

Prayer

Praise the Lord for the way that He reveals Himself to His people:

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 Praise the Lord for the way that He loves people and saves them:

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 Praise the Lord for the way that H sustains the faith of His chosen:

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 Thanks be to God: AMEN

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: Appointing leaders

We will use this week to think about the issue of appointing leaders for the church, and pray for those who are involved in this sometimes difficult but potentially rewarding work. If there are any issues in your church to do with appointing leaders, from clergy to children's workers to church treasurers; then please pray about them, and those who are working on them now.

Meditation

The glory of God is incredible, impressive beyond understanding;
 His glory is shown in creation, in absolute command of all history.

The glory of God is essential, sustaining all people and things by His power;
 His glory is found throughout time and space, the universe is His.

The glory of God is revealed in His Son; the glory that must be revealed;
 His glory is the empty Cross, the empty tomb, and His very presence.

The glory of God is prophetic, showing now what will one day become true;
 His glory is the truth, the eternal destiny of the world, and us.

The glory of God is a mystery, for no-one has ever defined it or grasped it;
 His glory is what He allows us to see, just enough for us to know

The glory of God is His nature; His being, work, authority, power and much more.

Bible Study - Hebrews 3:1-6

¹ Therefore, holy friends who share in the heavenly calling, take notice of the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus. ² He was faithful to the one who appointed Him, as was Moses from all of God's household, ³ but He is worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the founder of a household has more respect than the house itself. ⁴ (For every house is built by someone, but the founder of all things is God.) ⁵ Now from out of all God's household, Moses was faithful as a servant, testifying to what would be said in the future. ⁶ Christ, however, was faithful as a Son placed over God's house; and we are His house if we firmly grasp the assurance and the confidence of our hope.

Review

What a wonderful and expressive passage of Hebrews! The writer previously explained the work of Christ in making sacrificial atonement for our sins in chapter 2, and now makes an appeal to his readers to look to Christ, and Christ alone, for their inspiration. Many of those who first read letter this would have spent a lifetime in Judaism, doing what they believe to be right before God according to the teaching of Moses, as found in the Old Testament. Hebrews pays great respect to Moses, a man who was singled out (3:2,3) as a faithful servant who did what God required of him. But however impressive was Moses the man, he was only ever a member of God's household like every other man or woman in the lineage of Abraham: Christ was the 'Son' (3:6)

who had greater authority in the household of God, and this is why the writer urges his readers to honour Christ above Moses.

The way Hebrews talks about God's people, the Church, is interesting. At the beginning of this passage, they are 'holy friends who share in the heavenly calling'. It is a wonderfully inclusive description which identifies the bond which holds all Christians together; they have a 'heavenly calling' which is to testify to Jesus Christ. The central section of the passage (3:2-5) says more about Christ and why He is worthy of our honour, but at the end, we return to the notion of God's people as unified in Christ; 'we are His house if we firmly grasp the assurance and the confidence of our hope.' (3:6). This confidently asserts that our faith is based upon the hope of salvation in Christ, and the writer appeals to God's people to take hold of this fact by emphasising both personal commitment (as implied by the Greek word for 'assurance'), and public testimony (as indicated by the Greek word for 'confidence') to this great hope found in Christ alone.

The description of Moses in this passage is careful, giving him the honour of being found to be more faithful than any of his contemporaries amongst the people of God (best expressed in verse 5). Moses was the model for generations of Jews, and at the time of Christ, he was certainly considered the most important figure in the Bible. However, this passage paints a radically different picture of what it means to be a follower of Jesus rather than a follower of Moses. Through the saving work of Christ, those who follow Him 'share in a heavenly calling'. The words which follow help us understand what this heavenly calling is, because the writer talks about Jesus as the 'apostle and high priest of our calling' (3:1). Like Jesus, therefore, we are people who are 'sent', we have a role of care and service to others (as in high priest), and we have a 'confession' (3:1). In this setting, 'confession' does not mean saying sorry for sins, but 'declaring our faith'. In brief, we are sent to help others find faith and to declare what we believe!

Acting on this great calling, we build the house whose founder is Christ (3:4,5). It is amazing to me to find people in the church who think that it is possible to be religious and attend church, but have little to do with much of what has been mentioned in this study or in this passage of Hebrews. What is said here is consistent with the entire Gospel message of the New Testament. For example, the manner in which the Gospel is spelled out in Hebrews is special, but it is essentially no different from the Great Commission in Matthew (28:19). In God's church today, we could all do with a reality check about what the Bible says is true faith and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Unless we come together around the one true Gospel, the worship of God we offer on Sundays is relatively meaningless, and calls down God's judgement on us. So let us know our calling, hold fast to it and rejoice in 'the confidence of our hope!

Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. In what ways does this passage connect with our understanding of the Gospel? In what ways is it different, or does it add new understanding?
2. Do you see yourself as a builder of 'God's household'? Is it possible to stand back from this obligation and call ourselves Christians?
3. In what sense is Christ the 'head' of the house of your own 'church'? In what ways is this shown?

Discipleship

What this phrase mean to you; 'the assurance and the confidence of our hope?' More importantly, is this phrase something which you can find meaningful at some times in your life, but not at others? Really, this phrase is something that does not change, it is either true for you as a Christian or it is not, in which case it may be necessary to look hard at what is happening to your faith, particularly when under pressure. It is certainly my experience that assurance and confidence are lacking in the lives of too many who call themselves Christians.

Final Prayer

Jesus, You have begun a good work in me; may I not be so fickle as to fail to stand firm in my faith and hold on to the truths that have been passed on to me. Jesus, help me to face my own problems rather than try to ignore them, and liberate me from their power. Jesus, lift my heart to praise Your name, now and forever more: AMEN