



# ENDURE

PART TWO IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

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## STUDY 1 — JESUS THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH (PART 1)

### READ: HEBREWS 11:1–6

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” –Hebrews 11:1*

#### OVERVIEW

The Pro Football Hall of Fame located in Canton, Ohio, houses the busts of over 300 former NFL players. These professionals are enshrined as the finest athletes ever to play the game. Similarly, the Hollywood Walk of Fame gives acclaim to the glamour of the entertainment industry. Terrazzo and brass stars bearing the names of pop culture celebrities are permanently embedded in the sidewalk along Hollywood Boulevard as a public monument to their achievements in show business.

Like these modern day examples of fame, we find a catalog of specific men and women who modeled exemplary lives recorded in the Bible. However, unlike those in the Hall of Fame and Walk of Fame, those honored in Hebrews 11 are not praised on account of their own accomplishments but on account of their faith in the accomplishment of another. This list of saints is what some Christians refer to as the Hall of Faith.

In Hebrews 11:1-2, we see that the legacy of those celebrated is one marked by faith in a Redeemer. “The people of old” are described as individuals who looked forward in faith to the saving grace of God. Each one of them trusted in the promise that a Messiah would come. Further, Abel and Enoch show us that, while moral uprightness can gain the temporal commendation of man, faith alone gains the eternal commendation of God (vv. 4-5).

Today, we are afforded the opportunity to look back in faith to the saving grace of God. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is evidence that the promise made to the Old Testament saints is now a promise kept for all of God’s saints from all time (Romans 1:1-4). And just like we learn from Abel and Enoch, our good works may commend us before man, but our good works are not sufficient to commend us before God. As a matter of fact, we stand condemned before God if all we have are good works, because it is impossible to please him apart from faith (v. 6). However, the gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that even possession of saving faith is not of our own doing, but it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). Therefore, whoever receives the gift of faith, making Jesus the object of their faith, becomes an eternally elected member in the Hall of Faith (Romans 10:5-13).

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. How do the Old Testament saints who lived before the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ receive the same gift of saving faith from God that we do? How was their faith the same as those who lived after the resurrection? How was their faith different?
  
2. Read Romans 4:1-12. What past or present sin makes it difficult for you to believe that God justifies those who believe in him? What is your reaction to verses 7-8 in light of your sin?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. In what ways do you trust yourself to gain approval before God? How does the exchange of your sin for Christ's sinlessness shape your perspective of the God of the Bible? How does the knowledge of God's character revealed in this passage transform your faith in him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Not only does God save us from his wrath when we put our faith in him, but he also saves us to do good works (Ephesians 2:1-10). How does your knowledge of the gospel compel you to do good works? What specific good works give you joy?

### **AS YOU GO...**

- Speaking of Abel, the author of Hebrews says "And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks." Consider your own funeral. What will be the content of your eulogy? Will it testify to your faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ? How will the legacy of your life point to the greatness of Christ even after you are gone?
- Being a Christian does not mean abandoning reason. In reality, there are many good reasons to believe in the existence of God. However, it is likely that Christians are influenced by today's majority secular culture—culture that elevates reason and diminishes faith. How are you prone to trusting in the wisdom of man and not the wisdom of God through faith? At home? At work? At church?
- Who is someone you know who is living in a way that demonstrates a longing to be commended by man? How can you share your story of saving faith and personal experience of being commended by God with this person? Pray that this person would come to a saving faith and know the glory and joy of the commendation of God.

## **PRAYER**

Father, you are a merciful and gracious God. Thank you for the gift of faith that saves. Thank you for loving me and providing a way for me to be commended by you through your son, Jesus Christ, who bore my sin in exchange for his righteousness. Holy Spirit, I ask that you give me comfort and confidence in my faith. Help me proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, knowing that faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of Christ. Grow in me the desire to make my life point to the greatness of Christ.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 2 — JESUS: THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH (PART 2)

### READ: HEBREWS 11:7–40

*“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” –Hebrews 11:13*

### OVERVIEW

In Hebrews 11:6, the author notes that “without faith, it is impossible to please God.” In the remaining 30+ verses of this chapter, the writer goes to great lengths in order to offer readers numerous examples of his point from the ancient scriptures of the Old Testament. As we read this list, it is good to be reminded that this is not merely a summary of the highlights of the Old Testament Israelites. We are all brothers and sisters in the same family with Christ as our head—whether Israelite or Gentile.

