

Hebrews

Chapter 13

Hebrews 13:1-4

“Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also. Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

Brotherly Love

- There are four words for “love” in the Greek language:
 - 1. Eros**-This is erotic love or sexual love.
 - 2. Agapn**: This unconditional love and seeks the health of the whole person. It is a love that is not about feelings but decision and commitment. A giving love without expecting to receive.
 - 3. Storge**: This is the love between family members.
 - 4. Phileo**: A love between friends or brothers.

- The love used in Hebrews 13:1, is **philadelphia**, which literally is “love of the brothers” “delphus” is of the same womb whether between the same two parents or the same mother or the same father.
- “delphus” also means “having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, or countryman.”
- In this case the Hebrew writer is most likely referring to his fellow Jewish brothers.
- However, since we as believers are connected to Jesus, and being born again, the application is also to love fellow believers.

Entertain Strangers

- Love and hospitality are tied together.
- Not only is our love to be for those we know but also those we do not know.
- “And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.””-**Leviticus 19:33-34**
- Some people have also by being hospitable to strangers have entertained angels unaware.

Remember Prisoners

- We are to take care of our fellow brothers who are being held against their will because of the gospel.
- It also can extend to all people who are in prisons.
- Many people come to know the Lord while serving their sentence for a crime.
- “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”-1 John 3:17
- It pleases the Lord when we manifest needed love to those who suffer even because of their own foolish decisions.
- Love in 1 John 3:17, is agape which is a love that **seeks the health of the whole person a giving love.**

Marriage

- Marriage is the greatest demonstration of love between two people.
- Some people in the Early Church were influenced by the culture in which they lived and their view of marriage was of little importance.
- The culture of the people around Early Church was viewed as moral to have multiple partners.
- Our culture is probably just as bad as the Roman world.
- The Hebrew writer elevated marriage to its rightful place of importance before God.

Hebrews 13:5-6

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

Covetousness

- Covetousness is the heart of all sin.
- “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.” **Romans 7:7-8**
- We are to be content with what have because the “Lord is my helper” and he will “never leave you nor forsake you”.

Contentment Or Covetousness

- Contentment is the opposite of covetousness.
- Covetousness is a product of the sinful nature, whereas, contentment is a learned behavior.
- “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:” **Philippians 4:11**
- Contentment comes with great gain for the believer in this world.
- “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” **1 Timothy 6:6-8**

Discontentment

- Philosopher Immanuel Kant Stated: “Give a man everything he wants, and at that moment, everything will not be everything”
- When we grumble about our circumstances we doubt the goodness of the Father to take care of our needs.
- “It is in God that we find the source of our desires, and without God our human desires are doomed to remain frustrated and unfulfilled.” **-James Houston**
- Do the things we desire in this world fulfill our relationship with God and others, or do the things we desire fulfill our insecurity to be accepted within the cultural standard we live?

Contentment In God’s Promises

- Contentment comes from building our lives on God’s promises not what we want Him to do for us!
- “Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me—Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end.” **-Psalm 73:1-3;16-17**
- It was painful for the Psalmist to consider the prosperity of the wicked until he considered their outcome in light of eternity.

The Book Of Ecclesiastes

- The writer of Ecclesiastes states, "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." - **Ecclesiastes 1:2**
- Vanity in desiring pleasure, wisdom, and success through hard work, religion and family.
- "I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind." - **Ecclesiastes 1:12-14**

Enjoy The Good Things In Life

- "He has made **everything beautiful in its time**. Also He has put **eternity in their hearts**, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor — **It is the gift of God.**" - **Ecclesiastes 3:11-13**
- "A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;" - **Ecclesiastes 3:6**
- There is a time for everything and to want something prematurely will result in frustration from our own exertions and implant within us a dangerous confidence in our own power to accomplish what we desire rather than enjoy things in life as a gift from God.

