

Going Out to the Cross

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[0 : 00] Let's turn together this evening to Hebrews 13 and looking at the words of verse 13. Hebrews 13, verse 13, we can read at verse 12.

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Therefore let us go out to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

But here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Now we're continuing, as you can see from the text, with the theme of the cross for this evening.

Having looked this morning at that passage in Colossians, setting out how God made peace through the blood of the cross.

And here we are exhorted to go out to Jesus and in doing so to bear his reproach or the approach that he endured.

[1 : 08] You could say that in a sense this is a tale of two cities. Because it mentions the city that we are looking forward to, that Christians have a hope towards, the city that is to come.

The lasting city, the city that Abraham and other believers looked for and looked towards in the course of their lives too. The other city that is mentioned here is in reference to the camp or the gate.

Which takes us back literally to where the cross of Jesus was situated. The cross of Jesus was not placed within the city precincts of Jerusalem when he was put to death on the cross.

The cross was situated out with the city. It was itself, that itself was symbolic. And it really stood and stands for the rejection by those who examined him, by the Jewish people, by the authorities of the time.

As they rejected Jesus, so his being crucified outside of the city precincts was itself symbolic of his rejection. They were saying he doesn't belong within the city precincts.

[2 : 31] The city is here called the camp because that's taking us further back to the Old Testament. And to the Old Testament practice where God had specified that those carcasses of the animals that were brought into the holy place for sacrifice.

The blood of the animals brought in for sacrifice. But the bodies, the carcasses of those animals were to be burnt. But they were to be burnt outside of the camp.

They were regarded as unholy because of their association with sin. Having been a sacrifice for sin. And therefore they were carried and burnt out with the precincts of the camp.

The camp of the people of Israel. And you put all of that together. The camp in the Old Testament. The city of Jerusalem in the New Testament. In the time of Jesus. And all of that comes to be fulfilled.

Even to that point of detail. That just like the bodies of the animals were burnt outside of the camp. So Jesus suffered and died outside of the city.

[3 : 41] That's where he was set. That's where the cross was placed. And that's why here you've got this appeal on the basis of that.

Everything that Jesus represented as he came to represent God and speak of God to the people was put outside. They didn't want that. They didn't want to actually accept that.

So they put it away. They put him outside. They rejected it. And we are being counseled. We are being invited. We are being appealed to by God through the scripture to go out to where Jesus is.

That's what we really want to look at tonight. Leaving the city to go out to Jesus. And then in verse 14 briefly we'll look at looking forward to the city where Jesus now is.

The city of heaven. So first of all leaving the city to go out to Jesus. Notice the word therefore there. Therefore let us go out to him. Seeing he is placed outside of the city.

[4 : 47] Seeing he is in a place of rejection. Seeing he is separated from the spirit if you like or the power. The attitude. The mindset.

The opinion. The conclusions. That concluded that he'd be crucified. That he'd be rejected. That's what led to him being crucified outside of the city.

Where the cross is situated. And of course we have to accept too that Jesus came as we saw this morning. To receive even from God himself.

The punishment that was due to you and to me for our sins. That was visited upon Jesus. That is what made up his sufferings.

It's not just the sufferings of the cross. It's not just simply the very, very, very, very deep sufferings of his body on the cross.

[5 : 47] And before that when he was scourged by the Roman scourge which would have bitten into and torn his flesh. That's his physical suffering.

And his greatest suffering are the sufferings of his soul. The spiritual suffering. This separation from God.

This laying upon him the punishment. The penalty of our sin. And it's out there that Jesus suffered outside of the gate.

In other words, outside of the gate represents God. Represents God's salvation. Represents the things that God is emphasizing are good.

What Jesus came to teach. What Jesus came to stand for. The values of God. The principles that God has laid down for human life.

[6 : 43] The things that have to do with righteousness. With justice. With love. With compassion. With forgiveness. All of these things as they are in Jesus.

They were rejected by the people. But that's why it's now calling upon us. To leave the city. To go out to him.

Let's bring it up to date. The city for you and I tonight. Represents or is represented by. Those who want to have nothing to do with Jesus.

