

Hebrews 13 A Better Testimony

Hebrews 13:1-6 Moral Instructions

1 **Let brotherly love continue.**

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained **angels** unawares.

- The writer's final words echo those of Jesus – love one another
- Genesis 18 details Abram's visitation with angels and Genesis 19 details Lot's encounter
- *Angels*, Greek for *messengers*
- The Didache was written between 90 – 100 A.D. and served as an early church manual
- In regards to travelling evangelists, the following was stated:

Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread . . . but if he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this one sin shall not be forgiven. But not everyone that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the true prophet be known. (From The Ante-Nicean Fathers, Volume 7, page 380).

3 **Remember** them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

- Even today, Christian persecution is more common to everyday life for most of the world than we give credit
- *Remember*, Greek for *be mindful*

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

- A closing exhortation regarding the sanctity of marriage
- Since the beginning of time, man has attempted to rewrite the covenant of relationships as designed by the Creator
- Satan has exploited God's design for sexual relations in three distinct fashions
 1. Encouraging promiscuity outside the marriage
 2. Encouraging a monogamous cohabitation
 3. Forbidding sexual relations altogether
- The third being a frequently used perversion of religion

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and **be content with such things as ye have:** for he hath said, I will **never** leave thee, nor forsake thee.

- *Covetousness, Greek for lover of silver*
- *This is a warning of worldliness*
- *Never, Greek double negative for no, not ever*

1Timothy 6:6-10

6 ***But godliness with contentment is great gain.***

7 *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

8 *And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

9 *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

10 *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Philippians 4:10-13

10 *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

11 ***Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.***

12 *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

- *We often rebrand old sins with new terms as covetous has become ambitious*

Hebrews 13:7-13 Religious Instructions

7 **Remember** them which have the **rule** over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, **considering the end of their conversation**.

- It has been said that not only does the church need godly leaders, but also godly followers
- *Rule*, Greek for *lead*
- This verse seems to indicate leaders no longer with the saints as the writer directs them to consider the end of their behavior
- In 2011, *Ambercrombie and Fitch* offered money to the cast of *Jersey Shore* to not wear their clothes on set

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

- Worship and ministry trends come and go, but Christ remains the same
- Beware any organization that promises a new Jesus
- Leadership may come and go, but Christ remains – because of this, godly leadership must point the flock to follow Jesus

9 **Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines**. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

- New and different doctrines are nothing new to the contemporary church
- Since its inception, there have been those introducing some new facet to the gospel
- Several details in these closing remarks deal with doctrines predominant in different false doctrines gaining popularity in the early church (marriage forbidden, meats and other hedonism, etc.)

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

- Our altar is the cross
- Altar, the killing place

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

- Just as the sin offerings of the red heifer were offered outside the city, Jesus was led out of the city onto the surrounding hillsides for execution

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

- Everyone would enjoy sharing the glory of Christ, but we are also called to share in His exclusion
- The Jesus often accepted by society is not the Jesus of scripture

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

- We must remember the society that excludes Christianity is a temporary institution for we seek a city that is coming

15 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.

- *By Him*, all praise is offered in the context of Christ's perfect righteousness before God
- *Offer*, Greek for *bear up, lift up*
- *Sacrifice of praise*, worship may be costly
- *Continually*, never ceasing
- *Fruit of our lips*, worship is not only thoughtful, but sometimes requires spoken word or song

16 But to do good and to **communicate** forget not: for with such **sacrifices** God is well pleased.

- Share the faith through your actions
- *Communicate*, Greek for *social interaction*
- The writer encourages his audience to not only come together as a social club, but to engage with those around them
- Another false doctrine gaining momentum at this time was the Essenes which lived in communal groups outside of society to practice their faith
- The Lord commanded *separation* not *isolation*
- It was not the sacrifices of the temple, but a sacrificial life that would please the Lord

17 **Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:** for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

- Be open to following the example of godly leadership in your life
- These leaders must follow God themselves and lead by example
- *Watch*, Greek for *stay awake*
- Beware the leadership that requires absolute authority as there is only one authority – Jesus
- Godly leadership acknowledges that a great *accountability* and *responsibility* has been placed on them by the Lord and the realization of such responsibility will govern their lives

18 **Pray for us:** for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live **honestly**.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 **Make you perfect in every good work to do his will**, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- *Honestly*, Greek for *morally right*
- The author's faith in prayer is here revealed as he believes the prayers of his readers would be instrumental in their reunion
- His closing thoughts regard the perfection (completion) of this local body by God's inward work in their lives to perform His will

22 And I beseech you, brethren, **suffer the word of exhortation**: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

- Endure constructive encouragement

23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 **Salute** all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy **salute** you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

➤ *Salute*, Greek for *embrace*

➤ The perfect ending for a letter dealing with the Old and New Covenants – grace

In the days of the American revolutionary war there lived at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, a plain Baptist pastor, Peter Miller, who enjoyed the friendship of General Washington. There also dwelt in that town one Michael Wittman, an evil-minded man who did all in his power to abuse and oppose that pastor. But Michael Wittman was involved in treason and was arrested, and sentenced to death. The old preacher started out on foot and walked the whole seventy miles to Philadelphia that he might plead for that man's life. He was admitted into Washington's presence and begged for the life of the traitor. 'No, Peter,' said Washington, 'I cannot grant you the life of your friend.' My friend,' exclaimed the preacher, 'he is the bitterest enemy I have!' 'What?' cried Washington, 'you have walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I will grant the pardon.' And he did. And Peter Miller took Michael Wittman from the very shadow of death, back to his own home in Ephrata—but he went no longer as an enemy but as a friend.