

Hebrews Chapter 13D

This morning I plan to conclude our verse by verse study through the book of Hebrews. Beginning next week and throughout the season of Advent we will spend our time together reflecting on the Christmas narrative.

My goal in studying the book of Hebrews at this particular time was twofold.

- First, I hoped to encourage you to delight in the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ, his priesthood, his sacrifice, and his ongoing intercession on our behalf.
- Secondly I believe that the times in which we live demand that we learn how to persevere in the faith in an atmosphere that is increasing aggression toward the sheep of God's fold.
 - In a day when Christian businessmen and women are being publically maligned and forced out of business for their stand on marriage, this book of Hebrews teaches us how to stand firm in the face of opposition.
 - When every strange and immoral idea is given a prominent position in the national dialogue and those who hold firmly to Biblical truth suffer persecution. We need to know how to persevere in the faith.

I can say with honesty that this book has served to renew my mind and strengthen my spiritual resolve in a season of trial and hardship. I pray that you also have benefitted from the exhortations that have been presented by this unknown author.

Friends: I would consider this book of Hebrews to be one of the greatest theological works of all time.

And our study of the book has served to strengthen the foundations of our common faith. The Author has challenged us to hold fast to the core doctrines of Christianity.

- He affirmed that God is the creator and sustainer of all things.
- And that He has revealed himself finally and fully in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Ch. 1, We took a brief look at Angels – who were created by God to be **ministering spirits sent out to serve those who would inherit salvation**. (Heb 1:14)
- We were privileged to gaze upon the beautiful image of the priestly work of Jesus Christ who is our Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- We rejoiced together in our freedom from sin, knowing that Jesus offered himself as the perfect sacrifice. Given to cleanse our guilty consciences from dead works.
- It was with great seriousness that we considered the difficult exhortations to persevere in the faith.
- We have seen Jesus Christ as the Apostle sent by God, declared to be the Sovereign Lord, the long awaited Messiah, Our Great High Priest, The Eternal King, The Mediator and Guarantor of a better covenant and today we are reminded that he is the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

Here at the close of the book of Hebrews the Author reiterates a few of the great theological truths that he has laid out before us and he does this in context of a final benediction.

The word “Benediction” literally means “Good Words.” A benediction is a bestowal of blessing. Benedictions should be a normal part of the Christian life.

- Sometimes we will pronounce a Benediction when we are leaving someone’s home after sharing a meal, after enjoying a time of fellowship, we pray and ask God’s blessing on our host for their display of love and hospitality.
- In our normal order of corporate worship, the benediction comes at the end of the service and it sums up all that has been spoke with a sincere cry to God asking that He would help and bless his people.

Most of the New Testament Epistles contain some sort of benediction near the end of the letter. A good benediction exalts the Lord and invokes his blessing on believers.

Romans 15:13 **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.**

1 Thessalonians 3:11 **Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.**

- As we close out this book of Hebrews we come to one of the most well-known and dearly loved benedictions in the whole Bible.

As we study this benediction together I would like you to be on the lookout for:

1. Theology that leads to Fitness.
2. Theology that leads to Doxology
3. Theology that leads to BrTheology that leads to Fitness

Hebrews 13: 20 **Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 equip you (make you fit) 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.**

- This Benediction presents a theology by which sinful men who always rebelled against the will of God are NOW made FIT / EQUIPED by the blood of the everlasting covenant to do the will of God.
- How does that happen? Our fitness is accomplished by the God of Peace.

“**The God of Peace**” initiates and accomplishes a lasting peace with rebellious man.

- IN Ephesians 2:14 Paul say, “**He**” (Jesus) **is our peace.**”

- Through His sacrificial death the Lord Jesus bridged the gap between Holy God and Sinful Man therefore **making peace through the blood of his cross** (Col. 1:20)

Ro 5:1 **Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- The weight of God's wrath has been lifted, all of our guilt and condemnation have been removed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant we have been liberated from bondage to sin, the chains have been removed freedom in Christ has liberated our souls with a glorious and lasting peace.
- And the proof, the confirmation and realization of our peace with God is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Hebrews 13: 20 **Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep**

- Jesus can be our shepherd, even though he died, because God raised him from the dead never to die again.
- Jesus can be our shepherd, even though we are undeserving sinners, because His death and resurrection secured our forgiveness and imparted the gift of Christ's righteousness.

The God of peace raised Jesus Christ from the dead and He remains alive today.

- As the Great Shepherd He cares for the flock of God: Leading, loving, feeding and caring for those the Father has given to him.
- This is that Shepherd who leaves the 99 to seek and save the one who is lost.

Even today he still gathers his undeserving sheep from all the nations of the world. John 10:15-16 Jesus said: **"I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd"**

HOW does all of this Theology lead to our fitness? The Author gives two ways:

Hebrews 13:20 - 21: **"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,**

- Here's the first way He: **equips you with everything good that you may do his will,**
- Here's the second, He: **works in us that which is pleasing in his sight,**
- And our fitness is only **through Jesus Christ."**

1. HE equips or fits us to do his will

The God of peace equips us, fits us with everything good that we may do his will.

- He breathes the breath of life into a person who is dead in transgression and sin and makes them ALIVE! (Like Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones God Speaks His Word to us and we come ALIVE!)

- When he makes us alive He gives us a new heart and places His Own Spirit within us. It is through these gifts that God equips us to do His will.
- Before He made us alive we had NO ABILITY to do His will. Now the same grace that gave us life, empowers us to do the will of God.

Philippians 2: 12 **Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

- The Word of God renews our minds and the indwelling Spirit exerts a holy influence within us transforming our affections and energizing our performance.
- GOD does NOT compel or force us to act against our will. It is through His Power, Love and Grace that he equips us to do his will.