Those who are still crying out for his rejection. Those who actually tonight are concerned to put Christ away from them. As far as possible.

And what we are being called upon to do. Is to leave that. To leave that attitude. To leave that clamor for Christ's rejection.

[7 : 42] And to make our way out to him. To leave the world. And its worldliness. And its rejection of Christ. And its own so called values.

And the things which they the world sees. As far more important than your Bible. And the salvation that is in Jesus. God is appealing to us tonight.

Leave that city. Go out to the cross. Go out to the Christ. In his death. Who represented God.

And the salvation that is in him. Is what you go out to. Let us go out to him. What does that then entail? If it is based on the fact that.

This is where he was situated. This is what he represents. If it is based on the need to leave the world. To make our way out from. Rejection of Christ. To accept him.

[8 : 43] To stand with him. To stand beside him. To take out place by the cross. How do you do that? What does that entail? In practice. Well it means.

That you willingly. Accept. Christ. As your savior. It means that you reject. Every other offer. Or every other suggestion.

As to how your life. Can be put right with God. As to what you will really have. That is worth having for eternity. And instead of accepting them. That you reject them.

That you turn your back on them. And you go to Christ. And you accept Christ. And you accept all that is in Christ. That is what God is saying to us. It means.

A definite decision on our part. It means a clear cut. Conclusion in our minds. It means something that we deliberately do. Ourselves.

[9 : 36] By the grace of God. By the enabling of God. But it involves ourselves. Answering to this call of God. And saying.

I want no more. To live for the world. And for everything. Or anything that is associated. With the rejection of Christ. I want to stand with him.

I want to go out to where he is. I want to accept him. And his values. And his principles. And his way of life. And all that is in him. For my benefit.

You see. When Christ was crucified. If you think about the occasion. Literally. Everyone who made their way out. To the cross. It does not mean everybody who went out to the cross. Was accepting him spiritually. Of course. But just think of it. In your mind. In the physical sense. Every single person. That went out to where the cross was situated. Could be seen. Making their way out.

[10:35] From the city to the cross. And you have to translate that. Into spiritual language. And meaning. And say that going out to Jesus. Means. A decision on my part.

It means a conclusion on my part. It means an act of will on my part. To give myself to Jesus. But that's something. That is going to be seen. It's something that.

Is itself. Public. It's not something. You keep hidden. It's not something. Like Nicodemus. Who came to Jesus.

By night. As you read in John chapter 3. It's something. That you do. In a way. That. Actually. In your person.

In your thinking. In your decision. In your lifestyle. Has gone out. To Christ. Christ. And that's. First question. That meets us. Meets you. And meets me.

[11:32] Here. Have you made. That. Clean break. Have you made. That clear break. With the world. With sin. With rejection.

Of Christ. With everything. That stands. Opposed to him. Have you made. That clean break. And have you made it clear. Has it become apparent. In your life.

Has it become obvious. In your life. Are you content. To kind of live. In between things. As you see it. Without really. Clearly being. On the side of Christ.

Does the world. See you. As somebody. Who is a supporter. And a follower. Of Christ. That's what it's saying to us. That's the question.

It's answering us. You might say. Well. Yes. I've done it inwardly. In my mind. I know. That I want to be a Christian. I want to be saved. I want to be in heaven. At last.

[12:25] I want to be right with God. I want to have my sin. Forgiven. And if that's the case. Then. You have to.

Make your way out to him. You have to leave the city. You have to take the steps. You have to come openly. To where he is.

To himself. To his cross. To all that that cross. Stands for. You have to welcome his death. Into your life. As the basis of your acceptance.

With God. You have to see his sufferings. As drawing you out. From the world. And his sufferings. As set before you.

On the cross. As appealing to you. In such a way. That says to you. If you're saying. Yes I want to be a Christian. Well. Here is the cross. And here is Jesus. On the cross. And here is the death of Christ.

[13:22] And here is the sufferings of Christ. Appealing to you. And saying to you. How can you possibly stay. In the world. How can you stay in it. Any longer. When you see what I have done. When you see what I have gone through.

When you see what the cross. Is about. What it means. What it signifies. What happened there. That's why it's saying.

