

Hebrews 13 (Part 1) :1–14 •

Concluding Exhortations

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Hebrews Chapter 13. We're going to open up in prayer. We'll start that way and then we'll get into the text. Okay? Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your word this morning. We just pray that You will fill us with grace and understanding. We confess to you, Lord, that our ability to lay hold of the Word and apprehend it is predicated upon the work of Your spirit, the ministry of the teacher speaking to us, filling us with every good and perfect thing.

Lord, this is Your Word, and we pray that You use it to challenge and encourage us today. Help us, Lord, to walk as You would have us to walk. Teach us and guide us. We look to You to accomplish this Lord, in Jesus' precious name, amen. Amen.

There had been some discussion as to whether or not we might finish the book of Hebrews today. We will not. So, we're going to get through at least the first 14 verses or so. These, this last chapter of Hebrews is considered to be the epilogue of this fairly lengthy letter, and this is that time when—and this is common with the Biblical authors, they will kind of, where they're developing thoughts earlier in the letter—they use the last portion of the letter just to kind of quickly shoot out a bunch of exhortations.

And they're all, they're usually very practical sorts of things like walking out your life in Christ, and this is the way. He's going to talk about the way we ought to live. And I don't want anybody to misinterpret what's being said here. I don't want you to think for a moment that he's saying this is the way you need to live to be a Christian.

We are a Christian by virtue of our faith in Jesus Christ, and that's all. This is how we are to live now that we are Christians. He's not giving you requirements to be saved. He's giving you guidelines and directives and exhortations related to being a Christian and now walking out your faith in Jesus. Right?

And he doesn't go into a lot of development of these particular ideas. He kind of just lays them out there and wants us to think them through and apply them

accordingly. So, he begins in Verse 1 by simply saying, “*Let brotherly love continue.*” And that's really kind of the essence of what he has to say in that first verse. “*Let brotherly love continue.*” Now, there's a lot of different words in the Greek that can be translated love, and this one is correctly translated brotherly love because it is the Greek word Philadelphia. And it's of course where the city gets its name—the city of brotherly love.

And it's the kind of love, an affection that is typically in a family unit. This is the language of family—when he says, let this kind of a love continue in the body of Christ. And of course, it's very appropriate because we are a family in the body of Christ. At least we're supposed to act like one, and we're supposed to see one another as that. We're supposed to see one another as brothers and sisters.

And so, we're supposed to act like a family is supposed to act. Now, I know that might be some challenging sort of stuff for some of you because, although we are all raised in some level of dysfunction, there are some families that just really don't, or haven't, I should say, modeled the kind of love that we know we should as family members. And so, you are going to have to kind of ignore a little bit of what maybe happened in your family and just live the way you know you should, or the way families are supposed to live. You know.

“This is the way we should have treated one another in my family.” Had a brother say that to me many years ago who was raised in a very, very difficult home environment. He said, “Well, you know, if anything, my parents taught me what not to do.”

I suppose that's one way to look at it, you know. It's like I learned how not to parent my children. I learned what not to do around my kids because I remember how difficult my upbringing was. I think we know. We know what's right. We know what's good, and that's really what he's saying here. Let's do that. That's how we ought to treat one another.

And then he goes on in Verse 2 to kind of give an example of the showing of brotherly love to one another. In this verse where he says, “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares,*” which means without knowing it.

There's probably nothing like Middle Eastern hospitality. I mean, we in America, we could learn a thing or two from the way the Middle Easterners do hospitality. I mean, they're amazing. They will literally lay down their life if somebody comes under their roof. And it's just—your enemy could come into

your home and as a Middle Easterner, you would lay down your life while that person is in your home for that person, because you are the host, and you're taking care of them, and they come under your protection. And we don't really think like that. And there's a lot of other things that, frankly, don't kind of apply today.

Even though the Romans made travel from city to city easier by the creation of roads and that sort of thing, when people were traveling, such as like when you know, Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in the census, it would, it could be kind of a dangerous and lonely sort of a trek, because not every town had an inn, and the ones who did—that did have an inn—they weren't always very family-friendly. They were kind of creepy places to be. They were full of thievery and a lot of sexual immorality. And it just wasn't, it wasn't a five-star hotel, you know, with a pool and sauna and a continental breakfast. There's none of that.

In fact, they were like things to usually avoid. So, when Christians had to travel, it was incumbent upon other Christians to have the kind of brotherly love that needs to come into play to take care of those people, because there's no place for them to stay. And sometimes traveling to a particular area might take you days.

Where are you going to stay? Well, the believers needed to kind of reach out and, and just help out, and that's what he's telling them to do. And he brings up this point about the fact that some people in the Old Testament extended themselves in hospitality and did so to angels without even knowing it, or at least at first.

And of course, we read about some of those. We know Abraham and Lot entertained angels. How aware or unaware they were is a little bit gray, but and he's not necessarily saying that if you open up your home, it's going to be an angel, you know. I mean, you can ask, I suppose. “You an angel?” Or so.

They might say, “You know what, we're going to find some other place to stay. Thanks anyway.” But he's basically just saying it happened in the Bible, and you know, so there's that. I suppose you never know. But he goes on with kind of another expression of brotherly love in Verse 3. If you look with me in your Bible, it says, “*Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them,*” and of course that goes along with those who are also mistreated. He says since we're all part of the same body and da, da, da, da, da.

We've made the point several times in the past that the Roman prison system didn't feel any sort of a need to feed and clothe their prisoners. “You got in

trouble, you broke the law, we're putting you behind bars and all we're going to provide for you is a cell.” And it might not even be a very nice one at that. “Don't think that we're here to take care of you along the way. Don't think that we're here to feed and clothe you. This is prison and you're here because you did wrong.” Right?

Well, now you got this situation where people are being arrested simply because of their faith, simply because they are Christians. And so, the writer of Hebrews is writing now and saying, I want you to remember those people who are behind bars simply because of their faith in Jesus Christ, and you know they're depending upon you for food and clothing.

You see, we might not think about the implications of that, but here are the implications. If my brother, for example, got arrested for being a Christian, and I am wanting to take care of him, that's a good thing, but by going to the jail and taking care of my brother, I'm broadcasting the fact that I'm connected to this guy. And in so doing, I am making myself vulnerable to the same sort of incarceration. You know what I mean?

So, it's, you kind of, they're going to look at me and go, “You one of those too? You one of those followers of that Jesus character? I see you're here taking care of this guy?” You know what are you going to do at a time like that? What are you going to say? “No, I'm not a—I'm not. He is, not me. I'm just here because he's my brother.”

Yeah, the temptation might be great, you know, because you're putting yourself in some level of danger related to just taking care of a friend or family member who is behind bars for their faith. And so, he tells them to remember those who are in prison as though they were there with them.

Verse 4—here's another quick exhortation. “*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.*” Your Bible may use the word pure there instead of undefiled. And he gives the reason why at the end of the verse saying, “*for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*” And that's his way of saying judgment is coming for those who are sexually immoral and who live in a state of adultery.

And he's saying you don't want to be swept up in that judgment. So let marriage be held in high honor or in honor among all. I actually use this verse when I'm doing pre-marriage counseling with a couple. And the reason I do is because our very first session—I have a six-part session I do with couples when they want to get married.

Some of you here in this room have gone through my pre-marriage stuff, but the very first session of pre-marriage counseling is all about God's intention for marriage. We know what man thinks of marriage. We know what the world, you know, in general thinks of marriage. We know what believers think of marriage. But what we do in that first session is we ask the question, what does God think of marriage? What were His intentions? What were His goals? Why did He create the institution of marriage? And we go through that, and we bring this verse into that, because this verse tells you what His intent was for marriage.

It was to be honorable. And that's just one element of it, but He intended marriage to be an honorable thing. And when we honor the Lord by keeping to the definition that He gave of marriage, right, it's a—we honor marriage. And there's, of course, a lot of things that dishonor marriage. And you know, when we think about that, you know, we immediately think of things that have been kind of a blight on marriage for a long, long time.

Like, you know, the divorce rate, the sheer number of couples who are living together outside of marriage, which was even going on in Jesus's day. We know that when he had confronted the woman at the well. And those things dishonor marriage, but you know, those are kind of the biggies.

