

WHAT JESUS PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW (Hebrews 3:1-6)

The movement began in the late 1960's and continued into the early 70's. The impact of that movement is still felt and seen today. *Look* magazine gave the movement a name in a February 1971 article. They called it the "Jesus Movement." The title of a May 1971 article in *Life* magazine dubbed the adherents to that movement as "The Groovy Christians." The

June 21, 1971 cover of *Time* magazine featured a drawing of the head of Jesus, and arching over his head were the words, "The Jesus Revolution."

The Jesus People Movement began on the west coast and spread across the country. Young people, mostly hippies, who had not found what they were looking for in "the sex, drugs, and rock & roll" lifestyle they had been living were turning to Jesus by the hundreds and the thousands.

Several years ago, Pastor Greg Laurie (who was saved during that era) and Ellen Vaughan teamed up to write a book entitled, *Jesus Revolution*. The inside jacket of the book carries these words:

God has always been interested in turning unlikely people into his most fervent followers. Prostitutes and pagans, tax collectors and tricksters. The more unlikely, the more it seemed to please God and to demonstrate his power, might, and mercy. America in the 1960s and 1970s was full of unlikely people—men and women who had rejected the stuffy religion of their parents' generation, who didn't follow the rules, didn't fit in. The perfect setting for the greatest spiritual awakening of the 20th century.

There have been numerous occasions in our country's past when the Spirit of God has orchestrated times of awakening and revival, and they came at a time when they were sorely needed. You and I are living in such a time. There are scores of people in our country who are far from God. It is my prayer, and I ask you to join me in praying, that God would so move in our land that a great number of such people would become Jesus people.

Take your Bible and turn to Hebrews 3. We are going to be looking at vv. 1-6. I want to highlight four things that Jesus people need to know. All of you who follow Jesus are Jesus people, and there are four things you need to know.

As Jesus People, We Need to Know Who We Are

Right off the bat in v. 1, the author of Hebrews identifies his readers as "holy brothers." Both words are important, and it is vital that we give attention to both. Quite often, as we read the Bible, we blow past words without really thinking about what the Scripture is telling us. In our rush to get to the verbs, the action words, there are treasures that are hiding in plain sight. We simply overlook them.

Albert Mohler explained, "The biblical authors often embed an entire theology in the

words they use to describe the church.”

We are told here in Hebrews 3:1 that we are *holy brothers*. Elsewhere in the NT, the church is described as being *a holy temple, a holy priesthood, and a holy nation* (1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

As believers in Christ, we are holy. We were certainly not this before we trusted Christ. In Ephesians 2:11-13 Paul tells the believers in Corinth who they used to be and who they are now in Christ. Listen to how it appears in the NLT:

¹¹ Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders . . . ¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

In other words, we were strangers to holiness; we were devoid of any righteousness, but the death Jesus died for us, and His resurrection from the grave changed everything. We have experienced a change from the inside out.

A few years ago, a student in Egypt went to the Cairo Zoo. He posted pictures of the zebras on Facebook. He claimed that what he saw were nothing more than donkeys with black stripes painted on them. The zoo's director maintained in an interview that the zebras were real. A local news team investigated. They spoke with a veterinarian. He inspected the pictures and pointed out that real zebras don't have smudged lines.

You can paint a donkey to look like a zebra, but it is still a donkey.

Likewise, you can dress the way you think Christians dress, and talk like you think Christians talk, and you can try to act like Christians act, but the Lord knows those who are His. You can't fake true holiness. It is a gift received not a performance regardless of how convincing the act may be.

The author of Hebrews calls us holy brothers and sisters. We are family. We are more than friends or acquaintances. We are more than neighbors or buddies. We are family because we have the same Father, and we have the same Elder Brother. We learned that last week (2:17).

Through the years, I have learned something that may surprise you. I'm going to tell you, but I warn you that you may find this shocking. Here it is: Sometimes, members of the same family, sometimes, they fight with one another. I know, I know, I found it hard to believe, too, but sometimes, members of the same family have disagreements. They fuss, and feud, and bicker, and sometimes, they even hold grudges. I don't understand it, but I have found that to be the case.

Now, when members of the same family disagree, and when they do it disagreeably, when they are battling one another, does that mean they are no longer members of the same family? No. They are still brothers and sisters.

What does it mean? Paul tells us what it means in 1 Corinthians 3. The Church in Corinth was a feuding church. There were various factions. Each wanted to have it their own way. Paul wrote to them, “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people,

but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ” (3:1). Babies are members of the family, but they are babies, and they need to grow up, and with loving care, they will grow up to become functioning, contributing members of the family.

Whenever there is fussing and feuding going on in the church, you know that immaturity is on full display. But praise God, He has put members into His family who are called “peacemakers.” Jesus said of them, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). They are valued and valuable members of God’s family. They are gifted at bringing two warring sides together so that there can be unity and harmony in God’s family.

We are holy, and we are family. Those are two things that we as Jesus People need to know and keep in mind.

As Jesus People, We Need to Know What We Have

The very next thing that the author of Hebrews tells us as holy brothers and sisters is that we share a “heavenly calling.” That is what we have—a heavenly calling. What is this heavenly calling? By calling it a *heavenly calling*, the writer is not implying that the calling is to heaven. Rather, this calling comes from heaven.

I am reminded of a young man who told his pastor that God was calling him to preach. The pastor gave the young man an opportunity to preach on a Sunday night service. When the time came, some felt the young man did a less than stellar job. One lady whispered a question to her friend, “Do you think he is really called.” Her friend whispered back, “Well, he may have a call, but I’m pretty sure it is not long-distance.”

All who have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ have a received a long-distance call. It is a call that came from heaven. There are basically two calls. There is a corporate call and a personal call. The corporate call is the same for every believer. It is a call to belong—to belong to Jesus, to belong to the church, to belong to the body of Christ this is in this world. It is a call to belong to Him and to one another. We are not meant to be Lone Ranger Christians. We are in this together. The corporate call is the call to belong.

Then, there is a personal call. It is the call to become. God doesn’t mass produce His followers. Each are hand-crafted originals. God has something in mind for you to become. He wants you to serve Him in a particular way. You have a unique personality, a unique history, and a unique gifting. He is not going to use you in the same way that He uses me.

Let me tell you a story. I may have told you before, and if so, it bears repeating. When I was 40 years old, I felt God was calling me to a different kind of ministry. To pursue this type of ministry, I would need a secular job. I stepped out of being the full-time pastor of a high-profile church in the community where I lived, and I became the Manger of local hotel, an award-winning hotel.

I was the manager of the hotel for 2 and ½ years. Then, I was asked to be the principal, the administrator of a Christian school. About a year after becoming the administrator, I went to a conference for administrators in Fort Worth. As I drove down

to the conference, I kept asking myself, “What should I do?” I had been a pastor, a hotel manager, and now a school administrator, but what should I do? You might say, “I still didn’t know what I wanted to be when I grew up.”

The second day of the conference, I had several hours off, so, I drove to downtown Ft. Worth to look for a bookstore. I found a two-story bookstore. I went to the second story where the religious books were kept. I saw a sale table, where I could get a good deal on some books. Those are my kind of books. I found a book by Os Guinness. I had seen his name before. There on that table was a book he had written entitled, *The Call*. I picked it up, found a comfortable chair and began to read. What I read changed my entire perspective, and that is one of the reasons why I am your pastor today.

This is some of what I read:

A sense of calling should precede a choice of job and career, and the main way to discover calling is along the line of what we are each created and gifted to be. Instead of “You are what you do,” calling says, “Do what you are.”

At the very moment as I read those words, I realized I had been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking, “What should I do?”, I should ask, “Who am I?” So, I stopped and asked, “Who am I? Immediately, I answered, “I am a preacher.” That’s who I am. That’s who I was created and called to be. I’m not a hotel manager. I’m not a school administrator. I am a preacher. I could go out and find a different job that pays better, but I wouldn’t be happy, because that is not who I am. I am a minister of the gospel.

We have a calling to belong and a calling to become, and these two callings are heavenly. They come from the loving heart of God Himself. We are Jesus people. We need to know who we are and what we have.

As Jesus People, We Need to Know What to Do

In our text, we find an imperative, a command. We are told explicitly and plainly what we are to do. In the middle of v. 1 we read, “consider Jesus.” That is exactly what we are to do. That simple phrase is rendered differently in the various translations. The NLT says, “think about this Jesus.” The NIV offers, “fix your thoughts on Jesus.” The Voice Bible tell us, “let’s turn our attention to Jesus.” It conveys the idea of thinking something through thoroughly, of giving focused attention to something. This means we are to apply our minds diligently and continuously to Jesus.

In his exposition of this text, Kent Hughes pointed out that if we are to consider Jesus truly, it will involve desire, concentration, discipline, and time.

The first is **desire**. We will only focus on Jesus if we truly desire Him. Honestly, we give little attention to that which we don’t really want, but when we long for someone or something, we will think about that person or that thing long and often.

The next is **concentration**. When a girl likes a boy, she will sit and think about that boy, and day dream about him, oblivious to everything and everyone around her. That is concentration. We need to become preoccupied with Jesus.

To sustain that concentration, we need **discipline**. The problem is that we have very undisciplined minds. If the devil or his demons know that you are thinking about and focusing on Jesus, they will do whatever they can to distract you. Quite often they are successful, because we lack the self-discipline necessary to remain focused on Jesus. We allow our minds to wander, our attention to be diverted.

One of the prime enemies of focused attention is our digital devices. We start scrolling through text messages or Facebook posts, and before you know it, 45 minutes, an hour, and hour and a half have gone by. We are undisciplined; we allowed our attention to be diverted to the trivial and the unimportant.

The last necessary ingredient involved in considering Jesus, according to Hughes, is **time**. We can't truly consider Jesus by only glancing at Him. If you are going to appreciate the art at an art museum, it will require time focusing on the paintings or the sculptures. Some galleries put benches in front of great works of art. You are invited to sit down and focus on the message the artist wants to communicate.

Regularly, we need to put away the distractions, silence the cell phones, turn off the devices, and sit in the presence of Jesus and consider Him.

I believe it was in the mid to late 1990's when people began wearing cheap, rubber bracelets that bore the letters WWJD. The letters stood for, "What would Jesus do?" That is a great question to ask yourself before choosing a course of action or making an important decision. I would argue, however, that you can't answer the question, "What would Jesus do?" until you first answer the question, "What did Jesus do?" To answer that question requires that you open up the Bible, that you read the gospels, and that you prayerfully consider Him.

That brings us to the final point.

As Jesus People, We Need to Know Jesus Well

So far, we have just stayed in v. 1 of our text. The next five verses are dedicated to telling us about Jesus. In the first two chapters of Hebrews, we were told that Jesus is superior to the angels. Now, the author of Hebrews wants us to know that Jesus is superior to Moses.

Why was that message important? We need to keep in mind that the audience to which this author is writing is predominantly Jewish. There was no one who was held in higher esteem among the Jews than Moses.

It was Moses, who was chosen by God to deliver His people, and it was Moses whom God used to accomplish that amazing feat. It was through Moses that God displayed His miraculous power. In addition to being a Deliverer, Moses was also a prophet. But unlike other prophets whom God communicated with indirectly through dreams and visions, God communicated directly to Moses. We read the testimony of God in Numbers 12:8, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD."

It was Moses through whom God gave His people the Law. In fact, the Jewish people didn't just call it "the Law." They called it "the Law of Moses."

In addition to being the conduit through the Law came to God's people, Moses was also the author of the first five books of the Bible. We call it the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

One of the most amazing things we read about Moses appears in Numbers 12:3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all the people on the face of the earth." Scripture says that Moses was the meekest man in all the world. Unfortunately, meekness is not highly valued in our culture today. When boards are voting on a new CEO, when employers are looking for new managers, when large churches are looking for new lead pastor, meekness is not a quality that are looking for. It should be. It is something God highly values. Please understand, meekness is not weakness. In fact, it is the exact opposite. Meekness is strength under control. The original word was used to describe horses that had been broken. A horse has incredible strength, and when the horse had been broken, its strength has been, literally, harnessed. Now, that strength can be used for good.

In light all these wonderful things the Jewish people knew about Moses, the author of Hebrews is saying, "Jesus is even greater." Let me just read again vv. 2-6. If we boil all that down, the argument is that while Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, Jesus is the faithful Son over God's house.

Look at v. 6. We are the house. Who are you going to worship—the servant of the Son?

As Jesus people, we are going to keep our confidence in Jesus, and we are going to keep boasting about Him. The more we know about Jesus, the greater our confidence will be, and the longer our boast will be. We need to know Jesus well.

Many years ago, when I was pastoring on Grand Lake, I was asked by the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Quapaw to preach a revival at his church. I agreed. The revival started on a Sunday morning. My daughter, Bethany, was about three. Her mother and I explained to her that we would be going to a different church that day.

As the daughter of a pastor, she had been to church just about every Sunday of her young life. In fact, she was born on a Wednesday, and she was in church the following Sunday. Bethany knew that at her church, she sang about Jesus and to Jesus. She knew that her Sunday School lessons were about Jesus. She knew that her Daddy preached about Jesus. When she was told that we were going to a different church that day, she had only one question. She asked, "Is it a Jesus Church?"

That is a great question to ask whenever you contemplate joining a Church: "Is it a Jesus Church?" That is a wonderful question to ask if you are already a member of Church: "Is this Church a Jesus Church?"

A Church can only be a Jesus Church if the members within it are Jesus People. Are you a Jesus person?