

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
December 14, 2014**

Hebrews 3:1-6

The Surpassing Christ: Greater than Moses

**Hymns: *Where the Promise Shines* – 702 –
11 – Closing: 28**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

“Moses!” “Moses!” “Take off your sandals, for it is holy ground on which you stand.” If that call is familiar to you, it means that you grew up seeing images of Charlton Heston whenever you heard Bible stories about Moses. Thanks to a new movie entitled “EXODUS: Gods and Kings” that has been advertised incessantly over the past few months, and which came to theatres this past Friday, perhaps it will be Christian Bale with whom a new generation identifies the great Bible character named Moses. There has always been a certain fascination with the life of Moses, so much so that even Hollywood has chosen to capitalize on his story numerous times. Today, in our continued look at the Letter to the Hebrews, the writer takes us to that fascinating man of the Old Testament as he compares Moses to “The Surpassing Christ” that we have been focusing on.

¹ *Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.* ² *He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.* ³ *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.* ⁴ *For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.* ⁵ *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.* ⁶ *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are*

his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. Hebrews 3:1-6

As you think about the life of Moses, there are so many memorable stories that we could recount that show the greatness of Moses, but rather than retelling the story of the burning bush, or going through the 10 plagues or recounting the Splitting of the Red Sea, I'm going to read one verse to remind you of how different Moses was from really every other person that has ever lived. It comes from Exodus 33:11. There, in the midst of explaining how God communicated with Moses, the Bible shares this nugget of information, ***“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”*** For all the stories from Moses' life that fill us with awe and wonder and which make us pronounce Moses' greatness, that verse might be the most insightful. Numerous times in the Bible, we hear about sinful man's inability to stand before a perfect God, yet ***“God talked with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”*** Now, Moses was not perfect, in fact, he was far from perfect, but what a special privilege Moses was given. No wonder, we say, “Moses was great!”

In fact, as we look a little more closely, we see many ways in which Moses' life mirrored the life of Jesus.

Moses' life began with a story of deliverance. Threatened by a jealous and bloodthirsty Pharaoh, Moses found rescue in a raft discovered by the princess of Egypt. Jesus' life also began with a story of deliverance. Threatened by the jealous and bloodthirsty King Herod, Joseph and Mary found safety as they fled with Jesus to the land of Egypt.

As a boy and young adult, Moses received training amongst the royalty of Egypt as he grew in wisdom and stature. The Bible also recounts Jesus sitting in the temple in Jerusalem, studying the Scriptures and growing in wisdom and stature before men.

Yet, these men would be tested. The second 40 years of Moses' life would be a time spent in the desert wilderness, far removed from his people, trying to run from terrible mistakes. Jesus, also, would face testing in the desert

wilderness at the hands of Satan who tempted him with all of his lies and deceit for 40 days.

Finally, Moses would be called by God to be the Deliverer of his people, a mission that Jesus would also be sent by God to accomplish. In so many ways, Moses was like the Christ. In fact, even Moses made the comparison. As he spoke to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses said these words when speaking about the coming Christ: ***“God will raise up for you a prophet like me.”***

Yet, for all his greatness, for all the ways in which he was a type or picture of the coming Christ, we must remember that Moses was but a faint shadow of the reality. And that is because, though Moses was called to be a deliverer for God’s people; he could not bring the true deliverance that they needed.

God would send Moses to deliver the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt, and he would do so in remarkable and spectacular ways – through powerful words and astounding miracles and terror-inducing plagues. But his deliverance didn’t meet the full need. God’s people needed an answer to the corruption that filled them from the moment they entered this world. They needed a solution to the rebellion that they constantly drifted to. They needed to be freed from the slavery that sin held them in and Moses could not bring that deliverance.

Moses’ shortcomings can be summed up by the message that he is known for – the 10 Commandments. Moses was a messenger of the Law of God, and that Law showed the ugliness of sin and the deathly wages that sin earned. Moses brought a covenant, but it was marred by man’s inability to keep their side of it. Moses delivered the people from slavery in Egypt, but could do nothing about their slavery to sin.

And for that reason, God sent a Deliverer who far surpassed Moses. God sent his Son to bring the deliverance that was needed. God sent Jesus Christ to be a deliverer for ALL people, because it wasn’t just the people of Israel who were slaves. Every person in this world is born a slave to sin. We chase after our own desires. We are led by corrupted morals.

We are influenced by an erring world. We need a deliverer. Because of that, God sent Jesus.

For all their similarities, the writer to the Hebrews tells us how different Moses and Jesus were. In verses 5 and 6 we are told, ⁵ ***“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future.”*** ⁶ ***But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house.”*** Moses was comparable to Jesus in so many ways, yet he was incomparable in this way: Moses was a servant, and Jesus is the Son!

God spoke highly of Moses, but of Jesus God the Father said, ***“This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well-pleased”*** (Matt. 17:5). As the perfect Son of God, Jesus could meet the demands of perfection that had been set by God. As the perfect Son of God, Jesus could serve as the justice-satisfying sacrifice that God called for. As the perfect Son of God, Jesus could be the Deliverer that Moses could not be; Jesus could be the deliverer from sin and death for every person in this world. And in remarkable and spectacular ways, by resisting all of Satan’s temptations, by suffering and dying on the cross, by triumphing over the grave, Jesus would be that Deliverer for you and me.

Jesus was greater than Moses because he gave us what we needed. It is all summed up well by a passage at the beginning of John’s Gospel, ***“The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Christ Jesus.”*** (John 1:18) Through Moses, we are shown our sin and its results; through Moses, we are given burdensome law. But through Jesus, we see clearly the undeserved love that God has for us; through Jesus, we are given the truth of how we find deliverance from our sins.

Deliverance will soon come to us in a humble story, as a baby born in the Bethlehem stable. But don’t ever doubt for a moment what we have been given in that manger. In the surpassing Christ, we have the Son who is able to deliver us! Amen.