

Hebrews 3:1-6

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. I apologize if my voice goes in and out this morning, or if it's followed by a little snuffle or intermittent cough.
- I told my friend yesterday, he said, you know what that means? That means our enemy is trying to prevent you from saying something worthwhile.
- I turned to him and I responded, or it could be the Lord, knowing that I have nothing worthwhile to say. But yet I find myself here this morning, and after that remark we should pray.
- The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
- The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. And Lord, we come to your word this morning. We desire our souls to be revived.
- [1 : 0 9] We desire to be made wise. We desire our hearts to rejoice. And we desire our eyes to be enlightened. Would you do that work in us, through your word, by your spirit, for your honor, and to your praise.
- Amen. What are you? Being Asian American, that's a question I receive quite often. I've learned that certain answers don't suffice.
- If I simply answer, I'm Asian American, a person will follow up with the question, where are you from? If I'm feeling very witty, which I often, oh, I probably do more than I should, I respond, I'm from California.
- And then, they ask the question you may be thinking, where are your parents from? You see, their question is very interesting.
- It's actually set in a cultural norm of sorts. We are socially taught to formally inquire about a person when we meet them. We often ask about origin, relational status, employment.
- [2 : 3 1] Whether intentional or not, we are trying to obtain some sense of a person's identity. Who they are, what they are, potentially how they are doing.
- Identity is multifaceted. It's comprised of pieces that make up the whole. At one level, it's racial and ethnic. At another level, it's cultural and experiential.
- And still, yet another level, it's biological and psychological. And furthermore, it's a product of what I attest to myself. How I'm historically informed by society.
- And I'm perpetuated in particular social settings. Identity is very complex. Mother Teresa, recipient of the Nobel Prize for her humanitarian work in Calcutta, was once asked in an interview who she was.
- And she responded in this way. By citizenship, by blood, I'm Albanian. By citizenship, I'm Indian. By faith, I'm Catholic.
- [3 : 3 7] As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to Jesus. She alluded to the very fact that identity is comprised of multiple things.

It's multi-layered. If I simply told you that I'm Asian American, it's a small depiction of what I am, but it would be inadequate. For I assert that I am far more than a blending of being Asian and American.

The passage this morning concerns this question. What is the Christian identity? What is the Christian identity?

Last week's passage made the astonishing claim whereby divinity, namely Jesus, shared in solidarity with humanity, particularly in suffering. God shamelessly identified with you and I.

God identified with humanity in Christ. So that we can say accurately, Jesus is God's human identity.

[4 : 40] This week, the writer wants the recipients of the letter to learn how we identify to God. What is our identity in Christ? The concern of this passage is to secure the professing believer's identity.

What is the Christian? In other words, in Christ, what is man? Up to this point, you may have picked up on the writer's use of familial language.

The letter actually opens up with familial language. You'll see, long ago at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

Father-son language is embedded in the first chapter. And as we proceeded into chapter 2, you continue to see that familial language. You see it occurring in chapter 2, verse 12, the language of brother, including sister, as well.

If you follow the footnotes in your Bible, you'll see that the word there translated is actually brothers and sisters. It's the plural Greek word, though the ESV has simply translated brothers.

[5 : 58] You see in chapter 2, verse 12. You see it again in chapter 3, verse 1. You'll see it again in chapter 3, verse 12. And as you and I reflect on these things, what is compounding together is this father and son language, this brother and sister language, this sibling language, this language of children.

It is as if God in Christ is birthing children, which may seem like an obscure image, but as we unfold this passage, I believe it will be more clear. At the time of writing, the household or the family was the centerpiece of one's identity.

Since not all households were equally respected, belonging to one that enjoyed prestige was desirable. So belonging, to example, to Caesar's household would afford you more luxuries and privileges and benefits than belonging to a household of a nearby carpenter.

Being students of the Bible, you may have picked up on things like this. It matters to whose house or household you belong. To be the son of the carpenter was to belong near the bottom of the social ladder.

The religious leaders intended it to be a slight at Jesus and his family. How could someone teach with such authority and do such works if they emerged from Joseph's household?

[7 : 26] Matthew 13. Where did they, quoting, where then did this man get all these things? And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household. The status of Jesus' household had convinced others that nothing significant could emerge out of his household or his family.

Theologically speaking, the house to which the listeners belong differs from households in that its sons and daughters are identified not by natural kinship but by their relationship to God.

