

**Sermon Notes of
Elder Laura Urista's Sermon on September 27, 2015
"Hebrews Initiative #3:
One More Story, Please!"**

[In today's sermon, part 3 of a 12 part series on the book of Hebrews, Elder Laura Urista points out that chapter 3 reveals to us that Jesus is greater than Moses, warns us not to fall into an unbelieving attitude and that we have now entered into God's eternal rest.]

Notes:

Introduction – review of last two weeks:

- The Son is the exact representation of the Father.

Hebrews 1:3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.”

- Jesus is superior to the prophets and angels.
- Jewish community preoccupied with angels and gave them too much importance.
- God speaks to His people. He has always communicated with His people and always wanted a have a connection with us.
- In the past he spoke in various ways, but now He speaks to us through His Son.
- We need to focus on what Jesus said and by what He did – how he lived.
- In the future all things will be subject to mankind, but not yet
- In death Jesus experienced and conquered death for all humanity.
- He is exalted and now sits at the right hand of God.
- God only knows what we would be like without Jesus, but with him we are the children of God.

Today:

Hebrews 3:1-6 “Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. 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,’ bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. 6) But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.”

Moment of listening :

- Take a few minutes to reflect on this passage and let the Spirit open our minds.

- The author of Hebrews demonstrated in the first two chapters that Jesus is superior to the prophets and superior to the angels.
- Now the author shows how Jesus is superior to Moses.
- Jesus, the Son over God's house, is superior to Moses, the servant in God's house.
- This may seem obvious to us, but it was a brand new concept to the readers of Hebrews (Jewish Christians).

Tell us a story:

- Bedtime can be like World-War 3 in many households.
- Routines can help but many children feel they're missing out on something fun when they have to go to bed.
- Like most children, the Urista's kids had a specific bedtime routine.
- The highlight of course, was The Bedtime Story.
- This was often Juan's job and sometimes he would read them a story.
- But what the kids liked most was when he would make up exciting stories and let them make up their own endings or add their characters.
- When the story was over Laura would hear their sweet voices begging, "Daddy, just one more story please?"
- So Laura would have to be the bedtime enforcer and come "calm them down" with a lullaby then they would all say their prayers.
- But like all parents, we know that rest is good and necessary.
- If we don't get enough rest, we often get cranky.
- Likewise our Father knows we need rest. He offers it both now and eternally.
- But God's idea of rest and ours may be very different.

It's a STORY:

- As a congregation, we just recently heard 8 sermons about God's Epic Story.
- This excerpt by pastor and author Brian Zahnd ties in with this.

*It's a STORY
We're telling news here
Keeping alive an ancient epic
The grand narrative of paradise lost and paradise regained
The greatest "Once upon a time" tale ever told
The beautiful story which moves relentlessly toward—
"They lived happily ever after"*

*Never, never, NEVER forget that before its anything else it's a story
So let the Story live and breathe, enthrall and enchant
Don't rip out its guts and leave it lifeless on the dissecting table
Don't make it something it's really not—
A catalog of wished-for promises
An encyclopedia of God-facts
A law journal of divine edicts
A how-to manual for do-it-yourselfers*

*Find the promises, learn the facts, heed the laws, live the lessons
But don't forget the Story*

*Learn to read the Book for what it is—
God's great big wild and wonderful surprise ending love story
Let there be wonder
Let there be mystery
Let there be tragedy
Let there be heartbreak
Let there be suspense
Let there be surprise
Let it be earthy and human
Let it be celestial and divine*

*Let it be what it is and don't try to make it perfect where it's not
This fantastic story of—
Creation
Alienation
Devastation
Incarnation
Salvation
Restoration
With its cast of thousands, more Tolstoy novel than thousand page sermon*

*It's a Story because we are not saved by ideas but by events!
Here's a plotline for you: Death, Burial, and Resurrection
Yes, it's a story — not a plan, not ology or ism, but a story*

*And it's an amalgamated patchwork story told in mixed medium
Narration, history, genealogy
Prophecy, poetry, parable
Psalm, song, sermon
Dream and vision
Memoir and letter*

*So understand the medium and don't try so hard to miss the point
Try to learn what matters and what doesn't
It's not where and when Job lived
But what Job learned
In his painful odyssey and poetic theodicy*

*It's not how many cubits of water you need to put Everest under a flood
But why the world was so dirty that it needed such a big bath
Trying to find Noah's ark
Instead of trying to rid the world of violence
Really is an exercise in missing the point*

*Speaking of missing the point—
It's not did a snake talk?
But what the darn thing said!
Because even though I've never met a talking snake*

I've sure had serpentine thoughts crawl through my head

Literalism is a kind of escapism

By which you move out of the crosshairs of the probing question

But parable and metaphor have a way of knocking us to the floor

Prose flattened literalism makes the story small, time confined and irrelevant

But poetry and allegory travel through time and space to get in our face

Inert facts are easy enough to set on the shelf

But the Story well told will haunt you

Ah, the Story well told

That's what is needed

It's time for the Story to bust out of the cage and take the stage

And demand a hearing once again

It's a STORY, I tell you!

