

Glorious Privileges

The Book of Hebrews

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Bible Text: Hebrews 17:7-17
Preached on: Sunday, October 25, 2020

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Well, this evening, as we very much draw towards a conclusion in our studies in this mighty epistle called Hebrews, we've come to chapter 13 and to verses 7 through 17. We are now very much in the conclusion. That's what chapter 13 is, the main body of the argument demonstrating beyond the shadow of doubt surely that Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice that you need for sin. None other. No other ministry. No other priesthood. None. And the writer goes back to that point, emphasizes it again, draws upon Old Testament Scripture types and shadows to impress that point. And one would rather hope. We don't know the outcome. Does this letter work in that way? Did they wake up? Did they cease to drift away from this great message? Well, we don't know. We don't have the result of it.

We know this. That it's inspired. And if they didn't, would that they had surrendered, and sort of run up the white flag, and say, "This is where is the power. This argument is irrefutable. We have done wrong in turning back towards Judaism, and the sacrifices, and the Aaronic priesthood. How could we have ever committed such folly?" That's what we would like to think that they did, but we don't actually have that answer to, that authority to give.

But as the writer has done with the main body of the argument, and we saw some of his moral exhortations the last time, well, now perhaps we could just entitle this portion of Scripture, this sort of different set of things that he is wanting to bring to their attention, glorious privileges. Glorious privileges. Well, they are all glorious privileges. Some just that that sums up really our position if we're Christians. We have glorious privileges. That serves then as our title here. Privileges now, and again the writer is forever drawing upon the Old Covenant, drawing upon the priesthood, the sacrifices that were offered there to make a point to actually say, "We have something better now. That whatever was there, we have something better now." And indeed, the lessons that are there in the Old Covenant are actually brought out into their fullest light and expression in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We start with perhaps a strange heading really for my first heading. Follow the pastor. Well, there's a thought. Follow the pastor. And we draw then, don't we, on verses 7 to 9. Remember those who are over you, and I am just also looking on to verse 17. "Obey

those who have the rule over, and be submissive for they watch out for your souls.” And the writer is here saying that in terms of those who rule, the eldership, in that way, then we are to recall not only what they teach but hopefully the lives that they live. They are only as good as they are true to the Word of God. When a minister departs from the Word of God, then basically he is pronounced his office and ceased to be a minister. The authority derives from the Word of God. We only follow them as far as they are following the Lord Jesus Christ. Go no further than that.

So, there is their preaching, and their teaching, and their conduct. And here in verses 7 to 9 we, particularly in verse 7, we rather think, commentators think, that these are now deceased pastors. These are men who no longer are alive. “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” And in a way, they are now part of the cloud of witnesses maybe. That there is a sense in which perhaps these men have been martyred. Their outcome, their faith, well it actually took them to martyrdom. They’ve actually died for the faith. They have given up. They have shed their blood in that cause in serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Many commentators think that’s actually what it’s referring to here. Ministers, preachers, elders who were there and now are not, but who died well in the Lord. Wesley said of his people, “They die well.” And that means they die looking to heaven. That they are still strong in their faith at the end as at the beginning and, hopefully, most of the time in between. They were looking unto the Lord.

And the writer is suggesting here that that’s what these men did. And remember that. Remember their example in that way. Remember how they left this world. They were looking to the next one. They were already those who verse 14 tells us, doesn’t it, no continuing city here. This is not home, but we are looking beyond here to the one to come. A continuing city. That New Jerusalem. That place that will never, never change. A kingdom that cannot be shaken, we’re receiving it now, and that’s the down payment of something that opens up into the very glory of heaven.

So, remember them. Remember their endurance. Remember their trials. This is a theme that’s there throughout this book, because they’re sort of shrinking back from perhaps some of the trials and the persecution and sort of finding some safety hiding in the crowd amongst Judaism. That perhaps there they would escape the kind of watching gaze of the powers that be. And he’s saying, “No, even though it may mean endurance and trial. No. There is no way forward there. That’s the way to destruction, to spiritual loss and destruction. No, rather trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as we have seen these godly pastors, preachers, elders had done. Follow their example.”

