

Text: Hebrews 11:1-4

Theme: God is Speaking through His Son

Sermon delivered by Reverend Dele Agbelusi during Christmas Eve Service on 24/12/2015 at 11.15pm

On this Christmas Eve, we want to highlight the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in that His birth confronts us with the reality of the un-seeable God becoming a baby such that we can behold Him. Scriptures tell us a lot that Jesus Christ existed before He was born in a manger more than two thousand years ago. Quoting Selwyn Hughes, "Every other human being has emerged from history. Jesus is the only one who has ever come into history. Of the Christ – child we may use the charming words of George MacDonald taken from his poem Baby: 'Where have you come from, baby dear? Out of everywhere into here'"

This baby had once overlooked the universe. His majestic robes of eternity were exchanged for the rags available to cover his body in that stable. He gave up His golden throne room in favour of a dirty sheep pen. Worshipping angels were replaced with doting shepherds who marveled at the birth of this special child. The Son of God became the Son of Man in order that the sons of men might become sons of God.

This special child of Mary is the Message of God- the Word of God. Let us see what the book of Hebrews has to tell us about this God child.

To start with, the human author of Hebrews remains unknown, but the book's inspiration by the Holy Spirit is evident. The first verse started with God (KJV). There is no attempt to prove God's existence and the main point in this verse is that God speaks.

Who at various times and in different ways spoke: The revelation given through the prophets was brought in **various** ways - sometimes through parables, historical narrative, prophetic confrontation, dramatic presentation, psalms, proverbs, and the like.

- He spoke to Moses by a burning bush. (Exodus 3)
- He spoke to Elijah by a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19)
- He spoke to Isaiah by a heavenly vision. (Isaiah 6)
- He spoke to Hosea by a family crisis. (Hosea 1:2)
- He spoke to Amos by a basket of fruit. (Amos 8:1)

The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that whatever the human instrumentality that God uses, He was the one speaking.

As I read Moses in the first five books of the Bible, I know that it is God that is speaking through Moses. Using the properties of light as an illustration, we may say that God spoke in a spectrum in the Old Testament. Jesus is a prism that collected all those bands of light and focused them into one pure beam.

Hebrews was obviously written to Christians with a Jewish background. It was beginning to dawn on the people that Christianity was not just a branch of Judaism but a movement in their own right. Members of their family and friends must have been asking them, why don't you go to the temple again to sacrifice as our fathers have done in the past? Why are you not adhering to the Rabbinic Judaism- a sort of "business as usual religion"? They must have put

so much pressure and blackmail on them not to forsake the Jewish religion. And if they did, it would be with dire consequences.

So, Hebrews is the letter to these Christians to hang on there and not give up, Hold fast. This is a relevant message to us today. We need something secure to hold fast to in our age riddled with fear and uncertainties, and we are going to see how and why we should hang on there. And who to hang on to.

I do not know your story in general and what burdens you carry and what challenges you face. You may be on the verge of giving up and in your heart you are asking, Pastor, give me some reason why I can believe in Jesus and continue holding on to Him. Hebrews exhorts discouraged Christians to continue on strong with Jesus in light of the complete superiority of who He is and what He did for us and I believe it is a message for you. So, who is Jesus, that God has reposed so much confidence in Him that He is the only credible voice in these last days. But first, we must consider what is meant by “these last days”.

Look at verse 2. In these last days: The last days begin with the coming of the Son into the world. We have been living in the last days since the days of Christ—that is, the last days of history as we know it before the final and full establishment of the kingdom of God.

The last days of a war are the days after the decisive battle has been fought or the decisive bomb has been dropped. Everyone knows who will win. It is only a matter of time. The resistance may go on for some years, but the mortal blow has been struck to the enemy and the high ground has been captured. The days of fighting that remain are the last days of the war.

So it is since the Son of God came into the world. In his death and resurrection, the decisive battle with sin and death and hell has been fought and won. It is only a matter of time. These are the last days bringing his decisive triumph to all the peoples of the earth.

God has Spoken to us by His Son

It isn't so much that Jesus *brought* a message from the Father; He *is* the message from the Father. The idea is that Jesus is far more than the latest or best prophet. He has revealed something no other prophet could. The point for the writer of Hebrews is this: The Word that God spoke by his Son is the decisive Word. It will not be followed in this age by any greater word or replacement word. This is the Word of God—the person of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, and the work of Jesus.

The *personality* of Paul, Peter, John, and other Biblical writers is clear in their writings. Yet in the revelation from Jesus we see the *personality of God*.

In other words, God has not just spoken by inspiring prophets and apostles. He has spoken by coming to us in the person of his Son. Who Jesus was, what he said, and what he accomplished by dying and rising from the dead is God's Word to us. This is what God has said, and what we should hear—what we need to listen to far more earnestly than we do.

One woman tells about her niece Samantha who was a teacher at a Christian elementary school. She had the job of producing the Christmas play one year.

She stressed to her students that if they forgot their lines, they should ad-lib something instead of just standing there.

