

Jesus is the Better Shepherd - Hebrews 13:20-25
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

It began on September 15, 2024. We were still at Pi School, watching the building we are in now go up. Joe Biden was President. The Cardinals and Blues were pretty much terrible. Now 35 sermons later we come to the end of our journey through the great New Testament book of Hebrews. We began by sharing that we (we meaning all of us in history) could not be sure who wrote Hebrews, but that it was certainly written in the First Century by a known early church leader or Apostle to a local congregation. Hebrews was written before 70 AD, the date for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and we know this because the author refers to multiple practices and sacrifices done only in the Temple as if they are still happening. So Hebrews was written no more than 35 or so years after the actual life of Jesus, and there were assuredly people who read or heard this letter who had actually seen and maybe met Jesus. While the book gives at least 150 descriptions and references to the person, work, glory, and deity of Jesus, these people would have known that these references were of an actual living person from their historical era. The book begins by declaring that this man who lived in history was also the creator and owner of all things, the final revelation of God, and the exact representation of His nature and glory. Then for 13 chapters the author has told us over and over again that Jesus is better. In this case, better than the Hebrew religious system, sacrifices, Priests, and rituals. He is better because all of these pointed to Jesus and find their ultimate meaning in His life on earth.

This book is a letter, but it is also probably a sermon turned into an Epistle. It was probably a sermon that was actually preached, and then recorded and sent to this early church to be read as a sermon in their church. Yet, the ending passage is a closing prayer and final encouragement that is fairly typical of First Century epistles (letters). Still, Hebrews ends where it started, with a beautiful reminder about the identity and glory of Jesus and a reminder that He is the one who will equip us to live out the beauty of our faith.

Verses 20-21 are a beautiful prayer of blessing. Yet in this blessing we discover several truths about our Lord Jesus. First, He is the God of peace. The original recipients of the letter lives in a world of chaos. Rome had created a false peace, flowing from crushing power that forced surrender. So it was a peace that was no peace. Furthermore, their faith in Jesus often brought conflict in their core relationships, at home, in neighborhoods, and at their work. Yet, the reason God the Father sent God the Son to the world was to create peace, first and foremost between rebels and sinners with God Himself. So the Father sent the Son and then brought Him from the dead. This is the means of peace, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Lets not forget how crazy a claim this actually is in the First Century (or any point in history). A man who was executed by Roman soldiers has been brought from the dead, is alive, and rules as King. He is now the Great Shepherd of the sheep, the one who leads, guides, protects, and feeds us. And He is the sacrifice that ratified the eternal covenant, making all the promises of God true in Jesus for us.

Here's the point of all of this. If our faith is growing stale and distant, or if we are struggling with idols and objects competing with our affection, the problem is that we are not turning our eyes to see Jesus enough and clearly. Imagine being in the Rockies or standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon and getting bored. If that's happening it is because we are not looking intently or seeing clearly. I get mesmerized when looking at the grandeur of the mountains, can't take my eyes off (which is a little bit of a problem when driving). So it is with Jesus, if we stop and gaze, keep looking intently and striving to see clearly the glory,

beauty, and magnificence of Jesus should explode in our eyes and soul.

We will then see that it is this Jesus who saves us and empowers us to live as we should. It is this Jesus who gives us our local church and accomplishes His glory through the global church. It is this Jesus who puts His Spirit in leaders such as Timothy, God's gift to the church for its edification. And it is this Jesus who showers us with grace upon grace, not giving what we deserve but blessing us with His kindness and mercy. Glory be to Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Acts 22	Acts 23	Acts 24	Acts 25	Acts 26	Acts 27	Acts 28

Reading from this past week's sermon: Hebrews 13:20-25

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Revelation 1:1-20

Family Worship

Song - *Everlasting God*

<https://youtu.be/cJ8zXzZp4Jk?si=e6k9D4mu95qmqm4y>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Sees and Hears

Story: Freedom from the Philistines

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 7

New City Catechism

Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly human?

Answer: That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin.

Verse: Hebrews 2:17

Hebrews 13:20-25

- How do you sign letters? What are some things you see in the closing of this letter that shows us the tenderness of the author for the recipients and His hopes for them?
- What images and descriptions of Jesus from the book of Hebrews can you remember? What are the descriptions of Him in this prayer and what are their meanings?
- Why does the author pray for their equipping? And what exactly does he ask God the Father to do in them through God the Son and by the Spirit?
- Who are the leaders and who are the saints referenced in verse 24? What are the implications that the writers of the New Testament refer to ordinary Christians and church members as "saints".
- Why does the author end with grace? Why must grace be central in our understanding of our faith and lives?

Prayer

*Pray that we would always remember that Jesus is better and live our lives fully for Him.

*Give thanks for those who fought and have given their lives for our freedom.