Therefore. Let us go. Out to him. You can't go to him. And stay in. The city of the world. The city of. The rejecters. The city of those.

Who don't want him. You can't be saved. And not go out to him. You have to go out. To where he is. You have to associate with. That cross.

You have to make it. Your greatest. Possession. This salvation. In Christ. And then you see. It says.

[14:18] Bearing the reproach. That he endured. It doesn't just say. Let's go out to him. Outside the camp. But let's do it. Bearing the reproach.

That he endured. Reproach. Reproach. Reproach. Is. When you. Look at the. Life that Jesus lived. The ministry that Jesus. Was active in. He was reproached. For it. So many times. He endured. As. Hebrews 12. Puts it here.

He endured. In verse 3. Such hostility. From sinners. Against himself. And what he's saying there. Is that. That's precisely.

What's turned. Against. Those who go out to him. Who have gone out to him. Because going out to him. Means bearing. The reproach. That he endured. That he carried.

[15:14] It doesn't mean that. We go out. To him. In the same way. As is able to bear. Our sin. That part of it. Is exclusively. Christ. No one can bear. Our sin. The way he bore.

Our sin. No one has to endure. The sufferings. Of bearing sin. The sufferings. Of actually having. Our sin. Atoned for. Are exclusively his. What it means.

Is. The sufferings. You endure. When you stand up. For God. When you walk. On God's side. When you take to yourself.

Everything. That honors God. Which is what Jesus. Was doing. He was there. As the servant. Of the father. And all the way. Through his life. Yes. Of course.

He was rendering himself. An atonement. For sin. He was carrying. The penalty. Of our sin. To the cross. And on the cross. But all the way. Through. He was.

[16:09] Representing. Righteousness. Holiness. Justice. Goodness. Truth. And when you stand. For these. Then you stand. As Jesus stood. In the name of God. And for God. And you bear the reproach.

That he bore. You have hostility against you. You have shame. Directed at you. That's why it's not simply. A reproach. For him.

That we're called upon. To endure. To bear. It's reproach. Like his. The reproach. That he endured. Is how it's put here. In the ESV. The AD has. Bearing. His reproach. That's not just reproach. For him. But it's also including. Reproach.

[17:03] Like his. Because it is like his. The same opposition. Because he. Represented God. And spoke for God. And stood for God. That's what you're going to face.

As you go out. To him. Bearing that reproach. That's the reproach. That you will bear. But you see. This is not. Of course. Setting this out.

Before us. So that we will. Immediately conclude. Well. If that's going to be the case. Then I don't want much to do with that. Why should I put myself through that? Well.

Jesus did. For you. He knew. What he was going out to. Every day.

He read the scriptures. He found himself in them. And every time. He found himself in them. He read about his sufferings. He read about.

[18:00] What it was about. He read about. His death. He read about. Why he had come. Into the world. He read about. What it entailed.

Yet he went out. He gave himself to this. He gave himself to those who had come. To take him captive. He gave himself to them. He gave himself to them willingly.

He let them do this to him. He gave himself to God's displeasure. He gave himself to the punishment. That was due to us for our sins.

He bore every reproach. As he came to stand for God. And now he is calling you.

To leave the city and follow him. And go out and bear. The reproach. That he bore. And if you are here as a Christian.

[19:00] It is the same every day. For us too. It is not just appealing. To those. Who have not yet come to Christ. Although that. Is certainly. A prominent aspect.

Of the appeal. This actually. Goes into the daily life. Of those who are already. Following the Lord. Because this really. Is the principle. That is.

So foundational. To their daily lives. Their daily life. Is about going out to him. About standing for him. About coming to the defense. Of his cause. About speaking up for him.

Why do we bother. To go through. All of these things. We go through. In writing to MPs. In signing petitions. In appealing for. People to.

Cease from. The ungodliness. That is so much. A part. Of the present generation. Why do we actually. Come to. Speak up for those. Who are unborn. In the womb.

[19:57] For the protection. Of our vulnerable. Old people. Why do we actually. Come to. Speak up for all of these. Tremendously. Important things. Because.

Christ. Is at the heart. Of things. Like righteousness. And justice. And honesty. And goodness. Why do we. Bear reproach. When we do that.

Why do we. Feel the bite. Of the world. Why do we. Actually. Experience. The hatred. Sometimes. Of those. Who hate God. God. Because.

Because. They associate us. With him. Because. We're standing. By the cross. Because. We're speaking up. For these values. And the world. Knows it.

And the world. Recognizes it. That you remember. How he himself. Spoke to the disciples. Do not.

[20 : 53] Be alarmed. Do not. Be surprised. If the world. Hates you. You know. That it hated me. Before it hated you.

All this. They will do to you. For my name's sake. Jesus.

Jesus. Didn't. Pretend. That following him. Was going to be easy. Jesus. Didn't. Try and. Cover up. The most difficult. Parts. Of being a Christian.

He actually. Set it out. As it was. Why. So that you and I. Would know full well. What it is.

To be a Christian. So that you and I. Would take pride. In the fact. That we are bearing. The reproach. That he bore. So that you and I.

[21 : 52] Would say of ourselves. As we follow him. This is nothing. Compared. To what the cross. Itself. Represents. In the sufferings. Of my savior soul.

And if he's calling. Upon me. Tonight. To go out. To him. Where he is. And if he's calling. Upon me. As a Christian. After all these years. Of following him. To keep on following him. To keep up. Standing for the cross. And speaking up. For Jesus. What is that. Compared. To what he did. For me. What is.

The reproach. That I have to endure. And you have to endure. Compared. To the weight. And the agony. That was in his soul.

As he bore our sins. It's the least we can do. It's not much really.

[22 : 46] To require of us. To come back to God. Which is where we should be anyway. When we consider all that he did. By the cross of Christ. And so there's the second question.

To us. Who are following the Lord. Are we. As active. In that. As we could be. Are we as active. In that. As we should be.

Are we as involved. In his church. As we should be. Is our life. In the church. Is our contribution. To the life. Of the church. One that shows.

Clearly. That we've gone out. To the cross. That we're bearing. His reproach. Are we afraid. We'll get hurt. Are we afraid.

Of people's opinions. Are we not willing. To bear. A little suffering. A little.

[23 : 44] Of putting ourselves. Out. Are we not prepared. To do that. Against the background. Of the enormity.

Of what he put up with. To save us. We leave the city. To go out. To Jesus. And we go all the way out.

We don't stop. Halfway. We don't try and look back. Like Lot's wife. To Sodom. When she left. Along with Lot.

We don't hesitate. As we go forwards. Of course. There are things. That make us afraid. Maybe tonight. You're afraid. Of taking that step.

Maybe you're afraid. Of coming out. More clearly. Towards the cross. And to the cross. Maybe in your mind. You're already out there. But you know. You haven't actually. Yet made it plain.

[24 : 43] You haven't made that. Clean break. Otherwise. Otherwise. Well. The Jesus. That you want to go out to. Is not appealing to you.

To go in your own strength. He's not appealing to you. To go in the strength. Of anybody else. Of a church session.

Of a congregation. Of your companions. In the church. When he says. Let us go out to him. And bear his reproach. He's saying.

Do it in my strength. Can we doubt. That the Jesus. Who did this. Who suffered. This death. Of the cross.

Is going to let us down. When we come out to him. With all our fears. And all our anxieties. If he has gone so far.

[25 : 39] As to do this. Is he not going to look. After you. And is he not going to deal. With all your fears. As you think of going out. To the cross.

Daily. Standing up for him. Of course he is. What would we think. Of Jesus. If he had stepped back. If he hadn't given us all. If he hadn't gone the full distance. To the death of the cross. If he had shrunk back from that.

If he had said. Well I will go so far. But I won't go that far. The world is going to tell you. You don't have to become. That religious.

You don't have to really become. That committed to Christ. You don't have to start doing. All of these things. That you see other people doing. Like going to prayer meetings. And going to

communion services.

[26 : 38] And coming to take communion. And all of that stuff. That's really serious stuff. You can be a Christian. Easy enough. Without any of that stuff. Yes you can. Be a Christian.

Easily. In one sense. But very uneasily. If you take with you. In your mind. The appeal of the cross. Because the cross.

