

Jesus Christ - The Author and Finisher of Our Faith in the Book of Hebrews (Part 3 - Chapters 11-13)

Meeting 7

Now is a good opportunity to mingle the word with the spirit of faith in us and to gain the reality. Three days for three chapters in Hebrews – that is very good! To cover too much is not too good because our capacity is not that great. How much can you eat for breakfast? Not too much. You cannot eat a loaf of bread, twenty oranges and drink ten cups of coffee. That is too much and is not healthy! Spiritually, it is the same – every day we must eat the Lord. If we don't eat, we cannot grow. I encourage all the young people to eat God's word every day. It does not have to be that much, but you must eat it into your heart, mingle it with faith and chew it. Digestion starts with chewing. If you do not chew and just swallow everything, you may have a problem. Then also learn to chew the cud every day, to digest the word of God! Be consistent and practice every day.

At the end of Hebrews 13 the writer says, *"Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly"* (Heb. 13:23). This verse shows us that the writer is Paul. Among the apostles, nobody knew the Holy Scriptures as well as Paul. He studied under Gamaliel and was very zealous for God. He was a scribe, a Pharisee of the Pharisees – the top Pharisee! He loved the word and desired to serve God. But he did not know Christ, which was a big problem, until the Lord met him. Timothy was one of his best young workers. Paul wrote that he had *"found no one like-minded..."* (Phil. 2:20a) as he was, except for Timothy. So, the book of Hebrews is written by Paul.

Why did I start with the last verse? Because it is Paul's style of writing in the last chapters of his epistles to always share something that is practical in our daily life. For example, in Ephesians, he talked about the body of Christ, a wonderful, excellent and vision that is so spiritual. Then he talked about practical matters: "*Husbands, love your wives,*" "*Wives submit to your own husbands,*" "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord,*" and he also addressed the employees and employers (Eph. 5:22-6:9). He wrote these things because if Christ is not lived out in a very practical way in our daily living, that means there is no reality – we are not applying Christ. In Colossians, Paul said, "*...do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Col. 3:17b); this is very practical. Here again in the last chapter of Hebrews, Paul talks about things that are super practical and very normal – in a sense, not very "spiritual," yet it is the spiritual reality of this wonderful faith exercised by the saints. It is expressed through our daily living. This is amazing! If there is no reality in our daily living, then what are we doing? So, I really appreciate the last chapter.

Remember the book of Hebrews is an epistle. When Paul was writing it, he probably was not thinking about separating it into 13 chapters. So, you must realize that Chapter 13 is a continuation of faith and of such a wonderful life in Zion. Zion is very practical; it is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with myriads of angels, the church of the firstborn, the festal gathering etc. Then we must serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

What does serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear look like? Is it just to do something for God? No, the practicality is: "*Let brotherly love continue*" (Heb. 13:1). That means they already had brotherly love. The way Paul wrote this should give us a sense of what Paul was feeling when he was writing. He was not teaching and commanding them: "You don't have brotherly love! From now on, after listening to this message, love the brethren!" On the contrary, his delivery was with love and care for the brethren: "*Let brotherly love continue.*" I appreciate the spirit of Paul. There is much for all of us to learn in the church life and even in the family life. We need to feel the heart of the saints. Do all things with love. This is the first thing he mentioned because it is the most important. It is also the first thing the Lord mentioned in the seven epistles to the churches. He was not happy

because they left their first love (Rev. 2:2). Love is wonderful. The first thing that the Holy Spirit did when He came to us to fill us up was to pour out the love of God into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). I have seen many gifted brothers, who were willing to go on, but they lacked one thing: love. If you don't have love, when there is a mistake, we point fingers – there is no compassion. In the end, you will be sitting on the throne, ruling over the saints, telling them what to do; and if they don't do it, you will show them the door. We must realize that in Zion, the city of the great King, the King rules with love. Love is a wonderful thing! It is also the very factor and reason that God sent His only begotten Son, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”* (John 3:16). God loves mankind!

Throughout the years, I have learned to love those who hate me and am still learning to have no bitterness toward them. This love is wonderful and so important. You cannot serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear without this continuing love. In his epistle, John not only tells us that God is light (1 John 1:5), but He also tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). We appreciate light: “I saw the light, and nobody saw this before!” But light without love is not that good because it is not balanced. God is light, and God is love. *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”* (1 John 3:1). How do you assess the growth of the church – through knowledge and whether everybody is reading books every day? The result of so much knowledge is being puffed up like a balloon and being proud. In 1 Corinthians 8:1b, Paul said, *“Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”* Which one do you prefer? In the past, there was love in the beginning and it was good; but in the end, we got a big head, and love disappeared. In all these past years, I have seen that it does not matter how much knowledge you have, it will not build up but tear down. It is the same thing with the family. May the Lord have mercy! Hebrews 13:1 is a continuation of how to serve God acceptably with reverence and with godly fear: *“Let brotherly love continue.”*

“Do not forget to entertain strangers...” (Heb. 13:2a). The word “entertain” is not as today's entertainment with TV, movies, games and sports. In this context, to entertain means to receive guests with love and care. You don't just invite guests into your house and have them sit

there while you go and do your own thing. With guests, we should have the fellowship and care, providing what is needed. The main thing is that we need to serve them with Christ, and then with some activities, which is good and normal.

