

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 3RD–4TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

LIVING AS CITIZENS (HEBREWS 13:1–9) CITIZENS OF THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM

The author of Hebrews has just spoken at length about the life of faith and reminded us that our reward for finishing the race is “a kingdom that cannot be shaken.”

- Because of this, we are to “serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe” (Heb 12:28).
- So, what does that look like? How do we serve God as citizens of the Unshakable Kingdom?

“LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE.” (V. 1)

If we have God as our heavenly Father, because we belong to Jesus, then others who have also placed their faith in Jesus are our brothers and sisters.

- We are to love them as members of our family!
- We are to develop and cultivate a kind of deep friendship and partnership with other Believers—we'll be in heaven together forever!

“DON'T NEGLECT TO SHOW HOSPITALITY...” (V. 2)

As citizens of God's Kingdom, our love must extend beyond the church.

- The word “hospitality” quite literally means “love to strangers”—being friendly, welcoming, and showing love to people we may not even know.
- Amazingly, in welcoming and showing kindness to strangers, some have unknowingly welcomed angels (Gen. 18:1–22; 19:1–3).

“REMEMBER THOSE IN PRISON...” (V. 3)

The prisoners mentioned here are probably the same ones from 10:33–34 who were locked up for the sake of the gospel (“the mistreated”).

- We are to remember our brothers and sisters who are suffering for their faith.
- If God gives us an opportunity to minister inside prisons/jails, we are to take it and serve them!

“MARRIAGE IS TO BE HONORED...” (V. 4)

As Christians, we are to give public, visible honor and private, personal honor to marriage as the monogamous, sacred union of a man and woman. Marriage is sacred!

- The marriage bed is to be kept undefiled—sexual intimacy within marriage is to be celebrated and protected from defilement.
- God will judge the sexually immoral.

“[LIVE] FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY...” (V. 5)

Money itself is amoral—it is a resource God provides that can be used for good or evil.

- The love of money is the “root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). If we are in love with money, we will be led astray to a lifestyle that does not serve God or honor others.
- You cannot serve God and money (Mt. 6:24).
- The love of money is enslaving.

“BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE...” (VS. 5B–6)

How do we live free from the love of money? Through the discipline of contentment.

- This is a call to practically live out the 10th Commandment (do not covet).
- The source of our contentment is not the security and comfort we get from owning things; it is from the God who always takes care of us.
- God has promised to provide for us!

“REMEMBER YOUR LEADERS...” (V. 7)

Godly leadership within the Body of Christ is to be honored and revered.

- Leaders who are worth “remembering/following” are those who do two things:
 - 1) Speak and teach God's Word faithfully.
 - 2) Live a godly life that is observable.
- We don't worship godly leaders (they're human and imperfect), but we do honor them.

BE CONSISTENT AND FAITHFUL, LIKE JESUS (V. 8)

The unchanging nature of God is such that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He's not flaky, inconsistent, moody, or unreliable.

- The idea is this—if the aim of Christian maturity is to grow in godliness to look more like Jesus, we are to grow in consistency and faithfulness.
- Nothing tampers with our Christian witness faster than unreliability and a lack of dependability.

“DON'T BE LED ASTRAY...” (V. 9)

The “various kinds of strange teachings” the author of Hebrews has in mind are not explicitly stated, but the mention of “food regulations” is noteworthy.

- The ones here seem to deal with a return to Mosaic ceremonies and laws that were fulfilled in Jesus. We are established by grace, not by earning God's approval through law!

SACRIFICES OF THE HEART (HEBREWS 13:10–16)

Rather than focusing on eating the right kinds of foods (Old Covenant), Christians “feed” on the perfect spiritual food—Christ!

- Under the New Covenant, we have access to a spiritual “altar”—the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice.
- Those still clinging to the Old Covenant (Levitical priests and temple worshipers) cannot eat at this spiritual table (v. 10).

Under the Old Covenant, sin offerings were taken outside the camp after their blood was used in the holy place (v. 11).

- This showed the separation of sin and pointed ahead to the significance of Christ's sacrifice outside of Jerusalem (v. 12).
- When Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, He fulfilled and surpassed the old sacrificial system. His blood sanctifies and sets apart Believers!

Perhaps the greatest pain these Believers were experiencing was the rejection from their Jewish community (“outside the camp”) because of their faith in Jesus.

- To follow Jesus may mean living outside the approval of the world, our family, or certain religious traditions (v. 13).
- We are called to follow Jesus “outside the camp,” even if it means rejection and suffering.

If we are rejected by our culture and by the world at large, it will hurt.

- All the stuff of this world and all its institutions are temporary (v. 14).
- We must remember that we are citizens of a heavenly city—the eternal Kingdom of God.
- To be loved and accepted by the temporary kingdoms of this world and have no place in the eternal Kingdom of God is a terrible exchange.

Because of Jesus, the sacrifices we offer are now deeper than just the physical/surface level.

- Our sacrifices are to be spiritual—offering heartfelt and constant praise and thanksgiving to God, proclaiming His name (v. 15).
- This cannot just be lip service and empty talk—it must be matched with action (v. 16).
- Generosity and doing good are spiritual sacrifices that delight God.

HONORING OTHERS (HEBREWS 13:17–25)

If God places a godly leader over us (one who has the character mentioned in v. 7), we are to obey, submit to, and respect them (v. 17).

- If they are speaking on the authority of God's Word, they do have a right to lovingly tell us how to live and follow Jesus faithfully.
- Leaders are accountable to God for their care of the souls God gives them to shepherd. Cooperative conduct is a joy to leaders and to us!

In a deeply personal request, the writer of Hebrews asks for prayer (vs. 18–19).

- They are asking for prayer that they would simply live honorably before God and others with a clear conscience.
- Many times, our prayers are more about acquiring blessings instead of us becoming a blessing.
- Is that your prayer? Are you willing to ask others to pray for you when you need it?

A “benediction” is the utterance or bestowal of a blessing, usually near the end of a worship service.

- In v. 20 we have the beginning of a benediction.
- This blessing is requested from the very God who raised Jesus—the ultimate Shepherd of His people and the One who established an everlasting covenant with us through His blood.

The blessing requested is that God would equip these Believers with everything good they need to do His will (v. 21).

- And that God, through Jesus, would work in them to bring about that which is pleasing to God.
- The writer encourages the audience to take his words to heart. What may seem “brief” (that's how we know this writer was probably a preacher!) was meant as a heartfelt exhortation.

News is shared about Timothy's release, and the writer expresses plans to visit the readers with him if possible (v. 23).

- A warm closing sends greetings to the church and leaders, and greetings are passed along from Believers in Italy (v. 24).
- A final blessing is given to these Believers—a prayer that God's grace would be on all the readers (v. 25).

CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM (VS. 1–9)

- The most confusing thing to the unbelieving world is Christians who claim to know and follow Jesus but look nothing like Him.
- If the gospel we claim to believe does not change how we love, serve, and honor others, our marriage/sexuality, or how we relate to money, we probably don't believe it.
- What teachings threaten to lead us astray?

TRUE SACRIFICES OF THE HEART (VS. 10–16)

- What God requires from us now is not just checking the box of some religious rituals—He wants all of us (Romans 12:1).
- If we are not willing to be rejected or seen as “uncool” by the world, we are not ready to fully follow Christ.
- Our faith must be more than just lip service and empty talk—we are to do good and share!

HONORING AND PRAYING FOR OTHERS (VS. 17–25)

- God is our ultimate authority, but He places godly, loving leaders in positions of authority over us. We are not to worship or follow them blindly, but we are to honor and follow them.
- Our prayers should not just be for blessings: they should be that God makes us into a blessing.
- Whom in your life can you encourage and pray for today? What prayer do you need?