Second, this benediction teaches us that through our Great Shepherd, God is **“working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.”**

- Once again God works by His Spirit in the heart of man to bring about that which is pleasing in His eyes.

AND what is it that pleases God? FAITH is what pleases God. He told us earlier in Hebrews 11 that **without faith it is impossible to please him.**

- So the gift of faith works in us that which is pleasing in his sight.

Romans 1: 17 **For in it (The Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

Application: How many of us have felt ill equipped for a job that we were thrown into? College didn't equip you for what you face on the job.

- Nothing could have prepared me for the things I have faced in the pastorate.

How many of us as husbands were really prepared to love our wives as Christ loved the church when we were first married.

How many wives were truly equipped to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord when they said “I DO?”

How many of us were really fit to be parents when our first children came along?

- In every aspect of our lives we desperately need the Spirit of God to Equip us to do the will of God working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.

NOW let's see how all of this theology leads to doxology: Point #2

Hebrews 13: 20 **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,**

21 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.

- I want you to take note of the transition that takes place from Theology to Doxology in Vs 21.

But first let me explain the term “Doxology” - The dictionary defines doxology as “an expression of praise to God, The word doxology comes from two Greek words

- doxa, (“glory, splendor, grandeur”) and logos, (“word”).

Doxologies in the Bible are short hymns of praise to God that generally follow a clear exposition of the character and, or work of God.

- It’s almost as if the author gets so caught up in the revelation of God that He lifts off like a rocket and soars into the stratosphere of worship and adoration.
- The Apostle Paul is famous for moving from Theology to Doxology.

In Ephesians 1: Paul wonderfully lays out the glorious theology of Grace.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

- Weighty theology of Election and the Imputation of Righteousness.
- Moving on He takes us even deeper:

5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

- Doctrine of Redemption, Atonement, Adoption, forgiveness
- THEN in Ch 2 He expounds on the Doctrine of Salvation that is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- And all of this glorious theology leads Paul to a wonderful doxology.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

In our own devotional life the Knowledge of God and His magnificent work should always lead to a heartfelt praise. The revelation of God simply must move us to fulfill the purpose for which we are created and that is to worship and glorify our Creator.

C.S. Lewis writes these words:

“I tend to find the doctrinal books often more helpful in devotion than the devotional books, and I rather suspect that the same experience may await many others. I believe that many who find that ‘nothing happens’ when they sit down, or kneel down, to a book of devotion, would find that the heart sings unbidden while they are working their way through a tough bit of theology with a pipe in their teeth and a pencil in their hand.”

- Apart from the pipe in my teeth, I have found Lewis’ words to perfectly describe my own experience.
- When I dig deeply into the riches of God’s glorious being, seeking to comprehend the length and breadth and depth of God’s perfections, I am lifted to new heights in worship almost overcome with the radiance of his glory.
- And I am not alone in this experience:

Christian Rapper Shai Linne said:

“Theology should always lead to doxology. And doxology should always be informed by good theology. Theology that doesn't lead to doxology is dead orthodoxy. Doxology that doesn't spring from good theology is idolatry. Both extremes dishonor God. The greatest commandment in the law as laid out by the Lord Jesus, is this:

"Jesus answered, "**The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'**" (Mark 12:29-30)

Theology and Doxology in the church today is often handled wrongly:

1. Skip (or brush over) the Theology and move right into Doxology
These Believers will attempt to bypass the mind altogether (as if that were possible) and move directly to an emotional experience with God,

2 . Focus on intellectual theology and completely avoid Doxology
There are some who are so intellectual in their approach to the things of God that they completely bypass the affections that are an essential part of doxology.

- The former (skip theology) results in us fashioning and worshipping a god who conforms to our every whim and this often leads to excesses and false beliefs.
- The latter results in a Pharisee-like coldness that finds more delight in winning an argument than it does experiencing the true joy of Christ who has graciously revealed himself to sinners such as ourselves.

BUT there is a balance that brings great joy and richness to our devotion when we who are filled with the Spirit of God, sit and contemplate the majesty and glory of the eternal God as he is revealed to us in Holy Scripture.

The last thoughts in this wonderful book teach us that sound Theology should lead us to deeper expressions of Brotherly love.

The Author of Hebrews closes his letter with a few personal notes that reveal a profound and abiding love for his readers.

- His words possess a sentiment of familial affection that spring forth from a redeemed heart.
- His tender care and clarity of communication cause me to believe that this author was a Pastor, possibly even the pastor of this flock of sheep.
- He calls his readers “Brothers” and addresses them with affection.

Hebrews 13:22 **I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.** 23 **You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.**

- He finishes this communication with a personal appeal that his readers should carefully weigh the words that he has written.
- He realizes that his words of exhortation have been challenging. He hasn't held back from expressing his deep concerns over their wavering faith.
- The Main point that is consistently raised throughout this letter is an exhortation to Persevere, press on, hold fast to the faith!
- It is with passion and authority that the author warns his readers of the deadly effects of Apostasy.

There are many things that we could learn and put into practice from this Book.

- The Author teaches us that Confrontation can be an expression of love when it is shared from a humble heart.
- If we truly love our brothers, we will ask the tough questions (about belief and faithfulness) and keep pointing them back to the Lord Jesus.
- We should look for opportunities to speak words of encouragement and treasure the times that we share together in corporate worship.

He ends with a greeting to the whole congregation and a benediction of GRACE.

24 **Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.** 25 **Grace be with all of you.**

Friends it is the desire of my heart that the rich theological content of our studies together throughout this book of Hebrews will serve to equip YOU to do the will of God and to live a glorious life of faith and heartfelt worship.

NOT only on Sundays but every day. And I pray that our love for one another would also grow as we grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Great Shepherd, the one who sealed the eternal covenant in his own blood.

