



First Quarter Review

A Look Back at the Greatness in Hebrews

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Well, I rarely get stuck in a window seat. I like the aisle seat, don't you? But one day—I don't know what happened—but I got stuck in a window seat, and I was flying out of the Orange County Airport. And I guess because of weather or wind, they flew out backwards. No, let me rephrase that. The plane didn't fly out backwards. We flew out an opposite direction. How's that? I mean, the nose was still in the front and the tail was still in the back, but instead of flying up over the ocean like they do, they flew up this direction.

And then they did this really weird bank turn and tried to get—because I was flying up north—and what was interesting is they flew right overhead here with my window looking down, and I saw the office, and I saw the church, and I saw my bank, and I saw Fatburger, and I saw, you know, the park, and my doctor's office. I saw all that stuff, and just the perspective was really weird, you know. I started rethinking paths that I took, and, you know, finding parks that I never knew were there before, and it was just an interesting perspective.

Sometimes the big perspective, the high perspective, is a good thing. It helps us to rethink everything, because as we're in a book like the book of Hebrews, we find ourselves kind of exploring all the side streets and back alleys, and we're kind of really dissecting the details of the book. But we need to remember that the book was initially read—or if not preached—to a congregation in one sitting. I mean, that's how it was initially received. And the parts and components of the book of Hebrews fit together to make a powerful statement. And oftentimes we miss that because we're going through each and every part as we ought to. And we ought to glean every part and catch God's truth in every word. I mean, Jesus was concerned with the tense of the verb sometimes, and so should we. But the big perspective is helpful.

So what I thought we would do today, in preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, I thought we should take a little break and step back. Between chapter 4 and chapter 5 is a good place to do this, and to kind of get the aerial view of what's going on in what we've already covered. We've covered the first four chapters. We've had 20 sermons in the first four chapters. We've covered—and if you think my math is bad, which it usually is—but the title of the message is looking back at the first quarter, whatever, what I call it. First quarter review, you're thinking, well, four chapters, 13 chapters. That's not quite right. But just remember, the last nine chapters are longer than the first four chapters. So actually, we've covered about 70 verses. There's about 300 verses in Hebrews. So we're not even quite a quarter of the way through.

And that was a completely useless part of this message. Didn't need to be said. But I know someone's going to send me an email. We're not a quarter of the way through the book. Actually, you're right. We're not even quite a quarter of the way through the book. But just for thoroughness sake, I want to let you know that we are almost a quarter of the way through the book.

So let's look back. And what I want to do, because, of course, the theme of the first part of Hebrews is the greatness of Christ. And what we'll get into in the next section is the greatness of what he's done,



although that's been set up for us already. And I think if we can get the aerial view of the greatness of what God has done through Christ, we might stand back and say, wow, that's a perspective I needed.

And I think today it would be a good preliminary and prelude to our time of focusing on the Lord's Supper. So take your Bibles, if you would, go back to the very beginning, and let us remember that the whole point of Hebrews is to give a clear and crisp picture of the greatness of Christ and the greatness of His work on our behalf.

Hebrews chapter 1, the summary paragraph, puts it this way: that God has spoken in the past to the forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. Now notice the focus on the greatness of Christ: whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Clearly Christ is great.

And then we get a series of comparisons. But look at the next phrase in that verse—verse number, uh, number three. It says, and after—here's the focus on his great work—he has provided purifications for sin. Now that sounds so simple and sounds so easy, but that is the great focus of the book of Hebrews. And after he did that, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

Chapter nine calls it redemption. And it's a good word, though we're not used to it. The greatness of Christ we've seen. The greatness of his work we've seen something of, and we'll see something of even more as we proceed through the book. But you need to know that the focus is that the great Christ has provided great redemption.

We don't often think about that, but you need to think about the idea that we, because of our sin, have been impounded, so to speak, and we are scheduled for destruction, dismantling. We were driving down the freeway the other day. We pulled up next to this flat-bed diesel truck, and it had all these cars—formerly cars—in these little boxes. Now, of course, if you've got a screen in your car like we do in ours, it's hard to get the kids to look at anything anymore but the screen. But I said, "Hey kids"—so I put my hand over the screen—I said, "Hey, look at those cars."

And it was so interesting because they were all just, I don't know, they were probably six feet by four feet, you know, they're just these little squares. And, you know, God has said that we are destined to destruction. And because God's wrath is going to break out against us because of our sin, but Christ has come and he's gone to the impound yard, so to speak, and he has redeemed us. He's purchased us out of that.

