

The Family of God

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[0 : 0 0] Any choruses, we'll just get started into the Word. Hebrews chapter 13. Hebrews chapter 13. We're finishing up Hebrews maybe today.

We'll see how much conversation you have determines whether we finish Hebrews today or not. Hebrews chapter 13. We've been talking about this book for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks.

Now we're coming to the end, the last chapter. We talked here the last couple of weeks. What is Hebrews chapter 11 about? Faith.

Hebrews chapter 12? Hope. Hebrews chapter 13? Charity, love.

So, faith, hope, and love the Bible talks about. And that's what he's exactly covering. Here in Hebrews, the last part of the book. We talked about the fact that Hebrews 13 has to do with the idea of love, living in love.

[1 : 0 8] And we talked about, first of all, it has to do with love and relationships. And the first four verses talk about that. And they talk about the fact that we're to show love inside the congregation.

We're supposed to love one another. Love as brethren. We're supposed to show love to those outside the church as well. We're supposed to show hospitality to other Christians and to others.

And then he talks about the fact, the third thing is, we're to show love to those who are going through struggles. In verse 3, he talks about those that are in bonds and those that are suffering adversity.

Show love to them. They often get left behind because out of sight, out of mind. They get kind of put through the cracks and they're just kind of left out there. He says, show love to them.

And then in verse 4, he talks about love in marriage. He says, look, make sure you love the one you are married to and don't go outside of that in order to find your love.

[2 : 1 3] Love in marriage is pure before God. Then he talks, second of all, about love and humility. Verses 5 through 9, we were talking about that. He talked about the fact that the Hebrews he's writing to had lost a lot.

They had been stolen from. The government had come in and taken over things from them, different things because of their beliefs. And they had lost a lot. And he talks about that in chapter 10, verse 34.

He talks about the fact that replace those things by being content with what God has given you. And contentment, he talks about the fact that we're satisfied with what God has provided.

And we're willing to share his blessings with those around us. We may not have a lot. We may have lost things. But we share what God has given to us with those around us and those others that need.

And we talked about the fact that if we have God's presence, we have so much. And are we willing to share with others what God has given to us?

- [3 : 22] And then we went on from that. And let's see what else we talked about. I've got things marked in here. We went to number 3, which I think is where we left off last week.
- Love and commitment. And show love and commitment. Look with me at verse 10. Hebrews 13, verse 10. We have an altar whereof we have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.
- For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, when he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.
- Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.
- By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not.
- [4 : 36] For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased. Stop there. Let's have a word of prayer. Father, I pray that you would help us as we continue here, finishing up the book of Hebrews.
- Lord, you might teach us today from your word about what it means to show love to one another. Lord, that's the primary thing. He starts right off the book with talking about let brotherly love to continue.
- So, Lord, I pray that you would just help us to learn today about showing love. And, Lord, help us to be able to take that and to put it into practice that we might show love to those around us.
- Lord, let's bless now as we look at your word, open our eyes, open our minds, that we may learn. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, throughout this sermon, remember this is what basically Hebrews chapter, Hebrews, the book of Hebrews is, is one long sermon.
- You know, we've been going weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks going through this book. If you were to sit down and read this book, it's probably about an hour-long sermon.
- [5 : 44] But there's so much in it, so much that he has been given. We've taken time to go through this. And what he's doing is he's been contrasting the Old Testament sacrificial system with the new and better life we have through Jesus Christ.
- And so he concludes his argument. He's coming back to the fact that the Levitical system, the system of sacrifices and everything they did, is good, but Christ is so much better.
- And so he's going to give that to us. Take your Bible, hold your finger there in Hebrews. Go with me to Exodus chapter 20. What is Exodus chapter 20? Anybody know?
- Exodus chapter 20 is the Ten Commandments. Exodus chapter 20 is the Ten Commandments. And in verse 4, starting in verse 4, it says this.
- Exodus 20, verse 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of any kind, anything that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- [6 : 56] Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers unto the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.
- How does our love for God lead us into being able to take care of doing what this passage says?
- Let me word it this way. This passage talks about making graven images and things like that. How does our love for God show us that this is what God wants?

He doesn't want us to make graven images. He doesn't want us to make things that are part of our worship.

It's not only to make them, but the things that are already there, we're not going to think more of that than we are in Christ. Okay. And the next one, I'm not taking the name of the Lord, that God is in heaven, using the faith of God.

