

## INTRODUCTION

I apologize in advance for another one of my corny jokes. One morning former President George W. Bush was out jogging in his neighborhood in Dallas. Several secret-service agents were with him. President Bush stopped when he saw an old man in a robe with long hair and a beard standing beside the road. The man was holding a wooden staff and staring up into the sky. Mr. Bush stopped and said, "Hey, aren't you Moses?" The man didn't say a word; he just kept staring up into the sky. Again the president asked, "I just asked you, are you Moses?" No reply. The president turned to one of his agents and said, "Either this guy is deaf or he's extremely rude." So the agent walked up and said, "Excuse me, sir, did you hear the President's question?" Without looking down the man with the beard said, "I am Moses, and I'm not deaf. It's just that the last time I spoke to a bush I spent forty years wandering in the desert!"

As we begin this third chapter of Hebrews, we've already seen that Jesus is superior to the prophets and the angels. In this passage we'll see that Jesus is superior to Moses.

Once again, why is the writer stressing this? These are Hebrew Christians who used to follow the teachings of Moses, and some of them were being misled to believe that Jesus was only a great prophet like Moses. Even today, there are many people who try to reduce Jesus to the category of a great human teacher. The writer was saying, "As much as you love Moses, Jesus is much greater and they are not even in the same category!"

Hebrews 3:1-6. "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. 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, testifying to what would be said in the future. 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."

Moses is one of the most interesting characters in the Bible. He was born at a time when Pharaoh had ordered all the male Hebrew babies be killed. Moses' mom hid him. Then the Bible says, "When she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile." (Exodus 2:3) So you might say Moses was a basket case from birth! But Pharaoh's daughter discovered him and he was raised in the palace as the adopted grandson of the most powerful man on earth. We all know Moses performed many miracles, including parting the Red Sea. I saw a cartoon once that talked about how hard it would have been to be in a fishing contest with Moses.

Moses' life can be divided into three equal sections. He spent forty years in the palace thinking he was somebody special. Then when he discovered he was one of the Hebrews he lost his temper and had to hide out in the desert of Midian for forty years. He spent that time trying to be a nobody. Then at age 80 God called Him at the burning bush. He spent the last forty years

of his life discovering that God is somebody who can use nobodies.

Moses was no stranger to disappointment and discouragement. In fact, when he died at 120, he never accomplished his life goal of the leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy 34 we read these sad words: Then Moses climbed to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land...Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." (Deuteronomy 34:1,4)

Of course, Moses eventually made it to the Holy Land the day that he and Elijah stood with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration!

There are several similarities between the life of Moses and the life of Jesus. At both their births there was a slaughter of children and they both had to be hidden. Moses introduced the Passover Lamb; and Jesus is the Passover Lamb. Moses face shone on Mt. Sinai; Jesus face shone on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses lifted up a brass serpent for the healing of those bitten by snakes; Jesus was lifted up on a cross to heal those ruined by sin. Moses fed thousands of people with manna, bread from heaven. Jesus fed the multitudes and He is the bread of heaven. Moses received a set of laws on a Mountain; Jesus perfected these laws in the Sermon on the Mount.

But while, there are similarities, there is no real comparison because Jesus is incomparable. Actually, Moses looked through the prophetic telescope and predicted the coming of Jesus. In Deuteronomy 18 Moses prophesied that one day a greater prophet would arise who would speak the very words of God. When Jesus fed the 5,000, the people said, "Is this the Prophet who was to come into the world?" Jesus was that prophet. Let's see three reasons why Jesus is superior to Moses.

### **1. MOSES was a man who delivered God's Law. JESUS is God and He delivered God's grace.**

The greatest difference between Moses and Jesus was that Moses was a man. He was a great man, but he was just a man. Jesus was the one and only God-man. Moses delivered God's law, but Jesus did something much greater; He demonstrated God's grace. In the first chapter of John we read: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:17-18) Moses spoke with God and was even called a friend of God. But Jesus is God in the flesh.

Sometimes in the New Testament the Old Testament is called the Law of Moses. But it wasn't Moses' Law; it was God's Law. Moses didn't invent the Law of God; he just delivered to the world. Before the Ten Commandments were given on Sinai it was already a sin to kill or to steal or to commit adultery. The Ten Commandments just summarized in writing some of God's most important laws. But beyond the Ten Commandments, God gave hundreds of other laws to the Jews. The reason God gave the Law was to let people know that it was impossible to keep

the Law and they needed something greater than the law: Grace.

