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Pastor's Introduction

Hope. After the past two years, this is a word that has been used a lot in our everyday lives. Whether on social media or in casual conversation, people all over our community are looking for hope. For many of us, we looked to the holidays and the Christmas season as a time for hope to be with our families and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

But now that the holidays have passed...where do we find our hope? Join us beginning Sunday, January 16, for a new extended sermon series called "A Better Hope," where we will be examining the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews was written primarily for the Jewish people who had placed their hope in a Messiah that would bring either a social or government revolution. Yet, when Jesus arrived, He showed them that their hearts needed rescuing first, not the systems around us.

Join us as we kick off 2022 to remind ourselves that Jesus and His gospel is "The Better Hope" that we have been looking for and the one that we desperately need.

Serving Christ and You,

Chad Crawford,
Campus Pastor, Cumberland Church

Ed. TG



Participant Guide for January 16, 2022

Better Moment

Hebrews 1:1-3

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. In this passage, the author takes us on a journey through redemptive history, that is, from the beginning of the Bible to the end. As a class, talk through the four major themes of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration and how they align with today's passage. How do all these events in history lead up to the moment where the author is writing down these words?
2. In the Bible, what are some ways that God revealed himself to people? Are any of these ways unusual? If you need help, see Numbers 22:21-39. Why was it necessary for God to speak to his people in various ways?
3. The author states that "The Son is the radiance of God's glory." What does the word "radiance" mean? What does it mean for the Son to be the radiance of God's glory? Describe some ways that Jesus radiated God's glory.
4. Some say that Jesus is not God; others may say that he was a great prophet; others may say that he was a great teacher, but just a man. How would you respond to those claims based on this passage?
5. How does this passage contain all the elements of the gospel? How can we use this passage as a springboard for presenting the gospel to others?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, consider how God reveals himself in your life. Are there ways that he is revealing himself that you are missing? What disciplines are you going to put in place to make sure you are in tune with God's revelation?



Participant Guide for January 23, 2022

Better Messenger

Hebrews 1:4-14

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon notes:



Apply

1. What does it mean to be a messenger? You may have heard the phrase, “don’t shoot the messenger.” How do messengers sometimes carry the weight and responsibility of the message they deliver?
2. If someone asked you, “tell me about who Jesus is without telling me what he did,” how would you answer? Why is it essential to not only be able to tell others about *what Jesus did* but also *who Jesus is*?
3. What is the definition of the word “angel?” Verse 1 states that God spoke through the prophets, but the Bible records that God also spoke through angels. Describe times in the Bible where an angel delivered a message from God.
4. Why does the author spend so much time comparing Jesus to the angels? What point is he trying to make? What is the difference between God speaking through his angels and God speaking through Jesus his Son?
5. How many times does the author quote the Old Testament in this passage? Why is he using the Old Testament to build his argument for the superiority of Jesus as God’s messenger of God’s angels?
6. Read Isaiah 61:1: How is Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of this verse? Because we have the gospel message from the better messenger, how can that empower us to follow him as messengers of the Good News?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, pray for God to reveal people in your path that need you to be God’s messenger.

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Old Testament quotes in this passage (7):

- 1:5-6 - Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, Deuteronomy 32:43.
- 1:7-12 - Psalm 104:4; 45:6-7; 102:25-27.
- 1:13-14 - Psalm 110:1



Participant Guide for January 30, 2022

Better Message

Hebrews 2:1-4

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Last week, we talked about Jesus being a better messenger. Now we look at how the message itself is better. Tell the class about a time where you hoped to receive good news, and instead, you received even better news than you expected. What made the message better than you expected?
2. The CSB says that the message spoken through the angels was “legally binding,” the ESV uses “reliable,” and the NIV uses “binding.” What are these various translations trying to tell us about the importance of the message spoken through the angels?
3. What does the author mean when he says, “how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” What does it mean to neglect God’s salvation? How do both believers and non-believers fit into the category of neglecting God’s salvation?
4. Throughout the book of Hebrews, you will hear legal (or courtroom) terminology. Verse 4 says that God testified regarding this message of salvation through Christ. What does that mean? How did God testify? Why did God need to testify?
5. Is there a difference between the words “witness” and “testify?” When we share what God is doing in our lives, are we “witnessing” or “testifying?” What is the difference?
6. How is your life a testimony to God’s message? How is God currently using you to proclaim his message of salvation?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, examine if there are any areas of your life where you are drifting away from God’s message and make a plan to get back on track.

