

Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 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. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Remember that the writer to Hebrews is writing to converted Jews who were tempted to fall away from the Christian Faith in persecution. Whereas most Gentiles might not have identified with Moses so much, having been converted from paganism, Moses still held a special place for converted Jews. He was Israel's leader for the defining event of its Old Testament history: the exodus from slavery in Egypt. He was the prophet, so to speak. And yet now the writer points out that a greater prophet, the Messiah, has come. While Moses was most certainly important and a faithful servant, Christ is the Son and He has been faithful to lead us, not out of earthly slavery, but out of bondage to sin, death, and the devil. And, for that reason, Jesus has been counted of more glory than Moses. How foolish these converted Jews would have been, therefore, to return to the law of Moses now that they had come to know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Most of us cannot identify with these Jews' connection to Moses. We too have never lived under the law of God handed down by him as they had. The moral law, the Ten Commandments, remains, but we do not have the same ceremonial and civil laws that they lived under for so long. We do not have the dietary laws and the laws concerning clothing, for instance. Yet we too can be tempted to turn to Moses instead of Christ. Whenever we expect from the law what only the gospel can give, namely, forgiveness and salvation, that is what we are doing. That is the case when we somehow convince ourselves that we can make up for our sins in God's eyes, balance out the scales, or fix ourselves so that we sin no more by virtue of will power alone, which is nothing other than to think we can rip Christ from His cross, to which He was held by a love too strong for us to sever. Whenever we try to make a Christian through the law, that is, with arguments and rules and shame and guilt, instead of letting the Spirit make a Christian through the gospel, that is what we are doing. The law must remain the law (Moses must remain Moses) and the gospel must remain the gospel (Christ must remain Christ), and so we do well to strive to balance law and gospel rightly and salutarily to the best of our ability.

How foolish we would be to trade anything for Jesus, to want anything to take His rightful place in the church, the sermon, the hymns, the prayers, or in our daily lives! Moses and all the saints are but servants, while Jesus is the Son who through His faithful and redeeming sacrifice makes us sons and daughters of God with Him. He is faithful over His house, and through faith we are made that house, each of us living stones. Let us, then, "*hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope,*" so that we might remain His house all our days, no matter what obstacle, persecution, or empty promises we might face. Amen.