

Hebrews 13

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 September 2015

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] By the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good, that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Greet all your leaders and all the saints, those who come from Italy, send you greetings. Grace be with you all. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word.

And sing again from, again from Sing Psalm, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in Psalm 147. And the tune is credited in.

And you'll find that on page 192. Verses 1 to 7. O praise the Lord, how good it is to sing him songs of praise.

How pleasant to give thanks to him for all his gracious ways. The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he it is alone who reaches out to Israel to bring the exiles home.

He heals his people's broken hearts, restores the bruised and lame. He sets the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and great in power.

[1 : 37] His wisdom is profound. The Lord sustains the meek, but casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the Lord with thankfulness, with joy his praise proclaim.

And with the music of the harp give glory to his name. 1 to 7, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in. O praise the Lord, how good it is to sing him songs of praise.

1 to 7, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in.

1 to 7, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in.

1 to 7, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in.

[3 : 44] 1 to 7, Psalm 147, the tune is credited in.

Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Hebrews chapter 13. Hebrews 13, verse 5, Hebrews 13, verse 5.

Keep your life free from love of money and be content with what you have. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper.

I will not fear. I will not fear. I will not fear. What can man do to me? And so on. There's a series of exhortations given here.

Very simple things, but they're all very biblical things about brotherly love, about hospitality, about remembering those who are in prison, about honoring marriage.

[5 : 10] And then it comes to verse 5. Now, some translations, rather than having keep your life free from love of money, have their covetousness.

You could, if you're going to give a title to what this really is about, it is covetousness as an over-against contentment.

Because that is what it is saying. Keep your life free from love of money or covetousness and be content with what you have. And covetousness and contentment couldn't be further apart.

You cannot have, at the same time, covetousness and contentment. You might as well try and live in the East and West at the same time, as to live comfortably with covetousness and contentment in your heart.

Because they are in absolute opposition one to the other. And the apostle here is giving this exhortation.

[6 : 20] Because covetousness, and it is here in relation to money, because the actual Greek here, although it does indicate covetousness, it is covetousness in relation to money and relation to wealth.

Covetousness, as we know, if we know our commandments, the Ten Commandments, is the last one. But I think we could honestly say that covetousness is in all of them.

Because covetousness, at the end of the day, we're told, Paul tells us, is idolatry. And if you go through all the commandments, you can see how covetousness is really in them all.

It's the bottom line, why people kill, why people steal, why people will commit adultery, why people break the Lord's day. You can run through them all, and you can argue that covetousness is part and partial.

Where we are deciding what we don't have, where we have to have it. Of course, there's nothing wrong with admiring. There's nothing wrong in any way with admiring what we don't have.

[7 : 31] And saying, oh, that's really, we mustn't tie ourselves in knots and start thinking that if ever we look at anything appreciatively, that we have been covetous, that's not the case.

It is where we have our heart set, where we begin to get disturbed by it, where we say to ourselves, I have to have that. And where we see somebody else with something, and we say, I have to have that.

Where there is this growing desire to having to have. That is where the sin is. Again, we have to be clear that it's not just simply wanting to have something.

It is where there is a wrong desire. And in this particular line here, it is with regard to wealth, with regard to money.

So, keep your life free from the love of money. Now, again, we've got to be clear on what it is not saying. It doesn't say here, keep your life free from money.

[8 : 36] That's not what it is saying. There is nothing wrong with wealth in and of itself. When you go through the Bible, lots of God's people were actually very wealthy. So, that wealth in and of itself, it's not a wrong thing.

Wealth can be a very good thing. It can be a very positive thing. And there is so much good done in this world with wealth. So, that wealth and money in and of itself is not wrong.

It's not wrong to have a healthy ambition to do well in life. These things are not wrong. It is this obsessive desire to have.

To have more. To have more. It is where there is just this hunger to have. To have. And once a passion begins to be swallowed up with this, it's almost like a cancer gnawing away.

And it is impossible for a passion like that to be able to be content, to enjoy contentment in life.

When there is this burning desire to have, to have, to have.

[9 : 45] It's really basically an unhealthy love of money. Now, at the time when this was written, persecution was rife. The Christian church was suffering terribly.

So, we've got to remember that this is actually the backdrop here that the apostle is writing to Christians who were suffering. And it was tough for them. It's the same as is happening in many parts of the world today.

Where people were losing their home, their possessions. They were being dispossessed because of their love of the Lord. That's happening today just as it was happening 2,000 years ago.

The very same thing. There are people that their rights have been taken away. There's a lot of people today in this world, if they become Christians where they live, then their ability to get work becomes really hard.

These things are happening. People lose their jobs simply by becoming Christians in certain places. So, it's despite all that there is still this warning against the love of money.