By faith...

- Noah built an ark when the ground was dry.
- Abraham left the safety of family to follow where God would lead him.
- Sarah bore the child of promise decades after her childbearing years were gone.
- Joseph saw the ways that God would deliver his people hundreds of years before God carried them to the Promised Land.
- Moses chose to be part of the people of God, rather than a privileged son of Pharaoh.
- Rahab, the prostitute, saw beyond her world in Jericho and trusted in God when she chose to protect God’s spies within her home.

All of the names mentioned represent people who were full of flaws. And yet, the author does not remember them for the times they fell short, but for the faith that they demonstrated in following God, however imperfectly. This is true for those of us today who keep faith as well. God has promised that our imperfections and sins will be forgotten, that they will be made as white as snow. Only faith, along with hope and love, remain in the kingdom of God.

The author tells us plainly that God’s faithful people are seeking the kingdom. What is this kingdom? It is the city of God—mentioned specifically in Hebrews 11:16. As the writer of Hebrews notes in verses 39–40, these men and women who trusted in God died while they were still on the way to their paradise. The city itself would remain out of reach for these faithful, but there was great joy in trusting in God. In the end, it was not the land of Canaan that would be their reward (and ours), but rather the very city of God that he himself had prepared for them. Pilgrims in all generations should be reminded that God’s word is true, and whatever he promises comes to pass.



3. How might it change the way you pray and live if you truly believed that God is faithful, kind, powerful, and able to make a way where there seems to be no way?
  
4. Read Hebrews 11:35-38. How are those “of whom the world was not worthy” described? What about this passage is challenging? What about it is hopeful?
  
5. Where is God currently asking you to step out in faith? This could be something big or seemingly small. As a community group, commit to encouraging one another in these things.

### **AS YOU GO...**

- Take time this week to learn more about one of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11:32. In what ways were they imperfect, yet faithful? Using a concordance, a website such as Bible Gateway, or a searchable Bible app is a good place to start.
- Ask God to bring to mind someone you know who is in the middle of a difficult season and struggling to trust God’s promises. Commit to praying for them regularly and encouraging them.
- Spend time talking with friends or family about times in your lives when God has answered prayers in unexpected ways.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, you are good. You are full of steadfast love and faithfulness. You are mighty to save, and your plans are infinitely better and more creative than my best ideas for my life. Lord, help my unbelief as I trust and follow you. Knowing you is worth more than all the comfort this world can offer. I trust you with my life and the lives of those I love. Be glorified in our lives as we seek to walk in the light of your face, as we try to love as you love. Because you are strong, we can faithfully obey even in our weakest moments. We praise you for all you are doing that we cannot see or understand.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 3 — JESUS: FOUNDER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH

### READ: HEBREWS 12:1-3

*"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." –Hebrews 12:2*

### OVERVIEW

Years ago, I picked up long distance running as hobby. I was probably a little overambitious when I found a "Couch to Half Marathon" program from *Runner's World*, but after my first month of training I was feeling confident I could run the 13 miles. But as the training wore on, my endurance began to fade. A strained muscle, a case of "runner's knee," cold morning sessions in the rain. I hobbled my way into the Philadelphia Half Marathon and crossed the finish line numb from the waist down, exhausted, and cringing at the thought of doing that all over again.

As Christians, this can mirror our lives in many ways. When we come to faith in Christ, we are excited by our newfound love and want to live our life for him. Yet, after some time, we can find ourselves frustrated by persistent sin, pessimistic about the world around us, and wanting to hang it all up for our former life.

We're not alone in this feeling. A careful reading of the book of Hebrews reveals the same spiritual exhaustion in the recipients of this letter. This exhaustion is the difficult reality of our lives while we wait for the completion of God's kingdom on earth. And it's this exhaustion the author of Hebrews has in mind in the beginning of Chapter 12.