On the big night, all went well until the Three Wise Men made their entrance. The first was perfect. "Baby Jesus, here is your gold," the boy said.

The second boy was perfect, too. "Baby Jesus, here is your frankincense," he said.

The boy playing the third Wise Man said, "Baby Jesus, here is your . . ." and froze, having forgotten the name of his gift.

After a tense few seconds had passed, the teacher whispered out to him, "Say anything!"

The boy then peered into the manger and exclaimed, "Oh, doesn't he look just like his dad!"

Well, he does look just like his Dad, says the writer of Hebrews. Christ "is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being . . ." That doesn't mean that Jesus looked like God, of course, but it does mean that Jesus showed us everything we need to know about God God's self-giving love for all people.

The Book of Hebrews (for the most part) does not present Jesus speaking of Himself, the Father speaks concerning the Son. The book of Hebrews is the God the Father telling us what God the Son is all about. "If men cannot learn about God from the Son, no amount of prophetic voices or actions would convince them." (Guthrie)

God loves to boast about the Son and point people's attention to Him. Here God speaks:

(2b-3) A sevenfold description of the glorious Son.

One of the ways we can understand something about the majesty of Jesus is to see how beautifully the Bible piles phrase upon phrase, description upon description on His person and the following is not even exhaustive. This begins a glorious section describing Jesus, first as the **heir of all things**. Now why does the author add this? Because he wants us to dwell on the fact that the one we listen to, Jesus, the Son of God, can make good in the end on all that he promises. Why? Because he is the heir of all things. In the end, he will have at his disposal all things. He will have in subjection to him all that is. The writer wants us to think about this. What does it mean to listen to a Spokesman for God who in the end will have under his complete control and ownership all things (all land, all water, all fire, all wind, all energy, all natural resources, all nations, all military might, all buildings, all bacteria and viruses, all angels, all demons, all spiritual and material beings except God the Father)? Well, it means that he can make good on all his promises.

Everything belongs to Him even the things that don't know yet that they belong to Him. If you are here and you are saying, I haven't given my whole life yet, maybe you have your toe in the water but not all of you. He has a claim on you whether you recognise it or not. You stand to benefit immensely if you go into the stream of God's flow with more than your toes but the whole of you.

He made the worlds: (He is the Creator) Jesus made more than the material world, He also made the very ages - history itself is the creation of the Son of God. And because He created everything, He owns you.

The brightness of God's glory: He is the revealer of what God in Heaven is like to us.

The original language gives to us the sense of Jesus as the "beam" of God's glory. We have never seen the sun, only the rays of its light as they come to us. Even so, we have never seen God the Father, but we see Him through the "rays" of the Son of God. **The express image of His person:** The idea is of an exact likeness as made by a stamp. Jesus *exactly* represents God to us. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus.

Upholding all things by the word of His power: The idea behind the word translated **upholding** is better thought of as "maintaining." Or actively sustaining.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus constantly demonstrated the power of His word. He could heal, forgive, cast out demons, calm nature's fury all at the expression of one word. Here we see that His word is so powerful that it can **uphold all things**.

If Jesus is the one who upholds all things He can uphold you right now. He is able to sustain you and keep you from being crushed. Do not say, you can uphold the whole world but you cannot help me. That is crazy.

Himself purged our sins (Jesus the Redeemer): He did this **Himself**, showing that no one else could do it for us, and we could not do it for ourselves.

Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Jesus the Ruler): Here He is seated on the throne with all things under His feet. Even if it is over my head, it is still under His feet. This is a position of majesty, of honor, of glory, and of finished work. This position of Jesus sets Him far above all creation.

Therefore, Jesus is so much better than the angels.

Having become so much better than the angels: This description of Jesus in previous verses shows us that He is far superior than any angelic being. Jesus **became** better in the sense that He was made *perfect* (complete as our redeemer) *through sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10) - something no angel ever did.

A more excellent name than they: Jesus' superior status is demonstrated by a superior **name**, which is not merely a title, but a description of His nature and character. There are many reasons why it is important to understand the surpassing excellence of Jesus, setting Him far above every angelic being.

Jesus supremacy over angels is to address a problem first century Jewish Christians had. There was the heretical idea that Jesus Himself was an angel, a concept that degrades His glory and majesty. This may not be our problem today but the fact remains that Jesus is supreme over everything in our world and life.

Omit angels and substitute your own dilemma or travail or fancy.

He is so much better than your success, your failure, your marriage, what is going right, what is going wrong. If we don't hold the supremacy of Jesus before us, we will not be able to hold on.

There is so much to discover about Jesus that the more of Him you know the more you appreciate what God has done by revealing Himself to us in Jesus.

So, can you afford not to trust Him with your broken marriage, your faltering business, your uncertain future, your ill health, your children's future, your retirement, I say, listen to God as He speaks through His Son. If you hang on to Him tonight, you can be sure you will not be consumed by whatever fire is burning around you.

Take time to speak to Jesus, simply telling Him, you trust Him and you want to commit your life to Him.