And If you allow the Story to seep into your life

So that THE STORY begins to weave into your story

That's when, at last, my friend, you're reading the Bible right

God commanded rest for the Israelites: (Ex 20:8-11):

Exodus 20:8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9) Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11) For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

- The Israelites had been slaves and were not allowed to rest from their labor or worship God on a weekly basis.
- But now Jesus came and is Lord of the Sabbath

Mark 2:23-28, "One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24) The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?' 25) He answered, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26) In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.' 27) Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' 28) So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

- Jesus offers us a different kind of rest than the Old Covenant rest.

Jesus offers rest to all who are weary and burdened:

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- The Jewish religious leaders had heaped burdens on the people that God never intended, and they were weary.
- Jesus gives us spiritual rest.

- Contrast: Mount Sinai versus Sermon on the Mount
 - Mount Sinai was the mountain that could not be touched.
 - Moses brought written words.

 - Sermon on the Mount – Jesus who touched and healed lepers, sinners, outcast.
 - Jesus Is The Living Word.

 - Moses knew about God and about the Law,
 - But Jesus IS God and God IS Love.
 - Jesus came to show us and call us to a higher Law – the law of love.

- Beatitudes = Be-Attitudes are not commands or quid pro quo formulas but an attitude of being in Christ by the Holy Spirit.
- It's a state of rest or Shalom resulting from the life of the risen Christ in us.
- Jesus gives us the Shalom of God – it can't be earned

- The entire Bible is leads up to and culminates in the greatest story of redemption.
- God in the person of Jesus came to clean us up and redeem us.

- *Makarious* is the Greek word translated, "blessed."
- Blessed describes how a person feels when they are happy and content.

- A classic story turned into a musical: "My Fair Lady."
- A 2 minute video excerpt of the movie was shown where the star Eliza Doolittle sings the song, "Show Me Now!"

- Jesus came to show us the Father.

John 14:8-10: Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9) Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10) Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

- Remember Heb. 1:3 – tells us that Jesus is the exact representation and express image of God – like an imprint or stamp.

A Warning to the Hebrews:

Hebrews 3:7-12: "Therefore as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you will hear His voice, 8) do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9) where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10) Therefore I was angry with that generation and said 'they always go astray in their heart and they have not known My ways, 11) so I swore in My wrath, 'they shall not enter My rest.' [Ps.

95:7-11] 12) Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God' but exhort one another daily, while it is called today..."

- In this passage, the Hebrews are warned about the condition of their hearts (hardened, unbelieving, disobedient).
- The result was that the Israelites of old were sentenced to wander in the wilderness.

Eternal rest is coming for those who believe:

Hebrews 3:16-19 "Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17) And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? 18) And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19) So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief."

John 6:29: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

- Belief and obedience are required.
- But God gives us belief.
- We are called to serve now and eternally but our service is not tedious, it comes out of Christ's love as He lives in us.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Conclusion:

- There is an eternal rest in the future but there is also a rest now in His presence.
- "Rethinking Hell Conference" where scholars and professors couldn't agree on a view of Hell.
- Some things remain a mystery for good reason!
- It's hard for us to think "4th dimensionally" where God is – beyond time and space.
- But God gives us some clues in the New Testament.
- It's God's will that all be saved:

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

- God has the power to save all:

Matthew 19:26, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- What the world sees, versus what every mother or parent sees.
 - Many of you have probably seen this image on Facebook or in a similar TV commercial – a fully grown man in a soldier's uniform.
 - But the mother sees her son as a little boy in a soldier's uniform.

- When Laura looks at their grown adult children, of course she sees them as all grown up.
- They've got their own lives and are starting their own families.
- But as a mother, she will always see them as her sweet, precious babies.

- When God looks at the world what does he see?
- Jesus shows us that God sees all of us as his precious children, and his heart goes out to them.
- His greatest desire is to save all.
- But we realize that some may reject God's gracious offer.

- It is Laura's prayer that one day all God's children will come before His throne and beg, "Daddy, one more story, please?"

Closing Prayer: