

## Hebrews 13:3-19

Vss. 3-6: “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. <sup>4</sup>Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. <sup>5</sup>Keep 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.” <sup>6</sup>So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

1. The theme of the superiority of Christ that should encourage a Christian to remain faithful no matter what they face, is a theme lived out in every aspect of life. For example here in verses 3-6:
  - a. In respect to remembering those in prison AND those who are mistreated. (v 3)
  - b. In respect to holy marriage. (v 4)
  - c. In respect to money. (v 5)
  - d. In respect to the constant awareness that the Lord is our help and answer to fear. (v 6)
2. And remember also the subheading to Hebrews 13:1-19: “Sacrifices Pleasing to God”...our lives are now living sacrifices back to God, sacrifices of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and good works.
3. Think of Romans 12:1-2

### **A Living Sacrifice**

**12** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

4. Christ gave Himself for us/sacrificed Himself for us. His sacrifice for us was and is so powerful and efficacious that we are enabled to “sacrifice back” in thanksgiving, honor, and service, especially as we are now His conduits for reaching others. That is, we are neighbor-oriented as we sacrifice to God.
5. Thus, we are to remember those in prison. TLSB 2127 points out “not criminals, but Christians being unjustly persecuted.”
6. Kleinig puts forth that both these “are part of the congregation” which supports the TLSB notation. (696)
7. Kleinig says that this gives us insight regarding what was going on at the time in terms of the Church being persecuted. (697)
8. That is to say, the Christians were being trained to think in terms of St. Paul, “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” (1 Cor 12:26)

9. Note that Buls brings out Matthew 25:36: "...I was in prison and you came to Me." Those in prison are easily forgotten. But if all need the Gospel, are we only talking about members of the congregation? There are intentional ministries today that seek to reach all prisoners.
10. Verse 4 teaches our sacrifices to God through faithfulness in holy marriage. Is this defining marriage or presenting the right attitude toward marriage? Maybe it is both. The sanctity and holiness of marriage is to be held up and sexual immorality especially avoided. The command goes out to all married and unmarried. We underestimate the holiness of marriage in our culture to put it mildly. The institution is representative of the marriage between Christ and His bride the Church. God's Word begins with marriage and ends with marriage. All four loves are applicable, but it is to especially emphasize *agape* love. Imagine: we give good a good sacrifice to God based on how we treat our spouse (again, both before and after marriage).
11. Verse 5...see the progression going on, at verse 3 = our attitude about other people; verse 4 = our attitude toward our spouse; and now verse 5 = our attitude toward material goods and resources. Money will fail us. God will not fail us. In whom or in what will you trust? It is easy to get into the hypnotic lie that money is our security. Talk about an illusion. The love of money is put forth in Luke 16 and fascinatingly, marriage is thrown in for good measure:

### **The Parable of the Dishonest Manager**

**16** He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup> And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' <sup>3</sup> And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' <sup>5</sup> So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup> He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' <sup>7</sup> Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' <sup>8</sup> The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. <sup>9</sup> And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

<sup>10</sup> "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. <sup>11</sup> If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? <sup>13</sup> No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

### **The Law and the Kingdom of God**

<sup>14</sup>The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

<sup>16</sup>“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. <sup>17</sup>But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.

### **Divorce and Remarriage**

<sup>18</sup>“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

### **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

<sup>19</sup>“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup>And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup>who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup>The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup>and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup>And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup>But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup>And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup>And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— <sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup>But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup>And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup>He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

12. When it says, “Keep your life,” at Hebrews 13:5 in the Greek, it is “Keep your WAY of Life, or your character, or your manner.”

13. Bultmann: “We can’t have the proper character or the right attitude toward money unless we truly trust the Lord as we ought.” (89)

14. The second half of verse 5 and verse 6 are connected. How can we live in true contentment? Answer: By knowing the LORD’s promise to never leave us.

Hebrews 13:7: Another one to remember, not just other people, not just your spouse, not just your relationship with material possessions, but also at verse 7:

<sup>7</sup>Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

15. Remember your past leaders, your former pastors, as they represent faithfulness.

This is a kind of mini and more recent version of Chapter 11 and the hall of faith

chapter. These exemplars are closer to home. As I have written my books, I have given credit to my undergraduate mentors, my seminary mentors, my mentors in apologetics and my doctoral supervisor. I have credited my father confessors as well. This is something we are to do constantly.

16. Note all that we are to take into consideration as we imitate them:

- a. Their speaking of God's Word.
- b. The outcome of their life (the way they lived).
- c. Their faith which are to imitate.

17. If these leaders were steadfast then it was because they knew the LORD was and is and is always steadfast, so verse 8:

Hebrews 13:8: <sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

18. When has Jesus been loving toward you? When has He been merciful toward you? When has He prayed for you?

19. The OT. Teaches that God is immutable. Malachi 3:6:

<sup>6</sup>“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

20. And we follow the logical consideration:

- a. God does not change.
- b. Jesus is God.
- c. Therefore, Jesus does not change.

21. The greatest characteristic of winning the race is not inherent talent, ability, or hard work, etc., but consistency, not ceasing, and constancy. Jesus is this for us.

Hebrews 13:9-14

<sup>9</sup>Do 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. <sup>10</sup>We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. <sup>11</sup>For 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. <sup>12</sup>So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. <sup>14</sup>For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

22. What can distract us from constancy and faithfulness? = “diverse and strange teachings.”

23. But why mention foods in this verse? Because of the influence of OT sacrificial meals. That is, much of the ceremonial law or sacrificial law involved food preparation. For example, cereal offerings are put forth in Leviticus 2 and 6:14-23

and this went along with to animal sacrifices referred to as “meat” or “meal” sacrifices. Baked loaves, wafers, or morsels were presented as part of the first fruits. One can see the association of cereal offerings with burnt offerings in Numbers 28-29, etc. There were also drink offerings (see Numbers 15:1-10). At any rate, diverse and strange teachings might attempt to confuse Christians as to how to live in faithfulness. St. Paul gives specific warnings at Colossians chapter 2:

### **Let No One Disqualify You**

<sup>16</sup>Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup>Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

<sup>20</sup>If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— <sup>21</sup>“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” <sup>22</sup>(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? <sup>23</sup>These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

24. The split second the focus becomes what you eat or don't eat, you have entered a diverse and strange teaching to take Christ away from your eyes of faith.

25. Verse 10: Our altar is the Lord's Table, the Sacrament of the Altar. If anyone is still going after false offerings and sacrifices, they dare not receive Holy Communion. “Tent” = impermanence; but we receive Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.

26. Verses 11-12: After the priests conducted the atoning sacrifices in the tabernacle and temple, the bodies were burned outside the camp to remind the people of what had taken place: their sins were atoned for, but now Jesus conducted the final sacrifice outside the city gates of the Holy City for the whole world to be drawn to Him, the final sacrifice for all sin for all time.

27. Verse 13: Now Christians are emboldened to go “outside” into the world to bear the Name of Jesus, unafraid of any persecution that might come.

28. Verse 14: How can we have such confidence? Answer: “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.” That's how.