

**Hebrews**



**Promises  
Faithfully  
Kept**

# Hebrews 13.18-25 (CSB) M.E.R.G.E.D.

I was reminded of two unique differences this weekend between growing up in Louisiana and living in the mid-Atlantic states.

First, y'all don't have boudin. Someone brought some vacuum-sealed, frozen boudin to us. I threw those boudin links on the grill yesterday. My oh my. They tasted good.

The other one pertains to merging traffic.



Around DC you can have all kinds of merge lanes from all kinds of directions.

(Merge lanes pic)

Where I grew up, you'd simple merge lanes. If a road was running parallel or perpendicular to another, you could expect there to possibly be a merge lane or ramp between the two.

And you're allowed to turn left at any time you have an opening between lanes on an in-town road. Here if you want to turn left. The other week I was in a town that made me go 1.25 miles before being allowed to turn left, and that did not allow u-turns.

The kind of merge lanes Louisianians really do not understand or appreciate are roundabouts.



There are more wrecks on one large round about in Alexandria, Louisiana than anywhere else in that entire parish. It's not even called a roundabout. It's called the traffic circle and its the most hated roadway in central Louisiana. Half the people get on it and think they're in a Nascar race. You just keep turning left. The other half are praying that God gets them off of this giant merry go round safely. They merged onto there, but they don't know how to exit that roundabout to merge onto a different road.

The author in this last portion of his sermon has been helping us see how we are to make the connection of Christ and the gospel to our everyday lives. He says he wants us to receive this brief word if exhortation. He wants us to merge successfully what God has communicated with how we live.

So as we read the last verses of Hebrews, let's consider whether we have merged the Scripture with our lives, priorities, and actions.

**18 Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, wanting to conduct ourselves honorably in everything.**

**19 And I urge you all the more to  
pray that I may be restored to  
you very soon.**

**20 Now may the God of peace,  
who brought up from the dead  
our Lord Jesus—the great  
Shepherd of the sheep—  
through the blood of the  
everlasting covenant,**