Now that's the picture of the book of Hebrews: redemption. And we'll see throughout our review of the first four chapters that that becomes even more great when we understand the greatness of Christ.

Now on your worksheet you've got something, and I didn't mean to get into a chart here—I know I've become Mr. Chart lately—but something like this that's going to help us review the greatness of, in number one on your outline—let's look at that—the greatness of Christ in chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, and chapter 4. And that should be familiar to you even with the tag words that I put next to chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4: angels, pay attention, Moses, and rest. Those were the themes of each of these, or at least



they're tag words that should bring back to memory the 20-some sermons we've had already in the book of Hebrews.

But let's look through—glance through—the first chapter, if you will, of Hebrews. We're already there in the introductory paragraph, and let us just think through the fact that Jesus is being compared to the most powerful, nimble, intelligent beings in the universe—angelic beings—and still in this text, the Bible says Jesus, by the way, outshines them all. He is the greatest person, and person is a word that simply describes someone who has intellect, emotion, and will. He is the greatest of intellect, the greatest of accurate and godly emotion, and the greatest volition and godly choices, all because he is, as we just read in chapter 1, the exact representation of God's glory.

And of course, we looked at that as we studied through the text, but we need to recognize that Jesus Christ is presented to us as the greatest. As a matter of fact, if you want to get specific, drop your eyes down there to verse number 8 after we have a statement in verse 4 that he's better than the angels. The text actually—look at what it says in verse number eight—says of the Son (this is a quotation from Psalm 45): “Your throne, oh”—and you circled that from before, didn't you? If not, circle it now—“Your throne, oh God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.”

It doesn't get any greater than that. God himself. And God, you need to remember in Scripture, is seen as a spirit being who dwells in unapproachable light. You cannot capture him. And yet at one point in history, God has, for the sake of redemption, put all of deity—the fullness of deity—in bodily form. And we have for the first time a visible and tangible fleshly manifestation of God himself. And it doesn't get any better than that.

Christ is great in chapter 1 because he is God. Christ is great in chapter 1 because he is the bodily manifestation of God himself.

Chapter 2, you remember, we started with this very poignant and brisk reminder that we are to be people that pay attention to what God says because as the discussion of the angelic messengers continues—angels are messengers, they bring a message—we learn in chapter 2 that greater still is the message of Christ. He brings the greatest message. That if the Old Testament message was important, we learn in chapter 2 that Jesus is great and he's the greatest because the message he brings comes with even more focused intensity and more accountability.

Look at it across the page. Verse number 1: “We've got to pay more careful attention,” Hebrews 2:1 says, “to what we've heard so that we don't drift away. Because if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how are we going to escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation which was first announced by the Lord and confirmed to us by those who heard Him, and God testified to it by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.”

Christ's message is supreme. There's nothing more important than that. And that's why we give ourselves to things like planting churches and expanding the kingdom of God through missionary



work. Why? Because this is the greatest message given through the greatest messenger. And Christ's message is binding.

And one day, as we learned last time, God is going to open the books. And he will then be able to judge every human life based on the message that's been delivered to them. We've learned a lot about that in Romans chapter 2 in our Thursday night Bible study. Christ brings the greatest message.

Chapter 3, as you turn the page to chapter 3, you'll remember we have now a comparison with Moses. That Christ is presented to us as someone who is even greater than Moses, who is seen as the quintessential manager of the people of God, the giver of the law, but Christ is even greater.

Verse 1 says, "Therefore, holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the *apostellō* and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all of God's house. But Jesus," verse 3, "has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as a builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was a faithful servant in all of God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house, and we are his house if we hold on to our courage and prove to be faithful as well, the hope to which we boast."

Christ is, in this text, the most faithful. There is no one more reliable. There is no one who speaks and carries through with what he's done. You can take the quintessential manager of God's people, Moses, the lawgiver, and watch at points in his life where he's not faithful—where he's supposed to speak to a rock and he strikes a rock—where he's not even allowed to enter the promised land because of infidelity, though it's very few and far between. And Christ is presented to us as one even more faithful: the faithful Son, the greatest and most faithful one.

Last four sermons in Hebrews—or five, six, I guess it's been—we looked at chapter four, where we learned about this concept of rest, which was seen in its many facets in chapter four, that there is this rest that's ultimately coming, provided by Christ. And it was compared to the rest that was given to Israel through Joshua. He was bringing them into the land that was flowing with what? Milk and honey. Supposed to be the greatest place to live. And yet Christ's reward for those that follow him is greater still.