[10 : 55] And we're told in Scripture also that the love of money is the root of all evil. That is this inordinate desire. And at the heart of so much of the oppression in this world is this very thing, the love of money.

You know, if you really stripped away, if you look at all so many of the power struggles in this world, if you look at a lot of the wars in this world, I reckon if you stripped everything away, Human greed, the human desire for power and for riches is underneath it all.

Whether at a national level, at a political level, at an individual level, it is there. It is this lust for having more and often for having wealth.

An awful lot of things. People can put a face onto it, but underneath, the human heart doesn't change. And it's this that's driving so much of the cruelty, so much of the oppression.

So many people today have been deprived. So many people today have lost out because of human greed. Where people, other people, with this inordinate desire for wealth to get on in this world, Are

losing, and they, as a result, have lost out.

[12 : 24] So much corruption, so much oppression, so much greed. And we're living in a day where we very often measure a person by their wealth.

You often see it, say, how much is a person worth? How much is he worth? How much is she worth? That's a very strange way of asking.

That we measure a person's value and worth in this world. By their bank account. By their possessions. Jesus tells us that's completely wrong.

Jesus makes that very clear. Jesus said, a man, or that is a person, A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

That's right. That's a cut right across the way that society today so often values people. You often find that question.

[13 : 24] How much is he worth? The thing is, that person's soul is worth far more than the whole world's riches put together.

Jesus said that. What will a person give in exchange for their soul? What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world? All its wealth, all its resources, all its power, all its everything.

What will it profit him if he gain all that and yet lose his own soul? What will a person give in exchange for their soul? So you see, so often we get caught up with our wrong estimation, with our wrong value of things.

So here the apostle is saying, we're to guard against, keep your life free from the love of money. So keep it free.

Don't be entangled. Don't have this sort of entangling you so that what drives you on in this world, where there's an obsession within your heart, within your life for money, get free from that.

[14 : 33] If you have, if that is what is driving your life on, you will not know contentment. You cannot understand contentment at the same time. So keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have.

Now contentment is not something that we're born with naturally. It's not something that happens overnight. Contentment is something that the Lord works in us over a long period.

Remember how the apostle Paul talked about his contentment. He said, I have learned in whatever state I am in, therein to be content.

It was a learning process. It wasn't something that just happened. We're told in scripture also that godliness with contentment is great gain. So the apostle is saying, be content with what you have. And maybe you might be saying to yourself, oh, that's all very well for the apostle to say that. It's all very well for some people to say that. But if you were in my situation, if you were where I am, it wouldn't be so easy to be content with what I have.

[15 : 48] Well, we've got to remember that when the apostle Paul wrote that he had learned in whatever state he was in to be content, that Paul wasn't somebody who was a rich man living in splendor with everything at his fingertips.

Paul was somebody who had been deprived of everything. Paul wrote that from prison. Paul was somebody who knew all about being shipwrecked, being beaten up, being imprisoned, being stoned.

And this is the man who was saying, I've learned to be content. So we've got to realize that it's not contentment doesn't depend upon outward things.

Contentment is all about an inward attitude and an inward spirit. Because again, if you look around today at many people who have everything as far as the world is concerned, they might have all the world's trappings.

But a lot of people, they have to have personal bodyguards. Their houses are built with so much security. It's like Fort Knox. They are continually under media spotlight wherever they go.

[17 : 01] And I cannot imagine, despite all that you have, that you're enjoying contentment, if that's the way you're having to live. But here we're told to be content with such things as we have.

And I think at the very heart of that is that we have to have, I mean it's easy to say, that the Lord is filling our heart, filling our vision.

Because the Lord tells us that there are certain people who enjoy, who inherit the earth. And when he talks about inheriting the earth, he is talking about people who every day find fulfillment and find satisfaction as they live out their days in this world.

And who are they? He tells us they're the meek. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. These are the people who have humbled themselves before the Lord and have filled themselves with the Lord so that they see God's hand in everything.

And where there is this awareness that God is good, God is good to them, and that in every situation, wherever they are, that God is ruling and he is in control.

[18 : 30] There is built into them a spirit of submission, a spirit of humility before God. Now again, that doesn't happen overnight.

But that is what we need to be asking the Lord for. Lord, give me this spirit of contentment in life. Because we're living in a world that's just pushing us on.

We're being propelled. There's like a machine going on. It's like we're on a treadmill and somebody's just putting it up a little faster each time. Every day, every week, every month. Just getting a little faster. That's the way we're moving on. And we need time to stop and to reflect. And to even enjoy life where we are.

Because God is saying to us, right at the very beginning, our first caddiction, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. However, enjoyment is written in to God's purposes for us.

