

Your Duties as a Church Member (Part 1)

Hebrews 13:1-6

Introduction

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready you for the Word of God this morning? We've got Round-Up Sunday coming up next week. We each have a part in this. Hebrews 13 is as practical of a chapter in Scripture today as it was then. We've seen our culture change, technology progress and our economy go through highs and lows. Nevertheless, we serve a God who will never change and what He said then is still true now. The people being written to in Hebrews are going through many hardships and persecutions because of their faith, they are encouraged yet reminded of their duty and how it matters in this world.

Purpose/Theme:

1. To encourage the readers as they went through intense persecution to hold fast to their faith and live righteously in light of Christ's superiority (12:1-13:20).
2. To exalt Jesus Christ and His superiority over all things. He is superior to angels (1:4-2:18). He is superior to Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:14). He is superior the Aaronic priesthood (4:14-7:28). He is superior to the Old Covenant (8:1-10:39).
3. To warn the readers the dangers of falling back into the Old Testament system (3:12-19).

Reading of the text

Hebrews 13:1-6 (1) Let brotherly love continue. (2) Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (3) Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. (4) Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (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. (6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Outline

I. Love one another consistently, vv. 1-3

A. Our love is to be made known to each other, v. 1.

(1) Let brotherly love continue.

1. The audience is exhorted for their brotherly love to continue.

a. Note, he writes “Brotherly love.” This is among the people of the faith.

b. The implication here is they already had brotherly love among each other. This is an encouragement to keep it up.

c. If love for one another is something not already there, of course it is then commanded.

2. In our English language, we typically just use one word “Love.” We usually understand the degree of it or what we are talking about by the context. I love steak – I love my family. This is not going to be the same degree (or at least I hope all of you would agree.)

the language

in which the NT comes from (Koine Greek), there are four common words used for “love.”

a. “Eros” This love is described, as we might guess from the word itself, erotic love. It refers to sexual love.

b. “Storge” This love is a unique love which refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child, or between family members in general. This love appears once in the New Testament as a compound word (Romans 12:10 “Be kindly affectionate.”)

c. “Agape” This is the most powerful word for love in the New Testament,

it used often to describe God's love towards us. It is a love that loves without changing. It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment. It is love that loves even when it is rejected. Agape love gives and loves because it chooses to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given - it gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive. Agape love isn't about feelings, it is about decisions. Aren't you glad God's love towards us is unconditional?

d. "Philia" This word speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. This is the Word being used here in Hebrews 13:1. It is a special love you can have among your brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. There should always be plenty of this kind of love among Christians, and it should continue. It's the kind of love that takes people from many backgrounds and interests and places them in a state of harmony. Christian family love.

3. Why must it continue?

a. First, it is among the two greatest commandments Jesus gave.

Matthew 22:37-40 (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Loving God supremely allows us to loving one another sincerely.

b. Second, loving one another is evidence of one's faith in the Lord

Jesus – of being a disciple of Jesus.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (35) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

c. Third, loving one another is ultimately how we show our love for God!

1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

1 John 4:20-21 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Matthew 25:40 (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.

B. Our love is also to be extended to “strangers.” v. 2.

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

1. The Hebrews are told “be not forgetful” or do not neglect to entertain strangers.
2. The words “entertain strangers” is one word in the original (φιλοξεῖα); it means “show hospitality.”
3. In the ancient world, “motels and inns,” where they did exist, were infamous for immorality. It was important for traveling Christians to find open homes from other Christians. Christians would often host other traveling Christians. Of course, being taken advantage of was also something they needed to be on guard for.
4. This is not saying to leave your house unlocked for anyone who wants to come in. The context here isn’t teaching anything like telling you to leave your doors unlocked and set yourself in danger, other principles of Scripture will teach otherwise.
5. How can we apply this as a church? We can welcome our guests with open arms and love. Introduce to them classes we have here. Tell them about our church. Show true interest in their lives. Don’t let love and care for our guests

only be the duty of the Pastors. We also are to show hospitality to our visiting missionaries. When you see someone you don't recognize, make it a priority to introduce to yourself, learn their name, thank them for being here and express your desire to see them come back. If we want to see our church grow in attendance, our love for the Lord and one another must be evident.

6. When we are hospitable to others, if what we read in Matthew 25 applies, we are being hospitable to our Savior too.
7. At the we also see that some have unknowingly were hospitable towards angels. Abraham and Lot were examples of this. I don't know if I can say angels or walking around us today looking like humans, but the focus of the text isn't on the angels. Rather, this expression goes to teach us that your love, care and hospitality has greater impact than you may realize.

