

"The Practical Application"**Hebrews 13:1-25**

Introduction: Last week in our study of Hebrews we entered into Hebrews 13 which is one of the most important chapters in the letter. This chapter is the pinnacle of the book because it is in this chapter that the writer explains to Hebrews as well as to us how to live the theology of the first 11 chapters. It is in this chapter that we find several exhortations concerning how to walk by faith in the theology presented in the first 11 chapters.

I. **Exhortation #1 - Love one another.****Notice Hebrews 13:1**

We looked at this verse last week so I don't want to get too deep into it again but I do need to briefly touch on it again. The exhortation here is to let brotherly love CONTINUE. It was not that it did not exist because it did. The writer just wanted to reinforce that they needed to continue to love one another. They had been taught by God to love.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

⁹ *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

¹⁰ *And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;*

When God places His Spirit in each of us the Spirit teaches us how to love because God is love.

1 John 4:16

¹⁶ *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

Romans 5:5

⁵ *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

So, the exhortation is to be sure the love CONTINUES.

II. **Exhortation #2 - Show Hospitality**

Notice Hebrews 13:2a

The writer now exhorts these Hebrews to show hospitality to "strangers". In the days when this letter was written there were men who were called into the ministry who walked away from all they had to serve God. They would travel from town to town proclaiming the Gospel. It was the responsibility of other believers to open their homes to these traveling believers. To show hospitality to them was the same as showing love and hospitality to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 25:31-40

³¹ *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:*

³² *And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

³³ *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

³⁴ *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

³⁵ *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

³⁶ *Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

³⁷ *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

³⁸ *When saw we thee a **stranger**, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

³⁹ *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

⁴⁰ *And the King shall answer and say unto them, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.***

This is where we stopped last week but there are a few more thoughts about hospitality which we need to see. Hospitality to strangers is very important in the eyes of God. Let me show you what was commanded to Israel in the Old Testament.

Leviticus 19:33-34

³³ *And if a **stranger** sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.*

³⁴ *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were **strangers** in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

Deuteronomy 10:18-19

¹⁸ He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

¹⁹ Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

¹⁴ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:

¹⁵ At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

Malachi 3:5

⁵ And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Notice Hebrews 13:2 again.

The writer now points to 3 Old Testament experiences.

1. Abraham entertained the Angel of the Lord and 2 others.

Genesis 18:1-2

And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

² And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

2. Lot was visited by 2 angels.

Genesis 19:1-3

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

² And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

³ And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

3. Manoah was visited by the Angel of the Lord.

Judges 13:15-16

¹⁵ *And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.*

¹⁶ *And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD.*

These are the 3 encounters in the mind of the writer of Hebrews. Now I do not believe he is saying that we are going to encounter angels in human form though it is possible, (the writer never tells the Hebrews they will do the same) but I believe the idea the writer has here is that we have no idea who God may bring into our lives. The writer may be thinking about Jesus Words from the Olivet Discourse.

Matthew 25:40b

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

There may be a stranger who steps into your life whom God has sent on a mission and your hospitality may be the way in which God planned to provide for him. When we show hospitality to another believer it is the same as showing hospitality to Jesus Christ.

This verse out of Matthew 25 applies to the next exhortation also.

III. **Exhortation #3 - Live Selflessly**

Notice Hebrews 13:3

There is much which comes into my mind when I read this verse. First of all I am reminded that prisons in the day when this letter was written were not like the prisons of today. They were not given 3 meals a day and their wounds were not treated. They often received their food and their care from those who visited them.

Philippians 4:14-19

¹⁴ *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.*

¹⁵ *Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

¹⁷ Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

¹⁸ But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:16-18

¹⁶ The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

¹⁷ But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

¹⁸ The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Paul was often ministered to by other believers while he was in prison.

Now the exhortation here is to live selflessly and Paul did that also. While he was in prison he was always looking for a way to minister to the needs of others.

Let me show you a man whom Paul encountered while in prison. His name was Onesimus.

Philemon 1:9-13

⁹ Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

¹¹ Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

¹² Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

¹³ Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

Onesimus was a runaway slave who Paul met in prison and it was there that Paul led him to the Lord. Paul was not focused upon his own trials while in the prison but he was open to the needs of others and Onesimus had a need of salvation.

The Hebrews who received this letter were going through persecution and there was the danger of being so focused upon their own trials that they would miss opportunities to minister to others who were in bonds or who were afflicted.

Application:

Let me show you the words of the Pulpit Commentary:

"The Hebrews were to "remember" the saints who might be in prison. They were to do so "as bound with them;"-a beautiful expression, breathing the aroma of true Christian sympathy. They were to pray earnestly for them, if possible visit them, minister to their wants, and strive to secure their liberation. Brotherly kindness would lead them to conceive of themselves as occupying the position of the sufferers. It would cause them to realize the "bonds" of their brethren as an affliction personal to themselves, just as the elder Brother's love does (Acts 9:4). But, since imprisonment is not the only calamity to which believers are exposed, the writer proceeds to bespeak sympathy for all who in any way "are evil entreated" for Jesus' sake. We ourselves are liable to the same adversities which our brethren endure. Let us, therefore, identify ourselves with them. It is not enough that we contribute to public charities. Neither do we discharge all our duty when we employ some person as our proxy to care for the sufferers. True Christian sympathy requires that we bring ourselves into personal contact with them. Strength is often received from the glance of a sympathizing eye, or the grasp of a loving hand, or the utterance of a tender word of holy comfort."

You may be thinking that you do not know anyone who is "in bonds" but I believe we all know people who are "in bonds". They may not be in prison but they are "in bonds" in another way. They may be "bound" by their health and they are unable to get out. They may be "bound" financially and struggle to make ends meet. It could be a stay-at-home mom who is "bound" with the responsibilities of raising her children. There are people who are "bound" with the responsibility of taking care of a spouse, a parent or a disabled child.

Conclusion:

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

²⁵ *That there should be no schism in the body; **but that the members should have the same care one for another.***

²⁶ *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

²⁷ *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Galatians 6:2

² *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

1 Peter 3:8

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⁸ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: