

Hebrews



**Promises
Faithfully
Kept**

Hebrews 13.1-6 (CSB)

For the Love of God

At this point in the sermon that is the book of Hebrews the author leaves us with this crescendo coup de gras of God is a consuming fire. We feel the gravity of the nature of God being revealed especially for his people who are to represent his peace and holiness here on earth.

So this week as the author leads us into application in our lives we are left asking what does that look like. How is everything that has come up to this point which calls us to run after Jesus because God is holy and because we are Johnny holy, what does that look like in our life. It looks a lot like 24601.



Intro: compelling seeing of Jean Valjean trying to figure out what he should do regarding another man being accused as Jean Valjean.

The temptation that he's facing is to take care of himself in a way that is accessible to him in his flesh but it's not part of following after Christ. It's contrary to following after Christ. He senses this danger to himself, this turmoil that is capable of happening to him. He could possibly get sent back to jail, he could be detained and defamed. Or he could reject God and live a life of luxury, even if it tormented his conscience. His actions were going to show if he truly knew Christ and God's love or if he only faked it while it was easy.

The Hebrew Christians receiving this letter were facing a similar temptation. Do they go public with identifying with Christ through their love and testimony? Or do they reject Christ for temporary comfort. Do they remain Monsieur Les Mayor or reveal themselves as Jean Valjean who has been changed by the grace and love of God?

13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

**2 Don't neglect to show
hospitality, for by doing this
some have welcomed angels as
guests without knowing it.**

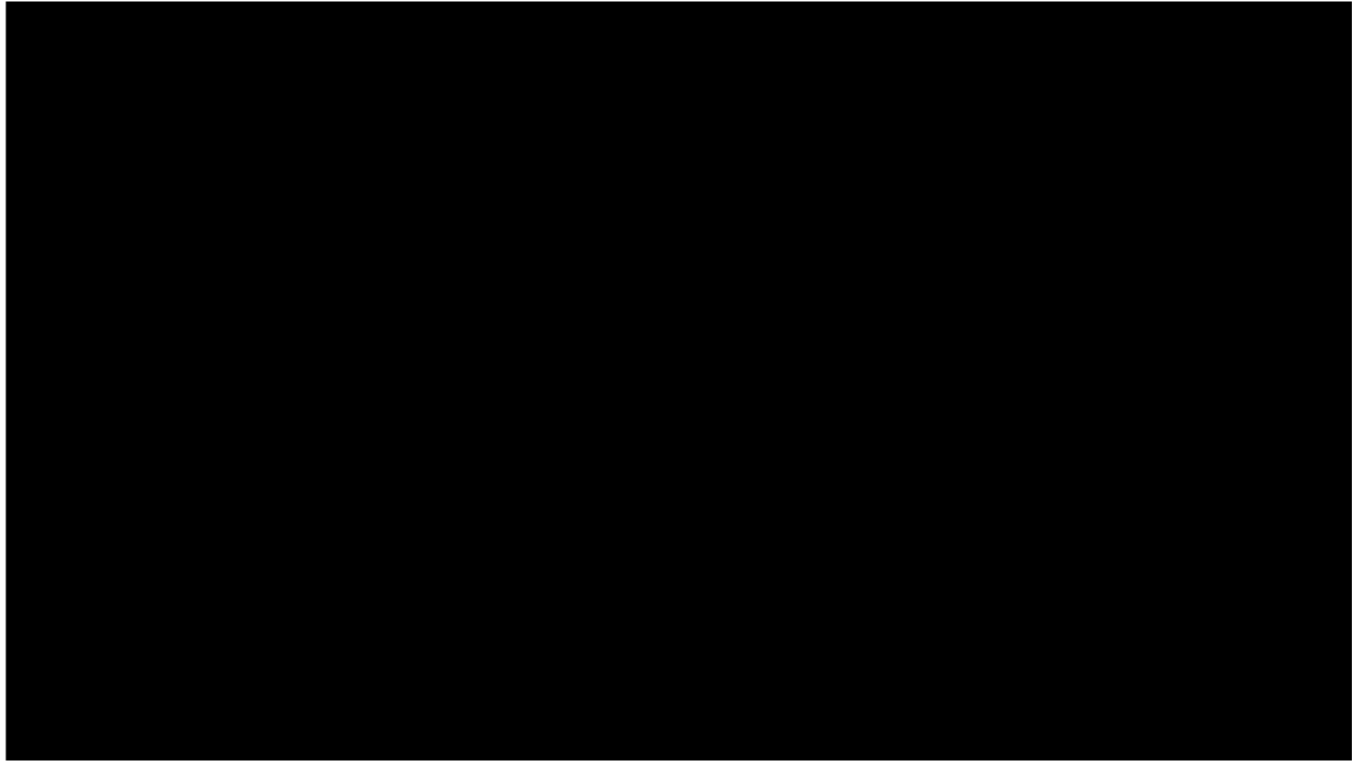
3 Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.

4 Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.

5 Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have,

**for he himself has said, I will
never leave you or abandon you.**

**6 Therefore, we may boldly say,
The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?**



Pray

Do your part to have love continue to characterize the church. (V. 1)

Do your part to have love continue to characterize the church.

As Paul said about the Thessalonians, I have no reason or need to write to you about loving one another. That's Kathleen said last night this is one of the great things about this church, is that it's not built around the pastor. It's not built around a particular personality. It's built around Christ with people that truly love one another, truly care about one another. It is filled with people that are actively seeking to serve one another and to care for one another and to teach one another.

As Kathleen said last night this is one of the great things about this church, is that it's not built around the pastor. It's not built around a particular personality. It's built around Christ with people that truly love one another, truly care about one another. It is filled with people that are actively seeking to serve one another and to care for one another and to teach one another.

But as Paul said shortly after that but we encourage you to do this all the more.

The early church took seriously that fellow members were brothers and sisters of the same family of God. They were to love one another. But there were times that this relationship needed to be sketched out in application.

Paul speaks about the nature of love in 1 Corinthians 13. We often associate 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 with weddings or with marriages, but the original context is not about a marriage relationship. The original context is about the church. So Paul is talking about the church when he says that love is patient, love is kind. The love that is to be expressed in the church does not envy nor boast. Love between brothers and sisters is not proud. It's not rude. When we value our brother or sister in Christ, we're not being self-seeking with our relationship. If we love our siblings in Christ, we're not easily angered or offended at them. If we find that we're starting to tally up a record of wrongs that we can then slam against a fellow believer, then we're not loving as God calls us to love.

Then Paul in first Corinthians 13 goes on to say love always trusts. in something inside many of us may want to rise up and say, “No, no, no. We have to protect ourselves. it would be unwise to have no guard rails, so surely this is not what Paul is talking about.” but it stairs right at us continuing to say love always trusts. let’s consider it this way, if there is mistrust between a brother or a sister in Christ and yourself, then we are not as healthy in our love for one another as we should be. either one or both of us need to grow immaturity and character and we probably need to learn to have those difficult conversations with one another.

Love has hope for one another. Love helps protect one another. Love perseveres with one another.

Every single one of us would love to have a home where this love is normal. We should want this to be even more true of our church than it is right now. Donnie Craft used to tell me there is a vitamin that amongst other vitamins known as the best friend vitamin. That vitamin is vitamin B1. If you want to have a friend, be one first. If you want to see your church family become even more loving, soak in the love of God and pray that He makes you a catalyst for expressing his love within our church family.

If you do not feel or think you can love the other Christians of the same church, know that we all have our issues, including our need to appreciate more deeply God’s love for us. If we are excusing our lack of love for others as acceptable, then we are saying that God’s love is not enough for me. I need something more from this other person to make them lovable, for God did not love me enough for me to obey him in loving others. Whatever we say we need to be complete or fulfilled, is what we worship. All idols will fail you. God’s love never will fail.

For the love God has shown you and for the love that you are to show back to him, maintain brotherly love, especially within the church.

Exercise hospitality with fellow believers in their occasional needs. (V. 2)

Exercise hospitality with fellow believers in their occasional needs.

As I may have mentioned earlier, we have some straightforward imperatives or commands in this passage. The meaning is very straightforward for these different commands. But the implications of these commands broaden our understanding of how we are to live out these commands. Hospitality within the biblical context pertains to providing for the practical need for shelter and a place to stay for visitors, whom you would treat as an honored guest, providing food and water and other items that may be of benefit to a traveler. The example given to us regarding angels, appears to be a reference back to Abraham and possibly Lot, when three angels visited Abraham first. By the way, the word angel is a transliteration from the Greek word *αγγελος*, which generally means messenger. The technical referent to those we know of as angels carried with it the idea of a heavenly representative sent by the Lord. Abraham entertained three heavenly representatives. Two of them were sent forward as angels of destruction for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but Abraham speaks to the third one in such a way as if He's God himself. Theologians refer to that such manifestations as the pre-incarnate Christ, the Son manifesting himself temporarily to Abraham.

The point of this command is not to say maybe you'll get an angel visit you if you have enough people in your home. Rather, we should so value those that do need our help upon occasion that we avail ourselves to help them. We should help those who are out of sorts or out of their normal place or routine. We should make visitors feel valued and welcome. We are to make ourselves available to them as we would to Christ. Jesus tells us that what we do to the least of his people, to the least of the children of God, then that is what we have done as unto Him.