It is important from the outset that we recognize familial language frames this passage for us this morning. We see the occurrence of the word house no less than eight times in the English text, seven in the Greek, six in the Greek.

Our text guides us into the nature of Christian identity in three ways. First, those in the household of faith share a common status.

[8 : 36] Secondly, we'll see those in the household of faith share a common call and confession. And thirdly, lastly, where I believe we'll spend most of our time, those in the household of faith share a common history.

If you've been with us since the beginning of this series, you have a sense of how the letter opened up. The author has used inclusive language.

In these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. In chapter 2, verse 1, therefore, we must pay closer attention.

Chapter 2, verse 2, you see, chapter 2, verse 3, it was attested to us, namely, the salvation message.

And all the way up to here, chapter 3, there is a change in tone. There's an intensification. The author is no longer using first-person pronouns like we've read.

[9 : 40] It is no longer we and us. All of a sudden, there is a direct address, holy brothers, comma, you. It is not meant to be confrontational.

Instead, as one author has written, it's a pattern of exhortation in the letter. He is intensifying. There is something different when I say we need to go there versus you need to go there.

He is exhorting the reader. The author is urging and bolstering the hearer toward a particular line of action and thinking.

There's a movement from the first person to the second person. It's directed and pointed speech. Firstly, the members of the household share a common status.

Namely, we have been made holy. You see that in chapter 3, verse 1. The author of Hebrews only uses this term once describing the faith family or the household of God.

[10 : 47] The term will be used later to describe the holy of holies, to describe the spirit of God, but it's only here in reference to the family of God. It's also translated in chapter 13 as saints.

For our purposes, we need to determine what is meant by holy. What does it mean? We often hear it apply to God, God being transcendent, other, perfect, but what does it mean when it's applied to you and I, to the reader?

2.11 provides a bulk of the answer. We are those who have been sanctified, made clean through the act of propitiation, chapter 2, verse 17, and we're ultimately saved.

We're sanctified. Well, what does that mean? Paul, in his letter, clears it up for us. As he, in his letter to the church of Corinth, he begins listing a set of things that keep people out of the kingdom of God.

He writes, do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, the idolaters, adulterers, men who practice homosexuality, thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers, swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

[12 : 07] And then, he writes, but you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of our God.

And for our purposes, you were made holy. You see what he's saying in that passage. At one time, there was no access to God.

There was no access to the family of God. Yet, access has been granted through the sanctifying work of Christ. Therefore, as a faith family, we are all recipients of the same work of Christ.

We are holy in the sense that we are a people who have been set apart because the punishment that results from our sin has been paid. Therefore, the author can write, you are holy.

Holy brothers. The household of God shares this common trait. We have been made holy. Taking the language of the prior chapter, we have been helped, namely, in the death of Christ, in destroying the one who has power over death.

[13 : 18] The power of death to deliver us from the fear of death and enslavement to our sin. This is distinctive to the people of God.

God does not make all people holy. Not all people will be sanctified. Holiness is not obtained. It is arguably not obtainable.

It is bestowed. You and I are made holy. Be forewarned. You may find yourselves in conversations where others assure you that they belong to the household that you find yourself in.

This is a litmus test. how did you get in? You ask. Some will say I was born into it. Others will say I worked my way into it.

Others may argue I bought my citizenship into it. Beware, the world will tell you there are other ways to enter the family.

[14 : 26] there are not. It is illustrated so brilliantly in Pilgrim's Progress. Christian, the main character, is on the road to the celestial city.

He is making his way on the narrow road. As he is walking, two people stumble over a fence down a hill into his path.

These two people I believe their names are hypocrisy and presumption. And as they begin to dialogue, Christian asks, how did you get on this path without going through the door?

There is a prescribed door. Whereby they go and say, oh no, no, no, that door, it is too far. It is too far. I am not walking all the way around to get to that door.

And they argue, our ancestors have always gotten this way. We take the shortcut, we hop the fence, and then we tumble down into the path. It doesn't matter how you get on the path, does it?

[15 : 40] To which Christian replies, absolutely. Because the person who designated the path has prescribed only one means, namely the gate. and the conversation continues.

You see, that is, as Christian argues, the point that you cannot enter the path through another gate or back door.

There's only one path, and these two characters, presumptuous and hypocrisy, laugh, and they walk away. there is only one gate.

There is only one mediator, namely the man Christ Jesus. I can assure you that in eternity, every one of our conversations will testify to the singular entrance through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be forewarned, if in this life a conversation takes you to another means of salvation, your conversation partner is not family. Salvation is founded upon a singular source, chapter 2, verse 11.

[16 : 51] I say it humorously, but in eternity, as you converse with everyone, because we will have a lot of time to converse with everyone, you will not come across a person that says, oh, you didn't come in through the back door or the side entrance?

I came in that way. You won't meet a person. We will all have entered through the one way, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one source from which the sanctifying work of the individual occurs. You and I were graciously brought into the family at a great cost, at the price of the life of our older brother, Jesus.

first. Firstly, the members of this family share a common status, namely, sanctified and made holy. Secondly, more quickly, the members of this household share a heavenly calling and confession.

One writer put it beautifully in writing, we are those who hear a call to heaven from heaven. It is heavenly in contrast to what is earthly.

[18 : 06] The summon and the call the members of our family receive originates not on earth, but from heaven. It is not to say there aren't earthly means, for we may have heard the gospel through an earthly voice or the voice of a man or a parent or a loved one.

It is not to say that we did not read from the earthly print of the Bible, but we must acknowledge that the heavenly call originates from heaven. It did not originate from the mind of man.

It was not contrived through a collective group of individuals to start a religion. It wasn't the result of sociological forces or observations and natures, but it originated from one source.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke, but today God spoke finally and completely and calls fully through the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was God who spoke. He spoke through means, but the source of the speaking was God and can only be attributed to God. the calling persists today.

[19 : 12] He continues to speak. We'll see it next week. He continues to speak by the Holy Spirit. You just preview to next week. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today the calling still resounds.

He called in the past and He continues to call today. The reality is that God, as He continually calls, He is continually speaking to you and I.

You'll see it. We'll see it fully next week. The word today will be paramount as we go into the next week. The members of this family share a heavenly calling and additionally a heavenly confession.

A heavenly confession. What is this confession? Mentioned in chapter 3, verse 1. It's used here. It's used later in the fourth chapter and again in the tenth chapter.

There isn't an explicit confession laid out in Hebrews. Historically, the early church had different confessions. Jesus is the Christ.

[20 : 16] Some would say it is a creedal or a confession. It's something that one confesses to what they believe. We don't know the content.

We don't know the exact confession, but we definitely know the subject or the content of this confession. It is namely Jesus. Because we see it in verse 1, Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.

As we unfold what this means, there's clues given to us. The confession pertains to Jesus' work as an apostle and as a high priest on behalf of his people.

He's faithful in both of these tasks. See, the members of this family share a heavenly calling and a confession which may consist of more than, but nothing less, than the faithfulness of Jesus as an apostle and a high priest.

It's the launching point for this segment of the letter. We are to consider Jesus who is the apostle and high priest of our confession. This is the only place in the New Testament where the word apostle is attributed to Jesus.

[21 : 33] It is the word that the New Testament uses for the twelve that Jesus selected. It simply means one who is sent. We see it in John's gospel when Jesus says he was the one sent into the world by God.

He is the one sent of God, asserted in chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. Long ago God spoke through the prophets, but now through his son. It could be rephrased, long ago God sent judges, God sent prophets, God sent kings, but in these last days God sent his son.

He's an apostle. He is the sent son who is God's final and complete revelation. Jesus is the one who was sent to rescue and deliver his brothers and sisters.

Jesus was sent to save his people. Part of that confession is acknowledging Jesus as the sent one.

of God. Secondly, the other half of that confession has to do with Jesus as high priest. What does it mean for Jesus to be high priest? This will be unpacked as our Hebrew series progresses, but just briefly, Jesus is high priest in that he mediates between God and his people.

[22 : 49] I won't belabor the role of high priest, but simply distill the high priest's role and duty. We're to offer sacrifices to God to atone for sin. This is exemplified on the day of atonement, where the high priest would offer one sacrifice on behalf of the nation.

Therefore, this confession we embrace consists of Jesus' work as the sent one and his office as high priest for his people. It is not wrong to say that this confession could simply be put, Jesus, our apostle and high priest.

Now, Jesus was not the only one that held these offices we're about to see, for we find shortly there's a man named Moses who did this as well, which will lead us to our final landing place.

So we see that the members of this faith, this faith household, this family of God, have a common calling and a common confession.

we have a common status, sanctified and holy. We share in a common calling sourced from heaven resulting in a confession that is common as well.

