

***Jesus and the Better Life - Hebrews 13:1-6***  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

Hebrews chapter 12 ends with one of the greatest descriptions of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a Kingdom which cannot be shaken." Everything in this world will be shaken, but the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ will remain. To be a Christian is to be a person who has received this Kingdom and is now firmly established in it. Yet, we cannot forget that to receive a Kingdom is to bow to a King. If Jesus is truly better, our response is to believe, to receive Him as our True and Better King.

This means, then, that the values and mission of our King should deeply shape our lives and the Christian community called the church. This becomes the immediate application here in Hebrews. The author shifts to a series of Kingdom actions and postures that reflect the glory of our King. Each of these are counter-cultural, yet the author shows us what it will look like if our lives and community are being molded into the image of Jesus. Each verse introduces a new Kingdom character trait and uses verbs that are in the imperative tense, meaning that these are not suggestions, they are commands and reflect a clear calling for us to follow intentionally. In other words, to neglect these commands is the opposite of following Jesus. Furthermore, each of these commands relates to our horizontal lives, our lives in relationship with other people and the things of the world. The point is clear, believing in Jesus will reshape the way we do relationships and life in the real world.

First, the call is to continue in brotherly love. Those who grew up in church may be used to calling other believers "brother" and "sister". But this was a new thing in both the Hebrew and Roman world. Your blood family mattered most, so to call someone a brother who was not actually a brother was actually scandalous in some context. Here, the author of Hebrews echoes a sentiment that is all over the New Testament. Followers of Jesus had drunk deeply from the well of love, we have experienced God's love displayed in His grace from the cross for our salvation. We know that "God so loved the world" is expressed, not as a general sentiment, but in a loving and forgiving pursuit of me. Loved people love. Jesus told His first followers that the greatest proof of the authenticity of their faith would be their love for each other. To love is to pursue, to forgive, to care, to enter pain and suffering.

Second, believers are called to be people of hospitality. We may think that hospitality speaks about the mom who hosts all the family meals and makes the best mashed potatoes. While this is to be commended, the Greek word here is a compound word that means love of strangers. Biblical hospitality is the opening of homes and lives to outsiders, those who believe differently, look different, and even live different. It coincides with the Biblical command to love the immigrant, refugee, and the poor. Differences among people create tension. We don't understand each other, see the world differently, and often have opposing values. Hospitality overcomes this tension and makes of the alien a friend, intentionally crossing those boundaries to know and hear others.

Third, Christ's Kingdom will push us to care for each other even if the potential cost is real and great. Verse 3 speaks of remembering those in prison, "As though in prison with them." While caring for all in prison can be a very good activity, in this case the text speaks of those who are in prison and mistreated for following Jesus. But to show up to care for them would identify you with them therefore potentially putting you in the sights of those rule. Yet, we show that we trust a better King when we enter their pain and suffering, demonstrating love even if it costs.

The author ends this text attacking two powerful idols that exist in every culture, sex and possessions. We are reminded that marriage itself is to be held in high honor, and that God's design for sexuality is one man, one woman, one lifetime. The Christian marriage and

sex ethic is always going to be counter-cultural. So some clarity here. The goal is not to force the culture to embrace the Christian marriage and sex life, rather, the call is to be transformed by Christ and therefore embrace His plan and purpose. In doing so the church will be different from all cultures where sex becomes a god. In the same way, every culture has some form of money and possession god. In our culture we call it the "American Dream". But Jesus' people will be those who keep their lives free from the love of money and work toward contentment. This is always difficult, because money gods are shiny and cry out constantly. Yet, contentment which leads us to thankfulness and generosity displays the glory of our King in such beautiful ways.

So may we be individuals that are shaped by the values of our King, and therefore become a loving, hospitable, caring, pure, and content community. We can then know that "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?" This is the battle cry for those whose feet are firmly planted in the unshakeable Kingdom.

### **Bible Reading for the Week**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Acts 9	Acts 9	Acts 10	Acts 11	Acts 12	Acts 13	Acts 14

Reading from this past week's sermon: Hebrews 13:1-6

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 13:7-19

### **Family Worship**

Song - *I am Not My Own*

<https://youtu.be/yxCb6l3jkis?si=2rm8GbdO9JxbCLZt>

#### **Gospel Project**

Unit: God Sees and Hears

Story: Samuel Was Born & Called

Big Picture Question: How does God care for His creation?

Answer: God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1-3

#### **New City Catechism**

Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?

Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse: 1 Timothy 2:5

#### **Hebrews 13:1-6**

- What is the connection between this passage, and our receiving the unshakeable Kingdom at the end of chapter 12?
- Work through each verse asking, what is the core command and how does this command shape our lives into the image of Jesus?
- How will a community shaped by these values, ethics, and actions look different from the cultures in which it dwells?
- How is verse 6 the cry of victory for those whose lives are firmly planted in Christ's Kingdom?

#### **Prayer**

\*Pray and give thanks for your natural mother and for your spiritual mothers.

\*Pray that God's Kingdom would shape us into a community of love, hospitality, holiness, and contentment.