

## Consider Jesus

Transfiguration of our Lord – 03/02/25 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Hebrews 3:1-6 Pastor Keith Besel

v.1, [The preacher exhorts us all,] **“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession...”**

### **Introduction**

- ⊗ “Consider Jesus,” this is what the preacher who first proclaimed the sermon that you and I today call the book of Hebrews, told his hearers they/we ought to do
  - ➔ But what is it that you and I are to “consider” about Jesus? He tells us only two verses later in verse three; that “Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses...”
- ⊗ I know what you’re thinking, “Well of course we should do that, Pastor.” I mean who among us in this room came to Worship this morning intending to worship or glorify Moses? We all know that Jesus is greater than Moses, even as great as Moses was as Yahweh’s mouthpiece before Pharaoh; as Yahweh’s prophet and earthly leader to God’s people.

### **I. Peter, James, John come informed by Moses**

- ⊗ But before we just move on from what might seem like an obvious and settled truth, I’d like to ask you for a few brief moments here to try and put yourselves in the place of those three guys that climbed up the mountain with Jesus to pray (Lk. 9:28); those disciples that don’t know that day, what you and I know today: Peter, James and John.
  - ➔ They are, of course, living out, in the moment, what we have heard, read, recounted and had preached to us many times. So they don’t have the clarity that you and I have been given in knowing “the rest of the story” as Paul Harvey used to famously say in his radio broadcasts.
- ⊗ You see, at that time, when Peter, James and John are hiking up Mount Tabor in the region of Galilee, it would have been close to blasphemy or heresy for anyone to say or think that anything was greater than Moses.
  - ➔ I looked up Mount Tabor, which is generally considered to be the “hill” as we Coloradoans would call it, that Jesus took the disciples up that day for a prayer on the summit. It rises up like a big boil in the plains of lower Galilee, a little more than nine miles west of the Sea of Galilee. From the base of it to the top it is a 1500 foot climb, about 1.5 miles long along switchbacks that take from one to two hours to hike.
  - ➔ Because Jesus and His disciples were likely in better shape than most of us today, this wouldn’t have been too difficult of a hike, but more likely a special little moment away from the others with Jesus. Still by the time they are getting toward the top of that steep climb, it’s safe to say that their hearts were racing and their breath was heightened.
- ⊗ And it isn’t hard to imagine that they had some time, climbing that rocky place, to think about the grand stories they had heard over the years about the heroes of old; those who also met with God on the tops of mountains. As faithful Jews, when they were small children, it’s safe to say that their parents and grandparents told them bedtime stories; true stories of those heroes of the faith; stories of David the king, Elijah the prophet, Joseph the prince of Egypt and more.
  - ➔ But none of those stories commanded the hushed tones and the serious leaning-forward attention like the centuries-old story of Moses. Try to imagine what it was like for those believers in their day: no TVs or tablets or cell phones to entertain them and put them to sleep. Not even any story books by Dr. Seuss or Mother Goose. Only readings from the scrolls that they and their ancestors heard read in the Synagogue each Sabbath.

→ So imagine their oil lamps burning low and warm; light flickering across the face of their beloved father, or some other family member saying of Moses, “Even his birth was nearly impossible – oh, I’m sure I’ve told this one.” “No, Papa or Uncle Yev, tell it again. Don’t skip a moment.” And the story would unfold in front of them; a blazing bush on the side of Mt. Sinai; the great escape from Pharaoh and his army; the water parting in front of them; then the words of Yahweh written in stone with God’s Commandments for His people; and Moses’ face glowing bright after seeing Yahweh face to face; and water coming from rocks. Oh, and don’t forget; don’t ever forget the words we’ve heard the Rabbi read from the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – so many important words from God recorded by this mighty servant of God. Who pray tell; who to this point has ever surpassed Moses? None! No other has seen and heard God quite the way old Moses did.

→ It’s just as our Old Testament Reading says in Deuteronomy 34:10, “And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face...”

✘ Those are the true, history and life-forming stories that raised Peter, James, and John from young boys to the grown men and disciples of Jesus that they were that day when He brought them up to the top of Mount Tabor to pray.

→ And then suddenly, as they come to the summit and they hear Jesus praying to His Father, they find that they are not alone with Jesus, but look, there’s Moses himself, and Elijah too!

## II. Consider how much greater Jesus is...

✘ And now the preacher speaking to you and me today in this sermon that he wrote to the Hebrews, rocks the first century world, by telling us to “consider Jesus.” The voice of God the Father that came out of the cloud though was more direct than that. Not so much like an invitation, just saying, “Hey folks, you ought to ‘consider’ this man Jesus.” No, this voice that Peter, James and John heard was no mere suggestion. It was a clear command from the Creator of all things: “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” (Lk 9:35).

→ Yes, Jesus is worth far more glory than any whom those disciples or you and I have ever idolized or idealized. It is no contest: Jesus is just plain greater! So, consider Him to be your hero; your Savior and your God.

