the people down and kill them, Moses parted the Red Sea with his staff and the entire nation passed through. He struck a rock and brought forth water.

He was the greatest of the prophets of Israel. God says of Moses: ***“Hear my words: 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. 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?”*** (Numbers 12:6–8, ESV) He was Israel's great lawgiver. The Ten Commandments, the sacrificial system, the OT manner of worship – all were given to him by God.

His leadership was impressive and powerful, leading the people in victory over the Amalekites, judging the people when they sinned... on and on it goes. When Moses died, the Lord Himself buried him in a location known only to God to this day. The book of Deuteronomy closes with this summation of his life: ***“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.”*** (Deuteronomy 34:10–12, ESV) Moses was truly great, for all intents and purposes the human instrument through which the Jewish religion was

founded. And yet for all of that, the writer of Hebrews says: “Jesus is greater and worthy of more glory.”

Now look, the writer of Hebrews is not dogging Moses, here. Not at all. He says of Moses that he was faithful in God’s house. He was faithful to serve the people of God, faithful among the people in his service to God. God’s house is just another way of saying “the people of God of every age.” And Moses was faithful in God’s house, among God’s people. He built up and encouraged and exhorted God’s people to faithfulness. He was the human instrument through which the redemptive plan was moved along. Moses was faithful to God and faithful to God’s people, but that is where the similarities to Jesus come to an end.

The writer of Hebrews says that Moses was ***faithful in all God’s house as a servant***, and in fact, the word that is used here is not the usual word for slave but someone who is an honored servant and far above the position of slave, a title of dignity and esteem. He was faithful as a servant ***to testify to the things that were to be spoken later***, the writer of Hebrews says. What’s that mean? He was faithful to testify to the coming Messiah in all that he did. Moses life and teaching merely testified to the greatness of Christ, to the final word from God to be spoken, the gospel that Jesus proclaimed as God’s Son. You see, Moses gave the Law in order to show people that they could not approach God, could not come to God, in their sinful state and they needed an intercessor, a mediator to make things right with God on their behalf. The system of sacrifices, established in the Law, pointed to the need of a perfect sacrifice that would atone for our sins once and for all. The believing Israelites offered the numerous sacrifices of the blood of bulls and goats and sheep, looking to the final sacrifice that would do in full what these sacrifices only pictured in part. The tabernacle pointed to Jesus. Paul describes how during the Exodus, the people drank from the rock that Moses split with his staff, saying, ***“and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”*** (1 Corinthians 10:4, ESV) In all that he did in serving God’s people, he pointed to Jesus. In fact, Jesus told the Jews who rejected Him as Messiah when he walked upon this earth, ***“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 5:45–47, ESV)

Moses was faithful as a servant, but Jesus is faithful over God’s house as a son. There is a qualitative difference between living in a house as servant and living in a house as a son.

Servants come and go, but sons are sons forever. Moses served in the house of God, but Jesus made the house of God by His shed blood. Moses served in the house of God, but Jesus is one who created it and just like greater glory belongs to the one who designs a great house or a great cathedral than to the stones or the boards of which it is made, so Jesus is worthy of far greater glory than Moses. Yes, Moses was faithful in his work to serve the house of God, but Jesus made it, made us by His death and resurrection. Jesus is in a totally different class!

So what the writer of Hebrews is saying to the Hebrew Christians who were tempted to return to the Jewish religion, which had come to its fruition in Jesus, was this: “While Moses is worthy of honor, Jesus is worthy of far more glory and honor. So don’t turn back from Jesus to following Moses or you will be turning from God’s Son to a mere man.” Christ is the builder of God’s house and He has made you a part of it through faith in Him as the apostle and high priest of your confession. And that’s why he tells them at the end of verse 6 to

**Hold Fast (6b)** He concludes this section saying: **“And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” (Hebrews 3:6, ESV)** What is he saying here? He is encouraging the Hebrew Christians and us to hold fast, “to keep a tight grip on their confidence and their boasting of the hope in Christ,” for by doing so they and we will prove our rightful place in the household of God. People get a little nervous when they hear these words. “Wait, I thought that I became a part of the house of God when I trusted in Jesus Christ and confessed Him as my Savior and Lord.” Yes, you did, but the truthfulness of that confession, the reality of that faith is proven by remaining faithful to Christ, continuing to hold fast to Christ, continuing in your trusting Him and boasting in Him as your hope of salvation. Christians who persevere to the end offer such a life as the proof that they are truly saved. Those who profess to be Christians and fall away from Christ reveal by their departure from Jesus, by their falling away, that they were never really a part of the house of God at all, but were merely pretenders. John addressed this in 1 John 2:19 saying, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” (1 John 2:19, ESV)**

