

S.N. Dec. 16, 73 A.M.

LAST WORDS

Hebrews 13

INTRODUCTION:

We now enter the closing chapter of our epistle. Like the concluding chapters of all of Paul's writing, this chapter closes with exhortations to the performance of various duties. These last words, which he has to offer to these Hebrews, are very practical and they are very essential qualities that ought to be in the Christian life. These injunctions and instructions are based upon the teachings that have preceded. He has brought the revelation to them - and God has spoken. Man has heard. And now he proceeded to unfold in these last words a real challenge.

I think we can divide the chapter into (three sections). The virtues of the Christian life - V. 1-6. Second, the duties of the Christian life - V. 8-18. Third, the benediction for all time.

I. THE VIRTUES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - V. 1-6

These marks or virtues which he gives here are very practical.

✓ 1- brotherly love Let brotherly love continue - V. 1 Man was originally created to love. And love was designed to be the master affection of his soul. We are to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart and when we direct this toward men - it is called (charity). But when it is directed to Christians, members of the household of faith, it is to be a partaker of a similar friendship. Genuine Christians may be loved by us. We may love them because they are our children, our parents, our companions in life. That we may love them on account of certain qualities of which they are indebted to us in religion. And this is a particular relation here which we have with God. We have a covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and it is a distinguishing

trait. Love to the brethren is an evidence that we have passed from death unto life, according to the Scriptures. And if you respect and love men for their love and zeal for God, it shows that we also love the cause of God. This resembles God in holiness. And this is a safe and an easy test of Christian character. Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life. Because we love the brethren. If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is liar.

Now brotherly love shows itself in various ways. It will lead to prayer for the brethren. It will enable you to bear one another's burdens by assisting and relieving each other. It will make you forbearing and forgiving. Now in this early church it was easy for them to go heresay hunting. And try to track down those that were heretics and those who had gone astray from the faith and be very unsympathetic with those people who had failed them. But the very necessity of loyalty in the midst of this hostile world was something they could not overlook. They had to keep their faith clean, but they also were supposed to have this love. Behold - how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew from Hermon, and the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion.

Brethren, brotherly love prevents a thousand evils. Need I to exhort you to cultivate brotherly love. If we would only have brotherly love, for each other, how much better it would be. How much more of Heaven might we have here on earth. The exhortation is love one another.

V(2) ✓ 2- [hospitality] Be not forgetful to entertain strangers. At that time multitudes were driven too and fro in the earth and they had to receive

lodging and entertainment, was given to these wanderers and the Christians of all times were people who had a mark and (a virtue) for giving hospitality. There were some who were poor and they would throw open their doors to entertain these strangers. Every man who has a house to sleep in may be benevolent to strangers.

Now when I speak of hospitality - I mean something different from the idea which opens one's house to festive parties made up of acquaintances from the immediate neighborhood. Something different from the enjoyments of social board. I mean kindness to strangers - in the proper sense of the word. That as such, they have no claim upon you by virtue of any intimate acquaintance or relationship.

Thereby some have entered (angels) unawares. Abraham and Lot ~~thus~~ took in strangers to share in their hospitality. And so it turned out that these guests were (ministers from God) Sent to them on an errand of love. So this was an honor.

Many a parent owes the conversion of a child to the influence of a pious stranger in his family. That is, many times, in by-gone days - Christian people open their homes to pastors who travel, who visited. And it was a blessing to the whole family. Make it a point never to turn strangers from your door - entertain him. The rich man who left poor Lazarus to perish at his gate, well might have been blessed had he taken him in and entertained him.

It surely was better for the Christian to entertain a strange Christian than for him to have to go to one of the (public inns) where the atmosphere was impossible. He had in mind here when the angel came to Abraham, to tell of the coming of a son, and he entertained him.

V. 3 - He urges them to remember those or have sympathy for those who are in

trouble. It is here that we see that the Christian church in the earliest days at it's best. It often happened that some Christian may have landed in prison. Maybe for his faith, or perhaps for a debt, or because he was poor. It was then that the Christian church went into action. History tells us that if they heard of one of their number in prison or in distress, for the sake of their Christ's name - they all rendered aid in his necessity. And if he can be redeemed - they set him free.

It is said of Origen when he was young, that he went to the jails to those who were condemned - and even accompanied them to their death. Sometimes Christians were condemned in the minds - like those who are sent to Siberia today. But the Christians sought out the other Christians and try to assist them. Those in bondage of sin and those in civil bondage, and those under social bondage - and God had entrusted to the Christians several talents - varied talents. And to some he had given money, others were given influence. And they were to share this with the fellow soldiers. This was one of the virtues - hospitality.

V. H. ④
30 - [Fourth, purity in marriage] This was a virtue that he upholds here. The marriage bond was to be universally respected.

Now there were those who taught that men should not marry. They should live a separate life in a monastery.

And second, there were those who were always liable to relapse into immorality - into adultrous living, impurity, and unnatural vice.

Now this is a good subject for a discussion here - and of course this is a text within itself. We will not have time to give treatment to it. But I can merely comment on it. That marriage is a divine ordinance instituted in

Paradise when man was first placed upon the earth. And God created a female.
One man and one woman for life. One of each sex - and man should have only one
wife and woman shall have only one husband. And so, the nature produces in
equal portions of males and females. Allowing one male more for every 12 -
for increased exposure to accidents and death.

Marriage is a civil and a religious contract and it assist public morality.
It is not a temporary but a permanent engagement. And it is not to be altered
by man. The Saviour says whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication
and shall marry another commits adultery.

So there are qualification for marriage. I think first there is the prohibition
of marriage between persons who are related to each other in blood. That is the
physical and mental degeneracy which follows. In the 2nd to the 3rd generation
is lamentable.

It is required that a pure mutual affection between the two people be under
taken and this not be on the level of beasts.

A third thing about marriage is that it ought to be of proper age, by persons
who are of age defined by the civil law. The reasons for this are that minors
do not have knowledge enough to make selections and do not have wisdom enough
to undertake the management of a family.

Now these duties that married people solomonly swear before the heart-searching
God - they promise the marriage vow. They are married in the eyes of the law,
and they are married in the sight of God.

Now our text declares here that marriage is honorable and it is honorable for
various reasons.

First, because of the institution - the two institutions now in existence which date way back to the beginning of creation. Marriage and the Sabbath and marriage goes back before the Sabbath. It's the oldest institution in the world.

Marriage is also honorable because it is the typical reference of the union of Christ with his church

It is a divine institution and he and all wisdom founded it. It is just, it is right, it is good. And it was not good for man to be alone. So Adam was given a wife.

It is also honorable because it brings comfort, happiness, and security. Some have suffered, because of contracting marriage contrary to the laws of nature, and the laws of revelation.

Man married - 1 mo - - ditch - not word against - she a slave - Dr. What's she doing you don't like. - (she say good, shirt, tie -) say horror what do put on get away - NO - Today - ditch next to on
There are more people who are happy by marriage than they would be under any other circumstances and it is a great usefulness in society in general. *Turned to shingles!*
Wife - one said let him be a man - push out his clothes - she could not change - this itch
Temp Chicago - away 2 wks - man got well!
Bottled by thing hurts - won't hold in heart - (old man's marriage honorable - Sep, etc -

Now Paul points out that there are evils that disregard the marriage institution. Those that he mentions - ludeness which is vice. And that produces other horrible crimes. The ordinary course of things for impurity he says, is the growth of sin. And this leads to the road to Hell. He designates the term adultery which a sufferer can receive this side of the grave. The vast combination of sufferings leaves a train of mourners. Tears stream which no hand can wipe away. And there are groans than no comforter can bring peace. And there is anguish for which there is no balm of Gilead that can soothe.