The author likens our spiritual journey to running a race. Unfortunately, we're not gliding effortlessly through this race. As verse 1 describes, we're running with the heavy weight of our sin on us. In order for us to run on with endurance, we need to shed off every "weight and sin which clings to us." But how do we do this? The author of Hebrews shows us by directing our attention to Jesus, the *founder* and *perfecter* of our faith. Jesus ran the race perfectly, enduring the cross, resurrecting, and ascending to the Father's throne. And he did all of this with the heavy weight of *our* sin on his back. This is the good news when we feel weary and tired; that Jesus endured on behalf of the exhausted. And he still endures now, so that no matter how weary and tired we get living in anticipation of his kingdom's completion, he will always give us the endurance we need...even the endurance we don't deserve, because he wants you to finish the race with him.

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. If you imagined your life right now as a race, in which you're the runner, how would you describe yourself? Tired? Enduring? Strong? Needing a break?
2. The author of Hebrews is writing in these verses so his hearers wouldn't "grow weary" (v. 3). Even if we don't feel this way right now, we've all spiritually grown weary at some point and will continue to experience it from time to time. In light of this reality, what makes you grow weary?

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3. When you feel spiritually tired and exhausted, where do you turn?
4. The author of Hebrews encourages his hearers in the middle of the race of life to “look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.” How does Jesus enable us to endure when we are exhausted?
5. One of the amazing gifts of the gospel is that, in Christ, we are part of a covenant family. How can we, as a community group, become a means of helping each other endure in the gospel of grace?

## **AS YOU GO...**

- Spend some time reflecting on Jesus as the founder of our faith and the perfecter as well. How can you see the grace of God’s one-way love in those two attributes?
- Take a moment to check in on the people in your group this week. If someone is feeling tired, pray for them and ask God to give you a word of gospel encouragement to help them endure.
- Exhaustion is not just something Christians face. In fact, apart from Christ there is no hope of true enduring. How could you share the message of Jesus’ enduring grace to an unbelieving friend?

## **PRAYER**

Father, thank you for the gift of your son, who not only establishes us in our faith, but refines it over time until the day we share in his resurrection. With the grace of your Spirit who points to Jesus, help us in the times we feel weary and faint-hearted. Encourage us in the race of life with the good news that Jesus has gone before us and earned the eternal prize. And empower us to continue running the race through your undeserved love until Christ returns to make all things new.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 4 — JESUS: OUR HOPE FOR ADOPTION

### READ: HEBREWS 12:4–11

*"It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?" –Hebrews 12:7*

#### OVERVIEW

My wife and I like brining our dog to the park every week so she can get out of our apartment and run around some. She loves being around the other dogs and playing with them. Inevitably though, she and another dog start wrestling too much and you have to break them up. This is when you encounter the unwritten law of the dog park: NEVER discipline someone else's dog.

The same rule that applies to dogs at the park applies to kids too. Have you ever tried randomly disciplining a stranger's child? I'm guessing it didn't go too well. One of the things that marks who our children are and aren't is our parental discipline. We disciple and care for *our* children.

In Hebrews 12, the author draws this same parallel to our spiritual status in God's family. Oftentimes we view discipline from the Lord as a sure sign of his displeasure and anger toward us. It's during these moments of discipline that we can often think God has run out of grace for us and is now emptying his tank of sovereign anger on us until we get our act together. At worst, we can think he's kicked us out of the family altogether.

Yet the author of Hebrews says it's just the opposite. God's fatherly discipline of us isn't the mark of our *ejection from* but of our *adoption into* his family. What "earthly father," he asks, doesn't discipline his children? They do this, the author states, because they know it's for the best of the child. How much more then, he asks, should our perfect Father discipline us for our good? Despite what you may think, God's discipline in your life isn't a curse, but a sweet reminder that he has adopted you, an orphan, into his family.

This truth is still hard to grasp. For some of us, it's compounded by the fact that we have parents whose discipline was cruel and unloving, producing in us shame, guilt, and a lack of trust that they really do love us. Yet the truth of the gospel is that, in Christ, God is no longer mad at you, but sings with joy over you. Even in the midst of his discipline. It's because of this reality that we can accept his discipline, knowing that our perfect Father is using it for our good.