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Participant Guide for February 6, 2022

Better Man

Hebrews 2:5-18

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What sets humans apart from other examples of God's creation? What are some of the unique traits of humanity?
2. How does this passage describe Jesus' humanity and uniquely human traits? Make a list of all the ways Jesus was human. Why is this passage going through such great lengths to argue for why Jesus needed to become like man?
3. Read Psalm 8:4-6: How are this Psalm and today's passage from Hebrews describing humanity? How do these passages take those concepts one step further to make the argument that Jesus is the "better man?"
4. In verse 8, we see what is commonly referred to as the "already-not yet" tension of the coming of Christ. As we live between the first and second coming of Christ, some things are already accomplished, and some things are not yet accomplished. What is the "already-not yet" tension in verse 8? (Hint, look for repetition of words.)
5. We see throughout the passage how Jesus shared in our humanity, but especially in our suffering and temptation (verse 18). What comfort does this verse provide that Jesus can help? How does Jesus help us? Is there anything that we have to do for Jesus to help us?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, consider what it means for Jesus, the everlasting King over all creation, became man for you! What should be your response that He would take on humanity for you?

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Participant Guide for February 13, 2022

Better Moses

Hebrews 3:1-6

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What do you think of when you hear “Moses?” What stories come to mind?
2. In verse one, we see that Christians share in a “heavenly calling.” What is our “heavenly calling?” What are the ways it affects how we live on earth?
3. When we hear “Apostle” we often think of Jesus’ closest followers. In general, an apostle is one who is sent as a messenger. In verse 1, we see Jesus is an apostle. Why is he given this title? It also says he is a high priest. Are the roles of apostle and high priest connected in any way?
4. To Jews, what was Moses’ significance? What would it mean to Jews who grew up reading the Old Testament as their Bible to say Jesus is a better Moses?
5. Hebrews 3:5 seems to be alluding to Numbers 12:7-8. In that passage, Moses is being criticized by Aaron and Miriam saying, “Does [the Lord] not also speak through us?” (Numbers 12:2). God’s response about Moses is in Numbers 12:7-8. Moses is often considered to be the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. How is Jesus a “better” prophet of God? Is there any relationship between Jesus as an apostle, high priest (as we saw earlier), and a prophet?
6. How do Jesus’ roles give us the “confidence and hope” indicated in verse 6? How do these affect how we live?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Through his Holy Spirit, ask God to allow us to walk in the confidence and hope of our heavenly calling, which we have in the faithful Son of God.

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Participant Guide for February 20, 2022

Green Light Conference

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What were your key takeaways from the Green Light Conference?
2. How will our class be involved in local missions?
3. How will our class be involved with our missionary partners?
4. Take time to pray for each of our missionary partners.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ What role will you play in God's mission?

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Participant Guide for February 27, 2022

Better Belief

Hebrews 3:7-19

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Has there even been a time where you simply couldn't believe something you heard? It could be a story on the news, or something that happened in your life. Why was the news so hard to believe?
2. Hebrews 3:7-11 quotes Psalm 95:7-11, which summarizes Israel's rebellion against God and not receiving the "rest" of the Promised Land. Hebrews says this was not only David's writing but the Holy Spirit speaking. Are both things true? How does knowing the Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture affect how we read the Bible?
3. Psalm 95 begins by saying we should worship God because he is the creator of all people and savior of Israel. It concludes by calling others to not rebel against their creator and savior. What is the opposite of rebelling against God? How can refraining from rebelling against God be an act of worship?
4. Verses 12-19 explain the Psalm 95 allusion. The author encourages us to "watch out." How do we "watch out?" What did the generation in the Wilderness not believe that caused them to rebel against God? (See Numbers 13 and 14).
5. In verse 13, the author emphasizes, from Psalm 95:7, that the Spirit is speaking to us "today." The author urges us to encourage each other in the church from being hardened by sin. How can corporately encouraging each other affect our personal salvation? What are ways we can warn each other from the effects of sin? Why is it important we encourage each other to not be hardened by sin's deception? (See v. 14 and 19).

Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**
- ◆ Find someone in your connect group and encourage them to trust the promises of God in his word to fight the sin of unbelief.

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Participant Guide for March 6, 2022

Better Rest

Hebrews 4:1-13

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. When was the most tired you've ever been? Do you remember? A long day at work? Or an event you had to run? What about if you're a parent?
2. What is your favorite way to rest? A TV show / good book / video or board game? Time with friends? Taking a nap? Are some methods of rest better than others?
3. What is the difference between physical and spiritual rest?
4. Hebrews 4:1-3 continues off of the previous passage, 3:7-19. Hebrews 3:7-19 is a plea to believe in the word of God and receive God's rest. This passage emphasizes deciding to believe *today*. Why might that be important when talking about believing the word of God?
5. The writer of Hebrews assumes the reader is familiar with stories of the Old Testament, including the creation story, the Psalms of David, and the conquest of Joshua. What is the way God created it? What did He do on the 7th day? Who was David known as? (A man after God's own heart) What was the purpose of the conquest of Joshua? (To obtain the promised land and rest from wandering.)
6. The common thread through all three is that: Belief in the Word of God results in God's rest. Verse 10 gets to the heart of it, "For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his." And verses 12-13 take it a step further, in essence saying God can spot a fake, so make sure you truly believe. This question might sting a little, but what are some ways you have been "fake?" How do you change?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ The rest of God is all-encompassing. In what ways are you choosing to refuse God's rest? Overworking? Over worrying? This week, find a way to rest in God.

