

HE IS BETTER.

A Series in the Book of Hebrews



Hebrews

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The book of Hebrews is often summed up in one simple phrase: Jesus is better. Yet the book of Hebrews is itself is far from a simple book. The audience of this letter appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. Yet, they seem to be facing persecution for believing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for. The author responds to these believers turning from faith in Jesus by showing that Jesus is superior to every possible thing that you could put in his place.

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11

Starter

Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they’ve seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion Question(s):

- What is a warning? Have you ever been warned by mom and dad or maybe a teacher not to do something? Did you listen to their warning or did you ignore it?

Text

Hebrews 5:11 - 6:12

Big Idea: Jesus is the better SACRIFICE

Summary

Remember that the author of Hebrews is writing to Jewish Christians who were raised and grew up on the Old Covenant ways of having to sacrifice animals to cover their sins, and laws that they were required to obey. The Jews at the time were dealing with being persecuted, beaten, and even killed by the Romans and by non-believing Jews for believing that Jesus was the Messiah King. Here the author of Hebrews is giving the people a warning. He is warning them of the following:

1. The Diagnosis: Looking outside Jesus' completed work of salvation, dulls our hearing of God's truth.
2. The Prognosis: Believing in our good works to earn God's favor leads to a wasted life.
3. The Assurance: The love we show to others is the evidence of our gratitude and perseverance in Christ's complete atonement for our sins.

Looking outside of Jesus' completed work of salvation, dulls our hearing of God's truth. Dullness of hearing is a symptom of something deeper happening in their faith. Have you ever had your ears get plugged maybe after swimming and when you get out of the water it is harder to hear what people are saying. Or maybe you have your AirPods in because you are watching a show or playing a game and you aren't able to hear anyone else in the room when they are talking to you. When the author of Hebrews is telling the Hebrew people that they have become dull of hearing he isn't saying they are deaf or have water in their ears. What he is warning the people of is that they once were able to clearly hear the voice of the Spirit and God's truth of who Jesus was, what He had done for them on the cross, and now how they were supposed to live. But, now that life is getting hard they are no longer paying attention to God's truth but are turning to listen to the world around them. They are turning to old ways of trying to live and save themselves instead of listening for the voice of God.

Persecution from the Jewish and Roman authorities were a daily reality. This persecution made life for early Christians extremely difficult, with the fear of death as a daily reality. Many if not all would be tempted to turn away from Christ's teaching back to the Law and Prophetic writings. Some believe this is why Hebrews was originally written, to encourage them to persevere in their faith through the ongoing persecutions. This was the deeper diagnosis happening in the hearts of the believers. They were asking themselves, do I continue believing in who Jesus was and what He did for my salvation and rightness with God or do I turn back to trusting in my own works to make me right with God? Do I turn back to trusting in my ability to follow the rules to be that which will save me, make me right with God, and avoid persecutions? In their heart they asked, "Is it worth it?"

Jesus

Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice. All of the old laws, covenants, and sacrifices never fully atoned for or dealt with sin. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross was the final sacrifice that needed to be made to deal with sin. Jesus was the only sacrifice that could ever and would ever fully deal with the power of sin because Jesus, as a man, was perfectly obedient to God's plan while on earth. Jesus fully trusted God and His plan. Jesus, when faced with hardships, persecution, and even when he was faced with death never turned away, but continued to be

obedient to God's plan because He knew God and listened for His voice. Now, we do not have to make sacrifices anymore to atone for our sin. Now, we are called to place our lives and trust in who Jesus is and what He did, and be obedient to His Spirit's voice. When we do this, Jesus' righteousness or his right standing with God, is given to us. This is the gospel. We are called to obedience because we are trusting God with our lives, but our obedience will not make God love us more or less. He already fully loves us and because He loves us, we can love Him and others!

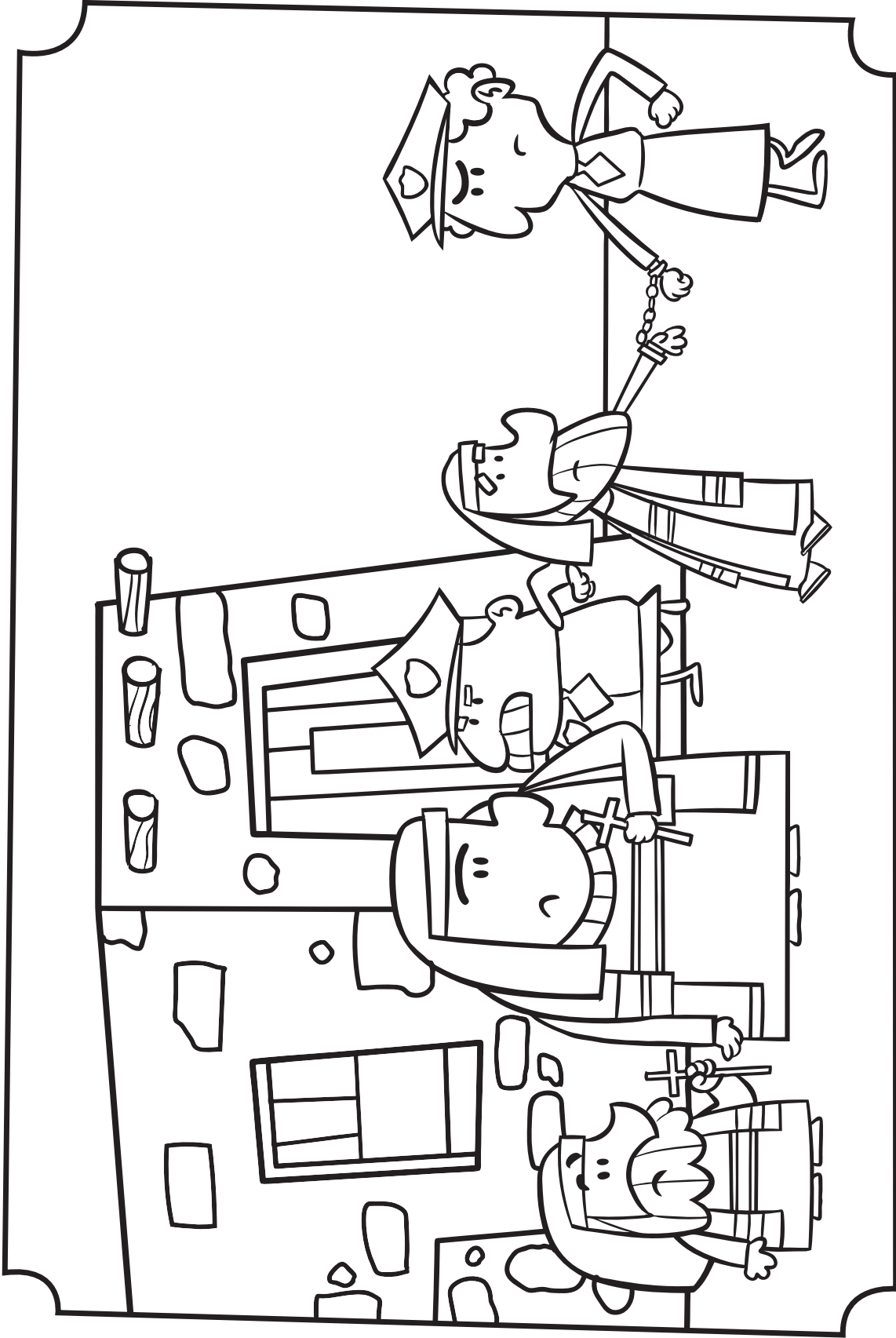
Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all

- Do you think that your parents would love you more than they already do if you perfectly followed all of their rules? What about teachers? What about Jesus?
- Do you think that your parents will love you less if you don't follow all of the rules? Teachers? Jesus?
- What are some that you think God might be saying to you, but you don't want to listen?
- Are there other voices than Jesus that you are paying more attention to or listening to?
- Are you trying to earn God's love? If so, how?
- Why was Jesus the perfect human?
- If you have trusted Jesus with your heart, life, and loyalties, how should we live in relationship to God, to others, and to God's created world?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.



The new Christians were persecuted for their faith - sometimes they were arrested, or their houses were taken away! The book of Hebrews was written as an encouragement to Christians, and we can also be encouraged by its message today.