**21 equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

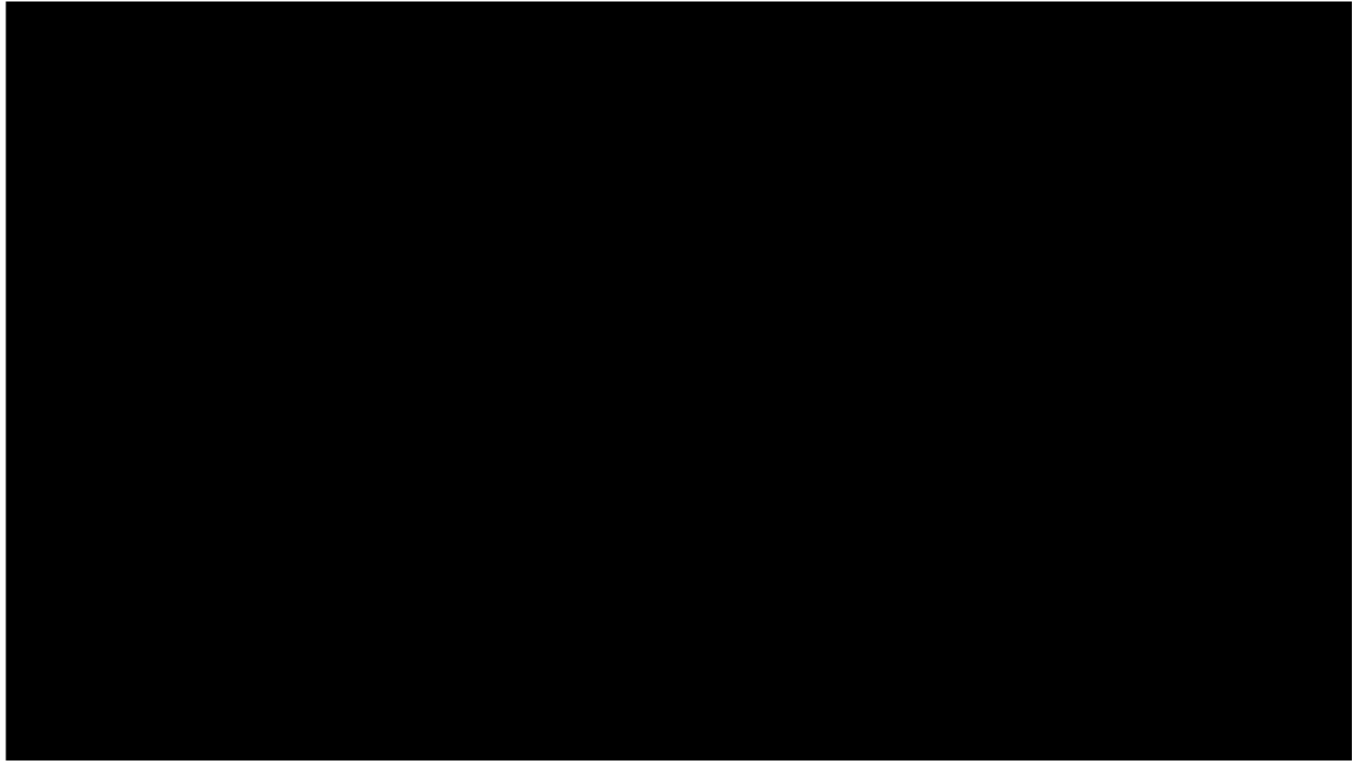


**22 Brothers and sisters, I urge  
you to receive this message of  
exhortation, for I have written to  
you briefly.**

**23 Be aware that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon enough, he will be with me when I see you.**

**24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who are from Italy send you greetings.**

**25 Grace be with you all.**



Pray

# Missional leaders need your prayers on their behalf (vv. 18-19a)

Missional leaders need your prayers.

Let's not undervalue the power of prayer. We have free access to God's very presence by means of Christ in our time of need. We get to ask for help from our Father, but James helps us understand that we need have our desires line up with God's desires in prayer.

You don't have to wonder if God wants you to pray about His mission in Christ to make disciples from among all nations and to grow Christian communities.

The author is part of a missions team of some sort, with either the author himself being an apostle or being part of a team with an apostle who is then giving approval to the composition of this letter. You have such teams present in Acts, e.g. Paul and Barnabas, then Paul and Barnabas leading two separate teams. Paul throughout his letters references traveling companions and coworkers in this gospel effort: Timothy, Titus, Epaphras, Aquilla, Priscilla, Luke.

As either an apostle or part of an apostolic mission team, the author requests prayer for him and the rest of the mission team he is part of with Timothy and others.

We should pray for the mission of Christ to go forth. We should pray for our involvement in it. We should pray for others helping to lead in these gospel efforts.

For accountability to do so, I have my phone alarm set to pray for different people or groups everyday.

Pray for the mission of God to go forward and pray for those God is using to lead in these efforts. Pray for all of us to embrace the truth that we are on the mission field for Christ. Pray for our elders, deacons, community group leaders, and ministry leaders.

Pray for our far-flung family members who have oriented their lives for this mission of proclaiming Christ, gathering the saved into the church. The Klins, the whetstones, Julie, Joanna, Scott, Rachael, Grace extended.

Use your weekly time in the hallway to remember to pray for them.

Pray for them to have a thriving relationship with God and to enjoy happy, healthy relationships with fellow believers. Pray for their marriages and for their financial situations. Pray for their health. Pray for them to establish friendships with the lost. Pray for them to proclaim the gospel wisely, winsomely, and boldly as they have opportunity.

## Encourage faithfulness and fellowship. (vv. 19, 22-23)

Encourage faithfulness and fellowship.

We are not only to pray for each other to be faithful. We are to pray for one another and exhort one another. The author has been exhorting us this whole letter, and we are to exhort one another, speaking the truth in love.

In my experience biblical and gospel exhortation is not something that Christians in America tend to feel comfortable with.

(Example of a typical community group time accountability time—when we confess sin, we jump straight to saying “Pray for me.” What we’re saying is that other believers are welcome to talk to God about our sin but not welcome to talk to us about it.

But we benefit ourselves and others more if we invite them to exhort us. Let them call your sin “sin” and then remind you Christ died for that sin so that you might be forgiven, made clean, and go sin no more.

It does not help but harms if we excuse sin as acceptable bc it is not as bad as others or that it is excused by our intentionality or good track record. Sin snares and entangles us.

Also, don’t stop at just calling wrongdoing sin. Rehearse and state the gospel to your fellow believer so that we are reminded this message comes from outside of us, from God ultimately through this fellow believer.

Remember that you have been set free from sin by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He took this sin upon Him so that you might be the righteousness of God.



God makes you clean. Go and sin no more.