C. Express love to those in bondage and affliction, v. 3.

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

1. Those in bonds here refer to those imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel.
2. Those who are suffering affliction are those persecuted for the sake of the Gospel.
3. We are to remember them as if it were us in their positions.
 - a. If your leg is on fire your arm does not say, "Wow, that's too bad, I bet that hurts. Well, good luck, leg." It says, "We're on fire!"
 - b. Many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world do not have the privilege we have here to gather in worship without the fear of being killed for it.

c. Our most sincere compassion and prayers are to be for these people.

II. We are to honor with God honors, v. 4.

A. Marriage is defined by Scripture.

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

1. Marriage is the union between one man and one woman for life.
2. Marriage is dishonored by divorce, by living together outside of marriage, by adultery, marriage is dishonored by neglect and even by re-defining it. I don't have to convince you that our society doesn't honor marriage.
3. It doesn't matter how the government wants to define marriage now and in allowing same sex marriage. A higher authority has already set it.
 - a. In Oklahoma, our marriage license was signed as "Spouse _____ Spouse, removing husband and wife.
 - b. Culture can try to change marriage, but God's Word never changes.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

4. The same definition is affirmed by Jesus.

Matthew 19:4-6 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, (5) And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

5. It is a beautiful picture of Christ and His Church.

Ephesians 5:31-33 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (32) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the

church. (33) Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

B. Marriage is to be honored by all.

1. “and the bed undefiled. . .”
2. The Bible strictly condemns sex outside of the marriage. It is a dishonor to the Lord, and your future spouse.

(whoremongers and adulterers God will judge). In addition, the Bible celebrates sexual love within the context of marriage.
3. Our enemy wants to do everything he can to encourage sex outside of the marriage bed, and he wants to do everything he can to discourage sex inside the marriage bed.
4. To reject this is not to reject mine, a preacher or anyone’s opinion, it is to reject God’s Word. (1 Thessalonians 4 is in the context of sexual activity outside of marriage)

1 Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

5. I love you enough to tell you the truth of what God’s Word says in spite of what the world practices.
6. Honor your husband and wife before you ever meet and marry them.
7. Those who have sinned against God in this area, there is always forgiveness in Christ. This also does not excuse you to continue in this because it’s already done. The wait is worth it I assure you.
8. These commands are not to ruin your fun. They are to protect you.

III. Live with awareness of the Lord’s presence in your life, vv. 5-6.

A. Let your conduct be without covetousness, v. 5.

(5) Let your conversation be without covetousness;

1. The word here for “conversation” means conduct or character.
2. Our character is to be free from greed. It is possible because of Jesus.

B. Be content with what you have, v. 5.

(5)...and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

1. In contrast to greed, we are to be content with what we have.
2. Contentment is something lacking in many people.
3. Bernard Baruch, millionaire and philanthropist was asked: “How much money does it take for a rich man to be satisfied?” His answer: “Just a million more than he has.” If you’re relying on money to for happiness, you will find your dissatisfied. Money is a good thing and a necessity, but it is not where you’ll find happiness and contentment. This is not teaching someone is forbidden to be wealthy and have earthly things, but rather depending your happiness upon them.
4. The key to true contentment is relying on Christ for happiness. In Christ, you can be satisfied with exactly what you have because, in Christ, you have all that you need. Christ is enough.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 (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.

C. God promises to never leave you nor forsake you, v. 5-6.

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

1. This calls back to what both Moses and Joshua were affirmed.
2. This promise extends to everyone who has trusted Jesus to save them.

3. Difficult days lie ahead. These Hebrew Christians have suffered a lot, but no matter what, you can be comforted with the truth that God will never leave you, nor forsake you.

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

4. At the end of commissioning His Church with taking the Gospel into all the world, baptizing them and teaching them, Jesus promises this to His Church:

Matthew 28:20 ...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

5. With this promise, we can say with confidence, “the Lord is my helper, I do not fear what man can do to me.”

Conclusion

It’s been over 6 years since the Lord brought me back to Lighthouse. I know it was His will and His calling on my life. If I was told this would be my life 15 years ago, I would’ve laughed. Yet, about 15 years ago is when I came to finally understand what Jesus did for me on that cross. I trusted in Him to save me, and not only did He rescue my soul, but He gave my life a calling and purpose. One of those purposes is to be here serving Lighthouse Baptist Church.

Followers of Jesus are called to be torchbearers in this world. Torchbearers in ancient times would carry light during processions or on dangerous night journeys. They had to be vigilant and keep their flames burning no matter the conditions. Their duty was not just to carry the light for themselves, but to light the way for others to follow. As Christians, we are carrying the light of Christ into a dark world. We must not just keep our own flame but to guide those towards Christ. When we face weariness, discouragement, we must remember the importance our role plays and the lives that depend on the light we carry. We must let our love be consistent, we honor what the Lord honors and we take confidence in the Lord to carry us through.