✘ Peter seemed to take what he was seeing seriously – Jesus who transformed to a “dazzling white”; talking with Moses and Elijah. He even offered up what seemed like a reasonable response: “What if we stay up here awhile? I’ll even build you some shelters”

→ But, was it possible that he mistook the moment as a chance for them to partake in the glory of their long-time heroes, Moses and Elijah? Had they missed the fact that they had already followed up and would soon follow down the mountain the very glory of God Himself in the person of Jesus? It seems like a good possibility. But the Father leaves no doubt, “Listen to Him!” “My beloved Son! Consider Jesus, would you? He is worthy of so much more glory than Moses.”

✘ Of course, what you Christians now know, and what Peter, James, and John would soon learn, is that God’s version of glory looks an awful lot like what you and I today might consider shame. But they don’t know that yet, at least not to its fullest extent.

✘ So, consider with me the kinds of things the disciples might have been thinking about on the hike down the mountain. If, while walking up, they remembered what their families had told them about Moses, on the way down I suspect they were thinking more about what they could tell their families about Jesus. And if they couldn’t tell them that day, since verse 36 of our Gospel Reading says, “...they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen”, then someday soon they would be telling anyone and everyone about Jesus more than

Moses. In fact, it was John who wrote down so much of what Jesus said and did; I'm sure reveling in his mind about all the firsthand moments like this that he had with Jesus.

✘ How is it then, as we consider Jesus, that He is worthy of more glory than Moses? Well, consider this:

→ Moses is from of old; going way back as a father of our faith. People have been flocking to him for years! But Jesus...He was with God since before the beginning of time.

→ Look at all that Moses did, even separating the Red Sea. But Jesus...He walked on water! Moses caused bread to be found on the ground after taking his concerns to God. But Jesus...He is the very Bread of Life. Moses made water flow from a rock. But Jesus...He is living water.

→ Moses wrote all those sacred words in Scripture. But Jesus...He *is* the Word; the very Word of God in the flesh.

✘ And you know what? If you listen carefully and correctly to Moses you find out that he is whispering to you throughout everything that he writes, that we all ought to consider Jesus. You see, that glory that the disciples saw on Moses' face there on the mountain, that's not his own glory, but the glory of Jesus reflected upon Moses and Elijah.

→ And that Promised Land that Moses led God's people toward for 40 years; that's our ultimate rest in Jesus; the rest of salvation and forgiveness from all of our sin.

→ Moses led God's people from slavery toward freedom! But that exodus, as glorious as it was, John would tell us later was not even on the same level as the exodus that Jesus brings to us as He leads us from death to life to the freedom that lasts into eternity. John 8:36, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

### III. The real difference – Jesus sets us free forever!

✘ Oh, the preacher gives Moses his due, telling us in verse five that "Moses was (past tense) faithful in all God's house as a servant...". But Jesus he says in verse six, "*is* faithful (present tense) over God's house as a Son.

→ What's the difference, you might ask? Well, as John told us in verse 35, of chapter 8: "A servant (slave) does not remain in the house forever," but "the Son remains forever."

→ And since the Father proclaimed of Jesus from the cloud, "This is My Son, My Chosen One" (Lk. 9:35), then we know who John is talking about when He says again, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36).

✘ And since, the Father also said in a clear, audible voice, "Listen to Him!" (Lk. 9:35), why would anyone ever chose not to seriously consider Jesus when He offers all mankind the freedom today to live in Him and die in Him and rise in Him to eternal life?

→ In fact, we see now that we have every reason to consider everything that Jesus says, not only about us and our life, but also the words that He spoke to His disciples just days before the transfiguration, and then again on the way down the mountain; saying that He must die and rise and lead all sinners from the cross through the most glorious exodus the world has ever seen out of hell and into His glorious presence.

### Conclusion

✘ Yes, Jesus is worth much more glory than Moses. You knew that coming into this message today. But, dear Christians, consider Jesus, now today, when you think about the greatness of those you admire; those you look up to and perhaps even consider to be the heroes in your life. Yes, even as you consider your personal mentors of faith; those that God has used to lead you

and teach you in the faith. Be thankful for them, of course, but hear and see in them, the same call that we hear issued to the Hebrews, “consider Jesus” and know that He is worthy of more glory than anyone else.

→ Friends, listen to Him and follow Him throughout this hike of life that we all are on. Yes, the steps down this mountain today can and will be dicey at times. So always remember the encouragement we receive later in Hebrews 12:1-2, so you will never fall from His glory. “...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,” the preacher says, “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

→ That’s the only way to the freedom and eternal glory that Jesus has won for us all. We walk; we run to and through the cross of Jesus; set free from the death we deserve by Jesus to burst from the tomb into eternal life where we bask in the glory of Jesus, because “...you are free indeed.” Amen.