As a matter of fact, he's presented in chapter 4 as the greatest rewarder. No one is going to deliver as a leader for his followers a greater place of rest. No one has something better to deliver to those that are faithful to him than Christ delivering to us one day the kingdom of heaven. And as he says in his parables, he's going to open it up to us and say, "Come now, blessed of my father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." And he'll usher us into the ultimate rest of God.

As we worked up to, through the fourth chapter of Hebrews, we learned a picture of Christ and he was great: the greatest person, greater than angels—God himself—the greatest messenger. You want to talk about angels? No one brought a greater and more binding message than Christ. We looked at Moses, a



faithful leader of God's people—Jesus, faithful or still, more faithful. The greatest rewarder—Joshua led them into rest, but Christ is even a greater rewarder.

Now, all of that—and the focus today, I hope—will be the redemption that he brings. And so I want to look, number two on your outline, at reconsidering, rather, the greatness of Christ's redemption. Oh, he is that, and that's good, and we're glad that he's the greatest. But what's pertinent to us as people impounded and people who are slated for destruction is the fact that he somehow, through this incredible work, brings us out of that place and into a place of blessing.

Hebrews chapter 1 said he's the greatest person. But we learn throughout the first chapter of Hebrews and into the second chapter that if this greatest person is to deliver us, he's got to take on a human form. He's got to be found in the weakness of human flesh so that he might be able to be murdered on our behalf, that God can pour out the justice of holiness on Christ instead of us.

And I'll tell you, for us, as we consider the Lord's table today, we ought to consider the humility of the redemption that Christ brings. If Christ is going to redeem us, he has to become like us. If he's going to exchange all the cars in the impounded lot and free them all, he himself has got to be subject to the crushing. And as Isaiah 53 says, that's exactly what he did. He became one who was willing to be crushed in our behalf and in our stead so that we wouldn't have to.

I want to keep our focus in Hebrews, but I've got to take you to Philippians chapter 2. So keep your finger in Hebrews. We'll be back in a second. But go to Philippians chapter 2 in this poetic statement of the great humility of Christ and what He was willing to do for us. And remember that as we enter into a time of reflecting on the redemption that Christ has bought for us, it didn't happen without an incredible laying aside of divine privileges and prerogatives and the comfort and the majesty and the luxury of heaven to live among us and to be found in a humble state as a human being.

You remember these great words beginning in verse number six, where it says who—that is Christ—being in very nature God. That's what we learned in Hebrews chapter one. He didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped. And you can only imagine what it might be like to have all the prerogatives and authority and majesty of heaven and everything at your disposal. But he said, no, I'll be born of a girl in Nazareth and be raised by a carpenter as a carpenter's son. And I'll live and be subject to the weakness of human frailty.

And in verse 7, it says, he made himself—if you want to think about the comparison—well, really compared to the majesty of God, he made himself nothing. And if it weren't for that nothing, there would be no redemption. But he brought himself to complete humility, taking on the very nature of a servant. He wasn't even born as a king. He was born in humble and contrite conditions, being made in human likeness.

Verse number eight: and being found in the appearance as a man, here's our word, he humbled himself, and he became obedient to death. Now here's the ringier: even death on a cross. The worst and most heinous kind of destruction. I mean, we're concerned now about executing people that have murdered people in heinous ways because they might feel some pain and some injection in their arm, and we're



looking rather at a Christ who was willing to go through not some decapitation, not some lethal injection, not an electrocution, but a day of complete torture on a cross.

The majesty of heaven laid aside and in his memory and instead in a place of complete humility, hanging naked before his jeers and those that would mock him, saying, I'll do this to redeem those people from the penalty of sin that they've already earned. And while we were yet sinners, the scripture says, Christ died for us.

How humiliating that must have been. I mean, you think about someone who's got a golden spoon in his mouth on this earth trying to do some menial job. Trying to think of the eternal God existing in heaven, willing to become the son of a carpenter, and to walk the dusty streets of Israel and die a humiliating death on a cross. Consider the humility of a great God—the bodily capturing of deity being crucified for your sin and mine. Consider the greatness of our redemption. Just imagine the humility.

If Christ is the greatest person, he's gone through the greatest humility. Chapter two, we learned of Jesus' role as a great messenger to bring this great and regal message of salvation that dare not be ignored. And we learned in chapter two—we already read it—that if the Old Testament came with penalties for ignoring the law of Moses, how much more the words of Christ?

And yet you and I live in the real world and we watch the news every night and we read the newspapers, we look around and we see the world, for the most part, shines Christ on. They couldn't care less about Christ. As a matter of fact, they disdain His Word. They don't live in accordance with it. As a matter of fact, a lot of your friends think you're silly for even being here this afternoon, being taught the Word of God. I mean, they don't just mock Him when they crucified Him. People, as a regular fare in their life, mock Him now.

What I need to think of as a messenger who gives a binding, regal message from heaven, it is amazing. Let's jot it down this way. Let's consider the restraint. I was going to use the word mercy, but it's so church-ized, we sometimes lose the thought of what it means. You might want to put the word mercy next to it, because that's what it is: is that God is withholding what we deserve.

And you and I have spent many years, if not periodically, many minutes, if not hours this week, living in opposition to the rule of Christ, doing something that is less than what we should be. And God shows incredible restraint. It's called mercy. And though every disobedience, it really deserves the just recompense, he says, well, I'll hold off.

Turn to Matthew 28. I wasn't going to turn you there, but let's turn there. Matthew 26. I'm sorry, not 28.

As you turn to Matthew 26, I think of the video of the police dogs. Remember these police dogs you see in all these cop shows now? Occasionally they show the cops with the German shepherds, the police dogs. And they come to the crime scene and you know the camera's getting jilted around and you get a sense of what's going on, and you see the shadow of the of the criminal crawl under the bush or hide in somebody's backyard. And the cop with the police dog gets out and that dog is trained to go after the bad guy, right? He's just going crazy and the cop holds them there by the side and there he is,



and they're, you know, they're there, they're coming up to the scene, and the dog's just waiting to get let loose on the bad guy.

That dog is not trained to go after the bad guy until the cop says go, right? But everything instinctively—the moment, the adrenaline, the fear emanating from the criminal—that dog just wants to go after it. I mean, by nature wants to go and attack that criminal.

What you and I don't understand about the table, the Lord's Supper—perhaps we don't feel it as we ought to—is that the things we call foibles and weaknesses and failures and just, you know, I kind of messed up this week—all that stuff the Bible calls sin—the holiness of God is by nature pitted against. The scripture says we store up the wrath of God against ourselves. And by nature, you've got a God, if you will, who's trained to respond to sin. He is by nature a holy God who just wants to break out against sin.

And yet he stands. And the scripture says he sometimes in heaven, then he laughs or mocks the evil ones. And it's like, he's like that trained aggressor that stands back and all he does is bark. And the scripture says Christ could release all of his—all of his majestic justice against sin. He could just release it this afternoon. And everything we're watching on the news, and including everything in our life, if God were to completely recompense sin, he would just break out in wrath against sin.

He's done that before. It was called the flood. I mean, I don't know why we still put our nurseries—we put the ark around our nurseries as though it was some fun event at the zoo or something, right? It was God's terrible anger when at one point the God of heaven released his anger against the sinful world and killed them all. It's amazing. And yet God today shows incredible restraint. But at any moment, he could release that.

Redemption. If you think about redemption, which is the pinnacle of God dealing with sin in the universe—at any moment, he could say, forget it, it's not worth it.

Matthew 26. Go down all the way to verse 51. You know the story. Peter is there. The betrayer has betrayed Christ. Peter's had enough. He pulls out his sword. He draws it. He's a fisherman, remember, not a centurion. So he's not real good at this. And he goes to—I'm sure he went to just split the melon of that servant just right in half. Instead, he just catches his ear, cuts the ear off.

Jesus says in verse 52, "Put your sword back in its place. All who draw the sword will die by the sword." And that's not the critical part. Underscore this. Here's the critical part. Thinking of a God restraining his wrath against sinful man: "Do you think I cannot call on my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions of angels. But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

You know what he had in view right there? Redemption of mankind. I could break out against sin. I could break out against my betrayer. I could break out against all that's pitted against what's good and righteous, but I won't. As a matter of fact, I'll allow the Father to break out the righteous anger at sin, and I'll allow Him to focus that on me. Consider the restraint in that. Christ went to the cross as an



incredible act of mercy. Before we ever speak of grace, we've got to speak of mercy, because He didn't give us what we deserve.