A Need To Hoard

- Americans need to hoard their belongings have been highlighted on television and self-storage units make it easier for people to keep their stuff squirreled away.
- "[T]he united states now has 2.3 billion square feet of self-storage space. (the self storage association notes that, with more than seven square feet for every man, woman and child, it's now "physically possible that every american could stand — all at the same time — under the total canopy of self-storage roofing.")" - www.becomingminimalist.com
- "And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." - **Luke 12:15**

Do Not Love The World

- Social position
- Pursuit of wealth
- World's treasures
- Personal righteousness
- Pride
- "**Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And **the world is passing away**, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." - **1 John 2:15-17**

Hebrews 13:7-8

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Remember Leaders

- The key attribute of a leader in the church is those, “who have spoken the word of God to you”.
- The responsibility of a church is to teach the word of God to people because it is the word of God that changes people through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- It is the authority of God’s word that makes the distinction between right and wrong not any church or organization.
- Jesus, Who is the living Word, is the same always and forever in how He operates in the world and in the life of the believer.

In Order For Us To Grow As Believers We Need To Have The Word Of God In Our Lives

I PETER 2:2: “LIKE NEWBORN BABIES, CRAVE PURE SPIRITUAL MILK, SO THAT YOU MAY GROW UP IN YOUR SALVATION, NOW THAT YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GOOD.

COLOSSIANS 3:16: “LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY AS YOU TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER....”

JAMES 1:22: “DO NOT MERELY LISTEN TO THE WORD, AND SO DECEIVE YOURSELVES. DO WHAT IT SAYS.”

These Three Things Determine A Believer's Growth

1. Crave the word: It is the root desire of the believer's heart.
- "The sickly condition of so many Christians sets forth a lamentable complaint of the food with which they are supplied. To say nothing of strong meat, they do not even get milk. Hence the Church of God too much resembles the wards of a children's hospital." (Meyer)

1. Let the word dwell in us: Meditate on the word in our lives. So much of the believer's transformation comes from the mind. (Romans 12:2)
2. Do what the word says: Put the word into practice in our daily lives.
 - "I fear we have many such in all congregations; admiring hearers, affectionate hearers, attached hearers, but all the while [unblessed] hearers, because they are not doers of the word." (Spurgeon)

The Work Of Jesus

- **Yesterday:** Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death" (Hebrews 5:7).
- **Today:** Jesus represents His people in the presence of God, a high priest who is able to sympathize with them in their weakness, because He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).
- **Forever:** Jesus lives, this same Jesus, "to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Quoted from F.F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews

Hebrew 13:9

"Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them."

Strange Doctrines

- The word for “carry” in the original Greek means, “to be driven” by various and strange doctrines.
- This in contrast to the word of God that is spoken in verse 7.
- Ever since the beginning of the Church there have been outlandish teachings that fascinate people which they passively accept and build their lives upon rather than the word of God.
- “**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires**, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”-2 Tim 4:3-4

Continue In The Things Learned

- “**But you have carefully followed my doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance.... But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”-2 Timothy 3:10-17

Watch Your Doctrine

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will SAVE both yourself and your hearers.”-1 Tim 4:16

- Save: Sozo
- “to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction
- Universally one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health: Matt 9:22

Powerless Doctrine

- “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!-2 Tim 3:1-5
- “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” - 1 Cor 1:18

A Heart Established By Grace

- The foundation of the gospel and the believer's life is the grace of God and not self imposed rules or established rules through organized traditions.
- Only an understanding of God's underserved approval of us will heal and free an individual to grow.
- A gospel without grace is not a gospel at all and we must beware of any teaching that minimizes the grace of God.

- "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who **called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel**, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" -**Galatians 1:6-9**
- Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." -**1 Corinthians 15:10**
- "...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." -**2 Peter 3:18**

Hebrews 13:10-13

"We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

Following The Rejected Jesus

- The altar that the Hebrew writer is referring to is the cross which Jesus was sacrificed upon for our salvation.
- The Hebrew writer has already made the point throughout the Book of Hebrews that the blood of goats and bulls could not take away sins.
- The bodies of those animals were burned outside the camp so also those who follow Jesus must meet Him outside the city gate.

Outside The Camp

- “Outside the camp” is a reference to institutional Judaism.
- These early believers were raised to believe that everything outside the camp was evil and unclean.
- Yet this is the very place they are to seek Jesus.
- It is outside the camp that Jesus made purification for our sins.
- This is probably a reference to the Red Heifer in Numbers 19:1-9

Hebrews 13:14

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.”