[24 : 09] And thirdly, lastly, where we'll spend the remainder of our time, the members of this family share a common history. We share a common history.

And you may be asking, how does that apply? Because my upbringing is far different from yours. We grew up at different times and different places and different parts of the world under different circumstances.

A few years ago, I picked up a book by a gentleman named Christopher Wright. And the book was titled Jesus and the Old Testament. Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament.

Phenomenal book, which I commend. But one of the premises he argues is that the Christian identity must account for Jewish history. He goes about arguing that the canon, the Bible that we have, it is actually dependent on the Hebrew Bible.

Therefore, he deduces this, in some sense, the Christian is also Jewish. I mean, and of course, when I read that, I said, wow, can you imagine that evangelistic tool?

[25 : 18] when someone asks me the next time, so Bing, what are you? Well, I'm part Chinese and I'm part Jewish. But anyway, it's true as we'll begin to see. Our history is a Jewish history.

Part of our personal narrative is a Jewish narrative. For those of us who have been helped by Christ, as the passage has mentioned, we are, according to chapter 2, verse 16, offspring of Abraham.

Abraham is part of our lineage. The children's song may be appropriate to quote right now. Father Abraham had many sons and daughters.

And many sons and daughters had the same father, namely Abraham. I am one of them, and so are you. It is significant to you and I today, for the work of Christ is not only illuminated, but magnified when you and I have a high view of Jewish history as revealed in the Bible.

If you simply say that I'm a New Testament Christian, that may be true, but you miss out on the entire argument of the book of Hebrews. It is as you learn about the historical significance of Abraham and Joshua and David and this morning Moses, that you begin to see how great Jesus actually is.

[26 : 42] you have to, you're thinking people, someone posed the question to me, when did the church start? And I thought I had it right.

Oh, easy. Church started in Acts chapter one and two. Right? And to that they replied, no, completely wrong.

Church started in Genesis 12. 12. I said, what? The church didn't even exist in the Old Testament. In my naivete, I replied.

Or did it? And that's something you and I, together, we have to figure out. Did the church start in Acts chapter one or two, or did it start in Genesis chapter 12?

There's different sides. But it's something you and I have to wrestle over. we are presented the whole host of names, we'll find out in chapter 11, that are only significant if we're aware of this Jewish heritage revealed in the Bible.

[27 : 51] The history of Israel as recorded in the Bible is also called redemptive history. By this I simply mean the history of how God has saved and set apart a people beginning in Genesis 12, I would argue.

It is our history as Christians. Therefore, it's not only authoritative, but it's also instructive, as we'll find out next week. All history may be instructive, but the scripture sees redemptive history as particularly instructive to the Christian.

We see it this morning. The common saying goes, we study history so not to repeat it. And therefore, we come to this passage this morning and study history so that we won't repeat something foolish that was done before.

For the remainder of our time, we will walk alongside the author because he is, for all intents and purposes, bringing the Christian to their roots, their Jewish roots in redemptive history.

We could talk about Moses for weeks on end, but I want to summarize him in a few passages so that we can actually wrap our time up together.

[29 : 04] There's two passages that I want to use to set the stage. Who is Moses and what did he do? Why is he even relevant? How could he be quoted?

And is he authoritative? The first comes from Numbers chapter 12. It may be helpful that we turn there. Numbers chapter 12. Numbers is where this passage is probably derived from.

Numbers chapter 12. Miriam and Aaron are upset at Moses because he married the wrong woman. They want to undermine his authority.

They say, wait, God doesn't only speak to Moses, he speaks to us as well. And I think there is some sense of we want to overthrow Moses as God's sole representative at that time.

You see in Numbers chapter 12, a few things about Moses. Verse 3, interestingly, now the man Moses was very meek, more than all the people who were on the face of the earth.

