

Sunday, February 28, 2016

Hebrews 3:1-19

I Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

Jesus is Greater... than Moses and Abraham...

For many years superheroes have appeared in comics, television programming and movies starring many different actors and actresses playing key roles. Superheroes come in all sizes and are often identified by capes, bright colours, and each has their own special super human power. There are both male and female superheroes and each character evolves differently by the individual who portrays them. Who are the superheroes-- Batman, Superman, Spiderman, Supergirl, Wonder Woman, Catwoman, Captain America.. The list goes on for a while and it seems that people just want to have someone to believe in that has gifts which are bigger and better than human strength. Who is your favourite superhero? The controversy between Batman and Superman will heat up soon as a new movie will soon be released putting these two against each other until they need to go against the enemy Lex Luthor.

But who is greater than all of these characters which came into existence because of an idea of power and strength? In this Lenten season we continue to focus on Jesus being greater than all that was and is and is to come. Jesus is human but he has gifts far beyond any Superhero of the past or present. For if you remember that last week our focus was how Jesus was the only one who did and could have sacrificed himself for the sake of all who believed in Him. Jesus is God's Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary and introduced by others as "My Beloved Son". We also heard how the angels announced his coming to Mary and then the shepherds. It is angels who also served Jesus when he was concluding his time in the wilderness indicating that Jesus is above the angels and is at the throne of God. Jesus is one person of the Trinity- for Jesus is God and so is the Spirit. Jesus is greater than angels but as a person who lived how great was he?

We might remember the stories of the Old Testament people Abraham, Jacob and Moses. Each person had a strong faith and served God. Each was called to a specific task or to

be in a covenant with God. And each lived a long time but they were human. They were men who had been born and raised as faithful Jewish boys. They were tested and tried for their faith and yet each is known as a great man of the faith. Each man was faithful to God yet each sinned before God, leaving us to realize that Jesus is greater still.

You might recall the original conditional covenant God made with Abraham as recorded in Genesis 12. If Abram and Sarai would follow God they would be blessed in seven ways:

1. Make of you a great nation. 2. Bless you. 3. Make your name great.
4. You shall be a blessing. 5. Bless them that bless you. 6. Curse them that curse you.
7. bless all families of the Earth through you. (Gen.12, 22)

Abraham fulfilled the covenant and he and Sarah were greatly blessed. He had many descendants including Isaac. With Isaac God also entered a covenant promise of three parts. He would have innumerable descendants and they would possess the land. And in his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Isaac also fulfilled his promise to God. (Gen 26 and 27)

God entered a third covenant with Isaac's son Jacob. Jacob was also a faithful man of God. He raised a large family and was prosperous. Even though he showed favouritism amongst his children through Joseph, God still fulfilled his covenant promise that he would be physically blessed and the promise which had yet to be fulfilled, that through his descendants would come the Messiah. (Gen 27-28)

These are the stories of the Hebrew scripture when God interacted with his people directly. But often what occurred was that the people just turned away. They did not think beyond their own life on earth but seemed only to survive.

Yet after these people the prophet and leader and humble servant of God, Moses lived out his life's story. God gave Moses a special task to take his people from the land of slavery in Egypt into the land of promise. This did occur eventually with God's support and direction. Moses also received the laws of God and he remained faithful to him. But Moses was not

perfect. In fact, he had sinned against God and could not enter the land to which he led the people. Moses died after only seeing the Promised Land from a distance. He was the one who brought God's laws to the people so they might know how to live God's way. But Moses lived a human life. Moses was known as a great leader and "no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel." (Deut.34:12) And Jesus is greater than Moses.

We read in Hebrews 3 that Moses was faithful in all God's house. He was faithful as a servant in God's houses, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Jesus 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. Moses was a good man- but Jesus is God's Son and is greater than Moses. Moses led people to the Promised Land but had disobeyed God earlier in his life. Many people had wandered with Moses but they too had sinned and not all of them entered because they did not believe in God.

Today we have heroes that we might look up to- whether real or fictional. We know of wonderful men and women who championed and were great for their accomplishments in various disciplines. We think of government leaders, entertainers and beloved folk heroes; we might even recall innovations that people made to enhance our lives today so that our work is not so difficult. They were great people, who had been blessed by God. But Jesus is greater still. Sometimes we find ourselves thinking if only people had listened to the likes of Martin Luther King Jr instead of killing him, racism would not be a problem. If only we had listened to people who taught that eating more fibre and fruit and vegetables in moderation with meat of land and sea we would be a healthier nation. If only everyone listened to great speakers of faith and were able to share how relevant the message of Jesus Christ is, the church today would be growing in new ways. Yet all we do not need to look to people to be inspired or innovative or challenged, but we are to fix our thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He is greater than all who ever lived because he taught, preached, healed and loved like no other. He is the Son of God. And God will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. And when we are tempted, God will provide a way out so that we can stand up under it.

The way out is in listening to what Jesus taught and focusing on God's love for us not for the things of this world.

While living on earth, Jesus traveled around the region and taught people, whoever wanted to listen, about the life and the gift and promise of eternal life. His message was simple—repent or die. Repent- tell him of your sins and receive the gift of eternal life. Or die not knowing of the glory of God's heaven or of the promise and hope of eternal life. How great is Jesus? He loves us so much that he reaches out with arms wide open and says Come to me.

Come to me and I will call you my own. Believe, remember and listen to the words I share with you. I love you; love me and follow me. And you will live forever in heaven. How great is Christ Jesus? More wonderful than Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, more gracious and loving than any hero we could ever imagine. Jesus is the One who is greater than all others because He leads our lives if we so choose.

Today we will do what he asked us to do in remembrance of Him. Let us gather at this table and rejoice. For Jesus is greater than all people and through God's love, he has shown us the way where justice dwells with mercy and love is the fulfillment of all promises. Let us rejoice in this as we sing together "Lead ON O Cloud of Presence" which reminds us of the journey of the People of Israel yet calls us to journey with Christ to our promised home.

Let us pray.

Holy God, we pray that you would reveal your Son Jesus to us as we share this time together. Show us again how Jesus is greater than all other people and enable us to follow in faith and with hope. Hear these our prayers. Amen.