

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP**JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Message Series: Hebrews: Greater Than****Message Title: Jesus, the Same, the Sanctifier, the Shepherd****Scripture: Hebrews 13:8, 12, 20-21**

Throughout this series, we've journeyed through the book of Hebrews, a sermon delivered to believers who were tired, pressed, and tempted to drift away from their faith and the great salvation found in Jesus. The preacher of Hebrews has been urging them, and us, to hold firmly to Jesus because he is greater than anything else we might turn to.

As the sermon comes to a close, the preacher lifts our eyes one last time to see that Jesus is still greater than all. The final chapter reminds us that while the sermon ends, the life of faith continues, centered on Jesus. In the last chapter, the preacher focuses on Jesus three times, revealing that Jesus is the same, Jesus is the sanctifier, and Jesus is the Shepherd.

1. Jesus is the Same Always (v.8)

- At first glance, verse 8 seems almost like an aside, a simple statement dropped into a string of commands. But it's the anchor for the entire chapter and the entire sermon.
- When life changes, and it always does, Jesus remains the same. Everything around the original hearers was shifting: their community was shrinking, their culture was hostile, their leaders were persecuted, and their future was uncertain.
- This sounds very familiar to the world we live in, which is constantly in motion, socially, politically, and spiritually. It's easy to feel disoriented. However, in the middle of the chaos comes the declaration: *"Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever."*
 - Yesterday, he was faithful to Abraham, Moses, David, and the disciples.
 - Today, he is faithful to us.
 - Forever, he will be faithful still.
- The preacher began the sermon in 1:10-12, quoting Psalm 102:25-27 to identify Jesus' role in creation. This psalm compares Jesus to the world. The world will wear out like a garment, but Jesus is always the same and remains forever.
- Everything else in life shifts: our feelings, our friendships, our circumstances, but the Savior who began this story is the same one who will finish it.
- Ask yourself: *What am I depending on that changes?* Hebrews reminds us our security isn't in those things that change, but in the Savior who is the same always.

2. Jesus is the Sanctifier (v. 12)

- Throughout Hebrews, holiness has been a theme as God calls his people to draw near, but sin stands in the way. The old covenant dealt with sin through priests and sacrifices. But the preacher has told us many times those were *shadows*. Jesus is greater than those shadows.

- Jesus was crucified *outside the gate*, outside the city walls of Jerusalem. While this identifies the geographical location where Jesus died, it is also a theological statement.
- On the Day of Atonement, sin was dealt with outside the camp as it was the place of rejection, shame, and impurity. The “outside” was where sin was dealt with. It was the place of rejection, shame, and impurity. The carcasses of sin offerings were burned outside the camp. (Leviticus 16:27).
- Jesus died outside the Temple, the holy place in Jerusalem. The preacher subtly sums up the entire message of Hebrews with this note about Jesus’ crucifixion outside the camp, using it as a geographical and theological illustration that Jesus is greater than the old covenant.
- The purpose of Jesus’ death was to sanctify, to make people holy through his blood. To be sanctified means to be *set apart* for God, even when that sets us apart from the world.
- In Hebrews 2:11, Jesus “makes holy” those who experience salvation in the Father and are his children. In Hebrews 10:14, Jesus “forever made perfect those who are being made holy.” Ultimately, Hebrews 12:14 concludes that “those who are not holy will not see the Lord.”
- Ask yourself: *How does Jesus need to make me holy?* Perhaps it’s saying no to what the world says yes to, or forgiving when everyone else holds grudges, or serving when no one notices, or loving when it’s inconvenient.

3. Jesus is the Shepherd (v. 20-21)

- The letter ends not with a command but with a blessing, a benediction that summarizes everything we’ve learned. Jesus is not only the same and the sanctifying one. Because God is a God of Peace, he sent Jesus, the shepherd who leads us, equips us, and brings us home.
- Sheep cannot survive on their own. They need a shepherd to guide, protect, and sustain them. We’re sheep, and this benediction reminds us that the same Jesus who died for us is alive to lead us. Jesus was raised from the dead as the “great Shepherd of the sheep.”
- Through the blood of Jesus, God “ratified,” or confirmed, or authorized an eternal covenant greater than the old covenant through Jesus.
- Jesus is actively working within us, not just commanding us from heaven but transforming us through his Spirit on earth. He equips us with everything necessary to do his will. The same Jesus who saved you shepherds you today. That means you don’t have to figure it all out or rely solely on your own strength to follow him.
- In John 10:1-18, Jesus taught about a shepherd. The sheep “*recognize the shepherd’s voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out* (10:3-4).” Jesus is the *Good Shepherd*, who gave his life for the sheep (10:14-15).
- Ask yourself: *Am I listening to the voice of the shepherd?* When you feel lost, listen for the shepherd’s voice. When you feel weak, trust his strength. When you feel directionless, remember Jesus is leading you somewhere good.

The book of Hebrews ends the same way it began, with Jesus at the center. Jesus is greater than everything:

- Greater than your past, because he is the same yesterday.
- Greater than your sin, because he suffered to make you holy.
- Greater than your uncertainty, because he shepherds you toward glory.