[19 : 34] I wonder how many people today really are completely content and enjoying life. Not just asking that question here, but just everywhere.

Because God, I know we're living in a sinful world, a fallen world. It's not the world that God originally made for us, where the full enjoyment was our right, which we would have had.

But still and all, in a fallen world, God has all the resources. And that doesn't mean that we cannot enjoy life in God, even when we've gone through difficult things.

There's loads of people here that have had crushing blows within their lives. Where their lives have been broken and shattered. But even there, the Lord is able to give you a spirit of contentment. Where you're at. And that shows how this is not human. It comes, it's not something that we can simply work up within ourselves.

[20 : 44] It is the Lord coming into our heart. And filling our heart with himself. So, it is one of the things that we must be asking the Lord for all the time.

Lord, give me this spirit of contentment. So that I am able to enjoy your peace. Your hand upon me for good.

Where does our contentment lie? Well, I think our contentment lies where our treasure is. That's what the Bible tells us. That wherever our treasure is, that's where our heart will be.

That's a question I have to ask myself today. You have to ask yourself, where's your treasure today? Where is the very heart of your life?

Where is the key to your life? Is it without yourself? Or is it within? And if it is within yourself, in other words, if it is the Lord who has come through his spirit to become king of your heart, of your life, then you're in a good place.

[21 : 55] If you're a believer today, your hope above all is in glory. That's where ultimately your treasure lies.

It is in glory. No moth or rust can get in and destroy. Or thieves get in and steal. That's where your ultimate treasure is.

And then the Lord says to us, keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Why, he says, because I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Now that's a wonderful promise. Because it's all very well to say, right, I'm told to be content. Lord, what else are you going to say to me?

Well, this is what the Lord says. He says, I'm with you. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. Now, as we know, this world is littered with broken promises.

[22 : 56] And probably we're all guilty of having broken promises. We've had people break promises to us. And we no doubt have broken promises to other people as well.

Sadly, that's part of life. But here is somebody, here is a person who cannot break a promise. There are two things the Bible shows us that God can't do.

He cannot deny himself. And he cannot lie. So the God who cannot lie has said, I will never, ever, ever, ever leave you. I will never forsake you.

And particularly when we're going through times of anxiety and difficulty, that's music to our ears. You remember when Joshua took over from Moses. You read Joshua chapter 1.

And the one thing that comes through there, although it doesn't actually say it, it is very obvious when we read into it that Joshua's knees were knocking together.

[23 : 59] He was a man who was crippled by anxiety and with fear. Why? Because he had to go into the shoes of Moses. He was going to take over from this mighty man of God.

And he's filled with trepidation. What if they won't listen to me? What if they won't be? How can I ever take over the mantle of this great man? You go to Joshua chapter 1, and it is filled with God coming to Joshua, reassuring him.

And he keeps saying to him, Do not be afraid. Be of good courage. Do not be afraid. And he's saying it over and over and over again.

That's why I know that Joshua was scared stiff. Because God wouldn't be saying to him, Don't be afraid. God wouldn't be saying, Be of good courage. If Joshua was full of courage.

But God says to him, Be of good courage. Because I'm with you. All the time. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.

[25 : 05] And that should be music to our ears. That the God who can never lie has said that. He will never forsake. Even the closest to us in this world will forsake us.

Death causes forsaking. Even those who do not want to forsake us, Death will cause forsaking. This life is full of broken hearts because of forsaking.

But here is one who says, Whoever else will leave you. Whoever else will forsake you. The Lord says, I won't. Doesn't matter day or night.

Doesn't matter past, present, future. In all your tomorrows, I will be with you. Wherever you go. Whatever you do.

Yeah? Even when we go wrong. Even when we're sinning. God hasn't turned us back. It's quite an amazing thought, isn't it?

[26 : 13] Even when we're sinning against him. Still with us. It's not moments where the Lord will say, Oh, right. I'm seeing what you're doing there. You're on your own now.

No. Even there. He never, ever, ever, ever stops holding our hand. Never, ever, ever abandons us or leaves us to ourself. And I can't think of anything more wonderful.

And you know the alternative is this. See, if you're out of Christ, if you do not have the Lord, you cannot claim these promises. Because it's only when you say, Lord, Lord, be my Lord.

In fact, that's the very meaning of Lord. Somebody who is in control of your life. Somebody who has the authority over your life. Somebody who's in charge.

See, that's the bottom line. That's a problem with people not wanting to be Christians. Because they say, Ah, I want. I want. That's a problem, isn't it?

[27 : 15] I want. I want. To be in control of my life. Don't want somebody else to be in control. That's a natural instinct.