And it's true, they do dishonor marriage, but they're—it's possible to be married and to be married for a long time and still not have an honorable marriage. Do you know what I mean? I mean, you can't just go around saying, “Yeah, well, bless God, we've never been divorced, and we never will be.” It doesn't mean you have a good marriage.

It doesn't mean your marriage is necessarily good. You know what I mean? Personally, I think that the way a couple just talks to each other says a lot about whether they're projecting an honorable picture of marriage, whether or not they allow reckless and hurtful words to fly between them at difficult times and so forth.

I've learned something in my own almost—next month, it'll be 43 years for Sue and I having been married—and I've learned that it takes me about 10 seconds to say something very hurtful, and it takes weeks or months to heal from that thing. I mean, you, you [snaps fingers] you say something just out of, just a second and, you know, you immediately regret it.

And then there's, and then there's a period of time, and you can say all day long, “Hey, please forgive me,” but it takes time to heal. You know. A cut takes time

to heal, a gash. And a gash or cut in your marriage can take a while to heal too. So, you know there's things that we can do to honor marriage just in the day-to-day.

Personally, I believe a wife honors the institution of marriage when she recognizes and respects the role that God has placed her husband in. He didn't put himself in that position of headship. God did. And when she respects that position, that honors marriage, when she speaks to him and about him in a respectful way that honors marriage and the One who created it.

And for men, for husbands, men honor marriage when they love their wives sacrificially, and show that willingness to love by not being selfish or being a bully to get our way. Guys, we're good at that. I'm good at that. I can be a bully, believe it or not. And you know, my wife and I, bless her heart, she—we had no idea when we got married.

We've taken some of those—I've told you this before—we've taken some of those personality tests. We're the same. We're the same. And basically it, when you look up the term for what we are, it's like cranky leader.

Yeah. And we're both, we can both be that, and we're both fairly strong personalities. And when you have two strong personalities and you throw them into a home situation, they often go like this [bumping fists]. You know. I remember one time when we were on vacation, I shouldn't say this with Alyssa sitting in the front row because, oh, what the heck.

We were on vacation at my parents, and Sue and I got into some kind of a little verbal tuffle just—I don't know what we were even talking about. We were arguing about something, and Alyssa was probably 13 or so at the time, whatever, and I remember she just looked at us and she went, “Stop.” And I remember it brought me up very short and I felt horrible.

And I remember thinking to myself, “What am I doing? I'm not portraying a very honorable picture of marriage to my children.” You know. It really did, it brought me up short. And you just get familiar with people, don't you? You live with somebody for so long and you just become so familiar with the way they do things, the way they annoy you, and the way you annoy them.

And it's just easy to just kind of [cat sound]. You know. But we don't honor marriage very much when we do that. And so, I think it's, sometimes it's some of the small things in addition, obviously to the big, that allow us to honor—show an honorable picture of marriage.

Look at Verse 5 with me as he kind of carries on. Here's another exhortation. *"Keep your life free from (the) love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say,*

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

The exhortation is keep your lives free from the love of money. And then he quotes a couple of Old Testament passages, one from Joshua, the other from the Psalms, to kind of buttress this exhortation, which is don't, don't allow your heart to become so connected to the acquisition of wealth that you get caught up in it and lost in it.

We need to keep our lives free from the love of wealth. Why? Well, Jesus gave us some reasons. Remember He said, for one thing, you can't love money and God at the same time. You can't serve two masters. You're either going to love one and hate the other, or vice versa. So, I mean, that's a pretty big deal. But what we need to do is we need to get to the place in our lives where we are okay not having a lot of money.

Are you okay with not having a lot of money? Are you okay? I mean, I know that's the way you live, but are you okay with that? See, that's the point. Paul called it a secret. He referred to it as there's a secret connected to being content. Let me show you where he wrote this in the book of Philippians, Chapter 4, he says,

Philippians 4:11-13 (ESV)

I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him strengthens me.

"I have learned, (and he'll, you'll notice, he'll repeat that) in whatever (the) situation (that) I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, (and that means to come to a place where I have nothing) and I know how to abound (and that means I've come to a place where I have everything.) In any and every circumstance, (again) I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. (And then he gives us the, here's the secret,) I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

That's it right there. That's put it in a nutshell, that's how we are, how we learn to be content in difficult circumstances. If you're in a place right now where you're not, you feel like you're always at a lack financially, you got to be very careful at a place like that. Because we, the world presents us with all kinds of solutions, you know, and none of them are good.

And the Bible doesn't have anything bad to say about working hard. There's nothing wrong with working hard, but when you bring the world into it and you start coming up with their solutions, it's like, well, now it's two or three jobs, and now there's no time to even be with my family or go to church or anything like that. No time to read the Bible, pray.

“I got to work because I got these bills” and stuff like that. Or you're going to do something stupid like go out and start buying lottery tickets. Sorry if you bought one recently, but it's just not that smart. It's better to lay hold of the secret of contentment and say, “Lord, in my flesh, I don't have what it is to be content, but You are able to give me that ability.”

And to simply pray about that. And one of the, one of the, you know, one of the biggest reasons for this is because He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. So, we're given all these statements about the danger of money, and we're given these wonderful statements about God's promise to us related to this.

One of the, one of the dangers or warnings about money was when Paul gave to Timothy, 1 Timothy Chapter 6, he said,

1 Timothy 6:10 (ESV)

...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

“The love of money is a root (and by the way, that's correct. It's not the root. You hear people quote it all the time as the root of all kinds of evil or all evil. It is a root, right? It's just one. There's many. But it is a root of all kinds of evils. And he goes on to say, here) It is through this craving (or this desire) that some have wandered away (actually) from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

It's kind of an old way of saying they brought a lot of grief into their lives simply because they were running after money. They made it the focus of their lives rather than running after Jesus. And they ended up bringing more

difficulty. The Bible says in the Old Testament that God gives wealth and brings no trouble to it. I love that verse. Man runs after wealth, many times gets it, but it comes with trouble. God never adds trouble.

And so, people sometimes will ask me, “So is you know—since money is a root of all kinds of evil, is it then evil to have money?” No. No. No. No. Money isn't the evil thing. You are the evil thing. It's the heart of man that is the problem. Okay? Not money. Money is amoral. It's what we do with it. You know there, there are characters in the Bible that had a lot of wealth that were very Godly people.

Take like Abraham. Wealth in his day, of course, wasn't a Swiss bank account. It was having a lot of flocks and herds and servants and things like that. And he had an abundance. I mean, the man was wealthy and frankly, so was his son, Isaac and his grandson Jacob. So, and God bless these men. So, it's—money is not the issue. The heart is the issue.

And that's why the Word of God talks about the craving for these things, the desire for these things. And that's what we're being told here. You know. Don't put your focus on those things because God has said to you, “*I will never leave you and I will not forsake you.*” And that's a quote from Joshua, and it was given to Joshua, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the author of Hebrews says, “That's for you too.”

God has told you, “*I will never leave you. I will not forsake you.*” So, stop worrying. Don't look to money for your security. And whatever you do, don't look to money for your happiness. The old saying “you can't buy happiness” is absolutely true, and you can't buy security and so forth. And remember something else, by way of another warning, Jesus said this, Mark 8:36.

Mark 8:36 (ESV)

...what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

“*What (is) it profit a man (if he gains) the whole world (and he wins every lottery but he forfeits) his soul?*” What good is that? Can't take it with you anyway, right? So, money.

Next exhortation, Verse 7, it says, “*Remember your leaders.*” The word remember means call to mind and. And he's clarifying what leaders he's talking about in the following part of the verse where he says, “*those who spoke to you, the word of God,*” those are the ones that you are to remember.

And he also says, “*Consider the outcome of their way of life.*” That's another way of speaking about their fruit. And he says, “*imitate their faith.*” Are leaders people that we are to imitate at all times. No. You know why? Well, they can't be imitated at all times because they're not perfect. They're not, they're not good. They're not imitable at all times.

So, he says, “*imitate their faith.*” We all mess up even leaders, but when you look to your leaders, those who shared the Word of God with you, consider the outcome of their life as they've walked in faith and obedience to God and imitate that which is good. Verse 8:

“*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” And you might be wondering now, that's an interesting kind of a thing to throw in there. Is that connected to the last verse or to the verse that's to come? I think it's connected to the verse to come, but it frankly can sit on its own. “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*”

What are we saying when we say that? Fundamentally, you know what we're saying? We're saying “Jesus is God.” That's what we're saying when we say Jesus Christ is “*the same yesterday, today, and forever,*” this is a declaration of deity because theologically speaking, we call this immutability. It's a \$65 word that simply means does not change. And this is true of God. Look what the Lord said through the prophet Malachi 3:6.