✓ 54 Fifth, the virtue of contentment - V. 5. The Christian must be free from the love of money. He must be content with what he has. And why should he not

The real leader of the church preaches Christ, and therefore brings men to Christ. It is not to himself that he draws attention but to the person of Jesus.

Leslie Weatherhead tells the story about a school boy who decided to enter the ministry. He was asked when he came to that decision. He said, that he had come to it after he had heard a sermon in his school chapel. He was asked the name of the preacher - his answer was that he did not remember the preacher's name. All he knew was that that preacher had shown him Jesus. The duty of the real preacher is to show men nothing but Jesus Christ. And the Christian preachers in this country for the most part, are pious and devoted and evangelical men who love God. Who love his cause and who love to win souls. And who have had an experience in their own soul. If their holy footsteps - their Godly example are to be followed - they should be remembered.

We ought to remember our instructors and those who have trials and support them with our prayers - like Moses interceding for Israel against Amalek. The hands of Christian ministers often become heavy and droop. Aaron and Hur stayed them up.

Paul found it important to call upon the churches to remember him in prayer. To give him assistance. Cold indifference often slows the preacher down. There are those who have little sympathy for a leader. Little do they think of the (overwhelming burden) which rests upon his hands. Christians, pray for your ministers. Not only a man - but men that are (charged with the care of souls). When you kneel in prayer, be patient for them as men of temporal wants - like other men. They give themselves up as they do for the work of Christ. They cannot pursue any worldly employment. They are entirely dependent upon the church as a means of life. It is altogether right that they should - for God commanded they that preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel.

The real preacher lives in the faith and thereby tries to bring men to Christ. And the real leader dies in loyalty. He shows men how to live - he demonstrates it by his own loyalty. Thereby the leader leaves to those who come after him, an example and an inspiration. It is a good thing to know and always to keep turning over in the mind, the things which were done of old by the disciples, the prophets, and the preachers. They lived with virtue.

V. 8-9
Unchangeable Christians V. 8-9.

V. 8 - Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Here is an ultimate statement - there can be no change because he is changeless. Referring to him today, yesterday, or tomorrow - he is forever going to be the same.

Time changes us. Your portrait taken years ago hanging on the walls of your home, is a sad contrast of your present self. Your eyes flashed, your hair was thick, there was no streaks of gray and marks on the face.

Of course, this makes no effect on God who said - I am eternal. The changeless one. Moods change us. We know people who are like oranges one day and lemons the next. They just change to suit the situations.

Jesus is always the same.

Circumstances change us. Men in poverty become wealthy. The butler who had done so much for Joseph in prison, who Joseph had done so much for, forgot him when he got back to the palace among new friends. But Jesus never changes.

I think what is implied here is that he is the same person - he is the same one. Hebrews 1:12 - He lives, he is here.

V. 9 Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. As Christ is unchangeable, so you as a Christian, should be courageous in your stand. It may have been there was some false doctrines going around, or false teachings going around even in the church that day. And they knew all about it. And some of them were in danger of falling for it. Now we may have similar conditions in our own time. Once an established heart in the grace of God - that the air is clear and you can see across the water. And you can see the outline of the Heavenly coast. And these strange doctrines have bothered the church all through the ages. There are those who are caught up with one single aspect of truth, and they distort this and they carry this to dangerous accesses. There is only one foundation that never rocks or moves - one condition which never alters. It is good to have the heart established with grace.

We must feed upon Christ.

3 - Bearing Reproach -
V. 10-11 He refers to the Jews who had their rigid food laws. They are layed down in Lev. 12. All the world knows that no Jew will eat pork. The Jew believes that he could serve and please God by eating and not eating certain foods. Possibly there are Christians in this church who were ready to abandon the Christian freedom and liberty, and once again take on the yoke of Jewish rule in the regulations about foods.

There were certain Greeks who had definite ideas about food. Because they believed in re-incarnation. They believed that a man's soul passed from body to body. And finally it merited release. And so, they turned to vegetables and ate no meat.