But God says, I have to be. I need to be king. Or else, I'm either king or nothing.

Is the Lord king in your heart, in your life? Well, if so, then all these promises belong to you. Every single one.

You don't need to be a super Christian or the greatest Christian. As long as there's that strand of faith linking you to God through Jesus Christ, then all these promises belong to you.

That doesn't mean that there won't be times when you're not aware of God's presence. Doesn't mean that there won't be times when he might hide his face from you for differing reasons.

[28 : 19] But he is still there. Just in the same way as the clouds often hide the sun from us. But that hasn't taken the sun away. The sun is still there. Clouds will pull back again and we'll see the sun.

And it's the same with the Lord. There might be clouds for differing reasons that are hiding him from us. But he's still there. Hasn't left us.

Never will. And so it says, so we can confidently say, because of this fact that he will never leave nor forsake, we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper.

Isn't that wonderful? The helper is one who runs to aid. That's what it means. Who runs to help.

That's what this actual word means. It's not somebody who is there who could help you. But somebody who runs to your aid. Just in the same way as a parent might see their child in trouble.

[29 : 26] If you saw that, would you just stand by and say, oh, that's tough. No. You'd be first over. You'd be running. You'd be pushing people out of the way to get there. Well, that's the idea that we have here.

The Lord is my helper. It's amazing. The Lord tells us how important his people are to him. Remember what Jesus said, the psalm says, whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. I think that's amazing.

The apple right there, right in the very center of your eye. That is so tender. That's so, so... It's amazing all that, the covering that we have over our eye with our eyebrows and lids and lashes and everything like that to protect the eye.

It's so sensitive. Anything coming to the eye straight away, it's so sensitive. Right into the very center of your eye. And the Lord is saying, anybody who touches any one of my people is touching the most sensitive part of me.

[30 : 35] that's how important, that's how important you are to the Lord. You may... Today you might not feel it. You might feel pretty down.

You might feel pretty low. You're looking back over life and you often, might often feel a failure and say, how can the Lord be interested in me?

Well, when the Lord loves you, He loves you far more than you ever, ever realize or understand.

And He is, all the time, He is running to your aid.

And you know, it's one of the great things I believe that heaven will show us. Where we'll be able to see something. I don't want...

I know, I can't say, but you know how very often today with today's technology and so on, with television, you can rewind and see things. Maybe you missed it. Oh, I want to see that again.

[31 : 32] Maybe our lives. It's only a maybe. But I believe there'll be something will be rewound in a way where we will be able to see how God worked for us in this life.

All the time He is working for us. We don't realize it because so often we think things are going against us. Jacob, at the end of his day, said, you know, all these things are against me.

He thought everything was going against him and if only he was able to look up, God is actually saying to him, no, Jacob, they're not. They're actually, everything is working for you.

You can't see it just now, but let me tell you, Jacob, that is what's happening. And the Lord is saying the same to us as well. If only you could see it's actually all working for you.

Even the things that are breaking your heart, even the things you don't understand, tells us that God is working all things together for good to those who love him.

[32 : 43] And as we conclude, may we, all of us, know the Lord today as our Lord so that we can rest and trust in the fullness of these promises.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, we give you thanks for all your goodness to us, your patience with us, your love to us. We pray that our hearts might delight in you and that we might be able to have that spirit of contentment that we were hearing about today.

Lord, we pray that we will not have wrong prerogatives in life, but that our desire will be to set our affections upon the things that are above.

Help us, Lord, as we go through life to enjoy life in the right way and give us that sense of purpose, sense of identity, sense of contentment so that we will know you, your presence with us all the time, by day and by night.

Bless us and those whom we love. We commit each to your care and keeping. Bless the kipper of tea and coffee in the hall after and forgive us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm 121 and this is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 121.

[34 : 07] The tune is Martyrdom. Psalm 121. I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come mine aid.

My safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber that he keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not nor sleeps.

The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade, on thy right hand doth stay. The moon by night, thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day. The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall preserve thee from all ill.

Henceforth thy going out and in, God keep forever will. The whole Psalm 121. The tune is Martyrdom. I through the hills will lift mine eyes from west sound of Thou of Seat, the Lord God once again refer to him as he says, Dr. Leone is wondering, Christ has here been come out of Sil. I through the hill and I have made every day■ deus and a projects for him there haunts more than heouµe throughout the earth.

[35 : 32] My place shoots him through the mountain that sat and good seeing God ¡Gracias por ver el video!

The Lord I shake, on my right hand thou stay.
The moon by night, it shall not shine, nor yet the sun by day.
The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall preserve thee from all hell.
And for thy glory, thou shalt end, brought thee forever well.
[37 : 19] Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and
abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.