Malachi 3:6 (ESV)

“*...I the Lord do not change...*”

“*I, the Lord do not change.*” And that very same characteristic and attribute is applied to Jesus Christ, who “*is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*” He does not change. And people, the implications of that are absolutely mind-blowing.

And I am so glad He doesn't change. Everything we know—and I'm talking, we humans—everything we know changes, except God. Everything. Everything changes. Right? Nothing stays the same, except God. But the implications of that bring great safety and security into our lives because that means His promises don't change.

He's not a slave to circumstances, so when He makes a promise, nothing else is going to come along and ruin it. You know. It means there's—I can look to Him, and I can say “It's always going to be the same.” If He says to me, “Paul, I

love you.” He’s always going to love me. He’s never going to take that love away. Right?

I—you guys know that I love A.W. Tozer. In his book, the “Knowledge of the Holy,” which is a wonderful treatment of the attributes of God, he deals specifically in one chapter with the immutability of God. And here’s what he says. This is great. He says:

To say that God is immutable is to say that He never differs from Himself. God cannot change for the better. Since He is perfectly holy, He has never been less holy than He is now and can never be holier than He is and has always been. Neither can God change for the worse. All that God is He has always been, and all that He has been and is He will ever be.” Nothing that God has ever said about Himself will be modified; nothing the inspired prophets and apostles have said about Him will be rescinded. His immutability guarantees this.

– **A.W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy**

“To say that God is immutable is to say that He never differs from Himself. God cannot change for the better. Since He is perfectly holy, He has never been less holy than He is now and (He) can never be holier than He is and has always been. Neither can God change for the worse. All that God is He has always been, and all that He has been and is He will ever be.” Nothing that God has ever said about Himself will be modified; nothing the inspired prophets and apostles have said about Him will be rescinded. His immutability guarantees this.”

“*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*” His word is immutable. His character is immutable. His truth is immutable Now. You know what that means when we say his truth is immutable? It means it doesn’t change.

I had a guy tell me one time many, many years ago that God had changed His opinion on faithfulness in marriage, because the culture demanded it. Yeah. He goes, “Well, you know, God’s had to kind of change His position on that, you know, because a lot of people are being unfaithful, so he had to kind of switch it around because, you know, otherwise, you know, yeah.”

Popular vote sort of a thing, you know. [Shoots air gun at head.] Anyway, here’s the, here’s what he says. Look at Verse 9 with me:

“*Do not be led away by diverse,*” —diverse, that’s an interesting word, isn’t it? Something that diverts from the truth. Something that—you got the path here, which is the immutable truth of God, but what runs off that path, what jumps

the track, as it were, and goes off in a different direction—he says, don't be led away by diverse and strange teachings.

They're strange because they're—they don't have any connection to the truth of God's Word. And he says, *“for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace,”* And now he's talking about some stuff that they're dealing with specifically as Jews, *“not by foods which have not benefited those devoted to them.”*

And he's just bringing out one example of food laws that were being kept and try, even by Christians and da da da da da. The point of this whole thing is don't be led astray by divergent teachings. *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* Whatever He said, He said, and He's always said it, and it'll always be true, right?

It makes it easy for those of us who don't think we have a tremendous amount of intellect, we just have to just stay on the truth and just, there we go. It's easy, but it grieves me that there are so many constant, strange teachings swirling around, catching people, grabbing them, drawing them off track. You know.

The last few verses of this—well, at least what we're going to cover here this morning—Verses 10 through 14. They have to all be taken together. I'm not going to do it here necessarily separately. I mean, we'll look at them each, but I want to just read them first together. All right? So, just follow along with me as I read 10 through 14.

“We have an altar from which those who serve the tent (your Bible may say tabernacle) have no right to eat. 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.”

I want you to take note of that phrase, “outside the camp.” We’re going to come back to it a lot.

“So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore let us go to him (here’s that phrase again) outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.”