And so, when it talks about, in verse 8, that great text there, and I’m not really going to preach on this per say, I mean, it stands out, doesn’t it, as one hundred sermons in and of itself, but Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. What the Lord Jesus Christ was to those who have gone before you, he will be to you today, and whatever tomorrow brings, he will be that too. He will be there with you. As he was their guide unto death, he will be your guide unto death. If death it must be in serving the Lord, surely one day then, unless the Lord returns, each of us must face death, but we will find

that, just as these godly men perhaps in their dying moments were still able to perhaps vocally testify to their trusting in Christ and maybe were granted to see, as some saints are, that as they die heaven is almost already there. They're already kind of there. They are crossing over the Jordan and already have reached that promised land, that continuing city. And speak to those about them about that. So many people go to what we think about there about the deathbed of friends in prayer, but who have gone to the deathbed of saints and actually the visitors have come away more encouraged than any encouragement they could have given to that dying saint. That that dying saint is so filled with the wonder, the Lord has drawn so near, that it is as though they are already in heaven. And they are speaking of those things, and people who have met with them just come away their faith actually increased because of what they have heard and what they have seen. Oh, to be able to be that when our moment should come.

But these examples here, these men that the churches or the church that he was writing to, the writer here, was addressing would know about these people. And this was reminding them. And that was what Jesus Christ was to them yesterday, but he's the same Jesus Christ today. A High Priest who is praying at the right hand of God for us in our infirmities, one whose sacrifice is sufficient and whose resurrection takes us from this world, shows us a reality that yes, this world is passing and done. Our bodies are passing and done. And all of our hopes of life, whatever they might be in the end, amount to very little in comparison of the glory that will be and that these men saw that. And these Christians were to see that and to be encouraged.

Well, how sad it is, and when perhaps some very notable instances of the fact that when a particular pastor that's been known for many years dies, is removed from his office of old age, or something like that, that the church kind of collapses at that point. That it sort of was dependent upon the pastor. When the pastor was not there, the work declined or collapsed. That too much dependence was on the man rather than on Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And when that time comes, and, friend, you can speak to that and retirement comes and one has to step back, one prays, does one not, that all will go well. And that the people actually were not relying upon the man, but upon the Christ whom the man was preaching and for whom he was attempting to live for the glory of God to show forth that. But there have been rather sad cases, and I won't mention them by name here, but sad cases when the minister is not there anymore, and suddenly it's gone, and people are heading in all directions, and at times showing such lack of wisdom and discernment, and you would have thought, "Well, had they listened to the minister, why then did they do that? Or why did they choose that as the successive minister? Or whatever else there.

But anyway, we move on, and, well, politely there is the pastor. Remind you dear brethren, well, obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls. That, dear friends, is a task and a duty indeed. And who is sufficient for these things? And as I approach now, I find myself having to repeat these words to just confirm I got my math right, but twenty years coming towards having been the minister here, and I try to watch out for the souls of people. We can think of friends, can't we, who have gone to glory. I think of one particular friend who at this particular time of year, five

years ago, and gone to glory. But pastors and preachers are not perfect people and don't get everything right all the time. But we attempt, don't we, before God to embody the truth, to try to live it out. The Lord sometimes sees fit to put ministers through the mill even more than others, to inflict them with illnesses, and pains, and sufferings, and circumstances that work something, well we trust, into their hearts and into their lives. And that they can then share with the flock from that.

So, Peter, in the first epistle chapter 5. Just read there, verses 1 to 4. "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Well, there is a promise there to ministers who seek to with their own feeble efforts to avoid the pitfalls that are listed here, and how many pastors have been undone by money, gold, glory, and sadly, of course, sexual immorality too has been the undoing of many. But sadly, as some ministers have brought churches into disrepute, but as far as pastors don't do that, we seek to preach the Word of God and seek to embody and live out the Word of God. Well, follow them. Indeed, follow me in that way. If you see or hear anything there that perhaps even faintly resembles the Lord Jesus Christ and what his Word would be.