Will not allow you. Anything less. Than full commitment to him. Because that's what he. Gave to you. Leaving the city.

To go out to Jesus. Bearing the reproach. That he endured. Now there's nothing. Harsh. About this. Maybe I presented it. Far too harshly. Far too starkly. Maybe the presentation of it. Has been far short. Of what it should have been. I'm sure it is.

[27 : 39] But I want you to be. Absolutely. And clear. About this. That the call. Of the cross.

Is the call. Of love. The call. Of mercy. The call. Of compassion. The call.

Of one. Who. Who wants. To you. To have. The very. Best. In this world. And in the world. To come. This is where you have it.

In the acceptance. Of himself. In going out. To him. In bearing. His reproach. Let's do it.

Go out. To him. Leave the city. If you haven't already. And if you're committed. To Christ. If I'm committed. To Christ. Tonight. Let tonight.

[28 : 38] Be. A moment. When you say to yourself. I'm going to be more committed. I'm going to do more for him. I'm going to seek more opportunities. To serve him. I'm going to do more.

In his church. For him. And for his glory. I'm going to go out. To that cross. I'm going to stand by that cross.

I'm going to represent. That cross. And I'm going to do it. The way it deserves. Secondly. Looking forward to the city.

Where Jesus now is. Just briefly. He's following on from saying. Let's go to him. Outside the camp. And bear the reproach. And for. Here. We have no.

Lasting city. But we are seeking the city. For the one that is to come. Let's continue with. That theme of the city. And you can picture in your mind.

[29 : 32] Again. Jerusalem. The city that. Rejected him. That sent him out. To be crucified. And. That city is not lasting.

It's not. Secure. Romans actually. Devastated. Jerusalem. In 70 AD. And even further on. From that.

The city of this world. This present world. Order. Things as we know them. In the world. We belong to. They're not going to last. Even if you live.

For a thousand years. They're not going to last. Because. God is going to come. And you see. At the end of. Chapter 12. There. He tells us. Quite plainly. That.

Yet. Once more. At that time. He talks about. How. Moses. On the. Mount of. Of. Sinai. Trembled.

[30 : 27] As he heard. The voice of God. And it says. At that time. His voice shook the earth. But now he has promised. Yet. Once more. I will shake. Not only the earth. But also the heavens.

This phrase. Yet. Once more. Indicates. The removal of things. That are shaken. That is. Things that have been created. In order that the things.

That cannot be shaken. May remain. Therefore. Let us be grateful. For receiving a kingdom. That cannot be shaken.

And let us offer up. To God. Sacrifice. Acceptable. With reverence. And. All. Friends. Nothing of this world.

Is going to remain. Nothing of this world. Order. Things as they are. In human society. Throughout the world. They are not going to stay like that.

[31 : 22] The day that Christ comes. I hope you all believe in that. The day that Christ appears. Will be the end of this world order.

As we know it. The Bible has a picture of. The heavens being rolled up. Just like a scroll. And the earth on fire. And the elements.

Melting. With fervent heat. Why? Because God is setting. A new heavens. And a new earth. A new order. In which righteousness dwells. That's the lasting one.

That's the city that has foundations. Whose builder and maker is God. That's what Abraham looked forward to. That's what he saw by faith. That's what these saints of the Old Testament.

Looked forward to. Not just the days of the New Testament. That you and I belong to. But even beyond that. And on into eternity. That's the city that we are seeking.

[32 : 18] We are seeking one to come. And what that means essentially. Is that that city already exists. Don't listen to people who have.

Concluded that God doesn't exist. Because nobody has ever found him. Nobody has ever seen him. From all the space exploration. That's been done. Nobody has ever seen.

Any sight of God. Well of course that's not true. You don't have to go out into space. To try and see God.

You see God in Jesus Christ. That's what John said. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten. Who is in the bosom of the father.

That's Jesus. He has redeemed him. He is the image. Of the invisible God. He is God made visible. To us. That's why.

[33 : 20] The city that exists. The city that is looked forward to. In faith. And in hope. When he says here. We are seeking that city. It doesn't mean he's looking for something. That he doesn't know exists.