There were people called gnostics - whom we will study in the book of Col. in January. Who were much the same. They believed that matter was altogether bad.

And that man must concentrate on spirit - which is altogether good. They cut food to the bear minimum and obstained from meat. There were a number of Greeks who thought what they ate or refused to eat - they were strengthened in their spiritual life and releasing their souls.

But neither of these things seems to fit in - this eating and drinking was something to do with the body of Jesus. The writer here goes back to the regulations on the day of atonement about the body of the bullock which was offered for sin. The body of the goat which was offered for the sins of the people. And was consumed with fire in a place outside the camp. Lev. 16:27. They were sin offerings and the point is - even if the worshippers had wished to eat their flesh, they could not do so.

Now the parallel for him at this point is - caused Jesus to be sacrificed outside the gate. For Calvary was outside the city wall of Jerusalem. And the crucifixions were always carried out outside of town. Jesus too was the sin offering for men and he follows that. Just as none could eat of the flesh of the sin offering on the day of atonement - no one can eat of his flesh.

It may be a clue here - there may have been a little group in the church who either had a sacrament or some common meal of communion - may have consecrated their food to Jesus. That in truth, they were eating the body of Christ.

They may have persuaded themselves that they had consecrated the food to Christ and his body entered it.

Which was indeed what the religious Greeks believed about their gods. And often they made feasts for friends and for their gods within the temple - where the sacrifice was made. And they believed that when they ate the meat and the

sacrifice - the god to whom they sacrificed was in the meat and entered into them.

V. (12) - Now Christ was crucified outside the gate - he was exiled and banished from men. He was reproached as a criminal. He was numbered among the transgressors. The Hebrews see a picture and we have to sever ourselves from the world. We have to submit to going out of the world's gate - we may have to bear some reproach as Christ bore. The separation, the isolation, the humiliation, may come to the Christian as they come to Christ. The Christian must be prepared to receive the same treatment that the master underwent.

V. (13) - Let us go therefore without the camp bearing reproach.

✓ (Charles Simeon) of Cambridge - at the beginning of his career as a minister, he was faced with violent abuse and opposition. And was being crushed. He turned to the word of God for direction. His eyes settled upon a passage and they came out and found a man of Cyrene - Simon, by name. Him they compelled to bear his cross.¹⁷ The similarity of the name to his own, arrested him. And he was moved to new courage. With the thought of his Oneness with the sufferings of Christ. So it is with all of us. If we are reproached for the name of Jesus - let us be happy.

This is the way it happened in the Old Testament. It was not to be popular always to follow Jesus.

✓ One day a man who was in the insurance business was asked by a friend - if he did not enjoy his relationship with the other men in the business. He replied - I am not close to any of my business associates. Because they want

to drink all the time. It seems that they are incapable of fellowship without liquor. So, he was a cast-out - without a camp. Now this is often the position of the Christian who refuses to compromise with the world.

✓ In 1870 there was a pretty girl by the name of Prisillia Livingston Stewart. She had lovely eyes, golden hair, and was Irish. She was popular beyond imagination. She had no time for religion - in fact, she opposed it. And then one day she met Christ and she became a very faithful disciple. The Salvation Army came to her section of the country and she cast her lot with those people. They were despised and often mistreated, by stones - bad tomatoes, eggs. And Miss Stewart said none of my friends recognized me in the street. And all of the young men who were fond of me walked on the other side. Now being a normal girl - this was painful. But God had other things in store for her because she later went as a missionary to China. And became the wife of the missionary, C. T. Studd.

None of my friends recognize me without the camp bearing his reproach. What do you say then when there are some in your friendships. These Hebrew Christians were wondering what they should do when they were cut off from the old ties of families and friends. And excluded from the temple. What are you to do when you are cast out because of Jesus. He says, let us go forth - therefore unto him. Without the camp, bearing his reproach.