So, pastors, the Lord always keeps them very much under the thumb and keeps them on their toes, and all the things that he sends upon them, and strange sicknesses that they seem to get, and all the rest of it there. But often it's the case, and sadly so, I'm not saying it to be here, but one could say it in other places, that some churches don't actually want pastors. They don't want to obey. They don't want to be submissive, because everybody's got their own opinion. And they've got their own point of view on things. And some pastors just suffered being in the pulpit. Nobody agrees with them over much, because they're listening on the internet to somebody's who has got it far more worked out than this poor struggling pastor who seems to not share all the distinctives that are their distinctives and doesn't sort of bear them out in something that they believe is the big issue of the day.

And it's where the writer rather takes the argument having begun up that point there where we have this whole discussion about foods and this which he here describes for the people of that day. Not profit to those who have been preoccupied or occupied with them. And this is how he is saying that it's Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever. We have our next heading in a minute which is real spiritual food. But his next statement is a warning. "Do not be carried away with various and strange doctrines." That's almost church history, isn't it there? Sadly, churches, denominations, get carried away with various and strange doctrines, and when we look at verse 17 and what gives grief to pastors that they're accountable to God for their stewardship, and let them do it with joy. But it will be this, that the church had no desire to stay within the heartlands of this, but had strange ideas and went off after this or went off after that and various and strange doctrines rather than looking to be established by grace, the grace that is in the Lord Jesus

Christ. It was something else that seemed to excite them. Some distinctive or aspect of eschatology or something like that that was the be all and the end all, the kind of fellowship breaker. And that is always rather grievous to ministers and grievous to us all when that particular kind of thing happens.

And so, the advice there is not. And foods, well, that was important in the Levitical system. That was a training ground for the people of God to discern, the clean things and the unclean things. But as we know, that was superseded in the coming of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the gathering in of the Gentiles. That sort of middle wall of separation there was taken away, was removed. And now, the Lord is saying that they should fellowship together, that foods now are not an obstacle or an impediment. Though seemingly here, some were still holding on to that and still making that the be all and the end all. That their obedience to God was not sufficient and nobody else's was sufficient unless you did not eat those foods, only these particular foods. And that this point now, since revelation has moved on, and we are now in the New Covenant, would now be classified as a various and strange doctrine that's carrying people around and taking them away from the central point of Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

And so, second heading is this: real, real spiritual food. Real spiritual food. There is inspiration in all of this, isn't there, in how the argument is pursued. And so, we've spoken of foods there, kind of in a negative way, but then he takes the subject of food and develops it in a most beautiful way and very positive way. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. We are fed as believers in a way that those who still perhaps are focused upon Jerusalem, believe the temple will be still standing at this point, and the altar, and the sacrifices, many of which provided food for the priests, that they had a portion of these different thank offerings, peace offerings for instance, where they would have a portion to eat. It was God's appointed way of providing for the priests that didn't have their own sort of cities in that way. They didn't have their own inheritance and land. God would be their portion and provide for them through these various offerings that the worshipers would bring. And so, they were fed in that way, but he is saying to the people here who might have been looking back at the altar, at the sacrifices, and thinking, "Perhaps we ought to be back there." He's saying, "No, we have food they don't have. They might be using these peace offerings and things, but these are now obsolete and are about to pass away entirely. We are able to feed upon, well, the Lord Jesus Christ, aren't we? That we have that which satisfies the soul to its very depths." We have something well beyond anything that they have there.

So, we have John 6 there as an obvious place to turn. Verses 53 to 58 for instance. Our Lord speaking about himself as the bread of life. "Then Jesus said to them," we read, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

Contrast is made there in what our Lord is saying with those who have the manna which provided for them physically in the desert, miraculously, surely, was provision. But now something beyond that has come. The true bread that truly gives life. Spiritual life. And it's found, of course, through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, through his body, through his blood. The offering that he makes of himself there. And which opens up to the believer the power of the Holy Spirit, life, and health, and peace. That he is to us everything that we need. What could we find now to go back to the offerings of bulls, and goats, and such things? Even the portions of food that came from it, which was God's provision for that time, but which was just pointing forward to something better. Something that will feed, not just the priests, but us all. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ and his life that he gives to all of his people and sustains not just when we first believe and see the glory of the cross and our Lord Jesus Christ giving himself body, soul, his blood shed for the remission of sin, opened our eyes.