Before we kind of unpack these verses, can I just tell you we're standing, or sitting as the case may, be on holy ground. I really, truly think this is one of the most profound passages in the Bible. And what the author is doing here through

incredibly symbolic language is he is talking about the Old Testament sacrificial system and how much better we have it under the New Covenant, because of what we get to partake of.

Now remember, he's talking to Jews. The writer is Jewish and he's writing to Jews—Christian Jews, Hebrews—thus the name for the book. And he's talking to them about things that they would've been raised with from day one. And one of the things they were raised with was an understanding of the honorable position of the high priest.

Guys, the high priest was the top dog from the standpoint that he and only he got to go into the Holy of Holies once a year, sprinkle blood for everybody else, the entire nation. The high priest did it for everybody. He was the only one who was allowed in there. And then some of the offerings or the meat that came from the offerings, it was him and his family were the only ones who were, had the right to partake of those sacrificial offerings—the part that hadn't been burned up.

Only the priest. Why? Because it was a holy offering. So, you got to understand, the high priest was the man. Okay? But he's going to make a point about you in relationship to the high priest. And in order for us to really kind of lay hold of this, I want to just revisit really quickly on the screen a couple of passages from the Old Testament that make reference to these aspects that we've just talked about. The first one is Leviticus Chapter 6:

Leviticus 6:24-26, 29 (ESV)

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord; it is most holy. The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting. Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy.”

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord; (look at this) it is most holy. The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. (In other words, is able to eat that part which is not burnt up.) In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting. Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy.’”

And that means anybody else, you're not in the priestly line, get your hands off. You may not. You have no right to partake. You with me? This is the Old

Covenant. We're going to connect it with the New here in just a moment. The other one comes from Leviticus Chapter 4, beginning of Verse 8. It says:

Leviticus 4:8, 10b-12 (ESV)

“...all the fat of the...sin offering he shall remove from it...and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. But the skin of the bull and all its flesh with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung – all the rest of the bull – he shall carry outside the camp...on the ash heap, it shall be burned up.”

“All the fat of the sin offering he shall remove from it and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. But the skin of the bull and all its flesh with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung – all the rest of the bull – he shall carry (and here's that term again) outside the camp on the ash heap, it shall be burned up.”

Now he's talking about that part of the animal which was not involved in the sacrifice. In this particular case, for the sin offering, they would, they would take the rest of the animal that wasn't sacrificed—the hide and all the other stuff, kind of gross—and they would take it to a place outside the camp and they'd burn it. Now you got to understand something about that term “outside the camp” that came to have a connotation and it meant unclean. Okay?

Outside the camp means unclean. It's out there. Do you guys remember in the Old Testament, those of you who've studied through it, if somebody got, became unclean, they had to go outside the camp for a period of time. If you touched a dead body, you had to wash this special washing, and then you had to go sit outside the camp for a while, a period of time, the whatever the prescribed time was, and you were excluded from the worshiping community of Israel until such time as you were deemed clean and could come back inside the camp. You with me?

And there were all kinds of things that would render you unclean and have to go outside the camp. Now remember, outside the camp was also where they burned their garbage. It's where they buried dead bodies. It's where things like that took place. It was outside the camp. And so, you can understand that that term became synonymous with yuck.

It's out there. It's rejected. It's, it's not—it's unclean. Okay? This is what the author is doing here now. And he begins in Verse 10 by saying again, “*We have an altar.*” And he's using that figuratively, and he's talking about the cross, which is where the sacrifice of the Lord took place. “*We have an altar from which those who serve the tent (or the tabernacle) have no right to eat.*”

Now, this is huge to a Jew, because remember I said, the high priest was the man. He was everything. But he's coming to these people and he's saying, I know how highly you think of the high priest, under the Jewish sacrificial system and so forth. But let me tell you something, you have an altar. From which he has no right to partake.

You have an altar that you are free to partake of and he can't. And he's talking about partaking of Jesus. The partaking of the animal was a picture of partaking of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Do you guys remember when, when—and you know we're going to do communion next week, as Aaron told you—but you guys know what Jesus said when He is talking about what He's about to do on the cross. The language was eating. You remember? Let me show you. Matthew:26, beginning of Verse 26:

Matthew 26:26-28 (ESV)

Now, as they were eating, Jesus took the bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took the bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples (saying, look at it, it's not what it says. What does He say?) Take eat."

