

# Hebrews Ch 13

Welcome to the final chapter of Hebrews  
We finally got there  
After 13 weeks – with a break in August

## Is it a letter or a sermon?

- Read Hebrews without Ch 13 – You would think it is a sermon. There is no opening greetings, etc.
- And Ch 13 still contains many exhortations or instructions
- Including another explanation of the meaning of the sacrifice of Jesus
- Ending with a blessing, greetings and a promise to visit!

This letter had theologians head scratching

Not only does it not begin as a letter and it ends as one

Ch 13 has also quite different style. Many topics are touched and there's only one bit of extended teaching

Was it added later on?

Most theologians are agreeing that this is not the case.

The author concludes with very practical instructions / exhortations – but bearing on the overall teaching that he has given in the rest of the letter / sermon

# The exhortations

## 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)

Mutual love – Greek Phileo

One short sentence, on which all the rest of this chapter is based upon

The summary of the law: Love your God with all your heart, mind and soul

Love your neighbour as yourself

This chapter is focused on the latter, but mainly within the Christian community

Not that we can learn from this on how to deal with others outside the community as well

# The exhortations

- 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)
- 2) Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (v2)

As the second point indicates!

Strangers are per definition not part of the community.

But we do not know their background. They could be Christians. They could even be angels!

As others have experienced!

# The exhortations

- 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)
- 2) Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (v2)
- 3) Remember those who are in prison (v3)

Those who are in prison. These are I think the ones of the community who are in prison because of their Christian faith

And they were often tortured as well to give up their faith.

The author here asks for empathy with them, so far that we imagine ourselves being in prison with them

Still many Christians are persecuted for their faith in many countries. We pray for them, but it is difficult to imagine what it is like. But still the author puts this on our hearts.

# The exhortations

- 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)
- 2) Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (v2)
- 3) Remember those who are in prison (v3)
- 4) Honour your marriages (v4)

In line with all the Old Testament teaching as well as the New Testament teaching

But keeping in honour by all, not just the couple, but the whole community

Do not stir in someone else marriage!

And secondly, only sex within marriage – no dallying outside of it. He does not mention sex before marriage, although that is a standard that the Bible holds us to as well.

In fact the first sexual relations is often seen in the Bible as the 'consummation' of the marriage.

Using this standard many people are married way before they thought and with many more people!  
Don't!

# The exhortations

- 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)
- 2) Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (v2)
- 3) Remember those who are in prison (v3)
- 4) Honour your marriages (v4)
- 5) Do not love money, but be content with what you have (v5-6)

Another sticking point

If you love money, you do not love God with all your heart, mind and soul. There are other loves that compete with God, but we often rely on our money. While some of us lack money for even the most basic things.

The author says: Jesus will never leave not forsake us. In this context, do we rely on Jesus instead of what we have in our bank accounts or our possession?

No, the author says, God will protect you! But do we rely on that?

# The exhortations

- 1) Let mutual love continue (v1)
- 2) Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (v2)
- 3) Remember those who are in prison (v3)
- 4) Honour your marriages (v4)
- 5) Do not love money, but be content with what you have (v5-6)
- 6) Remember your leaders (v7-8)

This saying is two fold

1. Is the life of the leader/preacher consistent with what they teach? A challenge for both the congregation and the leader
2. If so, yes imitate them in their faith. But also a challenge for the leaders. Is our faith worth while initiating?

The ultimate teacher/leader is Jesus Christ – the same yesterday, today and forever. You can surely imitate him!



# The exhortations

7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)

This seems a simple instruction. We need to test what is being taught, by the same leaders previously mentioned, with the bible.

Does it give glory to God and Jesus Christ?  
Is it consistent with what God says in the bible?  
Do other spirit filled Christians agree with the teaching?

So if we hear something that is strange, but our own leaders but also from the radio, internet, and all sorts of wonderful books, look at these three tests!

And discuss it with each other, does it align with our knowledge of Father, Son and Spirit and what the Bible teaches?

# The exhortations

- 7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)
  - 1) Giving an example of grace over regulations of food
  - 2) But then under-guarding with a teaching on another meaning of the sacrifice of Christ – that of a sacrificial meal (vs10-14)

The author then gives an example of the food regulations. Quite a sticking point between the Christians and the Jews.(even today – kosher food) But many Christians thought that they still had to adhere to those rules too.

The author then gives another aspect of Jesus sacrifice

We have an altar (communion table? Or even the presence of Jesus in our hearts?) different from the Hebrew faith.

He then reminds that the kosher sacrifices were also burned outside the camp. Only the blood was being used for the atonement of sin.

Jesus sacrifice, once and for all, was also outside the camp - outside the city is where the cross was.

# The exhortations

- 7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)
  - 1) Giving an example of grace over regulations of food
  - 2) But then under-guarding with a teaching on another meaning of the sacrifice of Christ – that of a sacrificial meal (vs10-14)

The author then says that in order to be with Jesus, we also need to go outside the walls, in this case outside of religious regulations – those do not save us.

To also bear the abuse that Jesus suffered. And many Christians have

We do not even have a lasting city that we can call home! That city is still to come!

Instead we need to sacrifice to God and Jesus outside the city, outside the regulations

How?

# The exhortations

- 7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)
  - 1) Giving an example of grace over regulations of food
  - 2) But then under-guarding with a teaching on another meaning of the sacrifice of Christ – that of a sacrificial meal (vs10-14)
- 8) Continually over sacrifices of praise to God (v15)

V15: by giving him praise continually. And that is not easy, that is a sacrifice. Not only in the church or even in our houses. But everywhere where people can hear us!

# The exhortations

- 7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)
  - 1) Giving an example of grace over regulations of food
  - 2) But then under-guarding with a teaching on another meaning of the sacrifice of Christ – that of a sacrificial meal (vs10-14)
- 8) Continually over sacrifices of praise to God (v15)
- 9) Do not neglect to do good and share what you have, as another form of sacrifice to God (v16)

And then he mentions to other forms of sacrifices:

Doing good – not only within the community, but also outside

And sharing what we have. It is not specific inside our outside the community. But sharing or giving is also a sacrifice to Jesus

This is hard, but Jesus gave his whole life for us, so we can also share what we have with others.

And why to earn our salvation? No, just for the simple fact that they are pleasing to God. And because we want to please God, freely, without getting something back additionally.

# The exhortations

- 7) Do not be carried away by strange teachings (v9)
  - 1) Giving an example of grace over regulations of food
  - 2) But then under-guarding with a teaching on another meaning of the sacrifice of Christ – that of a sacrificial meal (vs10-14)
- 8) Continually over sacrifices of praise to God (v15)
- 9) Do not neglect to do good and share what you have, as another form of sacrifice to God (v16)
- 10) Obey and submit to your leaders (v17)

Another instruction towards leaders: obey and submit.

I must admit that I did not expect to have to give an account of you to God! But that is what the author says! I also find it daunting to keep watch over your souls, and I am sure that the elders would agree with me on those points!

But then he tells the congregation not to give those in leadership cause for worry! It not good for them, and it probably means that what the leaders are worried about is harmful for ourselves!

# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)

The we get to the ending written as a letter. But we have still things to learn.

The author asks for prayers. Who can we pray for that is in ministry on the coal face of mission and evangelism?

We have seen quite often Christian organisations falling short on how they should behave. Are we praying for them? To continue to have a clear conscience and to act honourably? The URC, Tearfund, Mission Aviation Fellowship, DFB&I / PRMI,

Or are we criticising instead?

# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)
- We want to be returned to you (v19)

For us it is interesting to note that the author wanted to get back to those he writes to. And that this would happen earlier if they pray for him!



# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)
- We want to be returned to you (v19)
- A benediction
  - Reminding us again of the blood of the eternal covenant (v20-21)

The we have the first blessing:

20 Now may the **God of peace**, who through the **blood of the eternal covenant** brought back from the dead our **Lord Jesus**, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 **equip you with everything good for doing his will**, and may **he work in us what is pleasing to him**, through **Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever**. Amen.

# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)
- We want to be returned to you (v19)
- A benediction
  - Reminding us again of the blood of the eternal covenant (v20-21)
- Hope that you can bear with the instructions (of this letter)

The final verses. The author realised that all that he gives as exhortations or instruction is quite difficult. He used the words “urges to bear with”. He tells this all for our own wellbeing as followers of Jesus.

It is also brief (!) He has much more to say! But we have the rest of the bible an never ending source of teaching through the Holy Spirit

# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)
- We want to be returned to you (v19)
- A benediction
  - Reminding us again of the blood of the eternal covenant (v20-21)
- Hope that you can bear with the instructions (of this letter)
- Timothy freed and may visit (v23)

Here's a name that we know: Timothy! Assuming that this is the same Timothy that we know from Paul, we have to note that the other accounts of the bible do not mention that he was imprisoned. We don't know, but it is an interesting fact.

The congregations receiving this letter are therefore also familiar with him and his life as well

# The ending as a letter

- Pray for us! (v18)
- We want to be returned to you (v19)
- A benediction
  - Reminding us again of the blood of the eternal covenant (v20-21)
- Hope that you can bear with the instructions (of this letter)
- Timothy freed and may visit (v23)
- Greetings & final blessing (v24-25)

The letter is ending with greetings from those from Italy. Unknown is if they are in Italy (hence the letter could be written there) or it is a group of missionaries who originate out of Italy, and the letter is sent to those who also have connections with Italy? We don't know.

The final words are a simpler blessing: grace be with you all.

So I end with that as well.

# Conclusion