[8 : 07] And to me, a person who says they love the Lord, and they continue using their old ways of using the following words all the time, and everything, that's not showing their love for God.

Okay. All right. Anybody else? Jared? Oh, Margaret? I would say, if you really want God, you want to make him happy. And if he says, this will make me happy, don't do that.

Then you don't do it. Period. Okay. You want to make God happy. You want to show him that you respect him, so you obey. There is a verse that says, if you love me, keep my commandments.

Okay. If you love me, keep my commandments. Yep. Jared? Is that we can't draw a picture of an angel? Oh, no. We can draw a picture of an angel. God says, don't draw a picture of him. No.

He says, anything in heaven. I believe. Anything that's in the heaven. Yes. Meaning, anything to represent him. Remember, a lot of the other groups, they would use cows, they'd use eagles, they'd use all different things to represent their God.

[9 : 19] He's saying, don't use anything to represent me. Margaret? I think there's a difference between drawing a picture and worshiping the picture. Yeah, that's true.

Put that picture in place of God. Say, I'm not listening to you. God, this picture's going to talk to me. Yeah. Okay. That's a good point. It's not the picture.

It's what you do with it. Right. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Am I worshiping God or am I worshiping the picture or the graven image or the statue or, you know, what am I?

When I come, let's say when you come to prayer, am I coming to pray to God or am I coming to pray to the statue? You know, which one am I actually praying to?

Jared, you were going to add something? I just want to know what you were reading in the law and what faiths, what burden you are in chapter 20. Chapter 20, verse 4. Okay.

[10 : 16] 4 through 6. 4 through 6. Yep. Thank you. Yep. Okay. The people back in these times, back in the ancient world, Christianity seemed kind of peculiar to them because they were used to having graven images and doing things and stuff that they would go after, that they would, you know, use as representative of their gods and everything.

Matter of fact, Christians, here's an interesting little turn for you. Christians were often considered to be atheists. Think about that one for a minute.

Why were they considered to be atheists? Because they had no images. Because they had no sacrifices and things that they did. They didn't do all of those things like many of the other religions did.

The only observable things that they did was baptism and communion. Those two things. Nothing else. Matter of fact, their whole worship was based on what?

Preaching. Huh? No. Other people's, yes. But Christians. What was theirs based on? Preaching, prayer, and singing. There was no visible representation that they were bowing down to.

[11 : 34] No visible representation that they were talking to or using to represent God or anything. They were, I don't know how many of you have seen the film Sheffy.

I showed it once a while ago. But there's a scene in there. Sheffy was an itinerant preacher in the south back in the 1800s. In the early 1900s. And one of the things that he's trying to get licensed to be a preacher and go out and do things.

And he's having trouble with this group who's supposed to license people. And one of the guys said, well, when you, people have observed you out in the middle of the woods.

Or out in the field. And you're praying and you're praying like you were talking to God himself. And Sheffy's answer is, who do you pray to when you pray?

You know? And that's what the Christians were doing. They were talking to God. It wasn't a matter of I need to see this picture. I need to have this thing to represent him. I'm just going to talk to God about things.

[12 : 42] So, the writer says, look, we don't do it like other people do. But, we do have an altar. Did you notice that in verse 10?

In verse 10 he says, we have an altar. We do? Yeah. He says, this is back in Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 13.

We're back there. Verse 10 says, we have an altar. What is the altar that we have? Well, where was Jesus sacrificed? On a cross.

He says, we have an altar. But, it's not a bronze one where sacrifices take place and things of that nature. He says, it's not like they do in the Old Testament.

Jesus came and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice on the cross. He was a sacrifice for sins himself. We don't have to offer anything else. There's no longer a need for animal sacrifices because Jesus paid the price for sin once and for all.

[13 : 45] He took care of it. So, anyone who holds fast to the tabernacle things and the Levitical things, he says, you're missing the point. Jesus took care of all of that when he went to the cross.

Sure. I have a question. I have a question. I have a question. Like the Lord says, yes. He came to church. He takes all services. He gets more than two of the money he makes.

But, if the son comes up, I'm telling you, he doesn't stay home. He's a woman. But, yeah, he gets more than two of the money. Oh, Jesus. I would say his money is his office.

He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. He doesn't. I would say his priorities are out of whack. Yeah. But, I would say, you know, it's, I'm not quick to judge people.