Chapter 3 in Hebrews, we looked at Moses, who was a faithful servant in God's house. But we looked at the Son, who was a faithful son, who did everything. And when Moses was put to the point, he broke. When Jesus was put to the breaking point in Gethsemane, he didn't break. As a matter of fact, he was willing to defer to the will of the Father. Christ showed his fidelity to his calling. As we said up there in Philippians 2, he was willing to even pay the ultimate price, even death on a cross.

John 15—just jot it down, don't turn there—verse 13, you know the verse. John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The ultimate price that can be paid. Infidelity to the plan of redemption is to carry through with it, even if it costs me my life.

Picture Gethsemane. "Lord," he says, "Father, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but yours be done." Greater love has no one than this. Consider, if you would, the faithfulness required, which is no more than a demonstration of Christ's love for us. That he would say, I love you, and that's the reason I'm willing to go even to death, murder on a cross. I'm willing to be murdered on a cross, which won't really be death at the hands of the Romans, or death at the hands of the Sanhedrin, or Caiaphas, the high priest. It will be death at the hands of God the Father, who was willing to offer him as a guilt offering on our behalf.

John 10:11 says, "I'm the good shepherd," Jesus said, "and a good shepherd is willing to lay down his life for the sheep." The hired hand—oh, he's not willing to do that. Matter of fact, the hired hand sees the wolf coming and he abandons the sheep, but the wolf then comes and attacks and scatters the flock. But the man who's not the hired hand, but the shepherd, he cares for the sheep. The hired hand cares nothing for the sheep. "I'm the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. And just as the Father knows me, I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Greater love is no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. While we were yet sinners, Romans 5 says, he died for us. Christ's task was to walk through death so that we wouldn't have to. And when it came to his task, unlike Moses, when the pressure was at the boiling point, Christ said, I'll do that for them because I love them. No longer do I call you servants, Jesus said to his apostles, now I call you friends. Friendship is tested in adversity. Friendship is tested when there's a price tag attached to it. Christ has proved his love for us because he was faithful to carry out his mission to redeem us.

Chapter four, we learned of rest. We learned of the grace of God and the rest that he gives us. And I say grace because here were people that were subject to destruction. They were impounded. They were children, as 1 John 3 says, they were children of the enemy. And Christ was willing to lay down his life to pull them out, to redeem them.

And these people that have, because of their sin, sent Christ to the cross. He endures the cross. He conquers death. He's resurrected. Now he looks at those people and you'd think now, if ever, he would want to dominate those people and make them the most menial slaves of all time, right? You caused me to die on your behalf. I've done it. Now you shine my shoes, see? And yet Christ doesn't do that.



As a matter of fact, though he expects obedience from us and though he calls us his friends and his servants, in the end, he takes his servants and as Scripture says, he sits them at the table and the master then girds himself to serve and he begins to serve the servants. The amazing picture. We've gone from mercy through love and we're in a whole new category now. It's the pinnacle of the virtue of redemption. It's the fact that Christ has provided for us grace.

Think about the promises of chapter four. God wants to give you ultimate rest. Why? Because you deserve it? No, because your sins, instead of taking Christ to the cross—but instead of condemnation—He's now going to reward you and give you a land flowing with milk and honey. That's no perishable land that's still infested with thorns and weeds. No, He's going to give you the new Jerusalem, the kingdom, prepared before the foundation of the world, and He's going to say, "Enter in, you blessed of my Father." That's called grace. It's not what we deserve. It's the antithesis of what we deserve.

We've got the greatest person of all time showing the greatest humility to save us. What should that do for us? As a matter of fact, let's think through this third column here. We need to think about providing Christ a great response, which is what the table should do. Not only bring us to a time to recognize the greatness of Christ and what he's done, it should lead us as we think through the truth of the greatness of Christ and his work to say, now what? What should I be? What should I do?

Chapter 1, we see the greatest person going through the greatest humility. If you go back to Hebrews chapter 1, just take a look, it's very clear. God is calling us to a very simple response. Look at verse number 6 by example here. We have the Father in heaven bringing the prototokos, the prototype—his Son—into the world. Deity now is incarnate in bodily form. And he says to the angels, "Let's worship him."

Which, by the way, the angels told the shepherds and God through his astrological signs and the insight that probably gained through Daniel in Babylon generations before, He called the wise men to worship him. He called the shepherds to worship him. He called the fishermen in Galilee to worship him.