**Exercise compassionate and
empathetic care for fellow
believers in ongoing suffering.
(v. 3)**

Thankfully, we mostly have not had to follow through on this direct command regarding Christians being thrown into prison in the United States for the sake of their religious beliefs. But the direct command to care for prisoners still applies to our brothers and sisters in other locations.

It has come to the attention of our church leaders through Bonnie Thapa that a brother of hers back in Nepal will potentially face jail time for the sake of evangelizing. He will lose his job as a teacher and will not be able to provide for his family and is expected to provide for his own food while in prison if convicted. If you would like to help contribute financially, please see Kevin Larson, Ramesh Shrestha, or Bonnie Thapa to contribute. If you will at least commit to praying for this brother, find out from them how to receive updates on his situation.

Thankfully, the United States has been a place safe from governmental persecution for religious belief, but religious liberty is constantly being tested or threatened. I was listening to the Briefing with Al Mohler this past week. He said something that I feel like we know and recognize, but it hits you when someone finally verbalizes it. What was considered outlandish and wrong in the past is considered acceptable and even normal now.

Those who were seen as liberals 25 years ago are being called conservative bigots by those who see themselves as liberal today. Generally speaking regarding the trajectory of our nation, those exclusive religious groups who are unwilling to conform to the norms of the government will receive more critical treatment by our government. To believe that freedom of religion should be normal is to be a religious zealot and bigot in the eyes of many now. May God change that trajectory. May he use our prayers and our votes.

If that time comes in which religious liberty is no longer a rights in our country, then we will be compelled to live out this imperative as the church receiving this letter had

to live. But even if we do not reach that point as a nation, the implication of this command applies. Whereas hospitality pertains to occasional needs, this call for empathetic care pertains to ongoing needs of those suffering, especially those suffering for expressing their faith.

On a Sunday morning, if you're wondering if it's worth it to come to this physical building to be around others to worship God together, I will tell you immediately yes. Not only do you get to worship the Triune God with fellow believer singing onto the Lord and hearing the Word in community, you get to be around others as a mutual encouragement to one another in preparation for facing the world this following week.

Just your presence as a fellow believer in Christ is encouragement to the person near you. In addition to that encouragement, by gathering together, you hear about what is going on in each other's lives. You see the face of the person that you normally greet. As one of the elders said it to me this week, your presence is used by God to help protect these fellow believers from the enemy's attacks. It is encouraging to the teacher who wonders if he will be reprimanded just for being consistent with his faith. Your faithful presence is encouraging to the lady wondering if anyone will accept her and love her here. Your presence is encouraging to the senior who has no one else in her home. Your presence is encouraging to the teenager who is the only believer in his household. The presence of others helps protect you from making your world all about you.

When we do learn of ongoing needs of others, the love of God compels us to action. This is not a church that says, "Glad to see you. Figure life out on your own." No, I witness on a regular basis how our church reaches out to the hurting as an expression of Christ's love. Those who sacrificially serve others find that they are blessed far beyond the sacrifice it took for them to serve.

This week I witnessed an adult son gently and sacrificially caring for his mother in her hospital bed with great compassion and empathy. He experienced the grace to serve and the joy of service, even though he felt the weight and gravity of doing so. When God uses us to care for others we are reminded of God's great care shown to us in Christ.

Honor marriage as given and designed by God. (V. 4)

Honor marriage as given and designed by God.

You know, when it comes to Christian ethics, how we live for God pertains to all areas of life. So it is not isolated to what you put into your body or what you use your body to do with others. But drug addictions and sexual misconduct will derail your pursuit of Christ faster and for longer than just about anything else.

Some in the world are in shock that we hold to the notions that there are only two sexes and that marriage is to be between one man and one woman for life and that marriage is the only acceptable avenue for sexual expression.

The attack on marriage by the sexual revolution has grown and morphed so that there is now no consistent standard for sexuality. In France this week, a left-wing feminist group is outraged that their government is offering assistance to pregnant “men.” The current leading philosophy rejects the very idea of definition. The world is so enamored with the idea of self-autonomy that we are expected to accept whatever self-identifying pronoun someone gives without question.

The battle for marriage did not start when you got married, nor did it start in the 70s or in 2015. Marriage became a battleground in Genesis 3. When we are commanded to honor marriage, The focus is not just on making sure not to commit adultery or fornication. Honoring marriage is about worshiping God rather than idolatry. Honoring marriage is about seeing the opportunity marriage provides to serve another as worship unto Christ. God is the One who brought it to Adam’s attention that he was lacking a wife. God is the one that figuratively walked Eve down the aisle to Adam. God is the one who told them to enjoy one another and to be fruitful and multiply. God made husbands and wives to be complementary to each other. They were to care for one another and seek the benefit of the other.