It's between him and God. I am not their judge. I will preach the word, and this is what the word says. The word says, forsake not the assuming of yourselves together as a man or some is.

[14 : 51] Okay? So, that means when we get together, we're supposed to be together. So, yeah. He was my father. That's why I remember him. And I wish all his money was his God.

He was all done. Yeah. He gave me a raise. I can't, I can't talk about that because I don't know your dad. And I don't know the things, you know. You will know. I never will. Okay. Well, we'll see. But, you know, my life, I have to live according to the word of God.

It's not my place to judge. That's God's place to do that. It's not mine. So, I try to live my life according to this, and I try to help you know this is what God's word says.

That's my job. My job is not to say, to judge you. My job is to say, this is what God's word says, and go from there. So, Christ made the perfect sin offering when he was crucified.

And notice verse 12. He said, wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

[15 : 58] What does he mean by that? Well, go back to verse 11 for a second. The bodies of the beast, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

When they made their sacrifices, the priest would take the blood. He would bring it in to be sprinkled on the altar. The blood was the covering for sin. They did that.

That was a temporary covering until Jesus came. But the body of the animal that was sacrificed was taken outside to be burned.

It was not to be a part of the sacrifice itself. Jesus gave himself as the perfect sacrifice. Where was Calvary?

Outside. Outside. The walls of Jerusalem. And so, when Jesus made his sacrifice for sin on our altar, the cross, it was done outside the gates.

[17 : 05] So, he's holding true to the traditions that they had, but he is fulfilling the traditions that they had. He is giving himself to be the final sacrifice for sin.

And he's saying, look, you Hebrews, don't hold on to the system you're used to. Yes, it's comfortable. Yes, it's something we know. Yes, it's something we're familiar with. But, Jesus is so much better.

He's been teaching us that throughout the entire thing. Jesus is so much better. Margaret? I am just grateful that I can pray anywhere. I don't have to leave someone's sick bed and go to a certain place and pray to God for their healing.

That I can pray anywhere at any time. Because that middle wall of partition was taken away, ripped in half from the top to the bottom.

God did it. And so, now we don't have to go through priests and all that. We can go directly to him. That's good. Yep. So, Christ suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem.

[18 : 13] He was ridiculed by the Jewish leaders, religious leaders. He was ridiculed by the Roman officials and all those. He was bearing our reproach.

And he did it for us. Look at verse 13 there. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

A lot of what's taught today about Christianity is the fact that the health and wealth and if you accept Christ, life is going to be so much better, so much easier, and so much, you know, it's just unbelievable the difference it will make.

And I agree with that. The part where it's unbelievable the difference it will make. The other part, no. Being a Christian is not necessarily easy. And you look at this verse, he says he went without the camp, bearing his reproach.

How does that contradict the idea that we're going to live a life of comfort and ease? He says, no, we're bearing his reproach.

[19 : 21] You tell people you're a Christian today, some people react very well. Most people are like, huh. Bonnie? Bonnie? Well, it's like even back in the picture, the fact we're identified with Christ's death.

Mm-hmm. The resurrection. A Christian is identified with the reproach that Christ said to me. And we are agreeing to that. We are willing to follow what God said would happen.

That if people hated Christ, they're going to hate us. Yeah. A lot of people you talk to, so you identify with a dead Jewish guy?

No. I identify with a living Savior. But most people don't think of him that way. They think of him, yeah, the dead Jewish guy. So we bear reproach.

But that's okay. When we know Christ and we know that he is living within us and we know that we're going to be in heaven someday. We know that he is preparing a place for us.

[20 : 27] We know that he is walking with us day by day. We know that he will never leave us nor forsake us. It's a whole world of difference in the way we do things. Margaret? That's what the birth changed, Jesus, from these other supposed gods.

He's the only one who raised from the dead and came back. And over 500 people saw him. Mm-hmm. And people touched him. Mm-hmm. He said, you don't believe that I'm not a ghost?

Touch me. You can feel me. Yep. So he gave the evidence. Because like you said, over 500 people saw him. So these Hebrews, they might suffer for their faith.

But they need to identify with Christ. You know, they need to make sure that people understand they are Christians. And he's afraid that too many of them, because of the ridicule, because of the suffering, because of the reproach, are going to go back.

They're going to go, you know, life was much easier. We get persecuted as Jews, but it was easier than being a Christian. So when you think about it today, the day that we live in now, what does it cost us to be a Christian today?

