

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF HEBREWS

STICK TOGETHER (HEBREWS 13:1-9)

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN LOVE?

V1 is referring to how we treat fellow believers. We are to show special regard for other Christian's needs regardless of social, racial, or economic status. In essence, we treat each other like family.

- We live in a culture that has distorted the meaning of love. (1 Corinthians 13, Matthew 22:36-40, 1 John 4:7, John 3:16, Hebrews 12)

ONE WAY TO SHOW LOVE IS HOSPITALITY

V2 is referring to the treatment of people passing through work or believers we meet in day-to-day life.

Hospitality is required of Christian leadership (1 Timothy 3:2)

- The reference from Genesis 18-19 shows the enormity of being hospitable. Abe entertained people that were actually angels. (Matthew 25:35-45)

REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE MISTREATED

1st-century prisons were nothing like today. If prisoners were to eat or have clean clothing, people would have to supply it. In this time many Christians were jailed.

- We are called to reach out to people who are suffering. In America, we are not seeing much of this, but all across the world, they are. **Do we think about that?**

"MARRIAGE MUST BE RESPECTED BY ALL"

While the author was writing this letter, both pagan and Jewish marriages were mostly unhealthy and marked with immorality.

- God designed the nuclear family, but not only have we not progressed, but we have also digressed in how we value the family. **We must pursue purity, contentment, and trust to develop strong families!**

STRONG FAMILIES BEGIN WITH STRONG MARRIAGES

We're called to take marriage seriously. This means taking measures to guard our eyes, hearts, and minds and to be alert to things that distract us from purity

- **The effects of divorce have been huge.** Abuse, neglect, insecurity, and even poor economic decisions rise dramatically because of a flippant view of marriage.

ANOTHER THREAT TO THE FAMILY IS MATERIALISM

There is nothing wrong with money or success, but the "love of money" and material things is evil (1 Timothy 6:10).

- We are to renounce the love of money and be content with what we have. We live in a culture that covets, tries to impress others, is entitled, and is selfish. **This is not to be the mindset of the believer.**

ANOTHER LARGE THREAT TO THE FAMILY IS ANXIETY

In times like ours, we must remember the words of Psalm 118, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

- It's ok to worry at times, but if we trust Christ, we are not to live in anxiety and fear. **Fear is not a spirit given to us from God (2 Timothy 1:7) and we are not designed to live in anxiety.**

FOLLOW LEADERS THAT FOLLOW STRONG DOCTRINE

Imitate leaders that know and live the Word of God. Once we have seen the "outcome of their lives," we follow their example.

- Ultimately, we follow Jesus who is "the same yesterday (what He did on the cross), today (our Mediator to the Father), and forever (to come back and lead us into eternity)."

MAKE SURE TO NOT BE SWAYED BY FALSE TEACHING

The recipients of Hebrews believed that ceremonial foods and rituals could save them. Paul cleared this up in 1 Corinthians 8:8, "food does not bring us near to God."

- This goes for any man-made religious practice. **Grace through faith is how we are saved, and we are to conform to Christ's standards, not man's.**

WALKING DIFFERENTLY (HEBREWS 13:10-17)

EATING FROM A SPECIAL ALTAR

Jews who served in the temple had limited access to the resources of the temple and to God, but the Jews that gave their life to Christ have complete access because of Jesus.

- V10-11 is a subtle warning to not depend on meaningless rituals, but to focus on living for God and worshipping Him in Spirit and Truth

JESUS DIES OUTSIDE THE CITY (V12)

Jesus died on the cross to make His followers holy, He was taken outside of Jerusalem to be crucified. His death outside the city represents His rejection by the religious establishment.

- **We are urged to separate ourselves from man-made beliefs and surrender security in ritual for the "danger" of pursuing Christ.**

WHY SHOULD WE WALK SO DANGEROUSLY?

First, **we live in the present, but we are investing in our future.** We are to be looking for an "enduring city" that has not come yet.

- Second, **Christians are to be communal.** This means we help those in need, share our excess, pull people up to a higher standard, disciple, and love! **The Christian believes it is not all about us!**

WE ARE CALLED TO PRESENT A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

His glory, not our comfort, should be the focus of our lives. We are to be consistent and constant in our love and devotion to Him. We are to demonstrate goodness, greatness, and mercy (Psalm 51)

- **Works do not save us, but they should be a natural byproduct of the saved!** (James 2)

WE ALSO ARE CALLED TO HONOR OUR LEADERSHIP

We are called to submit, respect, and be obedient to Christian leadership without grudging. On the other side, the leader is called to be "above reproach" (Titus 1:6-7) and be merciful and fair to those they lead.

- **We are to honor authority, even if it is not Christian, but our biblical mandates always outweigh the laws of man.**

GENUINE AFFECTION (HEBREWS 13:18-25)

THE AUTHOR ASKS FOR PRAYER WHILE HE/SHE IS TRAVELING, AND MENTIONS THEY HAVE A "CLEAR CONSCIENCE" AND ARE ACTING "HONORABLY IN EVERYTHING."

We should pray for all people that request it, but it's easier for us when we know the individual is devoted to righteousness

THE AUTHOR WAS ASKING FOR INTERCESSION

There were unknown circumstances preventing the author from visiting them, and he thought their prayers could change those things. He asked to be restored so he could visit with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

- This further shows the power of community and the need for unity among believers.

MAY THE "GOD OF PEACE" BE WITH YOU (V20-21)

Jesus is peaceful, the great Shepherd that leads us through tough times, and He will bring out the best in us if we will **trust His will, let Him equip us, and let Him work in us "what is pleasing in His sight"**

- **The work of Christ is the only thing that enables us to function properly and efficiently.**

OUR BROTHER TIMOTHY

Paul's protégé and talented young leader, Timothy had been imprisoned but was apparently being freed and coming their way.

SHORT, BUT IMMENSELY IMPORTANT

Hebrews is considered a brief letter, one that could be read in less than an hour, but its "exhortation," or point, is simple and profound.

- The author simply urged them to receive this message. **Do not simply hear about Christ, but receive Him, follow Him, and honor Him, because everything hangs in the balance.**

GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL

- What we have heard for the last 4 months is an invitation to experience God's grace. It is not enough to simply believe that Jesus exists; we must receive Him.

RECEIVING CHRIST REQUIRES 100%

- To have saving faith is to accept all of the instruction of God, to submit to His will, to love like He loves, and to stand firm on His principles and commands, even in the face of hostility. It is a relationship that results in righteousness, and we are given tremendous grace in the process.