Sometimes we don't speak light into each other's darkness because we feel doing so would be overstepping, so we convince ourselves we're being meek.

The issue that keeps us from exhorting faithfulness is often not humility but pride masked as meekness.

We don't want to confront sin in others bc we don't want them confronting sin in us. We'd rather accept shame than the embarrassment of acknowledging our sin, and so we let our brothers and sisters continue in bondage bc it means our failures are not exposed.

One thing that helps us accept the awkwardness of accountability is the familiarity of those with whom we have fellowship.

When we know we are known and loved, we are willing to accept what our fellow believers have to say to us and we care enough to share with them.

Not just for the sake of correction, even more so for the sake of joy, purpose, and formation, we need fellowship with one another. The author was missing the enjoyment of fellowship with this church and with Timothy.

Sometimes you don't realize the value of the fellowship you have until you either can't have it or realize that your life has so veered off into a terrible direction that you feel you don't deserve it. Don't let the enemy trick you into thinking you are strong enough in yourself to live separate from the Shepherd and His sheep.

Don't wait for others to pursue you. Pursue fellowship and faithfulness yourself along with others in your CG and the church.

**Recite the Gospel as the basis  
for all things being made new.  
(v. 20)**

Recite the Gospel as our basis for all things being made new.

If you read vv. 20-21, it is a complex sentence. At its most simple level, it would read may God equip you. But let's read those verses aloud.

(Read aloud)

The preacher has much to say. He's not adding fluff. We are able to relate to the one God as the God of peace. Why?

The author has been preaching this point over and over. We have access to God only by means of Christ Jesus. He is the door. He is the curtain. He was the only perfect sacrifice. He is the only acceptable and forever living high priest.

He even adds here that Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the flock.

We who are prone to attack and to wandering have one who takes us to himself, protects us, keeps us, and keeps us close.

As I said, the author has made over and over this point about Christ, the gospel, and the new covenant.

Why is he saying it one last time in such a beautiful benediction? He wants it to be what you say. The gospel is to be on your own lips for yourself and others.

What is the power of God for salvation? It is the gospel, the good news of Christ.

If someone were to ask you what is this gospel, are you prepared to say it?

Do you believe it and say it enough so that it shapes how you view yourself and this world?

Have you ever tried flipping between different radio stations when you drive through a neighborhood or different town? The music you listen to will orient how you view your surroundings.

Is the gospel the mental soundtrack you have listened to as you view this world.

That Christ Jesus came to save sinners and to redeem his people and this world. That Christ Jesus died for sin according to the Scriptures, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that we are saved by placing our faith in Him.

He who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God and so now we are his ambassadors to others declaring this good news.

This good news reshapes how we view things, now we see that all things should be shaped for the glory of Jesus.

**be Equipped to do all things to  
the glory of God.  
(v. 21)**

be Equipped to do all things to the glory of God.

One church I was part of had this as their mission statement: Reaching the lost and equipping them join with us in the process of becoming mature and ministering worshippers of God.

When God saves you, he saves you within a particular mission field so you can be effective there. But He doesn't expect you to just stand there doing nothing. God Himself equips you with the Spirit, who leads us to receive and believe Scripture, go through suffering, and be more sanctified through it all, so that we might look more like Christ and point others to Him.

But we need to ask, are we running from that equipping or running to it? Are we excusing ourselves from it or refusing to accept excuses for ourselves?

I used the illustration of football a few weeks ago. I still remember the worst excuse a fellow player ever used for missing practice. He missed practice for the sake of getting a haircut. He didn't care about the team or the game. He was looking for an excuse from the equipping that practice brought.

God wants to equip you to live for His glory in all that you do. Do you want Him to grow you in Christlikeness or are you holding out hope that He will seek your comfort now?

1 Cor.10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

Col. 3:23 Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord.

If you pursue spiritual disciplines for the sake of self-improvement, they will be tedious and exhausting.

But if you pursue them as glory to God, doing so as you walk with God, as you are submitting to God's desire to equip you for His glory, then you will develop in these disciplines with love and purpose.

# **Depend on the grace of God. (v. 25)**

Depend on the grace of God.

The final words of the letter are not simple platitudes. We live and breathe by the grace of God. It is His unmerited favor and self-sacrificial love for us who don't deserve it. His grace saves us. His grace preserves us. His grace is why we are filled with Christ. His grace nourishes and sustains us.

His grace never leaves us. But as we look to the providence of God in our lives, may we depend on His grace even more so than we do oxygen for breath.