- [30 : 20] Hopefully he didn't write that. Sorry, I shouldn't have said that. But as Aaron and Miriam are undermining Moses' authority, God calls them out in verse 6.
- And he says something staggering about Moses. And God said, hear my words. If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision.
- I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth clearly and not in riddles.
- And he beholds the form of the Lord. And you begin to see how important Moses is. He didn't, God didn't reveal himself to Moses through dreams or visions.
- He actually spoke directly to him with great clarity and understanding. He beheld God's form in a way.
- [31 : 31] Another passage, his eulogy, namely the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. Staggering words about Moses. Moses' death is recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 34.
- A couple things to be said here. Joshua, who is Moses' successor in chapter 34 verse 9.
- Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. Verse 10.
- So striking. And there has not arisen a prophet since. In Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. None like him.
- For all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.
- [32 : 38] The conclusion is clear. There is no one in Old Testament history like Moses. That is why when the reader comes to Hebrews chapter 3, they are struck.
- Because the argument in Hebrews chapter 3 is saying there is one grander than Moses. There is one greater that supersedes Moses.
- See, what we have read is Moses was in a league of his own until this man came. Well, let me introduce you to that man, namely Jesus.
- The author has written in such a way that if you grew up watching Sesame Street, or even still watch it today, there is a game. What is different? What is different? And so the screen divides up to four parts.
- And they sing the song. I can't remember how the song goes, but you're given this timer and you go, what is different? What is different? So they show three images that are the same and one that is different. You're supposed to find what is different.
- [33 : 45] And this is what the author in the book of Hebrews is doing. What is the same and what is different? Moses and Jesus are alike in a few ways.
- First, they both occupy a role of apostle and high priest. Secondly, they were both appointed by God. Thirdly, both were faithful.
- And fourth, both are deserving of applause or glory. They're all commendable traits. But the argument that the author is laying out is it's not what's similar that's important, but what is different.
- So what is different? For what is different sets Jesus apart, that he is counted of more, counted worthy of more glory than Moses.
- Jesus, there are a few things that are different. Firstly, Jesus is a son. Moses is a servant. This is very important.
- [34 : 49] In antiquity, this mattered. An adult son differed vastly from a servant. Sons could own property. Sons could conclude or validate contracts on behalf of their father.

father. They can act as representatives for their father. They could inherit the father's estate. Servants and slaves couldn't do that. But the text wants us to consider the difference further.

Jesus is worthy of more glory because the son and the servant relate to the household differently. Moses' relation to God's household was that of a servant.

Christ's relation to God's household is that of a son and an heir. Moses served in the household.

Christ rules over the household. The owner of the household has appointed to exercise this rule. The son's authority is greater than the servant's.

[36 : 00] The difference is vast. It's just a preposition in and over. Pick your favorite company in the world. Whatever it may be. It may be a clothes shop, a technology, I don't know.

Pick your company. You have it in your mind? There is a vast difference in being an employee in the company and being the one over the company.

It's significant. It's huge. And therefore, Christ is worthy of more glory.

secondly, this household is actually derived from the son himself. The household is birthed out of the son.

The author of Hebrews is likely incorporating the common saying of the day. The builder of the house is more honor than the house itself. The architect is praised over the building. Living in a city known for its architecture, it would be a bizarre sight if you came upon a building and men and women applauded it.

[37 : 12] Imagine the scene. You go look at the Aqua building, completed in 2010, and there you see an individual caressing its curves, taking photos of its windows, and saying you are such a beautiful building.

And there behind that individual is Jeannie Gang, leader of the firm that designed it, crafted it, erected it, and in biblical language created it. It's absurd.

Why? Because Miss Gang can tell you far more about the building than you could ever observe. She could reveal more to you about the building than an employee who's worked there since 2010.

She could tell you more about the building than the company which oversees the security of the building. Why? Because she doesn't merely work in the building.

She built the building. And that is why there's this obscure phrase. When Moses, as a servant, he didn't even know what was going on, even though he had authority over God's house, in God's house.

[38 : 21] You see in verse 5, he was to testify things that were to be spoken later. He wasn't exactly sure. Christ had yet to come to reveal what would happen. He didn't know the full picture.

Why? Because he was a servant in the house. And then Christ comes on the scene as son over the house when the picture becomes clear and certain. This is the distinction.

Moses for solid day, one which he anticipated and spoke of, which at the time he could not fathom or comprehend. He actually foretells it in Deuteronomy 18.

It's a gem of a passage situated in all these legal matters. You know how significant Jesus is? Moses, who has no rival in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 18 says this, hey, the Lord, your God, will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers.

It is to him you shall listen. Fast forward. God's speaking. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak them and all that I command him.

[39 : 41] Moses, unbeknownst to him, knew of a day where another prophet would even supersede him, namely Jesus.

We are a people founded upon a common history, a redemptive history. we'll have the opportunity to look at heroic lives which we ought to praise God in Hebrews 11.

But even the lives, the summation of the lives and the faith in Hebrews 11, do not compare to the testimony of Christ in which the household was birthed and founded.

