

Christ Above all else

Hebrews 13:7-16

- As the writer is closing his letter to the Hebrew believers he emphasizes the need for Christians to remember and practice six things, the first we looked at last week was love. He said since Jesus demonstrated unconditional love toward us then we should show brotherly love to other believers, those who are imprisoned for the faith, and hospitality to anyone in need. In doing so it will help to give us the proper attitude toward love and protect us from displaying the attitudes of the world.

V7-16

- **V7-8** the second thing he wants us to apply is submission to authority, as he tells his readers to “**remember**” their leaders, those who had spoken the Word of God to them and modeled the truth in front of them, who had been examples for them to follow. In sharing this it’s a reminder of how we can forget, especially the good examples God has graciously allowed us to witness.
- I can’t tell you how many people I have talked to over the years who are not walking with The Lord but confess that they grew up hearing God’s Word from Godly parents or grandparents who told them the truth. He goes on to say whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct, look at the fruit of their lives.
- Leaders don’t need to be perfect, but they should be able to show with their life that the power of Jesus is real, for it has transformed their life into something un-mistakeable, demonstrating a faith that can actually be followed. **1Cor 11:1**- The Apostle Paul said to the Corinthian believers “**follow me as I follow Christ**”.
- **V8** is a reminder that as helpful and beneficial as spiritual leaders are they come and they go, but Jesus Christ remains the same, He isn’t going anywhere, as He is at the center of our faith. I heard a pastor say that he once resigned from a church that he had pastored for many years and one of the members came up to him and said they didn’t know how they were going to make it without him as they depended so much on him for help and spiritual guidance, I loved his response.

- He said well the sooner I leave the sooner you can start to depend more on the Lord, we are to never build our lives on any one servant of God, we build our lives on Jesus Christ, for He never changes that word mean immutability. It infers to Jesus Deity, man is fallible, imperfect, Jesus is not, we can truly put our total trust in Him amen!
- **V9** speaking of change, be wary of strange teachings that will masquerade as biblical truth, that will carry you away from The Lord and not to The Lord. **Eph 4:14-16** warns us about being carried away by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, people who are good orators, speak well, dress and look the part, smiling all the time, while with craftiness and deceitful plotting are ruining your faith.
- He gives an example: our hearts should be established by God's grace, why? **Eph 2:8-9** tell us that we are saved by grace through faith and not by our works or actions. That means my foundation is in what Christ did for me on the cross and not what I can do in my flesh. But a teaching during this time was that if you abstained from certain foods then you'd be more holy and accepted by God sound familiar.
- **V10-11** those who still followed the Jewish Levitical system of Judaism taunted the Christ following Jewish believers by telling them that they were turning their backs on Moses, the Law, the temple, their history. Because they are no longer relying on the sacrifices of animals to cover their sins, Jesus has delivered them from this system and its High priest, becoming our High Priest with His sacrifice on the cross.
- **V12-13** this caused a lot of problems within Jewish families and their communities, as those who believed in Jesus were shunned by family members becoming upset that they no longer are following in the same traditions that they were brought up in but instead are now following what the scriptures actually say through Jesus Christ.
- I can relate to this, everything I did in Church was based upon what my family said I should do much of which wasn't biblical. I got baptized but I hadn't given my life to Jesus, I was still living life on my own terms, I joined the church and got on the church roll but I wasn't saved, well at least I'll have a place to have my funeral my family said as your now a member of the church, but not according to scripture!
- This is what following Jesus is going to produce, a lot of backlash from people following tradition and family beliefs but not what the Bible teaches, so if you are going to whole heartedly follow Jesus get ready for some reproach > **Jn 15:18-20**.

- Outside the camp is an important point here, Jesus was crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem at a place called “**Golgotha**” place of the skull in Aramaic, known as Calvary. Because the Jews declared Jesus as blasphemous, and therefore unclean, Jewish Law said you take unclean things outside the city and sacrifice them.
- What they didn’t realize was they also was fulfilling scripture, as sacrifices made for sin offerings also were to be taken outside the camp and be burned symbolizing a removal of impurity. So what they thought they were doing as a reproach toward Jesus was actually a fulfillment of both that scriptures and the Law. **V12** Jesus suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people “**us**” through His blood.
- **V14-16** Jerusalem was near and dear to the hearts of those who served at the temple, but for the believer we have no such city on earth as our citizenship is in heaven > **Philip 3:20**. Therefore we offer as a sacrifice not animals or blood but our praise that should continually come from our lips, giving thanks to His Name.
- This will motivate us to use all of our resources to be a blessing to those around us, as instead of living for self we now live to glorify The Lord, and in this kind of sacrificial living, God is well pleased, as the sacrifice in our heart, coming forth out of our lips, have now spread to our hands, amen!