So the Holy Spirit tells us by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 that husbands should seek to please their wives in the marital relationship and wives are to do likewise for the husband. Each one is to seek the benefit of the other in regard to the romantic relationship between husband and wife. Men, you have to do a lot of study to do this well for your wife. What does she need of you spiritually, what does she need of you emotionally? What does she need of you relationally? How have you helped nourish her intellectually? If you are seeking to serve God by serving her in these various ways, it will be easier for her to seek your good romantically.

Wives, even though the husband should be leading in these things, let me encourage you not to wait for your husband. Christ Jesus is the great husband to the church. God has made His love known and will provide for our needs. The Scripture encourages you to love based on God's love, not based on what your husband deserves.

Men and women, regardless of marital status, your commitment to keeping sex only between husband and wife is an essential aspect of being the people of God in holiness. Fight for your spouse, not against one another. Fight for the marriages of fellow believers in prayer, encouragement, and accountability. If you do not think others' marriages in our church affect you and our church, please sign up to do biblical counseling training with CCTC. As soon as you join in your first session, you'll realize the grave effect a marriage partner has on another's spiritual wellbeing. God wants to use you to be a blessing to your spouse in the pursuit of Christ. Beware of pursuing any one other than your spouse with your eyes, your emotions, or your body. Otherwise, you may find that your heart never belonged to either your spouse or to God.

Pursue godliness with contentment with what you own. (V. 5a)

Pursue godliness with contentment with what you own.

Why do people want more money?

So they can have comfort? So they can have power? So they have social status? Why do they seek those things?

So they can have security? So they can have what they think will fulfill them? So they can feel accepted?

If those are the reasons people chase after more and more money, then when is enough enough? The promise of that fulfillment or security is always based on tomorrow's dollar but at the cost of today's joy.

We are supposed to use money and use it wisely. It is a good servant but a terrible master. It is hard enough seeking to serve God rightly through our labors in this world. Do not make it impossible to have joy by seeking to serve money and the promises of what it can bring.

**The love of God is more than
enough to satisfy us and make
us able to serve sacrificially.
(Vv. 5b-6)**

The love of God is more than enough to satisfy us and make us able to serve sacrificially.

This is a beautiful verse in 13:5. Just as God had promised to Jacob and to Joshua in the midst of facing great difficulty and isolation, so God promises us in Christ, “I will never ever fail you. I will never ever give up on you. I will never ever ever forsake you or walk away from you or leave you all alone.”

In the Koine Greek of the New Testament double negatives do not negate each other. In English they do. If I were to say, “I don’t not want to go,” then I’m saying I do want to go somewhere. I’m at least open to it. That same idea in the original language of the New Testament would rather be intensified. “I really don’t want to go somewhere.”

So we have this promise with emphasized with double negatives and intensified by a negative conjunction.

The God who is makes this grand promise to those in Christ: I will never ever leave you. I will never ever fail you. I will never ever abandon you. I will never ever walk away from you.

If you are not a Christian and are unfamiliar with this God about whom we speak, understand that He is not just a figment of our imagination. He is not a religious concept that we came up with. The Triune God is the necessary being by whom all dependent creation exists.

The Son of God has entered into history as a human participant with us, humiliating himself by taking on humanity and dying in the place of sinful man, all according to God’s divine plan revealed in Scripture. We received this divine salvation and relationship by grace through faith. Christians are to love others sacrificially because we know the love that God has for us and that that love is more than enough. All of the general commands given to us in these six verses are calls to love sacrificially. Only

as we revel in God's love for us, will we say that that His love is enough. It is only as we trust in this sufficient love of God, that we will stop seeking to comfort ourselves with sin.

All these general commands have in common the understanding that humanity will choose sin if it means that we think that sin will somehow make us feel better. Apart from the love of God, people will choose a temporary and immediate feeling regardless of right and wrong. But for the person who knows and depends on the love of God, that Christian can confidently say, "God is for me." Even if man wants to come against me and bring greater suffering, God is for me. So what can man do against me?

For the love of God that he has for us is sufficient for our every need. By the love that we have for God, we acknowledge that we were the sinner. We acknowledge that we are insufficient in ourselves. But we also acknowledge that we'd rather choose this great love that we've come to know than the world's fleeting promises of comfort at the cost of conscience.

May we identify with the Crucified who was condemned by the world so that we may know the love of God for eternity.