[21 : 47] What is, what, we're going to be a disciple of Christ. We're going to follow him. We started, as those of you were with me on Wednesday night, we started talking about that. Christian versus disciple. The term Christian versus disciple.

We're going to have Christian discipleship. How does, how does that play out today for us? What does it cost us today? Okay.

Sometimes it comes to time and family. Okay. Okay. I've experienced this a lot of times because my older children and my older grandchildren, some of them don't understand why I can't be doing the things that they want to do on Sunday.

Mm-hmm. Because I'm from church. And once in a while, some of them will not hold their birthday party or whatnot, you know, for the little ones, until after they know I can get there.

Yeah. But sometimes it makes it a little bit rough. But they all know why I do it. And I also am very grateful that they don't disrespect that.

[23 : 06] Okay. Because, I mean, in some families, I know that a lot of people who want to go and become a Christian in their families, they just don't have anything they want to do.

And just because, number one, I think it makes them feel guilty to what they're doing. Yeah. Yeah. And it does put a big gap on different things that families do when they're a Christian in the Bible.

Okay. Because, like I said, it makes them feel uncomfortable. Yep. So, I think the only thing that actually costs us is the world. The thing it only costs us is the world.

Okay. Yep. We don't do the same things. We don't partake in the same things and stuff. And, yep. We may miss out on some of the enjoyments of the world.

That's an air quote. You know, that people think are enjoyable. But when you really look at it, are they? I grew up in a Christian home.

[24 : 07] And I grew up with a mother who grew up in a home where her dad was an alcoholic and abusive when he was an alcoholic. And so, we didn't have alcohol in our home.

Don't even think about bringing it in. My mother will kill you. No, she won't. She's a very nice lady. But the idea of bringing that in was just so important to her.

And so, I grew up with that. And I watch people. And I watch how they act as drunks. And I watch what they do as drunks. And I watch, you know, the way they feel afterwards and stuff.

And I'm going, I don't see the fun. I don't see the enjoyment of all of that. But there are people, you know, that they think we're missing out because we don't. I just, you know, I don't see that.

So, and there's other things, too, that we don't do. It really depends on where you live. If you live in a Muslim country and you declare Christ as your Savior, you could die.

[25 : 16] You could die. Yep. So, good point. No. We face mockery. We face shunning sometimes. Our degree of suffering is no way to do it.

No. Here in the United States, we have it pretty cushy. You live in a Muslim country. If you want the right brand of Muslim, you can die. That's true. If you're not the right brand of Muslim, you can die, too.

That's a good point. Going back to what Kathy said about families and stuff. You ever notice families always seem to want to do things on Sunday? You live in that, but school goes to all Wednesday nights.

Wednesday nights. That's right. The first time I ever was really confronted with this, when I was going to high school and stuff, they usually did our concerts and things on Thursday or Friday.

Didn't do them on Wednesday and stuff. I did have to make a decision. None of you have ever heard me, but I used to play trumpet when I was in high school and stuff, and I was pretty good at it.

[26 : 16] I was the first chair of first trumpet in the Nokomis Band. If you know anything about bands in the area, Nokomis is one of the best. We went to the Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C. while I was there.

We went to things and competitions at Berkeley in Massachusetts. We went to a big music school and stuff, so we did all these different things. And because of my trumpet playing, they wanted me to be a part of the jazz band.

And I was like, okay. Well, it turns out the jazz band was going to meet on Wednesday night. I did it for about three or four weeks, and then finally I said, nope, can't do this anymore. It's on Wednesday night.

I need to be in church. And so I had to make a decision about whether to continue and stuff. So, yeah, sometimes you have to give up some things you like to do and want to do.

But one of the first times I was really confronted with it, I had a former student who went to Beale College. And when she was graduating, they set her graduation at 11 o'clock on Sunday.

[27 : 26] Now, is that a confrontation with church at 11 o'clock on a Sunday? But that's when they had their graduation. It's like, why? And you get 24 hours in a day, why that one?

Other than, I think, it was church. And we don't believe in it. So, anyway. Where was I going with that?

Oh, the fact that we face things because of our stand for Christ. And I'm going to stop there because it's almost quarter past. And I guess we will do this one more week.

Like I said, it's going to depend on how much you talk. So, you did. And it's good. I like the fact that you talk. I like the fact that you ask questions and do things. So, good. Let's have a word of prayer.

Father. Father. Think more.