## **PRAYER**

God, thank you that you have adopted us as your children and, through Jesus, have given us a place in your family. I confess that I have a tendency to view your discipline in my life as a curse and not a blessing. I also confess that I've used your discipline in other people's lives as a way to boost my own inner-sense of rightness. Help me to see your discipline as a sweet reminder of your love for me, and give me the strength of your Spirit as you train me through your discipline to share in your holiness.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## **STUDY 5 — JESUS: OUR MOTIVATION TO RUN**

### **READ: HEBREWS 12:12–17**

*“Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.” –Hebrews 12:12-13*

### **OVERVIEW**

At the beginning of Hebrews 12, we find a glorious image. Disciples of Jesus are like athletes running a race. The race is important. We must keep running. We must endure. But there are weights and obstacles that cling to our bodies, slow our speed, and clutter our path. As long as we fix our eyes ahead on Jesus, the one who knows every step of the path, we will be able to endure to the finish. He endured the cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father. His endurance fuels our endurance. We must keep running. We must endure.

*“Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning. Effort is action. Earning is attitude. You have never seen people more active than those who have been set on fire by the grace of God.”*

*–Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship**

While it is always God’s activity and initiative that animates our spiritual life, there are many actions we can take that will nourish our own souls and encourage those around us. We read scripture, we spend time in prayer, and we seek to practice various disciplines like confession, fasting, and gratitude. We take special care to be thoughtful about our environment and lifestyle, limiting the opportunities that sin would have to trip us up.

But what about corporately? What does it look like to endure this race together, as a community? Well, we ought to strive for peace and understanding in our relationships with believers and neighbors, friends and adversaries. We also ought to look out for one another, giving and receiving grace, and seeking to reconcile our conflicts quickly, as to prevent bitterness from taking root. When we do this well, we display the loving image of God in unity, harmony, and humility to the fractured world around us.

Finally, we must not be like Esau, who valued instant gratification over eternal blessing. Weary and indifferent, he gave up running the race altogether, sacrificing a prominent role in God’s redemptive work in the world in exchange for a single meal. We must heed the author’s warning and run our race with faithfulness, clinging desperately to a Savior who not only saves us from the future penalty of sin, but also saves us from the present power of sin in our lives.

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. If your spiritual journey is like running a marathon, how would you describe the current posture of your soul? (e.g. running with determination, weary but chugging along, curled up in the fetal position, too easily distracted...SQUIRREL!, etc.). What is God's posture toward you?
2. What daily/weekly/monthly rhythms do you keep that strengthen your spiritual life? What obstacles threaten those rhythms?

3. Disciples of Jesus are called to strive for peace with everyone, but also to lead distinctly holy lives (v.14). Where do you find tension in pursuing both peace and holiness? How do you maintain one without sacrificing the other?
  
4. How have you seen bitterness take root amongst believers in the church as well as outsiders to the faith? How can extending and receiving God's grace remedy bitterness?
  
5. What impact does the sin of sexual immorality have on you, your family, or your community? How is God calling you to seek peace, pursue holiness, extend grace, fight bitterness, or tearfully repent in regards to this particular sin issue?

### **AS YOU GO...**

- Consider what you may need to change or reorder about your current schedule in order to better live into your identity as a disciple. Plan your next step.
- Find someone to reconcile with this week. Strive to make peace, demonstrate holiness, extend grace, and uproot bitterness in that relationship.
- Get serious about fighting sexual immorality, personally and corporately. Find accountability with someone you trust from your gender. Get involved in the fight against sex trafficking with organizations like Samaritan's Village and Florida Abolitionists.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, thank you that we do not run this race of discipleship in our own strength or in isolation. We know that you run ahead of us and that you've already secured our victory. Thank you for fellow runners on the path. We ask that you would strengthen our hearts to engage both your holy presence and our broken world, extending peace and grace, while also striving toward repentance and holiness. Cleanse our culture of the lustfulness that damages our inner lives, threatens relationships, and exploits the marginalized. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 6 — JESUS: KING OF AN UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM

### READ: HEBREWS 12:18–24

*“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” –Hebrews 12:22*

#### OVERVIEW

In this passage the author of Hebrews uses the imagery of two contrasting mountains (Sinai and Zion) to draw out the differences between two contrasting covenants (Old and New). The first of these covenants is depicted in verses 18–21 by recalling a terrifying moment in the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews recounts Exodus 19, when God met Moses on Mount Sinai. As the people of God waited at the foot of the mountain, smoke and fire, “darkness and gloom” surrounded it, and God ordered anything living that touched the mountain to be stoned. Even Moses was trembling with fear. The author of Hebrews evokes this image to remind his readers of the restricted access to God’s presence in the Old Covenant.