Or maybe not. Maybe yes. Maybe no. What he's saying is that. We are seeking this city. That is to come. The one that already exists.

That God has built. And that will be revealed. When Jesus comes. That's what we're living for. He says. That's what we're seeking. In other words. What it's saying is that.

Like Abraham. If you go to chapter 11. Abraham. Moses. And chapter 11. Verse 26. You notice what it says there. He considered. The reproach. Of Christ.

A word again. Reproach of Christ. Greater wealth. Than the riches. The treasures of Egypt. For he was looking forward. To the reward. Abraham.

[34 : 17] Just a few verses before then. When it says that he. Dwelt in Canaan. In a land. Dwelling in tents there.

And saying that he. Looked forward to a city. That has foundations. Whose builder. And maker. Is God. And then it says.

These all died in faith. Not having received. The things promised. But having seen them. And greeted them. From afar. And having acknowledged. That they were strangers.

And excels on the earth. If they had been thinking. Of that land. From which they had gone out. They would have had opportunity. To return. But as it is. They desire a better country. That is a heavenly one.

Therefore. God does not. Ashamed to be called. Their God. For he has. Prepared for them. A city. We are seeking.

[35 : 15] The city that is to come. Not seeking. In the sense of. Not being sure. Whether it is there or not. But seeking it. In the sense of. Yearning for it. Looking forward to it.

Realizing that it is going to. Replace this world order. And that it is secure. That it is lasting. It is going to last. For eternity. Are you a citizen. Tonight.

Of that country. Of that city. Of that heaven. Have you gone out. To the camp. Out of the camp. To Jesus. Have you taken your stand.

Have you identified with him. Have you received him. Have you accepted him. Is the cross.

Centrally placed. In your life. All of these people.

That mentioned there. They went out. Abraham went out. Of the old days. Moses went out. Of Egypt. All of that. Was symbolical. They were going out.

[36 : 17] Of what rejected God. And they were going towards. The reward. The inheritance. The city. That God had prepared. For them. I want to finish.

By quoting. From a famous work. By John Bunyan. I have to confess. It is. Far too long. Since I last read it. Pilgrim's Progress.

And the pilgrim. Called Christian. Having left. The city. Which called. The city of destruction. This is what. We read then. In the pilgrim's Progress.

He ran thus. Till he came. At a place. Somewhat ascending. And upon that place. Stood a cross. And a little below. In the bottom.

A sepulcher. Just as he came. Up to the cross. This burden. Loosed from. Off his shoulders. And fell. From off his back. And began.

[37 : 14] To tumble. And so it continued. To do. Till it came. To the mouth. Of the sepulcher. Where it fell in. And I saw it. No more. That was of course.

His sin. And his guilt. Then he said. With a merry heart. He has given me. Rest. By his sorrow. And life.

By his death. Then Christian. Gave three leaps. For joy. And went on. Singing. These are the verses. These are the words. That he sang. Thus far.

Did I come. Laden with my sin. Nor could aught else. Ease the grief. That I was in. Till I came hither. What a place is this.

Must hear. Be the beginning. Of my bliss. Must hear. The burden. Fall. From off my back. Must hear. The strings. That bounded. To me. Crack. Blessed cross.

[38 : 10] Blessed sepulcher. Blessed rather be. The man that there. Was put to shame. For me. Let's pray.

Lord our God. We do give thanks. As we conclude our worship now. We do give thanks. For all that we have contemplated today. We know that all of these things.

Lord belong to your truth. Truth that you have verified. And worked through. In the life. And in the death. Of our Lord. Truth that came to be embodied in him.

And truth that was seen. And proved. And seen to be of such worth. As he stood for it. And died for it. We thank you that that truth.

Includes his own death. His resurrection. His empty cross. And empty sepulcher. Lord help us. We pray. To live our lives. Between them.

[39 : 15] Ever having on the one side of us. That cross. On which he died. On the other side. The sepulcher. From which he rose. So that we may be.

Each day of our lives. Governed. By the power of his death. And resurrection. We pray that you bless us now. And bless the food to us. That is prepared for us.

Make us thankful for it. And all we ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen. Thank you.