

Hebrews 3:1-6

Image: As a child, heroes adorned my wall. They changed over time, but were always there. Whether Superman or sports stars, these were people I looked up to, wanted to be like, copied even down to the clothes they wore. One hero was Michael Jordan, the basketball great. I wanted to “be like Mike.” I wore his shoes, had posters on my walls, chose his number anytime I got to choose a number in sports. I even chewed gum during the match like he did. Fast forward to today. I still have heroes, though I like to think they are more “sanctified” and “holy.” One of my heroes is Jonathan Edwards, the great 18th century American pastor and theologian. Here’s a guy who spent 13 hours a day in his study, 1 hour a day with his kids...all 11 of them, and lived for the glory of God. He was a pastor, a missionary, a writer, a theologian, the president of a college, a husband, and a father. But it’s his wife who is the real hero. Sarah Pierrepont put up with him. When he died in 1758 after a smallpox vaccine, his wife wrote to their children (**READ LETTER**). His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren’s CVs read like a Who’s Who of important people in positions of influence. (**READ DOSSIER of DESCENDANTS**). I’d be doing good to live up to half the life he lived.

Need: Who are your heroes? We all have them. Important question is “Are they worth emulating?”

Context: In the time between the Old and New Testaments and into the 1st century, there was one man who stood head and shoulders above the rest in Judaism. There was no more king, there was no more ownership of the land. The only thing remaining of the past was...wait for it...the Law. And there was no one greater than the one who had given the Law to the people...Moses. We’re entering a section in which the author is going to expound on the idea of faithfulness. Today we’ll get a positive example of what it means to be faithful. Next week we’ll see a negative one. Our author wants these guys to come back to a serious focus on what they had claimed in the past.

Preview: We’re going to consider faithfulness today. I want to show you who is the ultimate hero.

I. Jesus was heroic in faithfulness (1-2)

A. He was faithful in being who God called Him to be (1)

1. He was faithful in His mission as an Apostle. A messenger sent by God.
2. He was faithful in His role as HP. He faithfully mediated between us and God. Incidentally, this was our confession, as it was theirs. I think, as many, that this is a reference to the **confession** we made at baptism. That is, that Jesus’ mediating sacrifice was sufficient to pay fully for our sin.

B. He was faithful with the best of them (2)

1. Here we see this comparison to Moses. He was also faithful as God’s man.
 - a. He was faithful as an apostle sent by God to His people.
 - b. As a HP, he uniquely mediated between God and the Israelites. Although he wasn’t officially the HP, he was uniquely the mediator. *3 times Moses mediates on behalf of the people when they had upset God. After the golden calf in Ex. 32, in Num. 14 after the spies return and give a bad report of the land. And then the one the author here goes on to explain in Numbers 12 when Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses.*
2. It’s in **Numbers 12** that the greatness of Moses is settled by God Himself. *Letters of recommendation from important people.*
 - a. Moses was it. In fact, **Deut. 18:15-18**, he’s even greater than the angels. Moses is God’s right hand man in **Ex. 14:31**. He met with God face to face in **Ex. 33:7-11**. He was it.
 - b. Incidentally, this generation was also rebelling against God’s man just like then.

(Moses is a reference point. Like the angels in chapter 1. By showing that Moses was great, Jesus looks that much better. If you thought Moses was something...just wait)

II. Jesus is the example of faithfulness *par excellence*. He is the most heroic of all heroes.

A. Jesus was greater than Moses (5-6a).

1. Moses made great by God. So Moses was faithful *in* God’s house as *part* of the house. Christ faithful *over* God’s house as the *builder* of God’s house. In other words, Jesus built Moses.
2. Moses **was faithful as a servant**. The word is used for a household servant. That is, a servant worthy of honor. In fact, the word is the root from which we get our word for therapy. It was

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used for a servant who rendered special aid to his master. XC, though, **was faithful as a Son**. And sons always possess greater honor than even the most honored servant.

B. IN fact, Jesus is greater than all. Here's the argument.

1. Jesus is God. As God He built everything (**3-4**). Remember in chapter 1, this is what he said in comparing Jesus to angels. Christ is God. He's divine. He created everything.
2. Therefore, just like no one looks at a building and worships it (because all buildings are built by someone), so Christ is worthy of our full attention as the one who built all (**3-4**). *Grand Designs program in Southern Italy who built the artist retreat by himself.*

(So having demonstrated that Jesus is the ultimate hero, he calls them and us to action.)

III. Cling to faith by cultivating faithfulness

A. We're called to cling to Jesus as the supreme object of our faith (**1**)

1. We're called to keep Jesus centered as the focal point of all our attention.
2. In a world that seeks to distract, we must keep Jesus central in our focus. Distractions abound...people and things begging for our focus. But we must cling to the faith we confessed. *Not unlike Peter walking on the water. He looked around and was distracted.*

B. Having considered the faithfulness of Jesus, we are then called to emulate it (**6b**).

1. This faithfulness in our lives then becomes the evidence that we are really God's kids.
 - a. This verse isn't cause/effect. In other words, perseverance doesn't save you. If that were the case, among other things, you'd have no assurance because you wouldn't know until the end whether you were saved or not. It's not cause/effect, it's evidence/inference. In other words, on the evidence of one who perseveres in the faith, it can be inferred that they are a genuine believer. We can't know the heart of a person...whether they have genuinely placed their trust in Jesus...only God can. All we can do is infer based on what we see. This is the point of **James 2**. Faith without works is evidence of a dead faith because the way you know someone has faith is not by what they say but by what they do. We can have great assurance that we are God's kids as we suffer well for His sake. So, those who believe live in their faith by living out their faith.
 - i. This doesn't mean perfection. We'll struggle with sin until death.
 - ii. But we'll struggle with it...we won't cut and run
 - b. The author here, in our context, believes these people to be genuine believers. So his exhortation to them, and us, is to keep the faith by emulating the faithfulness of Jesus.
 - i. They had made a **confession (v. 1)**
 - ii. "**partners**" or "**companions**" (fellowship, from break bread with *companos*) (**V. 1**)
 - iii. **Holy brothers and sisters (v. 1)**
 - iv. **Are His house**, present tense (**v. 6b**)
 - v. **Hold firmly (retain) public confidence (v. 6b)**
2. God's kids don't run. They stay faithful...like their savior. *FF Bruce said it best..."Nowhere in the New Testament more than here do we find such repeated insistence on the fact that continuance in the Christian life is the test of reality. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints has as its corollary the salutary teaching that the saints are the people who persevere to the end."*

Conc: We are all surrounded by people crying out for us to be like them. We're tempted everyday to set our focus on earthly success, money, selfish-narcissistic athletes or pop-singers. Sometimes temptation is even to emulate good people while pushing Jesus to the periphery. But this text, in my estimation, argues that Jesus is the best. Again, there's no where else to go. Jesus is it. You cling to Him, center Him on the wall of your heart so that He is your ultimate focus. Then you emulate Him: wear His shoes, do what He does, think what He thinks, live like He lived. You be faithful as He was faithful. **Edwards works 2 volumes, 1700 pages, double-column, tiny font.** He is heroic because in everything he did, he pointed to a greater hero...Jesus. John the Baptist in John 1...not worthy to untie his sandal.