Do you know what that's another way of saying? Partake. Partake. Partake of this. Why? Because He says, *"this is my body."* This is a picture. This is a symbol of my body, and he says *"he took (the) cup, and when he had given thanks (for it and) gave it to them, and he said, drink of it, all of you (why?) for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* This is a beautiful picture, you guys, but the point here is that the office of the high priest, which was considered to be incredibly, highly honored, yet he couldn't partake from the altar from which we partake.

And that altar is one that every single believer comes to when they accept what Jesus Christ did on the cross for their sins, we partake of that sacrifice and that is so much better than what Judaism could have offered. Where this one man, this one high priest, was the only one who could partake. And it didn't even give eternal life what he partook of.

And then he goes on to say in Verse 11, *"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.” There it is. Now he makes the connection in Verse 12. *“So Jesus also suffered outside the gate.”* Now, it wasn't a camp when Jesus was crucified, it was the city of Jerusalem.

But guys, the cross is the place where they crucified Jesus, that place they called Golgotha, or the place of the skull, or Calvary, depending on the language, was outside the city gates. And they took Jesus outside the city gates. And there they crucified Him. And he's saying therefore, since He suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood, *“Therefore, (Verse 13), let us go to him.”*

Let us be there with Him *“outside the camp and bear the reproach,”* (your Bible may say disgrace that) *he endured.*” And the message is really clear here. The world is one that we don't belong in. We're outside, and we're unclean in the world's eyes. The world is kind of encompassed by this city or whatever, and we don't belong. We don't belong in the world.

The world is never going to like us and they're never going to accept us, ever. We don't belong there. So, let's go outside the gate. Let's go outside the camp. It, it might be unclean to the world, but there's something really cool out there—Jesus. He says, let's go to Him in that place of disgrace, in that place where He's rejected.

That's, see, that's the picture. This part that wasn't used for the sacrifice. This part of the animal, they didn't burn. It was rejected and it was taken outside the camp. Let's go there because that's where Jesus is—outside. Remember what Jesus said to Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”* Right? Pilate was all upset thinking Jesus was going to bring some kind of political overthrow, and Jesus is like, *“My kingdom isn't of this world. I have no desire for your throne or Caesar's or anybody else's for that matter. I'm outside. I'm outside of all this.”*

Here's our question. Are we too outside? Are we outside the camp? Or are we playing around inside playing with the world? Because we don't want to bear the disgrace of what it means to go outside. But there's one very, very good reason to go outside. Look at Verse 14: *“For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.”*

People. This is no lasting city because it's passing away. The world is passing away. It's going away and it's going hard, isn't it? It's not going easy. It's going hard, and things are just getting really just, [grimaces]. It's going to, it's going to go out fighting, but it's going out. It's passing away. But we are part of a Kingdom that is to come.

Isn't that what He taught us to pray? "*Your Kingdom come. Your will be done.*" Right? That's what we're looking toward. That's our hope. That's our desire—that kingdom that is to come.

Let's stand together.

If you're in need of prayer this morning, then we'll have some people down front here to pray with you and encourage you to take advantage of that.

Heavenly Father, we come to Jesus outside the camp, outside the world, outside the system of popularity, money, drama, all the other things that the world, sexual immorality, adultery, all the things that the world just seems to love. Lord, we come outside, and Lord, that doesn't mean we're perfect, but our heart is outside.

It's with You, the Kingdom that is to come. And I thank You, my Father, God, that you've birthed that Kingdom in our hearts for starters. But we know it's coming in a physical way too, and spiritual, and we pray for that day. Our hearts long to say, "Come Lord Jesus, come and redeem Your people. Come and make all things new."

But until that day, help us to remember, you've given us the greatest honor anyone could ever get. We get to partake of eternal life. We partake from the altar from which others have no right to partake apart from faith. But through faith, receiving Jesus as our Savior, we gladly partake of that which gives life.

And we rejoice, Lord, that our names are written in the Book of Life. Be with us we pray. Strengthen us, Lord, as we go through each day to walk through this world as aliens and strangers. Be with us we pray. In Jesus's precious name. And all God's people said, amen.