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Participant Guide for March 13, 2022

Better Moses

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Have you ever had jury duty, been in court, or watched a drama about the practice of law? What is the role of the defense attorney?
2. What do you know about the priests of the Old Testament? Specifically, the high priest? (Found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; Aaron, Moses' brother, was one.)
3. In Hebrews 4:14-16, the writer sets up Jesus as the great high priest. Read verses 14-16 aloud. What does verse 14 tell us our response to the actions and status of Jesus should be? What does verse 15 tell us about the nature of Jesus? How does this set up your view of verse 16? (I have confidence to trust in him because he understands me)
4. Verses 1-4 give a picture of the relationship of the Old Testament high priest and the common Israelite. What are some key things from these verses about this relationship?
5. Take what you just pulled from the previous verses and discuss. How is Jesus, the better high priest? Now read verses 5-7. What does the text say about the priestly status of Jesus?
6. An Old Testament figurehead named Melchizedek is brought up twice throughout this passage, and he initially appears in Genesis 14:18-20. There is a lot of mystery surrounding this individual in particular, but something quite interesting to see is that Melchizedek was said to be two things, a king and a priest. What is Jesus compared to in our Hebrews passage? Romans 10:9 should point you to a mention of Lord Jesus. Why is this two-fold nature of Jesus so important? (He not only sacrificed for and saved; He reigns and rules)
7. In Hebrews 5:8-10, some interesting statements are made about Jesus. What are they?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ In light of Jesus' royalty and priestliness, what is one way he is calling you to serve him this week? Getting up 30 minutes earlier? Committing to pray 10 minutes every day this week? Buying someone a meal? Stepping out in faith into what the Holy Spirit has called you to? Telling someone about Jesus?



Participant Guide for March 20, 2022

Better Devotion

Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Has there ever been a time where you were frustrated with someone because you believed they were capable of understanding something but simply too lazy to understand? Why was that experience so frustrating? Have you ever been guilty of falling into that trap? How so?
2. What does it mean for you to devote yourself to something? What kind of things or causes do people devote themselves to? How does devotion to God result in spiritual maturity?
3. Hebrews 5:11-14 use a metaphor of milk versus solid food. What does each of these metaphors represent? What is the point that the author is making with this metaphor?
4. In terms of spiritual growth, give some tangible descriptions of what the “milk” represents. By contrast, what does “solid food” represent? What does the journey from milk to solid food look like for a baby becoming a toddler? Next, take those same principles and discuss what it looks like for a Christian moving from milk to solid food. What principles can we apply from each journey?
5. In chapter 6, what danger is the author warning about for those who do not mature? Why is it easier for those who are immature to fall away? What preventive measures can be implemented to ensure a solid biblical foundation?
6. How does our devotion to God influence how we grow spiritually and lead others to do the same? How are you leading others today?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, examine your spiritual growth over the last year. Would you say that you’ve moved on from milk to solid food? If not, how will you choose to grow over the next month?



Participant Guide for March 27, 2022

Better Promise

Hebrews 6:13-20

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Promises are some of the weightiest words someone can speak. Why do promises we make hold so much weight? Has there ever been a time where someone made a promise to you, and it took a long time for them to uphold their end?
2. In what ways do we swear oaths or make promises in our current culture? How is that different from how things were done in the past (recent past or ancient past)?
3. Verse 15 says that Abraham patiently waited. Was Abraham always patient with the promises of God? When did he fail at patience?
4. Read Genesis 22:16-18: The birth of Isaac played a critical role in God fulfilling his promise to Abraham. How does God's blessing of Abraham and Abraham's response to trust in God shape redemptive history? How did Abraham's receiving of God's promise affect us? What role do we now play in that promise?
5. Verse 18 says that we can now "seize the hope that is set before us." What hope is set before us? Further, what does it mean for us to seize that hope? How can we find strength in that promise if our hope is anchored in an unchanging God who holds us in his hand?
6. Verse 19 says that Christ is now the anchor of our souls. How is that true in your life? How would you explain to a non-believer what it looks like for God to be the anchor of your soul?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Do you sometimes feel disconnected from the promises of God? This week, meditate on how God reveals himself to you through the promises of His Word.