

Christ Community Covenant Church
Sermon – God has spoken: Chipotle Religion
Hebrews 3:1-6
Pastor Dave Scherrer - September 29, 2013

I enjoy Chipotle. Susan and I go there maybe once a month. I like that I can build my meal according to my sensitivities of the moment, pinto or black beans, white or brown rice, choice of salsa, kind of meat, naked or tortilla. I like that I can choose to go healthy or not so much, depending on my feelings of the moment. I know I'm not going to hurt anyone feelings and if I am unhappy with the meal, I can go to Qdoba next time I have a hankering for Mexican fast food.

This has a point - Here is my concern. There's a pervasive approach to the spiritual life in our culture that I would simply call "The Religion of Chipotle."

Chipotle Religion

Unfortunately, some people take that same approach and apply it to the spiritual quest. In our culture it's tempting to think we can saunter up to the great burrito bar of the religious world and say something like this:

- ♣ I'll have some of that evangelicalism. I like their energy and cultural adaptability.
- ♣ I like the regal nature of Roman Catholicism, and it seems kind of ancient, and I also need a little dab of mystery in my life—but not too much, please, because I also want to figure things out for myself.
- ♣ Give me a dash of Hinduism because I sure like that open-endedness; and if I'm a good person, I'll be reincarnated in a higher life form.
- ♣ I like the calmness and detachment of Buddhism. But once again, give me just a small portion because I don't want to quench all of my earthly desires.
- ♣ Wow, Islam has some seriousness and discipline. That would sure help me stay on track. I'll put a little bit of that in there.
- ♣ I like a little bit of the Secret, it gives me a sense of control – I can make things happen with my positive energy and I like the kind of New Age magic.
- ♣ Oh, but that judgment of God stuff—that's too spicy.
- ♣ And that "Jesus is the only way to God" salsa—no, I don't want to limit myself to that option. Please keep that out.

We literally choose and pick, often without research, often very subjectively, the things that we think must be true. As a result, we make our own religion like a self-made burrito. Have you seen this popular bumper sticker?



or this one . . .



One of the things I think people find distasteful about Christianity – although it is true about most other religions as well - is that it is exclusive. It says you cannot just pick and choose as if reality

is determined by our preferences. God exists outside of us and we cannot shape him and the universe simply to our liking like we would a burrito. We do not pick truth – we discover and face it.

Thus all religions are not equal or equally true – nor do they all teach the same things – they have differing views of God, reality and how one is saved or gets to an afterlife or heaven if they believe in a heaven.

This reality is part of what the book of Hebrews is arguing– it is arguing that Jesus is not only better than the alternatives – he really is the only option and choice. He is superior. Thus, we have entitled the series on Hebrews, ***God Has Spoken***– and in saying this we acknowledge that God gets to set the standard for truth and morality and our job is to devote ourselves to that truth.

The intended audience (Jewish Christians in Rome/Antioch) – are feeling the pressure to abandon their faith in Christ and find hope in something or someone else – they are facing increasing cultural pressure and persecution; they were operating as the minority in the culture. Some are going back to their Jewish roots or pieces of it and some are turning to other places, adding to their faith in Christ with rituals and habits that diminish and dilute our faith. Hebrews is saying, “Don’t do it! Stay faithful to what you have heard and know. God has spoken and Jesus is the true expression of Truth!”

In the last several weeks we have seen comparisons or as scholars call them a *synkrisis*, between people and things. It is a common technique of antiquity to help draw the reader into a deeper discussion or awareness and to create a distinction in the dialogue. Here is what we have already seen:

- ♣ Jesus is better because he is supreme – the son of God and fully God
- ♣ Jesus is better because he is superior to the angels – He was before creation
- ♣ Jesus is better because he became one of us – fully human

This morning we will take up the topic of our passage “Jesus is better because he is superior to Moses.”

“Jesus is better because he is superior to Moses”

But this is the problem with this book. Too often it seems so old and abstract so we have to ask – ‘So what?’ and ‘Who cares for why?’ So we will try to answer that application question before the morning is out. Let’s get started with our text:

Hebrews 3:1-6

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.² He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.⁵ Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house,^{6a} bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future.⁶ 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.

This is a critical text because it will help us see why Jesus is better, not simply better than Moses – but better than all the other options as well.

Moses was incredibly significant to the Jewish people – Moses was their religious hero.