“...for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (v. 2b). Did Lot know that the two people who approached him were angels? If you saw flying angels with wings, halos and shining faces, you would welcome them. But would you welcome normal strangers that you’ve never seen before? Suppose Lot said, “I don’t know them; I’m not going to entertain them”; then he and his family would not have been saved. But people were very hospitable in those days. Even though Lot did not know they were angels, he had an open heart and received the two men. Abraham also saw three persons coming and told Sarah to quickly prepare something for them. But we scrutinize people first by asking questions: “Who are you? Where did you come from? What do you want from me?” Of course, we need discernment and cannot let just anyone enter. We need discernment, and we must have a heart to receive guests at home. And who knows, maybe the Lord sent them! Definitely, it is a gain! This was the second item Paul mentioned.

“Remember the prisoners...” (Heb. 13:3a). Paul was not referring to criminals but to those who were martyrs, who for the sake of the testimony of Jesus, were in prison. If you are in the spirit, whether you know them or not, remember them in your prayers, keep them in your heart because they are suffering. They are in prison, and although you are enjoying life in your home, you have such a heart for them. These are the kind of citizens that dwell in Zion. Isn’t that wonderful? Are you in Zion? This is the way we serve our King in Zion. These martyrs are men of faith. To have faith does not mean: I believe so I can move mountains. Someone asked me, “Do you have the faith to move mountains?” If the Lord tells me to pray to move mountains, then I will pray, and the mountain will move. But if the Lord didn’t tell me to do that, and I say, “Mountain be moved,” it won’t work! If God says to do it, and I believe it and do what He says, it will work! Don’t try your faith by walking on the Pacific Ocean. You will drown because the Lord didn’t tell you, “Come.” The Lord told Peter, “Come.” (Matt. 14:29). And Peter did walk; but when he looked left and right and saw the storm, he

began to sink. Don't do anything the Lord didn't tell you to do just to try out faith. Don't drink poison purposely because Mark said, *"And these signs will follow you who believe...and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them..."* (Mark 16:17-18). Forty years ago, some people let poisonous snakes into the meeting to test their faith. The government came in and outlawed it because some people died. I wouldn't go there to try it out to see if I have faith or not! Faith is very closely connected to the living speaking of God to you. Don't just believe anything.

"Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also" (Heb. 13:3). That means we all have the same physical body to deal with. Everyone has suffered and had pain in their body. So, we should realize how others feel when they are suffering, being beaten, chained, and left without food and water for days. We have the same kind of body as them. We are living comfortably and have everything we need; but what about feeling with those who don't have? Try going ten days without food, then you will know how it feels. So, we must have such compassion for those who are suffering. Pray for those who are sick, "Lord, heal them." Even exercise your faith for them! Is that very spiritual? Can you see the action? Do you know people who are praying for you, people who have felt what you feel? It takes a lot of faith! Pray for them; intercede for them. That is why in Hebrews, the Lord is the great, heavenly High Priest always interceding for us because He became a Man and knows what it means to suffer. He senses your weaknesses! If He had not become a Man like you and me, He could never understand what we are complaining about. We don't have understanding for what people are going through. If I was not a teenager before, I wouldn't understand why teenagers are silly. So, you must intercede for people, help them, and understand them because you are a man, just like them. The Lord became a Man, like each one of us. This is why the description of the Son of Man in Hebrews is so precious. We only know Him as the Son of God who He died for us and rose again. But we do not realize that the reason He went through all these sufferings, was not just for Him to be perfected, but for Him to be perfected as the great High Priest that He would be able to save us to the uttermost! You cannot save someone whose sufferings and problems you don't understand. The policeman

doesn't have to understand – he gives a ticket because that is the law. He cannot help you. But The Lord is so compassionate and so understanding. The Lord even wept for Jerusalem. He is able to save us to the uttermost. These verses are so real in our Christian life of faith. Knowing this Christ is very practical.

“Marriage is honorable” (Heb. 13:4a). Have you ever thought about marriage being honorable? Marriage must be respected in the household by the husband, the wife, and the children. There must be respect for each other, love, and care – it must be honorable. *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge”* (v. 4). Remember this word and warning because we all have the flesh. God will judge. Have you ever thought of that as the church life? This is a very practical church life!

“Let your conduct, your manner of life be without covetousness” (Heb. 13:5a) because covetousness is idolatry. If you have covetousness in your heart, then that will be your god because you hold on to that. It will replace your love for God. People are corrupted through covetousness – coveting power, money, position and things. That is why the Word says, *“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil”* (1 Tim. 6:10). The fallen situation in the government is because of money. There is the saying: Follow the money. It will lead you to the source of evil. You are not content with what you have. Everything has to be better, nicer, more and more. Your covetousness has no bottom. It is a bottomless pit.

“...be content with such things as you have” (Heb. 13:5b). We should already be very thankful with what we have. Learn this! Paul says, *“Godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1 Tim. 6:6) because you gain Christ. You might not gain many things, but you gain Christ! Paul was really amazing – what he wrote to Timothy was exactly as what he wrote in Hebrews – it is very practical.

“For He Himself had said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Heb. 13:5c). God knows what you need. That is why we thank God for every meal on the table. When I was young, we were 13 children and were picky eaters; everyone wanted the best part. We should be thankful for

everything God has given us. We think we earned what we have, but where did our job come from? From the Lord! So, learn to share. Remember the poor and the needy. Don't forget them. The Lord will always take care of our needs, just as parents are always taking care of the children's needs. God will never leave us and forsake us. "So we may boldly say, 'The LORD is my Helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Heb. 13:6).

Note: The above content has not been reviewed by the speaker.