

Jesus is Better - Hebrews 1:1-4, 12:25-29
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Imagine if you will a First Century Jewish man, a person who actually saw Jesus at one point in time in the small town where he lived. He was in Jerusalem when Jesus seemed to get swept up by Jewish leaders resulting in Jesus being hung on a Roman cross, and it brought tears to his eyes. Yet a few days later the rumors of his being alive again started buzzing through the region. After Passover in what we know of as 33 AD the wave of the Gospel sweeps through Jerusalem after the festival called Pentecost, and this man believes. At first there is a ground swell of excitement about this risen Jewish man actually being the Jewish Messiah. But quickly other Jewish people reject the Gospel, and many in power who were responsible for the death of Jesus started persecuting Christians and putting pressure on the masses, what began as a small fault line between Christian and non-Christian Jews become a chasm in a few short years. As a result, the man begins to feel the pressure of persecution. He is beginning to lose relationship with family members, his wife's parents actually held a funeral for a daughter that is now dead to them. His business is being targeted and he is losing customers because of his faith in Jesus, and his kids are being picked on by others in the neighborhood. And more recently the hostility is turning to threats and violence toward your family and others in the church. Think about the central question for this man, his wife, and his family? It would be easier to return to Judaism, and either reject Jesus or just make your faith a private faith nobody knows about. Is Jesus really worth it? Seriously, Judaism is the faith handed down by God through Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. Is it really worth being threatened, persecuted, and even facing the potential to lose everything just for following Jesus.

The New Testament letter we call the book of Hebrews was written for people just like this fictional man. The author wants the readers to realize that Jesus is totally worth it, worth any cost and losing anything in this world, because He is better, so much better than anything. The author invites us to gaze at Jesus, to fix our eyes on Him and see His glory, His beauty, His value. God in His infinite wisdom has included this amazing book in the Scriptures for us as well. While the threats and doubts probably don't come from the same perspective as the First Century Jewish Christians this book targets, we too have doubts, pressures, and threats as we seek to live our the faith once for all delivered to the Saints. Most of us know people who have decided to leave Christianity for myriads of reasons. And the thought of gaining our Sunday mornings and other times we give to the church back is tempting for our busy lives. We need the book of Hebrews and the reminder that Jesus truly is better. Better than what, you might ask. While the author is addressing a Jewish audience, so his responses are addressing their culture and the Jewish challenges to faith, His ultimate answer to all of us is that Jesus is better than everything.

For our study, I have already written and published a study guide for our *Better* series on Hebrews. Let me encourage you to find that on the Genesis blog or Koinonia and take some time reading over the background information for the book. I won't rehash that material here, but I do want to focus for a moment on the makeup of the audience. As mentioned, Hebrews was written for a primarily Jewish audience, and the author connects the dots between the Jews story and truths revealed in the Old Testament and the fulfillment of all of these in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus is better because He is both the point and the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament. In other words, Judaism is incomplete without Jesus and it left these people with a religion that could not

save them. The book (that is actually written in the form of a sermon) was written to believers as an encouragement, even if they lost everything and their very lives, Jesus is better and so worth it. He alone brings an unshakeable Kingdom that will outlast this world. Hebrews is also written for those who are leaving the faith, and it contains several stern warnings. Hebrews reminds these people that it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31) because God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). And it is written as an invitation for those who are considering Jesus, knowing the cost, and wondering if following Jesus is worth it. This letter invites people in, to look to Jesus, to gaze on Him, and experience His glory and splendor. As we read what we will find is that Jesus is our treasure, of infinite value, and worthy of our worship, with reverence and awe. May our journey cause us to know Him more and fall more deeply in love with Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Revelations 20	Revelations 21	Revelations 22	Hosea 1	Hosea 2	Hosea 3	Hosea 4

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 1, 12

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 1:1-4

Family Worship

Song - *Because of Jesus*

<https://youtu.be/NfVEQJjbNXQ?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Rules over Creation

Story: The First Family

Big Picture Question: Who is God?

Answer: God is our Creator and the King of everything.

Scripture: Genesis 4

New City Catechism

Question 38: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God.

Verse: Psalm 62:8

Scripture

Hebrews 1:1-4, 12:25-29

- What were the challenges faced by these First Century Jewish believers? What are the challenges to your faith that make you wonder if following Jesus is worth it?
- The author starts big. What does he say about Jesus in the first four verses of the book? What do these things tell us about the glory and worth of Jesus?
- Hebrews both invites and warns. It invites readers to look on Jesus and see His glory, but it also gives very stern warnings about rejecting Jesus. Why do we need both of these?

Prayer

*Pray for our President, Congress, and our national leaders.

*Pray that we would find Jesus to be better than everything and that this series through Hebrews would grow our affections for Him.