Moses was Chosen
Moses was the Deliverer
Moses was the first Prophet and Intermediary
Moses was the Founder of their faith

1. **Moses was Chosen** – remember he is placed in the river by his mother and taken out by the daughter of Pharaoh – from the very start God had big plans for Moses – he is a special guy!
2. **Moses was the Deliverer** – their first savior – Moses grows up in the royal court and he is banished for killing a man – he travels to Midian and lives there for 40 years – in exile. When he is 80 God tells him to return to Egypt and God uses him to bring about the release of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. If you remember the story, God uses the plagues to finally move the Pharaoh to let the people go – the Nile turns to blood; there was the plague of frogs, gnats, flies, hail, boils and eventually the last plague results in the death of the first born during the Passover. Then, Moses leads them through the Red sea and to the desert of the Sinai – where because of their disobedience they wander for 40 years – but eventually they get to the land of milk and honey and freedom and to the promised ‘Rest’ of God.

This was core to their Jewish identity – every year they celebrate the Passover to remind them of who they are and what God has done and at the heart of that story of rescue is the rescuer Moses.

3. **Moses was seen as the first Prophet and Intermediary** – he spoke for God to the people – God spoke to him face to face (in fact he had to wear a veil to conceal the radiance of his face after being in the presence of God). But he was God’s voice to the people – he delivered the Ten Commandments, Moses bringer of the Law.
4. **Moses was the Founder of their faith and religion** – he authored according to tradition the first 5 books of the OT – what we call the Pentateuch. It contained the Law and the plans for the tabernacles – their place of worship and the sacrificial system – their whole system of living and their religious life

To most Jews Moses was simply the greatest – and according to one early tradition, Moses was superior to the angels, having a higher rank and privilege – he was absolutely essential to their religion.

Remember this letter or sermon of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians – they came out of the religion of Moses, and the Law, and the whole Judaic system. So, when the pressure was on and persecution hit and things got hard and they were not working out the way they expected – (and that is what is happening at this moment in time when these words are penned – just before the persecutions of the Roman emperor Nero against Christians) they were tempted to go back – to what was comfortable and what was easy and accepted their Jewish roots and religion – which meant going back to Moses. It was into that situation that the author of Hebrews writes.

So here is where we face the ‘So what and who cares?’ question. First let’s see how the passage makes it relevant – we see that there is a command for us.

1. The Command - Consider Jesus or fix your thoughts on Jesus

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.

'Kataneo'

Now I have another favorite Greek word! **'Kataneo'** – pay attention to – consider, think about, notice, observe – really **who he is and what he has done** – he is the apostle and the high priest. The word conveys the notion of putting your full attention and continuous observation and deep concentration to something – not just a passing thought but deep concerted mental effort. **Kataneo** is what my mom meant when she said, “Think David, Think!”

Jesus should not be an afterthought in our lives but rather the prime focus for us.

Like the cats watching the birds or a measuring tape – always zaps back to the center – and Jesus should be the center of our thoughts.

So he says focus on Jesus as the apostle and high priest:

- He is our apostle (Who he is) – Sent one – Moses was chosen and sent – but he really was just a sample of what was to come – he pointed to the Real Apostle – the one sent not to rescue just from Egypt but the one sent to rescue from sin and death
- He is our High Priest (What he has done) – intermediary or intercessor par excellence. He was the perfect human and perfectly God – he knows both man and God – and there is no one better to intercede. In Hebrews whenever it is talking about the high priest it is a reference to his role in providing atonement.

The high priest is the one who made atonement. He went into the sacred 'back room' of the temple to be where God was but before He could do that he had to make sacrifices to atone for his own sin. On the Day of Atonement the priest takes blood into the holy of holies to throw it on the Ark of the Covenant to make atonement or payment for sin – tied a rope around his ankle so they could get him out if he messed up and was struck dead. When Jesus goes before the Father to defend and atone for us perfection faces perfection. There can be no better intermediary.

We are to be always conscious of and thinking about **who Jesus is** and **what Jesus has done**. That framework and way of thinking is to shape our lives and provide the framework for our world view. We are to keep in mind that Jesus is the Builder of the House and Master of the House.

Builder of the House and Master of the House

Hebrews 3:3-6

³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵ Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, ^{6a} bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. ⁶ 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.

Moses was a servant in the house but Jesus is the Builder over the House and we sometimes get that mixed up. This is Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. It is a magnificent building, the greatest of its day and many might say still the greatest. It took 125 years to build.



And this scowling gentleman is Donato Bramante the designer and architect of this achievement.



Application: Focus on Jesus and keep focused on Jesus because he is our confidence and hope - better than anyone or anything else – past, present or future. I want to convince my audience that they should make Jesus and keep Jesus the center of their lives. So consider placing ***a dot on your phone*** to remind you that every decision and conversation needs to have the permission and approval of Jesus.

C.S. Lewis giving counsel to a little girl:

"If you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you, and I hope you always do so."

Prayer, offering, announcement,

Video: Sam Robson, How Great Thou Art