Imagine Bill Gates offered a million dollars to anyone who can swim from San Francisco to Hilo, Hawaii. There are no takers, so he increases the reward to \$100 million. Still no takers, so he raises it to \$1 billion. That's just too much to resist, so on the appointed day, 100 swimmers show up. 50 of them don't make it out of the currents of San Francisco Bay. Another 30 give up after ten miles. Another 15 make it to 20 miles. The only remaining swimmers are five Olympic long-distance swimmers. One by one they drop out and have to be rescued. The final swimmer, Olympic Gold medal winner Katie Ledecky, makes it an astounding 215 miles. But she is still 2,000 miles short of Hawaii. As she is pulled into the boat, she says with an exhausted voice. "I swam further than anyone else; don't I get a part of the prize money?" Bill Gates says, "Sorry, the prize was all or nothing." That's the problem with keeping the law: It's a pass/fail only. And God doesn't grade on the curve. We're all guilty, so our only hope is to accept the grace of God.

### **Personal Application: I can trust that His grace is enough!**

None of us will ever be good enough to meet God's standard of perfection. But thank God, Jesus came full of grace and truth. The New Testament teaches in Ephesians 2 that it "is by grace through faith that we have been saved, and that not of ourselves it is the gift of God; not of works lest anyone should boast."

Grace is God offering to give us the gift of eternal life. You can't earn a gift. You can only accept it or reject it. Our response to this offer is to accept it by faith. And God even gives us the gift of faith to receive it. Salvation is 100% Jesus and 0% me.

Legalism is the false belief that I can make God love me more or less by what I do. When Paul was struggling with his infamous thorn in the flesh God gave him this message, "My grace is sufficient." And it is. It is sufficient to cover every sin you've ever committed and it is sufficient to carry you through every struggle you'll ever face. Grace is not just some magic potion that you took whenever you were first saved. It is the constant presence and power of God's life working in you every day. I needed the grace of God to save me when I was nine years old. And I need the grace of God at this very moment to sustain me. But I'm here to tell you; God's grace is enough. You can trust Him. And that's better than the Law that Moses gave.

## **2. MOSES faithfully followed God until he died. JESUS is faithfully keeping His promises today.**

Moses was faithful, but he made mistakes because he was a man. He had flaws. When you examine his life you can see he often had a problem with losing his temper. That's what got him in trouble in Egypt. In a rage of anger he killed the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. He fled as a fugitive.

Later the people were thirsty and constantly complaining about having no water, so in Exodus 17 God showed Moses a rock and told him to strike it with his staff. He did and the water came

out. Thirty-eight years later, in Numbers 20, the people were still griping about having no water, so God showed Moses a rock and said, "Speak to the Rock" and you'll have water.

Moses and Aaron gathered the people. It is obvious Moses was angry by what he said. He said, "Listen, you bunch of griping rebels, you want to see me give you water (he was taking credit instead of giving credit to God.) "Watch this!" And he whacked the rock, nothing happened, so he whacked it again. And God must have shaken His Holy head and allowed the water to come out of the rock. But He took Moses aside and said, "Moses, my friend, because you disobeyed me and didn't honor me, you won't see the Land I have promised."

If that sounds like pretty severe punishment for just hitting a rock, remember Moses disobeyed God. God knew Moses didn't have the temperament to lead the Israelites into Canaan. He needed a leader who would obey him completely, and not lose his cool. In a few weeks they would be attacking Jericho, the most heavily fortified city in the ancient world. God would direct Joshua to lead the people to walk around the city for seven days, and on the seventh day to walk around it seven times. If hot-tempered, impulsive Moses couldn't follow God's directions to speak to a rock, he might not have been able to carry out that plan of walking around the city. Who knows? He might have dashed up to the main gate of Jericho and started whacking away with his stick!

But in spite of this failure God still honored Moses and when we get to the Roll Call of the Faithful in Hebrews 11, we find Moses listed prominently. He was faithful until he died.

But Jesus WAS faithful and He is STILL faithful! The Bible says, "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3) Jesus is still being faithful to keep his promises. Jesus has made many wonderful promises to us, and one of the greatest is when He promised us He would never leave us or forsake us.

### **Personal Application: I can rejoice in Jesus' promise to care for me!**

Jesus said God is aware when a tiny sparrow falls to the ground. And we can be sure that if His eye is on the sparrow, I know He watches over me.

The last verse of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm says, "Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23:6) We live in a time when there is a tremendous emphasis on security. There are more security guards, and home security companies than ever. We have a huge government agency called the Department of Homeland Security. We have more security measures than ever before, yet people feel less secure than ever. The only true security you'll ever find is in the goodness and mercy of God. I know it sounds cheesy, but it's true. I don't have to know what the future holds, because I really do know Who holds the future. I've read the final chapter and we win!

