

## FIRST MIDWEEK ADVENT VESPERS

Hebrews 3:1-6

*Consider Jesus*

*“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus”* It doesn’t sound like a lot, but in our day and age, as I suppose it has been in every day and age, it is a challenge.

*“Consider Jesus.”* It’s great advice, but life is full of demands, of responsibilities, of distractions, and, yes, of things to consider. And so, in the midst of all this, and in the midst of what is for many the busiest time of the year, when the writer to the Hebrews tells us to *“consider Jesus”* He is calling us to a serious task.

But it’s not only the busyness of this season intended for contemplation that gets in our way. As we seek to consider Jesus, we must wade through all the Jesi tossed about this time of year to find the real Jesus, the one to be considered. In a society that quickly takes the Child out of the manger and packs Him back up in a box in the attic, that smiles at His curls but never makes it to His cross, we must be careful not to rush by or to be too hasty.

To make things harder, part of us shrinks back from the idea itself. Considering Jesus means considering a lot of things that we’d much rather file away or set on the back burner. Considering Jesus makes us reexamine our selfish decisions, our shortsighted goals and destructive desires.

But yet, *“Consider Jesus.”* That is the goal set before us this Advent season, and these services are intended to do just that, and the writer to the Hebrews helps us to do so tonight by placing Him next to another Biblical hero, Moses.

When it comes to the Old Testament, Moses is the man. He wrote its first five books, the Pentateuch, and plays the lead role in the last four of them. He was the leader of Israel, delivering them from slavery in Egypt. He was the prophet of Israel, speaking to them the Word of God. It was Moses who had taught them to worship as they would worship until the time of Christ. It was Moses who taught them the law that would set them apart as a people until the time of Christ. In the Jewish mind at the time of Christ there could perhaps be no greater man than Moses, and that’s what makes the writer to the Hebrew’s statement so amazing.

*“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.)”* Moses was great, but Jesus is greater. Moses was the man, but Jesus is the God-Man, the builder of all things.

Do you remember what happened when Jesus arrived on the scene and John the Baptist’s disciples noticed that many were leaving to follow Him? They complained, *“Look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”* They thought they were looking out for

John. His congregation was shrinking as many crossed the river to listen to this new Preacher named Jesus, but John, looking out for them, explained, *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

And the same is true for us. In this season where we are so tempted to focus on what I want, what I get, what others do for me, we must remember that this is precisely the time for Christ to increase in us, even as we decrease in Christian humility, for us to point our hearts and the eyes of our loved ones to the newborn Lamb of God, for us to find true peace in the manger, peace that is found, not in our own will, but in God’s.

Moses would have said the same, because the prophets were sent for no other reason than to proclaim the coming of this Jesus, and they longed for nothing more than the fulfillment of that which they proclaimed. Do you remember the Transfiguration? Who appears next to Jesus but Moses, together with Elijah? Jesus is the fruition of their message and the realization of their hope.

St. John reminds us in the very beginning of his Gospel, *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* As Jesus person is greater than Moses, so also Jesus’ message is greater than Moses—not more necessary, but greater. Moses has given us the law. Love God above all, and we haven’t. Love God’s name, and we haven’t. Love God’s Word, and we haven’t. Honor those in authority, and we haven’t. Honor body and life, and we haven’t. Honor God’s gift of sex and your spouse, and we haven’t. Honor each other’s property, and we haven’t. Honor each other’s reputation, and we haven’t. Honor each other’s best interest, and we haven’t. Moses has given us the law, and the law would give us life if we could keep it, but the problem is that we can’t. Sure, we can make a decent go of things now and again, but we cannot keep it perfectly with a pure hearth and right motives all the time and in every way. We cannot, and we have not. Moses has given us the law, but Jesus brings us the gospel, good news of grace and truth.

*“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* There will not only be a Baby in the manger this Christmas, but a Man in the waters of the Jordan being baptized, a Man nailed to a cross being mocked, a Man walking out of a tomb being glorified. To consider Jesus is to ponder more than the hay; it is to walk through the entire Church Year in your head, to call to mind all the Gospels say about Him.

The little feet, the little hands, the little side in that hay: all will be pierced for our transgressions. The little head will be crowned with the fruit of our sin: thorns. And that little heel will be bruised by the ancient Serpent, Satan. But make no mistake about it: that little foot will also crush the Serpent’s head. Those little hands will stretch out in ascending blessing. That little head will be crowned with heavenly gold. Moses was sent

to keep the house in order, but this Child is sent to bring the house home, and you are part of that house, the household of God.

*“Consider Jesus.”* No, it’s not easy, but I pray it’s on top of your list, because if Advent passes and you’ve accomplished everything else for Christmas but this, you haven’t gotten anything done. *“Consider Jesus.”* Yes, there’s a lot to be done, and, yes, there’s a lot of Jesi out there, but this is what the season is about, and this Jesus, the one put forth in God’s Word, born to die for your sins and to rise for your justification, is the one upon which to focus. All the rest is bells and tinsel. *“Consider Jesus.”* Amen.