No man or woman will ever rival Jesus. God of whom is it said that he created the world? Of whom is it said that he radiates the glory of God?

Of whom is it said that he upholds the world by his word? None. There is no rival. There is no competitor. Jesus stands alone as God's appointed son.

[40 : 44] Therefore he is greater than even Moses himself. The members of this family share this common history. We share a common call.

Sorry. We share a common status. We share a common call. We share a common history to close. The argument of this letter is compounding. The author has dispelled the idea that the angelic host rival Jesus.

For they do not. They are mere servants of the household according to chapter 1 verse 14. They are ministering spirits sent out to serve. The author has dispelled the idea that Moses rivals Christ for he too is simply a servant of the household.

In the end both angels and Moses are servants to the purposes of the son. And one of the purposes of the son we begin to see is this. The preservation of his people.

The Lord is trying to preserve or the Lord will preserve his people. And we are this house if we indeed hold fast our confidence and our boasting and hope.

[41 : 58] This verse is given for your preservation as a member of the family the household of God. You are a member of this house if you are holding fast.

Now this sounds bizarre because it sounds conditional. It's as if if you hold tight enough you are a Christian. No, no, no. That's not it. We've already seen that.

You have been sanctified and made holy. Therefore, you are a Christian in this household. You have responded to a heavenly call and you profess an orthodox confession.

That makes you part of the family. Therefore, being part of the family, you need to hold fast because holding fast reflects that you are part of the family.

we are to hold fast.

[42 : 54] We are to hold fast to the teaching of Scripture. We are to hold fast in the singing of the songs of the saints. We are to hold fast by buckling our knees.

We are to hold fast by clinging to one another. We are to hold fast by receiving the exhortation from others. We are to hold fast by never giving up in meeting together.

We are to hold fast by stirring one another towards love and good works. We are to hold fast. This is one of the means for your very preservation. You have been set in a family for your preservation.

You have been placed in this household so that in order that Christ may uphold you by the word of his power. This faith community here in these walls is set apart by God's sanctifying work is arguably the greatest means of your preservation apart from God's redemption in your life.

We are here for one another. I will not make it without you. God's means to preserving us to holding fast is to hold on to one another.

[44 : 15] Do not neglect this gathering. Do not neglect meeting together. Because as one of us sinks, 40 hands should go down and reach for them.

We are to hold fast. We are to boast in hope. Boasting is very interesting because it's public. When you see someone boast, you go, that person is full of it.

But here, we're actually to boast. We're to make public our confession. It's to be outward. To boast of our confession requires one to be on the receiving end.

We are to speak of this confession. We are to speak as Jesus being our apostle and high priest. We are to speak highly of our family that we have been set in. We are to speak about the redeeming character of God to place us in a family.

This morning, providentially, we have been invited to a table. And this table is not meant to be eaten in solitude, but it's a meal eaten among family.

[45 : 31] In this meal, we proclaim, we even boast of the Lord's death until he comes. And we come to this meal, interestingly, not on the basis of blood or human lineage.

We don't come to this table because we are all in a social category that is economically equal. We don't come to this table based on ethnicity or color or race.

We don't come to this table because we're in an intellectual category that is together. We don't come to this table because something visibly you see.

We come to this table because we share this common trait. That as you proceed down the center aisle and you stare at the back of the individual in front of you, you can say with confidence, Christ died for that individual.

we come on those terms. This is the shared meal under one basis. Namely, we have been made holy and brought into this family. This is our means of holding fast.

[46 : 41] This is a means of grace. This is the confidence that you have as you come to this table that regardless of, as you reflect, we have a common status.

Regardless of earthly accomplishment, we have a common calling and confession. We have a common history that climaxes in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is your family given to you by God for your preservation.

And this family, whose members are made holy by Christ's work, this family whose members are called by God and profess Christ, this family whose members share a history that climaxes in God's Son.

let's pray. Father, we come to you and we are grateful because this family, we look around, we would not have picked this family.

It's a peculiar bunch. But you have ordained and set us together that you have died for us so that we can be part of your family, that we are in Christ's household.

[48 : 04] There is no rival to this household for our older brother, the Son of God, is the heir of all things. And so, Lord, as we come to this table and as we reflect on what it means to be in the household of faith, I pray, Lord, that you would stir us on, that you would stir us on to be those who boast in our hope, and you would stir us on to be those who hold fast or seize our confidence, our confession.

And to this end we pray. Amen.