

Sermon: Consider Christ: Faithful to His Calling; the Boast of our Hope (Hebrews 3:1-6)

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October 25thⁿ, 2009

Grace, Mercy, and Peace are yours through Jesus Christ our LORD, the Apostle and High Priest of the kingdom of God.

Have you ever considered the statements your fashion makes? For some of us, we have put a lot of thought into what we wear and what it says about us. Clothes make the man they say. People often think they can tell a lot about a person by what they are wearing. NASCAR drivers wear their allegiances right on their sleeve. I think this is part of the inspiration for the Christian clothing line. Christian clothing has had its peaks and its valleys. One sticks out in my mind. (t-shirt) Jesus is my homeboy. A silly confession isn't it? I guess you could understand it rightly. Jesus loves me and is always with me; he is someone I trust and can count on. But the statement is a muddled confession at best. Jesus is more than just someone to hang out with, more than my peer or my equal. Most of us would be pretty uncomfortable if these words would be included in any of our creeds. The WORD behind these words might be Scripturally sound, but it can easily be misunderstood.

We like our confessions clear. Jesus Christ is LORD. Amen. These words are a clear testimony about our Savior. But sometimes our actions make the WORD behind our confession unclear. Think about how our sinful nature reacts in good or bad times. In good times, we are quick to point to ourselves, how hard we work, how the sweat of our brow has earned us all that we have. Neighbors hear that too often the pride of your boast is your children, your truck, your home, your toys. But sometimes the juice doesn't drip down your chin. Money is tight and our friends notice we are worried about how to make ends meet, about our parents' health, about whatever. We worry. We worry about what will need to be done. We worry about whether we can do it. Either way our confession is the same isn't it? Sure Jesus Christ is LORD, but only for Easter and Judgment Day. We act as if he was sent to do God's Work for a time and that work is done, so he punched out. We know intellectually that he will come again, but how does that affect our here and now? Are your actions in line with your words? Or is your confession more like a confusing fashion statement? We don't know the day or the hour, so we act as if it doesn't matter that he is returning. Our actions and reactions are often more in line with a confession which says Jesus Christ was LORD and he will be again, someday, probably, maybe.

Our text for consideration this morning asks us to consider our confession about Christ. Consider Christ, the one who remains faithful to his appointment and who is the boast of our hope.

Jesus was more than just a perfect man. Our text describes him as the Apostle and our Great High Priest. Loaded titles which describe the work the Son of God was sent to do. And he was faithful in every way.

As the faithful Apostle, he was devoted to his calling. Jesus was sent to be true God and man among the lost. He came into this lost world, amongst a people living in darkness so he could show them that he was the great light that they had long waited for. He was the truth they needed. He was the life they longed for but could not earn. He lived perfectly, without sin. His actions and his confession were clear. But he was sent also to be true man, so that he could sympathize with our weaknesses, to understand the impact of sin and temptation in a real way. To live life in the midst of a world destroyed by sin. Yet, he was still perfect, a sacrifice without spot or defect, a Lamb without blemish. His actions were perfectly in line with his words & the words of the prophets. All to save his people. Faithful to his calling.

But he was called to be more than a sacrificial Lamb, he was also a faithful sacrificer, the High Priest. The High Priest had a special function in OT worship life. While he was the spiritual head of the people; he wasn't simply a worship manager sitting far off in the distance. His hands got bloody. He offered sacrifices for his sins and for the sins of all the people. And he had to make sure the sacrifices were acceptable. Without any kind of blemish or defect. Christ functioned as his

own quality control. Something he could only do as the perfect Son of God. Ensuring that the life he lived was indeed perfect in every way, that his blood was innocent, and that his death would make atonement for sins of all of mankind. As High Priest he served as mediator between man and God, making reconciliation through his own death.

But that was then right? We know all that. Christ lived perfectly and he died. And we know intellectually, through faith, that this is true. But what difference does it make now? This is what the Hebrews struggled with. They knew Christ was more than just a good guy. But they felt like they still had to accomplish things on their own. It's our sinful human nature isn't it? Free grace just sounds too good to be true. We think about it long and hard and we come up with wild ideas. Maybe you need to really reach out to God, so you can earn your faith. Or maybe God knew me, he knew who I would reach, who I would touch, and he saw how well I would work for him, that's why he chose me. We, just like the Hebrews, want a reason. A reason why God did what he did. Something that would set you apart from all the others. Something you can boast about.

God has given us something to boast about, but not what our human nature pines after. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of a boast of our hope. Christ. Consider Christ, the Apostle, Christ, your Great High Priest, your hope, the reason you have to boast.

Christ, the Apostle is sending you out. Sending you to learn your boast well. Sending you out to a world which does not know him. Our Christ has done divine miracles, preached moving sermons, suffered, and died. But he has done more than this. He sent his Holy Spirit to his Early Church and inspired them to write down the things he said and did. We don't have an oral history, passed down through word of mouth. We have the written WORD. Most of us, have multiple copies of the Bible in our homes that we can read in our own language. Especially when you examine this in the broad scope of human history, this is a great blessing. We have God's complete plan of salvation at our very fingertips. Read it. Learn your boast well. Regale yourself with Christ's miraculous birth, devour his parables. Watch and pray alongside the Lamb as he remains silent to the slaughter. He has accomplished everything that was ever written concerning his life, suffering, and death. This is the boast of your hope. His sacrifice is the final one. His death has earned us victory over death. Yesterday, we rejoiced knowing the victory Carlee Schoenfeld is experiencing. Our hope is just as sure; our boast is just as certain. Christ, the Apostle, was the complete fulfillment of the OT prophets and the Law, and he now is faithful to his promises in the New Testament. He is always with us, even to the very end of the age. At this very moment he is preparing a place specifically designed for our eternal rest. That's where Carlee is. And he will come again. You see, knowing our boast well, leads to actions which reflect this hope. We walk and talk knowing what has been accomplished on our behalf. We serve and worship our God knowing that all that has been done and all which we await is a gift of his grace. A gift he invites us to share with everyone. He invites us to boast to others concerning the sure hope we have in our Apostle. In what he has done and about the eternal future which awaits us.

And even now, Christ is still doing work, as our Great High Priest. He sits at the right hand of the Father, a position of honor and glory, and intercedes on our behalf. He reminds our just God that his sacrifice was perfectly accepted for the sins of the whole world. This is the reason we can so confidently boast, the reason we can so confidently approach the throne. Our High Priest assures us that all our requests will be heard. He pours out forgiveness upon us as we are burdened by our sin and guilt. He extends his strength to us to boast about our hope through words and actions. Because we know our hope.

Our Hope will boast one day, that triumphant day. Christ, the Apostle, our Great High Priest will return again and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. And they will know what it means, that he is worthy of greatest honor and praise. A day when our confession will be clear to all. Because on that day, clothes do make the believer. Christ clothes us with the blood of his righteousness. Our fashion statement will be a clear confession. Jesus Christ is more than my homeboy. Jesus Christ is my Apostle, my Great High Priest, the boast of my hope. Amen.