But our eyes stay open. And the cross remains the place to receive encouragements and hope and blessing to humble us and to take us away from our sins when we realize that is where sin takes you. Look what it required of the Savior to deliver us from it. Do we really want to continue in it? And of course, the spiritual when we're right-thinking answer is "No, we want to be as far away from that as possible." And so, we continually draw upon it. That's our food. That's our sustenance. As we abide in that, abide in that Christ who died upon the cross, who rose again, who is ascended into heaven, sat at the right hand of the majesty on high, purged our sins by himself, then there is food. There is power. There is life. And it goes on. And it continues to deliver. And we're never, never without supply wherever we are. We can feel discouraged and weary. We can feel sick. We can feel all manner of things, even perplexity, but actually as we go to him, we will be fed. As we pray to our Father in the name of Jesus, relying upon the resources that he has and that he has opened up to sinners, then we will find a sufficiency there.

These are the privileges we have. And the Old Covenant priests, high priests, great privilege, doesn't compare to this. He didn't have this food. He didn't have all that we today have and that we constantly are able to enjoy. But we notice, even as we notice that, that the writer has traveled on, and he is illustrating now again from the Old Testament from the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16 where we were. We haven't time to describe in all the detail the particular, minute detail and order in which all those sacrifices were to be made. What's the writer under inspiration, what's caught his attention here, is the way in which bodies of those animals, you remember the sin offering there of the bull and of the goat, and that they were to be burned outside the camp, the flesh, and the offal, all parts of it, burnt outside the camp. Those who did it, then had to wash their clothes when they came back in.

So, there was something to be removed far from the people of God. Their sins, the sins of the nation, removed far from them. Burnt out there, as though this was something unclean indeed. Regarded as unclean. We don't want to be near it. We want it burned outside the gate. And the writer says, "That actually is speaking to us about the Lord Jesus Christ suffering there and seemingly as an outcast despised and rejected of men, bearing that

reproach, the reproach of the high priests of that day, and the chief priests. and the scribes, and the pharisees, and all the dreadful, horrible things that were leveled against him in his time of passion and time of his crucifixion." That reproach that he bore. There was nothing lovely about him. Nothing that we should desire. Visage marred more than that of any man. And that is our Lord dying there outside the gates of Jerusalem in that way as an outcast, as someone that to follow in that direction you're just making yourself an object of the ridicule. You're making yourself an object of reproach by the religious authorities of this day. And still the same. That if we are believers. If you want to find the spiritual food, if you want the Christ of Scripture to be the one that you can draw upon, then there is reproach. There is cost. You have to go to him outside the camp. It's not going to be comfortable and easy. This is not going to leave you a reputation intact. You know how people talk about reputational damage these days, and brand images of companies, and not wanting to be associated here. So, with Christians, because that's reputational damage, and they'll have all the gay lobby against them and lose custom or they fear they will.

And that is the reproach that we as Christians have to endure, have to be ready to endure. But to know that in doing that we're finding the true and authentic Jesus Christ. And that we go outside of the comfort of received religion, whatever passes for Christianity in this day and this age, which makes no demands, no requirements, doesn't seem to have anything real to say. It just wants to affirm everybody and be inclusive of everything. We have to turn our backs upon that and say, no, this is so, so counter cultural. This is so not what people around us think is ought to be done today. But we honor him. And we believe that he is right, and we will go to him, come what may, bear that cost, bear that reproach, find him outside the camp, outside the city, leaving world behind and all of its ways of doing things, leaving established religion behind and even the Christianity that passes for it, believing that we'll find the true Christ by that separation from those things.

And sure enough, we will, because here in verse 14, we are told, and we have thought about this a little bit in previous sermons, but that here we have no continuing city. We're not actually leaving behind something that's going to last. It's all going to be burned up, all religious customs, received religion, natural religion. Not Christian religion, not the Bible religion, it's not going to be burned up. The world, and its sneers, and its rebukes, and all its looking down upon the believer, it's not going to last. It's not going to survive the judgment. And we're just actually turning away from, walking away from, something that is doomed anyway to go to Christ, to go to him who rose from the dead, and who promises us eternal life, and who will deliver on that promise, and his resurrection is proof of that. And we trust him. He's going to take us dear friends to heaven, which does last, and where actually to have born reproach life in this life will be well understood in heaven and well received, well accepted. Those crosses and those losses here are what heaven is looking for in us. And we will have that acclimation, that reception. We'll be given so an entrance into glory if we have born his reproach in this life.

