

SUPERIOR

February 11 & 12: Superior Trust

Series Overview

Our faith is rooted in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Like the rays of the sun, Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory. But the book of *Hebrews* tells us that Jesus was no mere man, that He is not just another prophet or the face of another religion—He is the Son of God! And it's through Him alone that we've been given a superior message, a superior promise, a superior faith, a superior everything. During this series we will be learning how to see Him more clearly, love Him more deeply and serve Him more passionately.



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Sermon Highlights

Hebrews 3:12-14 says, ¹²Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. ¹³You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. ¹⁴For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. (NLT)

The writer is building on the theme, "Jesus is Superior." In chapters 1 and 2, "Jesus is superior to the angels." In chapter 3, "Jesus is even superior to Moses." He quotes *Psalms 95* in *Hebrews 3:7-8*, ⁷...*Today when you hear his voice, ⁸don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled... (NLT)*

He's reminding them how the children of Israel acted when they were in the wilderness. They became discouraged and failed. So how can we avoid discouragement? How can we keep our hearts from becoming hard? How can we keep trusting and be encouraged?

1. We must stay focused.

Hebrews 3:1, And so, dear brothers and sisters who belong to God and are partners with those called to heaven, think carefully about this Jesus whom we declare to be God's messenger and High Priest. (NLT)

Jesus established the oneness of God the Father and God the Son. As "High Priest," He intercedes on our behalf to the Father.

Hebrews 3:2-6

Why do we need Jesus to intercede on our behalf? Because of our tendency to turn away from God. The human heart is a very unusual thing. Like sheep, we have the ability to get into trouble and wander off where we are not supposed to go. *Hebrews 3:12, Be careful... Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. (NLT)*

To stay encouraged we need to keep our hearts looking forward. And the first step is recognizing our sinful nature. We need to stay focused on Jesus ... our High Priest ... our Savior!

2. We must stay in fellowship.

Hebrews 3:13, But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

God has called us into community. One of the ways to guard your heart is to stay in regular congregational worship, encouraging each other. And notice we are to encourage "today." We can't encourage yesterday, and you may not have the opportunity tomorrow. The time to encourage is now.

How do we encourage?

- *Position* *Philippians 1:4-6*

Remind them where they came from. You will better appreciate your position in Christ when you remember your condition without Christ.

- *Potential* *Hebrews 3:7-11*

The *rest* referred to in *Hebrews 3:11* is the Promised Land, the place of God's provision. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. But this rebellious generation never got there. Some people think of the Promised Land as a picture of heaven, but it is not so! The Promised Land is a picture of the abundant life Christ wants us to have right here on earth!

- *Partnership* *Matthew 11:28-29*

3. We must stay fresh.

Hebrews 3:14, For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. (NLT)

Superior trust means we are on this journey for the long haul. The Christian life is not a sprint, it is a marathon. The truth is, anything can become stale. Even the new life we have as Christians can become routine. It's not enough to be *given* rest, to trust Christ for what He did in the past. You need to *find* rest by trusting Him for what He's doing in your life today. We know that Christ holds on to us, but we need to hold on to Christ. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart! Accept the given rest, then serve the Lord and find rest—the Promised Land—the promises of God for your life right now!



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: What would be your dream vacation? Why?

Read *Hebrews 3:1-6, Romans 7:22-25* and *Hebrews 3:12*.

1. What are some things that can cause you to lose your spiritual focus? What practical things can you do to guard against losing your spiritual drive and wandering in your devotion to Christ?
2. As our High Priest, Jesus regularly intercedes for us. What is your response to the fact that Christ's primary role now is praying for you and upholding you in your earthly journey? How might this affect your spiritual activity? Your spiritual confidence and boldness?
3. *Hebrews 3:6* says we are God's house. This means we are being built together with other believers. How does this sense of community encourage you? How do you feel, knowing that you are being built together with others to be God's dwelling place?
4. How important is it to honestly acknowledge that all of us can lose our focus on Christ at one time or another? What can your small group do to help each other to keep from wandering in our devotion to Him and the work of His kingdom?

Read *Hebrews 3:13, Philippians 1:4-6, Hebrews 3:7-11* and *Matthew 11:28-29*.

1. What are some ways that sin can deceive you? Why is it important for us to warn and encourage each other? Would you say you are open to encouragement and warning from others? Why or why not?
2. Spiritual formation has a beginning, a progress and a completion. Paul is confident that God will bring His work to a positive completion in each life. How does this analogy of a work in progress describe you? What kind of hope does this give you for God's work in you for the future?
3. Why is disbelief such a big sin with God? Have you had a miracle in your life that strengthened your faith in God? Even in the face of big events like that, we still have to guard our hearts. Why do you think that is?
4. How can rest be something we are *given* and something we *find*? Why is it so important that we continually cooperate with God as He leads and directs our lives? How will this contribute to our sense of peace, rest and blessing in our lives right now?

Read *Hebrews 3:12-14*.

1. All of us experience times when our spiritual lives seem stale or in a rut. What are some things we can do to make sure that our relationship with Christ is staying fresh and real?
2. Do you consider yourself committed to Christ for the long haul? How might that affect the way you approach your relationships, priorities and life decisions?
3. What can your small group do to keep each other on your toes so sin doesn't slow down your spiritual reflexes? How does this passage help you understand the value of spiritual community?



Take it home ... Practical Applications

Prayerfully examine yourself and see if you are keeping your spiritual focus. If you are in the midst of a stale season, ask God to stir your heart and bring new freshness as you make yourself available to Him.

Look for ways to encourage the people God has placed in your life. Be willing to allow your small group to bring encouragement and warning into your life as you accept the fact that we all have tendencies to wander and we all need each other to finish our spiritual journey.

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All Bible references are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.

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