It's real simple. He's calling us to worship him, which again is bizarre. Matter of fact, it's super bizarre. It's super bizarre that we are worshiping someone who walked on the planet. That's why it's bizarre we're even in a Jewish temple right now. Think about that. Think about it. We're really worshiping Christ, right? I mean, we are worshiping God, but God says, if you want to honor me, honor the Son. We sing songs about the Son. We sing great things He has done, and we think of the cross. We worship the God-man. It's an amazing thought, and we don't worship Him enough. But we should.

And his incredible humility—and you can jot it down again if you'd like, but Philippians 2, we've already been there. What we didn't read was the next two verses, which after he humbled himself, even to the point of death, even death on a cross, the next verse says, "So therefore God highly exalted him and gave him a name which was above every name, that the name of Jesus," what does it say, "every knee's going to bow, and every tongue's going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."



And God will be pleased that now you are worshiping the Son as you ought. You know, the rest of the world won't care. As a matter of fact, that incredible restraint is still in place as God lets the world walk away from Him and disdain Him and mock Him. But for us, we should be, before our time, the people called out from the rest to worship Him.

Do you worship Him? I mean, really? Is it just a few songs on Sunday? I hope that our time around the Lord's table today would remind you as you think back, well, church, we did that communion thing again. Wow. You know what? What was that all about? Well, in part, it's a reminder because God is great and Christ is great and he's done great things for us. He's requiring of us worship, which is more than singing songs. It's a heart that gives deference to the greatness of Christ and says Jesus is Lord, which is antiquated language for Jesus is the boss. He's in charge. We obey him.

If the greatest messenger is showing incredible restraint for people that don't obey him, I think what's important is that we obey what he says. And that we look to what he said. The messenger has spoken, and if he says repent of your sins and put your trust in me, we're going to do that. And then if he says further, don't do what everyone else does. It's not about living for the moment. It's not about expedience. It's not about comfort. It's not about convenience. It's about obeying the precepts of my word. Then we say, okay. We'll do that. We'll obey his word.

Luke 6:46, Jesus asked a very poignant question. He says, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I say?" This one means nothing. Worship means nothing if I'm not willing to do what he says. Jesus is Lord—that's one thing to say it: Jesus, your boss. But you know what? You can't really call him boss if you're not a good employee, and that means you got to do what he says.

We've got to pay much more careful attention, Hebrews 2 said, to what we've heard so that we do not drift away. We pay attention.

And after Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "Why do you not do what I say," he says, "I'll show you what the man is like who comes to me, hears my words, and actually puts them into practice." And you know this. He said it several times in his ministry. "He's like a man building a house who digs a deep foundation, and he lays the foundation of his house on the rock. And when the floods come and the torrents struck against the house, the house could not shake because it was well built. It was well manufactured. It was set on a foundation."

This is not just for his good that he has subservient people walking around Orange County. It's because he knows that if you obey him, your life will be founded on what's solid and secure. And the troubles of life will come, and your life will stand.

We've got the most faithful one, more faithful than Moses, who shows incredible love in going through the humility of the cross for us. And he shows us great love. If he's a faithful one and loves us that much, then there should be no need for us to doubt him or distrust him. You and I are called to trust him.



Let's just say this, you know what? He's never failed. When the going got tough and he had an opportunity to say, I'm more interested in my comfort and convenience than those people and their need, he says, I'll choose their need and I'll die on their behalf.

If you've got a friend like that, you ought to put your complete confidence in them. You ought to trust them through thick and through thin. And as James 1 says, there should be no doubting in your heart. If you ask a friend like that who's already gone and died on your behalf and you ask that God for help, there should be no doubt that he's got your best in mind.

As Romans 8 puts it, if he's freely given us his son, won't he also with him freely give us all things? And if you're praying for a yacht and he's not given it, then you don't need it, all right? Because I know that's where we go in our immaturity. Great. There's a lot of things I want to start praying for. Trust him, would you, when he doesn't give you what you want? And as we learned last week, he's interested in giving you what you need. Trust him.

Boy, Jesus called for that all the time. It's the greatest compliment you can give a trustworthy person is to trust them. Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust also in me. My father's house, there are many rooms. If it weren't so, I would have told you, but I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare that place, I'm going to come back and take you to be with me so that where I am, you may be also."

Remember that verse? Trust him. If life looks a little tempestuous, if it looks a little crazy, if the road's a little narrow, there's a few too many potholes in your life for your liking, trust him and don't stop trusting him. He's faithful.

If he's the greatest rewarder, he's got a land flowing with milk and honey, and that was just a small earthly picture of the eternal home he has for us. And he wants to reward us with incredible grace. If he's the greatest rewarder, and that demonstrates the incredible grace of our Redeemer, I think it would be important for us to respond the way he always asks us to whenever he talks about rewards. Let us serve him. Let's give our whole heart to serving him and saying no to a few things that don't really have eternal consequences. And let's say yes to a few things that do.

Jesus put it this way, "Don't store up for yourselves treasure on earth." Remember that passage, Matthew 6? "Store up for yourselves instead treasure in heaven." How do you do that? It means that you're looking at a God who says, I'm going to reward you in the next world. It's called the new Jerusalem, and I want you to not only be there, but I want you to prosper there. And the only way to prosper in the new Jerusalem is to get serious about serving him here.

You want to enjoy the rest to the fullest, if you don't want to get there, so as by fire, according to 1 Corinthians 3, if you really want to have, as the scripture says, a rich welcome into the kingdom of God, you better get busy serving him.

And you and I are far too earthly minded to get the sense of what that means, because I hear it all the time. Oh, it's too busy. I'm too busy. It's too hard. It's for that. I hate to even put it into words because you'll be a little too convicted.



But let's talk about stuff, for instance, like our Awana program. Was this all just a big run-up to an announcement about Awana workers? No, not really. But that's a good example. Or how about working with our Sunday morning group at Silverado, who go over to the nursing home and lead church there. Right, Mike? How about that? How about spending—instead of eating your omelet at brunch—you're there ministering to people that are on the brink of stepping into eternity, and you say, I'm going to spend my Sunday mornings that way. And gee, isn't that great? I can still go to church on Sunday afternoons. I knew that was on the afternoon schedule for some reason.

Awana—I just brought that up, but I didn't say much about it. Instead of sitting through something that might minister to me, I'm going to go downstairs and invest in eight, nine, ten, eleven-year-old kids. That's a good idea. Do you think that is eternal consequences?

Here's how Jesus put it: "If you do it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you've done it unto me." And "if you give a cup of cold water in my name," guess what? "You will not lose your reward." You know what that means? We got a gracious God, the greatest rewarder in the world. What should I do about that? Get busy serving him. Stop complaining about how hard it is. Stop it. I mean it, man. We get into all this aches and pains and it's so tough. Let's serve him.

We've got an incredible Christ who's gone through incredible humility, showed incredible restraint, has demonstrated incredible love, and has lavished on us and will lavish on us incredible grace. Let's get busy worshiping him, obeying him, serving him, trusting him. Let's do that. Is that too much to ask for someone that's gone to the cross for you?

Not a pitch for me. It's not a pitch for our church. I don't care—you're listening on the radio—you serve wherever it is that god has called you to serve. It's not about signing up and filling all the worker slots at our church. Get busy working for eternity.

We sang a song before we started this sermon: "To God be the glory, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice. Praise the Lord, let the people rejoice. So come to the Father through Jesus the Son. Oh, give him the glory. Great things he has done." That's what this table is all about. And it demands from us a response.

Greeters are going to come down the aisle—the ushers are rather—and they're going to pick up these elements. Let me give you the little 411 on this. I do this every time. But remember what this is about. It is a vehicle for us to remember what Christ has done for us. It is a tangible picture of the greatness of Christ who would go through the greatest humility to bring us salvation.

And your job and mine is to take these elements and you'll be passed a piece of bread and you'll be passed a little plastic cup. And if you're not sure what this is about, or you're not sure you're right with God, or you're running from God, or you're rebelling against God, or you're just visiting, you don't know what this weird thing's all about, just sit back and relax in the comfortable chair and just let all this stuff pass you by.



But if you know that you are a person that is committed to following Christ—you put your trust in him, you’ve repented of your sins, you’re called to love him and obey him and serve him and you trust him—then here, this is for us to say, we want to remember the greatness of Christ and the greatness of redemption.

Guys, go ahead and start serving this.

And as it comes by, I want you to spend some time even now worshipping him. I want you and your mind to think through the greatness of what God has done for us, what Christ has sacrificed on our behalf. And Bob’s going to add a little music, and it’s a great time, without any distraction, for you to close your eyes and spend some time saying, I’m going to put all this to work.

Christ is great. We’ve learned in 20 weeks of preaching through Hebrews so far the greatness of Christ, the greatness of His redemptive work. And you know what? I’m going to spend time worshipping Him. I’m going to be committed to obeying Him this week. I’m going to give him my trust where there’s doubt, and I’m going to get busy about serving him.

Scripture says as you do this, as we do it periodically here—about once every six or seven weeks at Compass—you are proclaiming the work and the redemptive work of Christ until he comes. You’re proclaiming it to yourself. You’re proclaiming it to each other. This is a great vehicle. It’s a vehicle of teaching, and it’s a vehicle of reception. And God is teaching us great things, and we’re proclaiming great things through doing this.

So you spend some time talking with God. Bob’s going to play as you pray. There we go. And I just want you to get your heart adjusted. There’s outstanding sin in your life. Get it dealt with right now. It takes a minute to confess your sin to God. Embrace the fact—trust the fact—that God is a God who has paid the penalty for your sin and can remove the guilt of your sin right now. He can do that. Just put it out there before him and say, God, it’s wrong. I confess it. I repent. And you and God can walk out of this auditorium this afternoon in sync and unified with one another. And we can take these elements as a sign of that, as a tangible tool to remember that, okay?

And I’ll get back up here in just a second. I’ll lead us in taking this together. If you could, just refrain until it’s time for all of us to do it together, and we’ll take these elements remembering the greatness of Christ.

For centuries, including the first, disciples sat around with the two elements that you’re holding in your hand, and they partook in this ceremonial meal. There’s nothing more than a token drink and a small piece of unleavened bread. And they remembered the greatness of Christ and the greatness of their redemption.

As a matter of fact, that’s exactly how Paul framed it for the churches. He said, in the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took the cup, and after giving thanks, He said, “This is my body broken for you.” And he said this: “When you eat this bread,” he says, “remember me.” Remember me.



He said, “When you take this cup, this covenant, this promise in my blood,” he says, “drink it and remember me.”

Remember that line from Hamlet when dead father’s spirit comes and talks to Hamlet? He says that last line before he slips away: is “remember me.” And Hamlet says—this is Mike Fabarez paraphrase, right?—but Hamlet says, man, to my dying breath, if there’s not a thought left in my mind, I’ll remember you. And in essence, Hamlet says, I’ll live for you.

You know, as Christians, there’s nothing more important than the fact that you’re no longer slated for destruction, that you now have the opportunity as Christians to walk into the eternal gates of the kingdom of heaven. And Christ said, you know, would you take this cup and eat this bread, and when you eat it, can you just remember me?

I think today we can say, oh yeah, we’ll remember you. To our dying breath, we’ll remember you. If everything else in this world gets fuzzy, we’ll remember what Christ has done for us.

Let’s eat this and drink this together in gratitude.

Would you stand with me? Let us pray together.

God, we are tremendously blessed people, fortunate people, who, depending on our awareness of our own sin, will have a particular depth of gratitude for what we’ve been talking about today. And Jesus, as you once taught us in the Gospels, that the one who’s forgiven much, he loves much.

And God today I know there are people here today that recognize because they feel the gravity of what they were destined for and what they had earned by their sin and rebellion, that today we can rejoice. We can with relief and enthusiasm, we can say we love you and we’re grateful.

And God for those that are here today that doubt this whole thing, maybe you’re sitting back with the basic lie of the enemy, that we’re not all that bad. We don’t really deserve God’s anger or God’s wrath. I pray that you convict their hearts.

God, I pray that there are some that sat through this today that don’t know what it is to say, yes, God is right and I’m wrong. And as Paul said, let God be found true and every man a liar. We recognize that what God has said about us, it’s accurate. And we need the grace of God that’s demonstrated in the redemption that Christ brought us.

I pray there’d be some that would cling to the cross today for the very first time, maybe even right now as I’m praying, maybe during this last song as we sing together, that hearts would be drawn to the only hope that we have, the rugged cross on which Christ died, the transaction that took place in heaven when God said that he would pour out his just anger on Christ instead of us. They would cling to the statement, the declaration of Christ when he said it’s finished.

God, I pray that today we would have the assurance, as we trust what you’ve said and what you’ve done on the cross, I pray that we’d have the assurance that we’re your children. And as Jesus put it, that



we would be your sheep, we would hear your voice, that you would know us and that we would know you.

God, we want to leave today being a part of your flock, being a part of your family. And God, I pray you'd make that clear in everyone's mind. No one leave having any confusion about where they stand with you today.

God, thank you so much that you paid it all. And because you paid it all, all to you we owe. And sin had left a crimson stain, but you washed it white as snow.

We thank you for that truth, God. We celebrate it today, even now as we sing. In Jesus' name, amen.