And so, finally, my final heading, response to our privileges. Well, these are privileges to even bear dishonor for his sake. But he will feed and watch over his people in remarkable ways. We find him there. And we are to respond. Those are there for, in verse 15, we

shall draw upon all of these things. Therefore, by him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. Once again the writer following a train of thought. So, they're so absorbed in sacrifices, are they? Well, then here is the sacrifice to make. If this Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever, and who feeds his people as they go out to him, and who has promised them a city that has got foundations. Well, a proper response is a sacrifice actually. It's a sacrifice of praise to God.

That should be coming from our lips. The fruit of our lips. Not the offering of grain that was to be made at different times. But actually, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But this response to these privileges is to be thanksgiving. It's to be praise. It's to have words that we are going to speak. Words that lift up his name on high, that speak of his glory, speak of his worth, and which indicate, well, the day will come when we can properly open our mouths, and sing, and be able to take hold of those truths once more. Singing, we're making melody in our hearts, aren't we, even if we can't quite open our mouths and quite sing at present. But that day will come, we know.

But in the meantime, anyway, that sacrifice of praise, and your devotions, and in mine, and in your private prayer closet, wherever, to stop and reflect what we have as Christians. What we have. What Christians have in a pandemic, Christians have still living with all these restrictions. What Jesus Christ is to you and to me, or I trust that he is, and that you respond to that and all that he is. And all that he has promised, and all that what you will be tomorrow for us, whatever that tomorrow is, and we don't know what it has, but he does, and he will be there. And so, we can praise him here today continually. If you want to make a continual sacrifice, which of course was the pattern of the Old Covenant, continual offerings, because they never could bring peace and comfort to the soul. There was still the incompleteness. Yes, that was true of those sacrifices, but here there is a valid continuing sacrifice. That is to take up the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to glorify God because of him.

And then very finally, in verse 16, another response is that this touches our hearts, doesn't it, and moves us in our affections towards each other. That we do not forget to do good. They're very forgetful. They neglected the meeting together of saints. They had forgotten that hospitality, you can be entertaining angels in that way. There had been a decline in the life of the fellowship in that way. And so, he's saying, "Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices," ah, there again there is sacrifices. If we're speaking sacrifices here, he's saying to these people, "These are the sacrifices God actually wants. He's pleased with these." Quite simple, isn't it? To do good to people. Plain. Simple. Do good to people. Do something positive toward their wellbeing, be they non-Christians or more particularly in the household of faith. We are to share. We are to give of our time, of our resources, give of our help, give whatever it is that we have, and that is God is well pleased with those sacrifices.

Glorious privileges we have. We have freely received, so we freely give. And we often struggle at times to be so free in that giving. We are to give of our energy, or our time, whatever it is. We all know that we can make excuses and all kinds of things. Well, we are to be liberated from that. And the liberation from that is all bound up in our

appreciation of those glorious privileges that in Christ Jesus every believer, every believer has. So, it will be a couple of weeks' time in the will of God when we actually complete this mighty, this great epistle, which is just so rich in spiritual food. And so, God willing, in two weeks' time.

GLORIOUS PRIVILEGES

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Hebrews 13 7-17.

The passage we are looking at here still belongs to the closing remarks which comprise Chapter 13. The main argument has now been concluded and the writer now turns to the privileges that people of the new covenant have over and above the people of the old covenant, including the priests. But the writer's comments also include some observations about church leaders, past and present, and how they are to be thought of.