Yet, in verses 22–24, we see a contrasting image painted of the New Covenant. The author of Hebrews reminds us that we have come not to Sinai, but to Zion, “the city of the living God.” Unlike the scene at Mount Sinai, which stood as a picture of God’s holy unapproachability, the scene Mount Zion sits as a picture of God’s loving accessibility. You and I have arrived not to “darkness and gloom,” but to a packed house of angels screaming God’s praise through the streets. To the church whose names are tattooed into heaven. And to Jesus, whose sacrificial blood speaks a better word over you than the homicidal blood of Abel.

Contrasting images like the one drawn in our passage have been used by some to divide the God of the Bible into an angry Old Covenant deity and an all-accepting New Covenant father. Yet the author of Hebrews won’t let us draw that distinction. Tucked away in his description of this raucous party at Mount Zion, the author of Hebrews reminds us “you have come to God, the *Judge* of all.” The fact is that God in the New Covenant is no less holy than he was in the Old. And, in reminding us of this, the author of Hebrews is pointing us to a third mountain. Not Sinai, not Zion, but Golgotha; a small trash heap outside of Jerusalem where God, in Jesus, accepted the penalty of our sins, experiencing the darkness and gloom of our failure to live up to the demands of Mount Sinai, so that through his unconditional love, you and I can enter into this party of grace.

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. The scene the author describes in verses 22-24 is of a raucous party—people intoxicated on the joy of God’s free-forgiveness. Yet that isn’t how every church looks. How have you viewed the church throughout your life, and how has that shaped your view of God?
2. Read Exodus 19:10-20 and Revelation 21:9-14; 22-27. What words would you use to depict the two contrasting scenes of God coming down on Mount Sinai and God coming down on the New Earth?

3. The two major themes the author of Hebrews is trying to highlight in this passage are the *unapproachability* of God in the Old Covenant, contrasted with the *accessibility* of God in the New Covenant. How would you describe God in your life right now? *Near* or *far*?
  
4. As people of the New Covenant, we have unrestricted access to God through Jesus. Though he may not feel like it, he is always near. Yet, at times, we can be afraid to approach him. Why do certain sins make you hesitant to approach God?
  
5. Read Genesis 4:8-12 and Ephesians 2:12-13. How does the blood of Jesus speak a better word over you than the blood of Abel? How does this encourage you?

### **AS YOU GO...**

- Reflect this week on something that makes you hesitant to approach God. Then spend some time meditating on Hebrews 10:19-22 and how Jesus has cleansed you and washed you from it.
- The heavenly party of forgiven sinners depicted in verses 22-24 should also be a depiction of the church. In light of the forgiveness we have received, is there someone you can extend forgiveness to this week?
- This passage points us ultimately to the second coming of Jesus, when this heavenly party of grace becomes our earth. Take a moment this week and write down some ways this hope helps you endure in faith.

## **PRAYER**

Father, thank you for the Cross, where you died for my failure to meet your Old Covenant and rose again for my place in your New Covenant. Thank you that through Jesus you are now both near and approachable. And that in this New Covenant you are holding up both ends of the bargain. Forgive me for all the ways I still live like an Israelite at Mount Sinai, afraid to approach you because I don't believe you really did die for my sins. Give me the faith I need this week to approach you with confidence and to live in the freedom of your grace.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 7 — A WARNING: DON'T REFUSE HIM

### READ: HEBREWS 12:25-29

*"This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain." —Hebrews 12:27*

### OVERVIEW

The warning in Hebrews 12:25 could easily follow Hebrews 1:1-2. Instead of twelve chapters, we would have a truly brief letter that reads: "God has spoken through his son; if you refuse him who is speaking, you will not escape judgment." It would still be true, and it might still work to snap the recipients out of their complacency...at least for a while. But God doesn't want us to simply follow him out of fear of judgment. Rather, he wants us to know our Savior who suffered judgment in our place. We can receive this serious warning with love, because the rest of Hebrews tells us about the one who warns. He is our great high priest, our once-for-all sacrifice, the founder and perfecter of our faith, our hope, our motivation, our king forever. This is the Jesus who is speaking to us, the savior we should not refuse.