Pastor Jack Hyles used to tell story about a woman who attended their church who often came up to him with a frightened look on her face and said, "Pastor, there are two strange men who followed me to church and they're in the back now waiting for me. When I walk home they

follow me home. I'm terribly frightened!" Pastor Hyles said for the first few times she mentioned the two men, he looked and couldn't see them, and even asked the woman to point them out, but she was afraid to look for them." She continued to complain to him about the two men following her. Finally Dr. Hyles said he realized it wasn't that there were men there, it was that the woman "was not all there" herself. There weren't two men following her, but she truly believed they were there, so she was afraid. So Dr. Hyles said, "Oh, you mean, THOSE men? I know who they are. One of them is named "goodness" and the other one is "mercy." Let's look here in your Bible at Psalm 23:6. It says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life."

So you don't have to be afraid of them. The woman smiled and never bothered Dr. Hyles again with her complaint!

### **3. MOSES was a servant in God's House. JESUS is the Son over God's House.**

The term "house" or "House of God" is mentioned seven times in this passage. There is a common misunderstanding that the house of God is a church building. A building is *never* the house of God neither in the Old Testament or the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Temple was a house of prayer where God chose to meet with His people, but He was never restricted to that address. In fact, God says through the prophet Isaiah, "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Has not my hand mad all these things?" (Isaiah 66:1-2)

In the New Testament the house of God was never a building, because there were no church buildings for the first two hundred years of the church. The identity of God's house is clearly seen in Hebrews 3:6. It says, "We are the house of God."

So here is a life changing principle: God's House is His household (family). The Bible says, "We are members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:19-20)

Today, God dwells in people—in men and women and boys and girls who have crowned Jesus as their Lord. Paul wrote in Ephesians 3: "Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him." (Ephesians 3:17 NLT)

Robert Boyd Munger wrote a little booklet entitled, "My heart, Christ's home." It describes how salvation is like inviting Jesus come into your life as if He is coming into your home. You invite him into the library, the dining room, the workroom, the rec room, and even into that hall closet where you keep your skeletons. Then you learn the only way He can make a difference in cleaning up the house is when He becomes the owner, not just a guest. It is at that point you transfer the title deed to Him. He is no longer a resident: He becomes the president. That's what it means to surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

### **Personal Application: I can have courage to endure because Christ lives in me!**

We have been basking in the bright sunlight of the glorious truth of the supremacy of Jesus. But in verse six there is a dark cloud that slides over the sun. It appears in a powerful word with only two letters. It's the word "if." The entire theme of Hebrews is that we must keep our eyes on Jesus, or else we will slip away from a position of blessing and fellowship. There is a very strong warning that only those who truly stay faithful to the end prove themselves to be a part of God's household. Notice these words in Hebrews 3:6. "And we are members of this household if we maintain our trust and joyful hope steadfast to the end." (Hebrews 3:6 Phillips)

There are some groups of Christians who believe you can be saved and then lose your salvation. In the weeks to come, we are going to be confronted with scriptures that seem to teach that. But I don't believe it. But it is a fact there are some people who profess faith in Christ and then they drift away, or drop out because their conversion was never genuine. So they don't lose their salvation. They never had it in the first place. Or, as we will see in the next message, there are many followers of Jesus who stop growing in their faith, and just sit down by the track. They don't lose their salvation, but they become joyless and useless.

Jesus died on the cross, so we can die to ourselves and He can live in us. One of my life verses says: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) The essence of the Christian life is, "Not I, but Christ lives in me."

The writings of Major Ian Thomas have had a tremendous influence on my life. Major Thomas was a decorated British Officer in World War II. After the war he became a great Bible teacher. His testimony was that he almost worked himself to death trying to be a good religious person. Then he made the life-changing discovery that living the Christian life wasn't hard—it was impossible. Only one man ever walked the planet who could live the Christian life, and His name is Jesus. At that point, Major Thomas surrendered to allow Jesus to live the Christian life through him, and from that point until he died at age 93, he lived a life of joy, peace and productive service. Here's how he expressed it: "There are few things quite so boring as being religious, but there is nothing quite so exciting as being a Christian! For godliness is not the consequence of your capacity to imitate God, but the consequence of His capacity to reproduce Himself in you. To be in Christ—that makes you fit for heaven; but for Christ to be in you—that makes you fit for earth! To be in Christ changes your destination; but for Christ to be in you—that changes your destiny! The one makes heaven your home—the other makes this world His workshop."

Jesus is greater than Moses. Moses could never live in a person, but Jesus can and He does if you are born again. So this week, keep your eyes on Jesus, but don't try to imitate Him. Allow Him to live His life through you!

## OUTLINE

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Pastor David Dykes