1. Follow the Pastor

In verses 7-9, we learn that we are to imitate those who are elders in the church, in other words, those who have the rule of the church, watching out for the souls of people. They exercise rule inasmuch as they are ruled by the authority of the Bible and are themselves imitators of the word of God. The word is to be preached and taught and it is to be lived out. Pastors and elders are often those who have to endure the most for the gospel. Their example of faith and conduct is to be an example of how to endure trials. They show the power of the unchanging Christ (v8) in their own lives and this is an encouragement to others that the Christ of elders and preachers can be the Christ of all people for He does not change. The wording suggests that the church elders who are in the writer's mind are now actually dead and they are probably men who have given up their lives serving the Lord in the gospel.

So, the example of men who were probably martyred is used to show the people that the Lord Jesus Christ does not alter and is able to be the same ever reliable and faithful Friend to all believers. Having such a Saviour is a great privilege. He is our Lord and our Guide. He is our High Priest praying for us, His people, in the midst of our trials. We have to remember that the Lord can sometimes take Pastors home to glory unexpectedly and that they are but men who will not live forever. It is sad when churches fall apart when a Pastor is taken home or has to leave for some reason. Some churches go not further than their Pastor and this too is sad. We remember the unhappy spectacle of King Joash, falling apart spiritually and morally. when the godly High priest, Jehoiada, passed away in old age.

We learn in verse 17 that, while there is an obligation to remember the example of Pastors and elder who have gone to glory, there is an obligation to listen to and obey elders in the present, inasmuch as they are followers of Christ. Scripture teaches that

elders are not to exercise naked power in the church (See 1 Peter 5:1-4) but are to be humble and not authoritarian. They are not to be lovers of money. Sadly, some ministers through their behaviour have brought the cause of Christ into disrepute. But the difficulty can often be that people think they know better than the Pastor and regard him as unspiritual because he does not support some position that they do. This is all the more so when people are influenced by the ever-increasing number of on-line ministries and opinions in the Christian blogosphere. The writer talks about 'foods' as being, for the church then, a doctrine that was generating a lot of heat but was not profitable. The controversy about which foods should be eaten belonged to the period of the old covenant era but not to the time of the new covenant. Likewise, every period of church history has its own strange doctrines that carry people about but which have no spiritual value.

Pastors have great grief when churches behave in unruly ways and if they are especially unstable and given to odd and extreme ideas. Churches are instructed to think carefully about their beliefs and their practice, so that ministers are not weighed down and burdened, but can work joyfully and answer joyfully at the Judgment Throne, for they must give account for their work there.

2. Real spiritual food

The subject of food in verse 9, even if the nature of the discussion about it in the church at that time was not helpful, allows the writer to develop the theme of food in a spiritual direction. He is able to talk of real spiritual food, by which most of all He means the Lord Jesus Christ who does not change (verse 8). The altar provided food for the priests in the old covenant as there were offerings that the worshipper brought where portions of the sacrifice were to be given to the priests to sustain them. But now the food is our Lord Jesus Christ (See John 6:53-58) and we are able to draw strength and sustenance from Him. There are all kinds of good things that He provides for His people. We are able to reflect on the glory and wonder of His Person and His work and see what a wonderful inheritance we have in Him, such as justification and final glorification.

We find this spiritual reality only if we follow our Lord, who is like the offering on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16, which is burnt outside the camp. The writer describes that sacrifice being regarded as unclean, and that is a picture to us of how we have to be willing to go out to Him, leaving behind the world, and being ready to bear His reproach. If we do not do this, we will not discover the reality of the real spiritual food that He can give us. We have to endure ridicule because if we become true followers of Christ, the world and old corrupt religion will fight back against us. We do not belong in the world but are looking for heaven, the city that continues (verse 14).

3. Response to our privileges

These privileges are something to review and to enjoy. They are spurs to duty and to service. They are resources to stimulate us in obedience. One of the things that should follow is, not sacrifice along the lines of the old order, but the sacrifice of praise (verse 15). That is a proper new covenant type sacrifice where we are found giving thanks to the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. We realize what a good position the Lord has put us in giving us such a great Saviour. We should be gripped by wonder that makes our praises follow on naturally. We should be full of good words that show this (See Ephesians 5: 3-4, 20). We have to ask ourselves, is that true of us?

Another response to our privileges is that we will do good and share. We have freely received from God and, therefore, we should freely give. These are sacrifices that the Lord is well pleased with. So we should make sacrifices out of our wealth and the goods we have.