



SERMON NOTES

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Don't Lose the Plot

Questions for the New Year (by Don Whitney):

- What's one thing you can do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?
- What's the single biggest time-waster in your life and how can you redeem the time?
- In which spiritual rhythm do you want to make progress this year?
- For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?

"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also 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. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs." (Hebrews 1:1-4)

When?

"In the past God spoke...but in these last days he has spoken..."

Who?

Jesus is:

- The Son
- Heir of all things
- The Creator and Sustainer
- The Radiance of God's glory and exact representation of his being
- The One who deals with sin
- The One seated in heaven
- Superior to the angels

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sermon Overview

Weariness. Sluggishness. Apathy. We have all experienced these feelings at some point—they drain our excitement and energy for living well. So, what do you do when you find yourself in a season of exhaustion and fatigue?

The book of Hebrews is written to a group of Christians who had found themselves in that type of season. In the midst of opposition and life's complications, they were in danger of losing interest in following Christ. So, this book reminds them of the resources they have in Christ and the nature of the journey they are on. All along the way, the author's challenge to them and to us is simply this—keep moving forward!

Praying Scripture

The prayer focus this week is 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. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

Below is an example of how to pray the passage:

Jesus, I worship and praise you for who you are. There is no one or anything like you. You are God of all things, you sustain us by your all-powerful word. Thank you for sacrificing your life so that I could experience your saving grace which brings freedom and joy. It is my desire to surrender to your authority as you sit on your throne in heaven. I humbly pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

JANUARY 7

Because the book of Hebrews opens like a sermon without mention of a sender or words of greeting, the author opens with a majestic overture that is theologically packed. This beautifully constructed opening statement begins by contrasting the revelation from the older testament with what was given under the new. This contrast focuses on and climaxes in the person of God's son-heir, agent of creation, sustainer of the universe, Savior, and sovereign who now sits at the right hand of God. (Guthrie 45)

The recipients of this book are under strong pressure to turn back to Judaism. Persecution from orthodox Jewish leaders is undermining their commitment to Christ. Therefore, the writer repeatedly reminds the believers to endure patiently.



DAY ONE

Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read the entire book of Hebrews to get an overview of the author's purpose in writing this epistle.

1. Write down impressions you have of the author's view of Jesus.
2. What is the author's attitude toward his readers? (Angry? Frustrated? Compassionate? Impersonal?)
3. Write down words and concepts that are repeated in the book.

Reflect on what you read in the book and how the three overarching themes are represented.

- Christ is superior in his person (1:1-4:16)
- Christ is superior as our High Priest (5:1-10:39)
- Christ is superior for pressing on (11:1-13:25)

As you reflect on what you read, write down your thoughts about why you should surrender your life to Jesus who is superior in every way.

Pray the prayer of release and receive as you reflect on the truths presented in this book. Create space in your heart and mind to ask the Spirit to guide you in to a deeper understanding of the book of Hebrews.

DAY TWO

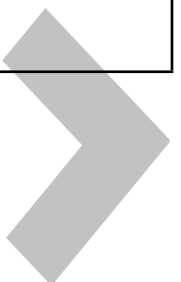
Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4. As you read the verses, imagine yourself in this situation where you are being persecuted for following Jesus. How would the opening verses of this book encourage you in the midst of challenges and hardships? Read the verses silently and then aloud to get a feel for the author's intent.

1. Based on these opening verses, what do you think the author's primary concern was in writing this letter? What does he want to establish first and foremost in the minds of his hearers?
2. What is meant by the term, "*in these last days*?"
3. In the chart below write what you learned about Christ in these 4 verses.

Who Jesus is	Where Jesus is	What Jesus does/has done

Reflect on verses 1 and 2 and rewrite them in your own words.



DAY THREE

Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4 again.

1. There are 5 “proofs” in Hebrews 1:3 that Christ is fully God. List them in your own words.
2. Why does it matter that Jesus sustains all things by his powerful word?
3. The Jews considered angels to be powerful and exalted beings. Why does the author contrast Jesus and the angels at the outset of the letter? Look up the following verses to better understand the reason: Colossians 2:18 and Revelation 22:8-9.

Reflect on the way Christ is described in these opening verses - how does that help you live *“in these last days?”* Write your thoughts.

Respond and Apply: These verses remind us that the entire universe was created by Jesus Christ. (See Psalm 95) How should you, as the creature, respond to the Creator? This week, keep that reality in mind and look for ways to respond accordingly to the circumstances you face. Share ways this passage impacted your thinking and your actions this week.

Listen to this song, “So Will I,” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfVd5x9W1Xc>) and worship the God of creation, remembering that Jesus is part of the Trinitarian God who was present at creation and is present now in your life.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What resonated with you from Pastor George’s story about watching the movie? What does it mean to “lose the plot?” How do we “lose the plot” in our spiritual lives?
2. How does this passage remind us that Jesus is superior in all ways?
3. Why is it important to remember that Christ is the creator and sustainer of all things?
4. We are living in the last days that are mentioned in this passage. The “last days” began with ushering in the Kingdom of God and continue now that Jesus has ascended into heaven. What does this passage tell us is true about Jesus “in the last days?” How should we live in the “last days” so that our faith keeps moving forward?
5. The purpose of this series is to help us ‘Keep Moving Forward’ in our Christian lives. Discuss the following questions:
 - What’s one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?
 - What is the single biggest time-waster in your life, and what will you do about it this year?
 - In which spiritual rhythm do you most want to make progress this year, and what will you do about it?
 - For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?
6. Commit to praying for one another and to help each other “stay focused on the plot,” which is God’s desire for his children to grow and mature.