In Deuteronomy 4:24, Moses warns the people entering the Promised Land not to turn to idols, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." The truth is that anything that is not devoted to God is devoted to idols. Unlike our sinful jealousy, God's jealousy isn't about envy or spite; it's about love for us and desire to protect us from lesser things. Because he is supreme, we will never find a greater joy, greater love, or greater power than we find in him. He loves us and knows that there is no greater gift than himself. We will never be more satisfied or delighted than when our eyes are opened to the majesty of God, our hearts are softened to receive his love, and we overflow with praise for him.

The more we are immersed in knowing him, the less satisfied we will be with anything that doesn't give him glory. Test your heart. How would your life change if all that is shakable were taken from you?

God knows what is best for you. He *is* what is best for you. Seek him, know him, praise him. Ask him to strip that which is not of him away now so that you can joyfully live as a beloved child of the Most High, knowing that you belong to an unshakable kingdom.

Encourage one another in this, because it isn't always easy to live in a world that is not your home.

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. List some ways that you've seen God at work lately. How has God been glorified in your life and in the lives of others? Think about big things and seemingly small things. How does knowing that all that is dedicated to God will not be shaken stir up your faith and trust in him?
2. It's common to want to downplay God's wrath and coming judgment. Why is it important not to do this? How does the book of Hebrews help us to understand God's judgment as well as his grace?



## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we praise you! You are wise, holy, and just. Thank you for speaking to us through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit. Give us ears to hear and hearts that long to obey. Turn our eyes away from worthless things as we seek to live lives devoted to your glory—devoted to things that cannot be shaken. Give us grace to love as you love, to show kindness to everyone we meet, and to boldly tell of your goodness and faithfulness. Give us humility to rejoice in your refining work in our lives, knowing that you love us too much to leave us as we are and desire for us to know you more. Increase our capacity to accept and understand your love for us.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

## STUDY 8 — JESUS: THE SACRIFICE-EMPOWERING SAVIOR

### READ: HEBREWS 13:1-25

*“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ...Amen.” –Hebrews 13:20-21*

### OVERVIEW

“Let brotherly love continue.” It is significant that this is the first exhortation after the writer’s warning about the coming judgment. He doesn’t first command the readers to continue telling others the good news of the gospel or to continue serving those in need, though Jesus clearly commands his followers to do these things. Instead, his first exhortation is that they love and encourage their Christian brothers and sisters. This reflects Jesus’ prayer for us in John 17:20-21: “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” As he was preparing to suffer the wrath of God on our behalf, Jesus prayed that there would be unity among believers—among the children of God who have no lasting city here. Brotherly love among believers allows us to experience some of God’s kingdom here on earth; it encourages faith and steadfastness and reveals Christ to the world.

Hebrews 13:2-17 continues with many more exhortations, each deserving of attention. We’re called to show hospitality to strangers, remember those who are in prison and mistreated because of the gospel, honor marriage and abstain from sexual immorality, be free from the love of money, imitate the faith of those who brought the good news of Christ, avoid strange teachings that add stipulations to the gospel, continually offer up a sacrifice of praise, do good, share what we have, obey those who faithfully lead, and pray. It’s a good list. Without Christ working through us, it’s an impossible list. Thankfully, he equips us to do all he asks; our job is to receive his promises and respond in faith.

Who is this God who promises to equip us? Hebrews 13:20 tells us that he is the God of peace. This means that he is not torn or frustrated, and he doesn’t doubt. He’s also the God who raised Jesus from the dead. We may struggle with fear, but our Father is not afraid. We may be weak, but the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead is working in and through us to do his will.

Therefore, we can embrace the final words of Hebrews: “Grace be with all of you.” Praise God for the grace that saved you and the grace he has shown you throughout your life so far, walk in the grace he has given you today, and press on with confidence, knowing that God will give you the grace you need to live for him from now until forever.

## MESSAGE NOTES AND APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. Who has encouraged you in your walk with Christ and shown you a faith that is worth imitating? What stood out (or stands out) about them? Who might be imitating your faith?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read Galatians 5:16-26 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. How do these passages compare to Hebrews 13? In what ways are all of these passages both challenging and encouraging?



## **PRAYER**

Spend time praying this prayer from Hebrews 13:20-21 for yourself and for your brothers and sisters in Christ:

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**