V. 15-18 He tells you how you can fulfill these duties of the Christian life.

✓ First, he says offer continual worship - V. 15. Sacrifice of praise to God - continually giving thanks in his name. The ancient people argued that a thank offering was more acceptable to God than a sin offering. But when a man offered a sin offering - he was trying to get something out of God, forgiveness for his sins. While a thank offering was the unconditional offering of the grateful

heart. Now the sacrifice of gratitude is a sacrifice for all kin and are bound to bring this.

V. 16 - Offer a public and glad confession of your faith in the name of Christ. This offering of loyalty here - communicated he says, and forget not this. Because this will please God. The Christian can always offer a life to God. And never be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Christian can offer as a sacrifice to God deeds of kindness. And sharing with his fellowmen - this is a point that the Jews well knew. The sacrifices of the temple were at an end after 70 AD. They were no longer possible for in that year the temple was destroyed. What was left. The Rabbi taught that in these latter days when the temple ritual was gone - theology, prayer, penitence, the study of the law, and charity were sacrifice still equivalent to the ancient ritual.

V. 17 - 19 - He instructs them to be obedient and in prayer. That the present leaders had duties to the congregation. And though the church was a democracy - it was not a democracy run mad. It must give obedience to the leaders. The obedience was given not to gratify the leaders in a sense of prestige. It was given to the end that they may have charge over lost souls. The great joy of a leader, of any Christian fellowship, is to see those who he leads established in the Christian way. The greatest sorry of a leader of any Christian fellowship is to see those whom he leads getting further away from God.

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III. A BENEDICTION FOR ALL TIME

Now we have discussed the virtues of a Christian life. V. 1-6. We have

touched on the duties of the Christian life and now we come to this benediction which was pronounced upon these Hebrews, which is a benediction that will cover all time. Because in this benediction, Paul is committing the cause into the hands of another. One that is higher above.

V. (20-21) He draws a picture of God and of Jesus.

God is the god of peace. Even though in the most troubled and distressing situation - God can bring peace to men's souls. In any fellowship where there is a division because men has forgotten God, if they will only lift up in memory - God -- his presence will bring back peace. When a man's mind and heart is distracted and torn between the two natures. If he would put it under the control God - God will bring peace. It is only the God of peace that will make us at peace with ourselves, at peace with each other, and peace with himself.

God is the god of life. It was the God who brought Jesus again from the dead. Now the love of God and the power of God are the only things which can bring a man peace in life and triumph in death.

God is the God who both shows us his will and equips us to do it. God never gives us a task without giving us the power to do it. He sends us out armed and equipped with everything that we need.

Next, he follows in this benediction - a three-fold picture of Jesus

First, Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep. He pictures Jesus as a good shepherd. It is something that is very precious to us. But strangely enough, it is a picture that Paul never uses and the writer of the Hebrews uses only here. There is a legend of Moses which tells of Moses keeping sheep

in Egypt on the dessert. And one sheep wandered away from the flock and Moses patiently followed it - and found it drinking at a mountain stream. Moses came upon it and put it upon his shoulder -- so it was because you were thirsty that you wandered away, said Moses. And without anger he toiled and carried it home. And when God saw it he said, if this man Moses is so compassionate to a straying sheep - he is the very man I want to lead my people. A shepherd is one who is ready to give his life for his sheep. He is one who bears with the foolishness of the sheep - he never stops loving them. That is what Jesus does for us.

Second, ² Jesus is the one who established the new covenant. And that is to say - he made possible the new relationship between God and man. He is the one who opened the door. He took the terror out and brought the love of God to us.

Third, ³ Jesus is the one who died to establish that new relationship. To open the way to God it cost him his life. Now, our new relationship to God cost the blood of Jesus. He died to bring us life.

Now he finishes off this letter in V. 22-24 - with some personal greetings. He says that he is sorry that the letter to the Hebrews is just about half the length that he would have liked to have made it. In short, you can read this letter in about an hour and it will bring you great profit. It has a reference to Timothy, who had been in prison for the sake of Christ. And it comes to an end with a blessing. Telling of the grace of Christ which opens the way to God.