

Hebrews 13

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A. Final Exhortations: 13:1-19:

The Text: **Sacrifices Pleasing to God**

13 Let brotherly love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. ⁴Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. ⁵Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;

what can man do to me?"

⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁸Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

1. The major themes of covenant, faith and holy fear have been covered, now comes practical application because faith without works is dead.
2. Vs 1: "Let brotherly love continue"
3. Vs. 1 "continue" or "keep on loving each other as brothers," = Lauersdorf: "Where persecution strikes, brotherly love has a hard time staying lit as people pull back, cautious about identity and concerned about safety. So the author urges them to practice the kind of love and concern you would expect toward those born from the same womb." (170)
4. See also 1 Thess. 5:16 and Jn. 11:35.
5. "*Philadelphia*, brotherly love, contains the word *philia*, not *agape*. *Agape* is the general word for Christian love in the NT. *Philia* denotes affection. This noun, *Philadelphia*, speaks of brotherly affection, the special love which Christians have for each other." (86)
6. See Psalm 133:1.
7. "But the very fact that our writer says *meneto*, 'let it remain,' shows that it can easily be lost. Christians are very much aware of their own sinful flesh, their old Adam (Rom. 7). Satan attacks them often and when they least expect it. He is a master at causing division among Christians...But our text (Heb. 13:1) implies that [this love] must be carefully nurtured. It is so easy to neglect Christian affection." (86)
8. Please see these passages on this particular love: Romans 12:10, 1 Thess. 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:7.
9. Vs. 2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
10. "The second instruction is a reminder not to 'forget' to offer hospitality..." (Kleinig, 696) Who points out a word-play related to "brotherly love."
11. The literal word used here *philoxenia* means "love of strangers." (Buls, 86)
12. "The world is not inclined to love a stranger." (Ibid, 86)
13. Kleinig: "Hospitality to strangers was prized in the ancient world because foreigners were especially vulnerable to exploitation since they had no legal status or protection in any alien community. But if a family offered hospitality to them, they became honorary members of that household for as long as they stayed there..." (696)
14. "Since the earliest Christian congregations typically met for worship in the house of a member, it could act as a household in providing liturgical and material hospitality to strangers." (Ibid, 696)
15. As for the possibility of "receiving angels as guests," the people would have been mindful of the scene in Genesis 18-19. Here is a portion of that:

18 And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” ¹⁰The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

¹⁶Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰Then the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”

16. “unawares they entertained” = Abraham in Genesis 18 and Lot in Genesis 19. See also Gideon at Judges 6:11ff and Manoah at Judges 13:3ff.

17. Bengel: “An unknown guest is often more worthy than he appears, and has angels as attendants, although they are unseen. Matt. 25:40.45.”