Looking For A City To Come

- This world is temporary and is not our home.
- “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them”-Hebrews 11:13,16

1 Peter 1:7-9

“The genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”

- Noah believed what God had spoken being warned of things not seen yet. (v.7)
- Abraham believed what God had spoken and went out not knowing where he was going. (v.8)
- Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus and saw it (John 8:56) but he saw it by faith through the promise spoken to him and saw it "afar off". (v.13)
- Others were assured of the promises of God and saw them beyond their grasp but walked with God anyway. (v. 13)
- Moses believed God and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter instead suffered affliction "as seeing Him Who is invisible". (v.27)

Hebrews 13:15-16

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Sacrifice Of Praise

- The sacrifice that is now to be offered as we wait for the eternal dwelling is a sacrifice of praise to Him Who died for our sins upon the cross.
- The sacrifice of praise is "by Him" or through Jesus and His work to make us righteous.
- The sacrifice of praise is continual.
- The sacrifice of praise is the fruit of our lips.
- The sacrifice of praise is giving thanks to His name.

Do Good

- The sacrifices from our lips are to be joined with action in our walk.
- Praise of the lips and action of the body go hand in hand.
- As we offer our sacrifices of praise we also offer our bodies as living sacrifices.
- "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." - **Romans 12:1**
- "The sacrifice is to be intelligent, in contrast to those offered by ritual and compulsion; the presentation is to be in accordance with the spiritual intelligence of those who are new creatures in Christ and are mindful of "the mercies of God." -Vines

The Mercies Of God

- Think of all the “mercies of God” that we can praise God for and offer our bodies as living sacrifices:
 1. Justification: Secure in our standing before God.
 2. Adoption in Jesus and identification with Christ: No longer in Adam but in Christ.
 3. Set under grace not law.
 4. The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 5. Help in all affliction and any present sufferings.

6. The certainty of coming glory: Those who are justified and elected through faith will be glorified.

7. The confidence of no separation from the love of God.
8. Total confidence in God’s continued faithfulness.

Since God has done all these great things we are admonished by Paul in Romans 12:1, to present our bodies as living sacrifices.

Hebrews 13:17

“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

Follow Your Leaders

- We are to follow leaders who have the character mentioned in 13:7.
- The reason we are to follow their lead is because they watch over our souls.
- The word for “watch” means, “to be sleepless, attentive, ready”.
- They must also give an account to the Lord for their leadership.
- Just as there must be godly leaders there must be godly followers.
- “A teacher should teach us to submit to God, not to himself.” (Chuck Smith)

Hebrews 13:18-19

“Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”

A Request For Prayer

- We all need prayer especially those who are leaders so that they can be strengthened to persevere.
- The word for “good” was used by the Greeks to join to names of men designated by their office, competent, able leaders.
- In the grammar of the Greek “pray” is in the present imperative which means it is a command to continually keep praying.
- The writer to the Hebrews “urged” his readers to pray because there was an obstacle that prevented him from joining them but he believed prayer could remove that obstacle.

Hebrews 13:20-21

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

A Blessing Proclaimed

- After asking for prayer for himself the Hebrew writer now prays for his readers.
- He proclaims a blessing upon them in the order of the Hebrew priestly blessing from the book of Numbers.
- “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”-Numbers 6:25-26

Complete In The Blood Of Jesus

- Jesus will complete His redemptive work in the believer's life.
- There is no procrastination with Jesus!
- Jesus always brings a life out of ruins!
- Jesus turns failure into newness of life!
- Jesus is always at work in our life!
- Jesus never gives up!
- Nothing is wasted in the economy of God

Philippians 1:6

"...He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

God Works In The Believer

- The first word for "work" is "ergon" and means "that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, or undertaking".
- The second word for "work" is "poieō" and means "to be the authors of, the cause, fashion or form something"
- God is the author within the believer's life making us complete until the great day of Jesus Christ.- Sanctification
- We are already complete in the blood of Christ.- Justification

Hebrews 13:22-25

"And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all. Amen."

Final Thoughts

- The writer considered the “few words” of Hebrews as an exhortation.
- In Hebrews he has written pointed warnings and admonitions concerned that his readers would miss the benefits of following Jesus through negligence of apathy.
- Paul knew Timothy as his “own son of faith” and “my dearly beloved son” 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2
- The Hebrew readers must have known Timothy personally thus were notified of his release from prison.
- It appears the author to Hebrews is writing from Italy and sends his greeting from believers living there.