This is a word that really needs to be heard in our day. So many people who show no evidence of any kind of true devotion to Christ, but who perhaps, at one point or another made a profession of faith in Christ, maintain that they are saved under the guise of “once

saved, always saved.” They “took care of that a long time ago” but there is no active holding fast, no active boast in Christ. The writer of Hebrews makes very clear the opposite is true. If there is no evidence of a persevering faith, than there is no evidence of faith at all. Christianity is not a matter of obtaining forgiveness only, but of irrevocable commitment to Jesus Christ.

That’s why we need to be asking ourselves, “Are we persevering? Is Jesus more precious to me than He was the moment that I believed? Is my boast in Christ; is He what I delight in more than anything else? Does my life show that Christ means more to me than anything else or is He being displaced by something else, even something good? Am I bold and unshakable in my hope in Christ? Am I courageous when it comes to my faith in Him?” Those are important questions because they are windows to our souls.

Those are important and real questions. They are questions that we want to be able to answer well, right? So how do we hold fast, how do we ensure that we don’t fall away? There are so many opportunities to do just that. The answer to that question is found in the two words that I spoke of at the beginning of this sermon. Our life in Christ begins and ends right here --- Consider Jesus.

**It Begins and Ends Here – Consider Jesus** How are we going to remain faithful? How are we going to ensure that we don’t fall away like so many seem to do? The answer is found in these two words – consider Jesus. Staying faithful to Christ, growing in grace and faith is not an issue of mustering up some inner strength or determination. It is not found in looking to your own strength at all. It is not a matter of finding the right techniques. It’s not a matter of just accumulating more and more biblical knowledge. It’s not found in the latest book or seminars, or following a spiritual to-do list, a formula or methodology for successful Christian living, or even resolving to do better. The key is looking to Jesus, considering Jesus.

Like I said at the beginning, the writer of Hebrews is telling the Hebrew Christians in Rome and he is telling us that this life in Christ is all about meditating upon, thinking diligently about, focusing our mind upon and the pondering deeply the glory, majesty, excellence, faithfulness, power and worth of Jesus – the person of Jesus. That is the whole of it – to so

love and honor Christ, to be so captivated by Him, to the point that you begin to think, speak, and act like Jesus.

That requires Spirit-empowered effort. It requires a desire to know Him, a desire that God the Father placed within your very heart that caused you to be saved in the first place. It requires concentration and focus. It requires discipline, an act of your Spirit empowered will. And it requires time. True reflection cannot happen in a glance. It requires that we make value judgments about what we give our time to. But all of these things we can do by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us if we are saved people.

Consider Jesus – all that He is and all that He has accomplished on your behalf. Think often of Him and organize your life around Him. Make Him the conscious object of your faith. That is the very heart of Christianity and it is the God-given key to perseverance in the Christian life. It is the goal of every sermon – to cause you to consider Jesus. The point at every stage of this book is: Consider Jesus, fix your eyes on Him, be captivated by Him. The one who is persistent and consistent in considering Jesus is the one who will complete the race and endure to the very end, who will not be tossed to and fro by emotional extremes, trial, difficulty, or personal failure, but who by keeping their sights focused on Christ, who forgives sin and empowers faithfulness and who alone satisfies the human soul, will endure regardless of the circumstances.

Beloved, the key to living in Christ is a steady preoccupation with Christ above everything else. Much thinking on Jesus, much meditation, much considering, much being satisfied in Jesus' excellence, glory, faithfulness and love – and you will be captivated by Him. And as you are, Jesus will supply the grace and the mercy that you need to be faithful and to persevere to the very end. He will strengthen and keep you in such a way that you cannot fall away. That's the word of the Lord to you today.

How do you need to respond?

Confess Christ as Savior and Lord.

Repent that you have not been fixed upon Jesus, considering Him, and orienting your life around Him, His lessening influence in your life, and it is starting to show.

Call upon Him for strength in the temptations and trials you are facing that are threatening to call you away.

Call upon Him for help with a besetting, habitual sin, and to reorient your focus on Him.

The answer for it all is this one thing – Consider Jesus... and live.

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