



“Twelve Messages In One” (Hebrews 13)

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Intro: If we chose to, we could spend as much time going through Hebrews 13 as we did Hebrews 11, but that is not the way I feel the Lord has led me. The Holy Spirit moves the writer of this letter to in quick succession cover one closing thought after another, and each is meant to be a vital aspect of the Christian life. No doubt we will be encouraged by every exhortation, and I'm sure some of us personally challenged as well. There are twelve topics dealt with, so if I spend four minutes one each, that's a 48 minutes message. No charge for the extra 3 minutes!

Doctrine ---- practice (Ephesians, etc.)

If my pattern of living cannot corroborate my doctrine, I have nothing to say. This is really the essence of chapter thirteen. Practical holiness is essential if we are going to be any kind of significant witness in the world. And by the way, practical holiness also is evidence that our salvation is genuine (see Heb.12:14b; James 2:14). If, as a church, all we did is preach the Word and had no practical outreach to the community, we would miss what true Christianity really is. Jesus said about the Pharisees, do what they say but not what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

v.1 If I think about this exhortation related to my childhood, I am pretty confused – my brother and I fought like cats and dogs! We know of course the exhortation is for us as Christian brothers and sisters. But if you think about it, we too can sometimes fight like cats and dogs!

- I Cor.1 (divisions)
- Matt.18: 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times..."
- Luke 17: 3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." 5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
- This is the number one mark of a true believer. A genuine Christian is called to forbear (Eph.4:2), and to forgive – repeatedly!

v.2 What an awful thing to get to heaven and realize someone you had an opportunity to be hospitable to and yet you were not really an angel.

- *Romans 12: 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*
- Note: A “stranger” is someone you do not know personally, but who you have an opportunity to be hospitable towards. Look for “strangers” that come into this place week after week. Invite them over to your table, to your small group meeting, ministry event, etc. Don't be clickish...

v.3 This was especially relevant for this Hebrew church, because persecution had increased dramatically under the rule of Nero. While this is directly referring to *believers* who were being imprisoned and/or mistreated, the principle goes beyond believers (See Matthew 25:31-45). This is why we are involved in prison ministry, jail ministry, JDC ministry, and other ministries that reach out to hurting people. Give a challenge to get involved.

v.4 This means I will be committed to my spouse, and if I am not married, I will abstain from sexual immorality (last week's message).

vv.5-6 See I Timothy 6:6-10; *Follow the trail of your time, energy, affections, and money, and there you find a throne. And whatever or whoever is on that throne is the object of your worship.*

- Some of the believers living in the days of the writing of this letter were really tested regarding money and possessions. See Heb.10:32-34.
- Personal testimony: I have over the past several months, especially in light of the recent stock market reports, had some moments where I have not been content with the money I have. A while back when the economy went south, I felt like the Lord was saying to me, just get out of all this, and put your 403b money into a fixed account. I did so, and it has remained in a fixed account ever since. Of course if I had placed at least some of it back in the market, I would have a much more than I do now. Here's what the Lord has reminded me every time I struggle with those thoughts - while I have ceased for the last several years to invest in ways that would have given me more significant financial increase in this life, I have NEVER stopped investing in the kingdom of God. And that stock has never, nor will it ever, DECREASE!
- *Matthew 6:19-21 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
- *Phil.4:11-12...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

v.7 As a leader, we should be able to say like Paul, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” Someone has said that we become like those we most admire. Godly Christian leaders ought to be our greatest heroes.

v.8 Sometimes leaders fail us, and that is one of the reasons why I believe v.8 is linked with v.7. Jesus never changes. Praise the Lord for that!

- James 1: 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- Right after I became a Christian I ended up at Christian college. My mother wrote me a letter telling me that my youth pastor, who I admired and looked up to greatly, had failed morally, and repeatedly. That was tough for me to deal with. But the Lord has never failed me, and he never will.
- *Lord, we thank you that you are the same yesterday and today and forever!*

vv.9-10 Henry Wright, Hallelujah Acres, The Hebrew Roots Movement

- Those who remain tied to any kind of legalistic attempt at righteousness have no “right” (access) to the altar of grace.
- Gal.5: 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

vv.11-14 *Rom.8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

- Phil.3: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...

v.15 *Psalm 145:1-3, 13, 21 I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom...Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations...My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.*

v.16 Christianity is not “not doing bad,” but rather “doing good.”

- *Eph.4: 28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*
- *I Tim.6: 17-18 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God...Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*
- *Lev.23:22 When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.*
- *Read Deut.24:19-21.*

v.17 This is referring to leaders in the church. Who is the leader directly over you? The two words used here give us great understanding on the point God is making. The first word (obey)

means to believe, trust, or be persuaded by. The second word (submit) means to yield your opinion to the opinion of another (your leader).

- When speaking on the authority of God's Word, leaders *do* have a right to tell us how to live and walk after God. But the motive and intent is to see that one's life is submitted to God, not simply submitted to an individual.

vv.18-19 Pray for your leaders. Satan is after leaders more than anyone else in the church. If you are a leader, he is after you!

vv.20-21 This is my prayer for you. What is it that he wants to work in us that would be pleasing to him?

- *Keep on loving one another.*
- *Practice hospitality, especially to "strangers."*
- *Reach out to those in prison, the mistreated, hurting, etc.*
- *Keep yourself sexually pure.*
- *Resist the love of money and be content with what you have.*
- *Imitate godly leaders.*
- *Don't be carried away by strange teachings.*
- *Be willing to suffer for Jesus.*
- *Live a life of praise.*
- *Share with others, do good when you have the opportunity.*
- *Remain submitted to church leadership.*
- *Pray for church leadership.*

CONCLUSION

- *Eph.2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*